

**Legislative Assembly,***Tuesday, 20th November, 1906.*

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

**PRAYERS.****BUGGY ACCIDENT, THE PREMIER'S INJURIES.**

THE TREASURER (Hon. F. Wilson) said: I regret having to report to the House that the Premier (Hon. N. J. Moore), owing to the very serious accident which happened on Sunday last, will be unable to attend in this House for several days. I have seen him this afternoon, and hon. members will be agreeably surprised to learn that he is not so badly hurt as we thought he was through the accident, although his injuries are rather serious. I hope, and he hopes, that in a few days he will be able to get out of his bed, at any rate, and that in the course of a week or ten days he will be able to resume his duties in this House.

(MEMBERS: Hear, hear.)

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): I desire to avail myself of this opportunity to express my regret at the painful accident which has occurred to the Premier; and I hope that in a very few days he will be with us again, and that we shall be able once more to see the pleasant countenance of the hon. gentleman in this House.

**ELECTION RETURN—MOUNT LEONORA.**

THE CLERK announced the return of writ for the election of a member for Mount Leonora (in room of Mr. P. J. Lynch, resigned), showing that Mr. Julian Alexander Salmon Stuart had been duly elected.

MR. STUART took the oath and subscribed the roll.

**QUESTION—MINERS' WORKING DAYS.**

MR. BATH gave notice that on the next day he would ask the Minister for Mines: 1, Was the Minister for Mines correctly reported in the *Morning Herald*, which states that he declared that the Labour party wished to provide for 365 working days per year for miners? 2, If so, was he aware in making such statement that it was absolutely misleading and incorrect?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: As the election is to be held to-morrow, I would like to reply now to the question by the Leader of the Opposition, if the hon. member will allow me to do so.

MR. BATH: I have no objection.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I wish to reply now in order that no misconception should arise. I desire to state that I was incorrectly reported. What I stated was that prior to the introduction of the present Bill, persons could be employed on the surface 365 days without its being any offence; and that a new clause in the Bill was an innovation, providing that miners should not be employed more than 13 days consecutively.

**EXPLANATION—MINING EXEMPTION.**

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): During the course of the discussion on the Mining Estimates, on information received from the Roebourne electorate I made a statement to the Committee to the effect that the warden had recommended exemption for the Mons Cupri lease in the Roebourne district, and that the recommendation had been refused by the Minister. The Minister having made available the file dealing with the case, I find that the statement was incorrect, and that the Minister approved of the exemption recommended by the warden. I desire to make the correction.

**PAPERS PRESENTED.**

By THE TREASURER: 1, Statement of expenditure incurred in entertaining distinguished visitors for 1905-6. This return, added the Treasurer, was in connection with the £788 referred to by Mr. Scaddan. 2, Papers relating to the

retirement of Police Constable Carrol; asked for by Mr. Daglish.

By THE MINISTER FOR MINES: 1, Statement showing Expenditure of Vote for Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources; asked for by Mr. Taylor.

#### QUESTION—MINES REGULATION AMENDMENT.

MR. HUDSON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the judgments delivered by the Federal High Court in cases relating to the Mines Regulation Act, namely, *Ivanhoe Gold Corporation Ltd. v. Symonds*, and the *London and Western Australian Exploration Co. Ltd. v. Ricco*? 2, If so, is it his intention to introduce amendments to the Act to give better security for the lives and bodies of miners; and if so, when?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Mines Regulation Bill now before the House has been introduced with the object of better regulating the working of mines, and beyond moving certain amendments of which I am giving notice to-day upon the recommittal of the Bill, I do not propose to introduce any other amendments in consequence of the judgments referred to.

#### QUESTION—TIMBER INSPECTORS ACCUSED.

MR. MONGER (for Mr. A. J. Wilson) asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has his attention been directed to accusations made against timber inspectors in the Arbitration Court as follows: "Mr. Cusack: Do you know whether the Government inspectors are in the pay of the companies?—Yes; they have repeatedly admitted that in addition to their salary and travelling allowance they receive amounts from the timber companies?" 2, Will the matter be fully investigated by the department?

THE TREASURER (for the Minister) replied: 1, Yes; some time ago it came to the knowledge of the Department that some inspectors had done work for companies during their spare time. Instructions were immediately given to discon-

tinue the practice. 2, The Department is prepared to receive and consider any evidence that will show any breach of those instructions.

BILL—LOAN, £2,467,000.

#### SECOND READING MOVED.

THE TREASURER (Hon. F. Wilson), in moving the second reading, said: I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill, because it is carrying out what was made a portion of the policy of the Government of the day, a policy which we maintain is to open up this country and develop its resources. We have had to consider during the past month or two the best means of carrying out that policy, and as forecasted in the speech which I delivered when introducing the Estimates, we have decided that the construction of railways in different portions of the country to give cheap means of transit is one of the main items which will conduce to the successful carrying out of our policy. We have also come to the conclusion that improvements to our harbours and rivers and improvements in water supply, together with the carrying out of that great sewerage scheme for the metropolitan area, the development of our goldfields by assisting prospectors and in other directions, and the development of our great agricultural resources, will also carry out our policy and redound to the benefit and prosperity of the country. It may be stated by some critics that we have gone rather too far in our loan proposals; but I venture to think that every member of this House, and indeed every citizen of the State which we control at present, will agree with me that if ever there was a time when a progressive policy of this description was desirable or justifiable, it is the present time. We hope that when we get our public works policy—after the House passes the measure—into full swing, it will do away altogether with any question of unemployed in our midst, and that it will give investors renewed courage by the confidence which they will see that the Government and the Parliament of this country have in the undoubted wealth and possibilities of our State.

*Policy of Works, Progressive and Equitable.*

We stated some time back that it was our intention to endeavour to carry out the programme forecasted in the policy speech of the Premier, delivered at Bunbury before this session commenced, and this measure is the result of our endeavours to carry out that policy. I may say at once that in considering the items of public works to be included in the Loan Bill, Cabinet have not been swayed by any desire to favour any portion of the State beyond another. We have endeavoured to give impartial consideration to the requirements of the different portions of the State, regardless of party or politics. We have also endeavoured to approach the question from the aspect of what is best in the interests of the country as a whole, rather than consider what might advance the status of one individual section of the community as against any other section of the community. Of course it stands to reason that in drawing up a Bill of this description we must of necessity have placed public works in one or other electorate represented by one or another member of this House; but I hope that in considering this important matter members will endeavour to give us credit, at any rate, for the fact that we have not shown any favouritism, that we have treated our political opponents as generously as our political supporters, and perhaps more generously; and I hope that members will view the matter as we have endeavoured to view it, from the standpoint of what is best for our country and best to advance the prosperity of the whole of the State. Turning to the question of our present financial position and our policy of future borrowing, I may say at once that the whole of the authorisations, as I explained when I delivered my Budget Speech, have been exhausted. With the exception of some £21,480 local inscribed stock sold during the last financial year, the loan which was floated by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) on the 8th June 1905, for £1,400,000, exhausted all authorisations, so that members will see at once that Western Australia has been off the money market during the past 17 months; and as it is of course not the Government's intention to proceed with any loan flotation, during the next two or

three months, because of the unfavourable market, it will probably be close up to two years before we float our next loan since the previous loan floated by the member for Subiaco when he was Premier and Treasurer.

*Money Market Troubles, better Prospect.*

I regret to say, what is a well-known fact to hon. members, that the market is undoubtedly at the present time unfavourable to flotations. The excessive gold withdrawals from the Bank of England recently, as reported in our local papers and elsewhere, caused a very high bank rate of interest, and to-day I believe the bank rate of interest is 5 per cent.; so members will see that we shall have to proceed with caution, and I do not propose to rush the money market, but to wait a favourable opportunity of placing our loan requirements on the market. It is necessary that we should come to the House to obtain authorisations in order that we may take advantage of any favourable opportunity which opens up in the near future. I am making inquiries quietly as to the state of the market and as to the likelihood of being successful when we place our loan upon it. I find there is undoubtedly plenty of money available. It is only a question of the price we shall have to pay. I find there is plenty of money available in Australia at the present time. I propose—and I do not think I shall be injuring my prospects in mentioning it here—in addition to probably taking advantage of the London market, as soon as possible next year to endeavour, if I can get favourable terms, to utilise the Australian market itself for some portion of our requirements. Of course in adopting a policy of this description, it is very necessary to take into consideration the different exchanges which have to be paid. For instance, in floating an Australian loan, it is necessary, in order to be anything like successful, to make the interest payable in the different capitals of the different States of the Commonwealth. That means exchange on remitting the interest. Of course, on the other hand, we have not to overlook the fact that in London we have large commitments. We have our interest and sinking fund moneys to provide in London, and we have large indents to provide for; so that

by floating a loan on the London market we shall have moneys available in London without exchange, to meet our responsibilities from time to time as they occur.

*Effect of Raising this Loan.*

The effect of this Bill will be readily seen by members if they follow the figures I am about to quote. The total authorisations of Western Australia to the 30th June 1906 were £18,273,253. We have redeemed of that amount £214,700, and our accumulated sinking fund is £1,320,603. These latter being deducted leave the net indebtedness of £16,737,950, equalling £64 3s. 8d. per head of our population. If we had to go on the market to-day to raise the sum of money mentioned in this Loan Bill, £2,467,000, our net liability would be increased of course very considerably, to the extent of £9 8s. 6d. per head of our population; but I think we may fairly consider that this loan, which it is proposed shall be spread over the next two and a-half to three years, at any rate two years to two and a-half years—

MR. BATH: Do you mean the raising of it?

THE TREASURER: A good portion, at least one-half, will be raised early next year. I reckon we will have to raise  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions next year and the balance, the other million, the following year. I think we may fairly estimate that the population will increase in the same or similar proportion to what it has done during the past few years; and if that takes place, our population at the end of June 1908 should approximate something like 283,000 people. I find on turning to the statistics that our population on the 30th June 1904 was 238,000, and that on the 30th June 1906, that is two years later, we had increased to 261,000; and it is estimated by the statisticians that at the end of June 1908, at about the same rate of increase our population will be equal to 283,000 people. Then if we take into consideration—and I think we are justified in considering this fact in connection with the matter—that during the next two financial years we will have paid to our sinking fund an annual amount of £232,567 in 1906-7 and £245,960 in 1907-8, we will find that our net liability at the end of the financial year 1907-8 will be £18,726,423,

or equal to £66 3s. 5d. per head of our estimated population at that date—that is provided that between now and the end of the 1907-8 financial year we have raised the whole of the loan we are now asking Parliament to authorise us to raise by this Bill. Of course if the whole of the loan is not floated during that period, that is within the next twenty months—and I think it will be—but if it is not, then our indebtedness per head of the population, providing we have this moderate estimated increase going on, will be pretty well the same as it is to-day. That is the effect of the Loan Bill so far as the total indebtedness of the country is concerned.

*Loan Fund Accounts, the present Position.*

I will now briefly draw attention to the position of the General Loan Fund and the Loan Suspense Accounts at the present time. On the 30th June, as I mentioned in my Budget Speech—and it is impossible I should refrain from repeating to some extent those figures—the balance to credit of the General Loan Fund amounted to £655,793. But this was not all available for expenditure on Loan Fund undertakings: there was a sum of £90,000 which had been provided in excess under previous loan authorisations for discounts and flotation expenses; so that left us with £565,756 on Loan Fund available for Loan Fund undertakings and works on the 30th June last. Then we had expended up to that time, under the authority of our last year's Loan Estimates, a sum of money from Loan Suspense Account amounting to £145,362; so that the loan moneys actually available for expenditure on the 30th June last amounted to £420,393. The expenditure since then, that is during the past four months to the 31st October, has amounted to £99,557 from General Loan Fund less the items duly authorised and ear-marked, and also a farther £86,549 against Loan Suspense Account, or a total of £186,106; leaving at the present day a balance of only £234,285 available for public works and undertakings under loan authorisations. The position so far as our financial requirements in England are concerned is briefly as follows. We have an arrangement with the London and Westminster Bank for an overdraft against

the Agent General's account; and on the 31st October it stood at £121,024 debit. Our arrangement is for a quarter of a million, £250,000, at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; and my information goes to show that we shall not have much difficulty in increasing that amount should we require to do it, and we undoubtedly will have to increase that accommodation for several months before we can go on the market. [MR. DAGLISH: At what rate?] I cannot state anything about the rate at present. The bank rate is so high that it would be suicidal for me to endeavour to make arrangements as to rates to-day. I believe in letting sleeping dogs lie. We shall have no necessity to seek assistance for three or four months hence, by which time I have every reason to believe that the financial position will have relieved itself, and that the bank rate will have come back to something like its normal condition. The Agent General's overdraft was £121,024; his requirements to the 31st June next, including indents in hand or *in transitu*, and also for interest and sinking fund and for miscellaneous items, amounted to £481,000. So that he shall require at the end of June next, provided no fresh indents were sent home, £602,000 for London expenditure, including of course the overdraft at the present day. These requirements are spread over the seven months between now and the end of June, and we have not very much to meet until January next. The November expenditure, and the month is almost out now, amounts to £30,000—here I am stating round figures. In December we shall want £24,000 in London; in January £105,000; in February £11,000; in March £17,000; in April, of course, we have interest and sinking fund to meet, and shall require £234,000; in May we shall want £34,000; and in June £23,000. So it will readily be seen that at any rate until the end of January next no fresh arrangements need be made, but that with the arrangement already made for an overdraft of a quarter of a million we have sufficient to carry us on almost to the end of January; and by that time I hope the bank rate of interest will be easier, and if we have to make fresh arrangements for an extended accommodation, we shall be able to do so on more advantageous terms than those of the

last few months with the rate  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

*Chief Items of Loan Expenditure.*

Turning to the Loan Bill itself, I now wish to refer to the schedules principally because the clauses do not interest us much. The first schedule shows the amount required to be raised; and taking the first item as an illustration, members will see that it is simply an estimated amount of the administrative cost of carrying out these several public works, which is usually placed in a loan schedule at 5 per cent. on the total capital expenditure for these works by the department.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Are the sums quoted estimated to be sufficient to complete the works?

THE TREASURER: In nearly every instance they are. The first schedule shows that for railways, including works in hand and new works, we require to raise £1,193,400. In addition to that, we have available under existing authorities a sum of £314,715, and we have an amount to be reappropriated against these works, as shown in the second and third schedules, of £32,497. So that under the heading of "Railways" we expect to expend, when the whole of these works and railways projected are completed, a total sum of £1,540,612. Under the heading "Harbours and Rivers" we propose asking authority from this House to raise £224,500; we have a balance available under existing authorisations of £109,879, and the amount to be reappropriated is a small sum of £146, making a total expenditure under this head of £334,525. Under "Water Supply and Sewerage" we ask the House to authorise us to raise a further sum of £319,500; we have a balance available under this head under existing authorisations of £73,936; but there are two small items under this head which will have to stand over—for instance the Albany Waterworks, and when this work is completed it is expected there will be a balance of £4,237 standing to credit, unless fresh requirements arise during the progress of the work. I should like to explain in connection with the work at Albany that the original scheme would have taken the whole of the expenditure provided; but a

mutual arrangement has been come to between the member for Albany (Mr. Barnett) and the Minister for Works in regard to the nature of the scheme, under which this saving of £1,900 it is expected will be made. Of course we cannot interfere with the item until the work is completed; therefore it must stand over. Then under "Water Supply for Towns Generally" there is a balance of £11,163, which I also propose to allow to remain standing to the credit of that vote, in order that we may have from time to time funds available for further works; so that there is a sum of £393,436 available for Water Supply and Sewerage, but deducting these two items amounting to £15,400, which as I have said must stand over, there is a balance left of £378,036 which will be available for expenditure under the Loan Estimates and under this Loan Bill. Then under the next heading, "Development of Goldfields etc.," we propose to ask Parliament to give us power to raise £138,100; and we have a balance available under existing authorisations of £13,487, making a total expenditure of £151,587. For the "Development of Agriculture" we are asking authority to raise £249,700, which includes the completion of the rabbit-proof fence, taking £126,600 for that.

MR. ANGWIN: You are sure it will be completed this time?

THE TREASURER: Yes, and something more—the hon. member will recollect that when he was in the House before there was to be a fence from north of Yalgoo across to the sea-coast. Reverting to the "Development of Agriculture," £248,700 is the amount we are asking Parliament to authorise us to raise under this Bill; and we have a balance available of £21,096, making a total of £269,796. But there is also a small balance standing under the heading of "Purchase of Wire Netting," £11,212. I do not propose to touch that item, which has not been availed of in the past to any great extent, but it is undoubtedly probable that agriculturists, farmers and others, may wish to avail themselves of the privilege of borrowing money under this item; therefore I propose to leave it standing, in order that it may be available if required by the Minister controlling the Department of Agriculture.

So that this, deducted from the total amount which I have just given, leaves £258,584, which we have to expend in connection with the development of our great agricultural pursuits. Under "Roads and Bridges," hon. members will see an item of £15,400. This is to cover the amount, and only the amount, which was voted on last year's Loan Estimates. Under "Buildings" we ask for power to raise £175,900, and departmentally (as I mentioned when I commenced on these figures) £120,000; so that the total amount available for expenditure is shown in the Loan Bill as £2,467,000. That only is the amount which we ask power to raise; and the total amount to be expended will be £2,974,644—almost three millions of money we shall have available for expenditure in opening up and developing this country. And this is exclusive of any expenditure which may be made in connection with the Metropolitan Water Supply as projected last December, when the House passed a measure increasing the borrowing powers. Any funds that will be required in carrying out the large scheme then put before the House and the country will be borrowed, as heretofore, through the Government Savings Bank and from the Savings Bank funds. I think it will be conceded that with a sum of three millions, to say nothing of the water works expenditure, in public works of the description which are mentioned in this Loan Bill, during the next two years or two and a-half to three years—I hope for the shorter period each time—we may expect to have some direct beneficial results. Not only shall we enable people to go on the land to cultivate it, but we shall open up in our great mining districts centres which hitherto have hardly been worth working, and perhaps have not been thoroughly prospected. By that means I trust, and also by the employment which the expenditure of this money will undoubtedly give to our artisans and others, we shall set an example to private investors; and I hope that they will come along, as they promised to do, and invest in our industries and undertakings, following the example of the Parliament and the Government, and that the result will be a large influx of population and a great increase of our prosperity.

MR. ANGWIN: But what about loss of confidence?

THE TREASURER: We have, in addition to the items which I have mentioned here, "Discounts and Flotation Expenses, £31,500;" and it is necessary I should refer to these, because otherwise the item might be misleading. It is usual to allow 5 per cent. to cover discounts and flotation expenses; and having, as I mentioned, £90,000 in hand from previous authorisations for flotation expenses, it is found necessary to provide only £31,500 in this Bill for that purpose, the two items together providing the 5 per cent. which it is estimated will cover the cost of flotation. The Second and Third Schedules (page 5 of the Bill) show the "Reappropriations" which we propose, amounting in all to £32,643. Hon. members will see that the Second Schedule shows the items from which reappropriations have been made, and the Third Schedule shows the items to which these reappropriations will be applied. It has been our endeavour, as is the custom, to keep any reappropriations to works of a similar character and works in the same district as far as possible. That custom is followed in the present instance, and when the Loan Estimates are introduced and come before the House hon. members will see that in the details of these items we have endeavoured as far as possible to give effect to the custom.

#### *Sinking Fund.*

Only one other matter I need refer to in this measure is in connection with Clause 4. I wish to draw hon. members' attention to the provision, the usual provision, which has been made for sinking fund in this Loan Bill, namely that a sinking fund at the rate of 1 per cent. per annum shall be maintained, and that the payments to that sinking fund shall commence four years from the date of the first issue of stock, as has been the custom heretofore. That is to say, should we float a portion of this loan early next year, say £1,000,000 or £500,000, or whatever the amount might be, the payment of sinking fund on the total amount of the Bill would commence four years later than the date of flotation. I suppose if we float a loan in March of next year, then in March of 1911 we should begin to pay this 1 per

cent. of sinking fund to provide for the redemption of the loan at maturity.

#### *Loan Works, Old and New.*

I do not propose to-night to detain the House at any great length by going into the details of the old and the new works projected in this loan measure. Ministers of the several departments will explain the items as they come up in Committee; and more fully will they explain them, and every information that can be given will be given, when the Loan Estimates are before the Committee. There will be ample opportunity to debate each item, not only when the Estimates are before the Committee, but also as far as the railways are concerned when the Bills necessary to authorise the construction of these lines are introduced. It is the intention of the Government, in order to carry out the policy which they have put before this country, to press forward with these works, should the House pass the Loan Bill to give them the necessary power to raise funds for the same—to press forward with these works which they consider of such vital importance to the well-being of the State. We hope that we shall be able, when we get the sanction of Parliament, to construct during the next 12 months five or six at any rate of the railways which have been projected.

#### *Railways under Construction.*

Before mentioning the new works in detail, I may inform the House that the three railways which at the present time are under construction, and the one which has been completed, are in the following position. Goomalling-Dowerin, as the House is aware, is completed and has been handed over to the working Railways Department. Wagin-Dumbleyung, it is hoped by the Works Department, will be completed next month. Katanning-Kojonup is well advanced, and it is anticipated that this line also will be completed at the end of February next. The Collie-Narrogin line, which of course is more extensive in character, being a line of a much heavier description than the light agricultural lines to which I have just referred, is in the following position. The section from Narrogin to Darkan has been handed over to the

Working Railways Branch, and the rails to couple up between Darkan and Collie have all been delivered at Bunbury. The work is now being pushed on, close on 300 hands being employed on it. Perhaps I may be pardoned for taking some little credit to the Government for the energy they have displayed—energy which I regret to say has been the subject of rather severe criticism more than once during the last 12 months—energy displayed in carrying out the works which were authorised by Parliament last December. I think it has established a record in the history of this State to have railways, even short light lines such as these undoubtedly are, with the exception of the Collie-Narrogin line, put in hand and completed and handed over to the Working Railways Branch within 12 months. This establishes a record at all events in the history of Western Australia, if not in the history of Australasia. The main interest, of course, centres in our new proposals, and I may say that the Government intend to introduce certain measures to this House, and with the assistance I hope of our friends on the Opposition benches, including the Leader of the Opposition, to pass these Bills.

#### *New Railways Proposed.*

We intend to introduce Bills immediately for the extension of the Greenhills railway, and we hope also that the House will sanction a measure to construct a railway from Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun. The Donnybrook to Preston line will be another measure, and the Coolgardie to Norseman, at any rate the first section, and the Narrogin to Wickepin, in addition to the Bill before the House for the completion of the railway between Armadale and Jandakot—these Bills will all be pushed forward, and with the sanction of this House I hope we will be enabled to put the works in hand immediately. If time permits, the other Railway Bills enumerated in this loan measure will also be introduced; and I may say that personally I am anxious, and I believe the majority of my colleagues are anxious, that we should if possible pass the Port Hedland to Marble Bar Bill. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I believe that in that district by means of the railway which it is proposed to construct, at any rate to Marble Bar, we shall be taking a first

step to open up a new territory, a territory which is undoubtedly rich in mineral and pastoral wealth, a territory which I believe is destined to sustain a very large population in the very near future. The lines which I have referred to have all been surveyed, or at any rate if they have not all been surveyed some of them have been and the survey of others is in hand, with the possible exception of the Ravensthorpe-Hopetoun line, and the permanent survey of that line is to be commenced immediately. For the Greenhills to Quairiding line, a distance of 30 miles, the permanent survey is practically completed, and tenders can be called early next year for this work if the House sanctions its construction. As regards the Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun line, which is the one we consider of very great urgency, opening up as it will a centre which has undoubtedly shown itself to be worthy of railway communication and which is at the present time carrying a considerable and increasing population, the permanent survey of this line should be completed within about three months, and almost immediately thereafter, say in four or five months from now, tenders can be called and the work commenced. With regard to the Donnybrook-Preston line, a distance of 50 miles, the permanent survey is well in hand, about 10 miles having been completed, and the whole survey ought to be finished within the next six months, so that tenders can perhaps be called about the middle of next year. As to the Coolgardie-Norseman line, a permanent survey, as hon. members are aware, has been made direct; but since it is now proposed to build this line *via* Higginsville, it will be necessary to make a survey of the proposed deviation; and if the Bill is passed, that will not interfere with the calling of tenders for the first section, perhaps from Coolgardie to Widgiemooltha. These tenders can be called within a couple of months after the measure is passed. The permanent survey of the Narrogin-Wickepin Railway, 30 miles, is practically completed, and there is nothing to hinder that work. As members are aware, the Jandakot-Armadale Railway is now being surveyed, and the Bill for the construction of that railway is before the House. The sur-



vey will be finished next week or within 10 days, and tenders will be called for that line within a very short time after the end of the present month. A permanent survey of the proposed Port Hedland-Marble Bar Railway has been completed, and if we have time to pass the Bill during the present session, tenders will be called at a very early date. There is a question as to the kind of sleepers to be used on that railway, which will receive very careful consideration. It has been suggested, and the engineers are in favour of it, that steel sleepers should be used for this railway, in order to withstand the ravages of white ants; but we must, before deciding to import steel sleepers, be perfectly sure that our own jarrah timbers will not do for the purpose. The Minister for Works intends to make exhaustive inquiries in countries such as Queensland and South Africa as to the utility of steel sleepers as compared with timber sleepers. It has been reported that in those countries where steel sleepers were used many years ago, they are now going back to the use of timber sleepers. If that be so, and our timbers have a reasonable life, without going into the question of cost I think we must endeavour as far as possible to stand by the local article and adopt jarrah sleepers in preference to the imported article. The same remarks apply in reference to the Newcastle-Bolgart railway. The survey is completed and tenders can be called at an early date when the House sanctions its construction. The remaining lines will have to be permanently surveyed, and it is proposed to put this work in hand as promptly as possible after the work now being carried out by the department is completed, and to have everything in readiness so as to get the Bills introduced as early as possible when Parliament meets next session.

*Agricultural Railways not yet Located.*

Passing from the specific lines mentioned in this Bill, I desire to draw the attention of the House to the item of £100,000 provided for "Agricultural Railways Generally." Of course it goes without saying that we cannot get the information quickly enough to decide as to every agricultural line that is required, and which it is thought desirable to construct.

Therefore in order that there may be no delay when the information is at hand, and that we may have the funds to carry out any works which may be authorised by this Parliament, we have put this item of £100,000 on the Schedule in order to provide for districts which have not yet been fully inquired into. Of course members will readily understand that this does not give the Government power to expend the money. It only gives them power to raise the money, to have it in readiness when we receive the authorisation of Parliament to carry out any works in connection with any agricultural railways we may bring before Parliament.

*Other New Works—Fremantle Dock, etc.*

With regard to the item "Harbours and Rivers," I think perhaps it is only necessary for me here to refer to the item of £50,000 in connection with the Fremantle Dock and Slip.

MR. BOLTON: An absolute farce. It is only to hoodwink the people.

THE TREASURER: I beg the hon. member's pardon; but if he listens to me he will probably find out that it is to carry out a great work. Members are perhaps not aware that in connection with the "Fremantle Dock and Slip" vote there is an unexpended balance of £59,324 already in the hands of the Treasurer. We propose to add £50,000 to this, to give a total of £109,324.

MR. ANGWIN: What are you going to do with it?

THE TREASURER: We have put the £50,000 in this Loan Bill because at the present time there seems to be a strong impression, not only on this side of the House but I believe on the other side of the House also, that a work of this magnitude, of this description, should be carried out by the Government and not by the Harbour Trust. Almost every member who has spoken in connection with the Harbour Trust Act Amendment Bill has expressed his opinion that a work of this description should be carried out by the Government and then handed over to the Harbour Trust. The Government are not adverse to utilising the expert skill of the Public Works Department to construct a work of this description; and therefore if that is the opinion of the majority of members, it is proposed that the clauses in

the Bill now before the House authorising the Harbour Trust to construct this work shall be eliminated. The measure itself is wanted; and without these clauses, it will be a very useful measure in order to give the Trust power to raise the necessary income to meet expenses. If it is the opinion of the House, and I believe it is, we shall drop the clauses authorising the Harbour Trust to construct the dock, and the Government will take it in hand. Of course before a work of this magnitude can be taken in hand, there must be a thorough inquiry as to site and a thorough understanding as to the bridges, and there must be complete plans and specifications, which perhaps members are not so conversant with as I am myself, in order that we may know exactly what we are going to do and to what we are going to commit the country. It will take a considerable time to get that information.

MR. ANGWIN: I suppose you know that £30,000 of that £50,000 is already spent.

THE TREASURER: The hon. member will have an opportunity of giving to the House all that information with which his brain is overflowing. A work of this description will entail considerable time. It may be at least 12 months before we can get a start with the work, before we can decide on the specification and site, and as to what we are going to do with the bridges and river traffic. It may be that certain existing rights may be interfered with when the site is selected; and it is just probable or possible that we may have to obtain special information. It will take 12 months to get all the information, and it may possibly be desirable—the Minister controlling the department will probably tell the House that in his opinion it is desirable—that we should have further expert advice on the site before deciding on it. [MR. ANGWIN: More waste of money.] When we have all the information to place on the table so that members may see what the whole scheme is, then it will be found that £160,000 will at any rate carry on the work for something like 18 months or two years from the present date. There is not the slightest doubt about that. I do not care who is in power, whether it be the

hon. member for East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin), I defy him to get such a great work considered and under way before then.

MR. BOLTON: Then why promise it?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why not borrow enough to do the whole of the work?

THE TREASURER: I have said sufficient on this item of the "Fremantle Dock and Slip." I propose we shall carry out the work after it has been sanctioned by the House, and that we shall then borrow the necessary money to complete it from time to time as the work progresses. It is not necessary to provide for the total amount of the cost of a work of this description, more especially as at the present time we do not know what its cost will be.

MR. ANGWIN: You might provide a quarter of it.

*Coast Lighthouses.*

THE TREASURER: It is necessary that I should make a few remarks in connection with the item, "Lighthouses, £33,800." We are proposing these lighthouses which this £33,800 will provide, because it is understood, in fact it is very probable, that the Federal Government will shortly be taking over the lighting of the Australian coast. If that comes about, the lights we are so badly in need of for the protection of navigation on our North-West coast may be delayed for several years to come. Therefore the Government have determined to ask this House to give the necessary authority to raise money in order to establish four lighthouses. One will be at Cape Inscription, at the north end of Dirk Hartog Island; another will be at Point Cloates, some 90 miles south of North-West Cape; the third will be on Redout Island, a low-lying coral island on the track of the steamers from Port Hedland to Broome; and the fourth will be at Point Leveque, at the entrance to King Sound. These are all lights said to be badly needed by those who have been navigating our coast for the past 20 years. We propose to get these works in hand as quickly as possible, so that if the Federal Government take over the lighting of the Australian coast, at any rate we then shall have lighthouses established that are so desirable at the present juncture.

*Water Supply, Sewerage, Boring.*

With regard to the several items under "Water Supply and Sewerage," the amount set down in this Bill will complete the whole of the scheme for Perth, Fremantle, and suburbs, and it also covers a sum of money for the purpose of boring for artesian water in the North-West and Kimberley. I think members will support me when I say that this portion of our territory, including the Pilbarra Goldfield, to which I have briefly referred earlier in my remarks, has been to a great extent neglected, and that it is deserving of more attention than we have been able to give it during the past nine or ten years. When we consider the great increase in our flocks of sheep and herds of cattle in the North-West, and when we think of the near approach of the time when we shall have to export beef and mutton and to establish refrigerating works for that purpose in the North-West, and when we think of the great development which will eventuate providing we can raise sufficient funds to open up this country thoroughly by the provision of water, then I think we must come to one conclusion, that the money we may be able to provide for opening up that vast territory will be money well expended, and will result in direct benefit to the whole community.

*Goldfields Development, etc.*

Another item I will briefly mention is "Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, £138,100." This also I need not labour, because the Minister for Mines will be able to give the House full information when the item comes up. But I do think, with those hon. members who represent the mining constituencies of Western Australia, that we cannot be too generous in the expenditure of money, wisely and judiciously of course, in opening up further mineral centres and the development of that great industry to which Western Australia owes so much during the past 14 or 15 years. It has often been admitted in this House and on public platforms that the prosperity of Western Australia has been primarily due to the gold-mining industry. I do not think any member will refrain from agreeing with me that the gold-mining industry has not by any means seen its last days, that the industry is rather in

its inception, and that with care and persistence and the due expenditure of money, we have before us very many years of a prosperous future for this great industry which has done so much for us in the past.

*Agricultural Development.*

With regard to the "Development of Agriculture," this includes, as I said, the completion of the rabbit-proof fence; and I think the remarks I have just made in connection with the gold-mining industry may well be repeated in connection with the agricultural industry. For, much as we may commend the gold-mining industry, yet we must naturally look to our great agricultural industry to continue the permanent settlement and prosperity of Western Australia; and I think the money which we are now asking authority to raise in order to assist settlement on our lands will bring a tenfold return to this State, a return many times over the amount of money we now propose to expend.

*Roads and Bridges, Public Buildings, etc.*

With regard to "Roads and Bridges," this amount will just cover the expenditure of last year. The "Public Buildings" item of £175,000 is principally covered by an expenditure of £50,000 in connection with the Lunatic Asylum at Claremont, which is at present in a state of incompleteness. It is proposed that the £50,000 shall be expended in providing machinery, machinery block, farm-stead, laundry building, with mortuary and different kinds of wards required for chronic and acute patients, also a sick-and-infirm ward, and an isolation ward. It is also proposed—and these items can of course be more fully discussed when the Loan Estimates are before the House—that we should construct the Perth Art Gallery from this item. Members are aware that it was promised some three or four years ago that this work should be put in hand and pushed forward to completion, when the foundation-stone was laid by their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York, now Prince and Princess of Wales. It is also proposed to include in this item the completion of the Old Men's Dépôt, the extension of the Government Printing Office (which I

referred to during the debate on the general Estimates), the erection of abattoirs at Kalgoorlie, also several main schools, the details of which will be seen when the Loan Estimates come down.

*Prudence and good Courage.*

To return once more, in conclusion, to the question of raising a loan in the near future, let me repeat that it is not the intention of the Government to rush the money market, though we do want the authority of Parliament in order that we may be able to finance until the market is favourable, and then we may hope to raise sufficient money for the requirements of this country on terms at any rate as favourable as the last loan, if not more favourable. The last loan was for £1,400,000; it was floated, as I mentioned at the inception of my remarks, on the 8th June 1905; the rate of interest was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and the minimum price per bond £96 10s.; the flotation expenses amounted to £2 8s. 8d. per cent., so that the net proceeds of that loan available for expenditure were £94 1s. 4d.; accrued interest had accumulated in the meantime to £10,493, which reduced the net proceeds to £93 6s. 4d. per cent.; and the actual rate of interest on the whole loan, allowing for redemption at par on the date of maturity, 1st May 1935, is calculated to be £3 17s. 7d. per cent. Let me commend this measure to the House. I hope that hon. members, in discussing the Bill, not only in this second-reading debate but when in Committee, will bear in mind that the future of our State depends on a progressive policy of the kind which we have here outlined; depends not on begrudging facilities to one centre because another centre cannot have the same facilities provided at the same time, but depends on our having generous regard for the requirements of the different districts which in the opinion of the House will bring a direct return from those facilities when provided; that members will view these proposals apart from party feeling, apart from the question as to whether they affect any individual member or any section of members; that they will bear in mind only that the aim of this Government and the aim of Parliament ought to be, and is I am sure, to advance

the best interests of the State by the best means at our disposal. (General applause.)

On motion by Mr. BATH, debate adjourned (after arrangement as to date) until the next Thursday.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1906-7.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from the previous Thursday, Mr. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Hon. J. Price, Minister).

Vote—*Public Works and Buildings*, £228,931 :

ON WORKS GENERALLY.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In presenting the Estimates of the Department of Public Works to the House, I desire to make one or two observations of a more or less general character in connection with the various items which I now bring forward. It will be in the knowledge of members of this House that the Public Works Department is in the position of builders and contractors to the other departments of the State. In addition to that, the Minister controlling this department is called on to administer the Goldfields Water Supply, the Metropolitan Waterworks Board, and several other water schemes. From time to time we hear a cry from those seeking the suffrages of the people that there should be some attempt made to lessen the cost of administration. That cry is not peculiar to members on one side of this House—we all join in it; but I venture to say that when one gets into a position where information is ready to hand, sometimes one is not inclined to think that things are as bad as they are occasionally painted. Of this much I am certain, that all Ministers, from whichever side they may be drawn, are anxious and desirous to get the best value for the money expended, and that all Governments are sincere in their efforts to effect economies. Not only does that apply to Ministers controlling the several departments, but it also applies (in so far as the Works Department is concerned) to all the chief

officers in the department. From my experience in office during the last six months, I can say that on all hands I have found a sincere and earnest attempt to lessen the cost of administration.

MR. ANGWIN: You have been converted in the last six months.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is interesting in this connection to compare the cost of administration of the Public Works Department of this State with those of the East, and for that purpose I have got out a few figures which may prove interesting to the House. Unfortunately my investigations only went so far as expenditure in connection with revenue is concerned. In New South Wales I find that in 1903-4 the percentage of administrative cost to expenditure was 16.6; in 1904-5, 15.56; in 1905-6, 16.6. In Victoria, in 1903-4 it was 26.86; in 1904-5, 25.56. In Queensland, in 1903-4 it was 17.73; in 1904-5, 20.62; in 1905-6, 17.45. In our own State the cost of administration for the last four years has been as follows: In 1902-3, loan expenditure 4.9, revenue 8.10; in 1903-4, loan 5.96, revenue 6.10; in 1904-5, loan 6.62, revenue 9.06; in 1905-6, loan 9.46, revenue 9.59.

MR. DAGLISH: That is a big increase.

THE MINISTER: While these figures show that the administrative cost as compared with the expenditure is considerably less in percentage in this State than in some of the Eastern States, the figures also show that during the past four years there has been a steady and consistent increase. It will be my endeavour to, if possible, bring that figure down to its old dimensions; and in that respect I may say that certain economies have been effected in my department, to the credit for which I do not lay claim because many of them have been made on the advice of officers of the department, who are equally anxious with myself to cut down the administrative cost. I have every hope that the cost of administration on loan and revenue expenditure taken together for the current year will be at all events under 7 per cent. Since the end of the year 1906 several economies have been effected. For instance, the services of five officials have been dispensed with, the total salaries paid to those gentlemen amounting to

£975, and there have been no corresponding appointments. [MEMBER: What are the names of the officials referred to?] I have their names here, and I shall be very pleased to show them to the hon. member if he desires the information; but it is rather out of the way to make these things public. At all events, we effected by that means an economy of a sum of about £1,000 a year; and not only that, but previous to my appointment considerable savings had been effected by the reorganisation of the accountancy branch of the Public Works, amounting in all to some £1,100 a year. Again, we have been fortunate in making economies in the lessened cost for telephones and so on, making in all a large and substantial decrease of our administration cost. We have also in view farther proposals for reduction (or rather rearrangement would be a more accurate term to describe the operation) of the staff, which proposals we intend to go into next year. On the whole, I think I can see my way clear to bring down the administrative cost of the department to the figure which I have previously mentioned. But not only do we wish to bring down administrative cost. I am sure it will be the desire of all members of the House that the moneys which we spend shall be carefully spent. There are works existing—I do not wish to indulge in anything of a recriminatory nature, and I shall not mention by whom or when these works were undertaken—but there are works which all of us can call to mind, works constructed at all sorts of times, which are altogether of too extravagant a nature for the purpose for which they are intended. Again, there is another point which frequently leads to increased cost of work, and that is the alteration of contracts after they have been let. I am glad to say that last year my department let 145 contracts, 125 being State contracts and 20 Federal contracts, and that of this number it was found necessary to alter the work in only five cases. That, I think, is a state of affairs on which the House will congratulate itself, because, as all of us know, it is the custom of the ordinary contractor, whenever an extra comes along, to seize the opportunity to make increased profits for himself, that being simply human nature. It will be within the knowledge of all members

who have had anything to do with public contracts, that many contractors by careful arrangement of their schedules look to making their profits out of any extras which may eventuate. In so far as the Public Works Department was concerned last year, I think it will be agreed that the fact of having to alter only five contracts out of a total of 145 shows that careful consideration was evinced by those officials who had to deal with such works before they were put in hand. There is another point in connection with the Estimates now before the House, and that is that all salaries of whatever description have been placed on the Estimates. For some years past it has been the custom to charge up the salaries of all surveyors and draftsmen engaged in works of the metropolitan sewerage boards to the sewerage fund. This year those salaries are shown *in extenso* in the Estimates; and I think hon. members will agree with me that this is a very desirable practice, because it gives a true and accurate statement of all the officers employed by the department. I may say that the salaries are affected to this extent, that there is charged in salaries this year on the present Estimates £880 which last year would have been charged against the sewerage. Although it is not my intention just now to refer much to individual items, there is one item which shows a very striking increase, and on which therefore I think the House is entitled to have some information. I refer to the large increase in the temporary assistance vote, an increase of £3,524. I may explain that that increased vote is caused almost entirely by extra employment on the sewerage scheme now about to be carried out, and also on the extra work entailed in the way of preparation for agricultural railways in connection with the Loan Bill now before the House.

MR. H. BROWN: What about the Metropolitan Water Scheme?

THE MINISTER: I shall come to that, if the hon. member will only contain his soul in patience. Last year the Works Department votes were well taken up. There were 176 works contemplated in 1905-6, and the number left over on the 30th June 1906 was only 10. Since then, the number put in hand has been three; and the number contemplated for

1906-7 is 131. This figure 131, by the way, does not include, as does the first figure I mentioned, 176, re-votes or grants for roads. Now I have to refer to the decrease of £19,000 in the roads and bridges votes throughout the State, I think it will be gratifying to members of the House to learn the effect of the departmental action initiated by my predecessor, the present Treasurer, who suggested to the roads boards that it was desirable they should rate at all events up to three-fifths of the maximum, and stated that he would seriously consider their action in this respect when he came to make grants in aid. I think it will be gratifying to the House to know that my predecessor's action will probably result this year in an increase of £12,653 in the rate revenues of the roads boards on the rate revenues which they raised, over the last year of which we have a complete record, namely 1904-5. It will be seen, therefore, from these figures that despite the fact that the roads board vote has been decreased by £19,000, the roads boards have been induced to take a more serious view of their responsibility, and to help themselves to the extent of an increase of £12,000 in their rates. That is a very satisfactory state of affairs, and I think that in view of it we can safely say that the sphere of usefulness of these local authorities is not likely to be materially diminished owing to the action of the Government in reducing the vote. On the other hand, the Government by their action have succeeded in imbuing these people with a proper appreciation of the responsibilities which fall upon them. Of course this criticism does not apply to all road boards. There are many boards in this State which for years past have recognised their responsibility, and have rated in a reasonable and fair manner; but there are others—and the list is shown in the Public Works Report—which I think hon. members will agree with me have been lamentably deficient in recognising their responsibilities in this respect. There is distinct evidence that many of the boards which in the past have been transgressors are waking up, and I see before me, in the increased sense of responsibility which many of these boards are displaying, a much brighter future in so far as the useful-

ness of many of these local authorities is concerned. It must be remembered that there is a natural tendency to expend money which comes easily, more carelessly than money would be expended if the cash devoted to various works were more largely drawn from the pockets of ratepayers. May I be permitted to say a few words on the two considerable schemes which it is my business to administer—I refer to the Metropolitan Waterworks and the Goldfields Water Supply. In so far as the Metropolitan Waterworks Board is concerned there has been a gradual diminution in administrative cost. In 1903-4 it was 13·09 per cent., in 1905-6 it was 11·5 per cent.; and the estimate for this year, an estimate which I think fair and reasonable, is 11·2 per cent. Last year the Waterworks Board spent on capital account, mostly in the way of permanent reticulation and meters, a sum of £22,066. The estimated expenditure on capital account for this year amounts to some £55,000, and all this expenditure will work in with the Canning scheme, which the House authorised last session. In reference to that work I may say that it will be seriously approached during the coming recess. I am sure hon. members will recognise that while Parliament is sitting, what with preparation of Bills, satisfying the very legitimate inquiries of members, and the multiplicity of work which devolves on Ministers during the session, it would be unwise to try to take into serious and complete consideration the details of a big scheme such as this—the calls upon a Minister's time are too many. At all events, I can assure the House and the metropolitan area generally that this scheme has not been lost sight of, and that a commencement may be expected in the near future. [Mr. H. Brown: When you raise the next loan?] We need not now consider the question as to where the cash is to come from: it is not necessary to put the work in the Loan Bill. Certain hon. members by their interjections show that they lack appreciation of the financial provisions of the Bill passed last year. In so far as this year is concerned, 777 new boundary services have been laid, and 1,500 are contemplated for the coming year. There has been some doubt as to the ability

of the department to supply the requisite water for Perth during the coming summer; but certain additions have been made to the plant at one of the bores, and I think we can reasonably hope to meet all requirements. These additions, however, must be looked on as being only of a purely temporary nature, because in the near future it will be an absolute necessity to obtain some increased water supply for this district. For that reason alone I feel it my duty to take into earnest consideration, with a view to an early start, the Canning scheme which the House adopted last year. So far as the Goldfields Water Supply administration is concerned, I have a few figures which may be of interest. The revenue last year was £160,000, and the expenditure £44,500. [Mr. BATH: Is that to the 30th June 1906?] Yes. Reserves of £11,000 are not included. The pumping cost last year was 8½d. per thousand gallons, the maintenance cost 9d., distribution 3½d., and administration 1d. per thousand gallons. The revenue earned since the commencement of sales amounts to about half a million, and the bad debts total about £500, or £1 in £1,000. The percentage of administrative cost to income has been 1·53. The annual interest bill which was paid this year amounts to £96,000. The sinking fund bill amounts to £85,000, of which £7,000 was paid. In addition, certain sums were put aside with a view to accrued maintenance in connection with deterioration over and above what may naturally be expected. I am glad to assure this House, from a personal inspection of the pipe line, that so far as external corrosion is concerned the position is not a serious one. For some months past we have been opening up the line at various points, and in all I think there are not more than six miles of the pipe line affected. The points affected are where the line runs through low-lying country. Where the pipes have been exposed, the corrosion and rust have been cleaned off, and where perforation has actually taken place, repairs have been satisfactorily effected. This, while a serious matter because it means increased maintenance charges rather more than we expected when the scheme was initiated, still is a matter which can well be kept in hand. I

do not think that anything serious is likely to happen so far as external corrosion of the pipes is concerned. I am glad to say that agreements are almost completed with the Mines Trust and with the different local authorities for the supply of domestic water, and in making these agreements the first principle I have had in mind is to retain the present revenue and to offer alluring terms to take increased water. It is only by making use of the water, or shall I say waste of water, as common on the fields as it is in metropolitan area, that we can hope to make this scheme a success. If the price for excess water remained as it is, I think we could have but little hope that individuals on the fields would be inclined to use an increased quantity of water, but by decreasing the price for over a certain quantity I think we may have every reason to expect an increased consumption, so that while we maintain our present revenue with certainty, we may also expect by reason of the increased consumption to add something to our revenue. I should like to call attention to one remark which occurs in the report of the Commissioner for Railways so far as the scheme is concerned. He draws attention to the low price charged to some consumers for scheme water; and on the ground that the Railway Department is one of the biggest consumers, he argues that the Railway Department is entitled to a considerable reduction in price. I feared in fixing up this Mines Trust agreement that their argument would be the same as the argument of the Commissioner of Railways to get a reduction. It has been the aim of the department for many years to open up new avenues of consumption, and if by quoting a low price for such an industry as market gardening we can induce a consumption of water in that direction which has been practically nonexistent in the past—

MR. BATH: Do you mean market gardening as a commercial undertaking?

THE MINISTER: Yes; if we can create a demand for water in that direction it will be an addition to the revenue. I feared that the Mines Trust would be inclined to use it as an argument in asking for a reduction in their price; but unlike the Commissioner of Railways, they recognised the position when I

pointed it out to them, and they said that no matter what price we saw fit to charge for water for market gardening purposes, they saw that any revenue derived from such a source would increase the revenue of the scheme, and that we were justified in offering tempting quotations so far as the price of water is concerned in order to open up new avenues for consumption. I trust that when the Commissioner of Railways goes into this aspect of the question he will take a broad view of it as do the Mines Trust in Kalgoorlie. His position is very similar to theirs. If he were to compare his price with the price paid by those mines retaining absolute freedom as to what amount of water they use, it would be a fair comparison. He would then find that he in no way suffers by the price the Railway Department is charged.

MR. ANGWIN: You also wish to take away his traffic.

THE MINISTER: I would not mind the loss of traffic to the Railway Department if by this movement we could supply the population of the goldfields with a large supply of vegetables at a cheaper rate than is at present ruling up there. During the past year among the public works undertaken have been contracts for the extension of the jetty 300 feet and the mole 500 feet at Bunbury; also the dredging to 33 feet of the Banjo section in the harbour at Albany.

MR. DAGLISH: You are dealing with Loan Estimates.

THE MINISTER: I am dealing with the work of the department for the last year, which I think is a fair thing to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question is "Revenue Estimates," not Loan Estimates.

THE MINISTER: These are works carried out by the department last year. I thought I was in order in dealing with them.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is quite in order in referring to them, but not in discussing them.

THE MINISTER: Certain improvements to the Swan River were carried out, and a considerable amount of boring. A supply of artesian water of 140,000 gallons per day has been struck at Broome at a depth of 1,450 feet. I am sure that must be satisfactory news. It indicates that the Government in their policy of



boring for artesian water may have fair hope of success in other parts of the great North - West. A considerable amount of boring has been done in agricultural districts at sites located by the Engineer for Water Supply and the Surveyor General, along the Great Southern Railway and in other parts. During the year a total depth of 6,250 feet has been attained in the various bores, and encouraging results have been obtained all round. I have endeavoured in connection with these estimates to avoid specific items. I quite recognise that with many men there are many minds, and that what might strike me as a fair provision for a certain district might strike others as totally insufficient or altogether too large. There has been no wilful intention on my part to use these estimates for any political purpose. I can honestly assure members that I have endeavoured, as far as I could, to give a fair and reasonable deal where the most pressing requirements lay. If I have failed in that, it is not owing to an endeavour on my part to make the distribution of these moneys the medium for anything in the nature of a political bribe.

MR. BATH: Then you must have disappointed your electors in view of the pamphlets you issued at your election.

THE MINISTER: I hope members will recognise that it the position I have taken up. As I said just now, I fully expect to find differences of opinion, but I also expect that I can give cogent reasons for the various provisions made.

MR. HOLMAN: Can you give good reasons for those that have not been made?

THE MINISTER: I can. The most effective reason is that the money is not there to give to many works which it would have given me the greatest pleasure to have seen on these Estimates.

MR. HOLMAN: You have plenty here that are not necessary.

THE MINISTER: I cannot altogether agree with that view. If the hon. member, as I believe, will deal fairly with me in this matter and will wait until he has queried some of these items and heard my explanations, I think he will be satisfied that at all events fair consideration has been given to the various requirements of the various districts of the State.

I recognise that the country's interests are protected by reasonable inquiry into the financial proposals of the Government, and it shall be my duty and my pleasure to give hon. members the fullest information in reply to their legitimate inquiries.

[General discussion ensued on Works.]

MR. BATH: The Minister assured us of his intention to economise in the cost of the administration of the Public Works Department, and probably his intentions were honourable in that respect; but so far as the proposed expenditure on administration during the financial year ending the 30th June 1907 was concerned, the Minister's intentions were not evidenced by any practical results in the estimates themselves. In 1905-6 the expenditure was £49,135, and the contemplated expenditure this year was to be £54,131, showing an increase of £4,996, or practically £5,000 over the expenditure last year. From these figures must be deducted the amount provided on the Loan Estimates. A much larger sum was to be deducted for the administration of loan moneys this year than was actually deducted last year, £39,131 as against £28,279. Thus there was an apparent saving on the revenue vote for salaries of £5,856. While there was no evidence of any well-defined policy of loan expenditure as far as the last financial year was concerned, because to a large extent it was centred on public buildings, roads and bridges, and the rabbit-proof fences, he (Mr. Bath) did not think, even with the glowing statement of the Treasurer as to the Government's loan proposals for the next few years, there was likely to be more loan money expended during this financial year than was expended in the last financial year, because the Treasurer during the last financial year got through the very respectable total of something over £500,000.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. BATH (continuing): Although the expenditure on various undertakings from loan funds last year was of a somewhat doubtful nature in many respects, seeing that they could not by any stretch of imagination be characterised as repro-

ductive works, still the amount expended was a considerable sum, and he did not think the expenditure which would be involved this financial year was likely to be in excess of the amount expended last year. The expenditure last year from General Loan Fund was £392,196, and £145,362 from Loan Suspense Account, making a total expenditure of £537,558. Even if the greatest expedition were displayed in the passage of loan proposals and in putting through the necessary Bills, the time at the disposal of the Government would not permit them to expend any greater sum than was expended by the administration up to the 30th June last year. He failed to see, therefore, any justification for this attempt to show a saving in administration by transferring such a large sum, so much in excess of that which was transferred last year, to the Loan Estimates debit to the extent of £39,131, as compared with £28,279 last year. The actual facts showed that there was an increase in the Estimates of £5,000, and whilst the Minister might have good intentions in this respect the fact remained that this was a considerable increase in the cost of administration; and even if economies were effected by the Minister they would not be of such a nature as to bring the expenditure or the administrative expenditure below that of the previous year. There was another matter to which reference should be made, namely the considerable diminution shown on the estimate of expenditure from revenue in the Public Works Department. We found that increase of course in administrative cost too. The total sum which it was estimated would be expended during this financial year from revenue was only £228,931. The expenditure in 1904-5 from revenue on public works was £337,936, and although the estimate was much higher than the £309,985 of 1905-6, the actual expenditure was only £238,000, or just short of £100,000 less in 1905-6 than in 1904-5. Now we were to have a diminution even of that amount, because it was not probable that the Minister would expend the whole of that £228,000. The probability was that even if he had a higher expenditure on the estimates set down, the expenditure would not be more than about £200,000, showing an enormous diminu-

tion in the amount provided from our revenue for the carrying on of necessary public works. It was useless pointing out what we were doing in the shape of a vigorous works policy from loan moneys, when there was this startling diminution every year in the amount provided upon the Works estimates, because we must recollect that this money when expended, if administered wisely in the development of our agricultural, mineral, and pastoral resources, had a great effect in stimulating those industries, in increasing population, and in the general welfare of the community. When we were able to bear the expenditure from revenue, we had not to provide the repayment of that money later on with the interest, which amounted at the maturity of the loan to a great deal more than the original principal. He would like to see that spirit of economy preached about by the Ministers, but so far not practised, really brought into operation, so that we should have this greater sum from revenue available for expenditure for public works, and so that we should not have to practically place the country in pawn to the extent we were doing in order to provide these works out of loan. It might be excusable and even justifiable where these works would pay interest and sinking fund; but when the money was expended as was proposed on such matters as public buildings, roads and bridges, and other works not likely to be reproductive in the next five to 20 years, we had reason to question the wisdom of this attitude and to ask whether we should not attempt to return to the old days when we provided such a large sum on our Revenue Estimates for the public works. He also desired to refer to the diminution in the amount provided from revenue for roads and bridges throughout the State. The Minister had pointed out that by a provision of his predecessor the present Treasurer, a number of roads boards throughout the State were warned that unless they made provision for raising greater sums by the means of taxation at their disposal in the local governing Acts, they could not anticipate that assistance from the Government which they had hitherto enjoyed. That was a perfectly legitimate system to adopt, and the Minister was to be commended for it.

There should in the administration of this vote be some attention paid to the question whether the roads boards were availing themselves of this means of taxation in order that they might be self-dependent and self-reliant. The fact remained, however, that whilst it was necessary to do this, that necessity did not show the justification for the reduction of this vote, because if there was to be that increase in the agricultural settlement which we hoped for, there would be greater demands than there ever had been on the exchequer for the construction of roads for the opening up of outlying areas where settlement was sparse, which the local governing bodies had no opportunity to meet unless they received assistance from the exchequer of the State. In those outlying districts where an increase in settlement was making the construction of roads and various other conveniences necessary, there should be provision for a larger amount than was expended last year; but instead of that we found a diminution in the votes to the extent of £19,001. The reduction of this item would seriously hamper the development of our outlying districts, not only on the goldfields but in our agricultural and pastoral areas. In regard to the administration of the metropolitan and goldfields water schemes, the State, or those communities which benefited by those schemes, had reason to congratulate themselves upon the transfer of those concerns to the Works Department for administration. As to the metropolitan district the people had received much better treatment and the scheme had worked out to greater advantage than it did under the control of the old board. In regard to the goldfields water scheme, he hoped the Minister would not carry out his intention outlined on the goldfields to increase the minimum rate which would be exacted from the householders in that area, because that would press hardly upon a great number of people, in fact upon a majority of those who were taking advantage of the goldfields water scheme. The Minister had uttered some complimentary words in respect to the way in which the Mines Trust on the East Coolgardie field had met him in relation to fixing the rates and prices for the ensuing term. The fact remained that they had been

getting water at a price considerably under the cost to the department at the stand-pipe or meter. Commercial concerns reaping large profits from the working of mines might fairly be asked to pay a price at all events approaching cost. He had hoped the Minister's mind would be disabused of the idea that the scheme would ever enable market-gardening to be carried on in goldfields districts on a commercial scale. Market gardening was found impracticable, even in connection with the irrigation schemes of Victoria and South Australia, which supplied at 6d. per thousand gallons; it was impossible even in connection with American irrigation schemes, which charged something like 3d. per thousand gallons, because competition with others working under natural conditions of water supply had in all these cases proved impossible. Certain people connected with the Coolgardie Water Scheme had indulged in poetic fancies as to "making the desert blossom as the rose"; but the "rose" could blossom there to only a very limited extent. Undoubtedly the scheme had made the conditions of life on the goldfields more bearable, and to that extent was an unquestionable blessing; but the market-gardening idea must be dismissed entirely. The Minister had stated that in framing the Estimates his aim had been to give a fair show to the whole of the electors throughout the State, and that he had not in any way sought to make the administration of the Works Department or the distribution of the Roads and Bridges Vote an aid to political advancement. If the Minister had adopted the same policy when seeking the suffrages of the Fremantle electors, it would have been much more to his credit. The hon. gentleman had abused his position as Minister for Works by holding out his Ministerial office as an inducement towards his return.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said his opponent claimed at first that he could do more as a private member than could himself as a Minister.

MR. BATH: That the Minister's opponent had made such a statement he could not agree.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The statement was on record in the newspapers.

**MR. BATH :** The Minister's opponent based his claim for support on the assiduity he had shown as a private member in advancing the interests of his constituents. The Minister's opponent had never appealed to the Fremantle electors to ask themselves whether the interests of the town could best be served by the Minister in charge of the Works Department or by a private member of a weak Opposition. The hon. gentleman had not administered his department in such a way as to justify his appeal to the electors—to put it plainly, the hon. gentleman had not administered his department with a view of aggrandising himself in the minds of the electors of Fremantle through the expenditure of large sums of money in that electorate; in fact, the Minister had deceived his supporters in that respect. Perhaps the hon. gentleman would now agree that it would have been infinitely better had he taken up his present attitude when appealing for the support of Fremantle. The Minister's appeal had been of such a nature as to place a low estimate on the integrity of the Fremantle electors.

**MR. HOLMAN :** The opinion that the back country had not received fair treatment had been expressed by him while the Minister was speaking, and he wished now to emphasise that opinion. If a line were drawn eastward from Perth through the State it would be found that the whole of the country north of that line had been almost entirely neglected. The Ministry was supported by the South-Western portion of the State, and almost the whole of the Roads and Bridges Vote had gone in that direction. He did not, perhaps, know the South-Western districts as well as he knew the goldfields districts; but he thought it was impossible to pick out any one part of the State as deserving of almost the whole of the financial aid at the disposal of the Government. The district which the present Treasurer and former Minister for Works represented had been granted seven or eight thousand pounds last year and this year was to be granted £3,000. On the other hand, the back country districts could not obtain any assistance for the maintenance of roads or the sinking of wells. One matter on which he desired explanation was why so many public works of the

character which had formerly been constructed from revenue were now being constructed out of loan. Year after year the revenue vote for public works was decreasing, and the loan vote for public works increasing. This statement applied to the Mines and Lands as well as to the Works Department. Plainly, the object of this was merely to bolster up the revenue and show a good financial position to the people of the State, who were, however, being entirely misled. In the past, even railways had been constructed out of revenue; but at present roads were being maintained out of loan. Such a policy would eventually prove ruinous to the country. He took strong exception to the reduction of the vote for roads and bridges throughout the State. The policy of leaving road boards to raise revenue themselves would no doubt be productive of much good; but in the back country, where the nearest settlers might be over 100 miles apart, to raise revenue was impossible. In his district there were roads ranging to fully 120 miles in length, without a single resident on any part of them; and how the local road boards were to raise revenue was beyond comprehension. The functions of the Kalgoorlie roads board, which had a well consolidated district, should be discharged by the local municipality. Last year, that roads board received about £5,200 from revenue, and levied no rate.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS :** The board had not sent in a return.

**MR. HOLMAN :** The Kalgoorlie roads board received an ordinary grant of £1,850 and special grants totalling £3,300.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS :** That roads board had raised a rate, but did not send in a return.

**MR. HOLMAN :** In that case the return presented by the Minister to Parliament was misleading. The Minister had stated that various roads boards had raised no revenue; but the fact might be that, like the Kalgoorlie roads board, they had sent in no return. Therefore the return presented by the Minister was worthless, and no farther attention should be paid to it. Settled centres like Kalgoorlie had vastly greater opportunities of raising revenue than had sparsely settled back-country districts.

The Estimates made provision for the maintenance of roads between Perth and Fremantle, and on those items he intended to get all possible information from the Minister. It was notable throughout the Estimates that certain parts of the State had been generously treated while others had been entirely neglected. The moneys of the State should be spent to the advantage of the whole State, and not for any other advantage whatever. The Minister had stated that he had placed nothing on the Estimates for the purpose of securing political support; but several members on the Opposition side of the House, after careful investigation of the Estimates, could arrive at no other conclusion than that those districts which returned supporters of the Government had been granted full attention to their requests, while those districts which had returned Opposition members had received no consideration. Applications which would have resulted in the opening up of country had been refused. Of course it was impossible to get explanation concerning items which ought to have appeared but did not appear on the Estimates; otherwise he would have inquired why not a single one of his applications had been granted. The treatment he had received was especially unfair in view of the fact that scores of applications by individual Ministerial members had been granted. He endorsed the statement of the Leader of the Opposition as to the roads boards grants, and as to the construction of certain works from loan instead of revenue. Would the Minister explain why the administrative expenditure had not decreased in proportion to the decreased vote for works? The administrative expenditure from loan had decreased by a large sum, showing that loan account paid the greater portion of such expenditure. All remembered the outcry when the Labour Government decided to construct a portion of the rabbit-proof fence from loan. This had to be done to expedite the work, which had been neglected by the previous Government. Yet the present Government, then in opposition, made no protest now, nor did the Press, against constructing out of loan the bulk of new public works.

MR. EWING took exception to the remarks of the preceding speaker. Though the cutting down of roads boards grants was regrettable, all who fairly considered the Estimates must admit the Minister had acted impartially. In the matter of new works every district had been treated alike. Many of the grants for the Sussex district represented re-votes. Members always fought shy of the crux of the question of building public works from loan, though they knew well there was no hope at this time of paying for many works out of revenue. The revenue had seriously decreased, and until we found the new revenue for which we were seeking we must either stop all public works or construct necessary works out of loan. When we had a land tax and perhaps an income tax we could repay loan account for any sum spent on nonproductive works. Next year the Minister should provide a much larger sum for grants to roads boards. None could deny the excellent work done without remuneration by roads board members; and unless the boards were fairly treated they could not carry on. To settle our agricultural lands, many miles of roads must be made.

MR. SCADDAN: Why not protest practically against the reductions?

MR. EWING was protesting, and demanding an increase next session. The Leader of the Opposition thought it impossible to carry on market gardening on the goldfields; but even if water cost 2s. 6d. or 3s. per thousand, such gardens should be commercially successful, and doubtless the Minister had in mind the need for reducing the price as consumption increased.

MR. BREBBER recognised the necessity for economising in the Estimates; but the economies in roads votes were most unsatisfactory. Money was spent on outlying roads which were not main tracks to anywhere, instead of main roads being provided to open up the country. The West Guildford and Bayswater main road was impassable, the whole of the traffic from North Perth having to cross the river to get to Guildford and Midland Junction. That road was as badly needed as any railway.

THE MINISTER: Negotiations were now in progress. The department were endeavouring to make the Bassenden Estate pay a portion of the cost of making the road.

MR. DAGLISH congratulated the Minister on his speech. It was a different speech from some the Minister had made during the session, being mild, moderate, temperate and reasonable. The Public Works Estimates were a sample of the economy of the Government. There were increases in departmental expenditure for red-tape, sealing-wax and parchment, but there was to be an enormous diminution, so-called economy on a department's expenditure, though that expenditure was perhaps of all expenditure the most vital for the development of the State. Similarly in the Mines Department there was economy in expenditure on developmental work. This was false economy. Economy should be shown in the sealing-wax and red-tape departments and not in those departments which undeniably ministered to the needs of the State. A Government which came in not only with a bald but also a bold public works policy, should show something more to justify their policy than a reduction in public works expenditure to, he believed, the lowest estimates for the past 10 years. The Minister was almost forced to be moderate, civil, and reasonable in introducing such estimates as these. While not wishing to detract from the merits of the Minister's performance, it was almost impossible for the Minister to take up any other attitude than the one assumed. It was almost impossible to discuss the bold public works policy of the Government with these Works Estimates confronting us. It was in fact impossible to know what the public works policy of the Government was until we saw the Loan Estimates. When speaking generally on the Budget, he (Mr. Daglish) had pointed out this fact and hoped that before the Public Works Estimates were submitted members should have in their possession the Loan Estimates, so that they could understand precisely what the Government intended to do in the future; but the Loan Estimates were being kept back. Only to-day complaint was made of the way

time was flying and of the need for the Assembly to close its business at the very earliest date. That argument would be urged more forcibly when the Loan Estimates were introduced. We would be told then that there was no time to adequately discuss them if we intended to close the session at the time it should be closed, and that we should allow the Government to get into recess to attend to the administration which had been so neglected during the past 12 months. No doubt the task of Ministers was a heavy one, and it was necessary for them to have freedom from attendance at the House in order that the task might be adequately discharged; but first of all members were entitled to have presented to them and to discuss the financial proposals the Government intended to apply when enforcing their administration. So far members had not had an opportunity of knowing what those financial proposals were, unless perhaps some member was in possession of a privilege copy or two. The Committee should have been in possession of the Loan Estimates, a branch of the Works Estimates he would call them, before being called upon to discuss the Budget, or at all events to discuss the Works Estimates. No financial proposal of the Government could be properly presented to Parliament or be considered by Parliament until the Loan Estimates were before members. Especially was that the case when the Government were making roads and building schools, police courts, gaols, and all sorts of buildings, and doing all sorts of public works of a non-productive character from loan funds. It was impossible to know what was to be done or left undone unless members had the Loan Estimates in their possession. Although he (Mr. Daglish) would be the last to do anything in the nature of stonewalling, he would insist on having full opportunity to discuss the Loan Estimates when they came forward. He did not care whether they came forward on Christmas Eve or not, he would insist on his full right in the interests of the State to adequately discuss and thoroughly dissect any of the proposals embodied in the Loan Estimates. In their absence it was useless to enter into a discussion in regard to the present public works proposals, but he urged the Minister to push immediately beyond

the talking stage the work of providing a better water supply for Perth and suburbs. At present in Subiaco the citizens were getting a worse quality of water than they had received for years past. The bore water at Subiaco in the past had been good, but the water the residents of Subiaco were getting now was absolutely distasteful. It might be healthy enough, but the Minister should see if something could not be done at once to give a better-tasting water. He urged the Government not to take any risk in regard to the possibility of there being a water famine in Perth. In spite of the Minister's assurance, he was quite satisfied from studying the figures that there was every need of pushing on the work intended to supplement the present supply for the metropolitan area. Although it might be supplemented by two or three additional bores, the supply was not sufficient to meet the reasonable demands of the people in view of the large number of extensions made during the last 12 months, and the Minister would be faced before the summer was over with a greater problem for supplying water for the metropolitan area than he realised at the present moment. The system of requiring people generally to obtain their supply through meters was not a good plan, nor was it necessary so far as he could judge. Supposing there was an adequate supply, the public should be encouraged to use as much water as possible, not only for domestic purposes but for gardening purposes, and especially in a climate and with soil such as Western Australia had. Looking at a few houses surrounded by the bare sand, with every particle of vegetation dead through the summer months, one regarded an eyesore and a breeding ground for flies, now recognised as carriers in many instances of disease, and principally diseases of the eyes. On the other hand, if one contemplated a cottage embellished by a garden or even a grass-plot which could only be maintained by a plentiful supply of water, the prospect was so improved by the expenditure of the water and a little labour that the supply of water by the State was well paid for by the results obtained; and probably no cottage would be without its garden if the consumers were encouraged instead of debarred from

using water freely. In some instances people were almost afraid to take a bath for fear that they would be required to have a meter put to the house if the water was seen running from the bathroom. The requirements of the department were too strict altogether, and he believed it would in the long run pay the department, assuming water was available, and the Minister assured members there was no danger of a water famine. There was no greater expense if the water were available, in supplying the individual with two thousand gallons of water per month than one thousand gallons of water per month. Assuming the sources of supply were ample, and we were assured they were, the department got no great advantage by supplying meters for meter rent, except the rent were absolutely extortionate. If this was so and a person was compelled to take a water meter and pay the extortionate rent, in order that the earnings of the department might be unduly increased—

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What did the member mean by extortionate?

MR. DAGLISH: What he had said was that there was no advantage, so far as revenue was concerned, to the Works Department or the Metropolitan Waterworks Board in compelling people to take meters and charge a rent, except indeed the rent was extortionate, and then the advantage was an unfair one to the consumer. He recognised the answer the Minister might make to that argument. He might point out the saving in the water supply, that the reduction of water required would be so great that this in itself would justify the step taken. But if the water was available and there was no danger, as the Minister assured members, of the supply being found insufficient, there was no advantage in conserving the water supply. There would be no disadvantage to the department whatsoever. If the supply was available, it was in the interests of the health of the community to encourage as far as possible the utilisation of water for garden purposes. The Government should endeavour to encourage the utilisation of water for garden-plots by people rather than discourage, and in some instances absolutely debar them from making gardens. He did not desire

to unduly labour that point, but he urged that it was worthy the consideration of the Minister. He hoped the whole question of the regulations of the Metropolitan Waterworks Board would be considered by the Minister during recess, and try to relax the regulations in some direction to encourage the consumption of water for garden purposes, and with a view farther to make the regulations less harassing than they were in many cases to consumers at present. There were a few items on the Estimates on which he intended to ask for information, and he would do so not in any carping spirit, but with a desire solely to obtain information, and possibly in one or two instances to supply some information to the Minister of which he might not be seized.

MR. ANGWIN: It must have been rather galling to the Minister for Works when he found that in the year 1905-6 the cost of the administration of the department exceeded the cost for the year 1904-5, more especially as we had been repeatedly told that those who were administering the Works Department during the year 1904-5 were not competent to administer the department in an efficient manner. When we realised that during last year this department had been in such capable hands, the least one might have expected was a decrease in the cost of administration. The Minister had said that during the year he had reduced the expenses by a reduction in the number of high officials. It would be information to the Committee if the Minister would tell members whether these offices were not vacated before he took charge of the department and whether some of these officers were not on leave.

THE MINISTER: What he had said was that the officers had left since the 30th June last.

MR. ANGWIN: They might have left, but were the officers on leave since that date, and the offices abolished? It was known to members that it was necessary to dispense with certain officers of the Works Department to reduce the cost of administration, and remove some persons who were not fully employed; but it was shown that these officers were entitled to long leave, and consequently the Minister was taking credit for actions

which had been carried out by those who preceded him.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS had specifically said that he took no credit for that.

MR. ANGWIN: There were a number of items on which increases were shown in administration. While the Minister still gave to certain officers privileges which they were justly entitled to, he had taken away privileges from men who were earning only a few shillings a day, and who had been in the department for a number of years. It was right that the Minister should see that these men who had spent years of good service should retain the positions they were justly entitled to. There was one other matter on which he desired the assurance of the Minister; that the action of the electors of East Fremantle a few days ago would not debar the construction of the sewerage scheme for Fremantle. The Minister might give an assurance on that point.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Did the member expect him to answer an offensive question like that? It was exactly what one might expect from the member.

MR. ANGWIN: A few days ago it was stated in his electorate that if he should be returned to represent the district there was a possibility of this work not being gone on with; consequently he was entitled to ask for an assurance on that point.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Who stated that?

MR. ANGWIN: The Minister did not; but seeing that such a statement was made at such a time, he was entitled to ask for an assurance that no difference would be made as far as that work was concerned. A meeting was held in the Caledonian Hall—he (Mr. Angwin) did not hear the statement made—and an inducement was held out to electors to exercise their votes in a certain direction. From what the Minister had said to-night, there was no intention to carry out that threat, because the Minister had said he would do justice to every district.

MR. EWING: What meeting at the Caledonian Hall was that, for he (Mr. Ewing) was present at one meeting?

MR. ANGWIN: The hon. member was present at the meeting.



MR. EWING: Then the statement was not true.

MR. ANGWIN: The Minister had done some justice as far as this district was concerned, for on looking through the Estimates he saw a number of roads down for maintenance votes. But the Minister had neglected to place on the Estimates the road from Canning to Perth, which showed that that district was in need of representation, and was neglected because there was no representation at the time. If the Minister intended to bring down Supplementary Estimates, he hoped this work would be included.

MR. EWING (in explanation) absolutely denied the statement the member made in regard to the alleged statement at the meeting at which he was present in the Caledonian Hall. The member had stated that certain things were said which were highly improper. Being present at the meeting from start to finish, he assured members that not a word was uttered to which exception could be taken. It was highly improper for a member to come to the House and make such a statement as the member had made to-night.

MR. ANGWIN accepted the member's explanation. The statement was made to him in all good faith, and seeing that such things had happened in the past and within the last few days, he took the statement to be correct.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply on the general discussion): There seemed to have been in the course of the discussion a good deal said as to the amount spent last year as compared with the amount spent during the year 1904-5. Those members who would use this criticism to the disadvantage of the Government very carefully refrained from giving what was the obvious explanation of the reduction of the Public Works Vote this year as compared with the one referred to. The Education Vote for this year amounted to £22,644 more than for the year 1904-5. The fixed Charges on Loan this year against the year 1904-5 amounted to £99,645 more, and he believed the Revenue Received during 1904-5 exceeded the estimate for the present year by £23,127. There were other votes, such as the Hospital Vote and the Medical Vote

which were increased by small amounts, such as £2,000 or £3,000 in some cases. But the three items just enumerated accounted for £144,806 difference as compared with the financial position this year, and these items alone were quite sufficient to account for a diminution of the Works Vote by £118,906. He agreed with the member for Brown Hill and others as to the undesirability of a reduction in the Roads-Board Vote, and regretted that absolute necessity forced us into such a position as to have to make such a reduction. It caused him considerable pain to have to make that reduction, and he trusted that it was but temporary, and that next year we might be able to get back to the former figures, but we had to cut our coat according to our cloth, and whilst one might desire to retain the proportions of last year the financial necessities at the moment left us no other alternative than this reduction. He recently had an opportunity of going through the country, and one could not but be struck by the fact that in every direction these roads boards were doing exceptionally good work. There were some boards capable of improvement, but taking the boards as a whole the country owed a great deal to the self-denying labours of those who travelled long distances and put in a great deal of time for the service of their fellows without any fee or reward. The member for Subiaco referred to water meters. Apparently the hon. member thought a water meter a contrivance for considerably increasing the revenue of a water company or board. But the idea of fixing these water meters was not to collect revenue, but to charge for the water in such fashion that each ratepayer should pay in proportion to the water he used.

MR. DAGLISH: Then the hon. gentleman should abolish the rating system altogether.

THE MINISTER: In addition to the rate there was a charge in connection with a water company which had some relation to a tax; but beyond that there was the rate, because it would be manifestly unfair that the owner of an unoccupied block, for instance, which participated in all municipal improvements and so on should not bear some share of the cost upon the community. We hoped by fixing meters to account for the differ-

ence of consumption between the amount recorded by the ratepayers last year and the amount which went through our mains. This difference reached, he thought, some two hundred million gallons in the course of the year. The Government did not propose to fix water meters unless they had fair reason to believe that some excess consumption was going on, and presumably it was not the policy of the board in a small house where there was apparently no garden, and no horse was kept or anything of that sort, to run the consumer into the expense of taking a meter. He trusted that explanation would be satisfactory to the hon. member.

MR. BATH: What did the meter cost?

THE MINISTER: For the ordinary consumer about £4 10s. The inferential meter was gradually being changed throughout the metropolis. The cost of the positive type of meter was £4 10s., and he believed that there was a charge of some 10s. a year for its use—a charge which did not yield any profit of any description to the department.

MR. DAGLISH: What was the life of the meter?

THE MINISTER: The life of a positive meter was estimated at about 20 years. The member for North Perth referred to a main road which wanted completing between West Guildford and Bayswater. He regretted the hon. member did not mention the matter to him at any time during the past month. Some four or five weeks ago he (the Minister) took the opportunity of going along that road to see its condition, and a considerable portion of the road, which was at present unmade, ran through a private estate, and if that road were made by the Government the owners of that private estate would very materially benefit. Under those circumstances he thought it a fair thing that some contribution should come from the owners of that estate towards making the road. He had put the matter to them and they were willing to meet him.

MR. HOLMAN: The hon gentleman should carry out that policy with the railways as well.

THE MINISTER: The policy he was putting before members was with regard to roads. It was a fair thing that those whose capital values were largely increased

by different improvements should pay some share of the cost.

MR. SCADDAN: That estate had been disposed of.

THE MINISTER: No; there was any amount of it left unsold. The owners were communicating with the West Guildford roads board with a view of fixing up a general contribution towards this road, and in the event of a reasonable offer being made the Government would be prepared to come forward and treat with them. He intended to see that the burden of the cost of construction of that particular road was put on the right shoulders.

MR. BOLTON: What about maintenance?

THE MINISTER: When we came to the main roads vote there would be an opportunity of discussing that question. He knew several members on the Opposition side of the House were opposed to proposals of the Government in that connection. He trusted that when we came down to the vote he would be able to deal with the criticism. The member for Subiaco was somewhat unfair in his criticism as to the length of time the Government had been in bringing down their road proposals. The hon. member forgot that this Government had been in office but a bare six months. [Indications of dissent by Opposition members.] The Moore Government had been in office for a bare six months. [MEMBER: That was a quibble.] All the information with regard to these loan proposals had had to be put together during six months.

MR. DAGLISH was talking of the Loan Estimates.

THE MINISTER: Reference was made by the member for Brown Hill as to the possibility of using scheme water in gold-fields districts for market gardening for commercial purposes. In one or two places market gardens were being run and water was being used for growing vegetables for sale, and we were informed by those who ought to know—he admitted he was somewhat sceptical that this trade would ever attain big dimensions—that there was a prospect of developing trade in this direction. He felt that under those circumstances it was a fair thing to make an experiment, and this year we were offering particularly low prices of water for market gardening.

MR. BATH did not object to the reduction of prices for that purpose, but only thought the project impossible.

THE MINISTER: Information had been asked as to the construction of so many public works out of loan funds instead of revenue. Personally he thought that wherever possible a public work, unless of a directly reproductive nature, should be constructed out of revenue; but we were faced with the position that if we were to adhere rigidly to that principle, works which in places were of an indirectly reproductive nature, such as some schools and for instance the asylum for the insane at Claremont, also the rabbit-proof fence, would have to go undone. That being so we were justified in making provision from our loan expenditure for this type of work, and he believed the Committee would agree that under the necessities of the case the Government were justified in the course taken. He thanked members for the wholly friendly criticism they had given to the Estimates, and, as he had already said, when he came to the different items he would be only too pleased if he could give them information which they might think necessary.

[Items discussed in detail.]

*Subdivision 1—Salaries £17,070 :*

Item (General)—Clerks, £9,092 :

MR. HOLMAN: There was a reduction on this item. Had reductions been made in the case of some clerks and an increase given to those who had received lower salaries?

THE MINISTER: The reduction was the result of the Public Service Commissioner's classification.

Item—Road board auditors, £509 :

MR. HOLMAN was of opinion that the auditors were doing good work, but he would like to have that borne out by the department. He would like to know for what special reasons these officials were being paid from the roads and bridges vote.

THE MINISTER: It was not thought right that these officers' salaries should be paid from the salaries vote. He had received valuable information from the

officers with respect to the work of the roads boards whose accounts they audited. Many slight irregularities had been unearthed and improvements in administration of various roads boards had been effected as a result of their reports, and generally he looked upon them as some of the most valuable officers connected with the department in assisting the Minister or the permanent head to bring some recalcitrant and transgressing roads boards to a proper sense of their duty.

Item—Road board searcher at £275 (6 months) £266, (6 months) £271 :

MR. BATH: Had the Works Department authorities decided to pay this officer themselves?

THE MINISTER: It had been proposed to charge the salary to the road board, and he had only that day sent a recommendation that the officer be placed under the Mines Department.

Item—Assistant to Engineer-in-Chief, £500 :

MR. WALKER: Was the officer here referred to one of the gentlemen engaged in Sydney, or was he previously in the Service, or had he been selected from outside?

THE MINISTER: It was merely a case of change of title, the officer being described this year as assistant to the Engineer-in-Chief. Reference to Item 18 would show a reduction of £500.

MR. SCADDAN: Was this alteration of title a stepping-stone to a rise of salary next year?

THE MINISTER: No. The change merely secured a more correct description of the position.

MR. BATH: Under which item were officers imported from the Eastern States included?

THE MINISTER: Under temporary assistance, he believed.

Item — Superintendent Rabbit-proof Fence, £500 :

MR. HOLMAN: Had anything been done towards securing white workers in place of Afghans on the rabbit-proof fence? White men were just as good with camels as Afghans, and in view of the large number of unemployed it was a disgrace that the Works Department should employ aliens.

**THE MINISTER :** As stated in reply to a previous inquiry by the hon. member on this subject, any white man prepared to take contract work at a price which returned to other white men a fair remuneration was given employment. In view of the large distances involved in carting material as the rabbit-proof fence approached completion, it had been difficult to obtain sufficient carters. Wherever possible, white men got the preference over aliens. Camel driving could hardly be put on the same footing as ordinary labour. One particular Afghan had been retained because peculiarly well qualified to repair saddles.

**MR. HOLMAN :** White workers were just as good as any Afghans available, and the officers of the department who advised the Minister on the matter were thoroughly well aware of the fact.

**THE MINISTER :** If the hon. member would see him privately on the subject, it could be gone into.

**MR. HOLMAN :** The terms of employment on the rabbit-proof fence had been very unsatisfactory for white men. However, he would go into the matter with the Minister.

Item — Superintendent Fremantle Water Supply, £360 :

**MR. HOLMAN :** Was this officer also in charge of the Claremont Water Supply?

**THE MINISTER :** No; that was under another department.

**MR. ANGWIN :** Was any saving being effected in this connection?

**THE MINISTER :** No; but occasionally, owing to friction which it was not desirable to particularise in public, it was advisable to remove an officer. The alteration had been recommended by the engineer controlling the water supply of this State.

**MR. ANGWIN :** Had not the friction arisen because the superintendent made a recommendation which would have resulted in a saving of £1,000 a year to the department in connection with the Claremont Water Supply, and had not the officer been reprimanded for making the recommendation?

**THE MINISTER :** No injustice had been done to the officer, whose salary had not been reduced. Possibly the department could do without an officer of this gentleman's status in connection with

either the Fremantle or Claremont Water Supply. Matters were running smoothly now, and possibly the department might find the officer some work of a more responsible nature.

Item — Officer in charge of Stock Route, £47 :

**MR. HOLMAN :** On what stock route was this officer employed? Stock routes were understood to be under the control of the Mines Department.

**THE MINISTER :** The Engineer-in-Chief controlled the expenditure of this item, but the Mines Department did the work. The officer was employed on the Wiluna to Hall's Creek stock route.

Item — Works Manager, £350 :

**MR. ANGWIN** asked for explanation.

**THE MINISTER :** This officer was in charge of the Fremantle Harbour Workshops and of a large portion of the river improvement works.

**MR. ANGWIN :** Was any other salary attached to the office? Did the officer receive also a fee from the Harbour Trust?

**THE MINISTER :** No. This was the salary paid by the department to the officer.

**MR. SCADDAN :** Members could not follow these items without the Blue Book.

**MR. ANGWIN :** Had the Minister given this officer permission to accept employment outside the department, on the tramway works?

**THE MINISTER :** Permission had been granted the officer to accept employment in connection with the Tramway Board, the circumstances being practically identical with those under which permission had been granted previously.

**MR. DAGLISH :** The original permission was given subject to the distinct stipulation that the officer, having been elected without obtaining permission to stand, should not seek re-election. Therefore, if there had been no change in circumstances, that stipulation ought to be enforced.

**THE MINISTER :** The officer's superior had stated that the professional duties of the officer would not suffer by reason of his being a member of the Tramway Board. The officer was painstaking and energetic, and worked considerable overtime. Therefore, it would not have been justifiable to stop him from putting up

for re-election. The officer's services had been of considerable benefit to Fremantle in the past.

**MR. ANGWIN:** The question was asked because of the circumstances under which the officer had been allowed to take his seat on the board originally. As a member of the board, the officer received a fee of £150 per annum.

**MR. SCADDAN:** The system of permitting public servants who were already receiving or ought to be receiving fair salaries, and who ought to have neither time nor opportunity for anything but their departmental duties, must be protested against. He moved that the item be reduced by £150, this being the amount which the officer received as a member of the Tramway Board.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	6
Noes	...	...	...	24
Majority against				18

## AYES.

Mr. Bolton  
Mr. Collier  
Mr. Holman  
Mr. Stuart  
Mr. Walker  
Mr. Scaddan (Teller).

## NOES.

Mr. Angwin  
Mr. Barnett  
Mr. Bath  
Mr. Brebber  
Mr. Daglish  
Mr. Davies  
Mr. Eddy  
Mr. Ewing  
Mr. Gordon  
Mr. Gregory  
Mr. Hardwick  
Mr. Hudson  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. Male  
Mr. Mitchell  
Mr. Monger  
Mr. S. F. Moore  
Mr. Price  
Mr. Stone  
Mr. Underwood  
Mr. Veryard  
Mr. F. Wilson  
Mr. Layman (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

**MR. DAGLISH:** Either members of the Fremantle Tramway Trust were much overpaid, or it was impossible for a public servant to earn £150 by acting on that trust without neglecting some of his public duties. Someone said the trust met only once a week. Fremantle people must be well off if they could afford to pay £150 for such services.

**MR. BOLTON:** There were day meetings also.

**MR. DAGLISH:** Impossible. The Minister assured us the position would not interfere with the officer's public duties. Without that assurance he (Mr.

Daglish) would not have voted against the amendment. The tramways must be a good investment.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** The tramways were not under discussion.

**MR. HOLMAN:** If the officer were worth an extra £150, the department should pay that and retain his whole service, instead of allowing him to compete with outsiders. Would the Minister make farther inquiries?

**THE MINISTER:** No; for he already knew the exact state of affairs. The town would benefit considerably by the officer's professional knowledge as a member of the board. He (the Minister) was not bound to the principle of one man one billet. If a man had brains enough for fifty billets, let him have them.

Item — Engineering Supervisors, £1,784:

**MR. HOLMAN:** Why the apparent increase in number?

**THE MINISTER:** Though the item apparently included eight officers, there were but seven. There was an increase in the district allowance, and a temporary increase to one officer while on railway work.

**MR. DAGLISH:** There was a wide discrepancy in the salaries. A difference of £110 between the highest and lowest salary was surely too great. For any supervisor £190 was too low a salary.

**MR. HOLMAN:** In reply to a question asked this session a former Minister had spoken of a new appointment.

**THE MINISTER:** Apparently that officer was not included in this item. The discrepancies in the salaries were, he admitted, considerable, even allowing for the fact that some of the officers had charge of works more important than the remainder.

Item—Engineering Clerks, £3,923:

**MR. EDDY:** Why should one officer at £200 be booked for a reduction to £190, and two at £200 each for a reduction to £196?

**THE MINISTER:** These rates were fixed by the Public Service Commissioner. The Commissioner's recommendation was carried out.

**MR. EDDY:** This officer would apparently be reduced by £50, but the Com-

missioner had recommended that he should get not less than £180. Would the Minister promise to have this corrected if there was a mistake?

THE MINISTER: Certainly; but he did not think there was a mistake.

Item—Temporary Assistance for all Divisions, £5,000:

MR. BOLTON: Last year we voted £800 for temporary assistance and spent £1,476. This year we proposed to expend £5,000, or an increase of £3,524 on last year's expenditure. This item covered a multitude of sins. It covered the recent appointments of men from the East, but these appointments should be shown separately on the Estimates.

THE MINISTER: When the item was understood, members would not take exception to it. The officers specified on the Estimates were permanent officers and were entitled to certain rights and privileges. It was not intended, when found necessary to employ extra men on large works being undertaken, to place those men so engaged on the permanent staff. They were kept as temporary assistants and were paid out of this item. Owing to the large works being undertaken during the current year, such as the sewerage works, it was necessary to employ draftsmen and others temporarily. That accounted for the large increase in the item.

MR. DAGLISH: If these officers were being employed solely on loan works, their salaries should not be voted on the Revenue Estimates but on the Loan Estimates. The system at present was to charge the salary of the permanent officers entirely to the Revenue Estimates and make a deduction for the work they performed on loan undertakings, but there was no reason why the salaries of temporary hands engaged entirely on loan works should not be charged to the Loan Estimates. As there was a reduction in departmental expenditure apart from Loan Funds, there should be a corresponding reduction in administration. With the intention of ascertaining the opinion of the Committee on the matter he moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member would agree that in one set of Estimates at

all events, the salaries of the whole of the officers of the Public Works Department should be shown, whether the officer was engaged on loan or revenue expenditure. It was estimated that on the loan expenditure we would require so many thousands worth of work, and we showed a debit from revenue to loan.

MR. DAGLISH: Would the Minister assure the Committee that a good system of bookkeeping was first of all to enter a charge against one account with the express purpose of transferring it afterwards to another?

THE MINISTER: It was frequently necessary.

MR. DAGLISH: If the Minister had ever seen any Loan Estimates he would know perfectly well that there was no difficulty in the way of adopting the suggestion made.

MR. HOLMAN: Was provision made in this item for the salaries of those engaged in surveying a stock route from Kimberley?

THE MINISTER: Yes. They were engaged on loan work and their salaries would come under the item, "Less amount provided on the Loan Estimates, £39,131."

MR. HOLMAN: The Minister should say how many men were in the party, and what salaries they were getting. They were doing good work for the country, their work was a success, but if this was loan work, why was it shown on the Revenue Estimates?

THE MINISTER: It was desirable in his opinion that the whole of the staff should appear on one or other of the Estimates. Portion of the time the Engineer-in-Chief was devoted to loan work and portion to Revenue work, but his salary was shown on the Revenue Estimates, and afterwards it was apportioned to loan or Revenue. It was desirable to have in a concrete form a complete list of the officers of the department and their salaries, and at the proper time the different amounts, loan or Revenue, could be allocated. That was the view taken by the department. It seemed reasonable and fair. It was the view that had been taken for years past.

[MR. DAGLISH took the Chair.]

MR. SCADDAN: The Minister's second statement absolutely contradicted

his first one. The Minister at first said the reason why this was not set out was that permanent officers only were employed on this work.

THE MINISTER had not said "only engaged," but "almost entirely."

MR. SCADDAN: The Minister was now trimming. One did not think the Minister used any such words; at any rate he had led the Committee to believe that permanent officers only were engaged on this work. The Minister now stated that because these officers were doing certain works which were paid for out of revenue, it was necessary to set out these items. If the officers were engaged on Loan works the items should be set out on the Loan Estimates, and not on the Revenue Estimates. Were the officers engaged in Sydney by the preceding Minister for Works in connection with the Perth sewerage works included in this item? Desiring to know what salary was being paid to those officers, he had asked the Minister early in the session whether any of the officers engaged in Sydney had received passage-money for his wife and family to this State; on a quibble, simply because he had mentioned "draftsman," the Minister replied that no officer had received passage money for his wife and family.

THE MINISTER had answered the question put to him.

MR. SCADDAN: The Minister had been anxious to drop the question; but he (Mr. Scaddan) persisted and had ultimately obtained the information that one officer had obtained passage money for his wife and family, while others had received only their own passage money, and others again had not even received that. He desired to know why this distinction was made. The Minister should state to the Committee the salaries paid to these officers, in order that they might be compared. A temporary officer should be paid a higher salary than a permanent officer, for he was not entitled to the same privileges.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. HOLMAN asked whether the officers engaged in opening up the stock-route were to be paid from this item; also whether the party had been sent out by the Works Department.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The party had been sent out by the Mines Department, but their salaries would be drawn from the Works Department. Special consideration had been shown those officers in the matter of salary; and in view of the arduous nature of the work, he (the Minister) would not be surprised if next session Parliament was asked to give the members of the party some farther consideration.

MR. HOLMAN: Had any attempt been made to follow up the suggestion made by him that the officers should report on the probability of the existence of auriferous country; and would charts be issued by the department in order that the public might have an idea of the possibilities of the country passed through for prospecting purposes?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES was not aware of any such suggestion having been made by the hon. member; but the members of the party were making special reports in this connection, and these reports would be dealt with in the ordinary way by the Mines Department.

MR. SCADDAN: Were the statements which had been made by him correct?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What statements?

MR. SCADDAN: Apparently the Minister had been asleep when he should have been defending his Estimates. One did not desire to repeat statements for fear that the Chairman should call him to order; but he had asked the Minister to explain to the Committee whether the officers engaged in the Eastern States were to be paid out of this item, and whether there was any differentiation in their salaries and those of permanent officers.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: As a matter of actual fact those officers would be paid out of this item; and as a general rule they were paid slightly more than permanent hands. The hon. member was somewhat unfair in his references to his question. He had asked distinctly whether any draftsmen had been engaged in the East—[MR. SCADDAN: The Minister well knew to what he referred]—and had their passages been paid to this State. The reply then was that the man to whom this concession had been given was only temporarily here and his services were specially engaged

for the particular work. The department had been fortunate in securing his services, and he, as Minister, was perfectly satisfied. That officer was now on the staff.

Item—Wages of storeman, packers, etc., Stores Manager's Office, £350 :

MR. HOLMAN: What number of men employed?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Two men were engaged, one in the packing-room and the other in the stationery-room.

Item—Wages of office-cleaners and labourers employed in Public Offices, Perth, £2,500 :

MR. ANGWIN: Was it intended to increase the wages of the office cleaners, some of whom he understood were paid only 17s. 6d. per week? Owing to their hours of labour these people were unable to obtain other employment.

MR. HOLMAN: These officers were not too well paid, and had to work unreasonably long hours, which prevented their engaging in other employment. Grave complaints had reached him that the salaries these people received were inadequate for the work performed. There was a decrease of £236 on last year's expenditure under this item, and he desired to have the Minister's assurance that these people would be better treated in the future.

THE MINISTER: No complaints had reached him that these people were dissatisfied. He would, however, go into the matter if representations were made that there was any hardship. The duties of these people were not carried out during the ordinary working hours.

*Subdivision 2—Contingencies generally, £9,450 :*

Item—Rents for office accommodation, schools, mining registrars' quarters, pensioners' allowances in lieu of quarters, etc., £2,500 :

MR. HOLMAN: This item might be reduced by more than £413, in view of the fact that the departments were now in occupation of the old police court offices and also that the Public Works offices were now concentrated.

#### STRANGER JOINS IN DEBATE.

A stranger in the Gallery called out "Speak up."

MR. H. BROWN: It was only fair that the person who interrupted should be expelled from the Chamber.

THE CHAIRMAN: If anything farther was heard from the Gallery he would at once order the removal of the offender.

The stranger said he wanted to hear what was going on; but if he was not wanted he would go. It was a funny thing that this should take place in a Christian country.

THE CHAIRMAN (to the Sergeant-at-Arms): Remove that person.

The stranger then left the Gallery.

#### DISCUSSION RESUMED.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was a considerable amount of office accommodation rented throughout the State. The item also included schools, pensioners' allowances, and so on.

MR. HOLMAN: Information had always been available on this item before. We knew that high rent had been paid for offices in cases where it was not necessary, and he wanted to see the system stopped as far as possible. Great reductions were made last year, and greater reductions should be made in future. The Minister should inquire into the matter.

Item—Insurance on public buildings, £200 :

MR. H. BROWN: Was this going to pay for the insurance of all the public buildings? The amount was very parsimonious, considering the great support given by insurance companies to fire brigades in this State. A fire occurred at one of the public buildings only a short time ago, and but for the brigade some thousands of pounds would have been involved. It would be wise to insure to a much greater extent than at present.

THE MINISTER: It had been customary to insure only buildings containing stores. It was not an unfair thing for the Government to run its own risk. That had been the custom in the past, and had been continued this year.

MR. H. BROWN: Would the hon. gentleman do it in his own business?



**THE MINISTER:** This principle was carried out by many big firms. Take the P. & O. Steamship Company, which employed no underwriters, simply because their business was big enough to do without them.

**MR. HOLMAN** approved of the policy of the Government in regard to insurance, and hoped they would stick to it.

*Subdivision 3—Roads and Bridges, £73,264:*

**MR. BATH:** The explanation by the Minister as to the reduction in the vote was not very convincing, neither was that by his apologist the member for Collie. The Minister had pointed out that the special charges for interest and sinking fund had increased nearly £31,000, and the special charges in the shape of interest on the loan of £2,560,000 would be increased by £87,500, supposing the loan were floated at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Provision for sinking fund did not come into force for four years. The position would be that if the policy adopted last year was pursued these special charges would be increased to that extent without a corresponding increase in the revenue. It would mean that at the end of the term which the loan expenditure was spread over they would have £87,500 more to provide out of revenue than they had to provide now. It was the same policy which was pursued in the Eastern States, with the result that disaster eventually accrued to those communities. The same thing would happen in Western Australia, unless greater discrimination was shown in the expenditure of loan moneys.

**Item—Roads and Bridges throughout the State, £42,000:**

On motion by the **MINISTER**, the words "grants etcetera" were inserted after "bridges."

**MR. HOLMAN:** In what manner was this vote going to be distributed? Was the Minister going to distribute it on the same system as that adopted in the past, or was he going to adopt some new system?

**THE MINISTER:** That was information he gave in his general statement. The first question was whether a board itself recognised its responsibilities and was prepared to help itself. The next

factor was the area over which the board had authority. Then there were the mileage of roads, the class of country, and the facilities for road-making. In the South-West, for example, the nature of the country caused considerable extra cost. He was now endeavouring to make a classification, though this was very difficult owing to the fact that hardly two boards, apart from suburban boards, were situated in exactly parallel circumstances. He recognised that many of the goldfields boards, with long roads and heavy traffic, were deserving of special consideration.

**MR. BATH:** Would the Minister, in allocating the vote, take into consideration the administrative cost of roads boards?

**THE MINISTER:** Certainly.

**MR. HOLMAN:** In view of the reduction of about £40,000 on last year's amount, the item should receive special consideration. How would places out-back stand when the drain on the vote became heavy, as it was bound to become because less provision was made for far-back requirements in other votes? Black Range and many other new fields carrying populations of 200 to 300 men had no roads whatever, only bush tracks, which were impassable in wet weather for want of corduroy. Two or three inches of rain and the absence of a stock of provisions might create a position of considerable difficulty on such fields.

*Roads, £20,851; revotes, £3,921:*

**Item—Perth-Fremantle Road, maintenance £1,650:**

**MR. BOLTON:** A little information was desirable. As had been explained, the maintenance of the road was governed by a special Act, the operation of which was limited by the boundary of Fremantle and the boundary of Perth. When North Fremantle was formed into a separate municipality, the boundary of the town of Fremantle was of course altered, and the definition of the boundary in the Act ought to have been correspondingly amended. This, however, was not done; and the consequence was that the section of the road traversing North Fremantle received no maintenance under the Act and had fallen into a state of disrepair. Several deputations from the North Fre-

mantle municipality had waited on the present Minister for Works, the previous Minister for Works, and a prior holder of the office, without result. He would be glad to know whether the Minister proposed to make any alteration in the boundaries as defined by the Act, or would subsidise the North Fremantle municipality in maintaining the road, or would remake it. Unless the allowance for maintenance was to be uniformly distributed, he would have to divide the Committee on the item.

**THE MINISTER:** The amount of £1,650 would be divided among the various local authorities between the boundary of Perth and the boundary of Fremantle, mainly on the basis of the length of road under each authority.

**MR. SCADDAN** was reluctantly compelled to attack this item year after year. The policy of the State was against lavishing money on roads in settled districts: the outback districts, agricultural as well as mining, should receive first consideration. The Perth-Fremantle road might very well be maintained by those who used it. It was a fact that all the roads leading out of Perth received special grants year after year, while outback £200 could not be spared even to clear a road. The member for Northam should know that in his own district the farmers could not get their produce to market for want of roads, and the same thing obtained in districts represented by other members on the cross-Ministerial benches. The then Minister for Works had promised last year that out-back districts should receive first consideration, and had also expressed the hope that this item, if not altogether wiped out on these Estimates, would be reduced. The hon. gentleman had farther said that this item would not be continued year after year. It was therefore not a little surprising to find the amount actually increased. The metropolitan municipalities ought to contribute to the upkeep of the Perth-Fremantle road. The Peppermint Grove Roads Board could well afford to pay for the upkeep of its portion.

**THE MINISTER:** What were the rates paid?

**MR. SCADDAN:** If one or two boards between Perth and Fremantle were municipal councils, their expenditure on roads must be much heavier than it was

now; but it suited them to remain roads boards so that they might rely on the Government for roads and footpaths. As the Roads and Bridges Vote was to be cut down by half, the metropolitan boards should share in the reduction. He moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £650.

A sum of £1,000 was quite sufficient; but if that sum appeared next year he would move that it be reduced by £500, and so on till it was wiped off. In and around Perth and Fremantle £6,270 was provided for roads, while all outside districts together received £7,200.

**THE MINISTER:** The hon. member was a bad accountant.

**MR. SCADDAN:** The calculation was accurate enough for the argument. The metropolitan roads received more than a fair share. The first object should be to clear tracks on which farmers could bring produce to railways and goldfields residents ore to batteries. He would protest annually against this continuous expenditure on the metropolitan area.

**MR. BARNETT:** Considering how the outback districts were refused aid for roads and bridges, he would support the amendment. Wealthy districts like Perth and Fremantle should be able to keep their roads in order.

**MR. STONE** had annually protested against these large amounts for maintaining metropolitan roads. It was enough for the Government to make the roads and let local residents maintain them. Outback farmers had to struggle through heavy sand to the railways, and should not have to contribute to the comfort of wealthy people.

**MR. ANGWIN:** Fremantle did not share in this grant. The only objection to the item was the Minister's intention to allocate it to the boards, instead of leaving the expenditure to the Government. This road was used by almost every person who did any trade in the State, and the districts did not reap the benefit of the traffic.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH** resumed the Chair.

**MR. HOLMAN:** The amendment should be to strike out the item. It would not be so bad were the money spent in proper maintenance; but much was wasted in laying the dust for the convenience of motorists and others who

competed against the railway. The road was one of the best in the State, the expenditure on maintenance being extravagant in view of the small traffic. There were roads in the country over which thousands of tons of machinery and all the foodstuffs for mining centres were carried, but not a penny of Government money was spent on them, yet it was intended to increase this vote for the Perth-Fremantle road over last year's expenditure. The item itself was unwarranted. The municipalities through which the road passed should maintain it. Altogether the Government must have spent £10,000 on this road. What special reason was there for increasing the vote this year? Was it not the intention of the Minister to compel the municipalities through which the road passed to keep it in proper order?

MR. BREBBER: The item should be increased. The heaviest traffic in the State took place on this road. The criticisms of goldfields members came with particularly bad grace, because the Government had gone out of their way to give grants for goldfields roads when the population and traffic by no means justified them. Goldfields members apparently wanted all the money to be appropriated for the goldfields. To hear them argue one would think there was no other industry in the State but the mining industry. They gave no consideration to the agricultural industry, or the timber industry, or the Collie coal industry, or to shipping or commercial interests. The Government had appropriated funds that should be allotted to necessary roads in the agricultural districts in order to spend them in goldfields districts where there was no justification for them. Instead of being hard on the goldfields the Government had been generous to them, and got no thanks for it.

THE MINISTER: Seeing that the member for North Perth considered the Government in these estimates were partial to the goldfields, and hearing a goldfields member claim that the Government were treating the coastal districts with partiality, he (the Minister) consoled himself that in these estimates he must be somewhere near the mark. In regard to the Perth-Fremantle road, the bulk of the traffic came from Perth and Fremantle, and neither place could be charged

with the maintenance of the road. The people in the intermediate districts hardly used the road, so that it would be unjust to the local bodies to charge them with the wear and tear of the road. It was one of the most expensive roads to maintain. He would not carry out the intention expressed by the Minister last year if what the member for Ivanhoe said was correct, because this item was reasonable and not too large.

MR. WALKER: The Minister did not seem to be so concerned for outlying districts on the goldfields as he was for the districts between his own constituency and the metropolis. Last year £150 was voted for the Broad Arrow-Bardoc road, and the money was spent, but this year there was no provision for that road, while there was an increase for the Perth-Fremantle road. If this was not a direct demonstration of the different treatment of different parts of the country he did not know what was. The sympathy for the local boards between Perth and Fremantle was extraordinary, but not a word of sympathy was given for the boards on the goldfields. It was necessary to make the protest as vigorous as possible.

MR. HOLMAN: Application was made for a grant of £1,000 for opening up a road from Nannine to Peak Hill, but it was refused. If that grant had been made it would have reduced the distance between Nannine and Peak Hill by 25 miles. Thousands of pounds were granted around Perth for the maintenance of roads, while the district referred to received nothing. Peak Hill produced 200,000 ounces of gold in a year, yet could not get a grant at all. All the food supplies, the machinery, and the timber were carried over this road. It was an injustice to the people in the back country to receive such treatment. The amount of money spent in developing the goldfields was very small indeed, but in Perth and Fremantle the votes were increased every year. If we were to make the State what it should be we must spend more money in the back country.

MR. SCADDAN: The Minister did not show where he (Mr. Scaddan) was wrong in comparing the amount spent around Perth and Fremantle with the amount spent in the country dis-

tricts. There was an amount of £1,650 provided for the Perth-Fremantle Road, £700 for another portion of it, Fremantle-Canning Road £250, Fremantle-South Street East £300, Fremantle-Hamilton Hill £300, Claremont Road £200, Perth-Midland Junction Road £550, Perth-Cannington Road £670, Perth-Bayswater £340, Perth-Wanneroo Road £140, Fremantle-Jandakot £300, Fremantle Cemetery Road £40, Canning-Armadale Road £180, Perth Curtis Road £250, Leederville £400, and others, making a total of about £6,270 expended in and around Perth, out of a total of £13,000 odd?

**THE MINISTER:** Where did the hon. member get his total of £13,000.

**MR. SCADDAN:** There was £1,840 for new works on one page, £5,780 on the next, £6,610 on the next, and £2,770 on the next. He had made a mistake. The total was £16,000.

**THE MINISTER:** The amount was £20,000.

**MR. SCADDAN:** We heard much from the member for Collie about this vote being distributed equally throughout the State. Every year he (Mr. Scaddan) went through the Estimates, he became more disgusted. We were expected, because one-third of the population was in Perth and Fremantle, to spend this large sum of money on roads in these localities. The goldfields could get neither roads nor railways. The member for North Perth started the cry of "coast *versus* goldfields." He (Mr. Scaddan) did not mention the word "coast." He was not prepared to admit that the coast consisted of only Perth and Fremantle. It comprised also all the agricultural districts, and he was speaking equally on their behalf as on behalf of the goldfields. The hon. member said nothing had been done for the timber, shipping, and agricultural industries. Recently there had been a concession to the timber industry of something like £16,000, and the shipping industry was receiving fair consideration. He hoped the Committee would agree to the amendment to reduce the item by £650.

**THE MINISTER:** If the hon. member went through the figures he would see that the sum came to over £20,000 for roads, and the amount for Perth and Fremantle districts was £6,250, that being a fair thing. There was one-third

of the population, or thereabout, in those districts, and this amount showed one-third of the total for them.

**MR. HOLMAN:** Why should the Government spend so much money on this road when provision was not made for roads in his district and in other places where roads were as much required? Application had been made for provision for his district, and he would like to know why it had not been granted. He asked for information.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member could not compel the Minister to answer.

**MR. HOLMAN** was not going to allow taxpayers in his district to be compelled to pay taxes and live year after year under great hardships without provision being made for them for communication by road, whilst people in the metropolis reaped the benefit of their hard work.

**MR. WALKER:** There was not only the road he called attention to before, but he would appeal to the Minister's sympathy in regard to a road at Broad Arrow. Farther, there was £100 knocked off in relation to the Gindalpi (Vesper-ton-Kurnalpi) road. Recently the State had gone to considerable expenditure to purchase a battery for the prospectors. The field was promising and the traffic was bound to be extensive, but there was not one penny provided on the Estimates for a road. Again, not one penny for the Kanowna-Kurnalpi road (going to Gingin), which would ultimately be a main road right through from Kanowna to the district represented by the Minister for Mines. If the Minister for Works would consult his officers, he would find them speaking in the highest praise regarding the work of the East Coolgardie Roads Board. Yet the whole vote was completely cut off. In consequence of temporary neglect, these important roads would eventually cost the Government far more. There was no justice in the distribution. Sussex, Fremantle, and Perth swallowed practically the whole of the money for roads.

**THE TREASURER:** The goldfields had natural roads.

**MR. WALKER:** So had Sussex.

**THE TREASURER:** No.

**MR. WALKER:** The goldfields roads were to a certain extent natural roads, but they would not stand the traffic

which the development of the mining industry and the increase of population put on them; they needed repair and upkeep. Distance prevented goldfields residents from running to the Minister's back-door every other day, and so they were forgotten. A third of the vote was spent on ten or a dozen miles of road in the Perth-Fremantle district, while hundreds of miles of road in the goldfields districts were starved.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The hon. member's arithmetic was bad. A third of the vote was not allotted to Perth-Fremantle roads.

**MR. WALKER:** The treatment accorded to the goldfields was utterly unfair. What was the use of opening up mines without roads to them? The goldfields could do without roads if they got railways, but unfortunately they got neither. The Minister knew nothing about the country outside the metropolitan area, otherwise he could not honourably have neglected these important goldfields districts; and yet members wondered why the goldfields complained of the avarice and selfishness of the coast.

**MR. STONE:** The Committee should now divide.

**MR. HOLMAN:** Would not the Minister give any farther explanation?

**THE MINISTER** had given the hon. member all the information available as to this road.

**MR. BATH:** What about the policy of road construction out back?

**THE MINISTER:** In allocating grants the roads were taken in what was considered their order of importance. This road, and the Boulder-Kalgoorlie road, were probably the most deserving in the State. He regretted that many roads like the Bardoc-Broad Arrow road could not be provided for, but that was no reason for objecting to this item.

**MR. HOLMAN:** Those roads were more necessary than this.

**THE MINISTER:** If any cases of manifest injustice were brought before him, he would be glad to provide something out of the general vote; but he had endeavoured to be fair. Members' ideas as to the relative importance of various roads might differ, but he was entitled to his opinion, and there was no reason for asserting that he unduly favoured his own constituency.

Amendment (to reduce the item by £650) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	...	17

Majority against ... 7

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Bath	Mr. Angwin
Mr. Collier	Mr. Boltou
Mr. Holman	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Brown
Mr. Layman	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Stone	Mr. Davies
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Walker	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Scaddan (Teller).	Mr. Gregory
	Mr. Male
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. S. F. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Vervard
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Hardwick (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Works Vote suspended at p. 62, Item 58, re-vote.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:22 o'clock, until the next day.

### Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 21st November, 1906.

Leave of Absence	Page
Bills: Municipal Corporations, Com. resumed, completed	3010
Perth Town Hall (site), Assembly's farther Message as to Amendments	3011
	3018

**THE PRESIDENT** took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the **HON. J. T. GLOWREY**, leave of absence for one month was