

way. If it is suggested that the bill be passed through all its stages in one day I shall offer no objection. I shall be prepared to go on next Wednesday.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 5.33 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 5 September, 1917.

Printed Questions and Answers—Papers—Questions without Notice—National Belgian Relief Fund—Aparies (Amendment) Bill—Public Instruction (Amendment) Bill—University and University Colleges (Amendment) Bill—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

PRINTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

EMPLOYMENT OF PHYSICALLY DEFECTIVE PERSONS.

Mr. OSBORNE asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) Is it a fact that an engine-driver named C. Thompson, who has only one leg, has been driving a locomotive at or from Newcastle during the past two or three weeks? (2) Is it a fact that a man named S. Smith, who has only one arm, has been similarly engaged as above? (3) Is it a fact that a Newcastle bootblack named Woods, who has never passed regulation eye test, has been employed as a mail fireman during the last two weeks? (4) Is it a fact that the following list of men who have failed in eye-sight test have filled positions of enginemmen during the past three weeks, namely:—George O'Brien, Thomas Leighton, John Devlin, William Long, John Freeman (Hamilton), and John Gould, Fred Yeatman (Narrabri West)?

Answer,—I am informed:

(1) Charles Thompson, a returned soldier, who was a locomotive driver when he enlisted, and who lost a leg at Gallipoli, acted temporarily as driver for a short period during the strike. He has an artificial leg and performed the duties satisfactorily. (2) Stephen Smith, who was a locomotive driver, and lost an arm while in the service, and is now employed as a coal viewer, acted as driver for a short period during the strike, having with him an experienced fireman who had

[*The Hon. J. Garland.*

acted as driver on many occasions. (3) No person of that name has been employed as a fireman at Newcastle, but a man named Wood, who has had experience as a locomotive driver in England was, after passing the eye-sight test, temporarily employed as a fireman at Sydney. (4) Some of the men mentioned were utilised as enginemmen during the early part of the strike, having experience in the duties. Every care was taken in the interests of safe working, and where the vision of the men concerned did not reach the departmental standard qualified pilotmen were also employed on the engines.

COUNT VON ROSSIG.

Mr. KEEGAN asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1) Is it a fact that a full-blooded Austrian, by name Count von Rossig, a single man, has been appointed to one of the highest posts in the Government Savings Bank? (2) Is it a fact that the officers of the Government Savings Bank have protested against the appointment of von Rossig, he being an enemy subject? (3) If so, who is responsible for Count von Rossig's appointment?

Answer,—I am informed:

(1) No; but the commissioners have an officer named V. A. Rosich, who is Australian born, is married, and has been appointed as accountant. His father is an Austrian, has been in Australia thirty-five years, and naturalised fifteen years. Mother an Englishwoman. (2) One officer complained, who thought he should have been appointed to the position. (3) The commissioners are responsible for Mr. Rosich's appointment, the power to make appointments being vested entirely in them under the provisions of the Government Savings Bank Act, 1906.

TARONGA PARK.

Colonel ONSLOW asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1) What has been the annual expenditure upon Taronga Park (Zoological Gardens) since 24th April, 1912? (2) What has been the total expenditure upon this park since its dedication?

Answer,—(1 and 2) I am informed that the books of the Department of Public Works show that the annual expenditure on construction of the Taronga Park Zoological Gardens has been:—From votes—Year 1915-16, £17,276 0s. 1d.; year 1916-17, £57,297 14s. 8d. Add expenditure suspense account, 1916-17, £5,029 19s. 6d.; total, £62,327 14s. 2d.;

total to 30th June, 1917, £79,603 14s. 3d. As shown above, the total expenditure recorded, so far as the Works Department is concerned, has amounted to £79,603 14s. 3d., but in addition there are liabilities which have been incurred by the Building Construction Branch, the Government Architect's Branch, and the Sydney Harbour Trust, which will bring the gross expenditure to £114,450 0s. 9d. The Chief Secretary's Department has also made the undermentioned grants in aid of maintenance and purchase of animals:—1915-16, £900; 1916-17, £4,200; total, £5,100.

TRAMWAY CARS.

MR. OSBORNE asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) What is the total number of tramway cars at each dépôt in the metropolitan area? (2) What number of these cars were at Randwick shops under repairs and awaiting same on 2nd August, 1917? (3) How many additional cars were out of use at the various sheds awaiting an opportunity to be sent to Randwick shops on same date? (4) How many of these "stopped cars" have been taken off the list and are now in use for tram traffic without being re-wheeled? (5) Were these cars on 2nd August considered unsafe for traffic, and were only permitted to be used for short periods on race days? (6) Is it a fact that the cars are being sent back to their dépôts since 2nd August, 1917, in the same state as received at Randwick sheds—that is, in a condition (according to previous departmental report) of unfitness for public use?

Answer.—This information should be moved for in the form of a return.

PAPERS.

Ministers laid upon the table the undermentioned papers, which were referred to the Printing Committee:—

Statement of accounts, auditor's certificate, receipts and expenditure from 5th March, 1915, to 14th August, 1917, of the National Belgian Relief Fund of New South Wales.

Further interim report and final schedule of his Honor Judge Bevan as a royal commissioner appointed to inquire into the claims made by certain settlers on the Murrumbidgee irrigation area, with

a view to ascertaining whether such settlers could prove that they were entitled to be compensated by reason of the unsuitability of the soil on their farms for the growth of lucerne.

Regulations under the Prisons Act, 1899.

Gazette notices setting forth the mode in which it is proposed to deal with the dedication of certain lands, under the Crown Lands Consolidation Act, 1913.

Abstract of Crown lands intended to be dedicated to public purposes, under the Crown Lands Consolidation Act, 1913.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

INCREASED FERRY FARES.

MR. BAVIN: I would like to know whether the Acting Premier is yet in a position to give an answer to the printed question on to-day's business-paper as to whether he will intimate to the Sydney Ferries, Ltd., that it is undesirable that fares should be increased until after the matter has been discussed by this House?

MR. FULLER: The Government has not approved of any increased fares; but I presume that the Sydney Ferries, Ltd., is in the same position as other companies, and is at liberty to raise fares if it thinks fit. With regard to the House discussing the matter, the forms of the House give hon. members the fullest opportunity for bringing such a matter under discussion.

DR. ARTHUR: In view of the statement of the Minister that the Sydney Ferries, Ltd., is in the same position as any other commercial institution, may I ask why it was necessary for the company to invite the Government to appoint a royal commission before raising fares? Further, why was it necessary for the Government to appoint the commission? Is it not a fact that the Sydney Ferries, Ltd., differs from ordinary commercial institutions in the sense that it possesses a monopoly of certain wharfs at Circular Quay and on the northern side of the Harbour? If the fares are raised will the Government, through the Harbour Trust, afford an opportunity to rival companies to obtain access to the ferry wharfs on both sides of the harbour?

MR. FULLER: The Government will be very glad to consider the claims of any rival company that may come along.

In regard to the other portion of the hon. member's question, I would ask for notice.

TUGGERAH LAKES.

Mr. EDDEN: Is it a fact that the Tuggerah Lakes have been offered for sale to certain oyster merchants?

Mr. FULLER: No such action is contemplated by the Government.

DEATH OF M. A. L. FLANAGAN.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: I desire to ask the Acting Premier a question without notice. Owing to the prolongation of the strike, caused by the callous conduct of the Government—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot express an opinion, and he must know that he is out of order.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: Owing to the prolongation of the strike, which has caused—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have already told the hon. member that he cannot express an opinion when asking a question.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: I desire to know from the Acting Premier whether he is aware that owing to the prolongation of the strike the great majority of the people of this State hold the Government responsible for the death of M. A. L. Flanagan—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member cannot obey the ruling of the Chair he cannot proceed.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH JURYMEN.

Mr. BUCKLEY: I wish to know from the Attorney-General whether it is a fact that his department has already communicated with various jurymen, and has asked them to sit on a certain day in connection with a case that is to be decided at one of the lower courts?

Mr. D. R. HALL: I am in a position to tell the hon. member quite flatly that he will be justified in telling, in any language he thinks proper, any one who asserts that what he has stated is a fact, that he is not telling the truth.

Mr. BUCKLEY:

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If an hon. member asks a question he must listen to the answer of the Minister. If he does not, I will not call on the Minister to reply.

[Mr. Fuller.

Colonel ONSLOW: I rise to order. I object to the hon. member for Yass sitting near me and making insolent and impertinent interjections. He has interjected that a certain hon. member is not an honorable member, and I appeal to you, sir, to correct him.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not hear any remarks made by the hon. member for Yass.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: I must say—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. D. R. HALL: I would like to give the most unqualified denial to the suggestion of the hon. member for Surry Hills, and to state in the most complete way that neither in any case now contemplated, nor in any case tried during the five years or more that I have occupied the position of Attorney-General or Solicitor-General, has such a practice as that referred to been resorted to. It is absolutely untrue that anything of the kind has been done.

Later,

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: In view of the reply of the Attorney-General to a question asked by the hon. member for Surry Hills that he has never tampered with the alleged springs of justice, will the Attorney-General explain why his department has recently made a departure from the usual course of procedure by appointing six jurymen on a coroner's inquest?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That question was asked and answered yesterday.

Later,

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: May I ask you, sir, a question without notice? When a question on this matter was asked yesterday by the hon. member for Granville you ruled that the matter was *sub judice*, and therefore the question could not be answered. The matter now having been decided by the jury can the question not be asked now?

Mr. SPEAKER: If I gave that decision there is all the more reason why the question should not be again asked. I have no official information that the case has been decided.

FOOD FOR STRIKERS' WIVES.

Mr. McKELL: I desire to ask the Acting Premier has he issued instructions to the officers of his department

to the effect that food orders should not be issued to the wives of men at present on strike?

Mr. FULLER: The question has been asked several times, and I have answered it on two occasions already.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry to say there is a practice growing up on the part of hon. members to read questions. That is against the rules of the House. Questions asked orally are the only questions that should be answered without notice.

Later,

Mr. MCKELL: I desire to ask the Acting Premier, since he answered the question on a previous occasion, has he given orders to any officers of his department to the effect that food orders should not be supplied to the wives of the men who are at present on strike?

Mr. FULLER: Since I answered the question previously I have given no orders in that regard.

GOLD LEASE, BATHURST.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I desire to ask the Minister for Mines is it a fact that gold lease No. 1,471, in the district of Bathurst, has not been worked for a period of upwards of four years; that applications from others than the lessees have been received by the department for that lease, and that the department has from time to time postponed dealing with the applications? Is it a fact that the department's most recent reply to those applications was that the matter would not be dealt with until after the termination of the present industrial unrest? Will the Minister be good enough to indicate what the application for a gold lease in the Bathurst district has to do with the present industrial unrest?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I cannot be expected to answer a question with regard to a specific lease unless the hon. member is prepared to furnish me with the particulars relating to it. If he will do that I shall have inquiry made with a view to furnishing him with information in connection with the matter.

LAVENDER BAY FERRY.

Mr. MUTCH: I desire to ask the Acting Premier is he aware that during the

last week or so the Sydney Ferries Company has been running most of the day an hourly service to Lavender Bay, which is only about a quarter of an hour's run from the city? Is the company endeavouring by these means to make profits unjustifiably, and force those people, who prefer walking to the boat to travelling by tram to walk to Milson's Point or McMahon's Point in order to get the ferry there? As the company controls a public utility will he take steps to see that it fulfils its obligations to its subscribers by running a reasonably decent service to Lavender Bay?

Mr. FULLER: I am not aware of the position stated by the hon. gentleman. If he will give notice of the question I shall have inquiry made. If the position is as the hon. gentleman states I should say the company is acting in accordance with a general policy that ought to be adopted at the present time, and that is to conserve coal as much as possible.

REPORTING OF DEBATES.

Mr. KEARSLEY: I desire to ask you, sir, if you are aware that certain members of this Chamber allege that certain matters which they have mentioned in the Chamber and portion of speeches which they have delivered in the Chamber have not been reported in *Hansard*? Can you inform the House whether censorship is exercised in the reporting of debates?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not aware of what the hon. gentleman has mentioned. If he will tell me any speech that has not been reported I shall make inquiries and find out the reason why.

NOTICES TO TENANTS.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I desire to ask the Attorney-General if he has had time to inquire into the validity of the use of the stamp on that document which I handed in yesterday afternoon? If so, can he give me a reply?

Mr. D. R. HALL: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. member a reply to-day, but I shall let him have a reply to-morrow.

STATE LOAN MONEY.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: I desire to ask the Acting Treasurer can he inform the House how much loan money the Premier obtained for New South Wales on his recent visit to England? Has he obtained any money for the construction of public works? What is the nature of the loan for which he has arranged?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I have no very definite knowledge up to the present time as to the sums which the Premier has been able to secure possession of, but I can tell the hon. member, for his own personal information, and as a secret not to be mentioned to any other hon. member—because, if he does mention it, every member will come along and ask for money—that there is ample to meet all the necessities of a reasonable character of the Yass electorate.

BAIL IN MURDER CASES.

Mr. M. BURKE: I wish to ask the Attorney-General whether it is a fact that, for the first time in the history of this State, a man charged with murder has been admitted to bail in the sum of £100?

Mr. D. R. HALL: I am not aware that the charge of murder has been preferred against anybody who has been admitted to the bail to which the hon. member refers. I can assure the hon. member that, if he will look at the charge that was made in the case under notice, and take the trouble to read up the history of what bail has been fixed in connection with such charges in days gone by, I do not think he will find that the bail was exceptionally light under the circumstances.

THE CASE OF MONTAGUE MILLER.

Mr. LANG: I desire to ask the Attorney-General whether his attention has been drawn to the case of a man named Montague Miller, who is considerably over 85 years of age, and who was sentenced to six months' hard labour for belonging to an unlawful association? Can the Attorney-General inform me whether that prosecution was initiated by the State Government or by the Federal Government?

Mr. D. R. HALL: The offence charged against this man was an offence under the

Federal law. I cannot tell the hon. member whether the Government or the police initiated the proceedings, but it was done in pursuance of the Federal Government's policy, and without any reference whatever to the State Government.

ARMING OF VOLUNTARY WORKERS.

Mr. BUCKLEY: I desire to ask the Acting Premier whether he is correctly reported in the *Daily Telegraph* of 31st August when he is alleged to have said, concerning the issue of firearms to volunteers:

Every effort has been made by the Government to prevent the volunteer workers from carrying firearms, but, in spite of this, it seems clear that some of the men are armed against the Government's wishes.

Is that consistent with the reply the Acting Premier gave to the hon. member for King last week in which he said that revolvers had been issued to volunteers, and it was in the public interest?

Mr. FULLER: I never made a statement to the effect that revolvers had been issued to volunteers. The Government has from the outset used its utmost endeavours to see that the volunteers were without revolvers.

STRIKE DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: I desire to ask the Acting Premier whether it is a fact that the Government has made a private arrangement with the strike defence committee to meet it to-morrow night? Is it a fact that the Government has arranged an apparent surrender of the strikers, and that privately the Government has more or less backed down?

Mr. FULLER: No such arrangement has been made, and there is not the slightest intention on the part of the Government to back down.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: I wish to ask whether or not it is a fact that the strike committee is to meet to-morrow night, and whether or not it is a fact that the outcome of that meeting will be an apparent surrender—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot repeat a question he has already asked.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: I want to—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has already asked a question, and it has been answered by the Acting Premier.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: The Acting Premier did not give the reply—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! When the hon. member asks a question he must be satisfied with the reply received. He cannot repeat the same question.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: Will you allow me to put it in another way, because the reply I received from the Acting Premier—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot make a speech. He can only ask a question.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: The reply of the Acting Premier was not altogether relevant. What I want to point out is this—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot make a speech. The hon. member can ask a question. If it is in order I shall allow it; if it is not in order I shall disallow it.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: Is it a fact that, in connection with a meeting which is to be held by the strike defence committee to-morrow night, certain private arrangements have been come to by emissaries of the Government—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That question has already been answered, and I will not allow it to be asked again.

FAIR RENTS COURT.

Mr. OSBORNE: Can the Attorney-General inform the House whether the court known as the Fair Rents Court is still in existence—whether it is working, and is it the intention of the hon. member to bring in an amending bill on similar lines to the one he brought in last year, making more liberal provision for tenants?

Mr. D. R. HALL: I have to inform the hon. member that the same gentleman who presided over the Fair Rents Court two years ago is still presiding over it, and that the work of the Fair Rents Court is quite up to date.

AN HON. MEMBER: When did the Fair Rents Court sit?

Mr. D. R. HALL: If the hon. member will make inquiries at Queen's-square he can find out that any cases brought for-

ward will be dealt with expeditiously. As to any intention of amending the Fair Rents Court Act, I ask the hon. member for Paddington to give notice.

SAFE MINES.

Mr. EDDEN: I should like to ask the Minister for Mines is it a fact that he has stated that during this terrible crisis no mines will be worked but what are safe? Can the hon. gentleman state what the word "safe" implies? Does it mean mines that are supposed to be free from gas? If so, is the hon. gentleman aware of the fact that many explosions are recorded in mining history which have taken place in mines where gas was never known to exist? If it extends further than that, and includes timbering and so forth, who is going to do the timbering and look after it for men who are inexperienced in mines?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: In answer to the hon. member, I have to say that no mine will be worked under existing conditions which is not certified as being absolutely safe by the expert authorities of the Mines Department of New South Wales.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: The miners will be safe in the arms of Jesus!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw that remark, and apologise to the House for having used it.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: I cannot with any honesty of mind withdraw that remark!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member withdraw that remark? I will not allow blasphemy to be used here whilst I am in the chair. I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark in the interests of decency and the decorum of Parliament.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: In deference to the rules of the House I will withdraw it!

NATIONAL BELGIAN RELIEF FUND.

Mr. FULLER, in laying upon the table the statement of accounts and auditors' certificate in connection with the National Belgian Relief Fund of New South Wales, read the following memo. :—

In presenting the above, the president indicates that the fund has now been closed, and the statement shows that "the

money so liberally subscribed by the public has been satisfactorily distributed." Special attention is invited to the very low administrative expenses, and the committee expresses appreciation of the assistance rendered by the Government, which made it possible to keep such expenses down to a minimum. The president adds that a good meed of commendation is also due to the officers and committee, who unstintingly gave their time and services "for the benefit of the sufferers from the barbarism of the Hun."

APIARIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. GRAHAME):

That this House will, on its next sitting day, resolve itself in a Committee of the Whole to consider the expediency of bringing in a bill to amend the *Apiaries Act, 1916*.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. JAMES):

That this House will, on its next sitting day, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the expediency of bringing in a bill to amend the law enforcing the attendance at school; to amend the *Public Instruction Act of 1880*, and the *Public Instruction (Amendment) Act, 1916*.

UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. JAMES):

That this House will, on its next sitting day, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the expediency of bringing in a bill to amend the *University and University Colleges Act, 1900*.

SUPPLY.

In Committee (consideration resumed from 30th August, *vide* page 900):

TREASURER AND SECRETARY FOR FINANCE AND TRADE.

Sydney Harbour Trust—Contingencies for Dredge Service—Rates and Taxes Payable to Board of Water Supply and Sewerage and City Council—Fire Insurance Premiums—Leichhardt Canal—Payments to Military—Reduction of Number of Draftsmen—Increase of Pensioners—Stores Supply for Parliamentary Offices—Stores for Tourist Bureau and Hotel Kosciusko—Stores for Police Department—Stores for Prisons Department—Excessive Prices Paid for Stores—Stores for Public Works and Education Departments—Comparison of Accounts—Supply of Blankets—Stores for Weights and Measures Department—Pensions for Totally and Partially Incapacitated members of Military and Naval Forces—Cancellation of Norton Griffiths & Co.'s Agreement—Increased Interest on Borrowed Money—Payment to Railway Commissioners for Conveyance of Members of Parliament, visitors, school children and other persons—Subsidy for Steamship Service between Sydney, Java, and Singapore.

[Mr. Fuller.

Resumed Properties.

Proposed vote, £12,825.

Mr. J. STOREY (Balmain) [5.8]: I desire to know how it comes about that there is an increase in salaries of officers from £4,444 last year to £4,874 this year?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: There is one extra clerk!

Mr. J. STOREY: I suppose the other increases are ordinary increments?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Yes!

Vote agreed to.

Sydney Harbour Trust.

Proposed vote, £158,857.

Mr. J. STOREY (Balmain) [5.10]: These estimates show a considerable increase—from £132,389 last year to £158,857 for the current year—despite the fact that during the last six months a large number of the dredges have been idle, and a large number of the men who were previously engaged in constructional work have been dispensed with. It would appear that though the number of workmen has been reduced the same expenditure is being incurred in connection with salaries. Whether labour is dispensed with or not the administrative staff still goes on, and the same amount of money has to be found for the payment of salaries to officers who must obviously have been very considerably overworked in days gone by, or to-day can have little or nothing to do. Retrenchment seems to start in every instance with the man at the bottom. The Government proceeds to practise economy by sacking men who are earning 30s. a week, and at the same time increasing the salaries of men receiving salaries of £500 a year and over. There does not appear to be the slightest justification for the continuance of these high salaries, together with increments, whilst men in the lower ranks are dispensed with, or do not receive any increase of pay on account of the war. If we are to become a Parliament of reform, and we are to follow the teachings of the daily press, which has been strongly advocating the reduction of Governmental expenditure, we ought to endeavour to curtail salaries in accordance with the general shrinkage

of operations. It would seem that the officials of the Harbour Trust are just as guilty as are other high officials of pettifoggish attempts at curtailment of expenditure by getting rid, as I have said, of the lower-paid employees, whilst at the same time providing for increased salaries for those in the higher grades of the service. This is a most objectionable feature, and is really farcical when it is viewed from the standpoint of economy. I cannot understand how highly-paid officials are allowed to go on attempting to delude the Government and the people in this way. The whole situation is absolutely absurd. The Government apparently finds itself utterly incapable of curtailing expenditure, and has handed itself over, body and soul, to the officials of the various departments. Hon. members now sitting on the Government benches used to talk of the extravagance of the Labour Government, and assured us that if they ever got into power they would show us how to handle the finances properly. Yet we find it is now proposed to spend £1,750,000 more than was spent last year on the ordinary affairs of government. These estimates clearly indicate that whilst the men who are at the bottom are to be dispensed with, the higher salaried officers are to be retained upon just as favourable a footing as in the good old days. It behoves the Assistant Treasurer more than anyone else to study economy, and cut down expenditure. He has spoken more than anyone else about the necessity for economy, and I thought that if he ever became a Minister he would make some effort to give effect to the views he expressed when he was in opposition. We have been considerably disappointed in the hon. member, who, like his predecessors, seems to have fallen entirely under the control of his officers. What can Ministers say in justification of these abnormal estimates? They have made no attempt to explain them, and apparently they are not concerned now that the general election is over, and they are secure in their positions. Any protests made by us are lightly passed over, and apparently are of no avail. All the same, I want to raise my protest against the present state of affairs in the Harbour Trust Depart-

ment. There has been a great curtailment of work, and yet the more highly-paid officials who cannot have anything like as much to do as formerly are being retained at the old rates, or at increased salaries. A number of dredges have been thrown out of commission because there has been a general curtailment of the operations of the Trust. I have nothing against the officers of the Trust who are excellent men, and have done very good work, but they obviously are not so fully engaged as was formerly the case owing to the falling off in the number of men employed.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK (Orange) Assistant Treasurer [5.22]: I wish to make a few comments upon the criticisms of the leader of the Opposition, which may carry some weight outside. He has stated that the salaries of the officers of the Harbour Trust have been increased, whereas, seeing that workmen have been dismissed in a wholesale way, there ought to be an appreciable reduction in the cost of administration. I would point out that not £1 has been added to the salary of any officer. There has been a reduction so far as draftsmen are concerned, but they are dealt with elsewhere in certain branches of the service. Some of the increase in the vote is due to the fact that we are called upon this year to pay £5,200 in excess of the amount paid last year in respect to pension charges. This year we have to provide £67,950 as against £60,415 last year for the dredge service, the expenditure covering among other things the wages of masters, engineers, firemen, deck hands, and labourers, and stores and material for repairs and renewals. Then, again, £65,650 is provided, as compared with £60,020 last year for labourers, storemen, cleaners, chainmen, watchmen, maintenance and working of bonded warehouses, maintenance of wharfs, and other properties, &c.

Mr. J. STOREY: I do not object to those items!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The hon. member has complained of a large number of men having been dispensed with in connection with the dredge service and construction work, but I would point out that it was only during one

brief period, just prior to the end of the last financial year, that any appreciable diminution took place in the number of men employed in connection with the dredges and the construction of wharfs. Not more than a couple of weeks elapsed before the great bulk of the men were reinstated in their former positions, and they are there still. We know that shipping was not so bulky during the last financial year as it was prior to the war, but works, such as the construction of wharfs and the deepening of the harbour, are being carried on notwithstanding the war, and notwithstanding that shipping is less in bulk than previously.

Mr. OSBORNE: There has been an immense decrease in shipping during the last two years!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Yes.

Mr. OSBORNE: But not in the expenditure!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: It has to be remembered that this is a revenue-earning department, and that in order to secure revenue it has to build wharfs for the accommodation of ships, and carry out other works. It is doing that work as efficiently as possible, and is getting for that purpose as much funds from the Government as circumstances will permit.

Mr. GARDINER (Newcastle) [5.26]: I object, as I did on a previous occasion, to these estimates being considered in the absence of the Auditor-General's report.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member not to pursue that. The argument that the Auditor-General's report is not available has been used by the hon. member at least twice before. I do not think it is competent for the hon. member to go over that argument again, and I ask the hon. member to address himself to the vote before the Committee.

Mr. GARDINER: I desire to point out that we are not sure after all that what the Assistant Treasurer has just stated is correct. I want to ask him if he can show to what extent the salaries of the highly-paid officials in this department have been increased since the war. According to these estimates the

[Mr. J. C. L. Fitzpatrick.

secretary is receiving £875 this year, the same as he received last year. Is it not a fact that there has been a considerable increase in this official's salary since the war started? The Minister knows that there has been. Then take the salary of the assistant secretary: That has been increased very considerably, but it is not shown here. The same remark applies to the salaries of the engineer-in-chief, the principal assistant engineer, and the harbour master. The salary of the harbour master now appears at £750, but at the beginning of the war I think his salary was £500.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I rise to order. I submit that the hon. member can only discuss the estimates as they appear before this Chamber. He cannot go into some statement that emanates from the depths of his inner consciousness, nor can he enter upon a discussion of alleged increases when those alleged increases are not under discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the vote which is now before the Committee. The hon. member knows that he had a full opportunity of discussing the department generally on the first item of this estimate. Whether he took advantage of that opportunity or not does not affect the position. I ask the hon. member to keep closely to the vote before the Committee.

Mr. GARDINER: That is just what I am doing. I am pointing out that the salaries of the officials which I have mentioned have gone up very considerably since the beginning of the war, notwithstanding that their duties have been very considerably decreased. A lot of these officials are standing by at the present time doing nothing and drawing their salaries. That is the case even to a greater degree in connection with some other departments. There are some departments in which the whole of the wages staff are not doing anything and not drawing any pay from the Government, while the whole of the salaried staff are doing nothing, but are drawing their pay. I want to ask the Assistant Treasurer why that distinction is made between the two classes of employees. It is more important that the wages staff should continue to draw their pay because

owing to their only having received sufficient to maintain themselves and their families for the time being, they have not been able to make any provision for the future. Why is that distinction made, not only in this department, but in other departments of which the Minister has charge? For instance, there is the Navigation Department.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the vote before the Chair.

Mr. GARDINER: I believe there is a desire on the part of the Ministry to effect economy, and in order to do that it is proposed to reduce the number of employees. Would it not be better to effect economy by reducing the number of employees in this way: Make it compulsory for every employee who reaches the age of 60 or 61 or 62 to retire on his pension, instead of retaining him in the service long after he has reached an age when he is not fitted to properly carry out his duties? It would be better to pension those men off, because they have a pension to get, than to cast on one side the younger employees, with wives and families to support, who might find it difficult to get employment elsewhere.

Mr. OSBORNE: How would you effect economy in that way—pension a man off and put another man in his place?

Mr. GARDINER: The hon. member knows it is economy.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member not to go into a general dissertation on questions of policy. The hon. member might have done so at an earlier stage, but he cannot do so at this stage. The hon. member must strictly confine himself to the vote before the Committee.

Mr. GARDINER: I should like to point out, in reply to the hon. member for Paddington, who is rather in favour of dismissing employees—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I shall not allow the hon. member to evade my ruling. I am inclined to think the hon. member is attempting to do in an indirect way what I have just ruled he cannot do. I shall not permit that. I ask the hon. member again to confine himself to the vote before the Committee.

Mr. OSBORNE: Please do not make any imputations that are not correct!.

Mr. GARDINER: I am not doing that. I am only pointing out that it is a wrong thing to dismiss many of these young, able, and competent employees, on the ground of economy, and to keep on some of the highly-paid officers who have reached the retiring age. I ask, which is the better policy to pursue in the interests of economy and justice—to compel a man to retire when he reaches the retiring age, thus doing him no injustice, as he receives a pension, or to do an injustice to the man who has a wife and family to support by dismissing him because he is in the lower grade? The law compelling officials to retire at the age of 60 is strictly adhered to in the lower branches of the public service. I know that is the practice of the Public Service Board. I can quote instances.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is departing from the question before the Committee. I ask the hon. member not to go into questions of general policy and the actions of the Public Service Board, but to confine himself to the vote before the Committee.

Mr. GARDINER: I shall take another opportunity of going thoroughly into this question. I hope, as one who has some knowledge of the public service, having spent seventeen years of my life in it—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Committee is not concerned in the hon. member's knowledge of the public service. I ask the hon. member again to strictly confine himself to the vote before the Committee. I tell the hon. member that this is the last time I shall warn him.

Mr. GARDINER: Many of the officers I have referred to are performing duties which are much less arduous than they were in normal times. Why they should be singled out for preferential treatment while the war is going on, and the poorer men of the service neglected, I cannot understand. If anything had happened to increase the cost of living a fair-minded Government would try to help the men in the lower ranks to enable them to meet that increase, and not give special consideration to men who are already receiving salaries above a living wage.

Mr. OSBORNE (Paddington) [5.42]: It is only right that one should draw attention to the fact that, in these days of necessary economy and reduction of governmental expenditure, there is an increase of no less than £26,000 under the heading of Sydney Harbour Trust. Last year the amount set apart for this department was £132,000, and this year it is £158,000. There is this much to be said for what the hon. member for Newcastle was attempting to say: that the administrative charges appear to be out of all proportion to the general expenditure. The total expenditure for the dredge service, including wages of masters, engineers, firemen, deck hands, and labourers, and all stores, coal, and material required, amounts to £67,000, and the amount set down for labourers, storemen, cleaners, chainmen, watchmen, maintenance and working of bonded warehouses and model lodging-house, maintenance of wharfs and other properties, harbour and wharf lighting, repairs, renewals, and other conveniences, is £65,650. The Assistant Treasurer very correctly says it is impossible for him to go into the items and tell any hon. member how much of these particular amounts are represented by wages and how much by maintenance and the purchase of stores and material. So, as a matter of fact, we are, in a certain measure, in the dark. Of course, one could get some information by reading the annual report of the Harbour Trust Commissioners. In my judgment, the administrative charges for all the officials controlling this department, amounting to about £40,000, are out of all proportion to the amount that is set down for wages to the workers and for maintenance and purchase of stores. Under normal conditions, one, perhaps, would not take much exception to this; but every one who has given consideration to the subject must admit that the activities of the Harbour Trust have been considerably diminished within the last three years. So far from the wharfage accommodation being taxed to its utmost capacity, as it was prior to the outbreak of the war, one rarely sees a steamer of any magnitude at a wharf. As a consequence of that, the cost of administration ought to be considerably

less to-day than it was three years ago. I am not saying anything against the administrative capacity of the officers of the Harbour Trust. So far as I know, they are competent individuals, and do their work well; but the fact remains that the charges for administration have not decreased in the last twelve months, but, as a matter of fact, have increased somewhat, whereas the amount set apart for wages, &c., is practically on all-fours with what it was three years ago. I suppose it will be admitted that the number of men employed is considerably less to-day than it was three years ago. Hon. members will admit that, where you employed 4,000 men three years ago for a specific sum the chances are that you are only employing 2,000 to-day, because of the increase in wages. The lump sum set down for the wages of labourers does not give an idea whether there has been an increase or a decrease in the staff. One is liable to draw the natural deduction that there has been a decrease in the working staff, because the wages-sheet is practically what it was three years ago. And if there has been a decrease in the ordinary working staff one wants to know why the cost of the administrative staff is as much as it was then. That is something which is worthy of the consideration of the Acting Treasurer. In the case of the general temporary clerical assistants, assistant engineers, draftsmen, collectors, and so on, there has been an increase from 144 last year to 154 this year. I am not in a position to speak, not having the report of the commissioners before me, but I cannot imagine that the work of the department has increased to such a degree in the last twelve months that it calls for the employment of ten additional men in these capacities. It is not that I advocate a reduction in the staff unless it is absolutely necessary, but it seems to me that this increase in the number of these officers, and the additional £2,000 set down on the estimates, are out of all proportion to the quantity of work done by the trust. These things are incomprehensible to us, because we are living under abnormal circumstances. One would have thought that the expenditure in this department would have been re-

duced. I do not raise my voice by way of complaint, but simply to get information as to why these ten additional men should be employed at a time like this. The increase in the superannuation fund one can heartily subscribe to. But I cannot understand the logic of the hon. member for Newcastle, when he proposes to economise by placing on the pension list a man who occupies a responsible position to-day, and putting in his place another man on the same salary. If it were a question of furthering the interests of the man on the lower rung of the ladder, and giving him a push up, without additional expenditure to the State, one could subscribe to the position. We make the statutory retiring age 60, so as to give men underneath the opportunity to work up to higher positions. That is right, but to give a man a pension of £400—that will have to come out of the consolidated revenue, or out of a fund subsidised by the consolidated revenue—and put another man in his place, is a kind of economy that would land the State in financial ruin in a very short space of time. I realise that the activities of the trust have to go on, even at a time like this, inasmuch as the port has to be continually improved; but the expenditure involved in that work comes out of loan moneys, and has nothing to do with the amounts voted on the estimates. There are several items of this description that might be explained by the Assistant Treasurer in order that we may gain some information as to whether the revenue which may be expected from the trust will be commensurate with the increasing expenditure.

Mr. QUIRK (Rozelle) [5.52]: I have been informed that there are about fourteen men employed at Jones' Bay, and about thirteen men at Miller's Point. I am not finding fault with the number of men employed. I regret that, owing to the present position of affairs, there is not a larger number of men employed. What I cannot understand is why there should be so many foremen in these two sections of the department. I believe I am correct in saying that about five are employed at Miller's Point and four at Jones' Bay. Hon. members must surely realise that it is not necessary

to have no less than eight or nine foremen to control sixty men. There is a handful of bricklayers, another of carpenters, another of labourers, and so on, and each handful of workmen is under the control of a separate foreman. If the Government is sincere in its expressed desire to reduce expenditure as much as possible, some effort should have been made to reduce the expenditure, at all events, in connection with the clerical staff. Nobody, I suppose, has the welfare of this country more at heart than I have, and I fully realise that at the present time, although the Government may be short of funds, there are, nevertheless, golden opportunities for the administrators of the various departments to find an outlet for some of the capital at their command by proceeding with work which will be of great benefit to the country in the future. The Harbour Trust has undertaken the resumption of certain properties, and I wish to point out where opportunities exist for it to carry out developmental works.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to keep strictly to the question before the Committee. The hon. member will not be permitted to go into a general survey of the history and administration of the Harbour Trust. I ask the hon. member not to deal with the question of resumptions, because I cannot see what relevancy that has to the particular item now before the Committee.

Mr. QUIRK: With regard to the extension of works under the Harbour Trust, I fully realise that to-day the position is very different from what it was twelve months ago. We know the unforeseen circumstances with which the Harbour Trust has to deal at the present time, and it has my sympathy on that account. I regret that its funds are in a somewhat depleted state, through no fault of its own, but owing to the condition of the money market; but I should like to get some explanation as to whether the officers controlling the operations of the Harbour Trust have been treated in the same way as those on the general staff. If the staff of workers has been decreased in number owing to lack of funds I have no hesitation in saying that the same treatment should

have been meted out to the clerical staff. I notice that the salary provided for the harbour master is £750 a year. Perhaps the Acting Treasurer can inform me if I am right in supposing that this gentleman is Captain Hildebrand. Whilst he may be worthy of the position he holds I wish to point out the difference that exists between those on the lower rungs of the ladder and those filling the higher positions under the Harbour Trust. When the pruning-knife was being applied to the bricklayers and other workers why was it not also applied to those filling higher positions? I trust that in future every possible endeavour will be made by the Harbour Trust to carry out extensive improvements of buildings, so as to provide all the accommodation that is necessary. Had this been done in the past I have no hesitation in saying that the loss of thousands of pounds which has occurred in connection with wheat storage on Glebe Island could have been avoided by having the necessary buildings on the foreshores of Rozelle and Balmain.

[The Chairman left the chair at 6.3 p.m. The Committee resumed at 7 p.m.]

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [7.5]: I notice that increases are provided for under the head of contingencies for the dredge service amounting to some £7,000 or £8,000, and for labourers and others and for the maintenance of bonded warehouses, wharfs, and other properties, &c., amounting to upwards of £5,000. On the other hand, there is a reduction in the amount provided for rates and taxes payable to the Board of Water Supply and Sewerage, and City Council, and fire insurance premiums on properties amounting to £1,200. This is somewhat peculiar, because the general tendency is for these charges to increase. I would like to know whether the Government has disposed of some of its properties or whether the insurance companies have reduced their charges. My main reason for rising is to point out that the Harbour Trust Department was positively starved last year, and that we cannot anticipate any very great improvement on the strength of an increase of £26,000 in the annual vote. Is this increase going to make all the difference between

[Mr. Quirk.

the blue-mouldy condition of the service during the past year and the provision of proper facilities for shipping and other purposes during the current year? Can the Minister say that this small increase will suffice to meet all the requirements of the country? I am certain that the Harbour Trust will require a considerably larger sum to carry on its services, and I would like to know whether the proposed vote represents the total amount asked for by the trust, or whether its requirements have been cut down?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: We are dealing now only with the administrative expenditure!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: These estimates include some items which cannot be regarded as administrative expenses, as I understand them. One item provides for the wages of labourers, storemen, cleaners, chainmen, watchmen, and for the maintenance and working of bonded warehouses and the model lodging-house, also for the maintenance of wharfs and other properties, harbour and wharf lighting, repairs, renewals, and other contingencies. The cost of renewals alone must be large, and surely many of the amounts that will have to be paid out of this item go beyond mere administrative expenses. Then in connection with the dredge service, possibly the wages of the masters and engineers might be regarded as coming under the head of administrative expenses, but that could scarcely apply to the wages to be provided for firemen, deck-hands, and labourers, and the cost of stores, coal, and material. I understood that the trust required a large sum of money for the purpose of completing the road round the water frontage where the gasworks are at present situated. [Committee counted.] To complete that road the commissioners would presumably require a large sum of money; but if the Assistant Treasurer assures me seriously that they do not, and that they have not made any attempt to secure money for that purpose, I am quite prepared to take the hon. gentleman's word.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: If the hon. member waits till he sees the Treasurer's own estimates he will be able to see exactly what the Harbour Trust will get. The bulk of the money expended by the

trust, apart from administrative costs, is obtained from loan funds. The trust, however, is amply provided for this year; it has practically all it has asked for.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I am pleased to hear that. I look upon the Harbour Trust as an industry which is about as well managed as it could be at the present time, and as an establishment which is paying a fair return upon the capital invested; consequently I take an interest in its business, and would be quite prepared to assist the Treasurer in providing the whole of the amounts required for its services as well as for purposes of administration.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I can assure the hon. gentleman that that is so!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Again, I think the Committee is entitled to know how this saving has been effected with regard to insurance and rates. If it has been made without taking undue risks in respect of Government properties and without affecting in any way the validity of the transactions with the insurance companies, the hon. member in charge of the estimate might be fairly complimented; but if, on the other hand, the saving has been made at the expense of the safety of the properties insured it would be quite wrong.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I may inform the hon. member with regard to that item that some properties have been leased to tenants who have to pay their own insurance charges. Certain old and dilapidated properties on which heavy premiums had to be paid have been remodelled, or new buildings put up, and the rate is lower now than it was on the dilapidated properties.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: That accounts for the difference. We know the value of the work the Harbour Trust Commissioners are doing, and its dredge service is of the utmost importance. In the absence of the hon. member for Leichhardt, who is at the present time fighting for the flag, I would ask the Assistant Treasurer if he can assure me that the dredge work which was being carried on in the canal at Leichhardt some eighteen months ago, but was discontinued owing to lack of funds, with great danger to the health of the locality, will be resumed in the near future; and if the

loan estimates will provide a sufficient sum, or whether the present estimates are to enable that work to be completed.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I understand that is one of the works with which the Harbour Trust intends to proceed at the earliest possible moment!

Mr. PRICE: But you are not dealing with the loan estimates!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I know I am not, but the hon. member asked me a fair question. Of course he must remember that the funds which would be expended on work of this kind come from loan sources, but I can tell him without hesitation that the Harbour Trust contemplates an early if not almost immediate resumption of the work which was discontinued for lack of funds some time since.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Then I can assure the people of Leichhardt that it is one of the works which the Harbour Trust will undertake in the near future?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Yes, I think the hon. member can do that!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I would next ask the hon. gentleman to take into consideration the fact that one at least of the men appearing in the vote which has just been passed for resumed properties seems to be below the minimum rate of pay fixed by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The hon. member cannot go back to that, but if he will send me along a notification of the particulars of the case I will have it looked into right away!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I thank the hon. gentleman. Then there is an item, "Difference between Military and Civil pay to artisans and others, £11,000. Less estimated savings on account of military payments to officers and others on active service, £4,000." Last year the net amount was £6,000, while this year it is £7,000. Is the latter sum made up by increased increments to officers of the department who are away, or is it due to the fact that there are a larger number of men away since the last estimates?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: That is so!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I understand that a man who goes to the front comes in for all increases in increments?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: That is so. If an officer is entitled to an increment,

one, two, or three years after he goes away, the fact that he is absent from duty does not debar him from deriving all the benefits associated with his position in the service!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Is the increase of £7,000 due to an increase in the number of labourers employed, or to an increase in the increments of officers already employed?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: It may be due to both causes. There is an increased number employed, and there are some small increases in salaries!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Does that also apply to the next item?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Yes!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I sincerely hope that the Minister will be able to enforce the views he has enunciated in answer to my questions. Efficient harbour works are inseparable from the success of the industries of the country, and are so necessary to the maintenance of our position as the sovereign State of Australia, that the matter should receive the most earnest consideration of the Minister. I have his assurance that the Harbour Trust is to get the whole of the money asked for general services. I am satisfied with that, and with the other information supplied to me by the Minister. [*Committee counted.*]

Mr. M. BURKE (Belmore) [7.23]: The number of draftsmen in 1916-17 was four, and their salaries were £1,210. This year the number is three, and the salaries are £880. The number of clerks in the former year was seventeen, and their salaries £4,741; and this year the number is fifteen, and the salaries amount to £4,299. I should like to know if those are permanent reductions? Another item reads: "Less salary paid from special appropriation as Commissioner, £900." I do not understand that. Does that mean that less work has been carried out by the trust in view of the reduced amount of shipping? I should like to know what the estimate is for carrying out harbour works.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: This item does not affect construction work such as wharfs. Funds for that purpose are voted in the loan estimates!

[*Mr. Stuart-Robertson.*]

Mr. PRICE (Gloucester) [7.25]: I desire to refer to the task imposed upon employees of preparing two separate returns in respect of income-tax.

The CHAIRMAN: The general administration of the department is not now open to discussion.

Mr. PRICE: I do not dispute your ruling. It is absolutely correct. It may save time if the Minister assures me that he will give personal consideration to certain matters which I desire to submit for his consideration.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I shall consider those matters!

Mr. BROOKFIELD (Sturt) [7.29]: The pensions provided under the Superannuation Act, 1916, were, for the year 1916-17, £900; this year the estimate is £6,100. What is the cause of that great increase?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Under the pension system men who go out of the service are entitled to receive the pensions due to them. The number who have gone out this year has largely exceeded that of last year!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: Can the Minister explain in what manner the pensions have been increased?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The pensions have not been increased, but the number of pensioners has been increased!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: It appears to be a very large increase.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: It may be even greater next year!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: It is a matter of about six times as much. It is an unusual increase.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: No, it is an average increase!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: Surely it does not increase on an average six times as much every year.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Not necessarily, but there is no law guiding an increase of that kind!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: Can the Minister give me more accurate information as to the reason for the increase?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I could not give any more information just now!

Mr. PRICE (Gloucester) [7.32]: So that there may be no misunderstanding I desire to get a definite answer from the Minister. Under this vote there is an item

of £67,000 for the dredge service. Certain concessions which are given to boiler-makers and other employees are not given to those in other similar branches of the public service. If the hon. gentleman will give me his assurance that no distinction will be made between those engaged in the Harbour Trust Department and those in other branches of the public service I shall have nothing more to say.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Certainly I will!

Mr. WRIGHT (Willyama) [7.34]: I notice that for the dredge service £60,000 was voted last year, while this year it is proposed to vote £67,000.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: There are more men employed!

Mr. WRIGHT: I understood that this reform Government was sacking men; in fact, I know that it has sacked men from the Harbour Trust. Does the Minister say that more men have been employed by the Harbour Trust?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I say so!

Vote agreed to.

Stores Supply Department.

Proposed vote, £150,000.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [7.36]: I notice that under the heading "Legislative Council and Assembly," there appears an item, "Parliamentary Offices, £850," while last year the amount voted was £750. Why is that increase being made? How much of that is for the Legislative Assembly and how much is to be spent on the House where hon. members opposite put their disabled political friends?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: About three-fourths is spent on behalf of the Assembly, and one-fourth on behalf of the Council!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: If I move that the amount be cut down by one-fourth, I shall be able to get at the expenditure of the Council.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: If you cut down the amount, you will cut down a corresponding amount in the Assembly!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: That, no doubt, would be most objectionable from the standpoint of the hon. member. Then we have an item, "His Excellency the State Governor, £500." Last year the amount voted was £600. I suppose

the decrease is due to the fact that the duties of the State Governor are being carried out by the Chief Justice, who is probably of a more economical turn of mind than the Governor. If that is so, it is a very fine argument in favour of having an Australian in the position.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Then we have an item, "Immigration and Tourists' Bureau, Caves Accommodation Houses, and Hotel Kosciusko, £850," while last year the amount voted was £600. I have always objected to this expenditure in connection with the Hotel Kosciusko. That hotel is situated at such a distance from the ordinary walk of life that the average man is deprived of the opportunity of enjoying himself there. The expenditure on this hotel is incurred on behalf of the wealthy classes in this country, who, with perhaps a few members of Parliament, are the only persons who are able to visit this distant place. A business of this kind should be made pay for itself, and should not be kept going unless a profit can be shown. As regards the caves, I agree that it is necessary to maintain them, because they are useful from a geological point of view, and are amongst the beauty spots of Australia. I protest against this mixing up of accounts. The accounts of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council are mixed so that we do not know what is expended upon each, and then in this item the accounts are again mixed. All the beauty spots of Australia should be preserved and treasured for our descendants. It is absurd to put the Tourists Bureau and the caves accommodation houses under the one item of £850. If an hon. member voted to strike out the £850, he might be voting to strike out something of benefit to the whole State. I ask the Minister to place this matter before the Auditor-General, and, if that official is incapable, let the Minister ask some public accountant to institute a proper system of book-keeping, so that we may know how much is allowed for each item on the estimates. I notice under the heading of Colonial Secretary and Minister of Public Health that the Ministerial, Electoral, and Fisheries Offices are mixed together. I want to know whether the item of Fisheries Offices is in connection

with the trawling industry, or does it refer to the administrative office which is maintained for the preservation of the fish in our estuaries. In any case, why cannot these items be separated so that we may know how much is to be spent in respect of each. With regard to the Police Department, I notice there is an increase of £3,650 over last year's estimates. I understand that is for furniture.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK : It is for policemen's clothing supplied by the Stores Department !

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON : Is the increase of £3,650 due to a greater number of uniforms, or to an increased amount paid to the people who supply clothing to the police ?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK : The people who supply the clothing are the State Clothing Department !

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON : We know that that department makes up the cloth after the Government purchases it. We know also that the cloth, the linings, and the buttons are purchased from some manufacturer, and I wish to know whether the £3,650 represents the difference between what the cloth could have been purchased for last year and the price this year.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK : No ; the more police the more cloth !

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON : I ask why there are more police, seeing that the population of New South Wales is less.

The CHAIRMAN : That has nothing to do with the item before the Committee. We are not dealing with the number of police or their efficiency. The hon. member knows that the police come under the Colonial Secretary's Department. We are now dealing with the question of stores supply.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON : Then we come to the item of Attorney-General and Justice. I notice in the item, "Prisons" that the amount is the same as last year. I presume that shows there is no increase in the number of people to be provided for. But the estimates do not say what the money is for. It may be for cooking utensils, or for a drawing-room suite, or for a piano. Of course we know that in prisons there are no Persian carpets, and no linoleum, nothing that is

likely to wear out. But year after year the estimates say so much for prisons, and there is no explanation as to what the money is to be expended for. We who are elected by the people to find out what the money is being expended upon are entitled to know from the Minister to what purpose every shilling under these headings is to be applied. My opinion of the Stores Supply Department is that a good deal of stuff is badly bought. We buy locally, when, being large consumers, we should import for ourselves, and under this policy we are providing a profit to feed the local importers, thereby unnecessarily taking money out of the pockets of the taxpayers. In view of the fact that the taxpayers are already overburdened, I look to the Minister for an assurance that he will consider a suggestion that there should be an inquiry into the whole of the methods of the Stores Supply Department to ascertain whether or not it is possible to institute economies and reforms. If the Minister will give me the opportunity, I shall be pleased to attend before any committee and assist it in the investigation. I know that when dealing with this estimate I shall not be allowed to quote instances where certain pieces of material have been bought at an excessive price ; but such things are taking place, and if the Minister will give me the opportunity I shall be only too glad to assist in any investigation which would enable us to find out the methods employed in the purchase of goods for which we are paying these large sums. Under the heading of "Lands" the amount provided for "stores, stationery, and furniture" is apparently intended to meet the requirements of the "Ministerial Department, district survey offices, land boards, Western Lands Board, and Crown lands agents." So far as the Western Lands Board is concerned, in my opinion it should be discontinued.

The CHAIRMAN : Order ! The Committee has nothing to do with the general policy of the Western Lands Board. We are dealing with the question of the supply of stores.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON : Is not this the position : if we can eliminate this item for "stores, stationery, and furniture," we shall be going a long way towards

[Mr. Stuart-Robertson.]

putting the Western Lands Board out of existence. Of course if you say I am out of order—

The CHAIRMAN: I certainly say the hon. member is out of order.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Then I shall not pursue that argument. I come now to the heading, "Public Works," which covers "Public Works (Ministerial and sub-departments), Dredge Service, Punts, and Ferries." The amount to be appropriated for the supply of "stores, stationery, and furniture" for those services is £4,000. In regard to punts and ferries we know that these services are to be found in various and widely-separated electorates. But under this method of presenting the accounts we cannot ascertain what is being expended on the punt, say in the Hurstville electorate, or upon the punt in the Darling electorate. We ought to know upon what particular dredge service or punt the money is to be spent, and for what purpose it is being provided. The Committee is entitled to know how these things are arrived at. The position of affairs in regard to "Public Instruction" is even more confusing. First of all, under that heading I observe "Ministerial office, high schools, technical college and museum, £1,550." Last year the amount appropriated was £1,100. Here is an increase of £400. Surely we are entitled to know what reason there is for an increased expenditure under these headings in the current financial year. It would appear as if the accounts had been jumbled up in this extraordinary way for some purpose not made clear. I do not suggest an ulterior purpose; but the Minister might explain the reason for presenting the accounts in this form. The next item is, "Farm Home for Boys, Gosford, £500." I presume this is the place to which the little lads go who are sent away under State control. I have nothing to say against the methods of that department. As items go, £500 is a small amount, and we can form some idea upon what the money is to be expended. I presume it will be expended upon stationery, furniture, repairs, and the necessary renovations and upkeep of the home for the boys. Whilst this item is clear there is nothing to indicate the reason for the increased expenditure upon the supplies required for the "Ministerial office, high

school, technical college and museum." Surely it is a fair request to make to the Minister that we should be told what proportion of the amount to be appropriated is to be expended upon each of those services, and if the Minister cannot supply the information now will he give us an assurance that he will remodel his department and institute reform? In regard to the £6,500 for the State Children Relief Department, the money is to be applied to the purposes of that department and no other. In regard to the £50 for the Conservatorium of Music, I am entitled to ask whether it is for renovations, furniture, or what. The whole of these items are jumbled up in such a confusing manner that in the absence of any explanation from the Minister it is utterly impossible for hon. members to ascertain exactly for what purpose the money is to be allocated. If the Minister is unable to furnish the explanation then it is all the more reason why the estimates should be referred back to the department for the information to be made available. Under the head "Agriculture," we have the item, "Ministerial Office, Laboratories £700," an increase of £50. In that case we know what the money is spent upon. After the item "Stock and Brands, £700," we have "Botanic Gardens, &c., £1,000"—the same as for last year—and "Governor's residences, 'Hillview' and 'Cranbrook,' £15," which is £25 less than was provided last year. Under "Labour and Industry" we have "Conveyance of Stores, £3,000," an increase of £500 for this year as compared with last year. Is that a charge for petrol or for horsefeed, or is the increased amount to be paid to a contractor who has the privilege of enjoying the Government's patronage as regards the conveyance of stores? Then there is the item "Packing and other expenses, £600." We know, of course, that something must be paid for packing; but the entry "other expenses," is very much like the form of book-keeping adopted by a young bride who put down—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to keep to the items before the Chair. If the hon. member has exhausted his arguments, I must request him to

resume his seat. I cannot allow him to convert the proceedings into something like a farce.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I think the Chairman will admit that I have kept very closely to the various items, and this is the only time I have transgressed. Then we have the item "Temporary Assistance—Clerical and General, £4,000"; the amount provided last year was £3,500. What is the increase of £500 for? To whom is the money to be paid? Among the remaining items we have "Cost of Directories for all Departments, £130." In this instance we know what the money is to be paid for. In the case of the Navigation Department, we know what the £200 mentioned on this estimate is to be spent upon because the item is set out here in detail. If that can be done in this instance, why not in others? The whole of these estimates, I submit, should be referred back to the departmental officers, who should be asked to exercise their ability in order that a comprehensive statement may be placed before hon. members, even if it had to be written upon fifty pages. Hon. members are elected by the people of the country to see that the public funds are properly expended, and we are entitled to know exactly what that money is expended upon. I protest against this jumbling up of accounts.

Mr. PRICE (Gloucester) [8.5]: The whole of this estimate shows that a bad system of keeping accounts is in operation. When I protested against this at the time a previous Government was in power, we were promised that the system then in vogue should be altered, but it has not been altered yet. One of the promises made to the electors by members of the present Government at the last election was to bring about reform. With the system of accounts under which these items are presented to us, it is impossible to properly understand the details of this expenditure. For instance, take the inspecting branch under this department. The cost of this inspecting branch is set down at £1,635. This branch is absolutely unnecessary, because the work it does is merely a duplication of work performed by the Auditor-General's Department, upon which we spend about £23,000 a year and by other departments. Is this

[Mr. Stuart-Robertson.

the reform which we were promised by members of the present Government?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not dealing now with the question of reform generally. If the hon. member can make his arguments relevant to the item of the Stores Department, I am perfectly willing to listen to him; but I ask the hon. gentleman not to indulge in a general dissertation on the promises of reform made by the Government. The hon. member can see that that would lead us into a very wide field indeed.

Mr. PRICE: I merely desire to point out that this inspecting branch is absolutely unnecessary. I am not going to be a party to throwing away £1,635 of the public money. I ask the Minister at the earliest possible moment to introduce a common-sense book-keeping system. Time after time we have been promised reform in respect to the way in which the accounts of the departments are presented, and the Assistant Treasurer, when in opposition, was one of the foremost in urging the necessity of this change. There is no necessity for this vote of £1,635, because the work here provided for is performed by other departments.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has used that argument five or six times already, and I must ask him not to repeat it. It is my duty to see that there is no undue repetition in debate.

Mr. PRICE: These items, instead of being lumped together in the Stores Department should be charged against the different services to which they relate. What is the reason of this? It is done to bamboozle Ministers, so that they may become the tools of the officials of the different departments.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the items before the Committee.

Mr. PRICE: Items have been allowed to creep in here which are improperly charged to the Stores Supply Department. This department is only the medium through which the stores required for other departments are handled, and the various charges should be debited to the departments for which they are really incurred. Items are charged against the Stores Supply Department which should be charged against the expenses of the various departments.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not permit the hon. member to go over that argument again and again. He has used it in almost the same words at least four times.

Mr. PRICE: My point is that a reform should be brought about in the method of keeping the accounts, as promised by this and previous Governments. An endeavour should be made to present the accounts so that hon. members may clearly understand them. The method now adopted is wrong, and I hope that the Minister will take into consideration the desirability of presenting his accounts in a businesslike way.

Mr. DAVIES (Wollongong) [8.17]: I notice that there is an item of £500 set down for his Excellency the State Governor. Seeing that we have no State Governor, and I hope we shall not have one—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: I do not see the necessity for placing this amount on the estimates seeing that we have no State Governor. I notice that the vote for the "Caves Accommodation Houses and Hotel Kosciusko" has been increased from £600 to £850. When the Assistant Treasurer was making his financial statement he laid it down as a principle that every State concern should pay its way, and if he is going to pursue that policy it should not be necessary to provide for an increase in the vote for the Hotel Kosciusko, which is patronised by rich people and parasites on society. The amount set down for the State Children Relief Department, £6,500, is the same as was provided for last year. I contend that this amount should be increased, because there has been a large increase in the cost of living, and those who have to keep children—

The CHAIRMAN: I do not see how the hon. member's present observations are relevant. We are now dealing with the Stores Supply Department and the hon. member is evidently under the impression that it is open to him to discuss the State Children Relief Department generally, which comes under another set of estimates altogether. We are now dealing with the item of £150,000 for the supply of stores required by the various depart-

ments, and it is only on the question of stores that the hon. member can address the Committee.

Mr. DAVIES: I contend that this amount at any rate should have been increased for the reasons I have stated, and if I cannot speak upon it now I will refer to it at a later opportunity.

Mr. SIMON HICKEY (Alexandria) [8.21]: I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the amount allotted for stores to the Immigration and Tourist Bureau. As I have previously observed, this is a department of State activity which could be well curtailed. We have not to cope now with outside tourists, but only with our own people; and though the business is now limited to within State bounds, the expenditure is creeping up all the time. I notice that applies also to the stores. I would invite the Minister to consider whether some of these amounts should not be curtailed at the present time. Certainly the increase is only £250; but it is quite possible that the £600 on the former estimates was too much, and if so, I take it there is no warrant for a further addition even of £250.

Then the sum of £600 is set down in respect of "blankets for deserving poor." I maintain that is a legitimate charge against the Colonial Secretary's Department. It is not a proper charge against the Stores Department, because once an amount is spent on these articles and they are distributed the asset entirely disappears, and can no longer be classed as stores. I would also remind the Minister that although the expenditure of £600 or £800 in providing blankets for deserving poor is very proper, and much good can be done in that direction, still I think, if the hon. gentleman were to inquire from the Railway Commissioners he would find that every year a number of those really first-class blankets used on the railways become—not worn out, but simply insufficiently good for sleeping car purposes. If the Minister looked into the matter no doubt he would find he could make a keen deal with the Railway Commissioners for those blankets, and have them allotted in the direction indicated; in which case he would probably save the £600 which is now spent in blankets, or at any rate he could do more than the

already considerable amount of good he is doing in endeavouring to provide warmth for poor people who would otherwise lack in the winter time.

I notice also an item of £200 for stores for the Weights and Measures Department. I presume that is for scales or equipment to carry on its work.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: A new Act has come into force recently, and of course it is necessary to equip the department accordingly!

Mr. SIMON HICKEY: The hon. member is quite correct, but there is one item of expenditure which is still necessary in order to thoroughly equip the Weights and Measures Office. Of late years leather has been sold by weight instead of by measurement weight.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The administration of the Weights and Measures Office does not come under the Stores Supply Department, as the hon. member will see; it comes under another department altogether. The Committee is only dealing now with the question of stores supply.

Mr. SIMON HICKEY: I do not propose to discuss the administration of the Weights and Measures Office, and if you will allow me, I will try to show what is my intention. I was going to say that I believed this £200 was really not sufficient at such a time as the present, because of late years leather has been sold by weight instead of by measurement, and the machinery necessary to test the measurements stated by the purveyors of leather costs about £100. I do not know if that is included here—I rather think not; but I should think that in order to provide efficient stores equipment for this office it will be necessary to spend more than £200.

Mr. WALKER (Hawkesbury) [8.26]: With regard to the item of £4,000, which includes ferry punts, will the Assistant Treasurer say whether provision has been made for engines for punts crossing the Hawkesbury River. The river at Wiseman's Ferry is about 500 yards wide, and at present the punt there is worked by manual labour. I would like to know whether, in the item of £4,000, any provision for engine-power is made?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: No. This is for expenditure chiefly in connection

[Mr. Simon Hickey.

with the dredge service. Punts and ferries are certainly mentioned, but the provision made is only for their equipment!

Mr. WALKER: It would be equipment if an engine were provided. Perhaps the Minister will say that under the Local Government Act the shire councils ought to find the money.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: We will give you gas-engines as soon as we can!

Mr. WALKER: Engines are wanted, and it is time they were provided, in order to enable passengers to cross the river in anything like decent time. The hon. member for Camden had to get across the other day, and it took him about half-an-hour. The sooner the sweating business of having these punts worked by men is done away with the better. At Tom Ugly's Point and other places within metropolitan electorates, steam punts are provided, but over the Hawkesbury River that provision has been neglected, and an improved means of crossing is very desirable.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: It will be provided at the earliest possible moment!

Mr. McKELL (Redfern) [8.28]: There is one item under the Stores Supply Department, which I think is worthy of special mention, namely, "blankets for deserving poor." The sum provided for the ensuing year is £600. I am exceedingly sorry the Treasurer has not seen fit to increase that amount, because I believe times during the next twelve months will be considerably worse than during the last. The estimate for last year was absolutely insufficient, and it is therefore reasonable to expect that the current year's estimate will prove insufficient in a still greater degree.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I can tell the hon. member that the utmost care is exercised in meeting all requirements, and if the sum set down is not adequate we will draw upon the advance account for the purpose of meeting obligations!

Mr. McKELL: Had I known that a week ago, I would have been able to get blankets in a very deserving case. If the Assistant Treasurer represented a constituency such as mine he would soon realise that the estimate is absolutely insufficient. An instance occurred only a week ago, when an old woman made application to the department for blankets.

The police were asked for the usual report, and they recommended that two blankets be issued.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot go into that now. He might have dealt with that matter on the estimates before the Colonial Secretary's Department.

Mr. McKELL: I am exceedingly sorry that the amount has not been increased, because during the ensuing twelve months we shall want more than we required last year.

Mr. WRIGHT (Willyama) [8.32]: The vote for the Forestry Department has gone up from £400 to £600. I should like to know the reason for the increase.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Because of increased activity on the part of the Forestry branch. They are going to make it a paying proposition now!

Mr. WRIGHT: I take exception to the item, "Conservatorium of Music, £50." There was a previous vote for that department, and the amounts ought to be bracketed together to show the whole vote for the institution. It seems to me that this Government is being run by long-haired men and short-haired women.

Mr. GARDINER (Newcastle) [8.36]: I notice that whereas the amount set down for the Inspecting Branch was £1,662 last year, this year the amount is £1,635. Is this really a duplication of salaries of inspectors?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: No; these are inspectors of goods, not of accounts!

Mr. GARDINER: I am glad to hear that it is not a duplication. Although I recognise I may be trespassing on the ruling of the Chair, I must say that this affords another reason why we should have the Auditor-General's report—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member knows well that he is transgressing the ruling I have given.

Mr. GARDINER: I do recognise that, but if we had had that report—

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member persists in defying my ruling I shall have to order him to discontinue speaking.

Mr. GARDINER: Very well; I shall not pursue that line of argument. I notice that the item for stores for his Excellency the State Governor is reduced

from £600 to £500. While that is a reduction, it has to be remembered that we have not a Governor just now, and may be shall not have one. Therefore I do not know why the item is in the estimates. In any case we should have the details of the item. The Committee is entitled to know what that money is for.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Stores, stationery, furniture. Do you want to know the number of kitchen chairs?

Mr. GARDINER: The next item is, "Premier's and Executive Council Offices." The amount last year was £300; this year it is £400. While we are on the subject of economy, either the price of kitchen chairs and jam has enormously increased or the Governor is becoming more extravagant. Is the increase from £300 to £400 due to an increase in the amount of stores consumed or in the price of stores? When we were discussing the Premier's Department we saw that the general vote was growing, and now we see it is growing in regard to stores. Then take "Immigration and Tourists' Bureau, Caves Accommodation Houses, and Hotel Kosciusko." Last year that vote was £600; now it is £850. Wherever there is provision for luxury the expenses have gone up. The taxpayer is called upon to pay something extra if it is a luxury, and has to do with other than the poor unfortunate working-man. In the Navigation Department the allowance has increased from £2,000 to £2,300. If that extra £300 is for the provision of uniforms for the boatmen, sailors, firemen, and hands on the pilot steamers, signalmen, and others, I take no exception to it, because they have been applying for them for a number of years. If the increased expenditure is for the purpose of catering for the tastes of heads of departments who want better chairs or tables, or more expensive carpets on the floors, then I am opposed to it. In almost every case there is an increased amount for the supply of stores to departments. At a time like this that ought not to be necessary, and I have a particular objection to increasing the expenditure for the purpose of providing luxuries at the present time. Any increase to relieve those public servants who are not getting sufficient to enable them to live up to the common

standard of civilisation I have no objection to, but I do object to increases for the provision of luxuries for those in high places.

Vote agreed to.

Miscellaneous Services.

Proposed vote, £596,796.

Mr. J. STOREY (Balmain) [8.43]: I notice that last year the sum of £30,000 was voted to supplement pensions granted by the Commonwealth Government to totally and partially incapacitated members of the military and naval forces, while this year the item disappears. I want to know why the Government has decided to discontinue these pension allowances. I am not complaining about the item disappearing if there is any special reason for it.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: It was the original intention of the State Government to supplement the pensions paid to incapacitated soldiers by contributing 10s. per week to each man, making the pension £2 per week. In consequence of this proposition having originated from the State Government, the Federal Government ultimately came to the rescue. I understand that it has decided that it will pay £2 a week, and make it apply to all soldiers in the various States, instead of allowing one State—the only State that really proposed to make such payment—to differentiate between the soldiers of New South Wales and the soldiers of the other States!

Mr. J. STOREY: I am thankful for the explanation, but I am afraid that it is not quite in accord with a statement by the head of the Government which appears in *Hansard*. A very strong declaration was made during the recent election campaign on this point, and if the soldiers are not going to receive the money, I regret it very much. I remember stating at the time that I did not think the State Government would be permitted to make such a payment as this, as that was rightfully the function of the Federal Government; that if the State did make this payment quarrelling would take place in the other States because the soldiers in those States were not getting the same amount, and as a consequence the payment would have to be discontinued here. For mak-

ing that statement I was told I was striking a discordant note, which somewhat savoured of disloyalty. The item has disappeared. I predicted it would, and it is regrettable that the incapacitated soldier cannot get from the Federal Government the pension he thought he would get from the State Government.

Mr. LATIMER: Does the hon. member say that the Federal Government is not paying this £2 a week?

Mr. J. STOREY: I say that the soldiers are not getting this £2 a week, though in many cases they are getting more. I understand that an incapacitated soldier gets 30s. a week, his wife 20s. per week, and each of his children 5s. per week, and that in many cases £3 or £4 a week is received. I am raising no objection to that, but I am pointing out that the fact that this item disappears from the estimates will result in the returned incapacitated soldier not getting that which we thought he would get in accordance with the solemn declaration made by Mr. Holman.

There is another item, "Norton Griffiths & Co.—compensation in connection with termination or cancellation of portion of agreement, £116,723." That is to be paid for the purpose of getting rid of the Norton Griffiths contract, and it is one of the items which I might almost be justified in moving the omission of. The Secretary for Public Works explained to the House that the cancellation of this contract had saved the State £750,000, and that statement was repeated by the Acting Premier; but we have not had one scintilla of information given to us to show in what way the cancellation of this contract has been justified. I ask hon. members whether we ought to sanction such a large expenditure without having some valid reason given for it. We have got into a lackadaisical fashion, which is dangerous, of permitting large payments such as these to be made, forgetful of the fact that we are entrusted by the people to watch their interests in these matters. If a mere statement by the Minister that we are saving £750,000 is not supported, we ought not to be asked to sanction the payment of this large sum of money. The Government might reasonably tell the House in plain Eng-

[Mr. Gardiner.

lish the reasons which justified it in cancelling the contract. Obviously we are entitled to have the information. Hon. members who sanction this sort of thing will have it brought up against them sooner or later. The public will not allow it to go on with impunity. It has a right to know, and we have a right to know. And this is only a part of the total amount. It is not the final payment for getting rid of Norton Griffiths & Co. The total sum approximates to nearly half a million. I do not expect the Acting Treasurer will be able to give the information, because he is only a party to the transaction in so far as he is Acting Treasurer. The matter belongs to the Minister for Public Works. He probably told the Government why he considered the contract should be cancelled, and this large sum of money given to cancel the contract. The Minister might in two minutes satisfy hon. members as to why it was done. In days gone by I have asked why the contract was cancelled, and if there was anything other than policy behind the matter, and the answer given by the Acting Premier was that he had saved the State £750,000; and the Minister for Public Works agreed with him. We have had no information as to why it has been done except that the Government was against the scheme as a matter of policy. It was against Norton Griffiths & Co. having the work of the Public Works Department under their control. The Government was justified in being opposed to it. But when a statement is made that a saving is to be effected, and that has not been shown to the country and the House, I am justified in protesting against the payment of such a large sum. I am not taking objection for the purpose merely of saying that I am opposed to the item. Why I am raising an objection is that this is only a fourth of the amount that is to be paid, and there is no explanation forthcoming, apart from the question of policy, as to why we should give Norton Griffiths & Co. £500,000 for the cancellation of a contract in connection with work they had undertaken to carry out.

Mr. EDDEN (Kahibah) [8.52] : I must say that I agree with the leader of the

Opposition on this important question. I am not able to go into details, but I have some recollection of the beginning of the Norton Griffiths contract which circumstances do not permit me to state here. The moderate remarks of the leader of the Opposition call for an answer from the Government as to why the contract has been cancelled, and why this money has to be paid. When the contract was entered into, many hon. members who are now on the Opposition side of the House were on the Government side. The leader of the Opposition and I were in another place, and heard this matter discussed and rediscussed. I have never set myself up as a financial expert. I have put a lot of trust in people, honestly believing they were doing the best they could for the community. But after listening to the temperate remarks of the leader of the Opposition, I think the House and the country are entitled to some explanation as to why the contract has been cancelled, and why this money has to be paid. I understand from the remarks of the leader of the Opposition that this amount is practically a fleabite compared with what will have to be paid later on. I have no recollection of any explanation on the part of the Government as to why the contract should be cancelled, and why Norton Griffiths & Co. should be paid these enormous amounts of money. There ought to be some explanation. The country wants to know it, and I want to know it. I am as ignorant as the man in the street with regard to the whole business, except up to a certain point. From the commencement I could never see why Norton Griffiths & Co. should be brought in to carry out our public works, nor why this country should be compelled to lean on Norton Griffiths & Co. as if they were a crutch, seeing that the Government had the British money market to go to, and its own officers in the Works Department to carry out public works. If they were not able to carry them out they should have been got rid of. That is what I argued in days gone by. I agree with the leader of the Opposition that there should be some explanation as to why these vast sums of money have to

be paid; and it must be remembered that the money has to come out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR (Yass) [8.58]: The least the Acting Treasurer might have done was to go through the items seriatim, and give the Committee an explanation with regard to each one. I notice in connection with the item, "Interest on moneys in the temporary possession of the Government," the amount has been increased from £155,000 to £167,000. That is an increase of £12,000 in interest accruing to the Government. Then we come to the startling item, "Interest on advances by banks," which has been increased from £50,000 for 1917 to £130,000 for 1918. There is no mention as to the banks from which the Government has borrowed the money, nor of the rate of interest paid. We do not know whether the interest is to be paid to banks or other institutions or private persons. We do not know whether the Government is paying 15 per cent. to the Mont de Piété, or where it is getting the money from. Some explanation is required in regard to this item. In the first place it looks to me like bad finance. Here we have interest to the tune of £167,000 upon money temporarily in the hands of the Government. That means there must be a huge sum lying idle upon which interest has to be paid, and in the absence of any explanation it would appear that the Government has borrowed an equal, possibly a larger, amount from the banks upon which it is paying a greater rate of interest. Whilst I recognise that the money temporarily held by the Government cannot be used for the same purposes as money borrowed from the banks, it seems to me that it ought to be possible to make some better arrangement with the institutions to whom the Government is paying £130,000 in interest upon advances, under which the money held at temporary call can be placed against the overdraft with the object of balancing the interest payments.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The hon. member does not imagine that the Treasury does not know that—the A B C of finance!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: The Treasury may or may not know it. The point un-

[Mr. Edden.

explained is that there is an increase of £80,000 in the amount of interest payable to financial institutions in respect of advances.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Is there not a general increase in interest charges?

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: Has the interest risen from £50,000 to £130,000 on a fixed advance? If so, it would appear that the Government is paying two and a half times as much interest this year as it paid last year. But I take it the amount of the overdraft is greater, and that the increase is not all represented by an increase in the interest rate.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The interest is higher and the amount involved is higher!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: That being the case we should be told what is the difference in the rate of interest paid by the Government on the amount at current call, and the interest paid to the financial institutions on the overdrafts. Is it 1 or 2 per cent. or more? We have no explanation on that matter. If the Government has £500,000 lying idle in its hands at current call for which it only gets 3 per cent., and at the same time it is paying 8 per cent. on £600,000 or £700,000 advanced by the financial institutions, it would on the face of it be bad finance.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: It would be if we did it!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: I do not say that this is what the Government is doing. I only ask for an explanation of the increased interest payments. It is a fair and reasonable question to put. The next item which demands attention is the proposed payment to Norton Griffiths & Co. in connection with the cancellation of their contract. This is a scandalous method of relieving the country of one of the greatest curses it has ever suffered. The general public was at the outset opposed to this contract being entered into. It was introduced by the Labour Government, and though many members of the party condemned it, the fact remains that they voted for it. Personally, I did not vote for it. I condemned the scheme when it came before Parliament, and on every possible occasion I stood out against the scheme from the first day it was inaugurated,

and I pointed out to Mr. Griffith, who was responsible for submitting it, that it was either corrupt or it was bad finance. If a private firm of contractors could borrow money where the Government of New South Wales with all the resources of the country behind it could not borrow, then it was very evident either that the country was in a bad state or that the Treasurer did not know his business. When the contract was entered into money was cheaper and more plentiful than ever it was before. We were led to believe that Norton Griffiths & Co. was a huge concern with plant assembled in other parts of the world which could be brought here in order to expeditiously carry out certain public works. The reason advanced by Mr. Holman for entering into the contract at a time when money was plentiful was that there would be a shortage if the war continued, and that it would be necessary to obtain £10,000,000 through the agency of the company to maintain our public works. That was the statement advanced to justify the present to Norton Griffiths & Co. of £500,000. We used the same argument to Mr. Holman. We said that if bad times did come owing to the war, and if Norton Griffiths & Co. could go upon the British money market and borrow ten millions, surely it would be possible for the Government of New South Wales to borrow on equally advantageous terms without giving Norton Griffiths & Co. 5 per cent. in addition to the usual interest charged. But we were met with the reply that certain arrangements had been entered into by Norton Griffiths & Co. with certain banking institutions under which £2,000,000 would be found annually until the £10,000,000 had been cut out. If that had been the case there would have been some justification, possibly, for entering into the contract. But what was our experience? The moment the money market tightened, the moment the Government got into straitened circumstances, Norton Griffiths & Co. also got into straitened circumstances, because they were only using the name of the Government to enable them to borrow. What happened? Notwithstanding the fact that the New South Wales Government could not borrow money, and that Norton Griffiths &

Co. were practically unable to borrow because they could not make use of the name of the Government, we find the National Government stepping in and compensating the company with £300,000 of the people's money. If only the Government had waited for a little while Norton Griffiths & Co. would have been in such a position that they could not have carried out their contract, seeing that they were no longer able to borrow money, and under those circumstances there would have been no necessity to pay them compensation for the cancellation of the contract. If there is any incident to which suspicion attaches it is this payment of compensation for the cancellation of the contract. Norton Griffiths & Co. had no money. They were not the financial institution Mr. Holman and Mr. Griffith led us to believe. The company was merely a local organisation of eight men, each of whom contributed £1. The company bought its office furniture and stamps with money provided by the New South Wales Government, and it never put one penny of its own money into the venture; in fact, the company never found any money at all. Norton Griffiths & Co., acting in conjunction with Niveson & Co., borrowed from the banks. Niveson & Co. got 1½ per cent., and Norton Griffiths & Co. 5 per cent. They borrowed in the name of the New South Wales Government; and as soon as the name of the Government became bad, as it is to-day across the water, and was no longer a useful asset, and as soon as it was found that the money market was tight, Norton Griffiths & Co. should have compensated the Government to the extent of £500,000—at least, they should have handed back every penny of commission which they had drawn from the Government, because Norton Griffiths & Co. were "up against it," and could not have found the money to carry out the works for which they had contracted. Furthermore, they did not even find the money necessary to finish the works which they were constructing in this country. Like Niveson & Co., Norton Griffiths & Co. borrowed money, or, rather, had a loan underwritten, in the name of the New South Wales Government. Although they constructed rail-

ways in this country, they brought neither machinery nor workmen to this country—they picked up a few men and put them as bosses over the Public Works Department's men, and they received between £300,000 and £400,000 at the date of the cancellation of the contract. When it became impossible for them as brokers to obtain money on the London money market, why did this Government give Norton Griffiths & Co. £350,000 without bringing the matter before the House and without consulting any member of the community? I ask hon. members to consider that phase of the question. The contract itself was smellful in the first instance; I said so in this House. It was a serious thing to pledge the credit of the country to a private body of men; it is worse still for the Government to compensate Norton Griffiths & Co. when Norton Griffiths & Co. should have been compelled to pay the Government compensation for not fulfilling their contract. To-night we are asked to vote £116,000 of this compensation money without being given any explanation. We know that the contract was practically broken by Norton Griffiths & Co.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: In what way?

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: By the fact that they could not raise any more money in England.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The hon. member has stated what is absolutely incorrect. Up to date they carried out their contract to borrow money!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: Yes, up to date.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: You cannot cook your hare until you catch it!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: Exactly. "Up to date" anybody could have borrowed money in London in the name of the New South Wales Government. But "up to date" makes all the difference in the world, because it is a well-known fact that the British Government will not allow any private firm to take money out of Great Britain to invest in other countries.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: You wait and see next November!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: The hon. member may have some information. A

[Mr. J. J. G. McGirr.

separate arrangement may have been made since. I do not say that something could not have been done in Great Britain, but I say that Norton Griffiths & Co. had not made arrangements with the British Government—that they had not prepared for a tightness in the money market in the future. Furthermore, I say that Norton Griffiths & Co. at no stage in their life could have borrowed £1,000,000 without the backing of the New South Wales Government, and the moment it became necessary for Norton Griffiths & Co. to go on the London money market and test it, they knew that they were doomed to failure. They knew that money could not be raised and sent out of the country in the name of a private firm. At that moment Norton Griffiths & Co. were practically dead-heads in this country. An agitation was begun for the cancellation of their contract, which agitation no doubt was inspired by Norton Griffiths & Co. or by people interested in that firm. One of the black marks against the Labour Government is the introduction of the Norton Griffiths scheme. I said so when I was a member of the Labour party; I repeat it now. It was something to the shame and disgrace of the Labour party that they called in a private company to carry out work which they themselves were pledged to carry out, and that they asked a private company to borrow money where the Government could not. For Ministers who perpetrated that trick upon another party in this House to turn round now and compensate Norton Griffiths & Co. to the extent of £350,000 is beyond the imagination of any sane financier in this country. I contend that this is a question in regard to which the House should have the whole of the papers laid before it. All the dealings in connection with the cancellation of this contract should be placed before us. We should have every cable and every other message that passed between the parties. To my mind, this is not merely a matter of paying £350,000 compensation. That is bad enough; but what of the great expense of works carried out by Norton Griffiths & Co. and paid for by the Government—what of the money which Norton Griffiths & Co. have received from the Government, and what

of their obligation for breach of contract which would eventually have had to go against them? These are all extras as well as the compensation paid by the Government. I ask the Acting Treasurer to take into his serious consideration the necessity of looking into this matter. The Government, after all is said and done, is only the custodian of the people's money. A Government that will turn round and give £350,000 of the people's money to a small body of contractors who have already been thriving and fattening on the people's money is as bad as a young fellow who will go to the racecourse and back horses with his boss's money which he has taken out of the till.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The difference is that we are getting something for this, but he would not get anything except three years' imprisonment!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: If the hon. member can show me where we have received anything for this £350,000 I shall be satisfied to stand up for the cancellation of this contract. Personally I am pleased to know that the contract was cancelled, but to give £350,000 of the people's money for its cancellation when the firm concerned was practically defunct, and could not have borrowed any more money, is a matter that requires some explanation from someone. We know the history of the Norton Griffiths scheme from start to finish. Two men named Mayoh came to this country with the scheme. They hung about this House for twelve months. We threw the scheme out on the voices on one occasion. Those men never left the country but stayed here in close consultation with Mr. Arthur Griffith, who was then Minister for Public Works. Eventually a certain member of the House, we know, was in close negotiation with Norton Griffiths & Co. Furthermore we know that the present Premier, who had voted against the scheme, became a convert to it all of a sudden, and a great supporter of it. Immediately he became a convert to that scheme, a bill was not brought before the House, but the matter became a Cabinet one, and part of the Government's policy. When it was brought before the House as part of the Government's policy I was a member of

the Labour party, and we had to let the matter go through the House because it was already practically the law of the land. After having got it to that stage these people—

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Be careful!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: If the hon. member wants proof that I have always been against it I can quote the *Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* to show that on every occasion I stoutly condemned it. I became a confirmed enemy of Mr. Arthur Griffith for the rest of my life. I said that he must be either a "cronk" Minister for Public Works or a rotten financier.

Mr. BALL: But you did not vote against it!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: I did vote against it. I definitely state now that I voted against the scheme when it was brought before the House. Norton Griffiths & Co.'s scheme in the first place came before the House in the shape of a contract, and was thrown out on the voices. There were not six members who voted for it, so rotten and smellful was it. It never came before the House again. The next thing we knew was that it became law by the decision of the Cabinet.

Mr. LATIMER: The contract was ratified by this House!

Mr. J. J. G. MCGIRR: It was never ratified by this House, and that was why it appeared to me to be corrupt. After it had been ratified by the Cabinet, I spoke on the address in reply and condemned the Government for its action. I was pulled up by Mr. Speaker Meagher for calling the contract corrupt. He said that I could call it anything but corrupt. I said that the scheme was corrupt and unfair, and that the time would come when the Government would have to buy these men out if they did not break their contract. I said furthermore that if these men were allowed to take up the construction of public works in this country, before many years we would not know whether they owned New South Wales or whether it belonged to us. If the war had not come along it would have been quite possible for Norton Griffiths & Co. to get a close grip upon the country. However, I am pleased to see that Ministers were

men enough to cancel this contract. It was a smelly and nasty contract, and it was well that it should be cancelled; but what I object to is the payment of £350,000 to Norton Griffiths & Co. Ministers have given no explanation as to why this money should be paid, and we are not told why we should pass the proposed vote of £116,000.

Mr. BALL: We got out of it very cheap!

Mr. J. J. G. McGIRR: I think Norton Griffiths & Co. ought to have paid £500,000 to be let off their contract. They were in the position of defaulters, because they never carried out any portion of their contract. They never found the money as they engaged to do. They were hypocrites; they were not the big financial institution they professed to be. They were not the controllers of the vast millions of money that Mr. Holman told us they commanded when he foisted the scheme on the people. They did not have the large plant assembled that Mr. Griffith represented they had. He told us that they had built the trans-Andean railway and also big railways in Mexico and Chili, but they were not the vast company that Mr. Griffith represented them to be. They did not control the vast bodies of men and masses of machinery necessary to enable them to carry out the Broken Hill railway and perform work in addition to that which could be carried out by the Public Works Department. They were not the vast enterprise that our people were led to believe. They were a myth in every sense of the word. They were a myth from the financial point of view. They did not control the £10,000,000 we were told they were going to raise and spend in this country. If they did, why should it have become necessary for the Premier to run about now trying to borrow money? We were told that there was £6,000,000 of this Norton Griffith money still available. If that were so, why did the Premier find it such a hard job to borrow £6,000,000 in London? If they were not defaulters, Messrs. Norton Griffiths & Co. should still be able to find this £6,000,000.

Mr. BALL: They were only required to provide £2,000,000 per year!

[Mr. J. J. G. McGirr.

Mr. J. J. G. McGIRR: Then why could not that amount be arranged for? We know that Mr. Holman cannot arrange for it. The British Government objects to any private firm taking money out of the country, and we know very well that Messrs. Norton Griffiths & Co. could not carry out their contract. The whole scheme was rotten, and was the subject of manipulation in this State for months before the contract was signed. Personally I condemned it, and I lost ground in my party that I never regained, and did not want to regain if the abandonment of my position was involved. The Government has done an unfair and unjust thing in paying over £350,000 to Messrs. Norton Griffiths & Co.—a body of men who were living on the people, and who had received the finest nest-egg that was ever obtained for nothing. Now we are asked to turn round and become the rich uncle once again. I admire the Government for having cancelled the contract, but I blame it for having paid over £350,000 to men who were corrupt, and who hung about this House until they got the contract from a Labour Government which sold its principles and platform. Now we have a Government which is supported by smart business men, who claim to be sound financiers, and who know that this was a corrupt and hare-brained scheme from a financial point of view, and yet we have these men allowing a vote of £116,000 to go through without one question as to why it should be paid. Hon. members are the custodians of the people's money, and in years to come they will be asked what were the facts in regard to the payment of this compensation. I would not be surprised if the whole of the facts in connection with this scheme became public, and any man who does not now raise his voice against the proposed payment will have to answer to the people of New South Wales in the future. I ask that we should be supplied with full particulars as to the whole of the negotiations that took place in connection with this sudden and mysterious cancellation of a rotten contract.

Mr. LANG (Granville) [9.28]: When the estimates of the Treasurer's Department were previously under considera-

tion I agreed to defer any remarks I might have to make in regard to the items under the head of "Miscellaneous Services" until the specific vote came under consideration. I want to direct attention to the item of £17,500 for the conveyance without charge of members of Parliament, distinguished visitors, school children, and others by railway. On the previous occasion I pointed out that in my view there was a good deal of insincerity about hon. members on the other side of the Chamber in connection with notices of motion placed on the paper which it was known would never be reached. I refer to notices of motion relating to the reduction of salaries of members of Parliament. It has always been a part of the stock in trade of our wealthy friends who now compose the National party that they only entered this august assembly—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the item before the Chair. The relations between one class of members and another have no relevancy to the question before the Chair.

Mr. LANG: It is a question whether the privileges accorded to members of both Houses under the proposed vote are not of greater importance than the salaries paid to hon. members of this House, and it seems to me that the item to which I have referred has some relevance to the notice of motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Hurstville. In my opinion, the opportunity for getting all the hon. member wants is presented here and now. If the country is to go on paying £17,500 a year for a privilege to hon. members alone—

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: No, it covers very much more than that; it includes "distinguished visitors, school children, and others"!

Mr. LANG: The item covers, among other things, the privileges of members of this House and of another place. The hon. member for Hurstville has now an opportunity of obtaining even-handed justice—of withdrawing the privileges to members of Parliament contained in this item, and of putting the humble worker on the same footing as the aristocrat. The parliamentary pass is not

so valuable to the artisan who comes here from his trade as it is to the hon. member with large commercial and legal interests, to whom it is worth probably £600 a year. I believe that the chief object of this item is to afford privileges to gentlemen in another place; and if the privileges were withdrawn there would not be such a rush to get there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is pursuing a line of argument which I cannot permit under this item. He is seeking to discuss the position of hon. members in another place, which, strictly speaking, is quite irrelevant to the matter before the Committee.

Mr. LANG: The use to which they put their passes is surely a question which I am entitled to discuss. These passes are granted for the purpose of conveying them in the public interest—not for conveying them in their own private interests, for which purpose, and not for purposes of representation, they mostly use their passes. I told the Assistant Treasurer I would call for a division on this item, and I intend to do so. There are ninety members in the Legislative Assembly, and seventy-one in another place. The value of their passes is £100 each—a total value of £16,100. The Minister interjected just now that there were also "distinguished visitors, school children, and others." If members of Parliament swallow up £16,100, only £1,400 per annum is left for the conveyance of these latter.

Mr. OSBORNE: Less than that; what about ex-Cabinet Ministers and ex-Speakers?

Mr. EDDEN: How much a year is your pass worth to you?

Mr. LANG: I accept the opinion of a competent valuer—in this case the Chief Commissioner for Railways—who says the value of a member of Parliament's pass is £100 per annum. In answer to the hon. member for Paddington's interjection, I say that "others" includes everybody not specifically mentioned. If there are only four ex-Cabinet Ministers, I presume they are among the "others," which reduces the surplus to £1,000. I ask the Assistant Treasurer, do the under-secretaries also get free passes?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Some of them do—when on duty!

Mr. LANG: Are they included amongst the "others"? If not, where are they provided for? I take it the £17,500 is the amount which the Treasurer pays to the Railway Commissioners for these various items. If the under-secretaries are also included, how much then is left for "distinguished visitors and school children"? Is there an additional fund from which this money is obtained? If so, it is not shown. We have a right to know from what source these amounts are paid, and whether the passes are worth the money. I say that the gold pass is not worth £100. The provision of £100 each for members of Parliament is apparently a reason for cutting out, amongst others, blind soldiers returned from the front. The reason that the Assistant Treasurer and Mr. Garland in another place gave—

The CHAIRMAN: That is not relevant to the question before the Chair.

Mr. LANG: Would it not be possible to give free passes over the railways and tramways to returned blind soldiers under the heading of "others"? What is to prevent the Government from giving those who have offered their lives for their country and have lost their sight; free passes? Are they not as good as anyone else who are included under the heading of "others"? The Minister for Railways made a statement that he would alter the law to give these men the right—because it is a right and not a privilege—to travel over the railways as is done in Victoria. Instead of altering the law to enable it to be done here could they not be included under the heading of "others"?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The alteration of the law was suggested to give them permanent passes, but at the present time they can obtain passes if they have a just claim. Very many of them are at present using passes that have been issued to them!

Mr. LANG: There are many in my electorate—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the item before the Chair. It is not for the hon. member to say what ought to be in the estimate.

[Mr. Lang.]

I cannot allow him to discuss the giving of passes to people other than those included in the item before the Chair.

Mr. LANG: When I am asked to vote £17,500 I am at least entitled to express an opinion as to whom the money should go. I am entitled to say that there are returned blind soldiers—

The CHAIRMAN: I shall again ask the hon. member not to continue that line of argument. It is competent for the hon. member to ask who "others" refer to and to canvass the reply, but he cannot discuss the question of giving passes to people who are not included in the item before the Chair.

Mr. LANG: Should I be in order in moving an amendment to strike out the words "members of Parliament" and insert in their stead "returned blind soldiers"?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would certainly be out of order, and I would not accept the amendment.

Mr. LANG: May I suggest to the Assistant Treasurer that it would shorten the discussion if he would inform me who the "others" are?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Seeing that the hon. member has made reference to blind soldiers, I may inform him that there is a sum of £550 on the estimates for the carriage of blind soldiers. The others are "school children" and "dead bodies," to name two classes!

Mr. LANG: Will the Minister give the information for which I have asked, and also say how much of the £17,500 is spent on the conveyance without charge of members of Parliament, of distinguished visitors, and of school children; how much it is proposed to expend on "others" and who the "others" are, and whether the under-secretaries are included amongst "others"?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I have already told the hon. member; what is the use of going over the question half a dozen times?

Mr. LANG: Have the under-secretaries passes which they may use in exactly the same way as members of Parliament use theirs?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Emphatically no!

Mr. LANG: Does the Minister mean by "no" that he will not answer the question or that the under-secretaries do not get passes?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: No, no!

Mr. LANG: The Minister is silent.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member persists in his present course I shall order him to discontinue his remarks. He has asked the question of the Assistant Treasurer. I cannot compel the Minister to answer. He may answer or not, or may answer in his own time, and I cannot allow the hon. member to continually repeat the same question.

Mr. LANG: As it seems to be a question upon which I cannot get much light, I would ask the Assistant Treasurer to look at an item of the particulars of which he must be fully seized. I refer to "Subsidy for monthly steamship service between Sydney, Java ports, and Singapore, £2,000." That did not appear on the previous year's estimates. The Acting Treasurer should be fully conversant with that subject seeing that he was a special plenipotentiary, commissioner, or ambassador to Java during the last Parliament. Is that item included in the estimates as a result of the hon. gentleman's visit to Java? If so, are those ships running? We all know that at the present time shipping freight is very valuable.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: They are running!

Mr. LANG: At present so much profit is being made by those who control and own shipping that it seems ridiculous for the Government to give £2,000 a year for a shipping line between Sydney, Java, and Singapore.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: We cannot break a contract. There was a contract entered into to pay a subsidy of £2,000 per annum, and that £2,000 has to be paid whether the war is on or whether the war is off!

Mr. WRIGHT: When was the contract entered into?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: It was originally entered into before 1910, and was renewed!

Mr. LANG: I should like to know when this contract was entered into,

what it was for, whether it is being carried out, and what advantage it is to the State of New South Wales.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The contract will expire somewhere about the end of this year; it was a five years contract!

Mr. LANG: I notice that there was voted last year the sum of £2,925 as a subsidy for a monthly steamship service between the ports of Sydney and Shanghai.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: That is off!

Mr. LANG: And there is something else on. The Committee should know whether that £2,000 was paid last year. If the contract has been in operation five years and nothing was paid last year the Committee ought to know.

Then we come to the item, "Government Railways Superannuation—Amount required under section 112 of the Government Railways Act, No. 13, 1912, to meet claims, £15,000." That appeared on the estimates last year, and has been omitted this year. I may be told that it appears in another part of the estimates and has been increased to £30,000. What is the reason for that? Is the fund insolvent?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: No, it is not, but it is mounting up to such an extent that the future will have to look after itself. The Act will have to be amended for the purpose of enabling us to meet all obligations.

The CHAIRMAN: That is a statutory appropriation which cannot be discussed now. It appears under another heading.

Mr. LANG: Do I take your ruling to mean that if an item appears this year under one department, and next year under another department it cannot be discussed?

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that if there is no such item in the vote the hon. member cannot discuss it. There is no such item in this vote, and I ask the hon. member not to pursue his argument any further in that direction.

Mr. LANG: I presume I shall be in the same position when I come to the item of £30,000 which my leader discussed for thirty minutes. Will I be allowed to discuss that item of £30,000?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will see that the item of £15,000 has been transferred to another part of the esti-

mates. The hon. member had an opportunity of discussing it in an earlier portion of the estimates.

Mr. LANG : It appears to me that the item of £30,000 is in the same category as the item of £15,000. I desire to know whether any portion of the amount of £30,000 voted last year to supplement pensions granted by the Commonwealth Government to incapacitated soldiers has been paid. We all remember that one of the foremost planks in the platform of the National party as foreshadowed in the now notorious Gundagai speech was that the National party would, if given the reins of government, supplement the pensions of incapacitated soldiers by at least 10s. each per week. That has been dropped altogether and the explanation that the Commonwealth Government has partially stepped in is not satisfactory.

Mr. HUNT : It is being paid in another way!

Mr. LANG : It is not being paid by this Government. This Government gave a pledge to the electors and at the very first opportunity that pledge has been disregarded. We can only judge the members of the Government party by their past.

The CHAIRMAN : Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the question before the Chair.

Mr. LANG : I should like to know whether any portion of that £30,000 has been spent. It appears to me that the Government puts sums on the estimates which it has no intention of spending. I may say that I objected to this system of dealing with the estimates when the last Government was in power. I am not taking this stand now because I happen to be in opposition. With regard to the Norton Griffiths & Co. item, I regret that there has been no opportunity of discussing it. I wanted to have a word to say about it, and to give my opinion as to what should be the proper name of that institution. I would have called it the Morton Griffiths Co.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK : You voted for the scheme!

Mr. LANG : Never.

Mr. OSBORNE (Paddington) [10.2] : I think the Committee is entitled to some information with regard to certain items. For instance, there is the item, "Interest

on moneys in the temporary possession of the Government." That has been increased from £155,000 last year to £167,000 this year. It is difficult to understand why interest should be paid on moneys in the temporary possession of the Government.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK : Money comes into the possession of the Government temporarily, so the Government has to pay interest on it!

Mr. OSBORNE : I also notice an increase from £50,000 to £130,000 in the item of "Interest on advances by banks."

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK : There is an increase in the volume of money borrowed and used, and also an increase in the interest rate paid!

Mr. OSBORNE : I notice there is an increase from £95,000 to £120,000 in sewerage and water rates, city, municipal, and shire rates on Government properties.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK : The new system of rating in the city of Sydney is responsible in a great measure for that increase!

Mr. OSBORNE : That would apply to the question of the land-tax, but this is a matter of sewerage and water rates. We are in the dark in connection with these items. They are thrown at hon. members, and we have to form the best idea we can as to what they mean. I can understand that the Acting Treasurer could not go into every item and give the Committee information about it, but where a glaring increase of this description stands out, one would have thought that the Acting Treasurer would give hon. members some information about it. The item attracts notice particularly by reason of the fact that it assists materially to swell the total estimate from £413,018 of last year to £596,796 this year, an increase of nearly £184,000. I admit that the increase is made up to a great extent of one or two items, more particularly the item of £166,773 to be paid to Norton Griffiths & Co. Still that leaves an increase of £67,000 in one department alone. That increase in a department of a Governmental nature is very considerable in a year when everyone is preaching economy. We are entitled to some explanation for the considerable increases that have taken place when we take into account the fact that certain sums voted last year have been ex-

[Mr. Lang.

cluded from the estimates this year. For instance, there is no provision made this year under the heading of "Railway Government Superannuation," nor under the item, "To supplement pensions granted by the Commonwealth Government to incapacitated members of the military and naval forces." There is a reduction of £45,000 in those two items. When you take that into consideration, and remember there is a total increase of £184,000, you realise that the public is justified in viewing with concern the economical reforms that are being practised by the National Government. If that system of economy is going to be pursued, the finances of the State will soon be in a parlous condition. As a matter of fact they will be in a worse condition than under the last Government, which was considered to be ruining the State, because the gentleman at the head of affairs knew nothing about financial matters.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: The same gentleman is still there!

Mr. OSBORNE: The same gentleman is still presiding over the destinies of the Treasury, but he is associated now with gentlemen of expert views, who are supposed to have financial knowledge that no ordinary labourer, coming from the mine or the workshop, could be expected to possess. One would have expected that, when such men came to the assistance of the Treasurer, the condition of affairs would have been improved instead of being made worse. We view with a considerable amount of alarm the fact that unnecessary expenditure seems to be mounting up, while necessary expenditure is decreasing. The net result, however, is that it costs more to govern the country to-day than it did twelve months ago. I should have liked some information as to what the Government proposes to do in order to supplement the pensions granted by the Commonwealth Government to incapacitated members of the military and naval forces. The item appears on the estimates, but no sum is allocated to it. I should like to know if it is proposed to allocate a sum of money for this purpose in some other portion of the estimates, or is it intended to drop the matter altogether. This is a question of considerable importance. It excited interest on the part of the public of New South

Wales some time ago, because many of them were affected. I shall be glad if the Assistant Treasurer, in his reply, will state generally what the Government proposes to do in connection with this vital matter. Another matter, and one mentioned by the hon. member for Granville, is the subsidy for monthly steamship service between Sydney, Java ports, and Singapore. I gather that this is a contract which was entered into some time ago, and which is nearing expiry. If that is so it is difficult to understand why no amount appeared on the estimates last year, whilst an amount of £2,935 was appropriated last year as "subsidy for monthly steamship service between the ports of Sydney and Shanghai," for which no provision is made this year. Is it the view of the Government that it is better to subsidise a service between Sydney, Java ports, and Singapore, than between Sydney and Shanghai?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The disturbed condition of China at the present time makes it dangerous for hon. members to go home!

Mr. OSBORNE: No one on this side claims that part of the world as home. Presumably the Minister's observation must apply to members of his own party. We have always been consistent exponents of the White Australia policy. The question cannot be lightly brushed aside in that way. We want to know whether the Government has definitely decided to subsidise one steamship service at the expense of another; we want to know the reasons which have actuated the Government in substituting one service for another, and the period and terms of the contract. These are things the House and the country are entitled to know.

Mr. ESTELL (Wallsend) [10.14]: There is one item under the head of "Miscellaneous Services" in regard to which I should like some information. I should like to know from the Minister why it is that £30,000 appropriated last year "to supplement pensions granted by the Commonwealth Government to totally and partially incapacitated members of the military and naval forces" is not repeated in the estimates for this year. It was distinctly promised by Mr. Holman that the military pensions would be supplemented by the State. I do not say it is

right the State should do these things. I hold the opinion that the Commonwealth Government should shoulder its responsibilities, and provide ample pensions for those who went away. Still, that definite promise was made by Mr. Holman, and apparently it was made at the time for the specific purpose of getting votes, because now that it has been returned to power the National Government apparently is not prepared to honor that promise: I can produce letters from people all over the State inquiring what the Government proposes to do. What reply can I give beyond saying that although the Government made the promise it is not going to honor it, and as no provision is made upon the estimates this year nothing can be expected from the Government of New South Wales? I understand that the Acting Treasurer offered some explanation which I did not hear, but if the hon. member stated that the Commonwealth Government proposed to make up the pension to £2 a week then he is telling the people something which he knows is not correct. Nothing of the sort is intended. The Commonwealth Government proposes to increase the pension to 30s. per week. But Mr. Holman definitely stated that it was the intention of the Government of New South Wales to give those of our soldiers who were disabled a further 10s. in order to bring the pension up to £2 a week. Hon. members will agree with me that we cannot do too much for those of our boys who went away to uphold the name of Australia, and having made this promise the Government should be prepared to honor it. I regret that there is no provision on the estimates this year to supplement the pensions, and I appeal to the Minister to explain why it is that the Government has gone back on what was a definite and distinct promise. A similar promise was made to the railway men, and that promise has also been broken. When we find the Government prepared to make a promise of this character and break it, how can the people of the country retain confidence in it?

Mr. GARDINER (Newcastle) [10.18]: I shall be glad if the Minister will explain whether or not the £17,500, "Railway Department — for conveyance without charge of members of Parliament, dis-

[*Mr. Estell.*

tinguished visitors, school children, and others," includes the cost of the special trains, trams, and other vehicles which are engaged when the House sits after the ordinary train and tram services have ceased running. I was going to suggest that this item should be struck out altogether. It does not matter to the taxpayers whether the estimate now under review is passed at 11 o'clock to-night or at 11 o'clock to-morrow. Why should we stop here until all hours of the morning in order to put the estimate through, and compel the taxpayers to provide £200 or £300 for special conveyances? It is up to the Government to make a reform in that direction. It is easily to be done. If the custom of having all-night sittings or of sitting after 11 o'clock when the ordinary train or tram services stop were cut out altogether it would not mean the House sitting more than one more week at the end of the year.

Mr. EDDEN: Let us meet at 10 o'clock in the morning!

Mr. GARDINER: Very good, or meet a week earlier in the year, and get rid of all-night sittings altogether, and thus save the taxpayers the enormous expense involved by sending special trains or trams to every suburb to suit the convenience of thirty or forty members of Parliament. This Government should institute a reform of that kind, making it obligatory for the House to close at 11 o'clock at night.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Does the hon. member believe in early closing?

Mr. GARDINER: Yes.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Why do you not shut up, then?

Mr. GARDINER: I was pointing out the necessity for the more general application of early closing than would be gained if I were to shut up just now. I am not opposed to the item, "For the conveyance of school children," in fact I think that the whole of the Committee agree to that, but the items included in this particular vote should be separated so that we might know exactly what we were voting for. The amount of £35 is provided for "cab hire for members of the Legislative Assembly on the occasion of late sittings of the House when trams are not running." This is to enable one or two members to go to suburbs when the trams are not running.

Mr. ESTELL: You do not want them to walk, do you?

Mr. GARDINER: No, but I want the House to close at a reasonable hour to enable hon. members to get home in the ordinary way. This tax on the public is not justifiable and should be done away with at once. There is only one other matter to which I wish to refer—that is, the omission from these estimates of a sum of money to supplement pensions granted by the Commonwealth Government to returned soldiers and sailors. I understood that the State Government had promised to increase the amount. I wish that the Acting Treasurer would give us some explanation in regard to that. We are all in favour of honoring any promise of that kind, and I am sure that the taxpayers would readily pay any extra cost which they might be called upon to bear in order to honor whatever promise has been made. I might point out that until recently soldiers when they returned from the war were given free passes on the railways for a certain period, especially those travelling for health purposes or to their homes. But I understand that within the last few months these passes have been denied them, and now they have to pay full fares.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is that so?

Mr. GARDINER: I have been informed within the last week or so by returned soldiers that they no longer enjoy the privilege of having free passes or reduced rates on the railways and have to pay the full fares. That is not right.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: That statement is absolutely untrue, and you know it!

Mr. GARDINER: I do not know it. I challenge the denial of the hon. member, because men have told me repeatedly within the last month or so that that concession has been taken away from them. I have been told that several times within the last month, and unless the concession has been re-granted since I was told that, I challenge the hon. member's statement that the concession was not taken away from returned soldiers enabling them to travel with free passes or at reduced fares. I say that the concession of reduced fares has been taken away from them. I am quite clear that what the returned soldiers told me was that that concession had been

taken away from them. Whether it has been granted again I do not know. If it has, I should like the Minister to tell the Committee that it has been granted again so that we may know how the matter stands. If the concession has not been granted again and the Minister thinks it has, I ask him to look into the matter, and as he apparently, by his interjection, is in favour of its being granted, I ask him to take steps to have it granted again if it has been taken away.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [10.26]: In regard to the item "Railway Department—For conveyance, without charge, of members of Parliament, distinguished visitors, school children, and others, £17,500," I have to make the same complaint I previously made. Owing to the way this item is put on the estimates we do not know how much of this money is spent on the Legislative Council, how much on the Legislative Assembly, how much on distinguished visitors, how much on school children, and how much on other people whoever they may be. I want to make a further protest against the granting of free passes to unnecessary legislators recently appointed in this State, some of whom I can prove, if the opportunity is given to me, were really appointed through bribery.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member knows he is out of order in making an attack on members of the other Chamber. Whether they have been properly or improperly appointed, that matter is in no way relevant to the item "For conveyance, without charge, of members of Parliament." In discussing that item the hon. member cannot go into the question of the personnel of another House. I ask the hon. member not to pursue that line any further, and not to argue with the Chair.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I think that before giving a decision on such an important question it would be reasonable for you to hear argument.

The CHAIRMAN: If I thought it was necessary to hear argument I would do so, but the point is clear, and there can be no argument about it.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Unfortunately it is no use my trying to disagree with your ruling, and I have to accept it. This item is placed before us as it is

simply to confuse the issue and prevent hon. members, especially members of the Opposition, from being able to discover what amount is spent on the different departments. I do not believe the Minister in charge of these estimates is able to give us any information as to the amount of money which is being expended on the different items in these estimates. I do not think he knows any more about it than we do, and I think that both he and we are entitled to receive from the departmental officers, to whom a fair and reasonable salary is paid, information showing what this money is expended upon. If we cannot discuss the personnel of the other House, as the Chairman says we cannot; if we cannot ask any questions as to why there is a continuous and increased expenditure in all these branches, we are at least entitled to demand that the departmental officers shall put their estimates before the House in such a form that they may be comprehensible by members of the House, and also by members of the Government. In regard to the item "Sewerage and water rates, &c., city municipal and shire rates, &c., on Government properties in connection with appeals," I should like to know what is the reason for the increase from £95,000 last year to £120,000 this year. What are the appeals referred to? Are they in connection with properties resumed about the city, or are they appeals before the Land Court, or in relation to objections raised regarding certain properties? We should have some explanation. The Minister sits as dumb as an oyster, and refuses to give us information in regard to important items respecting which we should be furnished with the fullest particulars. I protest against this attitude on the part of the Minister, which is unfair to hon. members as representatives of the people. There is another item to which my attention has been drawn: "To pay officers of the Treasury Department who may be granted extended leave of absence prior to retirement, £1,000." The same amount was placed on the estimates last year, and I want to know whether the whole of the money was spent. If not, how has it been accounted for? We are entitled to information on this point, and I hope it will be forthcoming.

[*Mr. Stuart-Robertson.*]

When the Norton Griffiths agreement was first entered into I was informed by Mr. Griffith, then Minister for Public Works, that it was desirable to make the agreement in order to secure a larger number of customers for Australian bonds in London. He represented that we had a number of customers all ready under the control of certain groups of financiers, and his ingenious argument was that the new scheme would bring in a fresh group of customers for Australian loans through the agency of Norton Griffiths and Co. Many people believed him, and I relied on his word.

Colonel ONSLOW: We told you you were wrong!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I knew as much about those who said the proposal was right as about those who said it was wrong; but I was brought into contact with the man who said it was right, and who occupied the responsible position of Minister, and had taken an oath to carry out the duties of his office. I do not know even now that Mr. Arthur Griffith's argument was wrong. The present Government has cancelled the contract without giving any reason for doing so, and I do not know even now whether Mr. Arthur Griffith was right or wrong. The Government says it is going to make a saving by paying Norton Griffiths & Co. £116,773 for doing nothing.

Mr. LEX: For leaving the country!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: No, they are not leaving the country. I have no fault to find with them as contractors. They are entitled to carry out their operations within the limits of the law, and I have no desire to see them leave the country; in fact, I would be pleased to see a couple of million men of a similar class come here. But I am finding fault with the Government for claiming that it is making a saving by paying £116,000 to a firm of contractors for doing nothing. Like Mr. Arthur Griffith, Ministers produce no facts or figures, but ask us to take them on trust.

Colonel ONSLOW: You rejected the proposal once!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: The House rejected it once when it was brought forward by a Minister who has since been defeated; but when the curled darling of the National party who now

leads the Government brought it in he managed to get it through. Why, I do not know; but as far as I am concerned, if the Norton Griffiths scheme was to do what Mr. Arthur Griffith claimed it would—if it was to find employment and complete any works already in hand—then it was a very good thing, because we know that the money invested in different works will not, until they are completed, earn interest upon capital invested. It was therefore better to pay higher interest in order to enable money already invested to earn interest than to obtain money for works which would not show a return. From that standpoint alone there was a certain amount of justification for the contract; but now that the contract has been broken, we are to be told that for the future a saving will be effected by paying men to do wrong. When we reach such a stage as that, all I can say is that it is a positive insult to the intelligence of hon. members to simply throw an estimate on the table while the Minister in charge sits tight and declines to give any reason why the amount should be passed. I do not propose at this late hour to continue the debate further, but I do think, in view of the fair treatment which the Minister has received, especially at the hands of hon. members on this side of the House, we are entitled to some information.

Motion (by Mr. LANG) proposed:

That the item, "Railway Department—For conveyance without charge of members of Parliament, distinguished visitors, school children, and others, £17,500," be reduced by £7,500.

Question put. Division called for. Standing order No. 213 enforced:

AYES.

Gardiner, A. R.	Ley, T. J.
Kearsley, W.	Stuart-Robertson,
Lang, J. T.	R. J.

Vote agreed to.

Advance to Treasurer.

Proposed vote, £150,000.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [10.45]: I take it that under this vote there are a large number of items to be dealt with. It covers practically every service of the State. From this fund reimbursements are made to every department, and I submit I am entitled to refer to the inadequate supply of blankets—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not know whether the hon. member is serious.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I am quite serious.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that the hon. member cannot deal with the supply of blankets under the item "Advance to Treasurer."

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: May I ask that the Minister will give us some idea of what the estimate is for?

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member will read it, he will see that it is "to enable the Treasurer to make advances to public officers, and on account of other Governments, and to pay expenses of an unforeseen nature, which will afterwards be submitted for parliamentary appropriation. The whole amount to be adjusted not later than the 30th June, 1919."

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: "To pay expenses of an unforeseen nature" is what I was referring to.

The CHAIRMAN: I tell the hon. member once for all that he cannot be permitted under this item to deal with every item he likes of the Government service.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I have not the slightest intention of doing so. But surely something is going to be paid out of this £150,000, or is it merely put there as a show-card in the window or a dummy which is not to be used?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: How can we tell what the amount is to be used for when we do not know what is to happen within the currency of the next twelve months?

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Then it is merely to place something at the disposal of the hon. gentleman in case something may happen. I will leave it at that.

Mr. LANG (Granville) [10.49]: It is provided that the whole of the amounts are to be adjusted not later than 30th June, 1919. That has been the usual practice—the items have always been placed before Parliament?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Always!

Mr. LANG: And always in the estimates?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Yes!

Vote agreed to.

Public Works Fund.

Proposed vote, £250,000.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [10.5]: May I inquire from the Assistant Treasurer what this vote is for?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The Public Works Fund is supplemented by money from the sale of Crown lands, and the two sums combined furnish the wherewithal to carry out certain public works!

Vote agreed to.

RAILWAYS.

Construction of Locomotives—System of Checking in Railway Workshops—Complaints regarding Railway Management—Electric Cable Tunnel—Railway Station at North Sydney—Marshalling Yards at Rozelle Bay—Lavatory Accommodation in Trains—Chief Railway Commissioner—Grievances of Railway Employees—Tramway Service—Increased Railway Fares and Freights—North Coast Railway—Employment of Incompetent Persons—Military and Departmental Pay—Burning of Old Railway Sleepers—Railways Appeal Court—Rewards to Inventors—Railway and Tramway Strike—McMyler Hoists—Railway Refreshment-rooms—Railway and Tramway Inspectors—Repairs to Locomotives—Resumption of Properties—Definition of a Strike—Alteration of Working Conditions.

Proposed vote, £8,455,007.

Mr. J. STOREY (Balmain) [10.52]: The railway estimates generally take a considerable time, and I would ask the Minister in charge whether he has any idea of the time at which he will adjourn the debate?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Let us get on. We were six hours getting two pages of the Treasury estimates through!

Mr. J. STOREY: Perhaps on this occasion more than any, hon. members will be justified in delaying the Committee. I find myself in the position of having to discuss railway estimates at a late hour, when hon. members are not physically, some of them not mentally, fit to absorb the intricacies of railway administration. I suppose, however, one is, under our rules, compelled to proceed. The Railway Department and the Railway Commissioners have been subjected to more criticism this year than ever before. Some of that comment has been favourable; a large amount of it, as was evidenced by the tremendous meeting in the Sydney Town Hall to-night, has been of an opposite character. Therefore at this moment the Railway Commissioners and the Minister for Rail-

ways are in an unenviable position. They have in their several declarations endeavoured to show the public that the reason why our railways are not paying is the failure of the workmen to realise their obligations and to do what they ought to do as workmen holding fairly lucrative and satisfactory positions in the service. If it can be shown by other than mere statements that the men are any less efficient to-day and that the administration is better to-day than during the last five or six years we would perhaps be justified in accepting the statement of the Railway Commissioners that the men and the men only are at fault. I have never believed that the men are perfection. I have never said they have done everything that they might do. No hon. member has said so. Neither have we said that the Commissioners endeavour to get the best results from the men who are engaged at Eveleigh workshops. When a man seeks to enter the railway service as employee he has to be physically perfect. He must have eyesight equal to that of the best of our people. If he seeks to be a mechanic he must be first-class or at least good. Whatever department he seeks to enter he must be capable of doing the work for which he offers. That is a condition precedent to employment in the Railway Department. As a consequence of that it is fair to assume that the Railway Commissioners have the best of our workmen. I disagree entirely with those who say that the men have fallen off in their desire to do the best they can in the interests of the department. I have been looking through several of the reports which have from time to time been placed upon the table of the House. I notice in comparing the cost of building locomotives in the Eveleigh workshops with that of building them at the Clyde works that the Eveleigh workshops show very favourably. I have here a copy of a return presented on the 26th March, 1912, in which the cost of building locomotives at the railway workshops is compared with that at the Clyde works and in other parts of the world. I find that the cost of building the "P" class engine at Eveleigh compares more than favourably with the cost at the Clyde works. At Eveleigh it cost £5,340. In

another return, made also in 1912; a similar class engine cost £4,725 1s. 6d. The men in 1912 in the railway workshops were obviously under the same administration; they were the same class of mechanics; and they were able to show that they could build a locomotive cheaper than the Clyde works and English and American firms could build it under contract with the Government. That is evidence that at that time our workmen were doing at least as well as the workmen inside. We find that the cost of an English-built locomotive is practically the same. Making allowance for customs duties and the difference in the wages paid in the two countries the price of a locomotive built at Eveleigh compared more than favourably with that built in England. That was the position in 1911 and 1912.

I want now to refer to something of perhaps a more serious character to show that to-day even the Railway Commissioners must believe that what I am stating is a fact. I am going to quote from a report of the evidence which Mr. Lucy gave before a commission that was appointed in Adelaide for the purpose of inquiring into the railway systems of Australia. The quotation is from a newspaper which headed the article in a rather peculiar way: "Old System Perfect. Railway Chief's Opinion. Evidence to Royal Commission. Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee." Mr. Fraser has been careful to tell the public that his idea in introducing the card system was for the purpose of locating charges; that is to say, when men were engaged on a particular piece of work the Chief Railway Commissioner would be able to put his hand on the man who was disinclined to do his best and dismiss him if the occasion demanded it. Mr. Fraser said, "I do not want to introduce the Taylor system; you can accept my assurance that the introduction of the card has nothing to do with this system. All I want to do is to discover where the leakages are, and endeavour to stop them." That statement was made by Mr. Fraser just one month ago. Six months ago Mr. Lucy, the Chief Mechanical Engineer, than whom I suppose there is no more capable or reliable

officer in this country, and a man who has always been looked upon as being one of the most clear-headed of our engineers, said this in this evidence before that royal commission:

Major Smeaton: You have, apparently, a very perfect system of control. Now, in huge workshops such as you have, there are bound to be leakages somewhere. We would be glad if you would, for our benefit and the benefit of our own State, tell us where you look for those leakages; leakages which mean uneconomy, loss of time, loss of value through spoilt material?

Mr. Lucy: So far as the leakage by slow working, loss of time of any description, we discover, by keeping a good system of accounts, where the leakage occurs. We compare one leading hand or chargeman and a gang of fifteen or twenty, with another gang of the same number doing precisely the same work under similar conditions, and hold the leading hand or chargeman responsible for the output. In that way we are able to discover eventually the individuals to whom this lack of effort can be applied, and we deal with them. With regard to the wastage or loss of materials, we have a system of watchmen and a system of detectives; also by means of assays of castings made in the brass foundry and various other castings which contain such valuable metals as tin and copper, and lesser valuable metals such as spelter and lead. We determine by the amount of assay the total castings coming out which contain such and such a proportion of tin, and we say, "Where is the tin consumed during the month gone to?" "What is the percentage of waste or losses?" In that way we can check any leakage.

What is the result of all this care? Do you really check wastage and reduce to a percentage basis the loss on what you think you ought to achieve from all your work and that which you get?—Yes.

Do you think, taking the whole of your operations, that you are getting an efficient return for your expenditure?—Oh, yes; I am quite confident of that. The leakage is small.

You think that through the system of control you have, the constant oversight of the superior officers, and under them the foremen, you are getting the full return for the wages paid to the men?—Coupled with the system that we have of issue from the stores stock and return to stores, both the raw materials in their unmixing conditions, forged conditions, and finished conditions, the disparity of losses is further reduced to a minimum.

Mr. J. Gunn, a member of the commission, asked: "Do you consider that you

get as efficient service from the workmen employed in the Government workshops as private enterprise gets from employees in their own shops?" and the reply was, "I do."

That is the evidence given this year by a gentleman upon whose shoulders rests the administration of the whole of the railway workshops. Mr. Lucy says that they can check to a nicety the cost of the material, where it goes to, what are the leakages, and who are responsible for those leakages. He says that by comparison with private employment they are getting the best return from the workers in the employ of the Railway Department. In 1912, as shown by the report to which I have referred, the men at the Government workshops were able to build a locomotive cheaper than at the Clyde workshops. That being so, how can the charge against these workmen that they are not doing their best under the system that has hitherto prevailed be sustained? According to the report, the locomotives built at Eveleigh are giving equal satisfaction to those of English make, and are being built for less cost than locomotives are being built for at the Clyde. That is in 1912. In 1917, when the men are charged with being malingers and being disinclined to give their best services to the State, the answer of Mr. Lucy is so effective that the question can very properly be put, whom are we to believe? One of Mr. Fraser's own officers says, "We have no fault to find; we can check the materials to a nicety, we know where every leakage is, and we are getting better results from our workmen than are being obtained from workmen in private employ." When Mr. Lucy says that I am prepared to believe him, because there is not an hon. member who has ever challenged a statement made by that gentleman. I want to know from whom Mr. Fraser obtained his information before he took action. If he obtained it from Mr. Lucy what becomes of the evidence given by Mr. Lucy before that royal commission? Does not the Minister think that under the circumstances he ought to ask Mr. Fraser to give some further information regarding the authenticity of the statements that have been made? If they were made by Mr. Lucy, then that gen-

Mr. J. Storey.

tleman must undoubtedly have been mentally astray when he gave evidence before that commission. Did he mislead them? Was he telling the truth? If the truth was told by him six months ago, who gave the information to Mr. Fraser that the card system would give better results?

Mr. BALL: I understand that Mr. Lucy is in favour of the card system!

Mr. J. STOREY: Probably he is, because his chief introduced it. I am not disputing that. I say the reason why this great industrial crisis has been precipitated is because, as it is said, the men were not giving satisfaction, the cost of carrying out work at Eveleigh was excessive, and the men were loafing half their time. Mr. Lucy says that is not true. He says the men are giving better results than those in private workshops. Let me tell hon. members this trouble is not going to end in an hour. Let them peruse the report submitted to the House in 1912 with regard to the administration of the Eveleigh workshops, and compare the work done with that done in other shops in this State, and by English firms who are contractors for the Government.

Mr. LEY: Where do you get the information that Mr. Fraser stated that it was because the men were not doing their part that he introduced the card system?

Mr. J. STOREY: The statement has been made not once, but a dozen times in the last three weeks.

Mr. LEY: Where?

Mr. J. STOREY: By Mr. Fraser.

Mr. LEY: No!

Mr. J. STOREY: I beg your pardon. If I had time I would show the hon. member a cutting stating clearly that Mr. Fraser said, "I am not introducing this system for the purpose of sweating the men. I am doing it for the purpose of locating the malingers, and finding out the leakages in connection with the disappearance of material of a valuable character."

Mr. LEY: He did not say they were all malingers!

Mr. J. STOREY: The hon. member is only splitting straws. Everyone knows that in large workshops of any

description there is always a class of man who is vulgarly described as a "poler" or a loafer.

Colonel ONSLOW: That cuts away all your argument!

Mr. J. STOREY: Does the hon. member expect every man to be a first-class workman? His interjection is answered by the fact that some men are paid 20s. while others are paid only 10s. per day. I am not advancing any argument at this moment. I am only quoting the gentleman whose duty it is to govern the affairs of the railway service. I am quoting from a newspaper, showing that Mr. Lucy, in giving evidence, said he was getting the best results from his workmen—better than private firms. I suppose he referred to Clyde. He said they could reduce to a minimum the leakages in connection with the loss of material. In a big Government department where valuable metals are used, such as spelter, lead, bronze, and brass, in connection with the making of castings, a workman who has been working there for a long time can easily steal if he wishes to do so, or take for his own use, metals belonging to the Government. The operation of checking is that during the process of converting from ordinary metal into molten metal, which is afterwards to be turned into castings, a portion is sent to the assayer, who is able to determine the percentage of copper or other metal in the casting. They record the exact amount that is given to the department at the beginning of the year, they check the amount used, and the balance remaining over, and so they are able to see what becomes of the metals. Mr. Lucy says that checking is done carefully. We can honestly say that he has laid it down that there are no leakages worth speaking of that cannot be discovered in connection with the metals used. And there are some thousands of tons used in the course of the year. The Commissioner from South Australia, in marvelling at the magnitude of the institution, said that in such a huge institution there must be tremendous leakages. In reply Mr. Lucy said, "We are reducing to a minimum the leakages in connection with the metals used by our officers, and there is no trouble

worth speaking of." With regard to the workmen, he said, "We are getting as good results from our workmen as private workshops are getting from theirs, or even better results." If that is so, why introduce a system of espionage which is repugnant to every honest man? When I worked as a mechanic I would not have stood it for five minutes. The men have to undergo an eyesight test, and a hearing test. They have to have their teeth inspected, and must be examined to see whether they are physically perfect, in order to be able to get the miserable pittance they receive as skilled mechanics after years of work. Do hon. members expect the men to submit to what is proposed? If the men are compelled to go back to work under the card system, if they go back as disgruntled workmen, believe me the Commissioner will be sorry that he did not get them back in a happier mood. If you drive a thousand men back to employment in a dissatisfied state of mind, feeling that they have been defeated, are they going to give of their best to make the card system a success? If the Minister had taken my advice, the card system would have been in existence only three months. It was tried at Cockatoo, and what was the result? One thousand men were losing ten minutes every day fooling about with the cards. Multiply that by about 300 working days in the year, and you will see the loss of time taken up for the purpose of finding out whether some men are malingerers. If I were in charge of the men and could not discover the malingerers in a fortnight, I should expect to be regarded as a malingerer myself. The idea of giving a foreman a time-book with a stop-watch in the corner of it is objectionable. If that system is to be introduced into Australia my idea of Government ownership will soon disappear. It has never been found necessary in any other place. If I were the Minister I would put a stop-watch on others besides the workmen. I protest against the continuance of a system which I believe to be wrong. I know that it is improper to engage in a lengthy dissertation upon the strike and all its attendant evils, but when a responsible officer, a skilled engineer, who is now Chief Commissioner,

tells us that the men are malingerers and he will find them out; and another equally skilled man says they are not malingerers but first-class workmen, who are doing as well as any men outside the service, it is quite time the Government, in view of this conflict of opinion, instituted an independent tribunal to find out who are the culprits and whether any alteration can be effected in the system. I believe it is possible to effectively alter the system. A good workman going into the Eveleigh workshops is destroyed, because the system in operation is so far behind what should obtain in a shop equipped as those workshops are that it is impossible to obtain efficiency. There is a system in those works which absolutely prevents the men getting on with the work as they should do.

Mr. LEY: How do they get cheaper engines there than elsewhere?

Mr. J. STOREY: The answer is perfectly obvious. The men who have put their money into the Clyde works have not done it for fun. With the profit they want, the cost of production must necessarily be higher than in the Eveleigh workshops where no profit is made and the work is carried out by the Government of the country.

Mr. LEY: That knocks the hon. member's prior argument right out!

Mr. J. STOREY: The hon. member must understand that when the price of manufacture in the railway workshops is compared with private enterprises, the motive which actuates each party must be taken into account. I do not say that man for man and hour for hour the workmen are doing better; I simply say that Mr. Lucy says so, and he is accepted as an authority. If the men in the railway workshops were given the opportunity and they were working under a system as up-to-date as it should be, the results would be so good that it would be possible to turn out locomotives ever so much cheaper at Eveleigh than from private firms. I am not the only one who holds that opinion. The opinion is general that the men in the Government workshops ought to be able to turn out work much more cheaply, seeing that no profit is sought and there is any amount of money available for the pur-

[Mr. J. Storey.

chase of the most up-to-date machinery. The Minister will readily admit that the introduction of up-to-date machinery helps materially to cheapen cost.

Mr. BALL: We have up-to-date machinery at Eveleigh!

Mr. J. STOREY: I admit that the machinery installed is up-to-date. What I contend is that it is not possible to find at Eveleigh machinery which they have in other places. For example, any day men are to be seen travelling from one end of the workshops to the other pushing hand-trucks and dragging steel as if they were a team of bullocks, and returning in the same inefficient fashion. The Minister knows very well that there is certain work in connection with the repair and overhaul of locomotives which takes much longer to carry out at Eveleigh than should be the case in a well-equipped and up-to-date workshop. The reason is that whilst in up-to-date workshops they have duplicates of everything, in the Eveleigh workshops they only have duplicates of some things. The consequence is that an engine which should be in and out again in four days is kept in the workshops for twice that period. The men employed in the Eveleigh workshops have for years been handicapped by not having up-to-date machinery. In proof of what I say I need only refer to the card which was recently introduced. One of the questions on that card addressed to the sub-foreman was: "Are there any further machines required in your department?" That is the question put by a highly-paid official to a lower-paid officer. Did you ever hear of such a thing in a private firm? As a matter of fact it is the duty of the highly-paid officer to know what machinery is made use of in other parts of the world and to see that it is supplied. Here the question is put to the sub-foreman, and he has to send in a card; and by the time word is sent back whether or not the required machinery is available the locomotive is out on the road again. That sort of thing has been going on for years, hampering the railway workshops and making them a losing proposition instead of a first-class paying proposition to the State. As I said during the budget debate, it is that sort of thing which is creating losses:

in all our business undertakings—over-manning by the management and failure to obtain up-to-date machinery. Every man I put the question to tells me that it is impossible to get a move on in the Government workshops because the administration is cumbersome and the requisite machinery is not available. If there is any truth in that assertion why should the responsibility for failure be saddled upon the men? The mere carrying out of a piece of work at Mort's Dock or at Eveleigh makes no difference to a workman—his handicraft is just the same wherever he works; but if he is not permitted to do his best at Eveleigh because of the absence of machines which ought to be there, such as a private firm would have, how is it possible for him to give satisfaction? It is not possible, of course. The reason why we have the present industrial upheaval is because of the failure of the management of the railway workshops to realise the responsibility attaching to the offices they fill. Do hon. members know that when it is known that the Chief Railway Commissioner is going to visit the railway workshops there is a week's preparation for his visit, and men are engaged almost exclusively tidying up that part of the workshops which he will pass through? This applies not only to the present Chief Railway Commissioner; it applied to Mr. Tom Johnson and Mr. Harper when they were Chief Railway Commissioners. That is not the sort of thing that ought to prevail. Mr. Cutler at Newcastle, with all his imperfections, will go through a workshop with his coat off; he wants to know where every man is and what he is doing. I do not say that the Chief Railway Commissioner should do that, for his duties are greater, but if he cannot do it, he has colleagues who should do so. If hon. members want to test the accuracy of what I am saying, let them write a letter to the Governor-General and also one to the Chief Railway Commissioner seeking an interview, and I guarantee that they will be able to see the Governor-General before they will be able to see the Chief Railway Commissioner.

Colonel ONSLOW: The Chief Railway Commissioner is the easiest man in the world to see!

Mr. J. STOREY: I know he is not, and he has not been since Tom Johnson was Chief Railway Commissioner and ruined every man he came in contact with. When Mr. Harper became Chief Railway Commissioner, he adopted almost the same stupid administrative methods as Tom Johnson.

Colonel ONSLOW: All I can say is that you have been singularly unfortunate in your experience!

Mr. J. STOREY: And the hon. gentleman has been calamitous.

Colonel ONSLOW: I could see him every time I wanted to!

Mr. J. STOREY: Possibly. I am not complaining of want of courtesy. I never received anything but courtesy from officers of the public departments. I am talking of the difficulty of seeing the Chief Railway Commissioner as the head of a big department. I am not speaking of discourtesy shown to members of Parliament. It would be a good thing if members of Parliament were to keep away from the Chief Railway Commissioner altogether. I have spoken to the present Chief Railway Commissioner only twice during the past three years, and that was during the present strike; yet there is no man in this House who did more than I did to see that he got the position and was paid an adequate salary. I was among those who approached the present Premier to see that the Chief Railway Commissioner got the salary he now enjoys.

Mr. G. R. W. McDONALD: I was with you!

Mr. J. STOREY: I think you were there, too. I am not complaining about the Chief Railway Commissioner, but I say that the system created by Mr. Johnson has destroyed every idea of what an administrator ought to be. The late Mr. Harry Richardson, an efficient, honest man, sat in the department for three years doing practically nothing. That man, who was anxious to do the best he could for his country, was prevented from doing it because he was working under a certain system. According to the regulations, he and Mr. Harper were supposed to meet Mr. Tom Johnson every morning. One of them would walk into the room through one door and out of it through another and say

that he had nothing to report that morning, and then the other gentleman would do the same. That was supposed to be a conference with the Chief Railway Commissioner every morning, and after that Mr. Richardson could do what he liked.

Colonel ONSLOW: That is not correct!

Mr. J. STOREY: I am not concerned with the hon. member's opinion. I am stating a fact, and I never state what I do not think is correct.

Colonel ONSLOW: Neither do I; you have been misinformed!

Mr. J. STOREY: I am telling the hon. member what I saw and know to be a fact.

Colonel ONSLOW: Then your powers of observation are lacking!

Mr. J. STOREY: If they are lacking, they are on a par with the hon. gentleman's. If what I have said is correct, one is not at any loss when he endeavours to find out why we are not getting the best possible results from the Railway Department. I am not going to complain of mistakes being made, for mistakes will be made by everybody, particularly an engineer. A doctor buries his mistakes; a lawyer makes his clients pay for his mistakes; but an engineer has to take the responsibility for his mistakes. We have only to examine what is taking place every day. Some years ago I approached Mr. Richardson and asked him to permit an English firm to build a tunnel from Longnose Point, Balmain, to Greenwich, to carry electric cables in connection with a power-house. Mr. Fraser then said with all honesty and sincerity, "I can build that tunnel for £10,000 and in two years," but five years have elapsed and how far has the work proceeded? All the machinery and pumps are under Sydney Harbour, and piles have been driven down between Balmain and North Shore in the middle of the harbour, and how many casks or bags of cement have been sunk in the bottom of the harbour to fill the fissures to stop leakages in the tunnel heaven only knows. The piles and the wharf are there now, but when that tunnel will be completed heaven alone knows. It may be that it was impossible to foresee what was likely to happen with

[Mr. J. Storey.

regard to it, but there it is, and the power-house is practically eating its head off in interest charges because of the fact that that connection with North Sydney has not been effected. Hon. members may say that that is an engineering difficulty that could not have been foreseen. If so, the same excuse ought to be made for workmen carrying out work under an inefficient system. One has only to allow his mind to travel back a comparatively short time and he will remember the case of the railway-station near Milson's Point about which I spoke during the censure debate. Hon. members know that the people at North Sydney were not consulted about that matter, or if they were no notice was taken of what they said when that railway-station was being built which cost many thousands of pounds, and is now such an eyesore. No complaint was raised by any hon. members then, and I am not saying anything now by way of complaint because I know that mistakes will, as I have said, be made. An electric interlocking system was experimented with at the railway workshops, and the material is now lying of no value in the Randwick sheds, although it cost a considerable sum of money. All that was done in the interests of the State. No one complains about it. We know that mistakes will be made, but if they are going to be heaped up as charges against the railway system, why should you blame the workmen because they are unable to make the place pay? One could go on all night enumerating shortcomings of that kind, which are inseparable from big works.

Mr. BALL: No one ever attempted to blame the workmen for that. The workmen were never charged with responsibility for that!

Mr. J. STOREY: If the hon. member sincerely and honestly says that the workmen have never been blamed for the Railway Department's not paying, why is it that this great industrial upheaval has been created because of the introduction of a system for the purpose of getting over an alleged loss?

Mr. BALL: I am talking of the engineering blunders that you were talking about!

Mr. J. STOREY: I am only pointing them out to show that the workmen ought not to be charged with not doing their best, when we know that mistakes regularly take place throughout the workshops. I do not say the blunders might have been avoided, and I do not say that the Chief Railway Commissioner is any the less an efficient engineer, or Mr. Lucy either. I am not complaining about the railway engineers, but I say that if these mistakes occurred in connection with private firms, someone would be held responsible for them. For how long would a man hold his position with a private firm if he were guilty of building a railway-station costing a large sum of money and nobody would use it? How long would any officer hold a position in the service of a private firm if he allowed a great asset like the power-house at White Bay to remain idle and useless? I admit that it is a fine institution, but the tunnel which is to carry the cables to connect with it is now in the same position that it was twelve months ago. It is filled with sand, and the pumping machinery is in the bottom of the harbour, and I do not know how many tons of cement have been deposited there.

Mr. BALL: Even if the tunnel were completed we could not get the necessary materials to enable us to electrify the railway because of the war!

Mr. J. STOREY: I happen to know that the tunnel is not half finished, and the work is not being hung up because the Government cannot secure the necessary cables. I am inclined to think that the Minister has been misled.

Mr. BALL: I say that the works cannot be used until we can get the necessary material for electrifying purposes!

Mr. J. STOREY: The tunnel is only partly built, and is in the same condition that it was twelve months ago, except that then some work was going on, whereas now nothing is going on, and it is impossible to say when the work will be finished. When all these mistakes are being made, why should an attack be made upon the workmen and an industrial crisis be precipitated? Why should it be persistently stated that the marshalling yards at Rozelle Bay were necessary for the proper handling of the rail-

way goods traffic? Those yards cost many thousands of pounds to construct, and they are not being used for the purpose for which they were said to be designed. There are millions of bags of wheat stacked there, and instead of these being shipped on the spot they are being sent round to Darling Island, away from the place where so much money has been spent. Last year and the year before, when the estimates were being discussed, it was repeatedly stated that it was necessary to have these marshalling yards, and also necessary to have our main lines duplicated in order to give access to the water front.

Mr. BALL: You recommended it!

Mr. J. STOREY: No, that was done by the Public Works Committee before I became chairman. Owing to the mistakes to which I have referred a number of heavy charges have been piled up against the railways. I am prepared to admit that it is a difficult matter for the Railway Commissioners to make the railways pay when they have to conduct traffic over so many non-paying lines, and have to pay interest charges on so many works which have been constructed by the Public Works Department. I agree that the Commissioners are at their wits' end to make their accounts balance. I admit also that the Chief Commissioner has an industrial board which deals with matters affecting wages and that all he can do is to attend and give evidence against proposed increases. To that extent he is hampered, but, with all I have mentioned thrown in, there is no justification for endeavouring to fix the blame for the failure of the railways to pay on the shoulders of the unfortunate workmen.

Mr. LEY: Who does that?

Mr. J. STOREY: The hon. member, as a lawyer and as the representative of a district in which a large number of railway employees reside, should not require me to explain who is fixing the responsibility on the workmen. The card system has been introduced for that purpose alone. Mr. Lucy in his statements does not fix the responsibility on the workers; but Mr. Fraser's statements, which have been repeated by Mr. Fuller almost every day, fixes the responsibility

almost entirely on the workmen. If they do not, what is all the present trouble about? Why are the railway workmen out to-day?

Mr. BALL: Neither Mr. Fraser nor Mr. Fuller has attempted to fix the responsibility on the workmen!

Mr. J. STOREY: I could refer to half a dozen statements published in the newspapers in which Mr. Fraser has clearly stated that the card system has been introduced for the purpose of locating the loafers and ascertaining where the leakages are, and I should like to know what that means except it is intended to fix the responsibility on the men.

Mr. LEY: No!

Mr. J. STOREY: The hon. member's legal mind is too subtle for me. I say that the intention of the card system is to fix the responsibility on the men. All the happenings to which I have referred go to show that it is impossible to fix the responsibility on any human beings and say that they, and they only, are to blame because the railway system is not paying. If we had a better system of administration—which could be easily brought about—and we were to get rid of a good deal of the red tape that is now associated with the operations of the department, we should be in a much better position than we are to-day. It is not fair to blame the men, who ought to be back at work. The Minister for Railways ought to have found means long before this to bring about a settlement of the strike. If the strike is to be kept going until all the engineers and other workers are brought to their knees not only will Ministers be sorry, but they will do great injury to the people as a whole and the Treasury will suffer irreparable financial loss.

Mr. LEY: Is that a veiled threat?

Mr. J. STOREY: When the hon. member has been here a little longer and fully realises his responsibility, what I have been saying will appeal to him with much more force. The fact that he is a member of the legal profession does not render him immune from the charge that he supported a Government which endeavoured during its administration to fix upon the workers the responsibility for the failure of railway works which properly belongs to those who govern the

[Mr. J. Storey.

railways—in the persons of the Railway Commissioners and the highly-placed engineers. If the hon. member will ascertain from them what they are doing in regard to railway affairs, he will be in a position to get some tangible information as to why the railways are not paying. Following up that system, wherever loafers are discovered, sack them without regard to who the politician is who happens to have recommended them; and whether they be bosses or workmen, dismiss men if they are incompetent; but do not precipitate a tremendous industrial upheaval because you have failed to discover the men who are responsible.

Mr. G. R. W. McDONALD (Bingara) [11.52]: I am of opinion that it is nearly time the Railway Department had a general rake over. Not only in the Eveleigh workshops, but from one end of the railway system to the other there is plenty of room for improvement. It is a common experience for those who travel by the trains to find that there is no water in the lavatories; in other instances they are so filthy that it is impossible for passengers to use them. Again, you are constantly finding water bottles which have apparently never been cleaned, and many of them contain no water at all. At the railway-stations in summer it is not uncommon to find the water-bags empty which have been placed there for the convenience of passengers. Further, trucks which have been ordered for the despatch of wool and wheat are sent out long distances into the country without tarpaulins. A man arrives at the station with his wool, puts in into the wagons, and the Railway Commissioners refuse to remove it because it is not covered; with the result that the wool is left there exposed to the elements. I do not say the Commissioners are personally to blame, but the fact remains that the railway officials know the trucks will not be removed unless they are covered by tarpaulins, and yet when they are sent out the man who ordered them has to wait for a couple of days until the tarpaulins arrive. I was in a sleeping-car on one occasion when there was no water in the lavatory, and the place was unfit for human occupation by the time the train reached

Hornsby. When I spoke to the conductor, he said that there was a leaky tank, and that the car had been sent in for repair, but no one had attended to it.

Another common complaint against the Railway Department is that goods consigned to stations are sent to the wrong stations, and disappear for weeks at a time. I have on several occasions made complaints to the Railway Commissioners, and am pleased to say that they have frequently compensated people who have suffered losses in this way; but I remember one urgent case of sickness at Tamworth, when a man wanted an ice-chest. He could not get one in Tamworth, so he rang up Manilla, where one was put specially on the train to be taken to Tamworth. The consignee waited for the train, but when it arrived the ice-chest had disappeared. It was missing for some weeks, and when it turned up the Commissioners told him they were going to sell it at his risk. It was nearly winter time before he finally got possession of it, and in the meantime he had to purchase another in Sydney. In that case the Commissioners offered to take the ice-chest back to Manilla free of charge.

Mr. J. STOREY: It is a wonder they did not charge him demurrage!

Mr. G. R. W. McDONALD: As a matter of fact, it is a wonder, and that is what surprised me. I will say, however, that when the actual facts of a case like that have been brought to the Commissioners' attention, they have always, in my experience, acted fairly. I am one who never reports a matter unless I am aware of all the facts; when I make a complaint to the Railway Department, they generally know that I am right, and I am very careful when a man makes a complaint to me to definitely tell him that if there is anything wrong with what he says, I will not help him at all. That saves my own time and the time of the Commissioners.

Another trouble is in connection with the ordering of sleeping berths. It has been my common experience to send telegrams asking that berths be reserved, and frequently no notice is taken of them. I have ascertained from many people that it is a common event for

berths ordered not to be reserved. I had a painful experience one night at Rylstone, where a friend of mine wanted to reserve a berth. I advised him to hurry, as the train was about to arrive. He ran in and got my berth, because my telegram, which arrived the day before, had been overlooked. I had to sit up myself that night through giving advice to another man.

With regard to the conduct of employees in the department, I am positive that many of the 40,000 odd officials merely think the department is a place where they draw their wages on Friday night or Saturday morning. At country stations you will see small boys occupying seats who are employed as porters; they will let you walk about the premises for five minutes before even noticing that you are there. You may knock, but if you knock too often they will tell you to be careful. If they find you are a member of Parliament, they get very busy; but I have the greatest contempt for a man who gets busy just because he discovers that I am a member of Parliament, for it shows that he does not treat the public decently. There should be no necessity for a man to hurry when a member of Parliament walks in; because he should have been busy all the time. These young men do not realise the responsibility of their position; their carelessness results in irritation and loss to consignees and consignors alike. At one time I did suggest a system of education in the Railway Department, and I understand there is now an institute for that purpose, where they can circularise the officers and draw attention to neglect of simple duties.

I bring these instances before the Committee, not because I like to be making complaints, but because I wish to see these things remedied. One day I was at Uralla; something had gone wrong with one of the parts of the motor-car I was using, so I rang up Armidale and asked specially for a certain part to be put on the train and sent along. Everything was done specially, except when the part reached the railway station, when it seemed to be specially left behind. It was taken there by special carrier. Unfortunately the train was

half an hour late. That afforded an opportunity for the part to be put on it, yet when the train arrived at Uralla the part was missing. I had to hire a motor-car to go to Armidale to search for it. They actually wanted to charge me freight on it to Uralla. I made a claim against the department. I showed that I had spent 50s. for the hire of a car, and the department compensated me for the expenditure of 30s., but allowed me nothing for my time. It is a fair thing to take strong exception to loss of money caused by carelessness, neglect, or ignorance on the part of junior officers of the Railway Department. I do not say for a moment that everyone in the service is a loafer or is neglectful, but there are such in the service, and it consequently suffers as a whole. If an occasional traveller finds a lavatory dirty he thinks it is always so, and advertising the fact creates the impression that we have the rottenest railway service in the world. I am bringing these matters under the notice of the Minister only with the object of assisting him to make improvements. The operations of the Railway Institute might be extended so as to instil into the minds of the juniors the bad effects that must follow their neglect. If every boy, on joining as a porter or a clerk, was taught to give close attention to his work and to study the interests of the public, then in a few months' time we would see an all-round improvement, and the great mass of complaints would disappear. The only way in which an improvement can be made is to adopt the policy of telling the junior officers what they are to do, to discharge them if they do not do it, and to ignore representations from members of Parliament to reinstate them. If I find that a man who comes to me with a request for reinstatement has been properly sacked, I tell him so. I may lose a vote by that method, but I serve the interests of the public. If the Minister has 48,000 men all trying to help him, he will have a great system in smooth operation. If the card system is in operation he will be able to see where there is looseness. Then, instead of there being a necessity to increase the freights and fares by 10 per cent. in one year, and 15 per cent. in the next, the railways would pay.

[*Mr. G. R. W. McDonald.*]

Mr. SIMON HICKEY (Alexandria) [12.5 a.m.]: The statement has been made by the Commissioner that the falling-off in the productive activity of the employees in the Railway Department amounts to 25 per cent. I have no doubt that the introduction of the card system is attributable to that belief.

Mr. BALL: I do not think that that statement was ever made!

Mr. SIMON HICKEY: It was made. It is difficult to accurately cost up the work done in the shops on a comparative scale. Repair work differs very much in character. Similar work that at one time will be very easy to handle will at another require the application of a cold chisel. When a vehicle is out of repair, the work, although apparently similar in two cases, will really be found to differ immensely. That applies to tram-cars just as it does to locomotive engines. There is nothing uniform about repairs. When comparing the cost of repairs to-day with that of five years ago, you cannot make a true comparison of the nature of the damage and the quality of the repair work. Some time ago engines were run into dock more frequently than they are to-day. Now the Commissioners try to get more out of their rolling-stock. That would indicate that formerly when the engines went into the shops much less attention was required. The Eveleigh workshops are now becoming very congested—so much so that it has been considered desirable to move further afield. Nearly three times more workmen are being put into the shops than there were twenty years ago. That has the effect of throwing men out of their stride—they have not the space in which to move.

Mr. BALL: They are not hampered by want of space!

Mr. SIMON HICKEY: Why, then, were the Bankstown works proposed?

Mr. BALL: Because as the service increases there is more work to do!

Mr. SIMON HICKEY: The fact remains that there are three times as many men in the shops to-day as there were twenty years ago.

Mr. BALL: In the Victorian workshops they give the same space to two workmen as we give to one!

Mr. SIMON HICKEY: However, I specially refer to the statement that the amount of work has, on the average, fallen off 25 per cent.

Mr. BALL: I question if the statement was ever made!

Mr. SIMON HICKEY: I shall endeavour to prove it. I do not make statements that I cannot prove.

There is another matter of sufficient importance to require looking into. The Randwick workshops are not nearly so important as the Eveleigh workshops from the standpoint of productivity, yet we are continually hearing of disputes at those shops, while we seldom hear of disputes at the Eveleigh shops. At the Eveleigh shops there are two managerial heads who are pretty well on the same level. There are two kings in one kingdom, and it has been repeatedly asserted, not without reason, I believe, that those two gentlemen are at loggerheads. Dual management is not good at any time, but when it is in conflict the conditions become absolutely impossible. I understand that one of these gentlemen is just about reaching the retiring age, and if that is so there is an easy way out of the difficulty, and I invite the Minister when dealing with these positions again to consider whether it is a good thing to put two men on the same mark as regards status. One of the men should be second to the other man, and you would not then have a position that is described as being analogous to loggerheadedness.

The position of assistant to the Chief Mechanical Engineer has been provided for on the estimates for a long time. Some three or four years ago a very attractive advertisement was inserted in the English papers respecting this position. It would have required a man of at least 70 years of age who had physically never gone beyond the prime of life to fulfil all the requirements of this advertisement. He had practically to be a master of five professions. Because of the impossible conditions imposed no man was found to fill the position, which is one that should certainly be filled, especially when it has been provided for on the estimates for such a long time. It is always safe to have an understudy, and should the Chief Mechanical Engineer become ill or should

the expansion of the railways require an assistant there would be a dependable understudy. Until lately I was prepared to accept Mr. Fraser as a man of high repute, and a fair-minded man. I am willing to reserve my judgment regarding him at this moment, but under the prerogative which he has under the Railway Act he has lately developed the habit of sacking men. Three or four cases have come under my notice—an engine-driver named Roche, a guard named Albert Flemming, and an engineer named George Byrne. It is a source of irritation amongst men if they are refused the right of appeal to a tribunal which has been established by Parliament. If there is some proof that the dismissal of these men was warranted, that proof should be capable of being sustained before the appeals board. As regards Byrne, so far as I can find out he was held to be a member of the I.W.W. I can take an affidavit that the man is not imbued with I.W.W. ideas. He has never had any time for the I.W.W. and his discharge was a most iniquitous thing. I wrote to the Chief Commissioner about the case, which happened long enough ago for the matter to be rectified, but I have never heard that it has been. The Minister would do well to assert himself in this regard and see that those men who are dismissed have the usual right of appeal. Parliament accepted the idea that these men should have this right, and they should be allowed to exercise it.

During the last six or eight months enginemen on the railways have not been getting full time. They are receiving eight or nine days' pay only during the fortnight. I believe that is principally due to the non-cartage of wheat from the country and the consequent running of fewer trains. While these men are given short time they are made to stand by on the job, and even when they go home the officer in charge has to know where he can find them. That makes their conditions of employment very irksome. They are like members of fire brigades—they have to be right on the job all the time. It is not a fair thing to irritate them in that way, nor should they be pin-pricked by being required to sign too many documents and

make too many explanations regarding small things that have nothing to do with efficiency. At a time of turmoil through which these men are passing now these things do not make them value their jobs so much as they did previously, and as a result you will get them to strike where they would not strike previously. If they cannot be given employment for more than eight or nine days it is incumbent on the management to readjust matters. On the Victorian railways some years ago a readjustment in this respect became necessary as they had too many engine-drivers. The junior drivers could be converted into firemen and the junior firemen into cleaners. You rearrange the service in that way and give the men full time.

With regard to the tramways, I think the present turmoil has indicated that, for a portion of the day, it is not necessary to give certain suburbs a five or ten minutes' service. Some economy could be effected by using a type of car that would carry a greater number of passengers than those at present in use. Ten or twelve years ago there was a box type of car in use, the carrying capacity of which was only about half that of the dreadnought cars. It might be possible to have a longer car, or to use dreadnought cars coupled, especially in the middle of the day when there is not the same urgency for speed. Take a suburb like Petersham. There is a class of residence at Petersham which is only served by the train. You might class that as a half-hourly service. There is another part which has a tram service of ten minutes. Why the distinction? At the present time the department is making an attempt to give suburbs served by the tram a service three times better than in the case of those served entirely by train. During the business hours you could have plenty of trams running by working the men on broken shifts. That would be a labour-saving proposition.

The tramways might also be used for the conveyance of parcels. The railway service brings grist to the mill in the shape of revenue derived from parcels carried. I cannot understand why the tramways are not used for the same purpose. They might be so employed at

[*Mr. Simon Hickey.*

night time. The department has the rolling-stock, and the lines are laid, so it ought to make the tramway service as revenue-producing as possible. The trams already carry parcels of newspapers. Hundreds of parcels of newspapers are sent to every suburb by tram. I would suggest that the officers should be asked to report on the possibilities of the tramways for carrying parcels. I notice in connection with the item of "Gratuities to staff retired and relatives of deceased employees, £7,500," the amount has not been increased this year. I am glad to see that the amount granted towards railway technical classes and maintenance of Railway Institute has been increased. This is certainly a technical institute. When one talks about schools of art in the country, which are actually maintained by the revenue from the billiard table, one can see the humour of the position. This, however, is a legitimate attempt to preserve the idea of technical training within the limits of the Railway Department. Most if not all the lecturers are drawn from the railway service. I think they are all honorary lecturers. They are capable men, and in becoming lecturers at the institute they are not lost sight of by the department. With regard to the item, "Berthing Master, £430," I do not know what the functions of that official are. I should not think that was a job to warrant the appointment of a man on such a high mark. I was hoping that a returned soldier might have been given the position.

Mr. HUNT (Camden) [12.27 a.m.]: I do not wish to enter into a general criticism of the Railway Department, nor do I intend, like the last speaker, to attempt to instruct the Commissioners or the Minister how to run the railway service. I think the railways are run fairly well, and that they will compare favourably with those of other countries and States. There are some matters which I regret to have to refer to. One is the necessity for raising the railway fares. This, I am afraid, will act to the detriment of some people who have gone into the country some distance from the city to make homes for themselves. We have encouraged them to do so. I am afraid

the Railway Commissioners will not receive from these fares the revenue they expect. The increase will restrict to a great extent traffic that would come more regularly to the city if the fares were not so high. I hope that, as soon as practicable, the Minister or the Commissioner will bring the fares back to normal. This will be to the interest of the people in the country. From complaints made in the House the other evening, I realise that these increases will affect the people of the city also, but they will affect the people in the country a great deal more. Some of them will have to give up their homes and come nearer the city to live.

There is another matter I wish to bring before the Minister. An hon. member has complained of the condition of the lavatories in the railway carriages. My experience has not been like that of the hon. member, but my complaint is that no lavatory accommodation is provided on many trains which should have it. Some time ago I asked the following question in the House:—

Is it a fact that the Chief Railway Commissioner recently refused the request to provide lavatory accommodation on trains to Campbelltown, 34 miles from Sydney, made up exclusively of suburban carriages, on the ground that such accommodation was unnecessary on suburban lines? If so, will he ask the Chief Commissioner to reconsider his decision?

Answer.—I am informed that ample accommodation is provided at the railway stations, and it is not usual to provide lavatory accommodation on suburban trains.

Anyone who has travelled the 34 miles to Campbelltown will recognise the necessity for such accommodation being provided. I believe it has been provided on trains which do not run so great a distance. One may agree that lavatory accommodation is not required on the suburban lines, but in the case of trains running to Campbelltown, Penrith, Windsor, and other centres equally distant from the city, conveniences should be provided for the travelling public. We do not ask that there should be regular lavatory carriages, only that one carriage should be provided on each train. I hope the Minister will bring this matter before the Chief Commissioner and

see whether this cannot be done. It would not be costly, and the general public, which has to pay the piper in the long run, should be provided with conveniences of this character.

Mr. BROOKFIELD (Sturt) [12.32 a.m.]: There must be some other cause for the annual loss upon our railways than that put forward by hon. members who attribute it to the loafers and slow workers in the Randwick and Eveleigh workshops. The hon. member for Bingara seemed to think that the loss was due to the loafing of certain employees on bedrock wages, such as porters. I do not agree with the hon. member. My own view is that the cause is the want of administrative ability on the part of those in authority, and not the workers. For instance, a huge wood and coal shoot was recently erected at the Erskineville station at very great cost. That shoot was made so high that it was practically useless, and it has been found necessary to pull it to pieces. Someone is responsible. The cost of the work is added to the working cost of the railways. I do not agree with hon. members who would put the whole burden of the losses upon the men in the Eveleigh and Randwick workshops. Close to the shoot there is an elevator, which is also useless for the work it was erected to perform. When one learns of these things he cannot help thinking that there must be want of ability somewhere else than in the ranks of the lower-paid railway officers. The responsibility may not rest with the Commissioners. It may be that the works managers are not competent. Another device was installed at Eveleigh at considerable cost, known as "Lucy's Gun," the object of which was by a vacuum process to remove the ashes from the smoke-boxes of the locomotives. That device was installed at considerable cost, and proved a failure. There again is a cause of addition to the railway working cost, and another contribution to the annual loss. In view of these circumstances, it is unfair to suggest that the lower-paid workmen are responsible. Some six months or so ago the flanges of the locomotive wheels were altered. That was done against the advice of the engine-drivers, and the alteration led to considerable damage of the

rails and wheels, but despite that fact the alteration was persisted in, at a cost of some thousands of pounds. It is absurd for hon. members to blame some individual porter. Things of this sort destroy public confidence in the Commissioners and the works managers.

Here is another example of the shortsighted policy pursued by the Commissioners: The North Coast line, as everyone knows, will in course of time become the trunk line between Queensland and New South Wales. But the line has been built with single-line bridges across the rivers and single-line tunnels. In the near future these works will have to be duplicated, and it can only be done at great expense. Yet we expect the Railway Commissioners, who are responsible for mistakes of this kind, to carry on a large business enterprise and show a profit. The position is comparable with that of the varying gauges of the different States—another piece of shortsightedness which will cost some £50,000,000 to remedy. When one knows of the wilful waste of money caused by the shortsightedness of the Railway Commissioners, one must be astounded at the want of ability displayed. It is time drastic action was taken not towards the low-paid men, but against those who are at the top of the tree, and who are really responsible for the loss which is taking place. We can scarcely expect good service from the railway employees when we learn that the locomotive drivers and firemen were, some eighteen months ago, asked to sign a document under which they undertook not to divulge to outside persons any information in regard to the running of the railways, at the risk of instant dismissal. They were also threatened with six months' imprisonment.

Mr. BALL: Who was to give them six months' imprisonment?

Mr. BROOKFIELD: What I want to know is if the men signed a document which threatened them with dismissal if they dared to criticise the working of the railways?

Mr. BALL: I do not know!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: In the absence of any denial, I assume that there is truth in the suggestion.

[Mr. Brookfield.

Mr. BALL: The hon. member may take it from me that no man can be given six months' imprisonment except by a judge!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: I will leave that out; possibly it was only a threat. Still, the men had to sign a notice not to divulge any of the workings of the Railway Department, at the risk of instant dismissal. Does the Minister for Railways think it is right to stifle criticism of his department? If the hon. member is capable of handling this department he should invite criticism and not try to stifle it. If he tries to stifle criticism it is because he has something to hide.

Mr. BALL: We are inviting criticism. We are offering £2,000 to men who desire to give us any information for the better working of the railways. We encourage them, and compensate them for it!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: The money ought to be easily earned. If the Railway Commissioners allow a main trunk line to be constructed with only single-line tunnels and bridges, it shows a lack of foresight. We are going back to the days when there was one gauge constructed on the Victorian side of the border and another on the New South Wales side.

I wish to mention something which I think has been done on account of the strike—the re-employment of a lot of men who, on account of physical infirmity, were discharged from the service some years ago. Mr. Irwin, who was responsible for one of the most awful railway disasters in this country, has been taken back into the service and is now driving a railway engine. Surely the National Government cannot be so hard up for men that it must employ such a man as that and place him in charge of a railway engine again to the danger of the public? If that is the way the Government is going to carry on the railway service, it must be held responsible for any accident that may happen. W. Long, who had been off the footplates for seventeen years, is now driving a train again. He must be a back number and not fit for this work.

Mr. BALL: The trains are running all right—they are running to time!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: And you are taking a risk with people's lives. G. O'Brien, who could not pass the eyesight

test three years ago, is now driving a train from Newcastle to Sydney. There is a lot of trouble waiting for the Government. I am sure that when this industrial upheaval is over the Government will find it has been very expensive to employ such men as these to keep the railway service going. These men are not capable of running trains. A man named Crowther, known as "Black Jack," who was put off the footplates thirteen years ago, and is now driving a train between the north and Sydney, the other day overran Quirindi station by two lengths, and confessed that he could not see the signals, yet he is still employed in driving a train. If any accident should happen to anybody through this man driving a train, the responsible Minister will be guilty of murder. Another driver, S. Smith, is a one-armed man. Ten years ago he lost an arm, and he is now employed as an engine-driver. S. Bennett is also driving a train, although he has been out of the service for seven years. Judging by these men, the Minister must have engaged all the cripples and misfits he could get in the country to drive trains, and they have the lives of many people in their hands.

Mr. BALL: They are doing it wonderfully well!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: They may be doing it wonderfully well at first. I suppose it is owing to good luck. I hope the good luck will continue, and that there will not be any railway accidents. But if there is an accident, I shall blame the Minister as severely as any member of this House will blame him. A one-eyed man is also driving a train. He had failed in the engine test prior to losing his eye. Nevertheless, he is now driving a train. Can the Minister tell me whether what I have stated is true?

Mr. BALL: I cannot say, but I am sure that you would not say it if you did not think it was true!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: No; I would not. I could quote many other cases. I wish to ask the Minister if he is using Scarborough coal on the railways at present in preference to Helensburgh coal?

Mr. BALL: I am not aware that we are!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: The reason why I ask that question is because the Scar-

borough coal is not nearly so good as the Helensburgh coal; there is a lot more ash in it. If the Scarborough coal is being used on the railways in preference to the Helensburgh coal, there must be a reason for it. Does the Minister know whether more Scarborough coal than Helensburgh coal is being used on the railways?

Mr. BALL: I do not know!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: Some of the high railway officials are financially interested in the Scarborough colliery, and seeing that the coal from that mine is not as good as that obtained from Helensburgh the inference is that the Scarborough coal is being used to serve the interests of the mine-owners. At the commencement of the strike the Government stated distinctly that the strikers had given them an ultimatum on twenty-four hours' notice—

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot permit the hon. member to go into the history of the strike, which is not relevant to the matter before the Committee.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: There have been misstatements made in regard to the I.W.W. influence—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in going into the question of the cause of the strike, directly or indirectly. He will be permitted to criticise the administration of the department and may argue that mismanagement on the part of the responsible officials led to the strike, but I cannot allow him to go into the merits of the dispute or its history.

Mr. BROOKFIELD: I had intended to refer to the alleged go-slow policy that was said to have resulted in losses in connection with the railways, but as it would be a matter of great difficulty to discuss that question without referring to the strike, I will not say anything more about it.

I do not know how anyone could reasonably expect to run a decent service on our tramways with a contented and satisfied body of men under conditions such as apply to tram conductors. These men are supposed to work for only about eight hours per day, but they have to be on the job for from ten to twelve hours in order to get in their full shift. They have broken shifts and it is impossible for

them to do anything else than attend to the call of the department during the day. A man goes on for a few hours in the morning, then returns home and has to wait for a call to put in the rest of his day's work. He is on bedrock wages, which he would not take unless he was dead-beat. He has one of the worst jobs in the State, and if I were paid £1 per day I would not hang on to the trams in wet weather as the conductors have to do. The conditions are not at all fair, and point to the fact that those who are responsible for running the trams do not know their business and ought to be dispensed with. The locomotive drivers are in a very similar position to the tram conductors. They have to go to work at all hours of the night, are constantly at the beck and call of the superintending officers and may have to wait for hours without being called on to work. It is stated that they rarely get in more than nine or ten shifts in a fortnight, and it would be against human nature to expect men to do anything but strike against what they have to put up with. Anyone with a spark of manhood would not tolerate the conditions, and when a general clean-up takes place I hope the Government will try to arrange matters so that engine-drivers shall not be kept hanging about for twelve or fourteen hours in order to get in an eight-hours shift.

I notice that provision is made for the sum of £85,000 for the payment of the difference between military and departmental pay of members of the staff who are absent with the Expeditionary Forces. Does not this item give the direct denial to the statement that the railway servants are disloyal, loafers, and slackers? It is absurd for the Government to make wild statements about I.W.W. influences and disloyalty in the face of an item of this kind, and it would be well for Ministers to reflect whether the strike has not been brought about by faulty administration rather than by disloyalty on the part of the workers in the department.

It is admitted that men out of work are of no use to the community, and in this country of long distances it is difficult for men to get about in their search for work. I would like to know

[*Mr. Brookfield.*]

whether it would not be possible for the railways to carry free of charge men who have jobs to go to.

Mr. BALL: If a man has a *bona fide* situation to go to, provision is made for him!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: Yes, but the amount of his fare is deducted from his wages. He is put behind scratch to the extent of his railway fare. The awards of the Arbitration Court place men on scratch, and a worker who has to pay a heavy railway fare may be handicapped for a month. [*Committee counted.*] Again, can the Minister tell me why it is that old sleepers which could be sold are in many instances burnt?

Mr. BALL: We require all the old sleepers we can get for dunnage for wheat-stacking purposes. They have no right to be burnt!

Mr. BROOKFIELD: I have seen them burnt, and this is a matter into which I think inquiry might well be made.

In conclusion, I hope that when this department is reorganised, the reorganisers will not pay too much attention to the man who is at bedrock, but that they will take notice of the men higher up. They will find plenty of room for the card system, from the Commissioners down to the works managers. [*Committee counted.*]

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bathurst) [12.45 a.m.]: The statements just made by the hon. member for Sturt with regard to the burning of sleepers I can commend to the Minister for Railways as being well worthy of inquiry. I was recently at Narrabri in connection with the second ballot for Namoi electorate, and it came to my notice that hundreds of pounds worth of good sound sleepers had been piled up beside the railway line and destroyed by fire. This was an act of destruction for which somebody should be brought to account. I was told that £700 worth of sleepers were so destroyed in the vicinity of Narrabri.

Mr. BALL: If the hon. member will give me particulars of the matter, I will have inquiry made!

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am only stating what was told me in Narrabri from a reliable source, and I venture to think

that if the Minister through his department got in touch with the station-master at Narrabri West that officer would be able to point out when and where the sleepers were burnt; and I am informed he could indicate also where at the present time there are hundreds of sleepers which could be utilised by the department or sold to people who would put them to some useful purpose.

Mr. BALL: We want them very badly to use as dunnage for the stacking of wheat, and are anxious to get all we can!

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am assured they are there. I now wish to mention an item under "Railway and Tramway Construction Branch." We cannot make any comparisons between these estimates and those of last year, for the reason that last year's construction estimates were under the heading of "Public Works," while this time they are under the heading of "Railways." I am more than surprised, however, at seeing the small amount of £56,467 placed on the estimates for railway and tramway construction. I want to say here that it seems to me an appalling waste of time and money in connection with the city railway, for which some provision is made here, that one of our best parks has been rent asunder and a huge disreputable-looking fence put up enclosing a large portion of it.

Mr. BALL: These items only refer to administrative charges; they have nothing to do with construction, which will be met by loan expenditure!

Mr. JOHNSTON: They are under "Construction," and I want, if I am within my rights, to refer to them.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member sees that administrative charges only are dealt with under this vote. The matters to which he has referred with regard to the city railway are provided for out of loan estimates.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Then I will take an opportunity on another occasion of deploring the fact that these things do exist.

Something has been said with regard to general discontent in the railway service, and the general discontent on the

part of that important person who seems to have been overlooked during the present trouble—the producer who uses the railways. The conduct of the railways has in the past been to some extent arbitrary. Certainly those in charge seem to have thought that the last person to be given consideration is the producer in the country who sends his goods to the metropolitan market. I have been in this House only five or six months, but a great many of the complaints brought under my notice by people in the country have been on account of trouble with the Railway Department. I will give as an instance the case of a man in my electorate who gains his livelihood by growing cabbages. He sends down a large consignment of a truck-load or more, which means a considerable sum of money to him. That is the last he sees of his cabbages. When he makes his own representations to the Railway Department the replies he receives are in the first place evasive, and when he pursues the matter they are not courteous. He saw me, and on my recommendation took some advice, whereupon the department sheltered itself behind the fact that he was not insured. Something of the same kind occurred in connection with a truck or two trucks of fat bullocks consigned from my electorate to the metropolitan market. They were taken into the railway yards and were kept in the trucks for forty-eight hours longer than they should have been, so that not only was there absolute cruelty to animals, but depreciation in the value of the stock. Had those bullocks arrived at Homebush at the proper time they would have caught a good market, which, as circumstances turned out, they were unable to catch. Speaking as a country man, I say that the men who come within the well-worn phrase, the "backbone of the country," should be afforded more consideration. I could multiply these illustrations. I could give the case of a man in the country who purchased goods in the city. They have never yet reached him. He was given a very brief and discourteous reply from the department when he made representations to it. The department should be responsible as common carriers for the goods they undertake to deliver.

to the people in the country, or undertake to carry from the country for delivery in Sydney.

All these things have given rise to a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the railways, not with the bottom dog, the porter and others, but with those in charge of the administration, those in responsible positions, such as goods managers and station-masters. The great volume of dissatisfaction with the administration of the railway service generally is not because of the acts or omissions of the under-dog, the shunter, getting a paltry wage of £2 10s. or £3 a week. The man who is really responsible for all the dissatisfaction, who is really responsible for the discourtesy and dirty carriages and intolerable lavatories spoken of by the hon. member for Bingara, is not the fifty-bob or three-pounds-a-week man, but the more highly-paid man who does not do his duty, who does not supervise properly. Those are the men who are responsible for the feeling that the traveller can get no attention from railway employees unless he is the head of a department or member of Parliament. Then, as the hon. member for Bingara says, they fall over themselves in their effort to be polite. I agree with the hon. member that if they had been doing their duty all the time it would not be necessary for them to outdo themselves to display courtesy when they found themselves confronted by the head of a department or member of Parliament. If they had been pursuing their duty with proper vigilance they would not require that stir to activity. This state of things affects the department not only in its transport, but in every other part of the service where there are a number of hands employed. That is the reason for the little pin-pricks, the hundred and one little grievances, some so small that if they could see the light of day they would fade away, but because they cannot they eventually become magnified into something which causes great unrest amongst the employees.

Here I wish to make a suggestion which, if it were adopted, would, I believe, do away with a great deal of trouble, probably the gigantic trouble we have to-day. It is that the railways

[*Mr. Johnston.*]

appeal court, which under the new statute has given very great satisfaction all round, might have its powers and scope extended. The machinery of the Industrial Arbitration Act is such that it is expensive and difficult and generally tedious for men to get their grievances before the court. Where those grievances are merely pin-pricks the probability is that no workable industrial arbitration machinery could be found under which such trivial matters could be inquired into. But if this appeals board had its powers extended, these little grievances could be brought before it and investigated without expense and delay. With regard to wages boards, the success of a large number of them has been that when you have a broad-minded and capable chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is going outside the scope of the question before the Committee. Any matter which involves legislative enactment cannot be discussed on these estimates. The hon. member is permitted to discuss any matter relating to the administration of the railways, but he cannot go into any questions involving the passing of legislation. [*Committee counted.*]

Mr. JOHNSTON; I merely want to commend to the Minister the suggestion which I have made. It seems most extraordinary that there should be an estimated increase in the expenditure for this year of £608,667 over last year, considering that the tonnage carried over the railways will be materially less than last year. As regards wheat, one of the biggest revenue-producing products carried on the railways, millions of bushels will not be carried on the railways during the next twelve months, for the reason that shipping is not available for its transport oversea. On account of the terrible conflict that is going on in Europe, commercial life is to a great extent stagnated, and there will not be the volume of trade done that was done two years ago or even last year. It is extraordinary, therefore, that the cost of running the railways is going to increase this year by the amount which I have stated. I cannot see that the card system introduced by Mr. Fraser is going to increase expenditure by more than from £27,000 to £30,000.

Mr. BALL: There is an increase of £88,000 in wages due to various awards!

Mr. JOHNSTON: Computing the increased cost of the card system at about £30,000, that only brings the increased expenditure up to about £120,000. What is going to absorb the balance of the increased expenditure? I should like to refer to a few of these increases. I find that in the existing lines and maintenance branch the number of inspectors and members of the clerical staff is increased from 113 to 126, involving an additional expenditure of about £3,000. It is extraordinary that there should be this increase in one branch alone at a time like this, when the volume of the transport business must decrease and the amount of revenue earned by the railways proportionately decrease. I find that in each branch there is an increase in the inspecting and clerical staff. There may be a reasonable explanation for this, but at a time when our leading statesmen are using every effort to secure economy, when all the newspapers are advocating the scraping together of every available penny, in order to provide the silver bullet which we are told by Lloyd George is going to be the great factor in defeating our enemies in the war, an explanation should be given for this increase in every branch of the Railway Department—not in wages, although the Minister has pointed out that there is an increase of £88,000 for wages—

Mr. BALL: Will the hon. member allow me to correct that statement? The £88,000 I referred to was the actual increase in the tramway service. The actual increase in the railway service was no less than £759,452.

Mr. JOHNSTON: What I am now referring to is the increase in the number of inspectors. It is most extraordinary that at this crucial time, when the whole nation is being urged to use its last penny towards defeating our common enemy, there should be an increase in every branch of this great department in the number of inspectors and sub-foremen. The Minister has referred to the item "Towards payment of bonuses to officers and employees for suggestions adopted in connection with the improvement of railway or tramway working or appliances, £2,000." That is a very laud-

able thing. If an employee can show that a certain piece of work can be done better he should receive some of the benefits that may accrue to the department. The Minister might even go further and create a patents branch, so as to protect the interests of men who, under present conditions, are prevented from using their ability in devising more economical ways of doing the work. At present a foreman or sub-foreman may steal a man's ideas, and get the credit for an invention that originated in the mind of a humble employee. If the Minister will do something to enable employees to get the benefit of their ideas it will give the men in the service an impetus to work on lines that will develop this great socialistic industry.

With regard to the item of "Manager, City Railway, £600," it seems to me extraordinary that there should be a manager of a city railway that does not exist. The only part of that railway that exists is the number of hideous sheds erected for the machinery, and a few excavations which have been completed. These have given the city a most desolate appearance. Take that part in front of the City Railway Station. It should be a thing of beauty, but it is a hideous eyesore. An unsightly fence has also been erected round part of Hyde Park. I cannot understand why this item appears on the estimates, or what the manager is supposed to be doing. If it is his duty to inspect the hideous barricades I have referred to he is earning his £600 very easily.

Mr. WRIGHT (Willyama) [1.35 a.m.]: It has been admitted that certain men who the Commissioners found were not fit to be retained in the service for various reasons, such as defective eyesight or carelessness, have been put off under the rules laid down by the Commissioners. I have nothing to say against that. Those who manage the railways should look after the public interest, and see that competent men are in charge of the rolling-stock. That should be done for the purpose of protecting not only human life but property also. It is a well-known fact that, should a railway accident occur, the Commissioners are liable if it is proved to the satisfaction of the judge and jury that the Commissioners have

not exercised proper control over the service. If an accident should happen while incompetent men are in charge of an engine, it is open to any person to prove to the court that the Commissioners stated that on such a date these men were discharged for defective vision or carelessness or for some other reason which rendered them incompetent to carry out their duties. I take it the Railway Commissioners are within their rights in protecting the public interest by seeing that their staff is competent to do its work. The Commissioners have no right to put any man back because there happens to be a strike on, if he is not competent. Men have been discharged by the Commissioner because he thought an accident might happen as the result of having incompetent men in the service. If an accident should happen under such circumstances any person affected would have no difficulty in getting a verdict against the Commissioners in a court of law. I warn the Commissioners that there is very grave danger not only to human lives, but to the finances of the country. I was a witness of that awful disaster at Exeter. It was proved to the satisfaction of the Commissioners that certain men who were responsible for that accident were not fit to be entrusted with the care of a train. Those men are on the trains again. It is a very serious position for the Railway Commissioners to take up. There is one matter in connection with the railway management which deserves consideration, and that is the oil question. I see no provision in the estimates for oil, but the cost of oil in connection with the running of engines must be enormous. If the Commissioners were really desirous of conserving the interests of the people, they would plant castor-oil trees and prepare their own oil, instead of buying faked stuff, the use of which is responsible for heated engines. There are three grades of oil, and very often oil of second-grade quality is sold as cold-drawn, with the result that we have heated boxes and general inefficiency in the running of the rolling-stock. If the Commissioners would grow their own trees—and there are many localities suitable—they would save an enormous amount of money to the State. I submit this suggestion for their consideration. According to the

[*Mr. Wright.*

estimates the cost to the railways this year is to be £8,455,000. I know that portion of the increased cost is due to the increased wages. About that I make no comment. What I do complain of is the disproportionate amount of the expenses of management. The first two or three totals under the head of "Working Expenses," £9,999, £19,986, and £44,898, are exclusively for salaries. It is desirable that in preparing the estimates the amount required for wages and the amount required for salaries should be separately stated, in order that we may be able to ascertain and compare the cost of the two services. In submitting the estimates in one lump sum, it seems to me there is only one purpose to be served, and that is to disguise the real cost of supervision. I do not suggest that we should not pay for effective supervision, or that wages should be cut down; but there are too many drones. We want fewer supervisors and better men. Then in regard to the £23,000 for extra foremen, which is an addition to the estimates, we were told by the Minister that these were not extra men, but men taken from the workshops. If those extra foremen were taken from the workshops other men must have been appointed to fill their places. I am surprised that the Minister should try and force such stuff down our throats.

Mr. BALL: The fact remains that we did not put on extra men!

Mr. WRIGHT: Extra men may not have been put on yet, but when the strike is over it will be necessary to appoint men to fill the places of those working at the lathe and the forge who have been selected for duties of supervision.

Mr. BALL: This was done before the strike took place, and other men in the shops filled the positions without other men being put on!

Mr. WRIGHT: Then the assumption is that there were men in the shops who were of no use. In order to carry out the proposals of the Railway Commissioners an expenditure of £23,000 is involved in connection with the Eveleigh workshops alone, but whether the appointment of the additional foremen will result in £23,000 worth of additional work being got out of the men remains to be seen. I suppose the only excuse the Railway Commissioners have for appointing these

sub-foremen is that they believe they will be able to make more than £23,000 by the extra work they will get out of the men by introducing what is known as the Taylor card system. If the workmen had been working fairly previously, the introduction of the Taylor card system here must result in sweating the men, the same as it has resulted in sweating men elsewhere, and driving them to the cemetery before their time. I do not think that the action of the Railway Commissioners in this matter is in the interests of the country. On one occasion when Taylor interrogated an employer in America who had put this system in operation where it failed, and was told how he had brought it into operation, Taylor said to him, "You made a mistake in bringing the whole system into operation at once. You should have introduced it gradually." I suppose that our Railway Commissioners are trying to introduce the system gradually; but it is the Taylor system they are introducing.

Mr. HOSKINS: No!

Mr. WRIGHT: It is the Taylor system. I know more about this particular kind of work than the hon. member does. The Taylor system is a speeding-up system which makes men prematurely aged. As a young man I worked in America and was so fagged at the conclusion of my week's work on the Saturday night that I could hardly move on Sunday. The Railway Commissioners have not shown discretion in introducing such a system here. They have caused an upheaval which is a sorry thing for all concerned, and should not have been brought about in such a country as this, more particularly during the present awful war. If Mr. Lucy's statement was true—I have not heard it contradicted—that at the Eveleigh workshops the work was done as cheaply and well as in any private firm, there was certainly no need to alter the system. If, on the other hand, Mr. Lucy's statement was not true he ought not to be retained in his present position after making an untrue statement. No alteration in the conditions under which the men had been working in the Government workshops should have been made during the currency of the war. Those managing a large undertaking such as the rail-

ways should not be deficient in tact, and should not show a want of that sympathy which should exist between employer and employee. The Railway Commissioners are practically in the position of employers. According to my experience, an employer who is a bully does not get so much work out of his employees as does an employer who has a sympathetic feeling towards those whom he employs. I have worked for all classes of employers; I have also carried out contracts. When carrying out those contracts I have, without any bullying, got as much work from the men I employed as could have been obtained by any employer who was a bully. When the Railway Commissioners were appointed last year it was stated that each Commissioner would have a different department to control, but now everything appears to be controlled by the Chief Railway Commissioner. It seems to me that he is incompetent to carry out the work entrusted to him. It was a sorry day for this country when he was appointed to the position he now holds. Hundreds of people know it to their cost—not only the strikers, but also business and other people, who are seriously affected by the present awful strike, which was brought about by the Chief Railway Commissioner introducing a new system contrary to a promise he had made. Most of the awards which have been given in the Arbitration Court have been contested by the Chief Railway Commissioner, who has appealed to the High Court against them. The hon. member for Sturt mentioned the fact that when he waited upon the Chief Railway Commissioner in regard to some trouble with fettlers at Broken Hill the Chief Railway Commissioner refused to receive a deputation about the matter. This high and mighty man said, "They are well paid, and have a soft job." The Chief Railway Commissioner should go to Russia to manage something there. He should not be in Australia. I question whether he would be allowed to live long in Russia. We in Australia are a quiet law-abiding people, but there is a good deal of determination in the character of the Australian, and he will not allow himself to be put upon too long. The Chief Railway Commissioner ought to know this well enough. Some men, on

account of their domineering attitude, are not fit to manage men. A man may be an excellent engineer or accountant, and give good service in that capacity, but when he has to supervise the work of other men there is sometimes a want of sympathy on his part towards them. Men are not mere machines. At the present time they are largely machine tenders. You may work a piece of iron all right, but you cannot make a human being work just as you like. All human beings are not alike. We all have our idiosyncrasies. In my opinion the Chief Railway Commissioner has proved himself totally incompetent. He has shown that he is unable to manage our gigantic railway service. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that he wins his way out in the present struggle, what will happen? The people will be dissatisfied. What is happening now will happen again. I have seen many strikes in Australia, and many before I came here; and generally the men have won in the long run. Mr. Fraser has done one good thing. His action has consolidated the men. He thinks that he has wrecked them, but eventually they will become more consolidated than ever. In all these upheavals, after the first awful wreckage that occurs, the good results are seen, and eventually the men in the over-alls come out on top. In a young country like this everything should be rosy, and any man who introduces a system that causes an industrial upheaval is an enemy to his kind.

I notice that the provision for the solicitor and staff has been increased from £5,198 last year to £5,286. This is a very important branch, because the Chief Commissioner is not satisfied with the awards of the Arbitration Court, and has to utilise the services of his solicitor to contest them. If the Chief Commissioner would rest satisfied with the findings of the Arbitration Court, which ought to be good enough for him as a public servant, all the solicitor would have to do would be to settle claims in respect to accidents, and it would not be necessary to incur such heavy expense as at present. Does the Chief Commissioner ever think of a workman having to subsist on 10s. a day while he is drawing his £3,000 per annum? He has no consideration for

[*Mr. Wright.*]

those under him, and that is where he fails. It is inhumane to appeal against any decision of the Arbitration Court which awards men more than 12s. per day, because it is impossible for working-men to bring up their families decently on less than that amount.

Mr. LEY: What would you give single men?

Mr. WRIGHT: It is impossible to differentiate between single men and married men so far as wages are concerned. The policy of this country should be to encourage men to marry, and I believe that the Railway Commissioners have weeded out the single men and given preference to married men. It would be far better for this country if every man married when he reached the age of 22.

This strike has been prepared for by the Railway Commissioners. At no time in the history of the railways have they had such large stocks of coal, and this is a clear indication that trouble was expected by the Commissioners. The men were not expecting trouble. They did not want trouble, but pin-pricks were going on all the time, and the Commissioners, who knew that trouble was brewing, brought things to a head by appointing a lot of additional sub-foremen and introducing the card system. I know that for some considerable time past some of the union officials have had to hold their men back, and have had all they could do to keep them at work. Men have been called upon at 6 o'clock, and have not been permitted to start work until 12 o'clock, and until this and other similar conditions are altered the Commissioners will not be able to get the best out of the men. A man requires to be well fed and well treated to make him contented.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: That is what they are doing with the men at the Cricket Ground!

Mr. WRIGHT: That opens up another question. The Railway Commissioners have thought fit to get men to take the place of the strikers. These men have been called "loyalists," and provision will have to be made on the next estimates for the beer with which they are now being supplied; but no doubt the item will be put before us in a disguised form. These estimates

are not presented as they should be. We cannot ascertain the actual cost of supervision, and the position is not made as clear as it should be. There should be no disguise as to what is going on in the public service. I am not blaming this Government any more than previous Governments. They have all been doing the same thing, and it seems impossible to stop them until there is some combination made to do so; but I hope the time will come when things will be made so clear that those who run may read, and there will be no suspicion of anything being hidden. Ministers will then receive the respect which they do not have now from me. [*Committee counted.*]

Mr. OSBORNE (Paddington) [2.14 a.m.]: There are no estimates, I suppose, which will excite more discussion at this period of the year than those now before the Committee. Whilst I do not propose tonight to go into the merits or demerits of the industrial dispute which is now raging under railway administration, I do want to draw attention to what I consider to be some glaring inaccuracies appearing in the estimates. I wish to direct the Minister's attention to practically the first item on the estimate—that is, the cost of carrying on the general establishment. I have been perusing the last annual report of the Railway Commissioners, and I find that according to their own figures there is, as a matter of fact, a reduction—

Notice taken that there was not a quorum present.

The House resumed.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I desire to direct your attention, sir, to the fact that we had a quorum. One hon. member, who sat in the Chamber after the call for a quorum was made, went out of the Chamber and left us without a quorum.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member knows that I cannot take notice of anything that occurred in Committee unless it is reported. I can take notice only of what transpires in the House. There is a quorum present.

In Committee:

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move:

That the hon. member for Paddington be not further heard.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 26; noes, 15; majority, 11.

AYES.

Arthur, Dr. R.	Millard, W.
Ball, R. T.	Morton, Harry
Bennett, W.	Nicholson, Lt.-Col.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Oakes, C. W.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Crane, J. T.	Storey, D.
Fallick, J.	Walker, R. B.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Wearne, W. E.
Hall, D. R.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hoskins, T. J.	Zuill, W. A.
Hunt, J. C.	
Lane, H. W.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Latimer, W. F.	Bruntnell, A.
Ley, T. J.	Graff, A.

NOES.

Davies, W.	Mutch, T. D.
Doyle, J. W.	Osborne, J. P.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	
Keegan, T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lang, J. T.	Burke, M.
McKell, W. J.	McGirr, P. M.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [2.25 a.m.]: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move: That the hon. member be not further heard.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 27; noes, 20; majority, 7.

AYES.

Arthur, Dr. R.	Ley, T. J.
Ball, R. T.	Millard, W.
Bennett, W.	Morton, Harry
Bruntnell, A.	Nicholson, Lt.-Col.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Oakes, C. W.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Crane, J. T.	Storey, D.
Fallick, J.	Walker, R. B.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Wearne, W. E.
Hall, D. R.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hoskins, T. J.	Zuill, W. A.
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lane, H. W.	Buttenshaw, E. A.
Latimer, W. F.	Graff, A.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McGirr, P. M.
Davies, W.	McKell, W. J.
Dooley, J.	Mutch, T. D.
Doyle, J. W.	Osborne, J. P.
Estell, J.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Hickey, Simon	R. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Wright, J.
Kearsley, W.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Keegan, T.	Burke, M.
Lang, J. T.	Quirk, J. P.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. J. W. DOYLE (Phillip) [2.29 a.m.]: It is remarkable that in a serene atmosphere like this we should be discussing estimates of the department responsible for the greatest upheaval in this State and probably in Australia. I have travelled for some considerable time on the railways of this State, and long before I had any aspiration to become a member of this House I was struck with the way in which the railways were administered. Take for instance the McDonaldtown railway-station, which is absolutely useless. For the last ten or twelve years I have not seen more than two passengers either alight from or enter the train at that station, and I have very often seen the train pull up within 20 or 30 yards of the station, then crawl into it, and after stopping the scheduled time, draw out again. That is an absolute waste of time, and a great inconvenience to passengers.

I have asked a question bearing on the matter of the payment to railway servants who enlisted of the difference between their military and railway pays, and I am anxiously awaiting an answer. The railway servants of this State were promised that the difference between their military and railway pays would be made up by the Government, but it has come to my knowledge that, in the case of men who enlisted from the Railway Department, and made the supreme sacrifice in fighting for the cause of the Empire, their dependents upon application at the Railway Commissioners' office have been refused that accumulated pay which was promised when their unfortunate relatives enlisted. If that is the policy of this win-the-war Government I have very poor hopes regarding the recruiting movement in this State.

It would appear that nearly all the increases which are shown in these estimates are to be given to members of the salaried staff only. Clerks, and guards, and signalmen are certainly included, but the estimates do not show what proportion of the increases is to be made to the salaried staff. I take strong exception to the way in which the estimates are placed before us for our consideration. They are framed in a very unbusinesslike manner, and I trust that we

shall next year see an alteration for the better in this respect. I notice that there is an increase of approximately £150,000 in the item "Refreshment rooms—salaries and wages of staff, stores and materials, and other expenses in connection therewith." There has not been any explanation by the Minister of this large increase. There is altogether an increase of £600,000 odd over last year's expenditure, and no explanation has been forthcoming as to why this increase is necessary. I hope the Minister will be good enough to explain the reason for this huge increase.

Mr. GARDINER (Newcastle) [2.36 a.m.]: During the last few years certain innovations have been made in the Railway Department, and I am going to suggest another innovation, and that is that it would be a very good thing if the Chief Railway Commissioner, like the other heads of the other public departments, were in attendance behind the Chair during the passing of these estimates. I am certain that if that gentleman were present during criticism of the railway estimates he would get much valuable information.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GARDINER: A very noticeable thing is the habit which the Railway Commissioners have recently developed of travelling from centre to centre and delivering addresses to different sections of the community. The eloquence which they have displayed would do credit to members of Parliament. They have gone among the farmers and deplored the necessity for increasing fares and freights, pointing out that that was due to inefficiency, and even worse faults on the part of the rank and file in the railway service. After leaving their farmer friends, they have gone to the employees and patted them on the back as being one of the most efficient staffs in the world. Both statements cannot be true, but I rather believe the latter. The leader of the Opposition quoted from two reports this evening. The report of 1912 showed that the production of engines at Eveleigh is very creditable compared with the work done in private establishments. The other report contained the evidence given by Mr. Lucy to the effect that there is no leakage in the Eveleigh

workshop. Those reports are of recent date, and are directly opposed to statements made by the Chief Commissioner and members of the Government since the strike started. The question of the lack of efficiency or carelessness has been referred to, especially in connection with the North Shore station and the marshalling yards at Darling Harbour. I may mention a case at Newcastle. Seven or eight years ago, when Mr. Johnson was Chief Commissioner, he had one hoist erected at Newcastle, but the other two have been on the scrap-heap ever since. These hoists cost about £70,000 each, so the three of them represent a loss of £210,000 to the State. The railway managers would be better engaged if, instead of running about the country, they attended to the savings that would be effected by seeing that the heads of the departments understood their business and carried out their duties efficiently. If they had done so the present unseemly dispute between the managers and the men would very likely not have occurred.

I have noticed that in recent years the Commissioners have developed a desire to concern themselves about the wages paid to the staff. It should not be the concern of the Commissioners what wages men working with a shovel are getting. The award made in connection with any section of the railway service should not be the concern of the Commissioners, but of the officers under them. I will read from a report in a recent paper in regard to an award given which affected a large number of railway servants:

Judgment has been given in the case of W. Clancey, a blacksmith's striker, who claimed a balance of wages said to be due to him by the Railway Commissioners. The claim had been allowed by the industrial magistrate, and against this the Commissioners appealed.

The decision previously given by the court was that the rates and prices fixed by the award of the State board would apply under the section, provided the work was similar and done under similar circumstances.

Judge Rolin upset that decision, and said that section 26 did not apply. His judgment affected the wages of thousands of railway employees who followed the

occupation of a blacksmith's striker. If men engaged in that occupation throughout the whole Commonwealth are entitled to those wages surely the railway employees engaged in the same occupation are also entitled to them. The wages paid by private establishments are higher than those paid in the railway service. I have a case in mind where a man in the railway service was getting 8s. 6d. a day. He was asked to provide his own shovel. As he had a wife and family to keep he could not do so, and he asked the department to provide the shovel. He was suspended for not obeying orders. He then went to the steel works in Newcastle, where he got 11s. 9d. a day for doing the same kind of work. He was well known in the railway service.

Some time ago the railway refreshment-rooms were taken over by the Railway Department. They appointed as head an estate agent named Hunt, who had no knowledge of the business, and gave him an increase of salary. This officer appointed his own friends and relations to positions in the department without regard to their fitness, with the result that affairs soon became chaotic. Let me quote an instance of the sort of thing that occurred: A man was employed in charge of one of the refreshment-rooms. On account of his wife's sickness he sent in his resignation. Whilst his case was under consideration a complaint was lodged about the way in which the refreshment-room was conducted. In the meantime the man resigned, and a successor was appointed. The complaint was answered by the estate agent in charge to the effect that it had been noted, that the man in charge had been dismissed and a new man appointed. Whilst that was the answer given, the man against whom the complaint was made had upon his resignation obtained credentials from his superior officer. That is one example of what is going on under the eyes of the Railway Commissioners without their knowing it. There is one other matter I would appeal to the Minister to consider. I realise how difficult it is to get efficient men to take charge of the trams and trains, but it has been brought under my notice by some members of the

travelling public that men are filling these positions who are absolutely unqualified. I have a number of names of men whose cases I hope the Minister will inquire into, and give a guarantee that they will be removed from the trains which they are running, in some cases I believe without help of any kind. They are Carpenter, Cornwall, Thompson, O'Brien, Leighton, and others. These men have been in charge of trains as engine-drivers and firemen in and about Newcastle, and some of them on mail trains to the great danger of the travelling public. I trust the Minister will see that the Railway Commissioners take immediate steps to remove the danger with which the travelling public is threatened.

Colonel ONSLOW (Bondi) [2.55 a.m.]: I came in to listen to the leader of the Opposition in this debate, anticipating that I should hear something worth listening to. I heard the hon. member, in a long and involved argument, attempt to make out that something was wrong with the administration of the railways. No doubt there is something wrong, and what has been wrong has been that for a considerable time past a number of workmen have been engaged in the railway workshops who were not worth the salt they had with their meals from the standpoint of the amount of work they did for the pay they received from the public. Several hon. members have more than hinted in the course of the debate that the present industrial dislocation—I think that is the term used in the arbitration courts, on the Opposition benches, and in other places in the State—was due to the mismanagement of the men responsible for the administration of the railways, and that the deficit which unfortunately is known to exist in the railway finances was attributable to the same cause. As regards the industrial dislocation by which it was attempted to paralyse the railway system, that was entirely due to the machinations of hon. members opposite, or at all events to the people whom they represent. The hon. member for Newcastle, who supports no party, who was returned by the vote of both parties, and whose political principles apparently be-

[*Mr. Gardiner.*

gin and end with his retaining his seat in this Chamber, and the emoluments attached thereto, read out a list of names of men alleged to be working on trains but who are not qualified to do so, and appealed to the Government to see that the public was preserved from this pressing danger. Let me inform the hon. member that the Railway Commissioners and the Government are responsible for the administration of the railways, and that the public requirements demand that the railway wheels shall be kept running. The railway wheels have continued running in spite of the declamations, machinations, wishes, and intrigues of hon. gentlemen opposite and the people they represent.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Colonel ONSLOW: It appears to me that hon. members opposite are somewhat disappointed. They sit with the shadow of defeat upon them. The railways and tramways are still running, and will continue to run in spite of all that hon. members opposite may do and say. As to the present position of the railway service, it appears to me that a certain political faction, drunk with power which they were unfit to possess, and suddenly dispossessed of that power—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I prevented hon. members on the Opposition side from going into the question of the strike except so far as they attempted to prove that the strike was brought about by some mismanagement on the part of somebody connected with the railways. The hon. member can do that if he wishes, but I cannot allow him to go into the history and progress of the present industrial trouble. I refused to allow hon. members on the other side to do it. I hope that the hon. member will make his remarks strictly relevant to the question before the Chair.

Colonel ONSLOW: I was attempting to disprove the arguments of hon. members opposite. I desire to say a word or two in approbation of the present administration of the railways. I think that the Minister for Railways, hon. members opposite, all the people connected with the public life of this State in any shape or form, and the whole public of New South Wales are under an

eternal debt of gratitude to the present Chief Railway Commissioner, who has proved himself to be very capable and thoroughly fitted to maintain the railway service. In spite of vast difficulties which have been thrown in his way by traitors, pro-Germans, pro-Boers, and others of that breed, he has succeeded in keeping the railways running. He has supplied the public with an excellent and admirable service in spite of the efforts of all the traitors.

An HON. MEMBER: Why do you not sack him?

Colonel ONSLOW: The Chief Railway Commissioner will shortly be engaged in sacking or refusing to take back friends of the hon. member who has just interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Colonel ONSLOW: At the present moment I have in my pocket three letters from people who happen to be residing in my electorate, and until lately were employed in the railway and tramway service—three typical letters begging me to intercede on their behalf and use my influence to get the Railway Commissioners to take them back. These men have tried to get back and been refused, one of them because he has been spending a week or two intimidating former employees in the railway service who wished to resume work. Now he is doing his best to get back into the service himself, and has applied to me to assist him to get back. Another letter is from a man who has been using those very beautiful words “scab” and “black-leg” with great freedom, thereby inducing men to leave the railway service. Strangely enough, he now desires to get back to his previous position as tram-driver somewhere in the eastern suburbs; but for some reason the Railway Commissioners have refused to re-employ him, and he finds that he is in danger of losing employment altogether.

An HON. MEMBER: He lives at Bondi!

Colonel ONSLOW: I do not know where he lives, and do not care. I only know that he has asked me to get him reinstated in the service. I am sure that before many days are out I shall receive a great many more letters of the same sort, and every hon. member will receive many such letters. There is scarcely an

hon. member on this side of the House who has not a letter of that kind in his pocket or has had personal applications from men anxious to resume employment in the railway or tramway service.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will not pursue that line of argument any further. I do not think it is strictly relevant to the question before the Chair—the administration of the railways. The hon. member may make a reference to cases of that kind, but I will not allow him to go into them in detail because he would really be doing what I prevented hon. members on the other side from doing—that is, going into details of the present industrial trouble. I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to what concerns the management of the railways.

Colonel ONSLOW: In conclusion, I merely wish to congratulate the administration of the Railway Department, and also the Government, upon the admirable service that the public are at present receiving. It is a fortunate thing that we should have in the public service men who can keep a stiff upper lip and who will not flinch from doing their duty, despite the political abuse and prejudice of which they have been made the objects by an unprincipled gang of professional politicians.

Mr. DOOLEY (Hartley) [3.12 a.m.]: I intend to allow the remarks of the hon. member for Bondi to pass as unworthy of notice. There is no question that has greater claims to our serious consideration than the management and administration of our greatest national service. It is our duty to closely examine every item of these estimates and to assure ourselves that our biggest State undertaking is managed well and carefully in the interests of the people. We all know that a considerable loss is being incurred in the working of our railways. There must be some reason for this, but so far we have not had any explanation from the Minister, who should be able to tell us why the railways are not being run at a profit. I do not argue that we should charge exorbitant rates for the carriage of goods or passengers, or that in a country like this, with an enormous territory and scattered population, we should run

our railways solely with a view to making a profit and bolstering up the revenue. But I believe that the railways could be run at a fair margin of profit if we had good management and good organising brains at the head of affairs capable of dealing with big questions in a big way. We do not now possess the necessary efficient directing forces. The present state of chaos would not exist if we had men of the capacity required for the successful administration of this great department. Every man who uses the railways or comes into contact with the men must know that for years past the whole service has been seething with discontent. Among the fettlees, who receive miserable pay, the porters, station-masters, and the members of the mechanical staffs there has been great discontent for a very long time. The whole basis of working is wrong, and some effort should be made by the Government, which is responsible to the people, to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the trouble. Mr. Fraser is a man who, as an engineer, has done some good work, but has also committed great blunders which, if he had been in private employment, would surely have brought about his dismissal. When he was in charge of the work of laying down a new track in place of the Zig-zag on the Western line cuttings were put in at his instigation which afterwards had to be abandoned and which involved the department in very heavy loss. Any man of reasonable ability would have been able to realise that mistakes were being made, and would have been able to apply the remedy at a much earlier stage. With regard to the Assistant Commissioners, I believe that the late Mr. Milne, who was a traffic man, was a good organiser in his own department, and in many respects he justified his appointment. Of Mr. Fox I know very little. Mr. Cann we knew in this House as a fairly capable man, and he was respected by all, though I do not think anybody could argue that he had anything like the necessary detail knowledge of railway affairs to justify a Government in appointing him to the position of an administrator in that department. We all know that the present Government was afraid that if it did not appoint Mr. Cann—

[*Mr. Dooley.*]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not entitled to go into the question of the motives which actuated the Government in appointing Mr. Cann. I shall not prevent his discussing that gentleman's qualifications, but the motives of the Government which appointed him are certainly irrelevant to the question before the Committee.

Mr. DOOLEY: With all due respect, I do think it is my right to express the views I possess regarding the qualifications of every employee in the railway service.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already said that I shall not prevent the hon. member discussing the qualifications of Mr. Cann or anybody else in the railway service; but I certainly will not permit him to go into the question of the motives which actuated the Government in the appointment of Mr. Cann.

Mr. DOOLEY: I quite realise that the motives behind the Government's action cannot be discussed exhaustively; but I do contend, with due respect, that I am entitled to incidentally refer to them, and to ask the Government responsible for the appointment of officers to the service what was the reason they appointed a certain man to a particular position, and what were his qualifications.

The CHAIRMAN: I have ruled that the hon. member cannot discuss the motives of the Government in appointing Mr. Cann. If I permit him to discuss Mr. Cann's qualifications, that is all I can permit him to do.

Mr. DOOLEY: I will obey your ruling, as I have obeyed every ruling that has been given in this House since I have been here. These estimates clearly provide for the whole management of the railways, and I think I am permitted to discuss it.

Mr. BALL: It is not on the estimates!

Mr. DOOLEY: Whether that is so or not, the management of the railways has been discussed on the estimates for years past. The administration of the railways has been such that I think I am safe in saying the great majority of the employees have for a considerable time been living and working in a state of more than ordinary discontent. This discontent has not been grappled with by the

management, and we have now reached a stage at which those responsible for the higher administration require not one qualification, as was the case previously, but two. First, they must understand what they are managing; and, secondly, they must understand how to deal properly with the people who are carrying out the work of the industry with which they are concerned. On the one hand, the capacity of the administration and its knowledge of the particular work is doubted by the public generally, as well as by the officers of the department. On the other hand, the method of dealing with the employees has been deplorable, to say the least. We know that some of the superintendents have done their work well; others have been responsible for appointing themselves, as it were, to look after their own particular districts in a way which has not given the best results, but in a despotie, tyrannical way, and in many instances, instead of doing their work, they seem to have been continuously employed in trying to catch men in petty offences of such infinitesimal importance that it has not been worth while wasting paper in asking for reports upon them. We all know that the system of appointing additional inspectors to watch men and the travelling public has been increasing to such an extent that many are of opinion the inspectors' services could be used more advantageously to the community. Let me give a case in point. Quite recently a man got into the train at Katoomba to go to Wentworth Falls, two stations away. He had a second-class ticket, but seeing some friends in a first-class compartment, he decided to join them. He was caught. He did not get an opportunity of paying excess fare, but was brought before the court at Katoomba for attempting to travel without paying the necessary 2d. The magistrate held that it was such a trifling matter that the railway employees would have been better employed than in looking for a man who was trying to do the department out of 2d. This man, whose name is Watson, had been to the war and was in a consumptives' home. Although his life was not lost on the battlefield he there contracted a disease from the effects of which he will probably lose his life within a few months. The Rail-

way Department decided not to accept excess fare from him, but to take him before the court and send their highly-paid officers to waste their time and the money of the public. I believe there were three officers engaged at the court all day at an expenditure of, I suppose, £3, to see if they could manage to send a returned soldier to gaol for the sake of 2d. That kind of thing has been going on for such a long time that the magistrate decided he would not convict the returned soldier for evading the payment. When I see these things going on and the public money wasted; when I see officers who have nothing else to do, I must come to the conclusion that there is something materially wrong in the management of the railways. Travelling in a first-class carriage on a second-class ticket from Katoomba to Wentworth Falls is not a crime.

Before the industrial upheaval took place a number of inspectors were appointed on the trams. The number increased abnormally. I hold the view that each time a man is taken away from useful work and appointed to watch over people it is making it more difficult for the service to pay. Inspectors have been appointed for the purpose of catching newspaper boys who ride on the trams to sell their papers between one stopping-place and another. If a paper-boy jumps on a tram and tries to sell a paper between King-street and Market-street there is an inspector to catch him. On one day recently seven boys, on the next five boys, and on the next four boys, were brought before the Children's Court charged with this offence. One who was brought up was charged with travelling 20 yards on a tram to sell a paper, and his poor old mother had to go to the court to watch over him. To employ a staff of inspectors for the sole purpose of endeavouring to catch those boys is absurd. One boy, as I say, was proved to have travelled 20 yards.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: That is not true!

Mr. DOOLEY: It is true. The case was dismissed on the ground that it was too trivial.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Assuming that that sort of thing is done, is it not more for the protection of the boys?

They might meet with an accident and the Tramway Department would be held responsible!

Mr. DOOLEY: I do not admit that. As far as that is concerned it might apply in the suburbs or even in the city to boys jumping on and off moving trams.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member not to go into further detail in regard to these cases. It has been ruled in the House that in Committee it is not competent for an hon. member to go into a number of cases in connection with a department and discuss them in detail because it would lead to interminable discussion. It has been ruled that there is no objection to an hon. member referring briefly and incidentally to some case or line of cases. I shall ask the hon. member not to pursue this line of argument further.

Mr. DOOLEY: I desire to enter my emphatic protest against the railway and tramway management appointing a host of inspectors for the particular purpose of endeavouring to catch people for petty crimes instead of employing the services of those officials in a more useful direction. These newspaper boys find it necessary to jump on the trams in order to sell their papers, and it is unfair and unreasonable to require them to pay fares for the short distances which they travel. If these officials were put in positions for which they are suited it would be more advantageous to the department and the State, and I hope the Minister will see if a system cannot be instituted by which the best results will be obtained not only from the poorly-paid labourers in the railway and tramway services, but from the Chief Commissioners downwards. If such a system as that were established the Railway Commissioners would be able to reduce the fares instead of increasing them. I take the strongest objection to the method adopted by the Railway Commissioners, whenever a loss is shown, of increasing the fares and freights for the purpose of meeting that loss. I believe that, with reorganisation, a reduction in the number of officials, and a decrease in the salaries of some of the highly-paid officers, a great deal of money could be saved by the Commissioners.

[Mr. Dooley.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move: That the hon. member be not further heard.

Question put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 26; noes, 18; majority, 8.

AYES.

Arthur, Dr. R.	Lane, H. W.
Ball, R. T.	Latimer, W. F.
Bennett, W.	Millard, W.
Bruntnell, A.	Morton, Harry
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Nicholson, Lt.-Col.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Oakes, C. W.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Crane, J. T.	Storey, D.
Fallick, J.	Walker, R. B.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Graff, A.	
Hall, D. R.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hoskins, T. J.	Ley, T. J.
Hunt, J. C.	Wearne, W. E.

NOES.

Burke, M.	Mutch, T. D.
Dooley, J.	Osborne, J. P.
Doyle, J. W.	Quirk, J. P.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, P. M.	Davies, W.
McKell, W. J.	Keegan, T.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. QUIRK (Rozelle) [3.58 a.m.]: I desire to express my condemnation of the reduction that has taken place in the estimates in connection with a number of men in the railway service. It is astounding that an attempt should be made by this win-the-war Government as indicated in the estimates. Only a few months ago these men were paid the highest tribute of admiration by the Premier and several other hon. members on the Ministerial side. They said everything that was pleasant about the men, and expressed their goodwill towards them. What do we find has taken place in the preparation of the estimates? In spite of the promise that every consideration would be given to protect the welfare of those on active service and their dependents who might be left behind, there has been a reduction of £2,000 in the case of the provision for railway men, and £5,000 in the case of the provision for tramway employees.

In view of the kind words that have been over and over again uttered in regard to these brave men, it is sincerely to be regretted that these reductions have been made. No doubt the Minister will offer some explanation, but to my mind it will be difficult for the hon. member to justify the position. Dealing generally with the administration, it is well known that throughout the service to-day discontent is rampant. As an old public servant of thirty years' standing, I can speak with some authority. How are we to meet trouble of this kind? We know very well that the expiry of the award about which we have heard so much is largely responsible for the troubles from which we are suffering to-day. Not only is there far-reaching discontent in the Railway Department of the State, but other departments are equally affected. I have been told more than once that men in the Railway Department have been called upon to give an explanation in regard to work performed eighteen months ago. Hon. members will recognise how impossible it is under such circumstances for a report to be furnished, and they will appreciate what is one of the causes of the existing disaffection. Standing time is another source of dissatisfaction. I know of cases where men have been called for duty at 2 a.m., and they have been kept back until 10 a.m., and when the actual time worked has been compiled, a reduction of something like fourteen days has taken place. Then with regard to dismissals it is well known amongst officials of the department that men have been dismissed in utter ignorance of the charge made against them, and they have been denied an explanation by those in command. Troubles of this kind did not arise during the regime of Commissioner Goodchap or Mr. Eddy, but there must certainly be something radically wrong in the service to-day when men are refused an inquiry for which they have asked. I wish that the Minister for Labour and Industry would give to the case of these men the same consideration as he gave to the case of some other men when dealing with an award made by Mr. Justice Heydon on the 11th of last September, by which award 4,000

salaried officers were affected. According to a report which appeared in the *Sun*:

On account of the decision of Judge Heydon on 11th September limiting wages boards to consideration of employees receiving less than £225 per annum, a great portion of these railway officers cannot lodge fresh claims until the new scheme Mr. Beeby (Minister for Labour) is introducing operates.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I rule that the decision of some wages board or the Arbitration Court affecting a number of men has no relevancy to the question before the Chair, which is the administration of the railways during the past twelve months.

Mr. QUIRK: I beg pardon if I have transgressed, but what I was leading up to is an important question regarding the men on the salaried staff. One case is that of an employee in the railway service at the present time who was previously a foreman, but who now, although he has been receiving an increase of about 12s. a week in salary, since the 3rd July last, is designated an examiner. The reason for this I believe is to deny him the right of being attached to the salaried staff. Discontent does not exist merely among the artisan staff in the service, but also amongst those on the higher rungs of the ladder.

With regard to the card system, I have no desire to touch on that question at this stage, but it is a remarkable coincidence that some of the largest industries in the southern hemisphere have not attempted to introduce this pernicious system. There is nothing of the kind in operation at Mort's Dock, and judging from the remarks I have heard made by the manager of those works I have every reason to believe that such a system would never be introduced there.

A previous speaker referred to the increased fares brought into operation during the past month or two on the railways and tramways. In all probability this increase has been necessitated by the appointment of so many officers to control the men employed at Randwick and elsewhere. I have every reason to say that had the Minister for Labour and Industry given the claims of the men in the general division the same consideration as he gave to the claims

of the men in the case to which I have referred, much of the present trouble would not have taken place. In my humble opinion we have too many officers controlling this great industry.

I wish to mention the case of two elderly ladies residing in my electorate who travelled in a George-street tram from King-street to Park-street; and immediately they alighted from the tram were practically put under arrest on the charge of having travelled in the tram for that short distance without having paid the fare.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Had they paid their fare?

Mr. QUIRK: No. They were quite willing to pay their fare, but they had not been asked for it by the conductor of the tram. Whilst I admit that they should have paid the fare on leaving the tram, still in the bustle that takes place every day in George-street they were very glad to get to the footpath as soon as possible, and immediately they had done so they were accosted by a tramway official. They offered to pay him the fare, but he would not take it. Proceedings were taken against them, and they were fined. I think that some of the officers exceed their duty sometimes.

With regard to the great trouble with which we are now faced, I do not think that any hon. member every had a better opportunity of showing statesmanship than he now has in grappling with the present position of affairs. I have been told on very good authority that a man named Jakeman, who has been employed in the railway service for many years, and who was the shed foreman at Narrabri depôt, was placed on one side and was not permitted to perform any train work; but as soon as this unfortunate trouble took place he was permitted to drive a train from Moree to Narrabri, and is now engaged in that work, notwithstanding the fact that he failed to pass the eyesight test ten years ago. During the strike a vast amount of damage has been done to the railway rolling-stock, and in consequence extra burdens will be placed upon the taxpayers for many years to come. I sincerely trust that some effort will be made in the interest not only of New South

[Mr. Quirk.

Wales, but of the Commonwealth, to bring to a speedy end the serious crisis through which we are passing.

Mr. M. BURKE (Belmore) [4.25 a.m.]: I think it is fitting that every member of this House should have something to say upon this most important subject.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: We will not try to stop you!

Mr. M. BURKE: I do not think you will—I do not think you can. I think it is very unfair and entirely uncalled for that the Minister should make an observation of that kind.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: It was only a friendly interjection!

Mr. M. BURKE: The Minister has no right whatever to make a remark of that kind. He could not stop me.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I have told the hon. member that I merely made a friendly interjection!

Mr. M. BURKE: The Minister's remark was entirely uncalled for and unworthy of him.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: All right, if you will be insulting, I move:

That the hon. member be not further heard.

An HON. MEMBER: It was a pure misunderstanding!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Very well; I feel sure that the hon. member misunderstood me, and, with the permission of the Committee, I will withdraw my motion!

Mr. M. BURKE: There has been maladministration from beginning to end in the railway affairs of this State. By way of example, let me point to the mistake which was in connection with the erection of a new railway-station at Milson's Point, at a cost of nearly £30,000. Then there was the case of McMyler hoists. Four of these hoists were imported at a cost of £70,000, and to-day we find that only one of them is in use. Three of these expensive contrivances have been scrapped, and the country has been put to the loss of £210,000, and yet we do not hear one word as to who was responsible for this huge blunder. On the other hand, some people are never tired of talking about the faults of the unfortunate workers

in the Railway Department, who it is said are not prepared to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. I speak for the unionists of this State when I say that the men of the class to which I belong are prepared to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. We have never been associated with I.W.W.-ism or sabotage, and never intend to be. I would like to know from the Minister why the Government is keeping special camps going at Taronga Park and the Cricket Ground.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I rule that that has nothing to do with the question before the Committee. The hon. member must confine himself to the question of the administration of the railways.

Mr. M. BURKE: When we are losing £120,000 a day, am I not within my rights as a representative of the citizens in asking the Minister why something is not done to stop the leakage?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: What leakage?

Mr. M. BURKE: It is more than £120,000 a day; in fact it amounts to about £1,000,000 a week; and some steps ought to be taken to bring this upheaval to a termination. I think the amount provided on the estimates is very reasonable; it is the maladministration of the service that I am complaining of, and I ask the House to assist me in ending this terrible upheaval.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to make his observations relative to the question before the Committee. The estimates for the Railway Department are being dealt with, and I will allow the hon. member to use any arguments he likes in connection with railway administration.

Mr. M. BURKE: I am very much in earnest in this matter, and I believe the time has come when the wisdom of the people's representatives should be used to bring this upheaval to a finish. I have no purpose to serve personally, but in the interests of the community Ministers should unbend a little.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have told the hon. member he is not permitted under this estimate to go into the question of the means of settling the present industrial crisis. If he wishes to use any argument showing that mismanagement by the railway authorities led to the

upheaval he may do so, but I will not permit him to discuss means of settling the strike.

Mr. M. BURKE: The powers that be are responsible for the trouble, by violating a contract which was entered into eighteen months ago, that working conditions would not be altered during the currency of the war. The conditions have been altered since the 1st June last, and in consequence you are losing something like £1,000,000 a week on your railways and tramways. Is that fair to the taxpayers? All we ask is that a little sweet reasonableness be exercised by those in control to end the trouble.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must again ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. M. BURKE: If the Railway Commissioners have not done their duty by the public, am I not within my rights in criticising their action while we are dealing with the railway estimates? I say they are not doing their duty by the public. I believe it is their advisers, and not the Commissioners themselves, who are responsible for the trouble; and I ask that the Commissioners use that reasonableness which should be exercised in order to bring this trouble to an end. Hon. members may not realise the enormity of the situation as keenly as I do; they may not appreciate the loss that we are suffering. The Government will never be able to make up the £1,000,000 a week that it is losing. The trouble it is bringing on unfortunate people—many of them not implicated in the strike—is immeasurable. I do not want to see millions of money wasted because of the whim of individuals, whether they be Ministers or Commissioners. I ask the Minister to exercise his influence on the Commissioner in connection with this great trouble, so as to save the citizens the millions they are losing. I thoroughly approve of the additional £600,000 in the railway estimates this year. I believe it is necessary for the extension of the service, the duplication of the lines, and general expansion. The people must have better conditions than they had in days gone by. So also must the clerical workers and others on the staff. Additional payment is necessary in view of

the increased cost of living. I am not against such increases. In conclusion, I would ask the Minister to use his most sympathetic endeavours to bring about a settlement of this terrible trouble.

Mr. KEEGAN (Glebe) [4.45 a.m.]: It is not my intention to traverse the ground already covered by previous speakers, because no matter what we on this side of the House may say, it will not make any impression on the Ministerial side. The Government has brought down its estimates determined, with the aid of its majority, to pass them. The Railway Commissioners should give more consideration to the necessity of appointing as works managers men who have experience, not only of the work, but of the handling of men. If that were done we should not have the trouble that is arising throughout the railway service. I am informed that there is a works manager at the Randwick workshops of the name of Shenstone. It sounds more German than English, and it is astonishing, not only to myself, but to every hon. member, that a man of such a name should occupy an important position while we have in power a Government returned as a National and win-the-war Government.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The hon. member must know that Shenstone is a good old English name!

Mr. KEEGAN: When the hon. member for Bondi was speaking he referred to the machinations of hon. members on this side, and said they were pro-German and pro-Boer. I have also heard him, as well as other hon. members on the Government side, particularly Ministers, allude to their leader, Mr. Holman, as a pro-Boer and a pro-German. If the Railway Commissioner and the Government had done their duty, not only to themselves, but to the people of New South Wales, the unfortunate trouble which has arisen through the introduction of a new system into the railway workshops would never have taken place. I hope that better counsels will prevail even at this late hour, and that something will be done to enable these workshops to be carried on as they were on the 1st of June. It is well known that there has been a very great loss on the railway

[Mr. M. Burke.

and tramway services since this industrial crisis arose. Figures published in the *Sun* a few days ago show that in one month there has been a loss of £200,000. That gives an indication of the enormous loss which will occur unless the Government take immediate action to end the struggle. The Government ought to realise that a great deal of suffering is being endured not only by the women and children of those who are on strike but also by business people and others engaged in different occupations.

The statement has been made that hon. members on this side voted for the increased fares on Sunday, but that is not a fact because those increased fares were imposed before hon. members on this side who were supporting the then Government were made aware of it. Surely it is the duty of the Government to minimise the loss on the railways and tramways as much as possible by not allowing the existing state of affairs to continue. The upholding of dignity may be a very good thing, but the Government should not continue this great struggle merely for the sake of dignity.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in dealing with that aspect of the question.

Mr. KEEGAN: Unless a satisfactory arrangement be come to between the railway and tramway employees and the Railway Commissioners and the Government there is very little likelihood of the railway and tramway services being in a better position than they are in to-day, and I hope the Chief Railway Commissioner will, in order to make the services pay, take steps to bring about normal conditions. The Minister stated that under this new card system the men would be given an opportunity to initial their cards, but I desire to point out that Mr. Shenstone, works manager at the Randwick shops, refused to appoint a certain individual to the position of subforeman because the man had initialled a card which was in operation at that particular time at the Eveleigh workshops. The men realised that their positions might be affected in the same way as was the position of this particular individual.

Mr. HARRY MORTON: Our chaps at the Cricket Ground are satisfied with it!

Mr. KEEGAN: The reply given by the Minister to the question as to whether the card system was in operation at the shops was that it was not. It is of no use the hon. member saying that the chaps at the Cricket Ground are satisfied with it when he knows they are not working under that system. If the system was deemed to be good enough for the men who refused to adopt it, it should also be good enough for the men who are taking their places. I hope the needs of the country will receive more consideration than the dignity of the Ministry. If the country is going to prosper production must be carried on, and in order to do that we must have railway, tramway, and water services. The Government will have to realise that, owing to the demands made by the people for a settlement of the trouble which has paralysed industry, it will have to do what the men are asking for—that is, appoint a tribunal to settle the dispute between the men and the Government.

Mr. LANG (Granville) [5.2 a.m.]: I regret that one has to wait till such an early hour of the morning to make a few remarks on an estimate which it will be admitted the representative of Granville should have a word to say on, as there is a large number of railway men in that electorate. I hope the Minister will not think that the present industrial disastrous upheaval is going to make me say anything special in connection with the estimates. That is not so. I wish to refer to the general grievances of the employees of the Railway Department, especially the men of the running staff. The railway working expenses are subject to any alteration which the exigencies of the service may from time to time demand. I wish to say a word or two upon the present strike, seeing that hon. members have not always the opportunity of putting questions to the Minister and getting adequate replies during the limited time devoted to questions.

I am not going to make these statements merely for the purpose of creating a sensation. I should like the Minister to let the House know whether it is a fact that on the 20th of last month at Hurstville a locomotive was in charge of a driver and fireman who were incompetent, and that their action resulted in the

burning of the boiler, with the result that it had to go to the locomotive shed at Hurstville. They thought that the engine that was there would be in working order, but they found it was in such a state of disrepair that it was unworkable. Both these things occurred because those in charge of our great national asset allowed incapable men to take charge of the work. The Minister might take into consideration, the next time Cabinet meets, the question whether it would not be in the interest, not only of the workmen, but of the Cabinet, and the supporters of the Government, to have such a disastrous state of affairs brought to a close speedily. I am sure that the Government does not want to finish its time in office with a disastrous financial deficiency. I also wish to know whether an engine left the rails at Como, causing a great delay in the traffic. If I put that question in the ordinary way, I would be asked to give notice of it; but when you do that the answer is so long deferred that when it comes it is of no use. This was the question:

Is it a fact that seven locomotives, when being shunted at Eveleigh, came to a head-on collision, and that a fireman named Nixon was severely mangled?

I was asked to give notice of the question, but I did not think it worth while to do so because very often answers to such questions are kept in abeyance until they are of no further use to the members who asked the questions. Whether or not that is so, it is for the Minister to say. The 5.18 p.m. train was put into the siding at Flemington because the driver in charge was incompetent, and did not know how to work the injector. The officials of the department will understand what I mean without my explaining what an injector is. All these locomotives have had to be set aside, some of them severely, others lightly damaged, but when capable men return to work they will find that the locomotives are not in proper order, and they will be confronted with the usual "please explain," although the trouble happened through no fault of their own. The ordinary departmental official knows nothing whatever of the difficulties which beset the driver of a locomotive. He may say that the boiler was seen, and that when he

went out to do his work something happened on the road, and afterwards he is punished. The men who supply the information have not the time nor have they very much sympathy with those who have to work hard for a livelihood, and who possibly have been for a much longer period in the service. Another matter I would bring under the notice of the Minister is the barrack accommodation for men attached to the running staff. These men go away to some centre remote from the home depôt. They go to Bathurst, for example. It is quite possible they may arrive at their destination at 11 o'clock at night, and on arrival they find another man in the bed. They have to wait some hours before accommodation can be provided, and then they have to be content with a bed which has just been given up by some other person. This is an experience which I am sure the Railway Commissioners themselves would not care to go through. It is interesting to note how the London County Council dealt with a similar situation.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to go into details of this kind. There must be some limit to the amount of detail an hon. member may introduce. There was a ruling some years ago, and it was held on that occasion that an hon. member is not entitled to go in a detailed way into the working of any board or department. If I allow the hon. member to do that there will be no end to this discussion. I ask the hon. member not to deal further with the matter of sleeping accommodation.

Mr. LANG: This is a strong grievance, and I hope you will not be too strict. The men have to suffer these disabilities.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has referred to it, and I am not objecting. Now he is mentioning the London County Council, and I hope he will not proceed further.

Mr. LANG: I think that what I have said will impress the Minister that after all these men, who are employees of the State, are entitled to better treatment than they have so far received. If what I have stated is not correct, the Minister should be in a position to say so;

[Mr. Lang.

if it is correct, all I ask is that an inquiry shall be held. We have heard a good deal lately about the drivers of locomotives going slow, of sabotage, hot boxes, and other troubles. I remember that one of the newspapers, the *Sun*, took up the question of the supply of oil for locomotives, and kept hammering at it until the subject was hotter than a hot box; then suddenly it was dropped. After that nobody seemed to take much notice of the matter publicly. Occasionally it has been stated on platforms at political meetings, and it has also been stated in this Chamber by the hon. member for Willoughby, that the railway men are "go-slow" men, that they practise sabotage. The hon. member for Willoughby said that, in his opinion, this was proved by the hot boxes on locomotives. The fact of locomotives having hot boxes has evidently been a serious matter to the department. But is not the Minister entitled to look into the matter and ascertain if the heating of the boxes is really the fault of the men in charge of the locomotive or if it is the fault of those who are supposed to control the department—the Railway Commissioners and some of the highly-paid officers? In my opinion, a good deal of the trouble has arisen from what may be called the pooling of locomotives. A locomotive comes into the depôt in charge of two men, and is immediately sent out again in charge of two other men who are what I may call strangers to that particular locomotive. This continual changing of the men, and not leaving the same men always in charge of one particular piece of machinery, has been one of the things that has led to there being hot boxes. Another cause is the practice of the department in sending out special officers to see how far a locomotive can be run with a certain weight of oil, and then allowing the men in charge of the locomotives a paltry allowance of oil, instead of, when they fix the allowance of oil, making arrangements to see that that particular weight of oil is used by those in charge of the locomotive. The allowance for a "T" class engine is 4 lb. of very low-grade oil per 100 miles. There are 132 working parts, besides the other parts of a locomotive, to be oiled daily. Therefore

less than half an ounce or about three thimbles full of oil is allowed for each of the 132 parts to be oiled. The axle-box of a "T" class engine is 8 inches long and 4 inches broad, and half an ounce of oil will not cover the area at the bottom of the box. Instead of sending out officers to see how many miles a locomotive can run with so many ounces of oil, would it not be better for the officers to see that the locomotive is properly oiled before it goes out? In that way the department would be better served, and justice would be done to the men who have control of the locomotives, there would be no waste of oil, and a stop would be put to the pin-pricking and spying that now go on to prevent the use of extra oil. A locomotive costs several thousands of pounds. If a competent man on the engine believes that the use of a little extra oil is necessary for the effective working of the machinery, and he uses it, he is sent a note saying, "Please explain why you have used so much extra oil," and that is likely to be counted against him. One of the things which has helped to create the present position is the fact that men have been subjected to pin-pricking, and have been brought under what has been termed the Brown system of black marks, under which a man has no right of appeal against every charge that is made against him at the time it is made, but only when ten black marks have been registered against him. If the Minister could find time to go out and inquire into this matter, he would do good service to the department, and be able to see that justice is done to the locomotive men.

Mr. BALL: I will do that!

Mr. LANG: In regard to repairs to locomotives, the drivers are complaining that effective repairs are not always made when they are required. When a driver finishes his trip and finds something wrong with his engine he enters up a record of the fault in the repair book, and when he comes back or the next man comes along and looks at the repair book he finds the entry "engine examined," "engine fit for trip," or "engine using oil." For the last eighteen months the engine-drivers have complained that the repairs made have not been effective, but

that, as a matter of fact, all the repairs have been done with a pencil in the repair book.

The leader of the Opposition made some remarks with regard to locomotives being built more cheaply at Eveleigh than at the Clyde works. There is hardly a man employed at the Clyde works who is not personally known to me, and I say unhesitatingly that a finer body of men could not be found anywhere. If the statement of the leader of the Opposition be true, I do not regard it as any reflection on the workmen at the Clyde, who have been always looked upon as most capable. So far is this the case that for many years past the trouble has been to stop artisans from the Clyde works from entering the Government employment. There has been an understanding between the Government and the Clyde Engineering Company that men from the Clyde works are not to be taken into the Government shops. The managing director at the Clyde works, if asked for his opinion, would probably say that the railway authorities have millions to gamble with, whereas the Clyde management has to work on common-sense business lines. It is alleged that many of the jobs turned out at Eveleigh are costed at a low figure because the Government officials do not give honest reports in regard to their work. It is possible, by manipulating the accounts, to produce fictitious results and to show that work has been more cheaply done than is actually the case. Some of the finest tradesmen we have in the State are employed at the Clyde works, and Mr. Lucy, the Chief Mechanical Engineer at the Railway Department, has always been anxious to get men from the Clyde works. With regard to Mr. Lucy's capabilities, it is a pity that an investigation has not been made in regard to the "TF" class of engines. The drivers complain that the fact that the whole of the wheels are flanged makes it impossible to drive the engines over some of the curves. It is also stated that the permanent-way officials object to these engines because the flanges of the wheels cause the tracks to tread. These matters should be inquired into, and if the position is as I have described the engines should be withdrawn from

traffic. I am informed that the old "T" class engine is a better locomotive. The "TF" engine is supposed to be a coal economiser, but any driver will tell you that it uses more coal than the "T" class. Then, again, the "TF" engine will not travel round some curves unless it is sent along at top speed, and in many cases the drivers have to turn back and make a second attempt. At the same time, the drivers have instructions not to go round curves at more than a certain speed. So much for Mr. Lucy, the competent and capable Chief Mechanical Engineer.

Mr. BALL: The leader of the Opposition says he is the best man on earth!

Mr. LANG: He can say so if he likes; I say he is the worst. I am not asking the Minister to decide whether I or anybody else is right; I am only asking him to ascertain for himself if these statements are true. If they are, he should in the interests of the people try to rectify matters. It seems to me that a good deal of the expense of running our railways is brought about by patents which are put into operation, not for the benefit of the people but to give an advantage to certain persons. Most people who travel on the Main Suburban lines know that in many cases when arriving at a station the trains stop with a jolting movement; that is caused by a patent coupling which is not much good. The iron pin coupling which was previously used has not caused anything like the inconvenience which is suffered to-day. They are attempting now to equip some of the trucks with this coupling. I myself have seen trucks coupled up with it, but it would be better for the Minister to come out and see for himself how trucks fitted with this great mass of metal are coupled on to others which are equipped with the other system. The men who are responsible for these things are not doing a fair thing by the country, but are all the time standing behind a set of officials who, because they can write a decent letter and have a good system of filing records, are supposed to know everything; whereas they know nothing about these matters. The Minister is said to be a tradesman and a capable man. If he is, let him come out and see for himself.

[Mr. Lang.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: He will come out!

Mr. LANG: Will the Minister make an appointment for, say, within a month after the strike?

Mr. BALL: Yes, I will do that!

Mr. LANG: He will then see the force of what I have been pointing out.

Another matter I wish to mention is the increase in fares to places like Burwood, Kogarah, and other stations within 7 miles of Sydney from 5d. single and 9d. return to 6d. single, and 1s. return. The Minister might state why the single fare has only been raised by 1d., while the return fare has been raised by 3d.

Mr. MUTCH (Botany) [5.49 a.m.]: This seems to be my opportunity to bring before the Minister two matters of considerable importance to myself. I refer to matters to which the Minister has previously failed to give answers, and they relate to an item which is set down on these estimates. An amount of £85,000 is provided for the railway service towards the payment of the difference between military and departmental pay to staff absent with the Expeditionary Forces, while for the tramway service £30,000 is provided for the same purpose. The amount for the tramways is £5,000 less than it was last year, though it would be news to me that a smaller number of tramway men are in the Expeditionary Forces this year than last. The amount for the railway service is £2,000 less than last year, although the same remark applies to that service. So far I have heard no explanation as to why a smaller amount is provided for what must be a greater number of men on active service. On 22nd August the Minister answered a month-old question of mine in relation to the payment of money representing accrued holidays due to members of the railway staffs on active service. The reply was that there were no rights or privileges due; that the payment of the difference between military and departmental rates of pay was a concession made by the Government, and that all promises and undertakings would be honored. That was not an answer to the question. On repeating that question at

a later date I was referred to the previous answer given, but that answer was based on a misunderstanding of the question, which does not refer to the difference between the departmental and military pay. What I referred to was that the men who had gone away could not enjoy the holidays they would have had had they remained in the service here. I desire to inform the Minister that I received information from a friend at the front. His letter indicated that there was considerable discontent amongst railway men on active service in regard to the matter, and I was asked to look into it. When the men at the front see the answer given to my question they will come to the conclusion that the Government is humbugging them in the matter, and that the action of the Government does not meet the situation at all. I recognise that the Minister cannot know all the details of those matters and that he merely gives the answer supplied by his officers.

Mr. BALL: That answer was supplied by the Commissioners!

Mr. MUTCH: I ask the Minister to look into the matter, as it is causing grave concern to the men. The men who go away to the front are entitled to be relieved of any misunderstanding as to any promise given to them before they left. The men who went away left with the idea that the money representing those accrued holidays would be paid to them or their dependents. I am sure the Minister will agree that that is perfectly fair. They lost their holidays here, and they get no holidays in the trenches. I take it that now I have brought the matter directly under the notice of the Minister he will answer the question definitely, so as to save me having to exercise sufficient ingenuity to evade the rule relative to not asking the same question a second time.

On this subject there is another point of equal importance. I want to know why the department is sending inquisitorial letters to persons who are in positions in the railway service, and are entitled to the difference between the departmental and military rates of pay. Such letters are being sent by the official heads of the railway and tramway services. Why Mr. Brain, the Chief Elec-

trical Engineer, should send a letter of this kind to one of his men, I cannot understand:

Referring to your application for the difference between your military and departmental rates of pay to be paid to your mother, I have been instructed to obtain the following particulars for the information of the Commissioners:—

(a) What is he doing with his military pay?

What has that to do with the departmental head? That is the man's private business. Why should an inquisitorial question like that be asked? You might as well ask me what I am doing with my pay.

AN HON. MEMBER: What are you doing with it?

Mr. MUTCH: I can say that most of it is going for the relief of distress, owing to the difficulty we experience in obtaining the necessary relief from the department. The next question asked is:

(b) Is he maintaining the household in which his mother and daughter live? Is any other person contributing to the upkeep of the house?

These are extraordinary questions to put to a man who has a right to receive what the Government has pledged itself to give. The next question is:

(c) What are the total number of persons in the household who are depending upon him, their sexes, and ages? If any partially dependent, the particulars of the partial dependents should be given.

That is surely going beyond the duties of the officials. Surely the Chief Electrical Engineer has some better work to do than to run out a series of questions of this kind to men who are entitled to receive the difference between the military and departmental pay without any question whatever. The next question is:

(d) What rent is paid, and other expenses such as rates, taxes, insurance, &c., and what amount (which should be quoted separately) is required for living expenses?

It is a positive outrage that questions of that kind are asked. I ask the Minister to check the activity of Mr. Brain and inform him that it is entirely foreign to the spirit and intention of the Government that questions of the kind should

be asked of anyone, and that the difference between the departmental and military rates of pay should be made up without any inquisition at all. I hope the Minister will reply to the question I have asked—why this enormous reduction of £7,000 has been made in the amount voted to make up the difference between the military and departmental rates of pay to members of the railway and tramway staffs absent with the Expeditionary Forces. There are this year a greater number absent than there were last year, and yet a smaller amount has been set down to make up the difference.

There is another matter to which I would direct attention. A new amount of £2,000 is set down for the payment of bonuses to officers and employees for suggestions adopted in connection with the improvement of railway or tramway working or appliances. I am quite in accord with the system of giving suitable rewards to men who have shown sufficient initiative to introduce new methods of economy, but I know that any man in a big public service or private employ who dares to suggest improved methods of working frequently falls foul of his foreman, because the foreman does not like it to appear that he has less brains than the workman and has not thought of the improvements that it is shown could be effected in the department under his control. A man generally gets himself into trouble when he does that, and that restrains a great many men in the railway service from giving the department the benefit of their brains. The suspicion has been created that this amount of £2,000 represents the bonuses to be paid to these sub-foremen who have been appointed under the new scheme.

Mr. BALL: Nothing of the kind!

Mr. MUTCH: I am glad to have that assurance. In my judgment the trouble in the service has been due mainly to mismanagement and want of tact on the part of the managers, from the Chief Commissioner down to those who have charge of a few men each. If the managers of departments will consult the organisations of skilled employees, with a view to more efficient working, and will act without fear, favour, or respect of persons, I am quite sure improvements

[Mr. Mutch.

can be effected in the railway service that will reduce to some extent the huge expenditure that is being piled up as the result of the increased cost of coal and other charges that are at present sought to be reduced by grinding extra work out of the employees. In the last railway report the Chief Commissioner makes this statement:

This statement, with the accompanying diagrams, shows clearly that there has been successful effort to improve the working, and thus offset, to as great an extent as possible, the additional burdens imposed by the increases enumerated—

He states that this result has been achieved by various methods,—

and also very greatly by sustained pressure upon the staff as a whole to obtain a fair individual and collective effort. That the staff has responded in a very marked degree gives cause for satisfaction.

What better tribute to the men can you have than that very statement by the Chief Commissioner? It gives the lie direct to the statement made in the press that the men are responsible for the loss on the service. I do not want to raise an argument in this debate regarding the difficulties with which the Government is confronted at the present time, but I draw the attention of the Minister to the matters which I have mentioned, particularly to the discontent amongst the railway men on active service. I can assure the Minister that my informant is most reliable. He assures me that discontent is general amongst the railway men in France, and I should like to have recorded in *Hansard* an assurance by the Minister that the understanding on which these men left here will be honored by the Government, and the cause of discontent removed.

Mr. KEARSLEY (Cessnock) [6.4 a.m.]: As regards the matter of making up the difference between the military and departmental pay of railway and tramway men on active service, I have received a letter dated the 16th August, 1917, from which the following is an extract:—

This matter refers to my son _____, sapper in France. Previous to his enlisting he was an employee on the Government railways. When he enlisted his military pay was made up with the railway allowance to his full pay as an

employee. Now, he received this railway allowance all right till he left Australia, and then we had an exhibition of red-tape. There was a lot of bother and cross-questioning, but we got it all right, and continued to do so up to seven weeks ago. When my brother-in-law called for the money he was told that the pay was stopped till further notice, and he has received nothing since. Now, sir, would you favour me by bringing this matter before the Chief Commissioner of Railways, should you have the opportunity. I have written to the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Fraser, as well. Trusting you will give this matter your early attention, and thanking you in anticipation of a favourable reply.

Those men went away with the full assurance that the difference between their military and departmental pays would be made up. Whether the matter has been rectified or not I do not know, but I make bold to say unless it be made up it will be tantamount to a breach of faith on the part of the Railway Commissioners. I ask those persons who are responsible for this irregularity to give consideration to the matter and have it rectified.

As regards the resuming of properties that are required for railway purposes, some time ago a person whose property had been resumed wrote to me, stating that he had two houses near Newcastle, which were resumed in connection with the construction of a bridge at Broadmeadow. One day he went to get his rents, and the first intimation he got regarding the resumption of the property by the Railway Commissioners was a notice which he saw on the property advertising it for sale. I regard it as very improper to take a man's property without giving him warning. This man told me that the value put upon the property by the railway authorities was very low. I took action in the matter, but did not succeed in getting satisfaction. Ministerial influence was brought to bear, with the result that the matter was reconsidered and the man got something like a reasonable amount for the property of which he was deprived. I may say something with regard to the present trouble. I have here the Arbitration Act. In my view the action of the Commissioner is in contravention of the Act. I know the present trouble is called a strike. In my view this stoppage of work is not a strike.

I know it is the aim of the Government to preserve a continuity of employment, to keep the wheels of industry moving. That is a very fine aim, but it is not proper to throw all the blame on the employees. Some years ago on the South Coast a case was being tried by an arbitration judge. While the court was sitting a man was killed in a mine, and the men stopped work out of respect to the person killed. They also stopped on the day he was buried, and the judge said it was very improper for the men to stop on occasions like those. I think a judge goes outside his province when he dares to censure or criticise men for stopping in a case like that. It is to be hoped that judges will not make such comments on such matters. Sometimes men have the means of protesting against their conditions. Take the coal-miner, or the railway workshops. You and I possibly do not know the inner workings of these shops. Men make complaints to the foremen, the men directly over them, and they may go to someone else higher. There is so much regulation that they cannot go to the higher except by going to the lower. In many cases the men cannot get a hearing. Troubles accumulate, and in order to draw public attention to the matter they cease work. The purpose of ceasing work is sometimes to draw public attention to their grievances. Sometimes of course their stopping work is merely a means of resisting encroachments on their rights. In the present case I must confess that my knowledge is limited. The knowledge of everyone else seems also to be limited. I have never yet heard anyone describe properly the card system. I have made inquiries, but my inquiries have not been answered fully. I have read what the papers have said regarding the explanation given by the Minister for Railways, but even that hon. member has not given a full explanation. I know there are many card systems, such as the Walsh Island system, the Printing Office system, the present sheet system at Eveleigh, Randwick, and other workshops, and the card system now introduced, but I do not know their respective virtues, or how they compare with each other. I have not heard anyone explain them to my satisfaction.

In this case I want to say that the men have not stopped for the purpose of committing what is called a strike. According to the Arbitration Act a strike includes a cessation of work by any number of employees acting in combination with the view to compel their employer to accept terms of employment. My contention is that the employees in this case are not seeking to enforce their terms of employment. That point ought not to be overlooked. They are not acting to that end. Their stoppage of work is not a strike within the meaning of the Arbitration Act, and those who say that a strike is existing are saying something that is not true, according to my interpretation of the Act.

AN HON. MEMBER: What would you call it?

MR. KEARSLEY: It is a stoppage, a cessation of work. Your legal mind, Mr. Colquhoun, will perceive that the differentia in this definition or description depends upon the word "compel"—the compelling of an employer to accept the terms of employment. I say the employees have not ceased work with the view to compel the employers to accept the employees' terms of employment. As the element of compulsion to the end of making the employers accept the men's terms of employment does not exist, the stoppage is not a strike. As I view the position the men ought not to be called strikers, because the stoppage is not a strike within the meaning of the Act. What the men ask for is a tribunal to hear their grievances, and some authority to determine the question. They are now prepared to go back to work if a tribunal is appointed to hear their grievances. In my view the Commissioner is culpable.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (MR. COLQUHOUN): Order! The hon. member is not entitled to discuss the strike.

MR. KEARSLEY: Am I not entitled to discuss the working of the department?

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (MR. COLQUHOUN): The hon. member is entitled to discuss the administration of the department.

[Mr. Kearsley.

MR. KEARSLEY: If I say that the Commissioner has committed a breach of the Arbitration Act, and if I discuss the question from that view-point am I not in order?

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (MR. COLQUHOUN): No!

MR. KEARSLEY: I want to say that alterations have been introduced by the Chief Commissioner, and the men are willing to work. In fact the men are anxious to return to work, but they are not allowed to do so. They are prevented by the Commissioner from returning to work. The men—I refer more particularly to the engineers, because I understand that they are the men who came out and are said to be on strike—are anxious to return to work, but they are not allowed unless they submit to conditions imposed by their employer; and because the employer, the Commissioner, will not allow them to return to work I contend that he is creating a lock-out. According to the Act "lock-out," without limiting its ordinary meaning, includes the closing of a place of employment or a suspension of work or a refusal by an employer to continue to employ any number of his employees with a view to compelling his employees, or to aid another employer in compelling his employees, to accept terms of employment. The essential point of that definition or description is that a lock-out includes a refusal by an employer to continue to employ any number of his employees with a view to compel his employees to accept terms of employment. But my contention is that the men are anxious to go back to work, and that the Commissioner will not allow them to return unless they submit to his terms of employment, and in the light of that definition I contend that this is a lock-out, not a strike. There are some, I know, who say that the Commissioner is not bound by the Arbitration Act. Some people imagine that because he is Commissioner he is a law to himself. But according to another definition on page 4 of this Act "employer" includes the Chief Commissioner.

MR. BALL: I rise to a point of order. I submit that the hon. member in continuing to discuss the question of the

strike, which you have already ruled he cannot discuss, is out of order. The hon. member has been for some time referring to the Arbitration Act—a matter which has nothing whatever to do with the estimates now under consideration.

Mr. DOOLEY: On the point of order, I would submit that as the dispute originated in the railway workshops and as the railway estimates are now under consideration the hon. member is quite justified in discussing anything arising out of the workshops in view of the money proposed to be voted for the purpose of those shops.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. COLQUHOUN): I understand the point of order is that the hon. member for Cessnock is not entitled to discuss the strike on the estimates now before the Committee. The Chairman of Committees has already given a ruling to that effect, a ruling with which I entirely agree. The question of the strike does not come within the railway estimates in any shape or form, but the hon. member is entitled to discuss any administrative acts of the officers of the Railway Department in so far as they do not relate to the strike itself. Actions leading up to the strike are within the purview of the hon. member. He has already discussed that aspect of the case, and I permitted the discussion. But I cannot allow the hon. member to go further than he has already gone in discussing the strike in its relation to these estimates.

Mr. LANG: I desire to move dissent from the ruling of the Chair. I move:

That the Temporary Chairman do now leave the chair, and report a point of order, and ask leave to sit again so soon as the point of order has been decided by the House. The point of order is, that the hon. member for Cessnock was discussing the operation of the Arbitration Act in relation to the strike. The Temporary Chairman ruled that the hon. member was not entitled to discuss matters relating to the strike, although he was entitled to discuss acts of administration of the department leading up to the strike.

In moving dissent from your ruling, I do so with the greatest respect; but I feel that the matter which the hon. mem-

ber for Cessnock was discussing is a very important matter, which has very far-reaching effects in this State, and that in trying to connect the Chief Railway Commissioner with the awards of the Arbitration Court, the hon. member was perfectly in order, because the Chief Railway Commissioner, as an employer of labour, has no special privilege to avoid the operation of the Arbitration Court. I submit that the hon. member for Cessnock, in quoting the Arbitration Act, and referring to matters leading up to the strike, was in order, because there is no reason for the strike other than the action of the Chief Railway Commissioner, who is a servant of this Parliament, and is governed by the responsible Minister, the Minister for Railways. The Minister for Railways, being in charge of the estimate for the Railway Department, any hon. member has a right to ventilate any detail affecting the working of this department. If it cannot be ventilated now, there is no other time when it could be ventilated. The Chief Railway Commissioner is bound by decisions of the Arbitration Court equally with any other employer of labour, and the hon. member for Cessnock, in trying to point out that fact, and only in that respect trying to deal with the strike, was absolutely in order.

Mr. KEARSLEY: Mr. Chairman,—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. COLQUHOUN): Order!

Mr. KEARSLEY: I want to ask you a question. May I not state my own view of the case?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I take exception to the hon. member's even asking a question. The standing orders provide that the only hon. member entitled to speak now is the hon. member who has moved the motion of dissent from the ruling of the Chair. I submit that the hon. member for Cessnock is not entitled to audience at this stage.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. COLQUHOUN): I must uphold the point of order taken by the Acting Treasurer. The hon. member for Cessnock is not entitled to speak now on the point of order taken by the hon. member for Granville.

Question—That the Chairman do now leave the chair—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 17; noes, 29; majority, 12.

AYES.

Burke, M.	McKell, W. J.
Davies, W.	Osborne, J. P.
Dooley, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Doyle, J. W.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	
Keegan, F.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lang, J. T.	Mutch, T. D.
McGirr, P. M.	Wright, J.

NOES.

Ball, R. T.	Latimer, W. F.
Bennett, W.	Ley, T. J.
Bruntnell, A.	Millard, W.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Morton, Harry
Cocks, A. A. C.	Nicholson, Lt.-Col.
Crane, J. T.	Oakes, C. W.
Fallick, J.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Perry, J.
Graff, A.	Robson, W. E. V.
Grimm, A. H.	Storey, D.
Hall, D. R.	Wearne, W. E.
Hoskins, T. J.	Zuill, W. A.
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
James, A. G. F.	Walker, R. B.
Lane, H. W.	Weaver, R. W. D.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Mr. KEARSLEY: I was describing the condition of affairs at the Eveleigh and Randwick workshops, and I was contending—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to contend what the Temporary Chairman has already ruled that he cannot deal with.

Mr. KEARSLEY: I understand that we have at the head of the railways a Chief Commissioner who has committed a breach of the law. The law must be honored.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the question of the administration of the railways. I cannot allow the hon. member to pursue his present line of argument, unless he makes the question as to whether the Chief Commissioner has committed a breach of the law strictly relevant to the item.

Mr. KEARSLEY: If any officer of the department affected by these estimates has committed any irregularity or breach of the regulations or the law,

he must be held culpable, and if I can prove that the Chief Commissioner or any officer has committed a breach of the law—

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move:

That the hon. member be not further heard.

Question put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 29; noes, 18; majority, 11.

AYES.

Arthur, Dr. R.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Ley, T. J.
Bennett, W.	Morton, Harry
Bruntnell, A.	Nicholson, Lt.-Col.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Oakes, C. W.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Perry, J.
Crane, J. T.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fallick, J.	Storey, D.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Walker, R. B.
Graff, A.	Wearne, W. E.
Hall, D. R.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
James, A. G. F.	Grimm, A. H.
Lane, H. W.	Zuill, W. A.

NOES.

Burke, M.	McKell, W. J.
Davies, W.	Mutch, T. D.
Dooley, J.	Osborne, J. P.
Doyle, J. W.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Keegan, T.
McGirr, P. M.	Quirk, J. P.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 31; noes, 18; majority, 13.

AYES.

Arthur, Dr. R.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Millard, W.
Bennett, W.	Morton, Harry
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Nicholson, Lt.-Col.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Oakes, C. W.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Crane, J. T.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Storey, D.
Graff, A.	Walker, R. B.
Grimm, A. H.	Wearne, W. E.
Hall, D. R.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hoskins, T. J.	Zuill, W. A.
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
James, A. G. F.	Bruntnell, A.
Lane, H. W.	Ley, T. J.

NOES.

Burke, M.	Mutch, T. D.
Davies, W.	Osborne, J. P.
Dooley, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Doyle, J. W.	Storey, J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Stuart-Robertson,
Kearsley, W.	R. J.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers.</i>
McGirr, P. M.	Gardiner, A. R.
McKell, W. J.	McGirr, J. J. G.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote be agreed to
—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 31; noes, 18; majority, 13.

AYES.

Arthur, Dr. R.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Ley, T. J.
Bennett, W.	Millard, W.
Bruntnell, A.	Morton, Harry
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Nicholson, Lt.-Col.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Oakes, C. W.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Crane, J. T.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Storey, D.
Grimm, A. H.	Walker, R. B.
Hall, D. R.	Wearne, W. E.
Hoskins, T. J.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers.</i>
James, A. G. F.	Graff, A.
Lane, H. W.	Zuill, W. A.

NOES.

Burke, M.	Mutch, T. D.
Davies, W.	Osborne, J. P.
Dooley, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Doyle, J. W.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Kearsley, W.	R. J.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers.</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Johnston, V. C. R. W.
McKell, W. J.	McGirr, P. M.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Vote agreed to.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND JUSTICE.

Additional Arbitration Judges—Court Reporters—Fair Rent's Court—Work done for Commonwealth Government—Treatment of Prisoners in Gaols—Shooting Case at Camperdown—Prison Reform—Appointment of Acting District Court Judges—Bailiffs—Arrest of Kearney—Payment of Jurors—Clerk of the Peace—Additional Magistrates—Shaftesbury Reformatory—Bail Magistrates—Allowance to Prisoners' Dependents—Hangman's Fees—Public Service Board—Administration by Magistrates—Public Defenders—Crown Prosecutors—Amalgamation of Offices, Sheriff and Prothonotary—Public Service Board.

Department of Attorney-General and of Justice.

Proposed vote, £47,008.

Mr. J. STOREY (Balmain) [7.8 a.m.] :
Is it the intention of the Government to

rush the estimates through in this way? We have just disposed of a huge vote for the railways.

Mr. BALL: Yes; we shall go on!

Mr. J. STOREY: I protest against the Minister for Railways taking charge of the Attorney-General's estimates. The Attorney-General should be in the chair to supply hon. members with information. The Minister for Railways surely cannot have information regarding this department. I recognise there is no rule compelling the Attorney-General to take charge of his estimates, but I put it to him that as a matter of courtesy he should do so.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Under those circumstances I shall take charge of them!

Mr. J. STOREY: That is more satisfactory. I am of opinion that the sum set down for this department is altogether too great. Each year the estimates of this department are increased, and eventually will become such a burden that something will have to be done in the way of curtailment. Throughout the country there are large and expensive gaols, with not a prisoner in them, and no steps are taken to get rid of these unnecessary establishments. The Assistant Treasurer has stated that the Government spent three months in the effort to cut the estimates to the bone, but that cutting to the bone appears to have had one result only, and that is the increasing of the expenditure. Under the heading of "Miscellaneous" it is proposed to vote no less a sum than £15,415.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Half of that is to meet expenses of contests in court, which we get back when we are successful!

Mr. J. STOREY: I do not know that we are always successful. When the hon. member was a member of the Labour Government I heard him boast that we had won suits in many cases against the Commonwealth Government, but that was due, not to any superior knowledge of the law on our part, but to the fact that Mr. Hughes did not understand the Commonwealth Constitution. What I am complaining about is the huge sum of money that has to be found for this department. We have talked a lot about law reform, and the necessity for

economy in the system of justice generally, and yet we find that this expenditure continues to increase, while justice continues to diminish, so that we are getting a minimum of justice at a maximum of cost. The hon. member for Darlinghurst, when in opposition, frequently pointed out to the Minister where irregularities, excessive charges, and stupid administration have cost this country a large sum of money. The Minister accepted that advice, but never did anything in the way of effecting reform. Now he is on the same side as the hon. member for Darlinghurst and still he does not do anything. When is this piling up of expenditure, which has to be met by the unfortunate taxpayer, going to end?

Mr. D. R. HALL: The additional amount is nearly accounted for by the fact that we are employing additional Arbitration Court judges, and paying them from this department. It will be noted, too, that the Department of Labour and Industry is relieved of a very large sum for wages boards.

Mr. J. STOREY: I agree that the expenditure of money on those additional judges is justified. When we were members of the Government party we held that there ought to be additional Industrial Court judges for the purpose of relieving the congestion in the courts, because we recognised that that congestion caused a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst trade-unions, and consequent dislocation of industries. What I particularly refer to, however, is the reform that has been promised in connection with bankruptcy and other branches of the Justice Department. That matter has been discussed at party meetings and in this House on many occasions, but each succeeding Minister has refrained from doing anything. It will be the duty of the Government one day to practically turn itself inside out in order to find ways and means to carry on the affairs of the country if this piling up of expenditure be continued. I do not want to labour the question, but I believe that if you went page by page through the estimates you would discover abundance of justification for reform, if not for the curtailment of expenditure under existing conditions. I am ready to

[Mr. J. Storey.

admit that if you permit houses to be built, you must equip them; but what I am complaining about is the building of the houses, and the costly system that is growing up, which will become of such magnitude some day that it will be impossible for a population of 2,000,000 people to find the means to carry on the government of the country. Every thoughtful member has spoken on this subject. I admit that for seventeen years I have been a free lance, and possibly have not taken the keen interest in this matter I should have done. But that does not relieve me of the obligation which is now upon me to remind hon. members of the difficult position we are beginning to find ourselves in because of the rapidly increasing expenditure in the different departments. In the Justice Department it ought to be lessening. With the simplification of the prison system, I do not think the cost ought to be increasing.

Mr. D. R. HALL: There are savings, but the increased cost of food for the prisons during the last two years has eaten up what would have been saved in other directions!

Mr. J. STOREY: I remember during the course of the Enmore election that the Attorney-General pointed to the wonderful reforms in the prison system. He said that all the inmates were working harmoniously in the different gaols. He had a picture of the prisoners in a little book to show the reforms which had been carried out as the result of the humanitarian regulations introduced by him. Side by side with those reforms there should be some curtailment in the expenditure. I admit that the public want the departments to be well administered. They also want the law to be made simple in order that access to the different courts may be made easier. Why is it that we do not simplify the courts we have? Ask nine-tenths of the people what the Banco Court is, and they will tell you it is the Bankruptcy Court.

Mr. KEEGAN (Glebe) [7.24 a.m.]: I want to draw the attention of the Attorney-General to a matter I referred to a few days ago—that is, in respect of an official court reporter by the name of Quong. I asked the Minister whether it was a fact that a Mr. Quong, stated to

to be an alien, was employed as official court reporter, and that his presence was objected to by every member of the staff with which he was associated. I have been informed by the Attorney-General that this man is an Australian; but the fact remains that, although he is an Australian, he is a Chinaman.

Mr. D. R. HALL: His mother was a white woman, and his father a Chinaman!

Mr. KEEGAN: I am informed that objection was raised to this man being employed in the position he now holds. When that protest was made, he was temporarily removed from the position; but, apparently through some influence, he was afterwards placed back in the position he now occupies. He is working there now, in spite of the protest of every member of the staff.

Mr. OAKES: What is their objection to him?

Mr. KEEGAN: It is because they look upon him as a Chinaman. The Minister knows that promises have been held out to returned soldiers, and to every man who enlists, that when a position falls due, or even if a position has to be found, the Government is determined that every man who volunteers for service shall get preference of employment.

Mr. D. R. HALL: The position was an open competition for competent shorthand-writers. This Australian-born half-caste won it. No one else but him passed the test!

Mr. KEEGAN: I cannot understand how it is that there was nobody in New South Wales or in any of the other States—he came over from Melbourne—competent to fill the position that this so-called Chinaman fills. He is filling a position vacated by a man who is on active service, and has a wife and family at present in this State. When the members of the staff, both men and women, typewriters and short-handwriters who have associated with this man, object to his presence, at least the National win-the-war Government, or the Attorney-General, should be the last to keep a man in a position who is objected to, knowing that he is not a full-blooded Englishman or Australian, but of Chinese descent. Under the circumstances, I maintain that he has no right to keep that position. Further, it appears exceedingly strange to

me that this man should have been removed temporarily from the position because of the objection that was raised to him, and that afterwards he should be reinstated in his position. I do not know whether it is correct or not, but I have been informed that some of the judges object to his presence in the court.

Mr. WRIGHT: Such a judge ought to be sacked!

Mr. KEEGAN: I say he should not be sacked. I maintain that we have men of Australian birth or English descent competent to carry out the duties that this man is performing. He has no right to occupy a position vacated by a man who is fighting for the Empire. Under the heading of "Fair Rents"—

Mr. LEY: It ought to be cut out!

Mr. KEEGAN: That shows what regard the hon. member has for an institution that has been established for the purpose of protecting tenants against the avariciousness of certain landlords. So far as the Fair Rents Court is concerned it has done good work in giving protection to people who have availed themselves of it. But the Attorney-General knows that under section 11, which provides that the tenants shall not be removed until the expiration of three months, the court is practically impotent and does not perform the work expected of it because sufficient protection is not given to tenants who come before the court in order to have their rents reduced. When the Labour Government was in power and the hon. member who occupies the position of Attorney-General in the present Government held a similar position he brought down an amending bill.

The CHAIRMAN: I want to remind the hon. member that in the discussion of the estimates it is not pertinent to go into questions which involve the passing of legislation. If the hon. member desires to discuss the administration of the court he may do so as he pleases, but he is not entitled to discuss an amendment of the Fair Rents Act or the enlargement of the jurisdiction of the court by means of an amendment of the Act.

Mr. KEEGAN: The magistrate who presides over the court and the officers associated with him have made representations to the Attorney-General, I understand, in regard to the impossibility of

the court doing the work expected of it unless something is done to give the court greater powers than it at present possesses.

The CHAIRMAN: There again I must ask the hon. member to bear in mind what I have already ruled, namely, that anything involving the passing of legislation or an alteration of the Act for the purpose of enlarging the jurisdiction of the court is not a matter which can be discussed on the question before the Committee. On the estimates the hon. member can only discuss the administration of the various courts and departments, and not the matter of legislation. . .

Mr. KEEGAN: Should I be in order in pointing out that the money expended upon the maintenance of the Fair Rents Court would be of greater value to the community if the powers of the court were enlarged?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must see that he cannot do that. I will not permit the hon. member to do indirectly what I have already ruled he cannot do directly.

Mr. KEEGAN: Let me put this question to the hon. the Attorney-General: Is he as sincere to-day in what he proposes to do as he was eighteen months ago? I hope the National Government will not refuse to honor the promise made by the Premier prior to the last elections to the effect that there would be no interference with the legislation placed on the statute book at the time. Whilst the Fair Rents Court has done nearly all I expected of it it has not done sufficient.

An HON. MEMBER: Some rents have been raised!

Mr. KEEGAN: That shows the necessity for the establishment of the court, and that there is no justification for its abolition or for any interference with it, other than by giving it wider powers. I have been informed that, although the court has reduced rents, in many cases landlords have taken advantage of new tenants who have become the occupiers of tenements which have been vacated by other tenants when the rent was fixed by the court. Here is a case which came under my own notice which shows the consideration property-owners are prepared to extend to the men who are at

[Mr. Keegan.

the front fighting to defend the liberties we enjoy here to-day. A case came under my notice—

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the hon. member will not be allowed to pursue this line of argument. If the hon. member has heard cases between a landlord and tenant, I do not see how he can make those matters relevant to the question before the Committee, unless he can in some way connect them with the administration of the Fair Rents Court.

Mr. KEEGAN: There have been cases before the court in which the rent has been fixed for twelve months, and before the expiration of that term the owners have taken advantage of new incoming tenants to increase the rent. Proceedings have been taken to compel those people to observe the law.

Mr. D. R. HALL: If the hon. member can quote cases of that kind we will very soon deal with them!

Mr. KEEGAN: I should like a reply to this question: Is the Attorney-General sincere in the promise he made during the last election that he intended to bring in a bill to amend the Fair Rents Act?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot go into these matters. I have allowed the hon. member all the latitude I can under the rules, and I ask him not to deal with any matter involving any alteration of the Fair Rents Act, because whether consequent upon a promise of the Attorney-General or not it is not relevant to the administration of the Fair Rents Court.

Mr. KEEGAN: The very fact of property owners refusing to observe the law, increasing rents as they have done, and placing the court in the position of having to take proceedings against them for doing so, goes to prove the justification for the Fair Rents Court. I am very anxious to see a court in existence that can deal out even-handed justice as between property-owners and their tenants, by its having the fullest possible powers for the protection of tenants as much as property-owners are protected under laws which exist at the present time.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [7.41 a.m.]: At this stage I have no intention of going into details,

but I want to submit to the Attorney-General a matter previously brought under his notice by Commonwealth officers. In the hon. member's department there is a large number of officers who do work for the Commonwealth in their off-time. I believe I am correct in saying that the pay which these officers receive from the State Government is sufficiently liberal to enable them to live in a state of comfort, they being highly-paid officers. The Attorney-General is aware that a number of these officers do a considerable amount of work for the Commonwealth in addition to the work which they do for the State Government; that they do that work in their ordinary office hours, and receive payment from the Commonwealth for doing it. I want the Attorney-General to look into the matter and see that where work for the Commonwealth is done by an officer of his department in the hours allotted to him to do work for the State Government, any fee paid to him by the Commonwealth shall not go to increase his salary but shall be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the State, and thus go towards decreasing the taxation of the people of the State. If a man is employed in a State office and payment is made for work performed by him for the Commonwealth during his ordinary office hours it is right that that money should not go into the pockets of that officer, but in to the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the State.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I may inform the hon. member that the matter is under very serious consideration at the present time in all the departments!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I accept the hon. member's assurance that the matter is under consideration, and I suppose, therefore, that it will receive proper attention.

I want to ask the Attorney-General a question in regard to the prisons' administration. Is it a fact that he has decided that men convicted of offences under the Commonwealth Unlawful Associations Act shall whilst in prison be treated as political prisoners, and shall not be herded with what are generally known as the criminal classes? I should like to have the assurance of the Attorney-General that they are to be

treated as political prisoners and will not be herded with ordinary criminals. If there is no other charge against them, will the Attorney-General take into consideration the desirableness of putting those men in a different prison, and segregate them from the ordinary criminal classes in prison?

Mr. D. R. HALL: There is no such power now, but regulations are under consideration to permit certain prisoners to get different treatment. I do not contemplate treating the I.W.W. differently from ordinary prisoners, but that aged men shall receive different treatment.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: We know that a number of men have joined the I.W.W. association who look upon it purely and simply as a union, whatever may be proved against other members—for instance, a man over 85 years of age, who, until his conviction the other day, had never had a charge made against him.

Mr. D. R. HALL: He admitted that he had been in gaol before!

Mr. LANG: He did not!

Mr. D. R. HALL: He said it was well known!

Mr. LANG: No!

Mr. D. R. HALL: Yes, he did!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I submit for the serious consideration of the Attorney-General that it is unnecessary to aggravate any kind of sore, whether a political sore or otherwise. The most lenient treatment possible should, I think, be given to convicted persons under any circumstances.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I think there is something in that argument, but it ought to be addressed to the people who passed the Act—that is, the Commonwealth Parliament!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I thought that a prisoner, up to the time he came before the court, was subject to Commonwealth law, but once sentence had been passed upon him he became subject to the prison laws of New South Wales and the regulations thereunder. I was informed, in connection with the case of certain soldiers who were convicted under martial law in Egypt, that when they arrived here and were imprisoned they became subject to our prison regulations. It was not within

the power of the State authorities to modify their sentences, but the whole of their treatment was under local control.

Mr. D. R. HALL: We lent the Commonwealth some gaols, and managed them on its behalf. Our officers are taking instructions from the Commonwealth authorities!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Yes, but before that arrangement was entered into, the prisoners were detained under the conditions I have described. I take it that the Attorney-General will be perfectly within his right in modifying the application of the prison regulations, so that the men to whom I have referred may be treated with consideration beyond that extended to ordinary criminals. Ninety-nine per cent. of the men who have joined the I.W.W. have done so in the belief that it was an ordinary union, and they would not think of breaking the law.

I now desire to refer to the case in which a verdict was given to-day—the shooting case at Camperdown.

Mr. D. R. HALL: That case will come before the court to-morrow. An inquest was held as to the cause of the man's death, but a certain other man was charged before the police court with an offence in connection with the death, and his case was adjourned until to-morrow, Friday. Under these circumstances it is *sub judice*.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Here is the report—

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept any report. I must accept the word of the Attorney-General. I rule at once that the hon. member is not entitled to refer to a case which is pending, and is to go before the court to-morrow.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: The point is this—

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I ask that you, sir, should adhere to your ruling, inasmuch as a certain person connected with this case has been charged, and has to answer to his bail to-morrow. The case must necessarily be regarded as *sub judice*.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure the hon. member will not attempt to make any

[Mr. Stuart-Robertson.

further reference to the case, which is *sub judice* if ever a case was. I will not permit any reference to it.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I regret very much that you should have given such a ruling, because I shall be compelled to dissent from it.

The CHAIRMAN: Very well. Will the hon. member furnish me with his dissent in writing?

Mr. LANG:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to say what he likes, to call names across the table, and indulge in personal recriminations. This is not the place for that kind of thing.

Mr. LANG: The dishonorable member who tells lies!

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to withdraw that expression. He has referred to the Attorney-General as "the dishonorable member who tells lies." The expression is clearly disorderly and most offensive, and must be withdrawn.

Mr. LANG: What is the expression?

The CHAIRMAN: I have told the hon. member, and it is of no use for him to trifle with me. For the second time I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. LANG: I shall be pleased to do so—what is the expression?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member used the expression, "the dishonorable member who tells lies." Everyone heard the expression, and I ask the hon. member to withdraw it without further trifling.

Mr. LANG: I withdraw!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I move:

That the Chairman leave the chair to report a point of order, and ask leave to sit again so soon as the point of order shall have been decided by the House. The point of order is that the Chairman of Committees was wrong when he gave the decision that the hon. member for Camperdown was not in order in discussing the case of a verdict given in the Coroner's Court and reported in the *Daily Telegraph* of 6th September, 1917, on the ground that the matter was *sub judice*.

The reason I have dissented from your ruling is because I submit that you were not sufficiently informed of the circumstances of the case when you gave your decision. I submit that a correct report

in the *Daily Telegraph* was upon the table, which I could have handed to you, showing all the proceedings in that particular court, and that already a verdict had been given in the lower court which must bring about a dismissal immediately the prisoner appeared before the Newtown court to answer to his bail, because there was no evidence against him. That was the statement I received from the solicitor who was defending and whose integrity and knowledge of the law no hon. member would doubt. That is what Mr. Penny informed me was stated by the coroner in delivering his verdict. It was conveyed to me by telephone, and I feel certain that had you been fully seized of the facts in the case you must have decided that it was quite within the province of any hon. member of this House to discuss that case, as a decision had already been arrived at which was of such a nature that the prisoner on answering his bail must necessarily be discharged, on the ground that there was no evidence against him.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I rise to order. I take the point that the hon. member is now endeavouring to secure recognition, through the medium of a report, of the very statements which he desired to make on the occasion when you took exception to his attitude. The hon. member's bounden duty—

Mr. OSBORNE: I rise to order!

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know whether the hon. member for Paddington can take a point of order, unless the hon. member is going to contend that no point of order can be taken on the hon. member for Camperdown when he states his case.

Mr. OSBORNE: No. I propose to submit that the matter, having been submitted to the House by the hon. member for Camperdown, no discussion can take place.

The CHAIRMAN: The standing orders provide that an hon. member may take a point of order at any time, except in certain cases specifically provided for, of which this is not one. The Minister for Mines is quite in order in taking a point of order upon the hon. member for Camperdown in his stating his point to the House.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: May I read the standing order?

If any objection is taken to a ruling or decision of the Chairman of Committees, such objection must be taken at once, and having been stated in writing, and if the Committee so decide (no debate being allowed, except a statement of the objection limited to ten minutes), the Chairman shall leave the chair, and the House resume—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will resume his seat. I know that rule quite well; but if the hon. member thinks that under cover of it he is entitled to say anything he likes—for instance, to use offensive language, to violate the ordinary rules of debate, to use disrespectful language of the Sovereign, or to deal with matters that are *sub judice*—the hon. member is very much mistaken.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I used no offensive language!

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member were correct it would be possible for an hon. member, in speaking to a motion of dissent, to violate all the rules of debate, and to contend that because he has ten minutes in which to state the point, no hon. member can rise to a point of order. I rule that that is not so. I ask the hon. member to state his case concisely, and not to drag in matters that have been ruled out of order.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I thought that the hon. member was endeavouring to do what he was prevented from doing by your first ruling. Therefore I took the point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Camperdown was just transgressing, and I would have stopped him. He was clearly attempting to state to the Committee matters which he knew I had stopped him from submitting.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I was making no attempt to transgress your ruling. It is most difficult to get a complete statement of fact before the Chair without coming very near the dividing line between what is in order and what is not. I was endeavouring to place before hon. members arguments that the matter upon which I desired to speak was not *sub judice*. Surely the coroner having given a decision, accompanied by a certain intimation—

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the subject-matter of the motion of dissent. I ruled that the hon. member was not in order in dealing with a matter which, on the statement of the Attorney-General, and on the facts submitted, was clearly *sub judice*. It was quite clear to me that the hon. member was attempting to discuss a matter which was *sub judice*—a matter which is coming before the court to-morrow. The hon. member is now seeking to bring before the Committee, under cover of his ten minutes statement, those very matters that I ruled he could not introduce. I rule that the hon. member must deal with the facts stated in his motion of dissent, and that he is not entitled to go into the merits of the matter which I ruled was out of order.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: As I cannot inform you as to the facts, I shall, with your permission, withdraw the motion of dissent, and go on with the debate.

Motion by consent withdrawn.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: We come now to the question of court reporters. It is a large item, which involves a considerable amount of expense to the country. It was stated by the judge in arbitration recently that he takes his own short notes of the cases before the court, and by that means saves the country considerable expense. In view of the burden of taxation which we have, it is fair and reasonable, wherever possible, and consistent with the proper administration of the law and the right of the individual citizen to be properly heard before any tribunal, that departmental expenses shall be submitted to the pruning-knife so that all unnecessary administration expenses shall cease. I shall not in any way discuss the value of the judges. In all countries it is necessary to have laws. I submit to the Minister that the Arbitration Court judges could be reduced in number by one. The business in that court has been very considerably reduced, and one of the Arbitration Court judges might be employed in some other court than this one. In that way there would be a saving of the expense that is frequently incurred owing to the department appointing acting judges to do circuit work.

Mr. D. R. HALL: We will see what is the result when all the work of the wages boards is transferred to them!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: In view of the de-registration of so many unions, it would appear that the business in the Arbitration Court will be very small, and if the Government put all the unionists in gaol there will be nobody to appear for the employees. As regards the District Courts, the officers in those courts have long vacations. [*Committee counted.*]

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move: That the hon. member be not further heard.

Question put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 29; noes, 17; majority, 12.

AYES.

Arthur, Dr. R.	Lane, H. W.
Ball, R. T.	Latimer, W. F.
Beeby, G. S.	Ley, T. J.
Bennett, W.	Millard, W.
Bruntnell, A.	Nicholson, Lt.-Col.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Oakes, C. W.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Perry, J.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Storey, D.
Fallick, J.	Walker, R. B.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Wearne, W. E.
Graff, A.	Weayer, R. W. D.
Hall, D. R.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hunt, J. C.	Grimm, A. H.
James, A. G. F.	Robson, W. E. V.

NOES.

Dooley, J.	Osborne, J. P.
Doyle, J. W.	Quirk, J. P.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Stuart-Robertson,
Keegan, T.	R. J.
Lang, J. T.	Wright, J.
McGirr, J. J. G.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, P. M.	Davies, W.
McKell, W. J.	Kearsley, W.
Mutch, T. D.	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

[*The Chairman left the chair at 8.30 a.m. The Committee resumed at 9.30 a.m.*]

Mr. DOOLEY (Hartley) [9.30 a.m.]: For years past the proper discussion of the estimates has been almost impossible. I have stated many times in the House that we cannot overestimate the importance of discussing the estimates, because hon. members see a good deal of the condition of the country, and they very often have valuable suggestions to make to the officials responsible for the administration of the departments. I know

that the responsible officers take sufficient notice of these suggestions to bring about certain alterations.

The Department of the Attorney-General is one in which a great deal of reform is required. We have on various occasions in the House heard a great deal about law reform and the cheapening of law, so as to make it possible for people in poor circumstances to obtain the same rights before a court as wealthy people. You cannot claim that there is justice in a country when one person, by reason of his greater wealth, is able to override a decision in the lower court by appealing to a higher court, and so making it impossible for a poor man to continue to go from one court to another. We should endeavour to create a state of society wherein rich and poor alike would be able to get a fair deal before the courts. I am not reflecting upon the judges, but I think that many of them have outlived their years of usefulness. They have reached an age when their memories are not keen enough to retain the details of a case so as to enable them to give an unbiassed judgment. As to the magistrates, their decisions very often do not meet with the approval of the community. We must endeavour to see that the people respect both the judges and the magistrates to such a degree that they believe they can get justice. Constitutional government is impossible unless the community respects the Government.

I want to bring under the notice of the Attorney-General a case that has been before the court recently. A man was arrested on the charge of inciting to strike. That may or may not be a serious charge, but he is a respectable young man, of excellent character. He was brought before the court, and some delay took place in getting bail. After he got bail he appeared before the court and was remanded. I am informed on reliable authority that, while waiting for his case to come before the court, he was detained for hours in a cell with habitual drunkards and criminals of a low order. I will give the Minister the name of the man, with particulars of the case. I think discrimination should be shown in connection with cases that come before the court. When a man refuses to work

for another, or says to some man that he thinks he should not continue at his job, that may be a grievous offence at law, but a respectable, clean-living citizen should not be thrown into a cell with drunkards or persons of a low type and compelled to remain there.

In connection with the estimates last year I dealt with what I considered to be some of the essentials of prison reform, but I am sorry to say that not much has been done during the year. There still exists in the prisons of this State what any thinking man must regard as a monstrous thing in a civilised community. When you walk into a prison you see the gallows which has been erected for the purpose of taking the life of some human creature. I cannot look at the gallows without thinking that we are still in a barbarous age. While a gallows is allowed to exist in a prison it is almost impossible to bring about an environment of reform. I have always been against the system of destroying the life of a man. The old barbarous idea that because one man kills another you should kill him cannot be defended on the highest grounds of morality. I take this opportunity of protesting against the existence of these things, and of asking that the whole system of dealing with people in prisons should be reformed. Many a time when people are guilty of transgressing the law it is no doubt their own fault, but many a time it is the fault of the State. Great numbers of people have never had a chance. The environment in which they were born and bred has made it almost impossible for them to keep out of gaol. I have always argued that, although a criminal commits an offence against the State, there are thousands of cases where the State has committed an enormous offence against the individual. If the State does not do its duty to the people living in it, what are you to expect? I think that every student of criminology realises that the best means of reformation is work. I do not think that these people are beyond reform. When they get to an advanced age they may be, but the young ones certainly are not beyond the reach of reform. That work should not consist in sweeping up prison yards or pretending to learn some trade which

the prisoners do not learn sufficiently well to be able after they leave prison to successfully carry on the trade in question. Nine-tenths of the work done in prisons is of inferior quality.

Mr. D. R. HALL: It should be borne in mind that we do not equip prisons with such good machinery as is used in factories!

Mr. DOOLEY: Many of the instructors in the prisons are incompetent, and the machinery and general equipment are out of date. I have been informed by those who can speak with authority on the subject that not one out of a hundred prisoners goes out of gaol as a good tradesman, able to take his part with his fellowmen in the particular occupation which he has been taught while in prison.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I am sure that you are overstating the case!

Mr. DOOLEY: I may be, but that is what I have been informed.

Mr. D. R. HALL: One difficulty is that if we do prison work well we get into trouble with tradesmen outside, who do not like the competition!

Mr. DOOLEY: I believe that the best method of reforming a prisoner is to put him on some land outside the gaol and let him enjoy fresh air and clean surroundings whilst tilling the soil. I believe that this is done to some extent, but the system should be extended. Eighty per cent. of the men on coming out of prison should be able to take up land on their own account and obtain a livelihood by tilling the soil.

Mr. D. R. HALL: At Long Bay there are over 300 prisoners, and there are no industries carried on there except by men working outside. There are 300 prisoners working just outside the gaol!

Mr. DOOLEY: I am aware that that is done, but it is not so general as it should be. An Act was passed providing that a man refusing to maintain his wife and family could be sent to prison for committing that offence, and the wages earned by him whilst in gaol be handed over to his wife for the maintenance of herself and children. I believe that has been done in some cases, but I am informed that the amount received by a wife in such a case is very small indeed.

[Mr. Dooley.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Never under 9s. a week, unless the man is a hopeless cripple and cannot work at all!

Mr. DOOLEY: A man may commit a comparatively trivial offence and be sentenced to an imprisonment of twelve months or perhaps two or three years. In such a case the wife and family of that man are compelled to suffer enormous privations because of his incarceration for committing an offence of which they were entirely innocent. The wife can get an allowance of 2s. a week for each child from the State Children's Department, and sometimes the Colonial Secretary's Department will give a full order for 10s. a week. I maintain that when the State takes away the breadwinner from his ordinary occupation and puts him in prison for having committed some crime his wife and family should not be compelled to suffer the enormous privations which the wives and children of some prisoners have to suffer to-day. I hope the Government will take into its serious consideration the responsibility which devolves upon the State every time a man is sent to gaol, and thus taken away from his wife and family by the State. In such a case the State should hold itself responsible for the maintenance and clothing and healthy surroundings of that man's family while he is in prison.

Mr. LATIMER: That would make it all the easier for a man to go to gaol!

Mr. DOOLEY: That idea was exploded hundreds of years ago. I am too humane to think that a wife and children should be made to suffer because their breadwinner has been sent to prison for some offence.

Mr. D. R. HALL: If a man dies, his wife and family may get along as best they can, but if he is sent to gaol the State must look after them, according to the hon. member's argument!

Mr. DOOLEY: I say it is the duty of the State to provide for a woman and her children when they have been deprived of their breadwinner by the State.

I am exceedingly sorry that the Fair Rents Act has not had a fair trial. It has done a great deal of good, and, with slight amendment, could do a great deal more. I know that a number of hon.

members object to the principle of regulating rents by Act of Parliament. Other people have objected to the regulation of wages by Act of Parliament, but we must some day come to the conclusion that if a man's wages are to be regulated by Act of Parliament according to evidence given before a tribunal, the prices of commodities which he purchases with his wages should be similarly regulated; and as the principal portion of the wages earned by him is spent in rent, the first thing which it is necessary to have is a regulation of rents. During the present industrial upheaval there have been dozens of cases where men out of work were in arrears of rent for perhaps only a fortnight, and, in consequence, they, together with their wives and children, have been thrown out on to the streets by the landlord. These men believed that they were right in going out on strike, and in the absence of any finding of any tribunal to the contrary, I also believe that they were right. It is monstrous to say a system of landlordism should be permitted to pitch men and their wives and families out on the roadside simply because they are a fortnight in arrears with the rent, although they have not been behind in their rent previously, though, perhaps, in occupation of the same house for some years past. This shows the class hatred which is behind the present industrial upheaval. There is no protection at the present time through the Fair Rents Court. I know of instances where tenants have been notified of a substantial increase in rent. I admit that they have an opportunity of going before the court, but, without an amendment of the Act, the Fair Rents Court is not able to serve the purpose originally intended by this House. I think the Government should bear in mind the fact that it has more duties to perform to the country than to imprison strikers and break up unionism. It has the duty of protecting the lives of individuals; and a great many of these lives will be sacrificed unless a great deal of reform is done in the interests of the people.

The expenditure of the Public Service Board comes under this estimate, therefore it may not be out of place to review the usefulness or otherwise of that

board. I admit that it is very difficult to find out what is the best way to regulate the great staff employed by the Crown in the various departments. That is a problem which requires a lot of thinking about, and one which it is almost impossible to solve. Discontent exists everywhere, and as long as discontent is of a healthy character, nobody can find fault with it. I believe that healthy discontent is the only means whereby we can hope to get reasonable progress. Progression is impossible without a healthy discontent, because contentment brings about stagnation. The Public Service Board has a difficult task to perform, and, after all, I think that direct Ministerial management and control of the respective departments is better than a system which permits of favouritism being shown under the exercise of club and other influences. It cannot be said that under present conditions promotion is always based upon merit, or that high positions are always given to the persons best suited for them. Sometimes an officer who has had years of service in a particular department, and is well qualified, finds his chance of promotion taken away from him by an officer being introduced from another department, and placed over his head. If we are going to introduce a system of checking the work done by mechanics in our workshops, who are getting 10s. or 12s. a day, we should adopt some similar method of ascertaining the amount and value of the work done by salaried officers. If it is intended that only the bottom dog shall be required to put on an extra spurt, justice cannot be done, and the same system should be applied all round. If it is thought that the State is losing money in its industrial departments or business enterprises, there may be equal ground for believing that losses are occurring in other departments where salaried officers mainly are employed. I am not complaining of the individual heads of departments. I have received courteous treatment from most of them, and have found them to be full of information. But I think that a complete system of checking and costing should be applied to the work of every individual in every department, and the results should not only be recorded in

the departments, but should become the property of this House. As the custodians of the public funds, we do not look seriously enough into the manner in which such money is expended. There should be some general reorganisation of the public service. I know that a royal commission has been appointed for the purpose of ascertaining what course is best to adopt to improve the efficiency of the service, and to secure an accurate record of the work done. This commission has been appointed to inquire into the conditions under which officers receiving salaries of from, say, £200 to £600 are working, with a view to applying some system of checking the work; and if a commission is considered necessary in this case, how can the Government justify the introduction of a similar system of checking in the railway and tramway workshops before the appointment of a commission and the holding of an impartial inquiry? The railway employees were refused a commission of inquiry, and this favouritism of the section of the public servants who are in receipt of large salaries should be brought to an end. I hope that full consideration will be given to the reforms I have outlined, and that special attention will be directed to the matter of relieving the sufferings of women and children whose breadwinners are cast into prison.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bathurst) [10.9 a.m.]: I candidly confess that, after the long sitting through which we have passed, I do not feel that I am in a condition to criticise the estimates with the vigour that should be displayed. But I cannot allow them to pass without making a few observations in regard to some of the reforms which I think might be instituted. The Attorney-General, when he first took over the control of his department, when he was a member of the Labour Government, was very enthusiastic on the subject of law reform generally, and made prison reform a hobby. No doubt he then carried out some reforms, but he has since stopped short. Possibly this may have been due to his newly-found associates, who may have caused his enthusiasm to cool off. But, at any rate, he has not continued the good work upon which he embarked, particularly in the direction of improv-

[*Mr. Dooley.*

ing the conditions of the unfortunates who find their way into our penitentiaries.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I am going on with the good work in the general interests of all!

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the Minister were doing this good work I am sure he would not hide his light under a bushel. I hope he will not allow his native modesty to obscure the good work which he says is being carried on. Some years ago I had the honor and pleasure of directing his attention to certain facts in connection with our inferior courts, and I am glad to say that he then took action that led to the unfortunates who came before the court having meted out to them a larger measure of justice than was previously the case. But I would point out that the conditions that prevailed at the time I brought the matter under his notice are now, probably owing to lack of supervision, rapidly being reverted to. I can quite understand that the magistrates in the metropolitan police courts have a large number of cases to deal with. I am casting no reflection upon our magistrates. They are excellent men, and within their limitations do the best they can. But under present conditions they are prevented from displaying that close watchfulness that is necessary to ensure that the scales of justice shall be evenly balanced, and that the underdog shall receive a full measure of justice. All our magistrates in the courts through which a large amount of business passes are too prone to accept the evidence of the prosecuting constable, and do not show sufficient appreciation of the fact that the man brought before the court may be quite new to his surroundings, and may be overawed by the fact that he is brought face to face with an austere magistrate and the full majesty of the law. Under such circumstances the accused person is not able to place his case before the court in such a way as to secure justice unless he has the advantage of legal assistance. The principal reason for that is that there is not a sufficient number of magistrates in the metropolitan area.

Mr. D. R. HALL:

Mr. JOHNSTON: If that is so the department should see that these magistrates do not run through their cases as fast as they can in order that they may get leisure. They should spend a reasonable time in hearing all the evidence that may be forthcoming in a case. A magistrate, on account of the hurried way in which he deals with these cases, is too prone to take the evidence of the prosecuting constable at its face value and discount the evidence offered on behalf of the man who is being tried. The Minister states that there is a sufficient number of magistrates to deal with the cases that come before them, and if that is so it is the duty of the department to see that these magistrates remain in the court a reasonable time in order to hear the whole of the evidence available.

Mr. D. R. HALL: If the hon. member will give me the names of the magistrates who deal with cases in the way he suggests I shall be pleased to have their work checked. I shall drop into the court quietly and watch them some morning.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I shall be pleased to give the Minister the names of magistrates who are in the habit of doing this kind of thing. When the Minister is making these chance visits I trust that he will pay further regard to that which at one time he did pay regard—that is, that everybody concerned in a case shall be given a proper opportunity to hear the evidence. It is too often the practice in our inferior courts for the person who is being tried to be farthest away from the witness-box and from the magistrate, and unable to hear what is being said. One magistrate in particular makes his remarks in such a tone that the man being tried cannot hear him. I have frequently been sitting at the solicitors' table and have not been able to hear what was said by the magistrate, and the person who was being tried was further away from him than I was.

There is one phase of prison reform which might be well looked into by the Minister, and I am certain that if he verifies the facts which I am about to put before him he will at once take steps to see that this state of things does not any longer prevail. Men awaiting trial are sent to the Penitentiary, either be-

cause they have not been granted bail or because of bail not being forthcoming when it is granted. So far as prison discipline and diet for minor offences are concerned, those men are in exactly the same position as if they had been tried and found guilty. For instance, if the governor or deputy-governor of the prison walks past a man awaiting trial, the man has to immediately stand with his face to the wall until the official has gone by. Then again, I have found, when taking a statement in the Penitentiary, that the breath of the man from whom I was taking a statement was absolutely repellent, and it was next to impossible to sit within hearing distance of him. I am told that that repulsive breath is due to the hominy and the bromide that these men are given for their meals.

Mr. D. R. HALL: We took the opinions of those who were in all the gaols, and we found that while the women wanted porridge the men wanted hominy. The old prisoners, almost without exception, preferred hominy, while some of the new men preferred porridge.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I can quite understand men who have become inured to prison conditions preferring hominy. I accept the Minister's statement, but I can tell him that I have not seen one man who did not absolutely abhor this stinking stuff which they call hominy. There is only one way to describe the offensive breaths of these people, and that is that they simply stink. It would be most extraordinary if persons awaiting trial and not accustomed to prison fare preferred hominy to good wholesome porridge.

The man to whom bail has not been granted or to whom bail has been granted and not been forthcoming has a right to be treated as an innocent man until his peers have found him guilty. There are sent to the Penitentiary the worst and most mentally depraved men that the nation unfortunately produces. Even while awaiting trial men who are in the Penitentiary on charges of committing certain immoral offences are permitted at certain hours to commingle with men awaiting trial on other and much less heinous charges. There is no

doubt that that corrupts the morals of boys of over 16 years of age who cannot be dealt with at the Children's Court.

Mr. D. R. HALL: First offenders awaiting trial are not in association with old offenders awaiting trial!

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am speaking of offenders who are charged with committing sexual offences. I know of a specific case in which the boy's father came to me. As the boy was over 16 years of age he could not be dealt with at the Children's Court.

Mr. D. R. HALL: You say there ought to be a further subdivision of first offenders?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I will look into it!

Mr. JOHNSTON: I want to say a word with regard to workmen's compensation moneys held by the registrars of the District Courts. When speaking on the address in reply I understood that this matter was going to be looked into. I had interviews with the Solicitor-General, and he promised that he would give it his attention. I now call the Attorney-General's attention to the fact that thousands of pounds are vested in the registrar of the District Courts as trustees of moneys awarded to infants under the Workmen's Compensation Act, and held by the registrars as trustees until the infants attain the age of 21 years. If there is a time when these moneys should be expended upon the infants it is when they are not able to earn money for their food and clothing, or when money should be expended upon them to give them a reasonable chance in the battle of life. If the Minister will review the awards made by District Court judges in workmen's compensation cases he will find invariably that where there are children and a widow a portion of the money is given to the widow. Take a hypothetical case in which £400 is granted to a widow with three children. In almost every case something similar to this is done: The judge awards £200 to the widow, and the balance of £200 will go to the three children, to be vested in the registrar of the court until they attain the age of 21 years. He makes an order that if one should die the balance is vested in the survivors. The Act makes all such orders subject to review,

[Mr. Johnston.

but there is not one widow in twenty-five who ever comes back to the court to have a subsequent review made of the award.

Mr. D. R. HALL: It is a costly business when only a small sum is involved!

Mr. JOHNSTON: So it is, and the spirit of the Act is that the moneys awarded shall not be frittered away in legal expenses of barristers or solicitors or in court fees. In fact, Judge Backhouse has laid down, in connection with the distribution of these moneys, that he will not hear counsel or consent to money being expended in that way. Some steps should be taken so that the moneys shall be made available under reasonable supervision for the upkeep of the children, and to give them a reasonable chance of equipping themselves for the battle of life, if there is sufficient for that purpose.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Does that require a new Act or fresh regulation?

Mr. JOHNSTON: It only requires new regulations under the Workmen's Compensation Act. I wish to draw the Minister's attention to one or two items in regard to an increase in expenditure that seems to me strange under the existing conditions in regard to finance and this fearful war. I am not using harsh criticism, but I think the matter needs explanation, particularly in view of the denunciations by members of the Labour party when they occupied the Treasury benches that there should be such a number of acting District Court judges appointed.

Mr. D. R. HALL: There were two or three on leave at the same time, and we could not fill their places until their leave was up. Judge Rogers had several months' leave, and so had another judge!

Mr. JOHNSTON: They are not on leave now?

Mr. D. R. HALL: No; there are very few acting judges now. Until we make up the list for next year we have either to appoint another judge or make a subdivision of the work!

Mr. JOHNSTON: In view of the Labour party's policy on this question, I think the Minister should make some announcement to let the public know where they stand in regard to these appointments of acting judges.

Mr. D. R. HALL: When you see the new circuit for next year you will see that there will be no need for acting judges!

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am sure that will be welcomed by the public. I now wish to draw attention to the item of £1,500, "fees to non-salaried Crown prosecutors." That is an increase of £500 over the amount paid last year. Under the conditions of the war, when everybody is urged to study economy, the president of the Industrial Court has laid it down that he will not, except in isolated cases, alter the conditions of labour in such a way as to involve increases of wages during the currency of the war. In every instance, from huge industrial undertakings like our railways to small private concerns, everything is being done to induce the people to study economy. It is extraordinary that the Government expects to spend on Crown prosecutors in the forthcoming twelve months £500 more than was spent in the former twelve months.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Not more than was spent, but more than was voted!

Mr. JOHNSTON: I suggest there should be a column in the estimates showing what amount was expended and the amount appropriated. We should then be able to see at once what might reasonably be expected for the forthcoming year. In the absence of the Auditor-General's report such a column is necessary. I wish to refer to an item on page 72. Last year the amount voted was £93,252. The line I refer to is "Less estimated savings on salaries, £5,000," bringing the total down to £88,252. I do not see how the £5,000 is saved on salaries.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I think it is very largely made up as the result of officers who have gone to the war, and we get a recoup from the Federal Government!

Mr. JOHNSTON: It seems to me that the item requires a fuller explanation by the Minister. I hope the Minister will make inquiry with reasonable diligence into those items on the estimates that are not sufficiently plain, and in connection with which we have not the assistance of the Auditor-General's report.

Mr. GARDINER (Newcastle) [10.43 a.m.]: No matter where you look in the public service you find that the various departments are out of touch with the Public Service Board, and efforts are yearly made to get away from its control. Even the Public Service Association has passed a resolution urging that the board is not necessary, and asking to be taken out of its jurisdiction. The Dredge Service Association only recently got away from the control of the board. They asked for a special tribunal to hear their claims, and although the Public Service Board, under whose jurisdiction in such matters the officers of the dredge service came, protested against this, the board's protestations were in vain. The dredge service obtained a special tribunal, and their claims were upheld by that tribunal, which ought to have been done by the Public Service Board. I am pointing out this to show the uselessness of the Public Service Board and the general attitude of the various departments towards it. I say nothing against the gentlemen who occupy the position of Public Service Commissioners at the present time. I believe that some, if not all of them, are very estimable gentlemen, but there has grown up a practice for some years past of appointing to this board public servants who have got beyond their usefulness in their own departments. Misfits who were not getting on well in their own departments have been appointed as members of the Public Service Board to get them out of the way. For some years I have been of the opinion that the Public Service Board should be abolished. I hope that the day will soon come when this burden on the public will be got rid of. I understand that there is to be an inquiry by commission into the working of the public service. I do not know if the Public Service Board will come within the inquiries of that commission. If it does it will be found, as many public servants have stated recently, that the Public Service Board is no longer of any use to any section of the public service. The time of the board is principally taken up in adjusting salaries, making appointments, conducting examinations, and recommending promotions. Whenever a Minister in charge of a department wants to

have a particular appointment made, and does not want to take upon himself the responsibility for that appointment, he puts the responsibility on the shoulders of the Public Service Board. That has been done again and again. The responsibility for appointments, &c., should be directly on the Ministerial head. Then there would not be the continual dissatisfaction in the public service which has hitherto existed with regard to appointments made by the Public Service Board. Within the last few years the Public Service Board in various matters has taken a stand against the Minister in charge of a department, who had given a decision contrary to what the board had recommended. Two or three such cases occurred in the Public Works Department, where the Minister in charge took it upon himself to go back on the recommendation of the Public Service Board. The Public Service Board protested against what the Minister did, and put the paragraph in its annual report concerning what they termed improper action on the part of the Minister. The board apparently exists only to enable a Minister to thrust upon it a responsibility which he does not care to take upon himself. The whole cost of the Public Service Board is set down in these estimates at £12,465 per annum, but that is exclusive of the salaries of the members of the board. These amount to £3,000 altogether, and I suppose that the travelling and other expenses of the board come to £1,000 more. Therefore it costs the country £15,000 or £16,000 a year for the maintenance of a body from whose control every branch of the public service is agitating to get away, in order to be under some other body, with respect to regrading, promotions, examinations, and hundreds of other things which are now supposed to be adjusted by the Public Service Board. Year after year hon. members, especially those on the other side of the House, have been very scathing in their attacks on the Public Service Board. Now hon. members opposite, who are administering the various departments, have an opportunity to get to work in this matter and save the taxpayers from this useless burden. Even if there is only one appeal against its decision from some part of

[*Mr. Gardiner.*

the country, all the members of the board go travelling about with a short-hand-writer and a secretary, at the expense of the State. Sometimes the whole board and staff go to places as far distant as Tenterfield to hear an appeal lodged, perhaps, by the local police magistrate or some other officer in some other department there. The board does not always act fairly. In a great many instances the board is really in the hands of departmental heads, who get from the board the decisions they desire. The public service does not get a fair deal in a great majority of cases. The departmental head is consulted, and what he recommends is generally granted by the board. The Public Service Board has got into such a state of utter neglect of its duties that the only concern of the members of the board is to retain their position and make it as satisfactory as possible to themselves. A great deal of influence, such as social influence, is brought to bear on the board, which is very susceptible to it. The Ministerial head of a department may work off some spleen against one of his officers by getting the board to give a decision against that officer. It is common talk in the public service that in most cases the only people who get any consideration at all in the Public Service Board are the officers at the top of the tree, who are the board's own pets and social friends. One case I have in mind is that of wholesale appeals from the Navigation Department against the last regrading by the Public Service Board. Those appeals of course did not come from those of the upper ranks of the Navigation Department, because those officers got what they wanted at the first time of asking; but other officers of the department had to strongly appeal, and at last they were compelled to form an association, or, perhaps, it might be called a union, for the lower officers in that department. Some of them joined it, and some of them did not, and at last the Public Service Board was prevailed upon to grant an inquiry into their case. All the appeals were for increase in salary, and, strange to say, those who had joined the union—especially those who held office in it—were given only a miserable pittance as an increase, or nothing at all extra,

whilst some officers who had kept entirely away from the union were granted greater increases. The officers of the Navigation Department appealed to the Minister in charge of the department, and stated the facts to the Public Service Board; and I believe also to the Minister. What I have stated indicates clearly that we cannot look for much good from the Public Service Board, and I hope that the Minister will take the first opportunity of relieving the taxpayers from the burden now imposed upon them through the heavy expenditure incurred upon the board. I trust the Minister will look carefully into the charge I have made. The case is a most serious one, and if the facts are as represented a grave scandal exists which should not be tolerated for a moment. I believe the Minister is a fair man, and I hope he will see that justice is done.

Mr. F. M. BURKE (Newtown) [11.3 a.m.]: I would like some information on the question of bailiffs. I am not acquainted with the functions of the bailiffs who are attached to our various courts, and I am now seeking for some enlightenment. In Newtown some few weeks ago a bailiff presented himself at the door of the house occupied by a lady, and immediately the door was opened walked in and took possession. He had a warrant from a magistrate giving him the power to take possession. It appears that this lady had been in the habit of paying her rent monthly, and on the occasion of the bailiff's visit three weeks' rent was owing. No demand had been made by the agent for this rent, and the first intimation she had that she was required to pay it before the end of the month was that received from the bailiff himself. I would like to know whether it is permissible for a bailiff to take possession under such conditions. If so, it is full time that the law was amended so as to provide more protection for tenants. It seems to me extraordinary that an agent can accept rent monthly for a considerable period and then suddenly, without having previously made a demand on the tenant, send a bailiff in to take possession when three weeks' rent is owing. I waited on the agent in question and he told me he was within his rights under the law. I do

not see any reason why a man who owns house property should be protected to any greater degree than ordinary traders.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is now dealing with a matter that would involve an alteration of the statute law. He must confine himself to matters of administration.

Mr. F. M. BURKE: I would like to know why magistrates in the metropolitan district are allowed to exercise the widest discrimination in dealing with accused persons. A man who was recently brought before the court on a serious charge of feloniously slaying was released on bail in the paltry amount of £100, whilst in other instances of a similar character the men charged have not been allowed out on bail at all. Whether a man is guilty or not is immaterial. His guilt is presumed when he is charged, and if a man charged with feloniously slaying another is allowed out on bail his release constitutes a serious menace to the community. In contrast to the case I have referred to I would like to point to that of a man named Kearney who was recently arrested for inciting men to strike. He was taken before the police court and was admitted to bail, but was required to find securities to the extent of £200. This man was not accused of any very serious offence, and it could not be for one moment urged that his release on bail would constitute a public menace. The community is not a collection of anarchists and madmen, as some hon. members would have us suppose. The great body of the people are as sane as ever they were, and some of them are a great deal more sane. I am not speaking as a special advocate of the man who was charged with inciting men to strike. For all I know I may be similarly charged myself, and my object in mentioning this matter is to urge that some degree of justice should be meted out, and that differential treatment should not be given to the extent I have indicated. I believe that amongst our magistrates there is a considerable amount of class consciousness. Some of them apparently consider that they are placed on the bench to rule the country, instead of merely administering justice. When the conscription issue was before us a certain magistrate became positively

insulting to the young men who were brought before him. One of these gentlemen became so hot in this respect that it was necessary for the Minister to relegate him to some obscure part of the country.

As regards jurors' fees, a man who is called upon to perform the duties of a juror is paid the paltry sum of 8s. per day. Those from whom jurors are chosen are generally persons engaged in business, and it is most extraordinary that a man who has to leave his business for probably one day or two or three days or even a week should be paid 8s. per day only for serving his country in this respect. A juror is called upon to be in attendance about 9.45 a.m. If he is not empanelled he is allowed 4s.; if he is empanelled he is allowed 8s. per day. I know of cases in which jurors have lost from 10s. to 15s. a day on account of having to neglect their businesses to attend the court. This is a matter which ought to be rectified by the Government.

As regards the Fair Rents Court, the position is that a tenant is only allowed three months' grace after his rent has been fixed by the court. The Act cannot be properly administered while the tenant who makes application for a reduction in rent is confronted with the probability of being put out of his dwelling after three months. I know of several cases in which people do not think the rent which they pay is fair, but are afraid to go to the court because they think they will be turned out of their dwellings after three months. A period of twelve months should be allowed.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member not to go into that matter. Any matter which involves the alteration of an Act of Parliament cannot be discussed on the estimates. It is only matters of administration that can be dealt with.

Mr. F. M. BURKE: I desire to know what are the functions of the clerk of the peace. I was employed for a little time in close proximity to the clerk of the peace, and it was very difficult to see what that official did. He used to go to his office at about 10 o'clock or 10.30 in the morning and leave about 4 in the

[Mr. F. M. Burke.

afternoon, but the particular functions which he was performing it was impossible to find out.

As regards stipendiary magistrates, the amount voted for them last year was £1,800, while this year it is proposed to vote £2,400. Apparently we are going to have an additional stipendiary magistrate. Is that because the Government expect to have a great deal of lawlessness during the year, and it will be necessary to have an additional magistrate appointed to deal with those reckless anarchists who are supposed to be in our midst?

Mr. D. R. HALL: No. We are elevating Bathurst by giving it a stipendiary instead of a police magistrate. The hon. member will note that there is one more stipendiary magistrate and two fewer police magistrates!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: I could never understand why we have such a great number of justices of the peace in the metropolis and in New South Wales generally. The duty of a justice of the peace, as far as I can see, is merely to sign an affidavit or statutory declaration. Some time ago a deputation from the Justices of the Peace Association waited upon the Minister and pointed out that, in these times of great stress, the services of justices might be utilised for the purpose of doing the work of the stipendiary magistrates, who are such a great drag on the country.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Paid magistrates give more satisfaction!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: I cannot understand what is the difference between justices of the peace in the country and justices of the peace in the city.

Mr. D. R. HALL: The Act provides that all cases in and around the metropolitan area must be heard by a paid magistrate!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: I suppose that means that the people in the country are different from those in the city, because, after all, it was from the country that the Government got its loyalists. I should like to know what the Shaftesbury Reformatory at South Head is for.

Mr. D. R. HALL: For habitual drunkards!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: Will the Attorney-General state how many inebriates have been in that institution during the last twelve months?

Mr. D. R. HALL: Sometimes the number has been twenty, and sometimes it has been as low as six or seven!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: Considering the small number of patients in the institution is it worth while keeping it on?

Mr. D. R. HALL: We have there half-a-dozen men who were fighting at the front and who are hopeless drunkards!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: I notice that right through the estimates increases in salaries to the clerical staff are provided for. Is that because the Government is paying increments which are due?

Mr. D. R. HALL: Yes, only the increments!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: I notice that last year £520 was provided for warders at the Shaftesbury Reformatory whilst £730 is provided this year.

Mr. D. R. HALL: There are two additional warders. We have opened one part for women!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: As regards the case of John Kearney, discrimination should certainly be made between a man who is charged with inciting men to strike and a man who is charged with larceny or felonious assault or some other heinous offence. I believe that Mr. Kearney was placed in a cell at the Central Police Station at 6.15 and detained there till 8.45 while his bondsmen were waiting all the time to bail him out. Is there any specified time a man shall be kept before a bondsman can be procured?

Mr. D. R. HALL: I will have inquiry made into the matter. The bail magistrate ought to be made available more rapidly than that!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: I was under the impression that as soon as the bondsman was available the man was released.

Mr. D. R. HALL: We generally try to keep bail magistrates in the courts!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: On the following morning he was taken from the courtroom and again placed in a cell with convicted men and "drunks," while his bondsman was waiting in the court. Is there no set rule whereby discrimination can be shown between the different

classes of persons against whom charges are made? Are they all supposed to be huddled together in one common cell?

Mr. D. R. HALL: I am having inquiry made into the matter. There ought to be some discrimination shown!

Mr. F. M. BURKE: I have nothing more to say on the estimates. I hope the Government, in connection with its projected scheme of retrenchment, will apply the pruning-knife at the top of the tree, and not allow the unfortunate men at the bottom of the ladder to carry all the burden.

Mr. T. J. SMITH (King) [11.32 a.m.]: It seems to me that the sum of £64,000 set down for the Prisons Department could be put to better use. The modern conception of a criminal is quite out of line with our prison system. Money which is spent for the purpose of reforming criminals is really used for the purpose of debasing them. I am of the opinion that our prison system makes criminals instead of reforming them. I think the Government should give consideration to the question of the more sympathetic handling of this class. After all, the vast majority of those who go to prison are the misfits of civilisation. I think the difference between most people outside prisons and those inside is that those outside have never been caught.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The whole world is wrong!

Mr. T. J. SMITH: I should not like to think that "finish" had been written on the evolution of the world. Stagnation is no good to any community, and is in contradiction of intellectual activity. There is one particular point I want to make. I am keenly interested in this matter. Usually, when a man who has a wife and children goes to prison, an allowance is made to them, but in most cases it is totally inadequate to provide a reasonable measure of comfort for the wife and children. I know the case of a Mrs. Lewis, living in the city, whose husband was sent away for eighteen months. I am not concerned as to whether he was guilty or not. I presume he was guilty, because he was found to be so; but I am concerned with the fact that this is a woman with a couple of children, and she cannot get work because she is suffering from some

internal trouble which I understand is common among women. It is impossible for her to make any provision for the children. The department hands her 10s. a week. I can quite appreciate the point of view of hon. members who will say that a man should look after his wife and children; but the community has a duty to the children, if the citizen does not fulfil his duty. In this particular case it is the future citizens of the State who are suffering to-day—that is, the children. I should like to see the Government give some consideration to this particular question, with the view, if possible, of increasing the allowance, or, if that cannot be done, it should endeavour by some means to give the children a better chance.

I have looked carefully through the estimates, but I cannot find the item alluding to that relic of mediæval times, the hangman. I do not know where it appears on the estimates.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Why worry about him if he is not there?

Mr. T. J. SMITH: I am concerned with the fact that the taxpayers' money which he receives is down somewhere on the estimates. I recognise that the hangman performs a duty, and he is supposed to perform it with the consent of myself and that of every other citizen. I strongly object to him, because I believe that the majority of criminals are the products of heredity and environment. The greatest of criminologists tell us that in cases of aggravated, vicious, or criminal assaults, murders, and rape, about 80 per cent. of the individuals who do such horrible deeds are the products of atavism. They are the unfortunate possessors of certain vicious traits that have been displayed—

The CHAIRMAN: However interesting this dissertation on criminology may be, I do not see what relevancy it has to the Attorney-General's estimates. The hon. member has spoken about the hangman. If he desires to criticise the manner in which the hangman performs his duties I cannot restrain him from doing so. But on that question I will not permit him to deal with the question of capital punishment, which is a question for legislation.

[Mr. T. J. Smith.

Mr. T. J. SMITH: I do not agree with the Chairman. Anyhow, the hangman has certain duties. One abhors having to discuss his duties in detail, but I think it is necessary to make reference to one or two recent cases in which he performed his duty, and I question whether he did so as effectively as hon. members opposite may desire him to perform it. I take the case of a man named Wilson. When I think that this particular individual was struggling at the end of a rope for some ten minutes—

Mr. D. R. HALL: That is not so!

Mr. T. J. SMITH: With all due respect to the Minister's opinion I say we have witnesses who saw this man hanging. To use an expression of the daily press, muscular twitchings were displayed by this unfortunate individual for fully ten minutes; and, furthermore, the cap covering his face came away.

Mr. D. R. HALL: The medical men reported that death was instantaneous!

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: What about the victim's twitchings?

Mr. T. J. SMITH: Surely in these days we recognise that the average individual who commits a crime of that description is not in his full senses.

Mr. D. R. HALL: This man did not commit one crime only!

Mr. T. J. SMITH: He was a man of morbid tendencies who lacked feeling. He was an absolute born brute. He had the viciousness of a hundred men. After all, he was only one of the unfortunate creatures of the world. If the Attorney-General or any other hon. member has inherited a better nature, and had a better environment in his early youth, he can consider himself lucky, but this unfortunate individual was unlucky.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot see that the hon. member's observations are relevant. The questions of heredity and environment in their application to criminals has nothing to do with the estimate before the Committee.

Mr. T. J. SMITH: The sooner we bring our institutions into line with modern scientific thought the better.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I take the point of order that the hon. member is not entitled to discuss this question. The

hangman is paid by results, and no general fee is set down for him on these estimates; therefore the hon. member cannot discuss the matter now, but he can wait until the next execution takes place, and then be able to ascertain what fees are paid to the hangman, whether the hangman has carried out his duties efficiently, and whether the outcome of his operations has been such as to bring about some reform so far as prospective criminals are concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for King to confine himself strictly to the estimates. If the hon. member desires to discuss the manner in which the hangman performs his duties, he may discuss that now, but I ask him not to deal with the matter at any great length, as there is no specific item on the estimates for that individual.

Mr. T. J. SMITH: I will leave that point. I desire to make reference to the Fair Rents Court. I do not think that the Fair Rents Court is performing its functions in the way originally intended. I know that hon. members opposite would strongly object to our fixing rents, although they may be eager to fix wages. If we are to get good results from the Fair Rents Court we shall have to amend the Act in such a way as will enable matters that come before that court to be expedited; and we shall have to give the court power to obtain whatever evidence it is desirable for it to have. The Fair Rents Court, although its operations have not been crowned with much success, yet stands as an arbiter between landlords and tenants. Many landlords would increase rents if the Fair Rents Court was not in existence. I believe I am not permitted to deal with the general attitude of landlords towards the public interest, therefore I will conclude my remarks by again referring to the treatment meted out to the wives and children of men sent to gaol. If the Government incarcerates a man, it ought to make some provision for his wife and children. The time is coming when we must recognise that every child, whether the child of a criminal or the child of a law-abiding citizen, must have from the State the consideration to which it is entitled.

Mr. O'BRIEN (Annandale) [11.52 a.m.]: We are discussing the estimates of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, but I think that, as far as this department is concerned, "justice" is a misnomer. The department ought really to be called the department of the Attorney-General and injustice. As far as my experience and observation as a citizen go, justice is absolutely unknown in connection with the administration of this department. I do not know whether it is permissible for me to refer to the methods adopted by the police in connection with prosecutions, but they certainly are not consistent with justice. The police, for the most part, are more concerned about obtaining a conviction than about the guilt or innocence of the individual charged. Their chief function is at all hazards to obtain a conviction when a man comes within their power.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think the hon. member can hardly discuss that matter under these estimates. The hon. member will see that the police are provided for under the Colonial Secretary's estimates. Under those estimates the hon. member would have been entitled to go as fully as he might have wished into the methods adopted by the police in respect to prosecutions or anything else in which they have to act. I ask the hon. member not to pursue that line of argument now unless he can make it in some way relevant to the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice.

Mr. O'BRIEN: Of course I must submit to your ruling, but I was under the impression that we were dealing with the administration of justice, and since that appears to me to be the most important feature of the administration of justice, I thought that this would be the proper time to deal with it, but as your ruling is to the contrary I must, of course, conform to it. There are several items to which I desire to refer; one of them was touched upon by the last speaker in dealing with the Fair Rents Court. Something in the vicinity of £1,000 is provided on these estimates in connection with the Fair Rents Court. I think that is an absolute waste of money. In my opinion the Fair Rents Court is a mere pretence at dealing with

a very important issue. I will not contend that the principle of a Fair Rents Court is unsound, Rent-payers are certainly entitled to protection from avaricious landlords. They cannot have too much of that protection. It is the duty of the Government to give it to them. The Fair Rents Court as it at present exists is a mere apology, when it ought to be one of the most important departments under the Government. There is only one Fair Rents Court. Although there are hundreds of thousands of people paying rent in the metropolitan area, only one court has been established for the purpose of hearing applications from those citizens.

Mr. D. R. HALL: There will be more courts established if they are needed!

Mr. O'BRIEN: The position that presents itself to the citizens is that the Fair Rents Court is a joke. Rent-payers feel that their cases may never obtain a hearing in the Fair Rents Court, therefore many rent-payers do not make any application to the court.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Anybody can obtain a hearing in the court within a month after making application!

Mr. O'BRIEN: Hundreds of thousands of tenants are being compelled to pay more than the dwellings they rent are worth. If these hundreds of thousands of citizens were to make application to-morrow, does the Attorney-General mean to say that they could obtain a hearing within a month? The impossibility of that presents itself to rent-payers, and consequently they do not make application. If the Government desires to act wisely in the interests of the community it must not wait until the Fair Rents Court is overcrowded. Such a state of things will never occur, because, as I have said, rent-payers think that if they live many years their cases may never come before the Fair Rents Court, and therefore they do not make an application for a hearing. The Government should administer matters in connection with the Fair Rents Court as if they were serious about it and wanted the rent-payers to have a fair deal; as if the Government were earnestly desirous of protecting rent-payers against the avarice and greed of the hungry

[Mr. O'Brien.

landlords of this country. If the Government is earnestly desirous of finding to what extent rent-payers are being bled let them introduce a measure making provision not only for one, but for fifty Fair Rents Courts.

Mr. D. R. HALL: The present measure makes provision for as many courts as are necessary. There has not been one complaint about delay by anybody who knows anything about the matter!

Mr. O'BRIEN: Only one magistrate has been appointed.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Yes, and he is doing more than he was asked!

Mr. O'BRIEN: One magistrate has been appointed to deal with the applications of 100,000 individuals.

Mr. D. R. HALL: He is only working half-time; why do they not go to him?

Mr. O'BRIEN: For the reason I have stated. There are 100,000 tenants who are paying more rent than they should, and who do not go to the court because they know full well that their cases will never be heard. Many of them do not know that the court is in existence.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Why not go out and tell them?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I know my business better than the Attorney-General does, and God forbid that I should be guilty of the tricks he has been guilty of.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member not to be personal.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I bow to your ruling, sir, but I am not going to submit to the insults of the Attorney-General, or of any other hon. member. The Fair Rents Act is a mere pretence at dealing with a matter of vital importance to the people. It has been demonstrated that the Act is useless, and ninety-nine out of every hundred people believe that the court has gone out of existence. If the Government has any desire to ascertain the number of tenants who are paying more rent than they should, let them establish a Fair Rents Court in each district of the metropolitan area. They will then discover how serious are the evils that require to be remedied by reference to a fair tribunal. The money now provided for in connection with the administration of the Fair Rents Act is being absolutely wasted.

I notice that £9,330 is being provided for the Public Service Board. I believe that the board has outlived its usefulness and should be abolished. We know that it is guided in making appointments and promotions not by the experience or ability of individual applicants, but by club, society, or political influences. These are the predominating factors in connection with appointments, and there is nothing approaching justice in the operations of the board. The country will be much better off from a monetary standpoint, those who desire to obtain appointments in the public service will have a better chance of obtaining justice, and promotions will be made on considerations of merit when the board is abolished.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member not to pursue that line of argument because he must recognise that the abolition of the board could only be effected by altering the law.

Mr. O'BRIEN: While it might be necessary to introduce a special bill to abolish the board that object might be in effect accomplished by striking out the proposed vote for the purposes of the board, and it was from that aspect of the matter I was addressing the Committee. In protesting against the operations of the board I am voicing the feelings of many thousands of citizens who realise that the board has been ineffective and lacking in impartiality. I desire to emphatically enter my protest and to record my vote against the proposed expenditure upon an institution that does not make a pretence of justice or show any consideration for the public welfare.

Provision is made in the estimates for police and stipendiary magistrates. The distinction between these two classes of officers is quite incomprehensible to me, because I assume that police magistrates are paid in the same way as the others. Speaking generally, I believe that the paid magistrates endeavour to administer justice in a fair and impartial manner, but there are some magistrates who for the most part are asleep during the taking of evidence and who reduce the administration of justice to a joke and an absurdity. When men who are supposed to deal out even-handed justice to the citizens who are unfortunate enough to come before them, fall asleep during the

taking of evidence, it must be apparent that fair administration is entirely out of the question. Some of the magistrates seem to assume that when a man is charged with an offence it is their function to decide that he is guilty because he has been arrested. The statements made by the police, who represent the Government and the Attorney-General, are regarded as all that it is necessary to consider, and in many cases accused persons have been convicted by magistrates who have been asleep during the whole of the time evidence has been given in their defence. How can justice be meted out by indifferent indolent automata? Owing to their advanced age it is impossible for some of these magistrates to listen to cases with that attention and care which is necessary in order to deal out justice. It is because of that fact that I desire to record my protest against money being expended in a manner that makes the word "justice" a misnomer and a joke. These men who are too old should be replaced by men physically and mentally capable of administering justice. If the Attorney-General is true to the principles which he professed to espouse in his early life—the desire to uplift his fellow-men, and to make people happy and contented as far as possible—he is in a position to-day to put those principles into effect. The advocacy of those principles was responsible for his elevation to Parliament and his attaining the position which he now holds. Some of these magistrates allow their anger to obtrude into their conduct of cases, and when anger is exhibited by these men it is impossible for them to administer justice. Not only police and stipendiary magistrates, but also judges have displayed anger in their conduct of cases.

An HON. MEMBER: And even members of Parliament!

Mr. O'BRIEN: As far as that is concerned every effort is being made by the Government to rouse the anger of members of the Opposition in its deliberate attempt to flout the public will in connection with the present strike.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. O'BRIEN: Another matter to which I wish to refer is that charges which cannot rightly be described as criminal charges arising out of industrial

upheavals are heard by particular magistrates or judges. One magistrate who was deputed to deal with certain cases in a court in October last year proved himself so unfitted for the work that he was taken away from it. Yet this man, Mr. Smithers, has been selected as the presiding magistrate on almost every occasion when cases arising out of industrial upheavals have been heard. He has demonstrated by his intemperate attempts to administer justice that he is absolutely unfitted for his position. He has demonstrated that he is biased, and even though he might desire to administer justice, the bias which he has exhibited makes it impossible for him to do so. I do not believe that the Attorney-General is responsible for this man being selected to deal with these cases.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Do you say that Mr. Smithers deals with more industrial cases than other magistrates?

Mr. O'BRIEN: Yes; he dealt with almost the whole of Brookfield's cases.

Mr. D. R. HALL: The whole arrangement is in the hands of the Chief Magistrate, Mr. Macfarlane.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I do not blame the Attorney-General.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Is it worth while worrying about? He has only a few months to run!

Mr. O'BRIEN: But in the meantime he may do an injustice to many people. I am simply voicing the feelings of thousands of citizens, who although they do not approve of the actions of the men who are charged, know that justice cannot be meted out by this man, and it is certain that these men will be convicted by him. I was present in the court myself one day when this man actually rejoiced in the fact that he had the opportunity to convict a man. Such conduct as that makes justice an impossibility, and in the interests of the public the sooner he is removed from the bench the better it will be for the people, because his presence on the bench makes the so-called administration of justice an absurdity and the laughing-stock of the community. The sooner the Government hastens the termination of that man's appointment the better. I do not know whether the Solicitor-General can be discussed on these estimates, but I want to say that I

[Mr. O'Brien.

object to any man administering justice who has not received the confidence of the people by being elected to Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. O'BRIEN: What I have said with regard to Mr. Smithers, magistrate, applies equally to one of the judges. I do not know whether I can deal with that matter.

Mr. D. R. HALL: Judges can only be dealt with on a specific motion!

Mr. O'BRIEN: It is a remarkable thing that, whenever a case of the kind I have referred to comes before the court, there seems to be one judge who is always selected to do the work. Why or how he happens to be chosen I do not know. Many persons—particularly members on the other side of the House—regard him as a reasonable man.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member knows, I think, that it is not competent for him to reflect upon a judge. If he desires to do so, he must do it by specific motion.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I will not refer to that matter further, except to say that I am sure the Attorney-General knows to whom I am referring.

Mr. D. R. HALL: It has nothing to do with me. The Chief Justice arranges what judges shall preside over the courts. The judges are protected from politicians!

Mr. O'BRIEN: You have ruled, Mr. Chairman, that the merits or demerits of the principle of capital punishment cannot be debated on the estimates. I have no desire to trespass upon your ruling, but I want to record my verbal protest against the voting of money for a particular individual who has been referred to. I believe that, with this Government in power, he will have plenty of work to do within the next twelve months. The Government will stop at nothing.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to make a general attack upon the Government on the estimates. If he wishes to criticise the work of any of the boards or departments under the Attorney-General he may do so, but he is not permitted to make a general attack upon the Government as though he were speaking on a motion of censure.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I have no desire to do so, but the hon. member for Orange made an interjection while the hon. member for King was speaking, and I was referring to that interjection. However, I can feel what I wish to say although I cannot say it. I can see the possibilities of many sums of £5 5s. being given to this individual in the future. I object to capital punishment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member objects to capital punishment I object to his transgressing my ruling. I have already ruled that he cannot deal with the question of capital punishment, which is a matter for legislation.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I do not desire to ignore your ruling, but I thought I might object to the voting of the money, and, by so doing, in an indirect manner prevent any further executions. I object to the payment of any money to a hangman. In my opinion the Attorney-General, or the judge who convicts the individual, should carry out the execution.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not allow the hon. member to argue in that way. He is still trying to put before the Committee his arguments against the retention of capital punishment. I will not allow him to do in this indirect way what I have already ruled he cannot do directly. If he wishes to move to omit any specific item he can do so.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I want to object to the voting of money in that direction.

The CHAIRMAN: Which is the item the hon. member refers to?

Mr. O'BRIEN: It is not specified. I take it for granted that it comes under miscellaneous or contingencies. However, I enter my protest against the voting of money, not only to the hangman, but to all those officers whose functions are incidental to the hanging, such as the sheriffs, the men who build the scaffold, the official who leads the individual to the scaffold, and even the reporters and the coroner. I object to all those ghastly things. I object to the allotment of payment to those individuals who perform a thousand functions that deaden the sense of decency in every individual who has a soul worth calling a soul.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member transgresses my ruling again, I

shall order him to discontinue his remarks. He must know that he is attempting to put before the Committee his objections to capital punishment.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I can see it is impossible for me to make any further reference to that subject without going contrary to your ruling, and I have no desire to do that. However, my vote will certainly be recorded against the voting of money in that direction.

There is a matter in connection with the Crown prosecutor and the public defender. I am at a loss to know how far I can refer to these matters, because it seems to me that the rules governing the procedure of the House are inconsistent and incompatible with reasonable discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not reflect upon the rules and standing orders of the House. If he desires to deal with that matter he can do so on a specific motion.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I have no objection to the principle involved in the appointment of public defenders, but it seems to be taken for granted that an individual is guilty when these people are appealed to. Special application has to be made in connection with them. There ought to be certain legal men set apart for that particular work; or rather an individual should have the right to make application to the Department of Justice for a legal man to defend his case, and the Department of Justice should call upon some individual to enter the court. It would be unknown to the magistrate and to everyone else that he was there as the representative of a distressed prisoner. I am sure that in the minds of many people poverty implies guilt.

Mr. W. E. V. ROBSON: Absolute nonsense. No wonder people's property is set on fire!

Mr. O'BRIEN: I have had experience of life. I have had to live amongst poor people, and the hon. member has not.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must see that he is getting away from the question. I know he was drawn off by an interjection, but he must not pay attention to interjections.

Mr. O'BRIEN: When we read in the paper that the Crown has agreed in a most gracious moment to provide someone

to defend a distressed convict, the impression is that the person must be guilty. I am sure that impression affects everyone in the administration of justice.

Mr. W. E. V. ROBSON: You have a poor opinion of them!

Mr. O'BRIEN: I have a high sense of justice, but the hon. member has not. I have lived the life of these people, and I know what I am talking about. I am pleading for the bottom dog, the man and woman who are oppressed. It is because I know these people by experience that I can speak with knowledge. I have come here for that purpose. I know that the mere fact that someone goes to the court to represent an alleged convict prejudices the case of the accused, and that prejudice can only be removed by the man being defended in a spirit of justice. That would be by the department calling upon some individual to represent the prisoner, without letting it be known to everybody connected with the court that he is there representing a distressed prisoner.

Mr. W. E. V. ROBSON: What difference could it make?

Mr. O'BRIEN: Your experience in life has warped your mind. You are a stupid individual, and a prejudiced one, too.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. O'BRIEN: I object to insults from the hon. member. I also object to his walking out of the Chamber after insulting me. A man who claims to have had a good education—which he must have had to fit him for the position he holds in the legal profession—ought to treat the Committee and the Chairman with more courtesy than he has exhibited on this occasion.

Mr. W. E. V. ROBSON: I cannot sit here and listen quietly to stupid statements!

Mr. O'BRIEN: I consider that your statements on this matter are the outcome of stupidity and injustice.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. O'BRIEN: I am desirous of assisting men to establish their innocence, if they are innocent, and I say that they should be allowed to select, to defend them, men in such a manner that the court will be ignorant of the fact that those men represent distressed prisoners. I believe that if it were known

[Mr. O'Brien.

that a man was paid 20 guineas a day to defend an accused person that man would have greater weight with the court than would a man, even though of greater intellect, who it was known was paid only 2 guineas a day. I hope the Government will show that it is in earnest in this matter by providing members of the legal profession to defend people who cannot afford to pay for legal assistance, instead of these people being called upon to pay exorbitant fees to members of that very lucrative profession which has a union the most conservative and most class-conscious in this or any other part of the world. Sabotage, go-slow, the charging of exorbitant fees, and other things not conducive to the welfare of the community, characterise the whole of the work of the Law Institute to which members of the legal profession belong. If the Attorney-General is actuated by the high motives which characterised his early political life he will see that those people who most require assistance in conducting their defence are provided with assistance. I say unhesitatingly that it is impossible for accused persons to obtain justice as long as it is known to the court that the men appearing for them are representing them as distressed prisoners.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have listened to the hon. member very carefully and patiently. The hon. member has summed up his argument in almost the same words at least three times. It is my duty to prevent constant repetition of the same argument.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I thought I would be justified—

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that the hon. member is not justified.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I thought I was giving an excellent reason, which I could advance many times with good effect. If you object to that I certainly will not persist. As regards Crown prosecutors, I say that a Crown prosecutor should be more concerned about establishing the innocence of an accused person than obtaining a conviction against him. These views of mine may appear to be inconsistent with the conception of justice from the standpoint of hon. members on the other side. When a Crown proecutor is sent into court by the Gov-

ernment he goes there for the purpose of obtaining a conviction, whereas I say that an attempt should be made to, if possible, establish the innocence of the accused, or at all events the Crown prosecutor should never be called upon to secure a conviction when he and everybody connected with the court must know that the accused is an innocent person. Sometimes Crown prosecutors seek to establish the guilt of people whom they know to be innocent. Could anyone imagine a greater travesty on justice than for a Crown prosecutor to try to establish the guilt of an innocent person? It may seem unreasonable to say that that is done, nevertheless it is a fact. I myself have known Crown prosecutors to endeavour to have men, and women too, who were innocent, placed in prison, when in their own hearts they knew that those persons were innocent. They appeared in court on behalf of the Justice Department, and their instructions were to obtain convictions in justification of the action of the police in making the arrests. Somebody had to be arrested by the police, so that it should not appear that crime could go unpunished. I object to the payment of public money to Crown prosecutors, who in many cases merely try to make an accused person appear guilty in the eyes of the judge and jury, although innocent of the crime alleged against him.

Mr. LANG: Why is not the Attorney-General present in the Chamber when his departmental estimates are under consideration?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I do not know why the Attorney-General is not here to listen to my remarks.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Annandale will proceed with his remarks, whether the Attorney-General is in the Chamber or not. I cannot control that. There is no rule to compel a Minister to be present when the estimates of his department are being discussed.

Mr. O'BRIEN: Of course, if the Attorney-General does not think my remarks worth listening to, that is a matter for himself.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member for Annandale proceed with his remarks?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I will, but I must object to continuous interruptions. I have spoken only two or three times in this House, and on every occasion I have had innumerable interjections hurled at me without my receiving any protection from the Chair. I desire to enter my protest against that. Other hon. members can speak—

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member for Annandale proceed with his speech?

Mr. O'BRIEN: I will.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I move:

That the hon. member be not further heard.

Question put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 29; noes, 19; majority, 10.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Millard, W.
Beeby, G. S.	Morton, Harry
Bennett, W.	Morton, Mark F.
Briner, G. S.	Nesbitt, G.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Robson, W. E. V.
Graff, A.	Thomas, F. J.
Grahame, W. C.	Walker, R. B.
Grimm, A. H.	Wearne, W. E.
Hall, D. R.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hunt, J. C.	Bruntnell, A.
Lane, H. W.	Weaver, R. W. D.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McKell, W. J.
Burke, F. M.	Miller, G. T. C.
Burke, M.	Mutch, T. D.
Davies, W.	O'Brien, W. J.
Dooley, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Doyle, J. W.	Stuart-Robertson,
Gardiner, A. R.	R. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	
Keegan, T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lang, J. T.	McGirr, P. M.
McGirr, J. J. G.	Wright, J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 30; noes, 19; majority, 11.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Colquhoun, P. B.
Ball, R. T.	Fallick, J.
Beeby, G. S.	Fuller, G. W.
Bennett, W.	Graff, A.
Briner, G. S.	Grahame, W. C.
Bruntnell, A.	Grimm, A. H.

Hall, D. R.	Perry, J.
Hoskins, T. J.	Robson, W. E. V.
Hunt, J. C.	Thomas, F. J.
Lane, H. W.	Wearne, W. E.
Latimer, W. F.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Millard, W.	Zuill, W. A.
Morton, Harry	
Morton, Mark F.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Nesbitt, G.	Buttenshaw, E. A.
Onslow, Col. J. W. M.	Walker, R. B.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McGirr, P. M.
Burke, F. M.	Miller, G. T. C.
Burke, M.	Mutch, T. D.
Davies, W.	O'Brien, W. J.
Doyle, J. W.	Stuart-Robertson,
Gardiner, A. R.	R. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Wright, J.
Kearsley, W.	
Keegan, T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lang, J. T.	McKell, W. J.
McGirr, J. J. G.	Quirk, J. P.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote, "Department of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, £47,000," be agreed to—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 31; noes, 20; majority, 11.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Ley, T. J.
Beeby, G. S.	Millard, W.
Bennett, W.	Morton, Harry
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bruntnell, A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Perry, J.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fallick, J.	Thomas, F. J.
Fuller, G. W.	Walker, R. B.
Graff, A.	Wearne, W. E.
Grahame, W. C.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hall, D. R.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hunt, J. C.	Grimm, A. H.
Lane, H. W.	Nesbitt, G.

NOES.

Burke, F. M.	McKell, W. J.
Burke, M.	Miller, G. T. C.
Davies, W.	Mutch, T. D.
Estell, J.	O'Brien, W. J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Quirk, J. P.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Stuart-Robertson,
Kearsley, W.	R. J.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Brookfield, P.
McGirr, P. M.	Doyle, J. W.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

[The Chairman left the chair at 1.10 p.m. The Committee resumed at 2 p.m.]

Court Reporters.

Proposed vote, £8,475.

Mr. WRIGHT (Willyama) [2.21 p.m.]:
I move:

That the item be reduced by £75.

I do this because I am not satisfied with many of the items which build up the total of £8,475. For instance, there is a chief reporter at £370 per year. I want to know who he is, and what his duties are. Is that the McMurray who goes to the Domain on Sundays?

Mr. LANG: It is the same man!

Mr. WRIGHT: I do not know.

Mr. LANG: I assure the hon. member that it is!

Mr. WRIGHT: There are a number of reporters provided for, but I am not prepared to entrust the department with the expenditure of this amount of money on such vague information, knowing as I do that the Attorney-General in the absence of the Premier in England has used his position for personal profit.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not allow the hon. member to go into that. On the first item hon. members were permitted to deal with the whole of the department, and take specific items in the estimate. Now the hon. member must confine himself to the various items in this particular vote. I cannot allow him to discuss the attitude of the Attorney-General towards the reporters or towards anyone else.

Mr. WRIGHT: I notice amongst the items there is provision "to meet increases actually approved by the Public Service Board to 30th June, 1918." I do not know what increases the Public Service Board has decided on.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to go into that. He will have to confine himself to the specific increase mentioned here of £193.

Mr. WRIGHT: The amendment I have moved is to reduce the total item by £75.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I move:

That the hon. member for Willyama be not further heard.

Question put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 32; noes, 17; majority, 15.

AYES.

Ball, R. T.	Latimer, W. F.
Bavin, T. R.	Millard, W.
Bennett, W.	Morton, Harry
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bruntnell, A.	Nesbitt, G.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Oakes, C. W.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Perry, J.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fallick, J.	Thomas, F. J.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Walker, R. B.
Graff, A.	Wearne, W. E.
Grahame, W. C.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Grimm, A. H.	Zuill, W. A.
Hall, D. R.	
Hoskins, T. J.	
Hunt, J. C.	
Lane, H. W.	

Tellers,
Bagnall, W. R. C.
Onslow, Col. J. W. M.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	Mutch, T. D.
Burke, M.	O'Brien, W. J.
Davies, W.	Storey, J.
Dooley, J.	Stuart-Robertson,
Estell, J.	R. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	
McGirr, J. J. G.	
McGirr, P. M.	
McKell, W. J.	

Tellers,
Gardiner, A. R.
Kearsley, W.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 33; noes, 20; majority, 13.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Millard, W.
Beeby, G. S.	Morton, Harry
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bruntnell, A.	Nesbitt, G.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Oakes, C. W.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Storey, D.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Thomas, F. J.
Graff, A.	Walker, R. B.
Grahame, W. C.	Wearne, W. E.
Grimm, A. H.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hall, D. R.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	
Hunt, J. C.	
Lane, H. W.	

Tellers,
Bavin, T. R.
Robson, W. E. V.

NOES.

Burke, F. M.	McGirr, P. M.
Burke, M.	McKell, W. J.
Davies, W.	Mutch, T. D.
Dooley, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Estell, J.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J.
Keegan, T.	
Lang, J. T.	
McGirr, J. J. G.	

Tellers,
Brookfield, P.
O'Brien, W. J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the item, “£8,475,” be reduced by £75—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 20; noes, 33; majority, 13.

AYES.

Brookfield, P.	McGirr, P. M.
Burke, F. M.	McKell, W. J.
Burke, M.	Mutch, T. D.
Davies, W.	O'Brien, W. J.
Dooley, J.	Storey, J.
Estell, J.	Stuart-Robertson,
Gardiner, A. R.	R. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Wright, J.
Kearsley, W.	
Lang, J. T.	
McGirr, J. J. G.	

Tellers,
Keegan, T.
Quirk, J. P.

NOES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Lane, H. W.
Ball, R. T.	Latimer, W. F.
Bavin, T. R.	Millard, W.
Bennett, W.	Morton, Harry
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bruntnell, A.	Nesbitt, G.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Oakes, C. W.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Crane, J. T.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Storey, D.
Graff, A.	Walker, R. B.
Grahame, W. C.	Wearne, W. E.
Grimm, A. H.	Zuill, W. A.
Hall, D. R.	
Hoskins, T. J.	
Hunt, J. C.	

Tellers,
Buttenshaw, E. A.
Weaver, R. W. D.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [2.23 p.m.]: I beg to move that the item—

Mr. D. R. HALL: I move:

That the hon. member be not further heard.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 34; noes, 21; majority, 13.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Millard, W.
Bavin, T. R.	Morton, Harry
Bennett, W.	Morton, Mark F.
Briner, G. S.	Nesbitt, G.
Bruntnell, A.	Oakes, C. W.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Perry, J.
Crane, J. T.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fallick, J.	Storey, D.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Thomas, F. J.
Graff, A.	Walker, R. B.
Grahame, W. C.	Wearne, W. E.
Grimm, A. H.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hall, D. R.	
Hoskins, T. J.	
Hunt, J. C.	
Lane, H. W.	

Tellers,
Colquhoun, P. B.
Zuill, W. A.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.
Burke, F. M.
Burke, M.
Davies, W.
Dooley, J.
Estell, J.
Gardiner, A. R.
Hickey, Simon
Johnston, V. C. R. W.
Kearsley, W.
Keegan, T.
Lang, J. T.

McGirr, P. M.
Mutch, T. D.
O'Brien, W. J.
Quirk, J. P.
Storey, J.
Stuart-Robertson,
R. J.
Wright, J.
Tellers,
McGirr, J. J. G.
McKell, W. J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. D. R. HALL: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 34; noes, 21; majority, 13.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.
Ball, R. T.
Bavin, T. R.
Bennett, W.
Briner, G. S.
Bruntnell, A.
Buttenshaw, E. A.
Cocks, A. A. C.
Colquhoun, P. B.
Crane, J. T.
Edden, A.
Fallick, J.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.
Graff, A.
Grahame, W. C.
Grimm, A. H.
Hall, D. R.
Hoskins, T. J.

Hunt, J. C.
Lane, H. W.
Millard, W.
Morton, Harry
Morton, Mark F.
Nesbitt, G.
Oakes, C. W.
Perry, J.
Robson, W. E. V.
Storey, D.
Thomas, F. J.
Walker, R. B.
Wearne, W. E.
Weaver, R. W. D.

Tellers,

Latimer, W. F.
Onslow, Col. J. W. M.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.
Burke, F. M.
Burke, M.
Dooley, J.
Estell, J.
Gardiner, A. R.
Hickey, Simon
Johnston, V. C. R. W.
Kearsley, W.
Keegan, T.
Lang, J. T.
McGirr, J. J. G.

McGirr, P. M.
McKell, W. J.
O'Brien, W. J.
Quirk, J. P.
Storey, J.
Stuart-Robertson,
R. J.
Wright, J.
Tellers,
Davies, W.
Mutch, T. D.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote be agreed to—
put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 32; noes, 21; majority, 11.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.
Ball, R. T.
Bavin, T. R.
Bennett, W.
Briner, G. S.
Bruntnell, A.

Buttenshaw, E. A.
Cocks, A. A. C.
Colquhoun, P. B.
Crane, J. T.
Fallick, J.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.

Graff, A.
Grimm, A. H.
Hoskins, T. J.
Lane, H. W.
Latimer, W. F.
Millard, W.
Morton, Harry
Nesbitt, G.
Oakes, C. W.
Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Perry, J.

Robson, W. E. V.
Storey, D.
Thomas, F. J.
Walker, R. B.
Wearne, W. E.
Weaver, R. W. D.
Zuill, W. A.

Tellers,

Hunt, J. C.
Morton, Mark F.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.
Burke, F. M.
Davies, W.
Dooley, J.
Estell, J.
Gardiner, A. R.
Hickey, Simon
Kearsley, W.
Keegan, T.
Lang, J. T.
McGirr, J. J. G.
McGirr, P. M.

McKell, W. J.
Mutch, T. D.
O'Brien, W. J.
Quirk, J. P.
Storey, J.
Stuart-Robertson,
R. J.
Wright, J.

Tellers,

Burke, M.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

The Judges.

Proposed vote, £16,061.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 32; noes, 20; majority, 12.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.
Ball, R. T.
Bavin, T. R.
Bennett, W.
Briner, G. S.
Bruntnell, A.
Cocks, A. A. C.
Colquhoun, P. B.
Crane, J. T.
Fallick, J.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.
Graff, A.
Grimm, A. H.
Hoskins, T. J.
Hunt, J. C.
Lane, H. W.
Latimer, W. F.

Millard, W.
Morton, Harry
Morton, Mark F.
Nesbitt, G.
Oakes, C. W.
Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Perry, J.
Robson, W. E. V.
Storey, D.
Walker, R. B.
Wearne, W. E.
Weaver, R. W. D.
Zuill, W. A.

Tellers,

Buttenshaw, E. A.
Thomas, F. J.

NOES.

Burke, F. M.
Burke, M.
Davies, W.
Dooley, J.
Estell, J.
Gardiner, A. R.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.
Kearsley, W.
Keegan, T.
Lang, J. T.
McGirr, J. J. G.

McKell, W. J.
Mutch, T. D.
O'Brien, W. J.
Quirk, J. P.
Storey, J.
Stuart-Robertson,
R. J.
Wright, J.
Tellers,
Brookfield, P.
Hickey, Simon

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote be agreed to
—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 32; noes, 21; majority, 11.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Millard, W.
Ball, R. T.	Morton, Harry
Bavin, T. R.	Morton, Mark F.
Bennett, W.	Nesbitt, G.
Briner, G. S.	Oakes, C. W.
Bruntnell, A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Perry, J.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Robson, W. E. V.
Crane, J. T.	Storey, D.
Fallick, J.	Thomas, F. J.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Walker, R. B.
Graff, A.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Grimm, A. H.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lane, H. W.	Colquhoun, P. B.
Latimer, W. F.	Wearne, W. E.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McGirr, J. J. G.
Burke, F. M.	McGirr, P. M.
Burke, M.	McKell, W. J.
Davies, W.	Mutch, T. D.
Dooley, J.	O'Brien, W. J.
Estell, J.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Hickey, Simon	R. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J. P.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Prothonotary and Registrar in Divorce.

Proposed vote, £5,433.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 32; noes, 21; majority, 11.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Millard, W.
Ball, R. T.	Morton, Harry
Bavin, T. R.	Morton, Mark F.
Bennett, W.	Nesbitt, G.
Briner, G. S.	Oakes, C. W.
Bruntnell, A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Perry, J.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Robson, W. E. V.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Storey, D.
Crane, J. T.	Thomas, F. J.
Fallick, J.	Wearne, W. E.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Graff, A.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lane, H. W.	Grimm, A. H.
Latimer, W. F.	Walker, R. B.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McKell, W. J.
Davies, W.	Mutch, T. D.
Dooley, J.	O'Brien, W. J.
Estell, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J.
Keegan, T.	
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers.</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Burke, F. M.
McGirr, P. M.	Burke, M.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote be agreed to
—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 30; noes, 23; majority, 7.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Millard, W.
Ball, R. T.	Morton, Harry
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bruntnell, A.	Nesbitt, G.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Oakes, C. W.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Perry, J.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Robson, W. E. V.
Crane, J. T.	Storey, D.
Fallick, J.	Thomas, F. J.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Walker, R. B.
Graff, A.	Wearne, W. E.
Grimm, A. H.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hoskins, T. J.	
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lane, H. W.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Latimer, W. F.	Zuill, W. A.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McKell, W. J.
Burke, F. M.	Mutch, T. D.
Burke, M.	O'Brien, W. J.
Davies, W.	Osborne, J. P.
Dooley, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Estell, J.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Hickey, Simon	R. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Wright, J.
Kearsley, W.	
Keegan, T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lang, J. T.	McGirr, P. M.
McGirr, J. J. G.	Smith, T. J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Master in Equity.

Proposed vote, £3,649.

Mr. GARDINER (Newcastle) [3 p.m.]: I want to ask the Minister to agree at this stage to the adjournment of the debate until Tuesday.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Certainly not. I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 31; noes, 23; majority, 8.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Millard, W.
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Harry
Bruntnell, A.	Morton, Mark F.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Nesbitt, G.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Oakes, C. W.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Crane, J. T.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Storey, D.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Thomas, F. J.
Graff, A.	Walker, R. B.
Grahame, W. C.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Grimm, A. H.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hunt, J. C.	Robson, W. E. V.
Lane, H. W.	Wearne, W. E.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McKell, W. J.
Burke, F. M.	Mutch, T. D.
Burke, M.	O'Brien, W. J.
Davies, W.	Osborne, J. P.
Dooley, J.	Smith, T. J.
Estell, J.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Hickey, Simon	R. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Wright, J.
Keegan, T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lang, J. T.	Kearsley, W.
McGirr, J. J. G.	Quirk, J.
McGirr, P. M.	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote be agreed to—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 32; noes, 23; majority, 9.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Millard, W.
Ball, R. T.	Morton, Harry
Bavin, T. R.	Nesbitt, G.
Bennett, W.	Oakes, C. W.
Briner, G. S.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Bruntnell, A.	Perry, J.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Robson, W. E. V.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Storey, D.
Crane, J. T.	Thomas, F. J.
Fallick, J.	Walker, R. B.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Wearne, W. E.
Graff, A.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Grahame, W. C.	Zuill, W. A.
Grimm, A. H.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hoskins, T. J.	Cocks, A. A. C.
Hunt, J. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Lane, H. W.	

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	Mutch, T. D.
Burke, F. M.	O'Brien, W. J.
Burke, M.	Osborne, J. P.
Davies, W.	Quirk, J. P.
Dooley, J.	Smith, T. J.
Estell, J.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Kearsley, W.	R. J.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Hickey, Simon
McGirr, P. M.	Johnston, V. C. R. W.
McKell, W. J.	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Registrar in Bankruptcy.

Proposed vote, £2,709.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 32; noes, 22; majority, 10.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Millard, W.
Ball, R. T.	Morton, Harry
Bavin, T. R.	Morton, Mark F.
Bennett, W.	Nesbitt, G.
Briner, G. S.	Oakes, C. W.
Bruntnell, A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Perry, J.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Storey, D.
Crane, J. T.	Thomas, F. J.
Edden, A.	Walker, R. B.
Fallick, J.	Wearne, W. E.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Graff, A.	Zuill, W. A.
Grahame, W. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hoskins, T. J.	Grimm, A. H.
Hunt, J. C.	Lane, H. W.
Latimer, W. F.	

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McKell, W. J.
Burke, M.	Mutch, T. D.
Davies, W.	Osborne, J. P.
Dooley, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Estell, J.	Smith, T. J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Burke, F. M.
McGirr, P. M.	O'Brien, W. J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote be agreed to—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 29; noes, 22; majority, 7.

AYES.

Bennett, W.	Latimer, W. F.
Briner, G. S.	Millard, W.
Bruntnell, A.	Morton, Harry
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Nesbitt, G.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Oakes, C. W.
Crane, J. T.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Edden, A.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Thomas, F. J.
Graff, A.	Walker, R. B.
Grahame, W. C.	Wearne, W. E.
Grimm, A. H.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hunt, J. C.	Bagnall, W. R. C.
Lane, H. W.	Weaver, R. W. D.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McKell, W. J.
Burke, F. M.	O'Brien, W. J.
Burke, M.	Osborne, J. P.
Dooley, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Estell, J.	Smith, T. J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Davies, W.
McGirr, P. M.	Mutch, T. D.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Public Trustee.

Proposed vote, £11,996.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [3.25 p.m.]: I move:

That the item £11,996 be reduced by £146.

I do so because during the occupancy of office by the present Government the functions of the Public Trustee will be negligible, inasmuch as the country will shortly be bankrupt.

Mr. GARDINER (Newcastle) [3.26 p.m.]: I have a few remarks to make. I want to know—

Motion (by Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK) proposed:

That the hon. member be not further heard.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. GARDINER: A little debate will relieve the monotony of the proceedings. We are voting and again voting with-

out knowing on what we are voting. If the Minister would give the Committee some explanation with regard to this item we would be able to vote more intelligently. The item "Advances to estates for administration purposes" also requires explanation. The Committee would like some information from the Minister with regard to the whole vote.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 36; noes, 19; majority, 17.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Lane, H. W.
Ball, R. T.	Latimer, W. F.
Beeby, G. S.	Millard, W.
Bennett, W.	Morton, Harry
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bruntnell, A.	Nesbitt, G.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Oakes, C. W.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Perry, J.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Price, R. A.
Crane, J. T.	Robson, W. E. V.
Edden, A.	Storey, D.
Fallick, J.	Thomas, F. J.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Wearne, W. E.
Fuller, G. W.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Graff, A.	Zuill, W. A.
Grahame, W. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Grimm, A. H.	Bavin, T. R.
Hoskins, T. J.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Hunt, J. C.	

NOES.

Burke, F. M.	Osborne, J. P.
Davies, W.	Quirk, J. P.
Estell, J.	Smith, T. J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Brookfield, P.
McGirr, P. M.	McKell, W. J.
Mutch, T. D.	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote be reduced by £146—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 15; noes, 35; majority, 20.

AYES.

Brookfield, P.	Quirk, J. P.
Burke, F. M.	Smith, T. J.
Davies, W.	Storey, J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Stuart-Robertson,
Hickey, Simon	R. J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, P. M.	Kearsley, W.
McKell, W. J.	McGirr, J. J. G.
Mutch, T. D.	

NOES.

Ball, R. T.	Hunt, J. C.
Bavin, T. R.	Lane, H. W.
Beeby, G. S.	Latimer, W. F.
Bennett, W.	Millard, W.
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Harry
Bruntnell, A.	Morton, Mark F.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Nesbitt, G.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Oakes, C. W.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Perry, J.
Crane, J. T.	Price, R. A.
Edden, A.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fallick, J.	Storey, D.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Thomas, F. J.
Fuller, G. W.	Wearne, W. E.
Graff, A.	Zuill, W. A.
Grahame, W. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Grimm, A. H.	Bagnall, W. R. C.
Hoskins, T. J.	Weaver, R. W. D.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move:

That the question, "That the vote be agreed to," be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 34; noes, 20; majority, 14.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Hunt, J. C.
Ball, R. T.	Lane, H. W.
Bavin, T. R.	Millard, W.
Bennett, W.	Morton, Harry
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bruntnell, A.	Oakes, C. W.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Perry, J.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Price, R. A.
Crane, J. T.	Storey, D.
Edden, A.	Thomas, F. J.
Fallick, J.	Wearne, W. E.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Fuller, G. W.	Zuill, W. A.
Graff, A.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Grahame, W. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Grimm, A. H.	Nesbitt, G.
Hoskins, T. J.	

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	Mutch, T. D.
Burke, F. M.	Osborne, J. P.
Davies, W.	Quirk, J. P.
Estell, J.	Smith, T. J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Kearsley, W.	R. J.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Johnston, V. C. R. W.
McGirr, P. M.	McKell, W. J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote be agreed to
—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 34; noes, 19; majority, 15.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Millard, W.
Bavin, T. R.	Morton, Harry
Bennett, W.	Morton, Mark F.
Briner, G. S.	Nesbitt, G.
Bruntnell, A.	Oakes, C. W.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Perry, J.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Price, R. A.
Fallick, J.	Storey, D.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Thomas, F. J.
Fuller, G. W.	Wearne, W. E.
Graff, A.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Grahame, W. C.	Zuill, W. A.
Grimm, A. H.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hoskins, T. J.	Crane, J. T.
Hunt, J. C.	Walker, R. B.
Lane, H. W.	

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	Osborne, J. P.
Davies, W.	Quirk, J. P.
Estell, J.	Smith, T. J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Kearsley, W.
McGirr, P. M.	Mutch, T. D.
McKell, W. J.	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Probate Office.

Proposed vote, £2,577.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided:

Ayes, 32; noes, 19; majority, 13.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Millard, W.
Ball, R. T.	Morton, Harry
Bavin, T. R.	Morton, Mark F.
Bennett, W.	Nesbitt, G.
Briner, G. S.	Oakes, C. W.
Buttenshaw, E. A.	Perry, J.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Price, R. A.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Storey, D.
Crane, J. T.	Thomas, F. J.
Fuller, G. W.	Walker, R. B.
Graff, A.	Wearne, W. E.
Grahame, W. C.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Grimm, A. H.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hunt, J. C.	Abbott, M.
Lane, H. W.	
Latimer, W. F.	Bruntnell, A.

NOES.

Davies, W.	Mutch, T. D.
Estell, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Gardiner, A. R.	Smith, T. J.
Hickey, Simon	Storey, J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Stuart-Robertson,
Kearsley, W.	R. J.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	
McGirr, J. J. G.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, P. M.	McKell, W. J.
Miller, G. T. C.	Osborne, J. P.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the vote be agreed to—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 34; noes, 17; majority, 17.

AYES.

Abbott, M.	Hunt, J. C.
Bagnall, W. R. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Ball, R. T.	Millard, W.
Bavin, T. R.	Morton, Harry
Beeby, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bennett, W.	Nesbitt, G.
Briner, G. S.	Oakes, C. W.
Bruntnell, A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Perry, J.
Colquhoun, P. B.	Price, R. A.
Crane, J. T.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fallick, J.	Thomas, F. J.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Walker, R. B.
Fuller, G. W.	Wearne, W. E.
Graff, A.	
Grahame, W. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Grimm, A. H.	Lane, H. W.
Hoskins, T. J.	Zuill, W. A.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	Mutch, T. D.
Davies, W.	Osborne, J. P.
Estell, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Stuart-Robertson,
Kearsley, W.	R. J.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	
McGirr, P. M.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McKell, W. J.	Hickey, Simon
Miller, G. T. C.	Smith, T. J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Sheriff.

Proposed vote, £27,920.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bathurst) [4.6 p.m.]: I am surprised to see the item "Sheriff, £800," provided for this year. The Minister knows that the duties of Sheriff in this State are in the nature of a sinecure, and for some time past have been carried out by the Prothonotary of the Supreme Court. This item should have been reduced by at least £600. This could have been secured by combining the duties of Sheriff with those of Prothonotary. It would have added very

little to the not too-onerous duties of the Prothonotary, and for the additional duties he might have been remunerated with the remaining £200. By this means a saving of £600 could have been effected at a time when every inducement is offered to economise.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Will it be of any service to the hon. member to know that the two positions have been amalgamated, with the result that a saving has been effected so far as the competent administration of the department is concerned?

Mr. JOHNSTON: What is the saving?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: There is a saving of a considerable amount. As a result of the amalgamation the whole of the Sheriff's salary has been saved.

Mr. BAVIN: Why does the item appear on the estimates?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Because the amalgamation has been effected since the estimates were framed. The hon. member may take my assurance that, as a result of the amalgamation, a saving will be effected, and although the amount stands on the estimates as it does at present, it does not mean that it will be expended.

Mr. BAVIN: Is that so?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: I can assure hon. members that it is so. These estimates were prepared many weeks ago!

Mr. JOHNSTON: I have no desire to move any amendment, but what is to prevent the Minister amending the estimate by deducting the item in question?

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Because it is unnecessary. The reduction will be effected automatically!

Mr. JOHNSTON: In view of the Minister's assurance, I have nothing further to say.

Mr. BAVIN (Gordon) [4.10 p.m.]: I do think it undesirable that, if money is not to be spent, it should be voted on these estimates.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The hon. member can see that the provision was made in the estimates before the amalgamation was brought about!

Mr. BAVIN: I do not take exception to the item being there, but there is no good

reason why it should stay there. Whilst I am satisfied with the Minister's assurance, I should like to know how much there is on the estimates that we are called upon to vote to which the same thing applies. There may be £1,000 or £10,000, or £50,000, or possibly £100,000 that we are called upon to vote which we are not called upon to spend, and it is wrong in principle.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: How does the hon. member propose that we could alter the estimates after they have been printed?

Mr. BAVIN: If it is not intended to expend the amount involved in the item in question, then the estimate could be reduced by that amount. Possibly it might be left out of the Appropriation Bill. At any rate, the estimates could be amended by the omission of the item.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The appropriation of the money does not mean that it will be expended!

Mr. BAVIN: If the money is voted it means that taxes will have to be imposed to raise it. It is not a right principle that we should vote money which we know beforehand is not going to be expended.

Vote agreed to.

District Courts.

Proposed vote, £4,315.

Question—That the vote be agreed to—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 33; noes, 24; majority, 9.

AYES.

Abbott, M.	Lane, H. W.
Bagnall, W. R. C.	Latimer, W. F.
Bavin, T. R.	Millard, W.
Bennett, W.	Morton, Harry
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bruntnell, A.	Nesbitt, G.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Crane, J. T.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Price, R. A.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Thomas, F. J.
Fuller, G. W.	Walker, R. B.
Graff, A.	Wearne, W. E.
Grahame, W. C.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Grimm, A. H.	Zuill, W. A.
Hall, D. R.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hoskins, T. J.	Oakes, C. W.
Hunt, J. C.	Robson, W. E. V.

[Mr. Bavin.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McKell, W. J.
Burke, F. M.	Miller, G. T. C.
Burke, M.	Mutch, T. D.
Davies, W.	O'Brien, W. J.
Dooley, J.	Osborne, J. P.
Estell, J.	Smith, T. J.
Gardiner, A. R.	Storey, J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Keegan, T.	Wright, J.
Lang, J. T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McGirr, J. J. G.	Kearsley, W.
McGirr, P. M.	Quirk, J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Vote agreed to.

Fair Rents Court.

Proposed vote, £880, agreed to.

Coroners.

Proposed vote, £3,770.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [4.18 p.m.]: I shall call for a division and vote against this item as a protest against the administration and general conduct of the coroner's court.

Question—That the vote be agreed to—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 30; noes, 23; majority, 7.

AYES.

Abbott, M.	Morton, Harry
Bagnall, W. R. C.	Morton, Mark F.
Briner, G. S.	Nesbitt, G.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Oakes, C. W.
Crane, J. T.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Price, R. A.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Robson, W. E. V.
Graff, A.	Thomas, F. J.
Grahame, W. C.	Walker, R. B.
Grimm, A. H.	Wearne, W. E.
Hall, D. R.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hoskins, T. J.	Zuill, W. A.
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lane, H. W.	Bennett, W.
Latimer, W. F.	Bruntnell, A.
Millard, W.	

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McKell, W. J.
Purke, F. M.	Miller, G. T. C.
Burke, M.	O'Brien, W. J.
Dooley, J.	Osborne, J. P.
Estell, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Gardiner, A. R.	Smith, T. J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J.
Keegan, T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lang, J. T.	Davies, W.
McGirr, J. J. G.	Mutch, T. D.
McGirr, P. M.	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Vote agreed to.

Petty Sessions.

Proposed vote, £104,001.

Question—That the vote, "Petty Sessions, £104,001," be agreed to—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 27; noes, 23; majority, 4.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Hunt, J. C.
Bavin, T. R.	Latimer, W. F.
Bennett, W.	Millard, W.
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Harry
Bruntnell, A.	Nesbitt, G.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Oakes, C. W.
Crane, J. T.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Thomas, F. J.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Walker, R. B.
Graff, A.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Grahame, W. C.	Zuill, W. A.
Grimm, A. H.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Hall, D. R.	Lane, H. W.
Hoskins, T. J.	Price, R. A.

NOES.

Brookfield, P.	McKell, W. J.
Burke, F. M.	Miller, G. T. C.
Burke, M.	Mutch, T. D.
Davies, W.	O'Brien, W. J.
Dooley, J.	Osborne, J. P.
Estell, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Gardiner, A. E.	Stuart-Robertson,
Hickey, Simon	R. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Wright, J.
Kearsley, W.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lang, J. T.	Keegan, T.
McGirr, J. J. G.	Smith, T. J.
McGirr, P. M.	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Vote agreed to.

Prisons.

Proposed vote, £92,356.

Question—That the vote be agreed to put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 30; noes, 18; majority, 12.

AYES.

Bagnall, W. R. C.	Morton, Harry
Bavin, T. R.	Morton, Mark F.
Bennett, W.	Nesbitt, G.
Briner, G. S.	Oakes, C. W.
Bruntnell, A.	Onslow, Col. J. W. M.
Cocks, A. A. C.	Price, R. A.
Crane, J. T.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Robson, W. E. V.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Thomas, F. J.
Graff, A.	Wearne, W. E.
Hall, D. R.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hoskins, T. J.	Zuill, W. A.
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lane, H. W.	Grimm, A. H.
Latimer, W. F.	Walker, R. B.
Millard, W.	

NOES.

Davies, W.	Mutch, T. D.
Dooley, J.	Osborne, J. P.
Estell, J.	Quirk, J. P.
Gardiner, A. R.	Smith, T. J.
Hickey, Simon	Stuart-Robertson,
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	R. J.
Kearsley, W.	Wright, J.
Keegan, T.	<i>Tellers,</i>
Lang, J. T.	McGirr, P. M.
Miller, G. T. C.	McKell, W. J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.
Proposed vote, Registrar-General, £77,035, agreed to.

Public Service Board.

Proposed vote, £12,465.

Mr. QUIRK (Rozelle) [4.35 p.m.]: I would be prepared to record a vote for the abolition of this department. From its establishment in 1895 up till the present I have failed to see that it has done any great good with regard to the public service generally. I have from time to time received many complaints of the administration of the board, and I hold one in my hand which, in my opinion, should receive the attention of this Committee. A lady named Miss Greer had passed the examination held by the Public Service Board for appointment as probationary nurse, and had, in response to advice from the board, prepared her outfit in readiness to take up duty when required at the Coast Hospital. She was then informed by the Public Service Board that she stood sixteenth on the list, and was asked to be in readiness to take up duty at any time. Shortly afterwards she was informed that the board considered she should pass another examination, as so long a time had elapsed since she had passed. Miss Greer considered this treatment most unfair, and wrote to the board, protesting. She is now informed that her name has been removed from the list. This is only one of a number of such complaints to which I have had my attention drawn, and I think the time has arrived when steps should be taken with regard to the treatment meted out by this department to applicants for appointment. Like all other departments, the board has progressed, but my argument is, that it is not serving the purpose for which it was intended.

I should be glad to learn from the Minister whether public servants in the Registrar-General's Office have their salaries regulated by the Public Service Board or by the departmental board. I know a clerk in that department who has served thirty-one years, and who is now in receipt of only £250 per annum, whilst quite a number of others are receiving £300 and over.

The sum of £12,465 under the heading of Public Service Board could, in my opinion, well be applied to better advantage in assisting other departments. We have the same state of things coming into existence to-day as obtained prior to the constitution of the board. Ministers at the head of departments are quite capable of carrying on their own affairs; and I hope this will be the last occasion upon which the Committee is called upon to deal with estimates under this head.

Vote agreed to.

Miscellaneous services.

Proposed vote, £15,415.

Question—That the vote be agreed to—put. The Committee divided:

Ayes, 34; noes, 20; majority, 14.

AYES

Abbott, M.	Latimer, W. F.
Bagnall, W. R. C.	Ley, T. J.
Ball, R. T.	Millard, W.
Bavin, T. R.	Morton, Harry
Briner, G. S.	Morton, Mark F.
Bruntnell, A.	Nesbitt, G.
Crane, J. T.	Nicholson, Lt.-Col.
Edden, A.	Perry, J.
Fallick, J.	Price, R. A.
Fitzpatrick, J. C. L.	Robson, W. E. V.
Graff, A.	Walker, R. B.
Grahame, W. C.	Wearne, W. E.
Grimm, A. H.	Weaver, R. W. D.
Hall, D. R.	Zuill, W. A.
Hoskins, T. J.	
Hunt, J. C.	<i>Tellers,</i>
James, A. G. F.	Buttenshaw, E. A.
Lane, H. W.	Thomas, F. J.

NOES.

Burke, F. M.	Mutch, T. D.
Dooley, J.	O'Brien, W. J.
Estell, J.	Osborne, J. P.
Gardiner, A. R.	Quirk, J. P.
Hickey, Simon	Smith, T. J.
Johnston, V. C. R. W.	Stuart-Robertson,
Keegan, T.	R. J.
Lang, J. T.	Wright, J.
McGirr, P. M.	<i>Tellers,</i>
McKell, W. J.	Brookfield, P.
Miller, G. T. C.	Kearsley, W.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

[*Mr. Quirk.*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS.

Purchase of Sawmills on North Coast—Resumption of Land for Returned Soldiers—Watson's Bay and South Shore Ferry Company—Homes for Incapacitated Soldiers and Widows of Soldiers—Western Lands Board—Expenditure on Parks—Freehold and Leasehold Tenures—Additional Areas.

Proposed vote, £399,254.

Mr. LANG (Granville) [4.45 p.m.]: May I ask the Minister in charge of the House if he will agree to an adjournment of the discussion of these estimates until the Minister for Lands returns to his place in this House.

Mr. GRAHAME: He cannot be here for a fortnight!

Mr. LANG: Does not the Minister for Agriculture think that it is reasonable to expect that the Minister for Lands ought to be in charge of his own estimates, and that their discussion ought to be adjourned until such time as he is?

Mr. GRAHAME: At present I am in charge of the Lands Department!

Mr. LANG: You are the Acting Minister for Lands?

Mr. GRAHAME: Yes!

Mr. LANG: In all seriousness, does not the hon. member consider that the importance of the Lands Department is such that this House ought to be given every opportunity to assist the department to carry out its functions by examining and criticising in detail the estimates placed before us? This House has been sitting since 4.30 p.m. yesterday up to the present time, which is 4.50 p.m., and I ask the Minister to consent to the adjournment of the debate for twenty-four hours.

Mr. GRAHAME: I will not agree to an adjournment of the debate!

Mr. PRICE (Gloucester) [4.51 p.m.]: I understand that at this juncture we are entitled to deal with the general estimates of the Lands Department. I recognise that the House has been sitting continuously for many hours, and I do not intend to take up a very considerable time; at the same time, I want to make my position perfectly clear. In these estimates certain items are omitted. The omitted items refer to the purchase of certain sawmills and the payment of certain salaries—an expenditure involving over £20,000. I regret that the Minister for Lands is not here.

and in his absence I do not want it to be said that I have taken an unfair advantage by referring to matters which I would prefer to deal with in his presence. The position is very clear. Contrary to the provisions of the Public Works Act, and contrary to the operations of the ordinary system of Government, the expenditure of a sum of over £20,000 is involved, and it is not shown on these estimates. I want the hon. gentleman to explain, before we go any further, how it is that a banking account has been transferred from the City Bank at Gloucester and opened on behalf of the Government with the Commercial Bank in the same town. These items are omitted from the estimates submitted to this House in connection with the department. The estimates should disclose the position exactly, and my contention is that these estimates do not. We had a report made by the Minister for Lands, intimating that a profit of 15 per cent. was made over a specific period. The Minister for Lands, in answer to a question put by me, deliberately said that the transaction had not been completed, yet it is a matter of open knowledge, and the Minister must either have been misinformed, he must have been misleading this House, or he must have made an untruthful statement. In drawing attention to this matter I am endeavouring to assist the Government. I recognise that in a grave crisis like this it is the duty of every man to assist the Government. I recognise that whilst this country is at war, and whilst the Government is in the midst of industrial turmoil, it becomes my duty, as it is the duty of every man, not to put chocks in the wheel, so far as the State is concerned. That is the reason why I have refrained from taking any course other than that which I am now adopting. Before voting for the item, I think that the facts ought to be submitted to the House. The members of the House, as well as every honest man in this country, every taxpayer, and every person who has to foot the bill, will recognise the fact that this expenditure was incurred contrary to the law, and is not shown on these estimates. I want to know what schedule this expense has been smothered under. According to the statement published by the Minister for

Lands, and authorised by the Auditor-General, it was shown that a profit of 15 per cent. had been realised on certain transactions. While the Minister produced that statement in answer to a question of mine, he said that the transaction had not been completed; but an account was transferred from the City Bank at Gloucester, and the Government opened an account in the Commercial Bank in the same town, cheques being drawn and paid by a private individual. Then Sir Allen Taylor, who sold the property, or the persons with whom the Crown negotiated, disputed the transaction, and to get behind the law as laid down by statute the Government entered into a transaction involving the expenditure of a sum of £20,000, which, according to the Public Works Act, must be submitted to this House. The fact is, that the law has been broken by the Government. I asked the question, as by right I was entitled to, and I submitted that a wrong was being done this country. To use a vulgarism, I submitted that the Government had bought a "pig in a poke," and that they had paid too much for it.

MR. GRAHAME: On a point of order, the hon. member for Gloucester is now discussing the purchase of a sawmill and other lands in the Gloucester district, which appeared as an item in the Public Works Fund last year. There is no item on the estimates this year dealing with sawmills, so that the hon. member, Mr. Price, is just one year too late in the discussion he is opening to-day.

MR. PRICE: On the point of order, I am dealing with the Forestry estimates, and am endeavouring to show that they do not disclose the true position of affairs. That, I contend, I am entitled to do.

MR. GRAHAME: You are not entitled to discuss anything passed last year!

MR. PRICE: I submit that the Forestry estimates, before they are passed by this House, must disclose certain things, and it is my objective to show that before passing the vote for the Forestry Department the transactions I am referring to should be disclosed.

HON. MEMBERS: On the point of order—

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (MR. COLQUHOUN): I do not want to hear

any hon. member further on the point of order. I think the hon. member for Gloucester is out of order in discussing the question of the purchase of certain sawmills, because in these estimates there is no item under the heading of the Secretary for Lands regarding the question. However, as the item was dealt with in last year's estimates under the heading of the Public Works Department, and as the Public Works Department estimate has been already discussed by this Committee, I consider that the hon. member for Gloucester is out of order in discussing the matter.

Mr. PRICE: I want to point out that we are getting into a very dangerous system, when items are jockeyed from one department to another. In answer to a specific question asked by me, the Minister distinctly stated that this transaction had not been completed. Now we are told that it has been completed. I complain of the way in which the accounts are bolstered up and falsified. My charge is that the Forestry estimates are absolutely wrong, inasmuch as they do not correctly disclose the affairs of the department. I claim my right to criticise. I am told that this matter was dealt with on the Works Department estimates. The Works Department has nothing to do with it. The necessary expenditure upon inspection, wages, and other details is provided for in the Forestry estimate. This matter is so confused that I shall take an early opportunity to have it investigated on a specific motion, in order that the whole condition of affairs may be exposed. We are dealing here with the people's money. I want to know if the director of Forestry is responsible for his own department. If he is responsible, how is it that upon this estimate provision is not made for certain salaries which are being paid. Who is paying them? Are they being paid out of the advance account? The matter cannot be glossed over by any subterfuge of this kind. The item has been removed for what reason I am not in a position to say, and I want to know what has become of it. In critical times like these my desire is to assist the Government in every possible way, and for that reason I am prepared to take advantage

[The Temporary Chairman.

of a later opportunity to press home my charge—that the properties were bought at excess values and that certain salaries are being paid, for which apparently no provision is made on the estimates. These accounts are supposed to be so clear that the man in the street can understand them, but far from being clear the House and the country is being deceived by a deliberate system of jockeying. These estimates, I submit, are false and not in accordance with the books of the department.

Mr. EDDEN: That is a serious charge!

Mr. PRICE: Yes, and a true one. I repeat that the account was transferred from the City Bank at Gloucester to a private account, and authority was given to a private citizen to operate upon it.

Mr. EDDEN: Is the hon. member prepared to prove it?

Mr. PRICE: Absolutely, and the sooner the facts are disclosed to the public, in order that they may thoroughly understand what the position is, the better it will be. I might explain to hon. members how the information came into my possession. The gentleman who carried the papers relating to the transaction dropped them on the roadside. They were picked up, and before the originals were returned typewritten copies were made. I have a copy here.

Mr. GRAHAME: Why did not the hon. member discuss this when the item was voted last year?

Mr. PRICE: It was never before the House.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. COLQUHOUN): The hon. member for Gloucester is not obeying my ruling. He knows he is attempting to get in a discussion which is not permissible. The hon. member must confine himself to the illustration he is using in regard to the administration of the department.

Mr. PRICE: I have no desire to evade the ruling of the Chair, but I want to make my position clear. These estimates ought not to be hurriedly gone through, seeing that they do not disclose the whole of the facts and the true position of affairs. When the facts are disclosed there will not be one decent man on either side of the House who will not cry "shame," not one decent citizen called upon to pay the piper, who

will not say a blunder has been committed. As regards the officer in charge of the Forestry Department, I have every confidence in him. I look upon him as an honorable, straightforward, decent man; but apparently some influences have been at work to prevent the whole transaction being inquired into. I intend to take advantage of a later opportunity to have an inquiry into the whole matter, in accordance with the terms of a motion, notice of which has been given. I want to assist the Government, and I am prepared to defer any further action. But before leaving the question I wish to refer once more to the extraordinary position of affairs which confronts us. The Minister has stated that this matter was dealt with twelve months ago. That is absolutely untrue. It never came before Parliament.

Mr. GRAHAME: I hope the hon. member will be called upon to withdraw that statement and apologise!

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. COLQUHOUN): The hon. member for Gloucester is not entitled to accuse the Minister of uttering absolute untruths, and I must call upon him to withdraw and apologise for the statement.

Mr. PRICE: I can neither withdraw nor apologise, because I do not accuse the Minister of uttering absolute untruths. What I say is, that the information furnished the House is not in accordance with the facts. When the hon. member says the matter was dealt with twelve months ago, I reply that the person who supplied him with the information supplied him with a statement which is absolutely untrue. The matter was never submitted to Parliament, although, as I have already contended, it should have been submitted in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Act. The whole transaction was carried out behind the back of Parliament, and a fraud has been committed, inasmuch as an excess price was paid for the property. If only the Government will grant me the inquiry I desire we shall be able to clear up the matter, when I am sure the truth of my statements will be proved. This matter was never submitted to Parliament.

Mr. GRAHAME: Why does the hon. member go on lying?

Mr. PRICE: I must ask that the Minister be called upon to withdraw that observation and apologise. The statement I made was quite in accordance with the facts.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. COLQUHOUN): I am sure the Minister will see the wisdom of withdrawing his remark.

Mr. GRAHAME: I withdraw, Mr. Temporary Chairman. I made the definite statement that this matter had been dealt with on the estimates last year. The hon. member for Gloucester has deliberately said three or four times that the statement is not true. I submit to you the estimates of last year, which show where the item was dealt with and passed by this House.

Mr. PRICE: I shall take a further opportunity to deal with the question. There is one other matter to which I desire to direct attention. Certain returns were furnished me the other night, in regard to lands purchased for returned soldiers. The Crown has resumed a number of areas, notwithstanding that surrounding the Bulga, the Craven, and in various other parts of the State, there are vast areas of Crown lands which could be utilised for the purpose by the expenditure of a comparatively small sum of public money. Further, the Minister for Lands advised me that no property had been resumed at £8 5s. per acre, the original purchase cost of which was £4 per acre. That is absolutely misleading. I would refer the Committee to the Oban estate, which was originally purchased at £4 per acre. The estate embraces some 8,000 and odd acres, and it was resumed by the Government for returned soldiers at a cost of £8 5s. per acre, thus giving a clear profit of approximately £36,000 to the vendors. Whilst that was being done, there were, as I have already said, thousands of acres of Crown lands available equally suitable for settlement but valueless at the present time; and instead of spending Government money in order to open up and make those areas available for settlement, the Government preferred to purchase private property. If you want repatriation, if you really want to settle men on the land, for God's sake give them decent land on which they can

make a living, and not land on which a bandicoot could not live. I know of one case in particular, that of J. P. Sands, but I shall wait a later opportunity to go into details. What I do say is that it is a case of maladministration, men coming back from the front are humbugged in a shameful way. If they want to get on the land and Crown lands are available, why not say, "Very well, take it up." But the Government does not do so. After "buying a pig in a poke," it makes the returned soldier suffer from its fault. I know all this land from A to Z, and although I merely enter a protest now, at a later stage I shall take definite action. The matter is too serious to be passed over lightly.

I want to assist the Government, but I ask it to do away with the sins of the past. I want to make the land administration clean, pure and bright. The administration of this department is of such a character that men who want to get on the land, and those who want land, those who want additional conditional purchases, and additional holdings are starving. The Government is killing this country by blocking settlement. There are men who went in as pioneers with hearts of giants, and their homes are not fitted up yet. I shall reserve my further remarks against the putrid and dishonest administration that has been adopted for a future time, when I shall, either by motion of adjournment or other forms of the House, bring up the whole question.

Mr. J. STOREY (Balmain) [5.20 p.m.] : I do not want to delay the Committee longer than possible, because I recognise that the officers of the House have now been engaged for over thirty hours, but I must invite the attention of the Committee to the remarks of the hon. member for Gloucester. He seems to make them with a degree of sincerity that would leave the impression on the minds of people that there is some truth in his statements.

Mr. EDDEN: What do you think about them?

Mr. J. STOREY: Out of respect for the hon. member I shall not say anything about that. If hon. members are permitted to make veiled charges of corruption against members of the

Government who are handling large estates for the purpose of placing people upon them, and no protest comes from the Government, we on this side of the House cannot be blamed if the idea forms itself in our minds that there is some truth in the statements. I put it to the Minister for Agriculture that the Government should do what was done with hon. members in days gone by if they made imputations against Ministers. I remember when the hon. member for Hartley, in perfect honesty, made allegations against an hon. member, Mr. Wade, the head of the Government, compelled the hon. member to withdraw the statements, warning him that if he did not he would adopt against him a course which would place him outside of the House. If that was a good thing to do in days gone by it is a good thing to-day. If I were a Minister, and anyone brought a charge of dishonesty against me, either he or I would go outside. If the Minister does not take some course against the hon. member the public will have a right to assume that something wrong is going on.

Mr. GRAHAME: You do not suppose the public takes any notice of these statements made by the hon. member for Gloucester?

Mr. J. STOREY: The outside public, whose everyday work compels it to take what goes on in the House as it is presented to it through the published records, has no opportunity of considering the personality of members, and they take the view that the remarks of the hon. member are made with a due regard to the solemnity of his position. I put it to the Minister that members of the public are not in a position to draw a distinction between the hon. member for Gloucester and, say, the hon. member for Balmain. Unfortunately for the Minister, the hon. member is not alone in these inuendoes. A gentleman who sits cheek by jowl with him to-day, who fraternises with him, and is one of his party, has made many more serious statements than has the hon. member for Gloucester, and no notice has been taken of them. I refer to Mr. Trethowan. He has made a statement that this is a House where land-jobbing and corruption takes place. If that is permitted to go on, I think

hon. members of the Opposition might well say, "Two of the Government supporters have said certain things; no action has been taken against them, and we are justified in considering that there is some truth in the statements." I say that members on my side of the House do not believe the statements. We take it that the actions of the Minister for Lands are legitimate and proper, but if the hon. member for Gloucester can submit evidence in support of his statements, there are no forms of the House that will not be used to sheet the charges home to the Government.

Mr. GRAHAME: If the hon. member has anything against us he will have every opportunity to sheet it home!

Mr. J. STOREY: I do not take much notice of the statements of the hon. member, because of his peculiarities, which are known to us, but Mr. Trethowan is not a man of that kind. He is a man of recognised standing in the country. He has made certain statements, and has not been asked to come up to the scratch. I am not going to subscribe to the doctrine that no one cares what becomes of resumed land, but we believe that the Government is doing the right thing with it.

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Mr. Trethowan has practically accused this House of corruption!

Mr. J. STOREY: Yes. Mr. Trethowan said that it is in this House where corruption and land jobbery have taken place, and are taking place. We on this side, not being administrators, can claim that we know nothing of it. Thus it narrows itself down to what the supporters of the Government are doing. Who are these land jobbers? Is there any person who is using the Minister? Is he permitting himself to be used? Obviously he is not. We know he is not, but the general public does not know it, and if Ministers allow an hon. member to rise here and make charges against their honesty and integrity they deserve that the public shall be suspicious of them. We all know that there are persons ever ready to make insinuations of this kind. We know that the Government is resuming estates for the purpose of putting soldiers on the land. If they are *bonâ-fide* resumptions everything

is right. But if the Government is allowing its officers to resume unsuitable land, or to give too much for land resumed, everything is wrong. If these charges are not refuted or some action taken against those who make them, then whatever is said against the department or the Government in future will be believed simply because the Government refuses to take action to compel those who make the charges, Mr. Trethowan amongst the number, to come up to the scratch. If a man charges me with being corrupt I am not going to sit by and take that charge quietly. I will make him come up to the scratch. I would make him come to the bar of this House if need be. There is another course which can be taken against Mr. Trethowan. He is an M.L.C. He is not free from the responsibilities of an M.L.C. He is not an ordinary farmer now; he has the dignified title of Honorable attached to his name. He can be brought to the bar of the Legislative Council. There is a proper tribunal there, and the Government has a representative there. Let me say to the Minister for Agriculture that I do not subscribe to the doctrine that members of this House are corrupt, and I think people who make such charges should be compelled to come forward and prove them.

Colonel ONSLOW (Bondi) [5.30 p.m.]: There is under this vote an item of £500 towards the maintenance and improvement of Vacluse Park. On that item I desire to bring to the notice of the Minister a certain grievance relating to my own electorate. I very much regret that the Minister for Lands is not present to hear what I have to say and to give his answer. I have seen the Minister on this matter more than once, and am prepared to affirm that in his heart he believes it is a very bad case. First of all, I thank the present Minister for Lands for the courtesy with which he has treated me, putting the whole of the papers at my disposal. I do not impute to him any blame for the state of affairs I am about to mention beyond that, as a member of the Government, he allows it to continue. In June last I received a letter from the town clerk of Vacluse, asking me to meet the late mayor,

who desired to put certain matters before me. It was a request dealing with a certain public inconvenience with regard to the ferries, with which I will deal later. It seemed to me a simple matter, and a petition was handed to me to be transmitted to the Minister. [*Committee counted.*] I duly presented the petition to the Minister, and the following state of things disclosed itself to me. In August, 1911, what is now known as Nielsen Park was resumed by the then Government and named after the then Minister for Lands. A portion of the land resumed had been acquired by the Watson's Bay and South Shore Ferry Company from the Wentworth Park trustees for the purpose of erecting a wharf. The company had also obtained from the Harbour Trust a lease of the harbour frontage, and was about to erect a wharf to serve the needs of the growing population in the district. The land which the ferry company had acquired was resumed with the rest of the area for Nielsen Park. I may say, in passing, that since 1911, when that land was resumed, not one penny of compensation has been paid to the ferry company, who had lawfully acquired and paid for it.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many shares have you in the company?

Colonel ONSLOW: The hon. member measures everyone's corn by his own bushel. I have no shares in the company. I am speaking in the interests of a number of my constituents, at the request of a municipal council in my district. The land being resumed, the ferry company was unable to proceed with the erection of a wharf, and the residents of the district were deprived of the services of the ferry steamers. The residents naturally wanted some transit between their homes and their places of business, and the ferry company endeavoured to come to an arrangement with the Government by which it could get some place of call at Shark Beach for its steamers. Considerable correspondence took place between the Lands Department and the company, with the result that an agreement was arrived at by which the company was to get a lease for twenty-one years of this land, and to erect a wharf upon it with the consent of the Harbour Trust. There were vari-

ous conditions attached, including one that the company was to waive all claim for compensation for any loss of business in connection with the matter. The company agreed to every stipulation put forward by the Government. Subsequently the Minister for Lands informed the company that the Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners had intimated their willingness to lease the water frontage; but the proposed arrangement was never carried into effect because the Nielsen Park trustees, for some reason, objected to the wharf being erected in that particular place. It is needless for me to go into all the details, but a meeting was held between the Harbour Trust Commissioners, the Park trustees, the Minister for Lands, and the ferry company, at which an arrangement was come to. There the company also agreed to every condition which was put forward. Some further difficulty arose, and the Lands Department having again come to an agreement, broke that agreement. A subsequent arrangement was then come to, reducing the lease from twenty-one to five years. Again the ferry company agreed to every condition which was put forward. Remember that the matter was begun in 1911, and that not one penny of compensation has since then been paid to the company by the Government, which resumed the land. Moreover, the company has been kept out of its business, and the residents have been deprived of the services of the boats.

Mr. EDDEN: Why did you not go down to the Lands Department?

Colonel ONSLOW: I have been to the Lands Department, but it is not my business to be going there all the time. A wharf has been built at which the Sydney Ferries, the trade rivals of the company, have been permitted to ply. Herein I point out that a grave injustice has been done. Property owned by a trading corporation carrying on a lawful business and serving a public utility has been taken away; the company has been deprived of its trade, no compensation has been paid, and its trade rivals have been let into its business. So much for the state of things as it affects the ferry company. Now for the effect on my constituents. The Watson's Bay Ferry Company ordinarily plies along

[*Colonel Onslow.*]

the whole of the south shore between Watson's Bay and Circular Quay. Meantime, by the Sydney Ferries being allowed to intervene and ply to a point of call which is mid-way between Circular Quay and the extreme point to which the Watson's Bay boats run, the ordinary steamers which serve that route are interfered with. I hold no brief for the Watson's Bay Company; indeed, on one occasion I was at loggerheads with them, and I have had a very acrimonious correspondence with them on matters relating to fares and timetables.

MR. STUART-ROBERTSON: On a point of order, I submit there is nothing in these estimates relating to the timetables or general business of the Watson's Bay Ferry Company, and the hon. member is therefore not in order in referring to such matters.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (MR. COLQUHOUN): The hon. member is discussing the general administration of the Department of Lands. He has been within his rights up to the last moment or so, but he is not entitled to go into details regarding extraneous matters which do not concern the administration of the department.

Colonel ONSLOW: I merely mentioned incidentally that I hold no brief for the ferry company. Dealing now with the matter as it affects my constituents, people living near Shark Beach and Steel Point are now obliged to travel between their business and their homes by means of a ferry service which carries them for a joy-ride round the harbour occupying forty-five to fifty minutes, instead of being able to use the ordinary steamer, which would take from twenty to thirty-five minutes only. On behalf of my constituents I submit that this is unfair and inflicts a considerable hardship upon them. I think I have made the main features of my complaint clear to the Minister in charge of the House. I put it to him that in the first place it is not fair for the Government to resume property without compensating the owner. Secondly, I think the wrong is aggravated when the resumed property is handed over to the trade rivals of the person whose property has been resumed; and, thirdly, I think that the case becomes far graver

when a considerable number of the public are put to a deal of inconvenience on account of the extraordinary action of the Lands administration. Although I could go into further details and castigate the Government very severely in connection with this matter, I do not intend to do so, but would like to hear from the Minister something to indicate that he realises the grave nature of the grievance, that he realises the irritation caused, owing to this state of affairs, to the public resident in the Vaucluse district, which I represent. The matter has been to my knowledge before the Cabinet more than once, and I ask the Minister if he considers it a fair thing that people should have their property resumed, that they should be kept out of it for a number of years without having any compensation paid them, that their property should be used in order to increase the business of their rivals in trade, and finally, that the representations they have made should remain unanswered, thus further aggravating the injustice. I believe that agreement after agreement has been arrived at between the Government and the company, but while the ferry company has agreed to every stipulation and every claim which has been made by the Government, the agreements have been disregarded and broken by the Government. I wish to express my thanks to the Minister for Lands, Mr. Ashford, for the courtesy which he has extended in connection with this matter; I impute no fault to him personally, but I submit that the beginning of this wrong was inflicted by a former Government. I can realise the difficulty which surrounds the case because the question is divided up between the Department of Lands, the Harbour Trust, and the Nielsen Park trustees. The three parties concerned, however, are branches of the Government of New South Wales, but no matter by which department a wrong is inflicted, it is the duty of the Government to see that it is righted, and that the inconvenience suffered by the public of Vaucluse is remedied with as little delay as possible. I think that the hon. the Minister understands my complaint, but I would like to hear subsequently from him that some steps have been taken

to remedy the injustices and grievances which I have voiced on behalf of my constituents.

Mr. KEARSLEY (Cessnock) [5.52 p.m.]: I notice that the department is concerning itself with regard to the providing of homes for permanently incapacitated soldiers and for widows of soldiers. I understand that the intention of the Lands Department was to build homes for incapacitated soldiers and the widows of soldiers, who would live in them free of rent, but it was apprehended that the widows of soldiers might not want to reside in the locality in which the house was located, and the department, fearing that the house when built might be untenanted, resolved to modify the arrangement and decided to pay their rent instead of building homes for soldiers' widows. What I want to draw the Minister's attention to is this: In some cases there are soldiers' widows living in houses which are partly paid for. Their deceased husbands saved some money and sought to purchase a home of their own, but before the house was paid for they enlisted and were killed, the consequence being that the widows were left to bear the burden of the debt. I made application to have the rents of these widows paid, but I was informed that because they were paying off the debt on their homes by instalments the department could not make them any allowance. On the other hand, if the widow is occupying rented premises the department will pay the rent for her, but if she is paying off for her own home she gets no assistance. I think that that is somewhat unjust. In my opinion it would be an advantage to the department if it would undertake to pay the instalments for the widow. In some cases she might owe £50 or £100 to free her home from debt, and might be paying 10s. per week for that purpose. If the department paid the balance of the principal due the home would become the property of the widow, who would be relieved from the obligation of having to meet interest charges and principal.

Mr. GRAHAME: I will refer the matter to the hon. the Minister for Lands and have inquiries made so that the question may be referred to the Cabinet!

Mr. KEARSLEY: In view of the promise of the Minister that the matter

[Colonel Onslow.

will be inquired into thoroughly, I am sure that justice will be done to the war widows.

[The Temporary Chairman left the chair at 6 p.m. The Committee resumed at 7 p.m.]

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON (Camperdown) [7.2 p.m.]: In view of the extended sitting which we have had, I do not propose to detain the Committee at any length. Recently a charge, virtually amounting to corruption, was made by the Hon. Mr. Trethowan, M.L.C., against the Minister for Lands and practically against this House, and some inquiry should be made by the Government for the purpose of setting the public mind at rest. I do not think it is fair that an accusation of bribery should be hurled at hon. members of this House in view of the circumstances under which they are required to deal with the resumption of private estates. Hon. members have no information regarding these estates, except that which the Minister gets from the advisory board and the officers of his department, and the information which they may casually gather from people in the districts in which these estates are situated. The advisory board, after inquiry, advises the Minister as to the actual value of the land. The Minister gains further information from various officers of his department, and then brings the proposal before the House, and unless some hon. member is seized of additional facts to those already collated, the proposition is dealt with upon the advice of the advisory board and of the officers of the department.

Mr. THOMAS: Estates valued at under £20,000 do not come before this House!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: I understand Mr. Trethowan's charge to be a sweeping one. I have reliable information that some of these estates have been purchased at higher prices than should have been paid. For example, The Pinnacles estate, between Forbes and Grenfell, was purchased by the Government at £6 10s. per acre, while I am informed that land of the same quality in that district can be purchased for £5 per acre. In the case of another estate, the Mimosa estate, near Temora, I am informed that owing to the high price paid

by the settlers, several of them are on the point of bankruptcy, and are scarcely able to carry on their holdings. These circumstances may give colour to the accusation made by Mr. Trethowan, but it takes more than one swallow to make a summer, and it surely cannot be reasonably argued that this House is in any way responsible for the exceptionally high prices that have been given in some cases, and the charge of boodling against this Chamber, therefore, falls to the ground. But in order to uphold the honor and integrity of members of the Chamber, the Government should hold an inquiry into the charges that are made so that we may be cleared from any suspicion that may exist in the public mind as to our complicity in the giving of too high prices for estates.

As regards the Western Lands Board, I know practically every inch of the land with which this board deals. The board has not succeeded in making those lands a payable asset to the State. As a matter of fact, its administration has been such that that part is a greater desert to-day than when the commission was appointed. The land beyond Dubbo is capable of carrying large flocks, and from it were raised large quantities of wool and wheat. Droughts and the rabbits and other pests have had the effect of putting the land in a bad state, and the board has not done anything towards improving the land, nor has it done anything towards improving the position of the settlers in that part. The land could be successfully worked if each settler had a certain area of river frontage and a certain area of volcanic or red-soil country, together with the black country. Unfortunately the settlers have either entirely cold black-soil country or entirely volcanic-soil country. The volcanic country is far warmer and much better for sheep's feet than the cold black land. The board has done nothing to settle the difficulties of the men on the land. It would be to the advantage of this country if the board were remodelled, and people with more modern ideas and a better knowledge of dealing with land settlement placed in charge.

There is one thing I may mention with regard to the money that is being expended upon parks. The sum of £1,500

is on the estimates for Kuring-gai Chase. That is a very fine place, but as a park for people living in the metropolitan area where they can go to enjoy themselves it is too remote from the city. It is of very little value to the big population in the metropolitan area and suburbs.

Mr. LATIMER: A great many people go there!

Mr. STUART-ROBERTSON: Compared with the number that frequent the National Park they are very few. The National Park is the best park for the people of Sydney, and yet it is left in an unsatisfactory condition. The sum of £4,000 is utterly inadequate for the upkeep of such an important place. I may be accused of touching upon another member's electorate, but it is the people of my electorate and other electorates represented by Labour members who most frequent the National Park, because it is within easy reach of the city. It would be fair to give a little more for the upkeep of this park than has been given in the past. The paths and the tracks up the sides of the hills are out of repair for want of a little money to put them in a better condition. The salt water part of the river is gradually silting up. A sum of money should be spent on it almost immediately if the river is to remain a navigable stream.

We are allowing the estimates to go through without dividing the Committee, or voting against any of the items, because from a general standpoint we concede that the Lands Department is fairly well administered. But in allowing the estimates to go through it must not be thought that we approve of the land policy of the Government. Our ideas on land policy are entirely different from those of hon. members opposite. We do not believe in the present system of resuming estates at very high prices and borrowing money to pay for them. We believe that the money should be kept in the country. The land is the property of the people, and it should be resumed on Treasury debentures, and only the interest upon the value of the land given to the people who refused to make a proper use of the land before it was resumed. We believe that a better system of land settlement

could be introduced. Instead of looking for men with money, it would be more advisable to look for men with general experience, settle them on the land, and pay through them for the cost of having their land cleared, their houses built, and the water necessary to carry on their occupation conserved. We would thereby ensure the work being done at the lowest possible cost, because the men would be working their own land. We believe that policy is infinitely better than the policy which has been pursued by the Government in the past, and has inflated the prices of land beyond its actual value. That has been the case in such places as The Pinnacles and other estates which have been purchased by the Government for closer settlement. The high prices that these lands have brought have been the result of the Government borrowing money, and with that borrowed money entering as competitors in the purchase of estates. By their competition they have inflated prices to such an extent that when the present conditions, which are largely artificial, cease to exist and things reach a normal state, it will be found that numbers of these unfortunate people who have been induced to settle on the land as the result of the policy of the National Government and its predecessors will be almost in a condition of bankruptcy. Before the Government pursues a policy of destruction to this State it should have further inquiry made, and try to discover some better means of dealing with land settlement. I am not asking the Government to do as it did in connection with the North Shore ferry and the Public Service Board, that is, appoint a barrister who knows nothing about business or land settlement to inquire into the matter. You could take men from both sides of the House and put them on a committee with the powers of a royal commission. There are men in the House who have an infinitely better knowledge of land values than men on the advisory boards. Such a committee could inquire into the allegations made by Mr. Trethowan, and also into the condition of a number of settlers who are crying for assistance from the Government, as the Minister for Agriculture knows. Land

[Mr. Stuart-Robertson.

settlement has grown to be a great problem. Men like the hon. member for Raleigh, the hon. member for Yass, and other hon. members who have a thorough knowledge of land settlement would make infinitely better commissioners than a barrister or someone else who had no knowledge of business or land settlement, and who would merely bring in a report upon the evidence placed before him. I believe that we could get really practical men from amongst hon. members of this House—men of integrity and honor—whom we could entrust with such a proposition. Finally I desire to say that in passing this estimate without revision we do so merely because we believe that in spite of what Mr. Trethowan has said, the administration of the department has been honest, and that generally speaking the officers of the department do their work well as far as they are capable of doing it. But I want to emphatically say that we in no way endorse either the land policy or the land purchase schemes of the present Government or of previous Governments.

Mr. BRINER (Raleigh) [7.22 p.m.] : I do not want to delay the Committee, but feel bound to occupy a few minutes in stating very briefly my reasons for speaking at all. Ministers will admit that hon. members on this side of the House supporting the Government have exercised very great restraint all through the debate on the estimates. Considering the difficult task which the Government has in connection with the present industrial troubles, we as supporters of the Government do not want to embarrass them, nor do we desire to waste time. Furthermore, the Minister for Lands is away, and I would not like to take advantage of his absence to say things which I would prefer to say when he is listening to me. But I want to say, by way of warning, so that I shall not take the Minister unawares, that on the first opportunity I have in this House, on a motion for adjournment, I intend to bring before the Minister and his colleagues some very grievous complaints—grievous at any rate in my opinion—in regard to the setting apart of land for returned soldiers, and ordinary settlement too. Recent *Gazette* notices dealing with holdings set apart

for returned soldiers have on the face of them not comic opera, but tragedy for the men who will settle on these lands. How any man of average intelligence as an officer of the Lands Department could recommend lands for settlement on the conditions set out in these *Gazette* notices passes my understanding. The same applies to ordinary Crown land settlement. The first opportunity I have I am going to show the *Gazette* notices and draw the Minister's attention to the matter, because I am one of those who like to be reasonable with the Minister, who has his hands full. I realise that he cannot supervise everything in his department. As regards the officers of the Lands Department, I do not think that any hon. member—even the hon. member for Gloucester who has talked so much in the House about bribery and corruption on the part of the Government, and inferentially on the part of the departmental officers—can complain of want of courtesy on the part of any officer of the Lands Department, or want of promptness either. The system under which the department is worked involves many delays, some warranted, and some in my opinion unwarranted; but I do not think that any hon. member has legitimate grounds of complaint against the officers. I believe that the hon. member for Camperdown, in referring to the question of land settlement, meant to confine his criticism to what is called closer settlement by resumption. I am inclined to agree with the hon. member that to resume lands at high prices and overload them, and then to put men on them to work out their own redemption by purchase is to ask them to do what sometimes is impossible. But the policy of the present Government up to date with regard to Crown lands is exactly the policy which the Labour party followed during the whole of its period of office. I have grounds of complaint in regard to that, and I want, in as friendly a way as possible, to ask the Minister now in charge of the House to bring the matter before his colleagues. I have done this by letter, and in other ways. I think I am expressing the views of every member of our party who spoke on this question at the last general elec-

tion, when I say that one of the most important and vital principles we then put before the people was that there should be an optional tenure—that every man who desires to select Crown land shall have the right to take it either as leasehold or freehold—because we wished to give the poor man, who could not take up land under a freehold tenure, the right to take it up under a cheaper system of leasehold with the right of conversion to freehold. We on this side—Ministers and every man in the rank and file—pledged ourselves to that policy. There are two kinds of policy in all departments, particularly in the Lands Department. There is policy of legislation which defines the tenures under which land may be taken up, and there is policy of administration which sometimes overrides the policy of legislation. That is what is going on to-day. The Labour party of 1910, when it came into office came in pledged to land nationalisation and perpetual leasehold; but it did not interfere with the Conversion Act, which gave the right to convert into freehold in certain cases. That right is still retained on the statute-book.

Mr. PRICE: To what Act does the hon. member refer?

Mr. BRINER: Every hon. member must know the Act to which I refer. I appreciate the remarks made by the leader of the Opposition to-night. I say that a man who comes into this House and makes wild statements must be suffering from political "D Ts." I confess that under the system of conversion of leaseholds a great deal of justice has been done to men with leaseholds. But the Labour party never interfered with that Act. Even supposing that the National party does not put any Act on the statute-book giving the optional right of leasehold or freehold tenure, I desire to say that under the existing law the policy of administration of the Lands Department enables the Minister by a stroke of the pen to make land available under any tenure named in the Crown Lands Act. As I stand pledged to the alternative policy of leasehold or freehold in land settlement, and as every hon. member of the party to which I belong also stands

pledged to it, particularly country members, I say that that policy should have been initiated by administration immediately after the last general election.

Mr. OSBORNE: Do you expect this Government to honor all its election pledges?

Mr. BRINER: I am one of those who do expect that, and I will demand it too when the Government has had a reasonable chance to get going. I believe that this Government will endeavour to give effect to its policy when it gets a chance. If it does not, I am not the only member on this side who will want to know the reason why, and if necessary change our course of conduct.

Mr. GRAHAME: I may say that the bill is already drafted, and will be proceeded with as soon as we get the estimates out of the way!

Mr. BRINER: The bill that is already drafted may provide for optional tenure of leasehold or freehold at the inception of settlement—that is, when the applicant goes to the Crown lands agent—but the Minister has the right now to make an additional area available under the same form of tenure as that held by the man who applies for an additional area—that is to say, an old conditional purchase holder who has brought up a family on a small area, and having a prior claim for an additional area, can now obtain only a Crown lease or a homestead farm. One has a tenure of forty-five years, with a condition of forty-five years' residence, and the other is a perpetual lease with perpetual residence conditions attached to it. I want to have initiated by administration a system by which a man who wants land made available for an additional holding shall be able to obtain it under exactly the same tenure as the original area, so that we may not have a number of piebald holdings. Then we should not have cases in which a man who, after having fulfilled all the conditions of his conditional purchase, is not able to get anything in the way of an additional area, except in the form of a Crown lease, with a condition of forty-five years' residence or a homestead farm with perpetual residence conditions. This is a grievance which every country member has, and which every city and suburban member ought to have, because it is not necessary

[Mr. Briner.

to wait for an Act of Parliament to put the principle into operation. I put forward this suggestion in the most friendly way. I understand that a bill is being drafted to give some optional right of tenure, but in the meantime the policy I have indicated should be adopted.

The hon. member for Camperdown complained that only £4,000 had been provided on the estimates for National Park, and that this amount was small relatively to that provided for the Kuring-gai Chase. Every country member has a grievance in this respect because not one penny is provided on the estimates for country parks and reserves which are just as essential as are the national parks near Sydney. At various places along the North Coast we have people who come from the hinterland, and who camp upon public reserves near the beaches for four and five months in the year, and these reserves are just as vitally important to the people there as are the parks around about Sydney to the people of the metropolis. So far as Kuring-gai Chase is concerned, it would appear to be a close preserve for the trustees and a few of their friends. Very few people go there, but no doubt a good many resort to National Park, and I admit that £4,000 is not enough to place on the estimates for expenditure on National Park. At the same time all through the estimates in every department retrenchment has been effected in votes relating to the country districts, and not one penny has been left where it could possibly be lopped off. If there is any place in which the people could be reasonably taxed to pay for the upkeep of their own parks it is the metropolitan area.

Mr. GRAHAME: All the parks except national parks are cut out!

Mr. BRINER: Who has the right to call these public reserves national parks? There are many parks and reserves along the North Coast which are just as much entitled as the Kuring-gai Chase or the National Park to be called national parks. Why should not these be called national parks and treated accordingly? To these reserves along the coast people come from hundreds of miles inland when the weather is hot and spend many months camped alongside the

sea enjoying the cooler atmosphere there. These people put their hands in their pockets and provide for as much as 60 and even 75 per cent. of the cost of the upkeep of these reserves and parks. I am not growling about the lack of provision for the parks at this time of economic stress, but when the hon. member for Camperdown complains about the smallness of the vote for the parks around about Sydney, I cannot help saying that it would not hurt the people who enjoy these parks to put their hands in their pockets as the country people have to do.

Mr. J. STOREY: These parks are visited by more country people than city people!

Mr. BRINER: No doubt National Park is visited by a large number of country people, but I doubt very much whether many people from the country know even of the existence of Kuring-gai Chase.

I wish to direct attention to a grievance which I am sure I share with most country members, and in regard to which it is very hard to allocate the blame. I could cite many instances to illustrate what I mean. I would first mention a case which occurred in 1907 or 1908. Then two brothers named Pearson, who were carpenters and builders, went to Orara, on the other side of Coff's Harbour, and were allotted by the district surveyor two areas of 69 acres each. These were supposed to be living areas, and they were situated well out from Coff's Harbour under the shadow of the Dorrigo mountains. Some little time afterwards the Pearsons applied for additional areas, and for some years the Lands Department said all the surrounding lands were in the forest reserves. The Forestry Department agreed some years ago to allow 400 acres of the forest reserve to be made available to satisfy the claims of the Pearsons and others, but nothing has been done so far as the Lands Department is concerned. In 1910 I put questions on the business-paper relating to these 69-acre blocks, and I was informed that they comprised rich alluvial flat country on the banks of a permanently-watered creek. Knowing the country, I did not say anything more about it for ten months. Then I asked a further question, and I received an

answer to the effect that the 69-acre blocks comprised rough, hilly, broken country ending in a bluff on the Wayper Creek. I have been travelling to and from the Lands Department and writing letters in this and other cases for seven or eight years, and every year I have made further attempts to obtain additional areas for the Pearsons, who are still waiting. For nine or ten years I have been attempting to get a reserve opened for settlement at Tyringham, near Guy Fawkes. The old settlers are clearing out, and those who remain cannot obtain school accommodation for their children. There is wonderfully rich land available for selection at Cloud's Creek, but because of the absence of school accommodation and roads no one will go there. The Forestry Department five or six years ago abandoned its claim to the Tyringham reserve, which has been designed for settlement into twenty-three holdings. If these holdings were made available they would be immediately taken up and a prosperous settlement would be established. I am still agitating with a view to having this land thrown open, and no doubt if I persevere for another sixteen years I shall be successful. In the case of the Pearsons I may possibly succeed in obtaining for them additional areas within the next twenty years. I could quote scores of cases of this kind, and every country member meets with the same disheartening experience, in spite of all the talk we hear about settling people on the land. We have heard a great deal about the settlement of returned soldiers, and not long ago I had my leg nicely pulled in my electorate. A man, whom I know well, came to me and said, "They are doing fine things for the returned soldiers; they have made some splendid land available." I told him I was glad to hear it, because it was the first information that had come to me of good land being made available. When I inquired where the land was, he indicated its locality and said that it would be eminently suitable for one-legged soldiers, because with their good leg they could stand on one side of the property and they could rest the stump of the other leg on the other side. When we hear of some of the places that have been

made available for settlement by returned soldiers we cannot altogether refrain from questioning the *bona-fides* of the Lands Department in regard to this class of settler. You cannot blame the Minister, nor can you blame the officers, because they are not the inspecting officers. But the inspecting officer who puts the department to the ever-recurring expense of re-inquiry or the remedying of mistakes ought not to be in the public service. And we have them in the public service.

Mr. G. R. W. McDONALD: Is the hon. member sure that these country officers are not coerced from somewhere else?

Mr. BRINER: They may be in some districts, but the officers in my district are certainly not coerced. Mine is naturally a closer settlement district, and the subdivision areas could not possibly be any smaller than they are. I know that mistakes like these creep in. I am not unreasonable. I know that the Minister looks to the district surveyor, and the district surveyor sends to the staff surveyor. I do not expect the staff surveyor to go 30 or 40 miles to report at once upon a particular application; it would cost the country too much. He waits until he receives several instructions. But when the reports come in, and I find that they are ignored by the district surveyor, who knows nothing about the matter, and who writes a report to the Minister which misleads him, then I have a right to complain. I would bring under the notice of the Minister the absolute necessity that exists for making available additional areas, and for remedying abuses which have resulted from making land available for returned soldiers or for ordinary settlers which is of no use to anyone. This only constitutes a cost and a handicap to the department for all time.

Mr. DOOLEY (Hartley) [7.42 p.m.]: I wish to refer briefly to the amount provided in the estimates for the Blue Mountain reserves. The sum of £1,000 is not sufficient for the purpose. When you consider that the extent of country concerned runs from Lithgow to Penrith and is included in two electorates, hon. members will readily recognise that a sum of £1,000 for the improvement and

[Mr. Briner.

maintenance of those reserves is altogether too little. It would be a wiser policy to provide for those reserves on the basis of their popularity or the number of people who utilise them. I agree with hon. members who say that the expenditure of £1,500 upon Kuring-gai Chase requires some explanation. Very few hon. members have been to the Chase, and the public generally rarely go there. I have been there two or three times, and I admit that it is a beautiful place, and a place which should be more popular, but the trouble is that it is less accessible than other places. To say that £1,500 is required for a reserve like that, and that £1,000 is sufficient for the whole of the reserves on the Blue Mountains demands some explanation.

Mr. LATIMER: Kuring-gai Chase is largely used by the people on the north side!

Mr. DOOLEY: I know that it is largely used by Mr. Hollis and his co-trustees. As regards the National Park, the difference between it and Kuring-gai Chase is that it is available to the general public, whereas the other reserve is not. The Committee must recognise that the Mountain reserves deserve more consideration at the hands of the Minister, because they have more to recommend them than other places. For example, the Railway Department receives a very considerable revenue from the traffic to the Blue Mountains. I should say that for every £ expended in making the reserves attractive £100 is reaped by the Railway Department from tourists and travellers. The mountain reserves have become an absolute necessity to the public. They are not merely beautiful spots, but they are important health resorts, and I hope the Minister will see his way to mete out more generous treatment.

Mr. PERRY (Byron) [7.47 p.m.]: The hon. member for Hartley complains of the meagreness of the sum allotted for the Blue Mountain reserves. If the hon. member looks down the items he will find that there is no provision at all for any parks north of Newcastle, and, as hon. members are aware, the country to the north, embracing as it does the best part of Australia, is closely settled and contains large areas of park lands. When

I find no provision on the estimates for those park lands I have a right to complain. Another misapprehension under which the hon. member labours is that Kuring-gai Chase is maintained for the convenience of Mr. Hollis and a few trustees. It may be as the hon. member says, that Kuring-gai Chase is somewhat inaccessible. All the same it is very well patronised, and the trustees carry out their work in the best interests of the public; and if the facts were available I dare say it would be found that the Chase is used to a greater extent by the general public than the Blue Mountain reserves. I happen to be one of the trustees, and I can tell the Committee that we go down twice a year at our own expense on a visit of inspection. We lay out the work and stay a night so as to be there for two days. We give our time, whatever ability we possess, and use the little money at our disposal to make the park comfortable for the visitors, who number thousands. In the season large numbers of people go and camp there, and the trustees have conserved water and provided other conveniences for them. There is no extravagance in that. I have nothing to say in regard to the vote for the reserves in the hon. member's electorate or the vote for the National Park. In both instances the money is well spent, but I do complain that money has not been found for country parks, where it is needed and where there is no chance for extravagance. There are fifteen parks in my electorate, and last year I was asked to divide the munificent sum of £75 amongst them.

Mr. GRAHAME (Wickham), Minister for Agriculture [7.50 p.m.]: I am very pleased at the criticism offered by the majority of members on the estimates for the Lands Department, and I know that if the Minister had been here he would have been one of the happiest of men upon hearing the criticism from the Opposition side. I rise to make a short reply to the observations of the hon. member for Gloucester. I believe that there has for some time been a personal feeling between him and the Minister for Lands, and he has never missed an opportunity of trying to place the Minister in a false light before the

public. He has said that the Minister was guilty of entering into certain contracts and of buying certain properties, and had smothered up the amounts spent on those purchases, and that the amounts did not appear on the estimates. I drew his attention to the fact that on last year's loan estimates those items appeared under "Public Works Fund," and were passed by the House. If the hon. member was not in his place at the time to look after the interests of his constituents and of the people generally he has no right now to come here and in the absence of the Minister for Lands make a charge against him. The amounts to which he refers were passed when he was absent, as he usually is when the interests of his constituents require his attendance here. On the estimates submitted for the year 1916-17 there appeared provision for timber land at Craven; £1,400 purchase of sawmill plant, £8,302, and purchase of sawmill plant, Gloucester, £2,735. He has come here to-night and, sheltered by the privileges of Parliament, has prostituted his position as a representative of the people by implying that a Minister of the Crown had smothered up the expenditure of thousands of pounds from the view of Parliament, although, as a matter of fact, Parliament has already dealt with the amount. I do not want to become heated over the matter, but when an hon. member uses his position in the Parliament of the country to make such charges against a man whose boots he is not worthy to blacken it is incumbent on me to say that the hon. member is trying to mislead the House and the country—that he is wilfully trying to do so, because I have drawn his attention to the facts.

Mr. PRICE:

Mr. GRAHAME: Anything I have done during my lifetime is open to inquiry, and I do not want the hon. member to read me a lecture upon what is right and what is wrong. I am here to-night on behalf of the Government to challenge him to make a definite statement on the question of the sawmills or the resumption of land. If he will do so the Government will appoint a commission to inquire into the matter immediately, but we have the right to ask this: that if he

fails to substantiate the charges he has made against the Minister for Lands to-night he will go out of the House and out of the public life of the country. I say the Government will appoint a commission if the hon. member will undertake to go out of public life if it is proved that he is trying to slander a man. We are prepared to appoint a commission to inquire into anything that the Minister for Lands has done in connection with the sawmills if the hon. member for Gloucester will give that undertaking. This Government will go down if he can prove one charge he has made to-night. The whole of the insinuations he has made to-night are based on the false ground that the Minister for Lands was trying to smother up an expenditure that the House has already agreed to.

Mr. PRICE (Gloucester) [7.56 p.m.] : The hon. member has torn an angry passion to tatters. The statement I made was that the transaction in regard to the purchase of certain mills do not appear in the papers. There was the Smith mill at Gloucester, and the Comboyne mill from Mr. Shedden. The records of the House show that on 14th August, 1917, I asked the following questions:—

(1) Has he yet arrived at a decision as to replying to the questions asked by the hon. member for Darlinghurst, Mr. D. Levy, M.L.A., before the conclusion of the last session of last Parliament on the subject of the purchase of sawmills at Craven and Gloucester? (2) Will he be good enough to furnish the House with the desired information as early as possible; if not, why not? (3) Has Mr. Shedden been appointed to any position under Government; if so, on what date, and what salary, expenses, and allowances have been granted to him and his staff? (4) Have any other members of Mr. Shedden's family been appointed to positions; if so, in what capacity, and what allowances will be paid to them? (5) The like information with regard to any other employees or members of his staff? (6) Has an account been opened by the Government at any Gloucester bank; if so, is Mr. Shedden or any of his family or employees allowed to operate on such account on behalf of the Government? (7) What is the extent of the account, and what moneys have been involved? (8) Has he any objection to lay the whole of the papers relating to the purchase of the State sawmills upon the table of this House? (9) Will he grant a royal commission to inquire into the transaction, or consent to the ap-

[Mr. Grahame.

pointment of a select committee of Parliament to investigate the purchasing of sawmills and resumption of lands by the State?

The answer given me is entirely different from the statement of the hon. member to-night. He says now that the money was provided during last session of Parliament. The answer then given is as follows:—

Answer.—I am advised by my colleague, the Minister for Forests, that the transactions in these matters are not yet completed, and it is therefore not possible to reply fully to the above questions.

I have made no charges with regard to the Minister that I cannot substantiate. The charges made by me are deliberately made. I asked the Minister to have an inquiry with regard to the transaction with Mr. Philip Langworthy and Sir Allen Taylor, and also with regard to Smith's sawmill at the Comboyne. On the 14th August I was told that the transaction was not yet completed. To-night I am told that the money was provided in last year's estimates. Which statement am I to believe? Does the Minister know that a notice of motion was tabled in the House urging an inquiry and that I sent on a statement by Mr. P. Langworthy that when the place was purchased the timber was cut out; that Sir Allen Taylor refused to deal with the contract and that the Government resumed under the Public Works Act? Either Sir Allen Taylor, who sold to Shedden, or the Minister, after he and his friend left Mr. Shedden's house—

Mr. GRAHAME: I was never in Mr. Shedden's house in my life, except in your company!

Mr. PRICE: The position is simply this: If you want to buy sawmills, buy them, but put them where there is timber. In this case a site was purchased where the timber was cut out. A sawmill was purchased of which the original machinery came from Ballarat—

Mr. GRAHAME: On a point of order, there is no item on the estimates with regard to sawmills at Craven or elsewhere. Before the adjournment, Mr. Colquhoun, you ruled that the hon. member had no right to discuss anything

relating to the purchase of sawmills when there was no such item on the estimates.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (MR. COLQUHOUN): The hon. member is traversing the ruling which I gave before the tea adjournment. I will ask him to confine himself entirely to the question before the Committee.

Motion (by Mr. JAMES) agreed to:

That the hon. member for Gloucester be not further heard.

Vote agreed to.

Proposed votes—Western Land Board, £7,294; Forestry, £50,785; Miscellaneous Services (Department of Lands), £43,014; Miscellaneous Services (Forestry Commission), £925; Special Services, £6,000—agreed to.

Progress reported.

MR. SPEAKER: I understand it is the wish of the Acting Premier and of the leader of the Opposition that I now leave the chair until half-past 4 on Tuesday next. Under those circumstances I will leave the chair accordingly.

[Mr. Speaker left the chair at 8.6 p.m. (Thursday).]

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 11 September, 1917.

[House resumed at 4.30 p.m. Continuation of proceedings from Thursday, 6th September.]

Personal Explanation—Navigation (Amendment) Bill—Supply.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. COCHRAN: As a matter of personal explanation, I desire to make the *amende honorable* for having stated in this House some days ago that certain remarks made by me did not appear in *Hansard*. It was subsequently discovered that they did appear, and I now rise to express my regret, accompanied by an apology, for having unwittingly stated that which was incorrect.

NAVIGATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

MR. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: With concurrence, I desire to give notice of the following motion:

That this House will, on its next sitting day, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole—

MR. EDDEN: I rise to order. I understood that this House simply adjourned last Thursday night, and that to-day, Government business—that is, the debating of the estimates—was to take precedence. I desire to ask you, sir, if the hon. gentleman is to be allowed to introduce this business. If he is, are not hon. members entitled to ask questions and give notice of motions?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is wrong in stating that the House adjourned last Thursday. The House did not adjourn. At the wish of the Acting Premier and the leader of the Opposition I left the chair last Thursday until to-day. This is really Thursday's sitting. The Minister is perfectly in order, and no hon. member can ask questions to-day.

MR. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The notice of motion is:

That this House will, on its next sitting day, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the expediency of bringing in a bill to alter certain rates in connection with navigation; to amend the Navigation Act, 1901, and the Sydney Harbour Trust and Navigation Amendment Act, 1908; and for purposes consequent thereon and incidental thereto.

SUPPLY.

In Committee (consideration resumed from 6th September):

Estimates—Minister for Public Works, Public Instruction, Labour and Industry, and Secretary for Mines—postponed.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Pastures Protection Boards—State Wheat Operations—Rabbit Inspection—Wheat Certificates—Stud Farms—Administration of Tick Act—Cattle Dips—Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission—Compensation to Settlers on Irrigation Area—Commercial Commissioner in the East—Centennial Park—Dairy Branch—Soil Surveyor—Herdmaster—Bangaroo Horse-breeding Farm—Stock Brands—Subsidies to Agricultural Societies—Advances on Hay-stacks—Hawkesbury Agricultural College—Experimental Farms—Land for Returned Soldiers—Custodian of Mosses—Travelling Stock Routes.