

**Legislative Assembly.***Tuesday, 27th November, 1906.*

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

**PRAYERS.****ELECTION RETURN—GERALDTON.**

THE CLERK announced the return of writ for the election of a member for Geraldton (in room of Mr. H. Carson, unseated on petition), showing that Mr. Thomas Leishman Brown had been duly elected.

MR. T. L. BROWN took the oath and subscribed the roll.

**URGENCY MOTION—ELECTION AT GERALDTON.**

HOW AFFECTED BY NEWS TELEGRAM, AND BY MINISTERIAL STATEMENT THEREON.

MR. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet): I beg to move the adjournment of the House on a question of urgency of which I have given notice.

MR. SPEAKER: I have received from the hon. member the following notice:—

With a view of drawing attention to a matter of urgency, viz., the statements made in the *Morning Herald* and the *West Australian*, as also the reported statement by the Attorney General as published in the *West Australian* of the 26th inst., and in Parliament by the Minister for Mines and the Member for Coolgardie, relative to the Geraldton election, I move That the House do now adjourn.

The question is "That this notice be proceeded with." It will be necessary, as hon. members are aware, for at least seven hon. members to rise in their

places if they are favourably disposed to receiving this motion.

More than seven members having risen in their places:—

MR. TROY proceeded to say: I desire first to refer to the gross breach of parliamentary privilege committed by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Eddy) in connection with the notice which he gave at the last sitting of this House. The notice labelled a newspaper in this State, and also conveyed an insinuation against the character of hon. members of this Chamber. I refer to this aspect of the matter particularly because the hon. member made these insinuations under the privilege and protection of the House. Insinuations and statements have been made by newspapers, and statements have been made by members of this House; but I must give them the credit of having made the statements not under the protection of the House, but in the knowledge that they were liable to prosecution for having made them. The member for Coolgardie, I regret to say, has made his statements and asked his questions under the cloak of the privileges of the House; and I say here that to cast aspersions on the character of any hon. member is a gross breach of political privilege. A newspaper has been grossly labelled by statements made in this House and by the Press. Since the *Morning Herald* and the *West Australian* as well as other newspapers have taken the responsibility of their statements, for which statements they will be called to answer, one must give them credit to that extent. As to the statements made by certain gentlemen in Geraldton, Mr. Darling, Mr. Pope, and Mr. Elliot, these also have been made courageously and without any appeal for protection, so that these gentlemen must be given credit accordingly. I have no doubt they will be called on to prove the statements they have made. The member for Coolgardie gave notice at the last sitting of certain questions, which were as follow:—

1, Whether the attention of the Attorney General has been called to a report in the *Morning Herald* of the 22nd inst. referring to the Geraldton election, which reads as follows—"An extraordinary aspect was given to the proceedings by the issue of an extra from the *Express* office, stating that the Black Range and Chapman Railway had been

shelved"—such being the head-lines to a telegram from Perth purporting to be an extract from the Treasurer's speech in moving the second reading of the Loan Bill. 2, Whether on the assumption that this publication was malicious and untrue and designed to injuriously affect the chances of one of the candidates in the election then proceeding, the Attorney General will cause inquiries to be made as to the parties responsible therefor. 3, Whether such publication is an electoral offence. 4, If so, whether proceedings will be taken against the guilty parties.

It is all very well to ask such questions in this House under cover of privilege, but nevertheless they constitute a gross insinuation.

MR. HOLMAN: The member for Coolgardie was put up to it by a Minister.

MR. TROY: There is no doubt the hon. member was put up to it, and I have no doubt his electors will deal with him as the electors lately dealt with a gentleman who also did as he was told on many occasions. Now the wire which came from Geraldton to the Attorney General was in regard to an alleged bogus telegram. The senders of the telegram were Messrs. R. Darling, E. Pope, and R. Elliot, and their message reads:—

Great indignation caused by publication of bogus telegram re Loan Bill during election, which affected many votes. Is not that sufficient to upset election?

Those gentlemen had the courage to express their opinions, and they will bear the responsibility. I do not know whether the Attorney General has given the advice asked for; but one cannot help remarking on the childishness of people in appealing to the Attorney-General, a gentleman who represents the whole of the people of this State, for an opinion on a question of this character. Why did they not go to another legal man, to a person independent of Ministerial duties?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because the Attorney General is the head of the Electoral Department.

MR. TROY: Certainly he is, but unless the election was conducted improperly he could not upset it. They should have appealed to some other legal adviser, and I say the Attorney General has no right to give an opinion on a matter of this kind. I do not know whether he has given an opinion; but if he has done so, I hope some member will table a motion demanding that whatever opinion was

given should be laid on the table of this House.

MEMBER: It would be pretty hard to get the opinion.

MR. TROY: I shall deal now with the Attorney General's statement, a statement which I hold could not have been made without due consideration, because the Attorney General is not a gentleman who says things impulsively, or who is in the habit of making hasty remarks. The Attorney General is reported as follows in the *West Australian*:—

Speaking to a representative of the *West Australian* on Saturday, Mr. Keenan said that he was causing inquiries to be made into the circumstances of what appeared to be a most discreditable incident. "I have sent to Geraldton," Mr. Keenan said, "for a copy of the publication containing the alleged report of the Colonial Treasurer's speech. From what I can see at present, the whole affair seems to have been carefully prearranged. The telegram, and what purported to be a report of the speech of the Colonial Treasurer, were circulated only when it was impossible to reply to them. As I said, I am having inquiries made, and if I can find out who were responsible for these false telegrams they shall certainly be prosecuted."

I regret that the Attorney General has been guilty of making such a statement. One would have thought that, profiting by the experience of the Minister for Mines, who made similar statements to the Press against Warden Hicks three or four years ago, he would have refrained from observations of that character. No doubt the Attorney General will have to bear the responsibility of his statements because I know that action is to be taken in that direction. He stated:—

The telegram, and what purported to be a report of the speech of the Colonial Treasurer, were circulated only when it was impossible to reply to them.

That statement is absolutely untrue; and the statement that on the very morning of polling day there were circulated in Geraldton telegrams purporting to come from Perth and stating that the Chapman and Black Range railways had been shelved, was also untrue, because at no time during the morning was such a statement circulated, and people who said it was circulated must have been in a hysterical state of mind, and upset by the very severe setback they received at that election. No doubt they thought they had discovered something, thought

something was amiss, and that illegal practices had been resorted to in order to win the election. Those people were grossly misled, and I regret that they did not take due care before making those sensational remarks in the newspapers and in this House. What was the true position of affairs at Geraldton? We have heard many statements, and the public have been led to believe that illegal and corrupt practices were resorted to by the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson), in order to win the election for the Labour party. I wish to deny that statement, because the member for Guildford had nothing to do with the statement that appeared in the "extraordinary" published by the *Geraldton Express*; and I say again, the *Geraldton Express* will be able easily to defend the action it took on that occasion. The telegram to the *Geraldton Express* came in the afternoon. No rumour was circulated in the morning. I have heard it said that in coming down in the train the other day a member of this Chamber said the telegram was sent by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath). If the member who made that statement is in this Chamber, he will know to whom I am referring. I wish to say that no telegram such as appeared in the *Geraldton Express* was sent to Geraldton by any member of this House.

MR. HOLMAN: The telegram was absolutely true, anyhow.

MR. TROY: The telegram was a summary of a speech made by the Treasurer on the Tuesday night preceding the Geraldton election. I have here a copy of the *West Australian* for the following day; and reading the report of the speech in that paper, one can easily understand why the Perth representative of the *Geraldton Express* forwarded the telegram in question. The *West Australian* reports the Treasurer as saying—

The Government hoped they would be able to get the sanction of Parliament to the construction during the next 12 months of five or six of the railways that were projected.

And again—

He might say that the Government intended to introduce immediately a Bill for the extension of the Greenhills line to Quairiding, and also to ask Parliament to sanction the con-

struction of a railway from Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun. The Donnybrook to Preston line would also be another measure; then there were the first section of the line from Coolgardie to Norseman and the Wagin-Wickepin line, in addition to the Bill before the House to complete the railway between Armadale and Jandakot. All these works the Government hoped would be pushed forward, and with the sanction of the House he trusted that if time permitted other Railway Bills enumerated in the Loan measure would be introduced.

"If time permitted"—so for the time those railways were shelved.

THE TREASURER: No. That is your construction.

MR. TROY: It is not my construction at all. The report continues—

This session there should be a Bill passed for the construction of a railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar.

I will take the statement which appeared in the *Geraldton Express*, and which has given rise to this discussion and all these wild and hysterical vapourings. It is as follows:—

In the Assembly—

THE TREASURER: Read the head-line.

MR. TROY: The newspaper had every justification for putting whatever head-line it liked. Every paper puts its own head-lines to its telegrams, and probably the newspaper would not have written this head-line without justification. The telegram states:—

In the Assembly the Colonial Treasurer (Mr. Frank Wilson) moved the second reading of the Loan Bill. He said the Government proposed that railways be first undertaken, and six Bills be introduced, namely Greenhills line to Quairiding, Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun, Donnybrook to Preston, Coolgardie to Norseman, Narrogin to Wickepin, and the completion of the Armadale-Jandakot line. All these works the Government hoped would be pushed forward. He hoped that the Bill would be passed during the present session. The railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, on the permanent survey being completed, construction should be commenced. He asked authority for the Fremantle dock, a work of great magnitude which it was proposed should be carried out by the Government, and not by the Harbour Trust. Provision was also made for a metropolitan water supply and sewerage, also a sum for the boring for water in the North-West and at Kimberley. The flotation of the loan would be spread over about two years.

I saw the original telegram which came to the *Geraldton Express*, and the extract

I have just read from that paper is an exact copy of the telegram. And when we consider the remarks of the Attorney General to the effect that this bogus telegram, as he called it, was prearranged, the House will understand how extraordinary and how dangerous was the Minister's statement.

**THE TREASURER :** From whom was the telegram you say you saw?

**MR. TROY :** The telegram was one of a budget of telegrams received from the Perth representative of the *Geraldton Express*; and it was not, as members opposite thought, sent by any member of this House, or by any member of a political party. The *Geraldton Express* stated the line had been shelved. What is the meaning of "shelve"? It means to put off or neglect, as to shelve a question or a claim. To shelve means to put off; and this railway has been put off for a time, anyhow till after this session.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL :** What is a 'piecrust promise'?

**MR. TROY :** "Shelve" means to put off, to put aside for the time being; and I find this telegram not only in the *Geraldton Express*, but in the *Murchison Times*. The latter paper does not use the word "shelved," but says "the Black Range railway omitted." The *Geraldton Express* says "the Black Range and the Chapman railways are shelved for the time being." Had not the newspaper a justification for that statement? And is here any justification for reflecting on the characters of members of this Chamber, and grossly libelling that newspaper? There is not any; and I hope the members who made those remarks were chafing under their defeat at Geraldton, and made them without due consideration. I wish, in conclusion, to say that the election was never fought on these railway questions; that the question of the railways did not enter into the campaign, because both parties were in agreement as to the construction of the railways; and if some hon. gentlemen who visited Geraldton endeavoured to influence the electors of that place by promising the construction of such railways, Mr. Johnson and I did not, because we hold that the Black Range and the Chapman railways are justifiable, and we never raised that question at the election. I say

again, in spite of all our opponents may urge, the publication of that telegram in Geraldton did not influence one vote.

**MR. EDDY :** What rot!

**MR. TROY :** Who said, what rot? I was in Geraldton, and I know better. I know that the publication of the telegram did not influence one vote, because as soon as it came out our opponents said it was merely an election trick, an election dodge.

**MR. EDDY :** A dirty one, too.

**MR. TROY :** The hon. member ought to be a good judge, when he makes that statement under privilege, throwing a reflection on the characters of members.

**MR. HOLMAN :** He played the game himself.

**MR. FOULKES :** You admit that the people of Geraldton thought it was an election dodge.

**MR. TROY :** It has also been said that the statement contained in the telegram was taken out to the farmers, and that the farmers then withheld their support from Mr. Carson. I was in the country when the statement got out.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS :** How did it get out?

**MR. TROY :** I was accused of taking out that statement; and I give the accusation an emphatic denial.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS :** I do not say you took it out, but how did it go?

**MR. TROY :** Neither I nor anyone who accompanied me to the country took out the statement. The statement was sent out, and I had no cognisance of its being sent out until at Crowder station I was called for and the statement handed to me; and this happened late in the afternoon, when there were only about two votes to poll, and at that polling place the statement caused no concern, nor did any person attach undue importance to it. When I returned to Geraldton that afternoon I found that immediately afterwards a wire had been sent to the Minister for Mines, who had promptly denied the truth of the wire sent for publication to the *Geraldton Express*. I wish to say that so far as Mr. Johnson, so far as I, and every other person connected with the Geraldton election on the Labour side are concerned, we did not know whether the statement was true or untrue. We concluded that

railway had been shelved. I heard that the subeditor of the *Geraldton Express* was looking for me, and so soon as I heard the statement I wired promptly to Mr. Bath, because I was of opinion that the Loan Bill had been amended. That opinion was not correct.

THE TREASURER: That shows the effect of the telegram.

MR. TROY: I thought the Loan Bill had been amended. The telegram had weight so far as I was concerned, because the Black Range railway is to be in my district. I wired to Mr. Bath as follows:—

Understood here Black Range and Chapman railways shelved. Very essential you should keep discussion on Loan Bill going until my return to Perth on Thursday night.

And believing that the telegram was absolutely correct, as it is. I appeared here on Thursday night.

THE TREASURER: What was the reply to your wire to Mr. Bath?

MR. TROY: I did not get a reply. My wire was not "urgent," as the Minister's was; and therefore Mr. Bath did not receive the wire till very late in the afternoon.

MR. WALKER: It did not need a reply.

THE TREASURER: Did he get the telegram?

MR. BATH: I did.

THE TREASURER: You did not reply.

MR. BATH: It did not call for a reply. He asked me to keep the debate going.

THE TREASURER: You did not keep the debate going.

MR. TROY: There was no necessity. I hold that the railway has been shelved, and there is more justification for constructing the Black Range railway than for constructing the Norseman railway and those southern railways mentioned in the Treasurer's speech on the Loan Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: One railway route has been completely surveyed, and the other has not.

MR. TROY: Has the Ravensthorpe railway route been completely surveyed?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No.

MR. TROY: Have the agricultural railway routes been completely surveyed? The Black Range railway is the most justifiable railway project in the Loan Bill. Although only three years old, the

district produces a thousand ounces per month more than the whole of the Dundas goldfield, and yet we find the Black Range line put aside in favour of railways in the southern portion of the State. I hope members on the other side who make such a mouthful of this so-called bogus telegram will be heartily ashamed of their statements, and they will be if they have any manliness. And I have again to give credit to the Attorney General, who made his statement at least openly, and he will of course bear the responsibility for it; and I have again to give credit for the statements published in the *Morning Herald*, the *West Australian*, and the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. Those newspapers will also bear the responsibility for the statements they have made regarding the alleged bogus telegram. And those three gentlemen who sent a wire from Geraldton have also had the courage of their opinions, stating openly that the wire was bogus; and they also will undoubtedly bear the responsibility. I have already proved that so far as we were concerned we had nothing to do with the telegram, and I have shown there was justification for it. I have shown too that the Murchison newspaper printed the same telegram; but it did not use the word "shelved"—it used a worse word, "omitted." Had the *Murchison Times* circulated that telegram in Geraldton on election day, what would hon. members opposite have said? They would have said it was an election dodge. Bearing in mind the promise made to the Geraldton electors by the Minister for Mines on the occasion of his last visit, a promise to which I take no exception—

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: What promise?

MR. TROY: The promise of the Black Range railway.

THE MINISTER: I did not promise that before the Loan Bill was brought in.

MR. TROY: Bearing in mind that promise—and it was a perfectly justifiable promise, which I give him every credit for—the *Geraldton Express* was quite justified in saying that the railway was shelved for the time being.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It did not say "for the time being."

MR. TROY: It said "shelved," and shelved means put off. The *Murchison Times* went stronger, and said the railway had been "omitted;" and if the *Murchison Times* had circulated in Geraldton on election day, our hysterical friends opposite would have said that the paper had published that telegram in order to unduly influence the election. I hope those members who have made use of these statements will have the honesty and courage to withdraw the insinuations they have made against members on this side of the Chamber and the libel they have cast on that newspaper.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member who has just spoken complains first of all that the questions appearing on the Notice Paper to be asked by the member for Coolgardie, which I would have answered in the course of to-day's proceedings but for this interruption, constitute a breach of the privileges of this House; a phrase we are constantly hearing from members opposite whenever anything which does not accord with their views happens to take place in the universe.

MR. JOHNSON: Simply because you have created so many breaches.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: And then he proceeded to read the questions, and with a peculiarity all his own he left out the very first of the lot, and proceeded as if the first had been eliminated from the four questions which it will be my duty to answer. The member for Coolgardie is to ask in the first place whether my attention had been called to a report in the *Morning Herald* of the 22nd of this month referring to the Geraldton election, which reads as follows:—

An extraordinary aspect was given to the proceedings by the issue of an extra from the *Express* office, stating that the Black Range and Chapman Railway had been shelved; such being the head-lines to a telegram from Perth purporting to be an extract from the Treasurer's speech in moving the second reading of the Loan Bill.

He then read, what is correct, that the hon. member had given notice to ask whether, on the assumption that this publication was malicious and untrue and designed to injuriously affect the chances of one of the candidates in the election then proceeding, I would make

inquiries as to the parties responsible therefor; and whether such publication is an electoral offence.

MR. HOLMAN: You ought to have referred that to Learmonth.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: As a matter of fact, the publication in the *Morning Herald* did take place in the words referred to by the member for Coolgardie; and furthermore assuming—and the assumption is not a violent one—that the publication was designed to injuriously affect the chances of one candidate and was published without any regard to its accuracy or to any influence it might have on the election—because these things do not happen by accident, there is somebody who moves the springs—then he wanted to know whether it was an electoral offence. It would be of considerable interest for members to know at what hour on election day the publication was made. Where such publication is clearly, on the face of it, designed to injuriously affect the chance of one of the candidates for election, where it can be shown that the publication was made with recklessness, and without any regard to its accuracy or truth, but solely for the purpose of injuring one of the candidates, it is a question whether if that is not an electoral offence, it should not be provided for in our future laws.

MR. WALKER: Do you believe it is an offence?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member will wait, he will hear what I do believe it is. I am now pointing out what are the questions which the member for Coolgardie had intended to ask to-day. Lastly, he was to ask whether proceedings are to be taken against the parties responsible. I have no hesitation in saying that every one of those questions is perfectly legitimate. They call attention to a report in a Perth newspaper which set out verbatim that an extraordinary aspect had been given to the Geraldton election by the issue of an "extra," and asked furthermore if that constituted an electoral offence, and if so whether proceedings were to be taken against those responsible for it. And I say it was the duty of any member of the House who saw that report to bring it under my notice, and ask me to inquire into it.

MR. BOLTON: Who formulated the questions?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: As to formulating the questions, that task is not beyond the capacity of even the hon. member. The hon. member may, if he exercises his intellect, arrive at the same height. Now I come to the phase of the question that is the most prominent here to-day, that is the supreme audacity of hon. members opposite in bringing this matter before the House. (Opposition laughter.) Here they are on their defence for an action that I venture to say every person dissociated from party on both sides will regard as discreditable.

MR. JOHNSON: To whom?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: And, instead of adopting an apologetic tone, they get up and try to bluff the House and the country by persuading themselves that they are the injured party. What are the facts? On the day of election in Geraldton, a certain newspaper which had been violently, strongly supporting one of the candidates—and I am not questioning its right to support any candidate it chooses—brought out what it is pleased to call a special edition. A special edition, as members know, comes out only for some special reason; it is not an everyday occurrence; it comes out for some special object. What was the special purpose in this instance? I venture to say this was the only special edition issued on that day by any newspaper published in Western Australia—the only special edition consisting entirely of that—[holding up a printed slip]—a mere “dodger.” Let hon. members ask themselves, what was the object of incurring the expense to produce this special edition, going out of the ordinary routine of newspaper publication? The object undoubtedly was to assist one candidate in the election proceeding on that day. The hon. member has not told us, and it would be interesting to know, at what hour of the day this thing was published, scattered around, so that when it came to the knowledge of those interested in the other candidate or of that candidate himself it might be too late for contradiction. As far as my knowledge goes, it was published sufficiently late in the day, 2 o'clock in the afternoon, to make it im-

possible or almost impossible for any contradiction to reach those amongst whom it was being circulated. Now turning to the matter which was published, and looking at the headings, we see here “Piecrust Promises.” The ordinary meaning of a “piecrust promise” is a promise made to be immediately broken and cast aside. And these “piecrust promises” are the Black Range Railway and the Chapman Railway. Another heading asks “What has Carson done?” Is it not perfectly apparent to any person who wants to read with the object of obtaining a meaning from it, that the meaning was that any promises made were false promises, and that Mr. Carson, who was ready to make promises that would not be carried out, was doing something discreditable and should be thrown out? This special edition on election day was simply a political dodger, sent out for the purpose of prostituting the electors by getting from them votes on a false representation of fact. And I have no hesitation in saying that every person who was identified in the least degree with that special edition became guilty of a discreditable political trick; and if any member opposite or anyone who was there was associated with it—

MR. BOLTON: We said we were not, but you would not accept our statement.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: And remember it is only in their own mouths that they have so far been associated with it, because the member for Coolgardie does not ask whether the member for Mt. Magnet or other members who have spoken—

[Several interjections.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order! Order!

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: We have it alone from their own mouths that they were associated with this discreditable political trick. But let us inquire farther. It has been said by the member for Mt. Magnet that this is a matter of no importance. If so, how comes it that the member himself attached so much importance to it as to telegraph to his leader in Parliament, inquiring whether the printed statement was true and to know all about it? If, as he says, it is a matter of no importance, that action alone would controvert the statement. And besides we know that mounted men were at hand

to scatter these "extras" broadcast throughout the constituency.

MR. TROY: That statement is absolutely untrue.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am informed, on authority I have no reason to doubt—

MR. TROY: You may doubt it, because it is not true.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That there were mounted men ready to scatter this discreditable "dodger" throughout the district.

MR. TROY: That is absolutely untrue.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: How do you know it is untrue?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: How does the hon. member know? He told us in his speech that he was in the country on that day and only became aware of it in the afternoon. How did it reach him? By word of mouth or by telegram? [A pause.] The hon. member will not give the information. I ask for information and cannot get it—why? Because the hon. member knows it would not suit him to give it. I have no hesitation in saying it is clear on the face of it that so far as the circulation is concerned, there was every evidence of pre-arrangement. Those men with horses—if my information is correct—would not have been found on the spur of the moment; they would have to be arranged for beforehand, and would be arranged for beforehand, why? Because it was hoped by means of this wretched political dodge to win the election, and these were all parties to carrying out the scheme.

MR. TROY: You are getting hysterical now.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Let me tell the hon. member that the only exhibition of hysterical behaviour is that when members come back and find that in a distant way a reflection has been cast upon them, they rise and yell in wild anger; and, strange to say, they themselves for the first time associated themselves with these particular acts.

MR. BOLTON: Only one has risen as yet.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have no doubt the hon. member will rise as often in the future as he has in the past, and will be as often wrong, particularly as when certain charges were made against railway officials. However,

leaving the misdeeds of the hon. member and getting back to the subject matter, it is said by the member who brings this matter to the notice of the House that the telegram had no effect on the voting. I have pointed out the effect it had on himself; and farther, does he suppose these newspaper people to be such great asses that they went to the expense and trouble of this special edition, making special arrangements for its circulation, unless they were fully satisfied it would have the effect they desired?

MR. WALKER: Who were "they"?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member had waited until I answered the question to-day, he would have known who, in my opinion, are the parties responsible. I have nothing farther to say, except that both sides of the House should join in repudiating a practice of this character. It may come home to other members one day. A circulation of this kind never happened in this State before. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh!] I challenge hon. members opposite to give a single instance in any part of Australia where any newspaper has issued a special edition in the middle of the day containing nothing but an absolutely false statement of fact for the purpose of misleading electors.

MR. HOLMAN: It happened in the election at Cue. There was a publication the night before the election.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I asked for an instance, not in the history of Western Australia alone but in the history of the whole of Australia, a single instance where a newspaper was published at 2 o'clock on the day of election, while polling was going on, containing an absolute perversion of fact, publishing that perversion of fact for the purpose of misleading electors.

MR. TROY: What about the Fremantle election? What about the "dodgers" there.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Instead of having the question raised as we have had it here to-day, hon. members opposite, if they had any regard for their dignity, would have joined with other members in this House in repudiating an action of this kind, and entirely dissociating themselves from it.



MR. T. BATH (Brown Hill): During the course of the present session hon. members have been at some loss to understand what peculiar fitness there is in the Attorney General for the position he holds.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Indulge in personalities! That is the only suitable reply.

MR. BATH: The speech of the Attorney General this afternoon will show that he is eminently fitted for two occupations in life, either that of a high tragedian or that of a serio-comic. We have had on several occasions here statements impugning the administration of the members of the present Government; and the only reply which we have had from those gentleman has been in the shape of an exhibition of heroics, characterised by an absolute disregard of the question at issue, and by this high-tragedy tone the Attorney General has assumed this afternoon. So far as the present discussion is concerned, I may say that if it has been stated, as the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy) said, that the wire giving a summary of the Colonial Treasurer's loan proposals, was sent to Geraldton, was not sent by me, it is not correct; but I wish to say also that in view of the promises which were made, first by Mr. Carson before the Loan Bill had even been submitted to members of this House, before it was even in their possession, and before they knew what loan proposals were to be submitted in this Chamber, repeated by the Minister for Mines and his colleague the Minister for Works—

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: After the Loan Bill.

MR. BATH: Statements concerning the construction of the Black Range and Chapman railways, for the purpose of influencing the electors of Geraldton to vote for the Government candidate. I say that after the Colonial Treasurer delivered that speech from which those railways were omitted, I should have been perfectly justified on the evening of the day on which he delivered the speech in sending a wire to Mr. Johnson and Mr. Troy, pointing out what were the Government's promises and what were the Government's performances. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] But I

was aware of the fact that both the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) and the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy) were not fighting the Geraldton election on the question of constructing either of those railways, and therefore I did not deem it necessary to attempt to influence the election by pointing out the fact that the Government had failed to embody in their proposals promises made by their representatives and by their candidate to the electors of Geraldton in order to influence their votes.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do you mind reading out any promises?

MR. BATH: The Attorney General also states that members on this side have accused themselves. Now the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy) is the only member who has spoken on this side. I must, however, refer the Attorney General to the statement of the Minister for Mines in reply to a question asked in this House. The hon. gentleman said that a telegram had been circulated by the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson). That is absolutely untrue, and that is the source —

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: On a point of order, I desire that the hon. member will withdraw that statement. In answer to a question asked me in connection with the statements made at Geraldton I spoke as follows, if I may be allowed to quote *Hansard*:—

I may state that I was not foolish enough to insult the intelligence and independence of my audience by making any such statement which could bear any such construction. I said, however, when dealing with the question of decentralisation, "It would be entirely the fault of the Geraldton traders if they could not control the trade of the Murchison Goldfields." I may add that I have just received the following telegram:—

Johnson showing telegram that Chapman-Black Range Railways shelved. Wire if correct.—*Guardian*.

I must say I cannot believe anything so dishonourable has been circulated in that district.

That was on the afternoon of that day.

MR. BATH: Yes; but the hon. member made here the statement that the member for Guildford was circulating a telegram. He made a statement altogether apart from the reply to the question he was asked, a question which was on an altogether different subject; and I

take it the Minister, when dragging in this statement in replying to a question, had a desire to impute that statement to the member for Guildford.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Minister for Mines take exception to the hon. member's statement?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: In that case the hon. member must withdraw.

MR. BATH: If the hon. member denies the statement, I will withdraw. In reply to a question on an altogether different subject, he farther dragged in the name of Mr. Johnson, the member for Guildford, as being connected with the despatch of this wire which to-night's motion deals with. In regard to the statement which appeared in the *Geraldton Express*, I desire to say that the head-lines are perfectly justified by the extract which was made from the Colonial Treasurer's remarks, because the member for Greenough (Mr. Stone) has been a supporter of the present Government on the strength of the proposed construction of the railway up the Chapman Valley.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Do you bring that accusation against him?

MR. BATH: I have only to add that after the Loan Bill the member for Greenough was in doubt as to whether he should vote with us on the land tax proposals. He said so right out, in the House. I am certain the member for Greenough, if he were to express his true sentiments, is absolutely dissatisfied with the treatment which has been meted out by the Government in regard to this proposed railway to Chapman.

MR. P. STONE (in explanation): I am satisfied. I do not see why I should be brought into this discussion. I am quite satisfied that it is the intention of the Government to build this railway, and the other railways mentioned in the Loan Bill. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: When?] Anybody with common sense knows that a loan of the magnitude proposed by the Government cannot be arranged straight away, and that all those railways cannot be completed immediately. I am satisfied, however, that within two years the proposals will be accomplished. I do not wish to be brought into this matter at all. I think it is a waste of time dis-

cussing it. If anything is to be done, it should be settled in the Supreme Court.

MR. BATH: I am glad to have the assurance of the member for Greenough that he is perfectly satisfied with the Government's intentions in regard to that railway. I desire to point out the head-lines which appear in the *Murchison Times*, a paper published absolutely outside the radius of the Geraldton election.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Was it a special edition?

MR. BATH: Never mind. The head-lines are as follow:—"Western Australia: The Loan Estimates: New Railway: Lines within a year: Black Range railway omitted." This paper says "omitted." "Shelving" means merely to put aside for a time, but here it is an "omission"; and this is a paper published apart altogether from the election campaign. The position is this: a number of these country papers have precisely the same correspondents in Perth; very many of them have their news sent to them through the medium of the Perth journals. The fact remains, however, that a *résumé* of the Colonial Treasurer's speech was sent to all these papers, and on the strength of that they were perfectly justified in pointing out to the electors of Geraldton how they had been gulled by Ministers in regard to these two proposals, and will always be gulled so long as elections are fought, not on political issues, but on a question as to whether if a Minister or a supporter of the Government is returned electors will have this railway or that work constructed. The Minister for Works, who ought to subside on a question of this kind, who ought to be absolutely unheard, in fact ought to be somewhere in the Corridor, talks about the circulation of literature on election day. Again and again we have pointed out to him the dodger which was circulated in Fremantle on the day of the election. No chance of replying to that! This Fremantle election dodger deserves to be handed down to posterity as an example of what the present Ministry will do in order to win seats on the strength of promises of votes. "Ask yourself which can help the town best, a Minister of the Crown who has charge of the Public Works Department"—[In-

terjections and laughter.] The hon. member wants to know whether the *Murchison Times* issued a special edition. Is not this a special edition?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Why not read the dodger to which that was an answer; the dodger issued by my opponent?

**MR. BATH:** A supporter of the Government has the audacity to ask what is caucus, after the experience of the present Ministerial party during this session—election of an Agent General; election of a Premier; education regulations; alteration of the Land Tax Assessment Bill; and then they ask, what is caucus? This was issued on the day of the election. No chance of replying to this.

**OPPOSITION MEMBERS:** Read the card.

**MR. BATH** (reading from card):

#### EAST FREMANTLE ELECTION.

**MR. HOLMES**, who served you so well and faithfully, having stated, when the petition was lodged by Mr. Angwin, "that he would not contest another election under the present Electoral Act," has, as he always has done, stuck to his principles. You are, therefore, asked to vote for

**MR. T. SMITH,**

The Ministerial Candidate.

To support **MR. SMITH** means assisting the Government, who have a Bill before Parliament giving power to the Harbour Trust to build a dock at Fremantle, and thus give prosperity to the electorate.

**MR. SMITH** is also pledged to support the Government who have carried out their promise to **MR. HOLMES** to allow residential leaseholders the right to acquire the **FREEHOLD**. Contrast this with the action of the Government of which **MR. ANGWIN** was a member.

Authorised by **T. SMITH**.

This was issued on the afternoon of that election. A "dodger" is just as effective as the special edition of a newspaper, but these dodgers are issued by the candidates themselves. It was a question of enterprise on the part of the newspaper as to whether they issued a special edition or not. We have heard a good deal in the Attorney General's speech about discreditable tactics, and I presume the Attorney General has been taking the advice of the member for Forrest (**MR. A. J. WILSON**), and has been learning a lesson in unimpeachable probity. As regards the Fremantle election, however, why did he not take action against the Minister for Works, his own

colleague, for bribery and corruption? He had a magnificent opportunity of vindicating the passion for purity on that occasion; also why did he not take action against **MR. T. SMITH**, the Ministerial candidate who issued a card of that nature on the afternoon of the election?

**OPPOSITION MEMBER:** Because the Government were supporting Smith.

**MR. BATH:** This was a splendid opportunity for an exhibition of the Attorney General's desire for purity of elections. However, we find the vials of his wrath, his great desire for purity and unimpeachable probity, reserved here for the gallery this afternoon. The Attorney General is as good as his colleague the Minister for Works, when indulging in heroics and altogether avoiding the questions at issue.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** What are you doing?

**MR. BATH:** I say that so far as this question is concerned, the Attorney General has not a leg to stand on. These things will recur so long as elections in this State are fought on the question of constructing public works, the expenditure of public money, and so long as the susceptibilities of Government supporters are smoothed down by the construction of such works. The question in election campaigns should be a question of political issues, and not a question of the construction of this work or of that. And so long as the Minister for Mines, the Minister for Works, or any other member of the present Government makes the construction of public works an election issue, disputes of this sort will continue to crop up. I desire to say I had nothing to do with the publication of that wire; but I repeat that I should have been perfectly justified, after the statement that appeared in the paper, in wiring either to **MR. JOHNSON** or to **MR. TROY**, if I thought they were making that an issue at the recent election, a statement of the works to be constructed by the Government. Now in regard to piecrust promises, a question on which one cannot touch without impeaching the Government; theirs are all piecrust promises—the Fremantle dock, the Black Range railway, the Chapman railway, the promise to reduce salaries. The Attorney General said he would support no Cabinet unless they made the question

of Constitutional reform, reduction of the franchise qualification for the Upper House, the first measure for discussion.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** Is there not a Bill before the House? The hon. member blocks it.

**MR. BATH:** It is certainly not the first item for discussion, though it may be the last; but I will not indulge in prophecy. I desire to say in regard to the Geraldton election that I fail to see the justification for the talk about discreditable tactics; and the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Eddy) ought to be the last to indulge in statements of that kind, or to weave them into a question to the Attorney General. The member for Coolgardie ought to know something about the methods employed at his election; and whoever indulges in such statements, that member ought to be the last to do so. I say the attacks on the members for Guildford and Mt. Magnet were absolutely unjustifiable, and if those responsible for the attacks have any ground of complaint, let them take action against the newspaper which published the telegram, and probably they will soon find, unless they quickly take action themselves, action will be taken against them at no distant date.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. N. J. Moore, who still showed signs of injuries from a carriage accident, and was greeted with general applause) said: I do not intend to indulge in any "heroics," but I must say I take strong exception to what the Leader of the Opposition has stated as to the susceptibilities of Ministerial supporters being smoothed down by the construction of public works in their districts. He has only to cast his eye over the schedule of the Loan Bill submitted the other night by the Treasurer, and will see that of all the railway projects submitted, something like 350 miles of railway, costing between £600,000 and £700,000, are to be built in constituencies represented by Opposition members. I think the hon. member should at least give the Government credit for looking at the whole question of railways construction with a view to what is best in the interests of the State, and not as to what is best for any particular constituency. The other day the hon. member

asked me a question regarding the Geraldton election. Mr. Carson had made some statement to the effect that he had no doubt it would be found when the Loan Bill schedule came down the Black Range railway would be included. Mr. Bath asked the following question:—

Is the statement made by Mr. Carson on the 6th November—that the construction of a railway from Mount Magnet to Black Range, and the construction of the Chapman railway, are being provided for on the Loan Estimates—correct? 2. If so, is it customary to first make the information public in connection with an election contest, instead of through the usual channel of presentation to Parliament?

The reply was:—

These railways, together with the other railway proposals mentioned in the policy speech, are now under consideration, and an announcement will be made to the House in the usual way when the Loan Bill is introduced.

That reply was given so that it could not be said the Government had tried to influence an election. Had we been trying to make capital out of that railway project, we should have simply replied that Mr. Carson's statement was correct; but in order that we should in no way influence the contest which was taking place, we framed the reply I have read.

**MR. BATH:** Mr. Carson was using the promise of the railway to influence the election.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** He was indulging in prophecy.

**THE PREMIER:** Possibly he made the statement. As to the Chapman railway, one of the reasons for not definitely bringing in the project was the fact of four different starting points being suggested; and before a line can be scheduled in a Loan Bill, it is absolutely necessary to be able not only to name the starting point but the terminal point also. One proposal is to start off the Northampton line, another to start from a point near Geraldton, another to start from Mullewa, and another to start from what is known as the Northern Gully. Whoever was responsible for the action which forms the basis of this motion, I think members must on reflection regret that such action was taken. It is not an action of which anyone can well be proud; and apparently up to date no one in this Chamber will take the credit of being the author of the publication brought out on

the day of the Geraldton election. Certain statements were made on a previous occasion in connection with an election; and some members will recollect that during the contest for the Pilbarra seat a wire was sent from Perth purporting to come from the Leader of the Opposition, reflecting very discreditably on the Ministerial candidate, Mr. Hopkins. On that occasion Mr. Troy afterwards stated that he and not the Leader of the Opposition was responsible for the wire. It is easy to circulate statements of this kind on the eve or on the day of an election, and very difficult to refute such statements. But I have it on the very best authority that this particular "dodger" was circulated by men sent out for that purpose from Geraldton, and I am prepared to give the name of the gentleman who has informed me in writing of that occurrence. He is Mr. James Kidd, a gentleman well known and respected in Geraldton. I have that information from him in a private letter, and he remarks there is not the slightest doubt that the effect of the wire altered the result of the election. I can only say in conclusion, I regret that Mr. Brown was not elected under more favourable auspices and I hope he will make as good a member as the man whose place he takes.

MR. W. T. EDDY (Coolgardie): As the conduct of my election has been attacked, I desire to reply to some of the remarks of members opposite. I am quite satisfied, considering what I have heard and what I know, that I shall be acting fairly in asking the question which I have placed on the Notice Paper. Any common-sense man who reads the head-lines in the extra special edition of the *Geraldton Express* must admit it is absolutely ridiculous to assert that the head-lines and the telegram were not directly intended to influence the election. The member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy) has attacked me and insinuated that I have been making an attack on the characters of Opposition members. I give that a direct denial. I had no intention of the kind. And as regards the member who has been returned (Mr. T. L. Brown), I am quite prepared to say that the principals at elections do not know half the trickery indulged in by those who assist them. The member for Mount Magnet stated my attitude was de-

plorable. In reply I tell him that I have nothing to deplore in the attitude I have assumed. He also told the House that probably my electors will deal with me as Mr. Carson has been dealt with. I tell the hon. member that I wish my electors to deal with me. I would sooner have them to deal with than the rag-tag opinions of the member for Mount Magnet.

MR. TROY: My opinion of you is not very favourable.

MR. EDDY: I am referring to the gentleman who stated that my action was deplorable. I submit there must be some fear in the minds of members who are making so deplorable a fuss about this affair. If not guilty, why such loud cries of alarm? I am really beginning to think that after all the cap must fit some of the members who have so much to say. I do not care what members on the other side may think. I say here, and I believe the majority of the people will think the same when the facts are made known, that this telegram was an election trick that lost Mr. Carson his seat. If the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson), who has been mentioned, and others, have had nothing to do with this trickery, they surely have nothing to fear from so legitimate a question as I have tabled. I say there is no reason at all, if we are fair and honourable, for evading legitimate questions. The member for Mount Magnet wishes to soap over the action of the owner of the *Geraldton Express*, a member of another House. I consider there is only one fair inference. It is just as well to say what we think. I think he must have been looking for a billet. It was stated that the owner of the paper had nothing to do with the telegram, and had no wrongful intention. Well, what was the object in publishing a special edition of so extraordinary a nature? There is only one reply. It was published with the object of injuring Mr. Carson. The member for Mount Magnet says no importance was attached to the wire. He may, perhaps, be truthful and sincere in that statement, but anyhow it is altogether against the facts, because we have it on the best authority that the scheme must have been thought out; that pickets were in readiness at Geraldton, and the extras were scattered broad-

cast throughout the electorate at a critical juncture on the day of election, when there was no opportunity of refuting the statements in the telegram.

MR. WALKER: Do you really believe that?

MR. EDDY: I do believe it; I am sure of it.

MR. HOLMAN: He is judging by his own tactics.

MR. EDDY: In reply to the hon. member's nasty interjection about my election, I say he is always throwing out dirty interjections from his seat.

MR. HOLMAN: They are true.

MR. EDDY: You say they are true; but fortunately your word goes for very little. Let the public judge of the rights or wrongs of this case. As to this afternoon's performance, I think some members opposite have taken up considerable time in a sort of "dress rehearsal;" and when the Leader of the Opposition speaks of the "gallery" performance on the part of the Attorney General and members on the Government side, he should take it to himself for putting up a very decent "gallery" performance. The member accuses the Attorney General of "heroics." What has the member's attitude been this afternoon? We have had a long harangue of personal abuse, irrelevant to the direct question before us. The Leader of the Opposition tells us that these head-lines were perfectly justifiable. The right-thinking people of the State will take notice of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, and it will be interesting to know whether his statements are endorsed by the electors of Western Australia or not. The Leader of the Opposition referred somewhat sarcastically to me and to my election, saying I ought to have some knowledge of elections. Certainly I have. I have a knowledge of the Leader of the Opposition fighting at an election against me, and I think really after all that was one of the influences that helped me to win the election. The hon. member who is supposed to be a leader in politics took a hand in a political meeting, and started off by giving, or rather announcing to give, a comic recitation "How McDowall topped the poll." Let me tell members that the intelligent electors were not to be insulted; therefore the Leader of the Opposition never got the recitation off

his chest. If there is nothing to fear, then why this trouble and fuss and flutter? But I say an extraordinary aspect was brought about; and when I ask whether on the assumption of the publication—

MR. WALKER: Who told you to put the question?

MR. BOLTON: Premier No. 3.

MR. EDDY: My question was fair and legitimate, and I leave it to members of the House and the electors of the country to say whether I am right in the action I have taken.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): It may be very refreshing to hear the member for Coolgardie explain his position in this matter, but his position is apparent to all. He has evidently been made the catpaw by some Minister to place this matter before the Chamber.

MR. EDDY: Who said so? I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

MR. SPEAKER: The member must not cast any reflection on another member.

MR. HOLMAN: If the hon. member denies it, I withdraw.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw it unconditionally.

MR. HOLMAN: I withdraw it. It comes very nice to hear the member for Coolgardie talking about tactics at elections when we consider the tactics adopted at his own election a short time ago. The tactics adopted were a disgrace to the country, and the man who represents a seat in Parliament won by such tactics as adopted then has nothing to be thankful for.

MR. EDDY: What tactics?

MR. HOLMAN: You know the tactics. The hon. member has insulted the intelligence of the House by bringing this matter before it—I cannot say at the behest of someone else. It is insinuated that we adopted dirty tactics in connection with the election. That has been absolutely denied by every member inside and outside the House. The hon. member said if the cap fitted let members wear it. That was a cowardly way of making a charge which the hon. member was afraid to make straightforwardly inside or outside this House. It has been denied on this side that any member had anything to do with the sending of the

telegram. To read the telegram itself shows that it came from someone in the profession—one of the pressmen in the State and no one else. It is part of the same report which was published in the *West Australian*.

MR. EDDY: Are the head-lines in the telegram?

MR. HOLMAN: They are not. Any newspaper has a right to express its idea by head-lines in the newspaper; and when we read a newspaper we know the head-lines are empty, the same as the head-line of the hon. member for Coolgardie. In connection with this telegram, it was sent, I see, after the promises made by the Minister for Works and the Minister for Mines, who made a special trip to Geraldton.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What promises?

MR. HOLMAN: The promises about the Loan Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Read them out.

MR. HOLMAN: I have not the statements here, but there were statements made by the Minister for Works at Geraldton in reference to the Loan Bill, which show that the hon. member would stop at nothing to try to win a seat.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said "promises": give me one of the promises.

MR. HOLMAN: Your speech was nothing but promises. In connection with the telegram, had I thought the publication of the statement of the Treasurer would have affected the result of the election, I would have sent a wire through.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Although false.

MR. HOLMAN: It was absolutely true. The statement that was wired through was absolutely true and was published in both newspapers in Perth, and this telegram was a copy from the Perth newspapers. The telegram simply says:—

In the Assembly the Colonial Treasurer (Mr. Frank Wilson) moved the second reading of the Loan Bill. He said the Government proposed that railways be first undertaken, and six Bills be introduced, namely Greenhills line to Quairading, Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun, Donnybrook to Preston, Coolgardie to Norseman, Narrogin to Wickepin, and the completion of the Armadale-Jandakot line.

These were the words the Treasurer spoke.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The whole of the truth?

MR. HOLMAN: The absolute truth, and nothing but the truth.

MR. EWING: What has happened to the other line?

MR. HOLMAN: It is like the Fremantle dock. A loan was raised for the construction of a dock at Fremantle ten years ago; but that dock is no nearer completion now than it was at that time. The Loan Bill, or a great part of it, contains items which are to be dangled before the eyes of the people simply to keep the Government in power by promises for the future. The Attorney General stated that this was not an accident. It certainly was not, and the Attorney General said that somebody must have moved the springs. If the action of the pressmen in the gallery in sending a telegram to newspapers is moving the springs, then it is all right.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The publication of the special headings.

MR. HOLMAN: When I was fighting an election in Cue 12 months ago the newspapers which were usually published on a Saturday were brought out on Thursday and given away to assist the other side. This was an "extraordinary" as is usually brought out by country newspapers when anything important has taken place. I have seen smaller matters than this happen and special issues brought out, but this is a matter that affects Geraldton in a great degree, the continuation of the line. I have seen scores of "specials" sent out when a late telegram has been received, so that people can get hold of the news at the earliest possible moment, and it needs no extra expense to publish such a pamphlet because it is only a proof sheet. The actual telegram appears in the newspaper that came out on the following day. There were the same head-lines, and everything else appears in the paper that was published the next day. There is nothing in that at all. We have heard a lot said about this election, but there has never been a greater prostitution of power than was shown in the case of the Fremantle election and right through. I will just read what occurred in the case of the Fremantle election,

and then ask what action the Attorney General took. This is what took place. Mr. Needham said :—

What had been told the police? Why, that if Mr. Price was returned members of the Police Force would receive 6d. a day more pay and four hours off on Sunday. Now, he had never said Mr. Price had done that, but he would tell them who did it. I was asked last night if I could give the name of the person. My answer is that the gentleman is a prominent canvasser for Mr. Price, and one of his most enthusiastic supporters, and he had appealed to every policeman in Fremantle, and extended to him the promises to which I have referred. That gentleman's name is Mr. Beresford, a solicitor in this town.

Did the Attorney General take action against that person? Greater prostitution and corruption never took place than offering policemen sixpence a day and to knock them off four hours on Sunday.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: So you believe it to be true?

MR. HOLMAN: The statement was made on the public platform at Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You were making all sorts of statements, and you were not pulled up for them.

MR. HOLMAN: The statements are true.

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed the hon. member a great deal of latitude because his remarks had a slight bearing on the question but he must not proceed farther with any remarks except they bear on the question at issue. The Fremantle election has nothing whatever to do with the motion. I have allowed the hon. member to go a certain distance, but I can allow him to go no farther.

MR. HOLMAN: The statement was made at Fremantle during the election time.

#### AS TO LATITUDE IN DEBATE.

MR. SPEAKER: The question of urgency is the statements made in the *Morning Herald* and the *West Australian*, as also the reported statement by the Attorney General as published in the *West Australian* of the 26th instant, and in Parliament by the Minister for Mines and the member for Coolgardie, relative to the Geraldton election. The hon. member's reference does not bear on that question.

MR. HOLMAN: You allowed a discussion on the construction of the Ravens-thorpe railway.

MR. SPEAKER: I shall not allow the member to proceed in that strain.

MR. FOULKES: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member said that you allowed a discussion on the construction of the Ravens-thorpe railway. I say that there was no discussion, and I ask the member to withdraw that statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is absolutely incorrect in saying that I allowed any discussion upon that railway. I have allowed a good deal of latitude, because it is a matter which perhaps reflects on hon. members, and I have endeavoured to consider hon. members' feelings as far as I can. If the hon. member has stated that I allowed discussion on that railway, he must withdraw unconditionally.

MR. HOLMAN: In accordance with the forms of the House, I have to withdraw; but when *Hansard* appears I think it will in all probability be found that the railway was mentioned.

MR. SPEAKER: It may have been mentioned. The hon. member must know from his long experience in this House that it is impossible to close hon. members' mouths on every irrelevant point. It may have been mentioned, but I did not allow discussion on it, and therefore the hon. member was bound to withdraw. I have accepted his withdrawal.

#### RESUMED.

MR. HOLMAN: Dealing with the question before the House, I much regret that I am not allowed to bring forward parallel cases to show what a big mouthful is made of this, while other instances have been allowed to go by without notice taken of them. I should have liked to cite parallel cases of absolutely corrupt practices, in which the present Ministry have taken no action.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: To whom do you refer when you mention corrupt practices?

MR. WALKER: Fremantle.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Fremantle.

MR. HOLMAN: I am not allowed to mention to whom I refer.

MR. SPEAKER: I have no desire to curtail the hon. member's remarks, any more than those of any other hon. mem-



ber, and he knows that full well. The hon. member would be perfectly in order in drawing comparisons, but not in introducing matters foreign to the subject before the House. I will give the hon. member all possible latitude, but I must call him to order when he is out of order.

## POINT OF ORDER.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** In reply to a question from me, the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) said that when the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) referred to "corrupt practices," he was referring to Fremantle. Am I allowed to ask that that interjection be withdrawn?

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the hon. member says the statement is not true, it must be withdrawn.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** It is untrue, and I therefore request, sir, that you ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the member for Kanowna has made a statement which another hon. member says is not correct, then of course the statement must be withdrawn.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Does the hon. member say I was guilty of corrupt practices at Fremantle?

**MR. WALKER:** I do not.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I accept that statement.

**MR. WALKER:** I distinctly said these things had occurred at Fremantle, corrupt practices.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Is the hon. member allowed to make that statement?

**OPPOSITION MEMBERS:** Certainly.

**MR. SPEAKER** (to the Minister for Works): I do not think the member for Kanowna has accused you. If he does accuse you, certainly he must withdraw; but of course there are many things occurring in elections at Fremantle and elsewhere.

## RESUMED.

**MR. HOLMAN:** When I was called to order, I was reading an extract from a paper published in connection with the Fremantle election, showing that an attempt was made to bribe certain persons

with a view to securing their votes for the present Minister for Works.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Do you say I attempted to bribe certain persons?

**MR. HOLMAN:** Yes; I was reading a statement that was made.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Do you say I attempted to bribe? Be explicit; be a man.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I read the statement from the Press. As I cannot refer to that matter, I shall deal as closely as I can with the question before the House, namely the telegram published at Geraldton. In connection with that telegram, the facts are as follow. I should not for a moment have hesitated to send exactly the same telegram myself to Geraldton, and I should have considered myself perfectly justified. Farther, I consider that any person, pressman, private individual, or member of Parliament, would be perfectly justified in sending that telegram to Geraldton on that Wednesday after the Treasurer's speech had been delivered. The telegram is true in every respect, and those who have stated it to be a bogus telegram are absolutely lying. We had the Minister for Mines rising on Wednesday night to make certain statements in regard to the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson), who was alleged to be reading certain bogus telegrams in Geraldton. That again is perfectly untrue. There was no foundation whatsoever for the statement, and the statement was made only with an intent to injure the member for Guildford, because we know the member for Guildford was in Geraldton at that time, in the same way as Ministers have fought to strengthen their party in the House. We know the statement made by the member for Coolgardie to-day, that because the proprietor of this newspaper, who holds a seat in another place, was a member of the late Government, and a more honest and straightforward man than any member of the present Government—

## POINT OF ORDER.

**MR. SPEAKER:** That is a reflection. The hon. member must withdraw. That is a reflection on Ministers, and must be withdrawn.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I must withdraw, and I—

MR. FOULKES: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member said "I must withdraw." I take exception to the form of withdrawal, and I insist that the hon. member withdraw unreservedly.

MR. HOLMAN: I withdraw, sir, unreservedly.

MR. BATH: The Minister for Works was really responsible for this.

#### RESUMED.

MR. HOLMAN: As for the statement of the member for Coolgardie that Mr. Drew was looking for a billet, I consider it disgraceful in the extreme. As I have stated before, I can, or I could, produce scores of the same special editions published in little country towns of this State when any matter of importance is up, and an important piece of information is received on a day which is not publication day.

MINISTERIAL MEMBER: Can you produce any extra-special editions?

MR. HOLMAN: Yes; extra-special editions published times without number. Even in connection with ordinary election returns, if a country newspaper receives a telegram giving election returns, that telegram is at once set in type and run off on galley sheets, and scores of these are distributed. When there are two newspapers in a place like Geraldton, it is only natural for a newspaper proprietor with any enterprise at all to make an important announcement at the very earliest possible moment. [THE MINISTER FOR WORKS interjected.] Speaking for the whole of the members on this side of the House, I think the tongue of the Minister for Works wags a little bit too loosely. [THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Is that so?] In connection with this matter I believe there was another special edition published containing telegrams from the Minister for Works, which telegrams made certain statements; so that after all it is only a question of journalistic enterprise.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: And a question of time.

MR. HOLMAN: Had this publication, or any publication whatever, been made with a view of furthering the candidature of the man supported by the present Government, no notice would have been taken. No matter what action had been taken to secure the return of a Govern-

ment supporter, no notice would have been taken by the Attorney General, no matter how corrupt or dirty the practices might be. But because a telegram which any honourable man might send without loss of dignity or self-respect, because a true telegram is despatched, members on the Government side of the House, simply in order to cover their own tracks, because they have lost a seat—and they will lose a good many more seats if the people only get an opportunity of expressing their opinion of the Government—with a view to belittling the defeat the Government have sustained and the victory which the Opposition have gained, and with a view to causing the people of this country to believe that members on this side of the House adopted unmanly and disreputable tactics, refer to the matter as it has been referred to on the other side of the House. The only telegram which was sent was in all probability despatched by a paid pressman to a paper in Geraldton, and that paper published the telegram in a spirit of journalistic enterprise—a fair telegram which was open to any man to send, because it gives the exact words of the Treasurer. The action of the Government in taking the matter up and in trying to cast a slur on members of this side of the House will show them up in their true light, because it cannot be denied that any tactics whatever the Government could possibly use in order to extend their power they have never failed to adopt.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price): During this debate my name has been mentioned on one or two occasions; firstly with reference to my visit to Geraldton, and secondly in connection with my re-election. I do not wish to extend the ground already covered by the debate, but I desire to say that any publications at my elections were simply in the nature of replies to misstatements circulated by my opponents. I venture to think that any man up for election is entitled at any time to contradict the misstatements of his opponent. It has twice been stated from the front Opposition bench that I went to Geraldton and made certain promises to the electors there with a view to influencing the election; but what I did at Geraldton was to

take two absolute misstatements of the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy), and pretty effectively expose them to the electors of Geraldton.

MR. COLLIER: Not very effectively.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You ask the member for Mount Magnet. He can tell you about that.

MR. COLLIER: Better ask the electors.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I ask the hon. member who heard that speech to rise in his place and say whether by word or innuendo or insinuation, or by any method whatever, I endeavoured to induce the Geraldton electors to vote for Mr. Carson by reason of any promises which I made as a member of the Government. I think the new member for Geraldton (Mr. T. L. Brown) will bear me out, when I say that at a reception in the Council Chambers on that afternoon I stated that in the peculiar circumstances in which I was placed it behoved me to refrain from reference to local topics, and that under no circumstances would I make any statement in reply to requests. I endeavoured to play my part honourably and fairly up there, and I ask members to give from my speeches quotations bearing out the remarks which they have made concerning my conduct at Geraldton.

MR. BATH: You promised that members on this side of the House were going to oppose the Loan Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has been said that I made promises to the electors of Geraldton. What were those promises? Hon. members surely do not stand up, without some ground, to make utterly reckless statements.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: We will get your speech.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member should have been prepared with extracts from my speech. I submit that this is not a fair method of procedure at all. I do not remember that I made any promises, though I may have referred incidentally to the Chapman railway among all the other railways which the Government were proposing. If I did mention the Chapman railway, however, I laid no stress on it, or any other work. Therefore, to describe my attitude as one of hanging out promises before the electors is distinctly and emphatically unfair, and one which no

quotation from my speech will bear out. This is the sort of thing we have to put up with. Our actions are misrepresented in this House, from the front Opposition bench, in this manner. These statements are scattered broadcast through the country, and when we come to investigate them we find absolutely nothing in them. I have listened to hon. members opposite with the utmost care, and I suppose that what we are asked to believe is in the following points which I have briefly noted: first, that the special edition of the *Express* was not intended to influence the election; secondly, that this issue on election day was a coincidence; thirdly, that the editor and proprietor of the paper takes no part or interest whatever in politics.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: Who said that?

MR. BATH: It is only assumption.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Fourthly, that the publication was probably intended to help Mr. Carson. This is the sort of thing we are asked to believe.

MR. WALKER: Misrepresentation.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Those are the fair inferences from the remarks which have been made. The editor and proprietor of that paper, it is to be noted, who published that special edition at the opportune moment, was intimately associated with hon. members on the other side of the House in the last Government.

MR. BATH: Not the proprietor. The proprietor was at Northampton on the day of the election, because his father was dying.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We know perfectly well that the proprietor's political opinions give the complexion to the newspaper; and I am not going to say that this was a big conspiracy, but I do ask the public of this State to question themselves whether the publication was a pure coincidence, and whether the publication was in any way intended to influence the election. Let them form their own judgment on the question. Had this sort of thing happened in connection with Government supporters, the country would have rung from one end to the other with the complaints of Oppositionists. I have said, and I say again, that the circular issued during my election campaign at Fre-

mantle was issued in reply to certain misstatements made broadcast throughout Fremantle, to the effect that as a Minister I could do nothing for the town. Those statements were made at every street corner in Fremantle; I was entitled to contradict them; and farthermore, if a similar thing happens at any election with which I am connected, I will issue a similar dodger. I leave it to members on the other side to say whether since I assumed the position I occupy I have abused that position in favour of the electorate I represent. If my district has been entitled to anything, I have not been afraid to give it. On the other hand, I have to appear before my electors sometime within the next two years, and to answer for my actions, just as the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) will have to answer for his actions in connection with the charges against railway officials.

MR. BOLTON: And I can do it too.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Judge did not think so.

MR. BOLTON: But the electors do.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I sometimes regret the hon. member has not another Commission hanging over his head.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister is not in order.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: While that inquiry was pending the hon. member was very quiet.

MR. HOLMAN: Is the Minister in order in thus referring to a Royal Commission?

MR. SPEAKER: I think the Minister is not deaf. I have already drawn his attention to the fact that he should not make such a reference.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I withdraw unreservedly. In my election campaign I had to answer certain remarks made against me. The people of Fremantle know whether during the campaign I behaved dishonourably, and they know whether, since I attained my present position, I have in any way prostituted it in order to grant to my electors gifts or privileges which I had no right to grant. And I venture to say that to compare the publication of this "special" without any preceding charges, without anything whatever to give rise to it except the exigencies of the moment—to compare that with the dodger which I

issued in reply to the street-corner misstatements of my opponents as to what I could do for that town as a member of the Government, is an unfair, unreasonable, and unjust comparison, and one which I fully expected from members in Opposition.

MR. W. C. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): It is fortunate that this question has come up to-night, because the discussion may result in our having for the future fearless and honest election campaigns. It appears the Attorney General took great exception to the headlines of a newspaper printed in Geraldton, and to one line in particular which referred to "piecrust promises." I maintain that the promises of the Government should undoubtedly be so characterised. The Attorney General stated that a piecrust promise consisted in promising a certain thing to a district and then not fulfilling or giving effect to that promise. I will ask him, what have his Government done with regard to the Fremantle dock?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: More than the Government with which you were connected.

MR. ANGWIN: I am not speaking of the Government with which I was connected; I am not referring to the member for Fremantle; I am referring to the Government with which he is connected.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: And for whose actions I take every responsibility.

MR. ANGWIN: I hope you will. Here is a statement of a Minister:—

As Minister he could say that the Bill for the Fremantle dock would be brought down next session.

This was a statement by a Minister of the Crown, and I maintain that an answer to a question in this House a few days ago clearly shows that statement to be a piecrust promise, because the statement was made on the 17th May of this year.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Who made that statement?

MR. ANGWIN: The Hon. James Price, Minister for Works.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have looked up the reports of my speeches, and find that on several occasions I referred to the introduction

of a Bill in this House extending the powers of the Harbour Trust. On one occasion I find I was reported as the hon. member now states; but that is an incorrect report, my promise being simply for an extension of the powers of the Harbour Trust. I ask that the hon. member's statement be withdrawn.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw, as exception is taken to his statement.

MR. ANGWIN: I wish you, sir, and other members present, to understand that this is not a misstatement of mine. I quoted from a newspaper.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Did you see the report in another newspaper?

MR. ANGWIN: This is the only report I have seen.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why read one report and not others? Come to me and I will show you the others.

MR. ANGWIN: As to any matters referring to the town in which I reside, I generally read the local paper. This is a report which appeared in the local paper. The Minister says he did not make the statement. I withdraw my statement that he did make it. But the report states a distinct promise was made by him as Minister and not as Mr. Price. I mention this only to show clearly that the head-line on the small slip of paper printed in Geraldton was a true statement, if the statement I have quoted from a Fremantle paper be correct; for if it be, the promises of the Government were piecrust promises, easily broken, and actually broken in regard to the Fremantle dock.

MR. T. WALKER (Kanowna): I do not see any necessity for the exhibition of feeling, first by the Attorney General and lastly by the Minister for Works.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, no. We are to sit down under insults.

MR. WALKER: If there have been any insults, the Attorney General is responsible for them.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: How?

MR. WALKER: By insinuating that this (Opposition) side of the House was in any way responsible for that "dodger," as an hon. member calls it, which appeared on the day of election in Geraldton.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member attempts to misrepresent me.

#### POINTS OF ORDER.

MR. WALKER: On a point of order; the Minister is accusing me of what I have not endeavoured to do. I insist on his statement being withdrawn.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister will be in the right if he really rises to a point of order, although the practice has been abused. When a member is speaking, other members rise in their places to make explanations. Strictly according to the Standing Orders, they ought not to rise until the member speaking sits down; but it is a common practice for the member speaking to give way to members who wish to speak immediately in explanation. Unless the member whose speech has been interrupted is inclined to sit down, I cannot compel him to do so to allow another to make an explanation. But if the Minister rises to a point of order, I must hear him.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: A statement has been made—

MR. WALKER: The hon. member has accused me of misrepresenting him—a direct accusation. He must withdraw that.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Let me point out what you have done.

MR. SPEAKER: Do I understand the Minister to rise to a point of order? If so, he must state his point of order without any prefix at all.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member said that when I was speaking I insinuated with regard to the preparation and publication of a certain document referred to here to-night that members opposite were parties to its publication.

MR. BOLTON: I certainly understood you to say that.

MR. SCADDAN: So did everybody else.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I say that is absolutely incorrect, and I ask the hon. member to withdraw that expression, and I state in asking for its withdrawal that what I said was, "Until the member for Mt. Magnet spoke."

MR. WALKER: This is not a point of order.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is a perfect point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister is rising to a point of order to the effect that

the hon. member (Mr. Walker) misquoted him and misrepresented him; and if the Minister denies the truth of the statement, the hon. member must withdraw according to the rules of the House.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** May I point out what I did say?

**MR. SPEAKER:** You were making a speech, and that was out of order.

**MR. WALKER:** I have not stated that the Attorney General accused this side of being guilty of preparing and arranging or doing anything else with the publication in the Geraldton paper. I have not stated that; therefore his point of order cannot have any value. If he desires me to be ruled out of order for certain words I have uttered, he must quote me correctly. Then I shall be prepared, if I have transgressed the rules of the House, honourably to withdraw.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Attorney General, I presume, must be satisfied that the hon. member did not insinuate there was any misrepresentation.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** I am satisfied.

#### RESUMED.

**MR. WALKER:** I say now that the exhibition of irritability just given by the Attorney General in itself constitutes a tendency to disorder, and to the irritation of members on this side of the House. His treatment of us is unfair. I say again there has been nothing whatever in the event which has transpired that should occasion all the ill-feeling, recriminations, and accusations veiled or insinuated, that may be taken personally by any member on this side of the House. As a matter of comparison I should like to read questions recently asked in this Chamber. They were apparently prepared for the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Eddy), and they have given rise to this discussion. I would draw attention to the wording of them.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** In the absence of the member for Coolgardie, it has been insinuated that those questions were prepared for him. The hon. member denied that they were.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I was particularly careful to notice that the hon. member (Mr. Walker) said they were apparently

prepared. The statement has been denied, but the hon. member is not out of order when he uses the word "apparently."

**MR. WALKER:** I am commenting on the manner in which the Attorney General turned those questions to account and the emphasis that he laid on certain assumptions made in the question. [Questions read as printed.] Those are questions that would give the Attorney General the opportunity of which he apparently availed himself this afternoon.

At 6.30, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

**MR. WALKER (continuing):** I was drawing attention to the manner in which this debate had been brought about, in consequence of notice having been given in this Chamber of certain hypothetical questions, the nature of which casts a shadow of suspicion. I am not going to traverse the same ground, but anyone looking into these questions must see first of all they are out of order, and that they are down on the Notice Paper for a specific purpose; not to gain information as to facts that have occurred, but to obtain some expression of opinion, perhaps on the lines already stated in the newspapers. The case presented in these questions is upon assumption. One question reads, "Whether on the assumption that this publication," etc., and the other questions follow on the same line. They come under the category of hypothetical and of assumed questions that are not allowable in a Legislative Assembly, and they are furthermore out of order in so much as they are liable to reflect, especially in the way they have been drafted, upon certain sections of the House; they are disrespectful. The Leader of the Opposition has been particularly abused for, as it was put, identifying himself with an alleged wrong that occurred at Geraldton; but already the Opposition have been placed in a very invidious position by the attitude assumed by the Government in regard to that publication at Geraldton. Certain members in this House approached the Attorney-General—but, before that, should say that a certain section of the daily Press, by misleading head-lines and

by what I believe to be an absolutely untruthful reflection on the dignity of the Opposition side of the House during the course of that election, had already drawn attention to the point. Let me read this telegram appearing in the *West Australian* :—

Considerable feeling is manifested here (Geraldton) over the election and the issue of an extra from the *Express* office which was largely circulated during the polling in Geraldton and outlying places. It is estimated that Mr. Carson lost 40 votes. The exact head-lines of the publication were as follows—“Piecrust Promises. Black Range and Chapman Railways Shelved. What has Carson Done?” To-day a telegram signed by R. Darling, R. Elliott, and E. Pope was sent to the Attorney General to the following effect:—“Great indignation caused by the publication of bogus telegram *re* Loan Bill during election, which affected many votes. Is not that sufficient to upset election?”

Who can read that without coming to the conclusion that somewhere or other there was an accusation of unfair tactics, unjust and dishonourable tactics—in fact the word has been used by the Attorney General to-night—unfair, unjust, and dishonourable? I think those expressions were frequently on the lips of the hon. member, and the insinuation was that these unfair tactics had been used by this (Opposition) side of the House, by some member or members on this side of the House. That was the supposition. To show how it was not this side of the House that brought forward any useless questions, but that it was the other side of the House backed up by Ministers of the Crown, we have only to refer to a publication in the *West Australian* as follows :—

Mr. Eddy (the member for Coolgardie) asked the Attorney General whether if the accounts of the incident in the Perth newspapers were true, he would take steps to punish the persons who were responsible for the circulation of this false information. Speaking to a representative of the *West Australian* on Saturday, Mr. Keenan said that he was causing inquiries to be made into the circumstances of what appeared to be a most discreditable incident.

If the matter went no farther than that, it is for this side of the House at all events to clear itself from any participation in any discreditable incident. The accusation inferentially was made before the motion was moved to-night, that some discreditable incident took place at

Geraldton connected with the recent election. The article goes on :—

“I have sent to Geraldton,” Mr. Keenan said, “for a copy of the publication containing the alleged report of the Colonial Treasurer’s speech. From what I can gather at present, the whole affair seems to have been carefully prearranged.”

And one cannot but notice how to-night the Attorney General played upon that point, that there was a conspiracy, that the strings were pulled, and that a little army of horsemen gathered around the newspaper office and at a given signal galloped headlong, like the horses that carried the good news from Ghent to Aix, to distribute this marvellous publication all over the country. That was the statement, and with his imagination running rampant in this way the Attorney General seems to think and really asserts that there appeared to be a prearrangement, and that it had not only been prearranged, but carefully prearranged. The article continues the remarks of the Attorney General :—

The telegram, and what purported to be a report of the speech of the Colonial Treasurer were circulated only when it was impossible to reply to them. As I said, I am having inquiries made, and if I can find out who were responsible for these false telegrams—

Mark this accusation by a responsible Minister of the Crown, “these false telegrams”!

they shall certainly be prosecuted.”

I submit that when the public read an account like that they cannot help but associate it with the Labour party who had won the victory, and clearly it is an assertion tantamount to this, that the election had been won by a bogus telegram as one paper has it, by false telegrams as the Attorney General has it, by a prearranged conspiracy and by a dodge or a trick, as the Attorney General put it to-night. Then how can this (Opposition) side of the House remain dumb under such accusations? And all upon what? What actually did occur? In this House last Tuesday night the Treasurer delivered his speech on the Loan Bill. Next day, in the afternoon only, the news reached Geraldton. Now where was the time for any prearrangement, for any conspiracy? Who knew before it had been delivered what the Treasurer was going to say? Who could anticipate his speech? Read

the telegram in conjunction with what appeared in the *West Australian* as a report of the Treasurer's speech, and it is clear to anyone that it is simply a condensed report of what actually occurred. There is no misrepresentation in that telegram, no misrepresentation in any form whatever.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Not in the head-lines?

**MR. WALKER:** The hon member has been the proprietor of a newspaper, and knows that the head-lines are placed there by the man in charge who receives the telegrams. He alone is responsible for them. Supposing this side were guilty of sending the telegram, we would not be responsible for the head-lines. They are put in by whoever is in charge at the newspaper office.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Deal with the publication.

**MR. WALKER:** I am dealing with the publication. We are dealing with this telegram. If I were so inclined I could justify the use of those head-lines. They are justifiable from the character of the speech undoubtedly, because so much was made of this particular Black Range railway. The Minister for Mines himself stood upon a platform in Geraldton, and insisted on that line as a sort of guarantee of the *bona fides* of the present Government, and as a sort of invitation to all present to vote for the Government supporter Mr. Carson; and when after all that had been done, after the Minister for Mines had gone from Perth for the purpose of playing that particular card, the Treasurer in his speech made no allusion to that line, it was a fair thing to say that what had been said by the Minister for Mines had been shelved by the Treasurer. Fair and just; nothing outside of fair and decent journalism, in such comment as that. To show it had no connection with political matters, to show that the head-lines were not of the character imputed to them, there was the same telegram, perhaps sent by the same sender, published at Cue, where the head-lines were even more severe on the Government. They do not say that the matters were "shelved," but "omitted," implying that there was no chance whatever of getting the Black Range railway. That is in another paper. If it was unjust for the Geraldton paper to publish this particular

head-line, "Black Range line shelved," is it not equally unjust for another newspaper to say the line was "omitted?" I am mentioning this to prove that the motive was not political. But let us go a step farther. The Attorney General has said or he implied that there was a conspiracy. The speech on the Loan Bill was delivered here on the Tuesday night; on his own showing, it did not reach Geraldton until the following afternoon; and immediately it reached Geraldton, it was published. Where is the time for all this conspiracy? So many horsemen from all parts of the country given instructions, this one to fly to the north, this one to the east, and that one to the west; that nothing was to prevent them, no creeks, no bridges, no mountains, but that they were to rush forth to the ends of the earth with this particular little bit of telegram in the afternoon. And the inference of the Attorney General is that it was done at a time when nobody could reply to it. If it was so, it was too late to do any harm.

**MR. EWING:** At 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

**MR. WALKER:** The bulk of the people had voted by that time. It was too late to do any practical harm. I have not the keen imagination that sees an army of horsemen around the *Express* office in Geraldton, as stated to suit the whims of the Attorney General and to insinuate dishonesty against the Labour party.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** You have the most vivid imagination in the House.

**MR. WALKER:** The healthiest.

**MR. HEITMANN:** Could you imagine that?

**MR. WALKER:** I do not want to be thrown off my track by any unwarrantable interjections, especially by one who is a past-master in these dodges, as the Attorney General called them. I say there was no time for conspiracy. The absurdity of it is seen at once. I maintain that a gentleman with the acumen of the Attorney General, a gentleman trained in dissecting evidence, who knows something about the fallibility of human nature, the weaknesses of human nature, and what is probable or improbable—I am surprised the Attorney General thinks it at all probable, let alone possible, for a



conspiracy to be arranged after 2 o'clock in the afternoon of the election day, pre-arranged at that time, suddenly pre-arranged. How does he imagine they could find the horsemen, the army of travellers, like lightning darts to fly to the farthest parts of the electorate? The Attorney General lends his position to such an imagination as that, threatening to punish somebody. When the facts are boiled down, what do we find? The telegram is absolutely true—absolutely. A mere condensation of the Treasurer's speech, and such a just condensation as we might expect in a telegram. I know that some fault is found with the head-lines, but nobody outside the newspaper office could be held responsible for them. An attempt was made when we were accused of unfairness and injustice and low-down tactics, by a Minister of the Crown this afternoon, to implicate in this alleged prearranged conspiracy a former Minister of the Labour Government, when as a matter of fact that gentleman was not in his newspaper office, but was miles away from it, and could not have been aware that such a telegram had arrived at his office. Being absent, he could not participate in the formation of the head-lines; he could have had nothing whatever to do with them. Yet the eagerness to associate that gentleman with this particular telegram and these particular head-lines is evident. First of all, it was a bogus telegram that was blazoned to the country to injure the Government party. Now nothing is said about the telegram, and all the criticism is left to the head-lines, ignoring altogether the fact that equally condemnatory head-lines had been published in a newspaper some hundreds of miles away, without any political object. Yet all was done for a political trick—to put it in the language of the Attorney General—because it happened to be published in the afternoon of the election.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Explain that.

**MR. WALKER:** Explain that? The easiest thing. Ask the Minister for Mines about it, for he knows something about newspapers; but I know the Minister for Works knows very little about newspapers. But what does a newspaper do? It takes advantage of public excitement to increase its circulation by pub-

lishing the latest news in which the public are interested. That is what every newspaper does.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Is it the usual custom of this newspaper?

**MR. WALKER:** It is the usual custom of every paper that knows its business, to take advantage of political times to bring out special editions. Every newspaper does that. At election times, every newspaper which does its duty and is not asleep comes out with the progress of the election perhaps three or four times a day—special editions.

**MR. EDDY:** Is that Mr. Carson's paper?

**MR. WALKER:** What?

**MR. EDDY:** The "extraordinary?"

**MR. WALKER:** The condemnation of it was in Carson's paper, I believe. The trick which has struck the member was in a Government paper, and it is from there that the whole thing has issued. If there be any conspiracy and any meanness, it is on the part of those supporting the Government. We know that dodges of all kinds are played at election times, even by the Minister for Works.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** On a point of order, is the member justified in saying that the dodges are played by me at election times?

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the hon. member takes exception to the statement, it must be withdrawn.

**MR. WALKER:** I am sorry to see the member so sensitive. During the debate this afternoon there have been many insinuations thrown out about the Minister for Works and about the publication of this (holding up handbill), which is a "dodge" precisely equivalent to that issued at Geraldton, precisely similar, except that it is more ornamental. The one published at Geraldton was a simple unadorned piece of black and white, nothing specially attractive about it, but simply desirous of conveying the information as soon as it arrived, information of a specially interesting character to the people of Geraldton. That is the one document, so simple and so plain as it is. Here is the other in blood-red ink, like a huge setting sun looming over a lone man on the ocean; and he tells us this, that it was only done in answer to accusations that had been hurled against

him by members of the Labour party. It was a pure answer, and he could never have done it had it not been for the accusations levelled by the Labour party. Let us see if the statement will bear criticism, if his own little "dodger," his own special edition, will bear this criticism?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** He did not say that, for a start.

**MR. WALKER:** The hon. member jumps out of one hole into another. Let us see what it is; let us try to fathom it. It says:—

Fremantle electors, do not be misled. Safeguard your own and the town's interests by voting for James Price.

No answer there. It is a parallel, an absolute parallel. One is a dodger issued at Geraldton, and the other a dodger issued at Fremantle, and it is on this that the hon. member, who would wish to make the accusation of playing tricks to win votes, ought to be silent so long as he is guilty of the same class of conduct. Men living in glass-houses should not throw stones. That is precisely what the Government are doing at the present time.

**MR. EDDY:** You ought to remember that, and take it to yourself.

**MR. WALKER:** I remember a good deal more than the member could teach me of what is right and just.

**MR. EDDY:** And what is wrong.

**MR. WALKER:** I have a good example of what is wrong when I gaze at the hon. member. Is not this another instance of the kind published at Fremantle? The most important point, when speaking of influencing an election, is what is charged against the party by the Attorney General when he accuses us of coming down to tricks in order to obtain votes. This is what the document issued at Fremantle farther says:—

Ask yourselves whether you can help the town best by voting for a Minister of the Crown who is in charge of the Public Works Department, or a private member of a weak Opposition.

Ah, the Opposition is getting a bit too strong for the Minister for Works. It is the strength that the party are getting that makes the Government party lose their temper, and makes them rush into this case with accusations as contemptible as any made by any irresponsible

politician. That is the course the party are pursuing. They do not like to say they were going down into an abyss of unpopularity; but they say this is a bogus telegram, as the Attorney General points out, a false telegram which is shown not to be false, which is shown to be genuine, and it is shown that the telegram had nothing to do with the defeat of Mr. Carson.

**MR. EDDY:** The telegram was all right; it is the head-lines.

**MR. WALKER:** Beaten on one ground, he rushes to another, and beaten on that he goes somewhere else. They have no stand or stability in them; they back down from every stand they take up. You cannot defeat them because they sink into their rat-holes. I submit that this debate has done one good thing to-night: it has shown that this party (Opposition) had absolutely nothing whatever to do with the telegram; and in the next place it has shown that the Government were not beneath resorting to any means short of insinuations and accusations in order to throw mud on this side, to make an apology for the defeat they received by blackening their opponents and insinuating that their characters are not honourable. That is what is shown by the debate to-night. I do not think the matter requires to be farther laboured; but I hope one farther good will come from it, and that is that at no elections henceforth will it be possible for Ministers to go about promising, to go about bribing constituencies to vote for their supporters. Then, if the opposite side remain honourable in that respect, I pledge my word with as much surety as ever I felt in any matter that this side will be perfectly content to leave the question in every issue to the electors themselves.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS (Hon. H. Gregory):** Before the debate concludes, I wish to make just a short statement. I regret the absence at the present moment of the member for Mt. Magnet.

**MR. HOLMAN:** He is in the Chamber. [Mr. Troy returned to his seat.]

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** I was about to say that I regretted his absence because when speaking in Geraldton the other night I was questioned

by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Augwin) regarding a report of my speech made there. I was speaking on the loan proposals of the Government and I was pointing out, referring to statements made in January previously, to the people of Geraldton in regard to decentralisation, that by the construction of these railways they should be enabled to retain the trade of the people of the Murchison district, and that it would be entirely the fault of the traders of Geraldton if they did not retain that trade. I am appealing to the hon. member sitting opposite, and who was sitting in front of me when I was making that statement, to justify the remarks I make in reply to the member for East Fremantle. I think he can bear me out in saying that I made on that occasion no statement which could in the slightest sense be said to hold out any special inducement to those people to vote for either one side or the other. On the day of the election, a little after three o'clock p.m., I received the following telegram from the *Guardian* office at Geraldton :—

Johnson showing telegram that Chapman-Black Range Railways shelved. Wire if correct.

That telegram was signed "*Guardian*." I immediately wired back that the statement was absolutely incorrect, that the Government intended to push forward with the surveys for the works, and that there was no intention on our part of shelving the railways. I had not then the slightest idea how this election was going; and the suggestion here that this statement was made because we were afraid that the election might go against the Government is a futile one, because at that moment not one of us had the slightest idea how the election would end. However, I stated in this House that I could not believe anything so dishonourable had been circulated in the district—

MR. JOHNSON: Conscience pricked you.

THE MINISTER: That I could not believe such a construction had been placed on the circumstances. It was apparent that some telegrams had been sent to Geraldton. The member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) can let the House know whether he produced any telegram whatever in connection with this election. I wired back at once that the

statement was entirely incorrect, and I made in this Chamber the statement that I could not believe any such telegram could have appeared or could have been distributed or circulated in the district. Of course next morning a statement came down and was published in the Press to the effect that telegrams were distributed among or were shown to the people of Geraldton, telegrams to the effect that the Government were shelving the Chapman Railway.

MR. JOHNSON: Telegrams now. It was telegram before.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The statement was published in the morning newspapers, and I certainly think some inquiry should be made in regard to these statements. I received telegrams from other persons—I have the originals in my possession—in connection with certain telegrams which were circulated in that district, and these latter telegrams were all to the one effect that by the speech of the Treasurer the Government were shelving the question of the railway. In several speeches made here to-night there have been references to the manner in which the Government have treated those who sit in Opposition in regard to our loan proposals. The Premier speaking to-night resented those statements, and I share his resentment, representing the Mines Department, more especially knowing that my colleagues know the fight I have made for the purpose of securing every assistance to the mining industry that could be given by means of railways, recognising that in every instance I was trying to assist a district represented by an Opposition member, knowing that night after night grave innuendoes and slurs of every description have been thrown on us in connection with our policy, knowing the statements which were made at the time of the Pilbarra election, whilst at that time by the simple statement of a responsible Minister the Government could have secured the election—it only needed an announcement of our intention to proceed with the construction of the Pilbarra railway, yet not one single word appeared which in any sense could have committed the Government to the construction of that railway. Right through the piece have we in every instance tried to refrain as far as possible from doing anything

which could be held up in the slightest degree either to ridicule or as an evidence that we had attempted for a single instant to bribe a constituency; and this is the reward we get! Hon. members on the other side say that the statements made in this special edition of the *Geraldton* paper, to the effect that the Government intended to shelve the railway, are correct. I say that statement is absolutely incorrect, and that the record of *Hansard* shows conclusively that there was nothing whatever in the speech made by my colleague the Treasurer which could give anyone the slightest right to say that the Government had the remotest intention of shelving this railway.

MR. BOLTON: The Treasurer never even mentioned it.

MR. SCADDAN: And there is nothing to prevent you from speaking about it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) is usually not very particular about what he says, and there are other members equally irresponsible.

MR. BOLTON: Yes; one is on his feet.

THE MINISTER: Of course when the hon. member is not speaking he is not maligning anybody. In the Treasurer's speech, however, most particular reference is made to the railways which the Government intended to press forward by the introduction of Bills. The Treasurer particularised those which the Government intended to bring forward this year. There were some proposals concerning lines already surveyed, and others concerning railways which were looked on as being important and of short length capable of being surveyed during the present year. The Ravens-thorpe line for instance was regarded as one of great importance. No survey has been made there yet, but in the case of that railway it is our intention to bring forward a Bill this year. As regards the Norseman railway, we have the survey, and we intend to bring forward the Bill for the construction of that railway this year. The Treasurer was careful to point out that certain Bills were to be brought forward during the present year, but he went on to say that if time permitted, the other Railway Bills enumerated in the loan measure would also be introduced. There now was a clear indication of the

desire of the Government that if time permitted the Bills enumerated in the loan proposals of the Government would be submitted to the House during this session. The Black Range Railway and the Upper Chapman Railway were enumerated in the schedule of that Loan Bill, and the Government feel themselves justified, should time permit, in bringing forward during the currency of this session measures for the construction of these railways. There was nothing whatever in the Treasurer's speech to say that that would not be done. In connection with the Black Range Railway, there is some question as to construction, the length of the proposed line being 90 miles: moreover, a survey has not yet been completed. I think we should have been justified in stating we would hardly be able to bring forward a measure of the kind at the far-end of the session, because probably it would be said that sufficient information was not available for the House. As regards the Upper Chapman Railway, the Premier has already told the House that four schemes have been submitted by the officers of the department, and that special inquiries will have to be made before the Bill can be brought down. Those facts, however, were not before the House when the Treasurer himself was speaking. They were in the possession of the Treasurer, and in his speech he distinctly pointed out that if time permitted.—

MR. BOLTON: Knowing that it would not.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: How does the hon. member know? We are making here to-night statements which were not in the knowledge of the House then. There was a clear indication that the Government had no desire whatever to shelve those proposals. Had we desired to shelve them, would not some statements have been made to the effect that the evidence we had to hand did not justify the proposals already suggested to be carried out? Was there one word in the speech to the effect that the Government had swerved in the slightest degree with respect to these proposals which had been laid on the table of the House? Not the slightest. There was not the slightest justification for any such statement. Several other matters were dealt

with, and in speaking on this point the Treasurer said :—

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.

Was there any desire to shelve these railways, and was there anything whatever to justify the statement made by the hon. member to the effect that the desire of the Government was to shelve the proposals? Not one single word has been adduced to show that we had any desire or the slightest intention to depart in the slightest degree from the proposals we had brought forward. With regard to certain proposals brought before us, we hardly felt justified in making recommendations to the House; and for the purpose of securing some scope to the Government we provided the sum of £100,000 in our Loan Bill in order that we might bring down Bills for the construction of agricultural railways not enumerated in the schedule to that Bill. However, so far as the schedule is concerned the Government are bound to every item in connection with those loan proposals, and not one word said by any member of the Government could lead any person to the conclusion that we had a desire to shelve any of those proposals. I maintain that the production of the telegram with those head-lines was a most peculiar electioneering dodge. The production of that telegram with those head-lines as a special edition—the member for Mt. Magnet did not read the head-lines when reading the telegram to the House, “Piecrust promises,” and so on.

MR. JOHNSON: What has that to do with the wire?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Those were the statements brought forward by the member for Mt. Magnet during the discussion to-night.

MR. JOHNSON: I thought you were discussing the wire.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: Bogus wire.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member ought to have been listening to the debate. I was speaking about the statement that the Black Range and Chapman Railways were shelved. Then

there was the wire sent me to the effect that telegrams had been received and were being produced in the district to the effect that the Government were shelving these railways.

MR. JOHNSON: They were synonymous wires.

THE MINISTER: They were not; I beg the hon. member's pardon. The wire was sent to the *Guardian*, a newspaper published in the district,

MR. SCADDAN: You did not mention the name when we asked for it.

THE MINISTER: I did not catch the word. I gave it to the Press and to *Hansard*. I handed the telegram straight to *Hansard*, and I have the *Hansard* report here. The telegram says, “Wire if correct—*Guardian*.” There is *Guardian* written here in the *Hansard* report. I handed the telegram in straight away, and it was not an anonymous telegram; not in the slightest sense. There should be every inquiry in regard to these matters, and we should try to find out not only who sent any of these telegrams in connection with these railways, but who were privy to the sending of these telegrams.

MR. JOHNSON: You continually say “telegrams.” Mention something else, some other telegram. It was singular till you spoke. It is plural now.

THE MINISTER: I have not heard that it is plural, unless the hon. member wants to put someone else in the pillory.

MR. JOHNSON: I am waiting to see whom you put in.

THE MINISTER: The only statement I have ever made in connection with this matter was as to the telegram received by me, and to which I immediately replied to the effect that it was incorrect and there was no truth in it. There was no truth in it, and I am trying to point out to the House to-night that there was no truth in the telegram.

MR. JOHNSON: And there was no truth in the telegram you received.

THE MINISTER: I am trying to point out also that in the speech made by the Treasurer there was no justification for any such statement. I have no desire to say anything against the newspaper which published these statements. In connection with the Loan Bill, when first introduced we found the same newspaper published a telegram to the effect that in regard to the Black Range and Chapman

railways the amounts provided were ridiculously inadequate, and the newspaper pointed out that the sum provided for the construction of these railways was altogether ridiculously inadequate for the purpose, thus altogether ignoring the fact that there was another item, a separate item for the purchase of rails and fastenings. In connection with this production I do not think there can be a doubt in the mind of any person that this special edition of that newspaper, in which it was stated that the Government had shelved these two railways, was not only without the slightest justification, but it had a great deal to do with the result of that election. I have no more to say, except that I think every inquiry should be made in connection with these matters. A deliberate statement has been made by someone representing the *Guardian* office, to the effect that telegrams were shown, the purport of which was that the Government were shelving these railways. I think it is a matter that well merits inquiry. There cannot be too much inquiry in a matter of this sort. If members wish to assume that they are being charged with having sent these telegrams, then the inquiry, if they are not guilty of anything of that sort, could well clear the atmosphere and show that they have had nothing to do with the sending of these wires. On the other hand, any persons who sent a telegram to this effect should I think be punished.

MR. SCADDAN: What is the offence you are going to prosecute them for?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: As the hon. member likes straight dealing—

MR. SCADDAN: I like it, but I do not often get it.

THE MINISTER: Does not the hon. member? I think that in connection with a matter of this sort, if anything wrong has been done, the sooner the atmosphere is cleared the better.

MR. HOLMAN: The telegram is absolutely true.

THE MINISTER: That telegram is true.

MR. HOLMAN: The telegram is true.

THE MINISTER: I do not think the hon. member was present when I quoted from the speech made by the Treasurer, and pointed out clearly that the remain-

ing lines will have to be permanently surveyed.

MR. SCADDAN: The question is what they mean by shelving?

THE MINISTER: The other night the Treasurer said:—

If time permits, the other Railway Bills enumerated in this loan measure will also be introduced.

MEMBER: What did he say later on?

THE MINISTER: There was nothing to justify any person in assuming that there was anything in the speech of the hon. gentleman to give anyone the idea that we were going to shelve these railways. On the other hand, let this one fact be remembered by every member of the House. The speech by the Treasurer was delivered on the eve of the election at Geraldton. Had he pointed out the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill immediately for the construction of those railways, would it not have been held then that he was trying to influence the people of Geraldton in connection with that election? Do members opposite think we are so slow in connection with a matter of this sort that if we had desired to influence the electors of those places we would not have tried to do the best we could with a view of endeavouring to obtain votes for the member we so earnestly desired to be re-elected? I especially had a strong desire, more personal than political. I had a strong personal desire to see Mr. Carson re-elected to this Chamber, and do members think for a single moment we were not alive to the fact that if the Treasurer made a special statement in connection with those railways it would tend in some sense to influence and help our candidate in this matter? But on the other hand there was a certain silence, a silence which I should have thought should have been respected by those in Opposition. The same thing occurred in connection with the Pilbarra election. We simply could have made public announcements, as the Premier did only a little while ago in connection with the Norseman railway and the Ravensthorpe railway, that those works were going to be proceeded with immediately; and had we had a desire to influence the electors in either the Pilbarra district or the Geraldton district, surely we should have made statements

which would have assisted us in those matters. So far as that is concerned we refrained, and it does come hard when one battles strenuously in the interests of my friends opposite, and when special consideration is given to the goldfields in our loan proposals, that we are being treated as we are, and that statements have been made such as have been made to-night in connection with the Government. It is, I say, very hard indeed to work for those constituencies.

MR. SCADDAN: I do not think it is quite fair to say "special consideration."

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I wish to point out that members have said time after time in the House, that no consideration is given by members of the Ministry to constituencies which are represented by members who sit in Opposition. Let us take my friend the member for Dundas. I certainly cannot thank him for anything he has said this session; yet two railways are to be constructed in his constituency, and I hope for the benefit of his constituency. The member for Mount Magnet—

MR. HOLMAN: For the benefit of Kaufman & Co.

THE MINISTER: Still it is because we recognise the importance of developing our industries, quite independently of where a member sits in the House.

MR. SCADDAN: You cannot very well miss that constituency.

THE MINISTER: We should get more kudos from members sitting behind us, if we went in more for agricultural railways.

MR. SCADDAN: Where are you going to run them?

THE MINISTER: The desire of the Government is to do justice to the great mining industry. In that Loan Bill it must be recognised that we have done so. I therefore think we can well afford to repudiate the statements which have been made. There is no justification for the statement by the Leader of the Opposition that the speech of the Treasurer would lead any person to conclude we were shelving those railways. He was clear and emphatic in the statement that we were sticking to all our railway proposals. The speech is quite clear in regard to those matters, and I can assure members that no matter what statement is made of this sort, no matter what high

words may follow, we are still determined to push forward with the proposals as they were originally brought down. There is no question of trying to shelve any of these matters; but in regard to these telegrams in connection with those statements, there is no doubt they were unwarranted, and I think there should be the most careful inquiry, so that if those telegrams have been sent from Perth those who have been charged with sending telegrams and have had no connection with them will be cleared. So far as the newspaper is concerned, there is no doubt that the statements it made were absolutely unjustifiable and unwarranted.

MR. HOLMAN: No.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford): I do not desire, after the long speech by the Minister for Railways, to say a great deal on this point, although perhaps I am the most interested party in the House concerning the matter in dispute. Before dealing with the matter I desire to say that I am extremely sorry that the Minister for Railways, in reply to a question put by a member on this (Opposition) side of the House, should have dragged in, in connection with the matter, a wire he received not from an individual but from the newspaper office making a charge against me which was absolutely untrue. The Minister's conscience evidently pricked him, after he read the wire, after he got it on record and got it published, for he said that he did not believe it had been done. If the Minister thought it was unfair and untrue, and that it was not possible to occur, why did he read it? Why did he give it to the public? Simply because the name of Johnson was connected with it. We are all aware of the fact that if the Minister for Mines and Railways can get an opportunity to cast an aspersion upon the character of Johnson, he is only too happy to do so. I have had it for some considerable time from the Minister, and I never expect anything better from him. Again, numerous statements have been made from this side of the House that no wire was received by myself or Mr. Tro from anybody, from any politician or any political party, concerning the Geraldton election, or concerning politics at all. Yet we still have the Minister persisting in saying we want an inquiry, and it

a remarkable thing that you cannot convince that hon. gentlemen that the statement is correct that we received no wire at all. If the Minister will not take my word for it, I will give him all authority to go to the telegraph office and get every wire received by me during the last fortnight. I guarantee that Mr. Troy will do the same, and also Mr. Brown, and the whole of Mr. Brown's committee. Then the Minister will be satisfied that there was no wire of any description at all sent to us from Perth. The position was that a wire was sent not by an individual of this House, but by the *Geraldton Express* correspondent in Perth. In order to demonstrate that the wire was not sent to influence the election, I may say the same wire, word for word, appears in other papers. Evidently the correspondent of the *Geraldton Express* is correspondent for other papers. The Murchison papers received the same wire, almost word for word; as a matter of fact I think it is word for word. They put a more severe head-line than even the *Geraldton Express*. Then we look even down to Albany, and find that in the Albany paper the same wire appears; consequently members will see it could not have been, as the Attorney General was kind enough to say, a prearranged affair. It could not possibly have been prearranged when it was a Press wire and was sent by an individual who does not usually support the Labour party. A man who fights against the Labour party was the correspondent who sent this wire. Consequently it could not be a political trick, and could not be prearranged. The wire was a fair comment on the speech of the Treasurer. One little incident was mentioned by the Premier, when he said he had received a letter from Mr. Kidd to the effect that mounted men distributed throughout the country the special edition of the newspaper. Mr. Kidd can make that statement from hearsay only, because he was scrutineer inside the Geraldton booth until 6 o'clock. I was there, Mr. Troy was out in the country, and I do not believe the special edition was distributed throughout the country. I was present and associated freely with my opponents after the count on the night of the poll; and there was no special comment about this wire. It

did not cause the sensation that has since been caused. It is true one or two people wired to Perth and stated that a sensation was caused; and it is remarkable that the gentleman who wired to the Minister for Mines stating that Johnson had received a wire—an absolutely incorrect statement—is the same gentleman who acts as correspondent for the *West Australian* and the *Morning Herald*; so it was necessary for that person, in order to justify himself and to justify his wire to the Minister for Railways, to make some statement in the columns of those two papers. That is unfortunate for the papers, because I believe action will be taken to make them retract what they have stated concerning the Geraldton election. I state this only to show that but a few persons tried to justify the assertion that the election was not fairly won. The election contest was absolutely fair. Members may think the circulation of the special edition with the head-lines was unfair. I do not suppose it is necessary for me to discuss that question. We are discussing the wire, not the head-lines; and even if we in Opposition were responsible in any way for the wire, we could not be responsible for the head-lines. The wire contains nothing unfair, and I do not think the head-lines had the slightest effect on the election. I do not think it necessary to say more. Enough has been said to prove clearly to members and to the country generally that the charge laid against me in particular of circulating a bogus wire is unfounded and untrue; and all the Opposition desire in bringing forward the question is to clear ourselves from that aspersion.

MR. TROY (in reply as mover): If no other member wishes to speak, I will make a few remarks before withdrawing the motion. I regret first the necessity for the motion. I and members associated with me felt it was necessary in order that the true position might be made clear to the House and the country. I understand it was considered that some corrupt practices were resorted to in order to win the Geraldton election; and I feel sure, though some little heat has been apparent in members on both sides, it is fully understood that such practices were not indulged in, and that neither



members of this side of the House nor any other members were responsible for what appeared in the *Geraldton Express*. In deference to the Ministers for Mines and Works, who have appealed to me on this matter, I say the election was fought out with considerable friendliness on both sides. There was no bitter feeling, and no unscrupulous tactics were resorted to. I was present in Geraldton when those Ministers visited the town, and I attended both meetings. I have often heard worse speeches than the Ministers delivered. I was severely attacked, and do not take exception to the attacks made upon me. The Ministers made certain assertions which I successfully combated; probably they will say I made assertions which they successfully combated. Anyhow, the election was fought out with a most friendly feeling on both sides, and both sides fraternised throughout the contest. As to those Ministers' promises concerning the Black Range railway, I can say that at the meetings which they addressed I did not draw the conclusion that either Minister asked the people of Geraldton to support Mr. Carson in order that the railway might be built. I did not understand the Ministers to use that argument, and I do not think they endeavoured to influence the election by the promise of that railway. It is only fair I should say so, because I attended all the meetings, and had I thought those Ministers intended to assist the candidature of Mr. Carson by promising the construction of that railway, I should certainly have fought them vigorously during the election. At the beginning of the session I said that the Government had not given fair consideration to the wants of my electorate, and I believe I had reasons for saying so on that occasion, because I felt the requirements of my constituency were not being attended to, and I reminded various Ministers of their duty. But with regard to the proposals in the Loan Bill, I admit that my electorate has had fair treatment, to which I never took any exception. I regret the Black Range railway has been made the subject of this dispute. I regret it because it is not in the interests of the railway or the district; and I know that after all, members on both sides will recognise the Geraldton election was not fought on the

question of that railway, but on the policies of both parties. The election was fought in a friendly manner, and I believe it was honestly won. I believe the publication of the telegram had nothing to do with the result of the election; and I believe Ministers and other members will be convinced, when they look calmly at the matter, that no unfair practice was resorted to, and that the election campaign was conducted honourably by both sides. I beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By THE TREASURER: Return under Section 60 of the Life Insurance Companies Act 1889.

#### QUESTIONS (2)—HARBOUR TRUST.

##### SOLICITORS AND OFFICE OF PROFIT.

MR. ANGWIN asked the Attorney General: 1, Has the Minister seen the report of the auditor of the Harbour Trust accounts, wherein it is stated certain solicitors, namely Messrs. Moss and Barsden, are solicitors to the trust? 2, Does this constitute an office of profit under the Crown as provided in the Constitution Act of 1899 in regard to a member of Parliament holding office of profit? 3, If so, does the Minister intend to see that the provisions of the Constitution Act 1899 are enforced? 4, If not, why not?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, Answered by No. 2. 4, Unnecessary.

##### AS TO LEGALITY OF THE TRUST.

MR. ANGWIN farther asked the Attorney General: 1, Does the Harbour Trust Act 1902, which has never been before His Majesty-in-Council for His Majesty's assent or otherwise, amend the Constitution Act of 1899? 2, If not, under what Act can a member of Parliament hold the position as Commissioner of the Harbour Trust, such office being one of profit under the Crown? 3, Does the Minister intend to take steps to enforce the provisions of the Constitution Act 1899, if such Act has not been amended? 4, If not, why not?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, Answered by No. 2. 4, Unnecessary.

# QUESTIONS (2)—COAL MINES REGULATION.

## HOURS UNDERGROUND.

MR. EWING asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Does the marginal note to section 6 of "The Coal Mines Regulation Act 1902," which reads as follows—"Persons not to be employed below ground more than eight hours on any day"—indicate the true intention and meaning of Section 6? 2, Does coal-getting come under the "except" contained in Section 6, Subsection (1), "except in cases of emergency"? 3, Has the inspector of Mines authority to examine the books, etc., of any of the coal companies operating at Collie with the object of ascertaining the names of workmen who have worked more than eight hours per day and more than forty-eight hours in the week (cases of emergency excepted), with the view to taking action in the matter of any violation of "The Coal Mines Regulation Act 1902"? 4, What are the reasons given by the Mines Department for refusing to take action in the cases brought under their notice on October the 8th and 22nd, 1906?

THE MINISTER replied: 1, No. 2, Cases of emergency are not defined by the Act. In the case of prosecution for a breach of the Act, it becomes a question of fact whether the case in question is or is not a case of emergency. In the opinion of the department, coal-getting is not a case of emergency. 3, Yes. 4, No record can be found of any cases having been brought under the notice of the department on October 8th and 22nd.

## SUNDAY LABOUR.

MR. EWING asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is the Minister aware that Sunday labour is on the increase in the Collie River Mining District? 2, How many permits for Sunday labour have been granted by the Department of Mines to the mining companies at Collie during the six months ending November 17th 1906, and to what companies were

the permits granted? 3, Have copies of such permits been forwarded to the local police, who are responsible for the enforcement of the Act?

THE MINISTER replied: 1, Information in the Minister's possession is to the effect that Sunday labour is not on the increase in Collie, and that little Sunday work has never been done there. 2, The Sunday Labour in Mines Act 1899 does not apply to collieries, owing, no doubt, to an oversight by the framer of the Coal Mines Regulation Act 1902. This will be remedied on the passing of the Mines Regulation Bill now before the House. 3, Answered by No. 2.

## QUESTION—ELECTION AT GERALDTON.

### EFFECT OF NEWS TELEGRAM.

MR. EDDY asked the Attorney General: 1, Has the attention of the Attorney General been called to a report in the *Morning Herald* of the 22nd inst., referring to the Geraldton election, which reads as follows—"An extraordinary aspect was given to the proceedings by the issue of an extra from the *Express* office, stating that the Black Range and Chapman Railway had been shelved"—such being the head-lines to a telegram from Perth purporting to be an extract from the Treasurer's speech in moving the second reading of the Loan Bill? 2, On the assumption that this publication was malicious and untrue and designed to injuriously affect the chances of one of the candidates in the election then proceeding, will the Attorney General cause inquiries to be made as to the parties responsible therefor? 3, Is such publication an electoral offence? 4, If so, will proceedings be taken against the guilty parties?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. 2, the only evidence available as to the party responsible therefor consists in the fact that the publication referred to purported to be a special and extraordinary edition of a newspaper which was actively supporting one of the candidates in the election then proceeding, and which issued the publication referred to. 3, 4, The matter is under consideration.

### SITTING DAYS AND HOURS, EXTENSION.

THE TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) moved :—

That for the remainder of the session the House do meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 3 o'clock p.m. until 6.30 p.m. if necessary, and if requisite from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

MR. BATH would not oppose the motion, because at the beginning of the session, when sitting days were discussed, the Opposition desired that the House should meet earlier so that more business could be transacted. Towards the end of last session an arrangement was arrived at by which business was facilitated, on the understanding that Parliament would meet much earlier this year, so that more time might be devoted to legislative and other business, and that the finances should receive earlier consideration than in previous years. Though that compact was not kept, owing in some degree to the change of Ministry, the fact remained that we did meet somewhat earlier this year than in the years immediately preceding; but because of the nature of the business introduced in the early part of this session we were now in much the same position as we occupied in former years. Towards the end of the session, when the greater part of the business ought to have been completed, the most important proposals, the financial questions, the Loan Bill, important railway projects, were all wedged into the few weeks now remaining before Christmas. One need only refer to the legislation introduced early in the session, measures such as the Second-hand Dealers Bill, the Evidence Bill, the Bills of Sale Amendment Bill, and the Police Offences Bill, to show how the Government wasted the opening weeks of the session, which should have been devoted to the Land Tax Assessment Bill, the Agricultural Bank Bill, the Estimates, the railway proposals, the Constitution Bill, and other important legislation which constituted the real policy of the Government. But for that waste of time we should be much farther forward. The fact remained that the earlier assembling of Parliament was practically of no avail, owing to the time of the House being devoted to the discussion of measures which could well have been left

to the leisure time of the Ministry after their more important proposals had been considered. He (Mr. Bath) had no desire to oppose the motion, seeing that it was in accordance with efforts made by members of the Opposition for the speedier transaction of business and for the earlier meeting time of the session; but he hoped that with the prospect of a long recess before the Ministry we would next year meet at an earlier date, and that then we would have the important proposals of the Government in addition to their financial and railway measures placed before us earlier than they were this session. It was not conducive to the complete and intelligent discussion of those measures, especially railway measures, to have them jammed into the last few weeks of the session.

MR. DAGLISH: This was an occasion on which, in view of the nature of this motion, the Treasurer might well inform the House of the particular legislation the Government proposed to carry through. There were on the Notice Paper at present no less than 32 Orders of the Day, and some of them were no doubt, like the Constitution Bill, to be quietly abandoned.

MR. HOLMAN: Notice of six Railway Bills was given to-day.

MR. DAGLISH: Members were surely entitled to know what work we had to do before the prorogation. If members were to meet at 3 o'clock on four days of the week, they were entitled to know to what hours the House was to sit. He was perfectly willing to sit to any hours necessary to transact business; but if members were to transact business properly they must have time between the sittings to consider the measures before them. It was absolutely impossible to consider Bills during progress of the sittings of the House, and there were so many Bills on the Notice Paper that, with the three days available when the House was not sitting, members desiring to take that personal interest which they should in the measures found it difficult indeed to acquire a mastery of the details of the various proposals. If members were to have this unlimited bill of fare, *plus* new railway proposals and other new Bills, for their digestion, it was quite impossible for them to do their duty as it should be done, and they were entitled to expect from the Government

on a motion like this a statement of the Bills the Government intended to see through before the close of the session. When there were Railway Bills yet unseen to be inquired into, about which there were no reports and no information available to hon. members, he was strongly inclined to take up the position that the House could not deal with those proposals without having time, in view of the fact that there were no inspection reports available, to make inspections for themselves and to make up for the want of information from which, so far, the House was suffering. How could we acquire this information if we were to sit four days a week, possibly for a dozen hours a day—already we had experience of a fair number of working hours this session; how were we to examine the railway proposals and the other measures still on the Notice Paper? It was the duty of members to insist on examination at no matter what personal inconvenience, and to insist on a reasonable discussion of Railway Bills as well as of other measures submitted, but particularly at the present stage of all Bills involving a heavy expenditure either from Loan or from Revenue Funds. If there was any difference it was more necessary to carefully examine railway proposals than any others, because they meant not only an immediate expenditure of Loan Funds, but also an increase in the interest and sinking fund bill, and also possibly a heavy farther expenditure to meet the difference between the revenue from the railway lines and working expenses. He sympathised with the desire of the Government to get through the business; but the Government should not forget that we must have ample time to thoroughly analyse any proposals to which we were asked to consent, and that we must particularly have time to get information in regard to new railways and other public works to be constructed out of Loan Funds. He had no desire to unnecessarily prolong the sittings of the House; he had done his best during the session to expedite business by speaking rarely and not at undue length; but in view of the fact that the financial question was the most important that could possibly come before a Western Australian Parliament, he insisted that it was the duty

of every member to see that every proposal for the expenditure of Loan Funds was carefully scrutinised and most thoroughly discussed; and he hoped the Treasurer would inform the House what measures now on the Notice Paper were to be proceeded with and what new measures were to be introduced before prorogation.

MR. HOLMAN trusted the explanation asked for by the member for Subiaco would be forthcoming. We should have the fullest opportunity of going into the whole of the railway questions, and should not be placed on the same footing as we were last session when we passed three or four important Railway Bills in the closing hours of the session. On the Notice Paper at present there was an example of that method of doing business. The member for Perth was asking for a select committee to inquire into the Katanning-Kojonup Railway, the Bill for the construction of which was passed during the closing hours of last session. Its construction was not giving satisfaction; in fact the people did not require the line.

HON. F. H. PRESSE denied that entirely. The hon. member should justify the statement.

MR. HOLMAN: The hon. member might deny it, but he (Mr. Holman) was informed by people in the district that they did not require the line. He was informed to that effect by a man who had probably lived in the district as long as the hon. member himself; so the statement was true. About five weeks ago an old settler told him that the people down there did not require the railway at all. He (Mr. Holman) spoke with that authority, and could give the hon. member the name of that person if the hon. member desired it. One reason why he (Mr. Holman) took strong exception to the motion before the House was that up to the present we had no opportunity of discussing the most important matters that would be brought before the House, or of considering the loan proposals before the House involving the raising of about two and a half millions and pledging Parliament to the construction of a considerable number of public works, some of which might be wanted and some of which might not be wanted. He ques-

tioned the advisability of rushing into the construction of several of the railways in the loan proposals, and he was not going to allow railway proposals to go through the same as last year. The proposed Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe Railway was a most important matter. The conditions under which a promise of the construction of that railway was made did not show out to the best advantage. A certain speculator came into the country two or three months ago, and for £20,000 bought certain property at Ravensthorpe, and then went to the London market, and at the present time the market value of his purchase was £1,200,000. It would take £50,000 or £60,000 of Government money to construct a railway from Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun. When we found that the total production of gold and copper from the Phillips River field during the 10 or 12 years it had been in existence was not more than £163,000, we should pause before involving the country in the expenditure of £60,000 on a railway to that district.

MR. EWING: The hon. member should say that on the Loan Bill.

MR. HOLMAN would say, a lot more on the Loan Bill.

MR. EWING: The hon. member was wasting time in saying it now.

MR. HOLMAN: The hon. member considered everybody was wasting time unless Collie coal was under discussion. The hon. member would get a little Collie coal on the Railway Estimates. He (Mr. Holman) took exception to the motion because, if members were to be kept in the House four days a week, it would be taking an unfair advantage of them and of the people of the country in forcing members to sit in the Chamber without giving due consideration to the important matters that might be brought forward. Before any railway proposal was put through the House, he would take the stand that it should receive due consideration from every member. Notice of motion was given by the Premier that Standing Orders be suspended to put Bills through at one sitting. What was to prevent members on the Government side of the House adopting the same tactics as already had been adopted, applying the closure and forcing through the House an expenditure of say £100,000?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member had taken up more space in *Hansard* than anybody.

MR. HOLMAN would not ask any member of the House or any Minister when he was to speak or what he was to say. It was the usual custom when the session was drawing to a close to sit long hours and more days, but it was regrettable that the Treasurer had not seen fit to move this motion earlier in the session when the weather was cooler and when it was better for the health of members to sit longer hours than it was at present. It was immaterial to him how long the House sat. He could stand it as well as anybody. He did not oppose the motion, but asked the Treasurer to give some explanation of what important measures were to be brought before the Chamber in the closing days of the session, so that members would have an opportunity of giving those measures full consideration, and of dropping out of their consideration measures that were to be dropped.

MR. JOHNSON: If the Treasurer would not give the information asked for, or an assurance that it would be given before the debate closed, it became necessary to debate the question. In a motion of this description Ministers should give the reasons why it was thought necessary to sit the extra day. The Government considered that certain legislation was most important, and it was only fair that members of the Opposition should be consulted as to what legislation was considered by them to be important. When members were asked to sit an extra day, surely they should be told for what they were to sit. There were already numerous Bills on the Notice Paper, and notice had to-day been given of intention to introduce six or seven further measures of greater importance even than those now on the Notice Paper; consequently members on the Opposition side were justified in saying that the Treasurer was unfair in refusing to give the information asked for, which it was customary to supply when moving a motion of this description.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It was not customary. He had been in the House for 17 sessions, and had never before heard a

question put in a similar manner to that put by the hon. member.

MR. JOHNSON: The member for Katanning was well aware that at the end of a session, on a motion of this description the Opposition were always consulted.

THE TREASURER: The Leader of the Opposition had been consulted and was being consulted at the present time.

MR. JOHNSON: That demonstrated how Ministers tried to trifle with the House and courted discussion, and then expected members to sit all night long discussing important questions. He did not desire to stonewall or to unduly delay business, but merely desired information as to the business to be carried through. The select committee on the Police Offences Bill had been obtained merely in order to shelve the measure. Ministers should deal more honestly and fairly with the House.

THE TREASURER objected to the remark.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw.

MR. JOHNSON withdrew the word. If the Government intended, because they had a majority, to do as they liked, the Opposition might put up their backs. The failure of Ministers to take the House into their confidence when moving motions of this description created a deal of discussion on unimportant questions.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The previous speaker was himself contributing to a lengthy discussion on a question which could be easily settled. In the past the procedure had been for the Government and the Leader of the Opposition to discuss the question, and members on each side could then learn from their respective leaders what was proposed to be done. While he agreed with the hon. member that the House was entitled to the information, the Government could not be expected, on the spur of the moment, to decide which Bills were to be proceeded with and which abandoned.

MR. BATH (in personal explanation) was not in a position to make the statement that an arrangement had been arrived at between the Government and the Opposition, because on questions of this kind the Leader of the Opposition

had no right to determine for himself; it was essentially a matter upon which he should consult the members of his party. Matters which he might deem important might not be deemed important by them, and on the other hand matters which they deemed important might not receive the same consideration from him. He had promised the Treasurer and the Premier that he would consult the members of his party at the earliest possible moment and place before them the proposals in regard to the termination of the session. As proposals for terminating on a specified date had already been considered by members of the Ministerial party, it was only fair that he should consult the members of the Opposition before coming to a definite arrangement.

THE TREASURER: If the member for Guildford had extended to him the courtesy which he (the Minister) was in the habit of extending to that hon. member and to other members on the Opposition side, he might have obtained more information. One thing objected to—and the hon. member himself also objected to it—was to be taken by the throat and threatened. The Government did not desire to push any Bills through the House, but were not going to permit stonewalling if it could be helped. If members like the member for Murchison had restrained their eloquence during the past four or five months, greater progress would have been made with the business. The member for Subiaco had ventured the assertion that it was customary to supply this information, and the member for Guildford also said that it was always done. He had looked up *Hansard* for the session when those gentlemen were in power. The member for Subiaco, the then Premier, moved a similar motion to this on the 8th December 1904. In moving that motion he said:—

This, if carried, meant that the House must sit to-morrow; but he did not wish to ask members to submit to any inconvenience. It would be impossible to sit after tea to-morrow; and if it were the will of the House he would accept an amendment to the effect that the motion should not come into effect until next week. The motion had been worded to apply this week, because he (the Premier) was aware that many members who usually went away

from the city on Friday morning would be staying in town this week all Friday, and because he had thought that members might desire to spend their unoccupied hours in attending to the business of the country during the afternoon rather than following some lighter form of work or recreation.

That was all the information vouchsafed to the House; and the motion was seconded by the member for Murchison nodding his head. The Leader of the Opposition got up and made some remarks as to the number of measures and their importance, but did not get any information from the then Premier. Yet those members now criticised the action of Ministers. It was impertinence for them to do so when they knew they themselves were the offenders. Last year they had not brought down their Loan Bill until within three days of the prorogation, after being three months in session; and yet members lectured the Government now. He had consulted the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the Government's proposals.

MR. JOHNSON: Why did not the Minister say that at first and save time?

THE TREASURER: Was the hon. member a member of the Opposition, or was he not? If he could not get information from his own leader he must be content to go without information. It was not for the Government to see that every member sitting on the cross-benches, every would-be leader of the Opposition, got information of the Government intentions. There were too many of them; it would take too much time. As the result of the conference, he understood a meeting of the Opposition was being called. The details asked for had never been given on a motion of this sort. He proposed to extend every courtesy to the Leader of the Opposition in the matter, as had been usual on the part of the Government. The plea that time had not been allowed for the consideration of the measures could not hold, as most of them had been in the hands of the Assembly for some months. For example, the Land Tax Assessment Bill, mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, was introduced on 24th of July. The House must also take into consideration that the Leader of the Opposition and himself had been compelled to be absent from the State for a period of three weeks, that this had delayed the

business of the House correspondingly, especially as consideration of the Estimates was postponed at the request of the Leader of the Opposition. The Government wished to work in harmony with the Opposition, in order to make the best use of the few remaining weeks of the session.

Question put and passed.

#### MOTION—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE TREASURER moved—

That after Wednesday, the 28th November, the Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

MR. SCADDAN: One question he hoped the Government would agree to deal with at an early date was the consideration of the report of the select committee which inquired into the boiler explosion at Gwalia. He had not yet received a reply to his question whether the Government would afford an opportunity for discussion.

MR. WALKER: If this motion were passed, a matter for the discussion of which he had been promised an opportunity, namely the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the case of John Maher, would be absolutely shelved. He would like to have either an assurance of some definite understanding with the Minister in whose department the matter came, or else an assurance of an opportunity of debate.

MR. BATH: The statements of the hon. members for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) and Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) were exactly the kind of statement which actuated him in informing the Treasurer that he was desirous of consulting his party on this matter. Due consideration should be given, more especially to questions on which promises had been made.

THE TREASURER (in reply): Any representations made by the Leader of the Opposition would be taken into due consideration, and every endeavour would be made to meet the convenience of that gentleman and of his party as far as possible. Hon. members, however, must recognise the impossibility of carrying out the entire Notice Paper: something would have to go by the board, unless the session was to be interminable.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—KATANNING-KOJONUP  
RAILWAY.

TO INQUIRE AS TO ROUTE, ETC.

Debate resumed from the 14th November, on the motion by Mr. H. Brown—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on the Katanning-Kojonup Railway, with power to call for persons and papers, to adjourn from place to place, and to sit on days during which the House stands adjourned.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (HON. J. PRICE): In connection with this matter, there is some information which I think it is desirable the House should have. In the first place I should like to remark that four points of view have to be considered when any of these agricultural railways are under consideration. The first is that of existing settlement; the second, that of opening up new country; the third, future extension; and the fourth, the best possible grade. I wish to remind the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown) that the report by an officer of the Public Works Department, from which the hon. member quoted so largely, is the report of an engineer. Although I have no doubt that the report of that gentleman, whose opinion was assuredly a perfectly honest one—although in the light of another report which I have received within the last few days some of his statements are totally inexplicable—was written in entire good faith, it is not fair to say whether this line is or is not justified solely on that report of an engineer.

MR. H. BROWN: You would not vote for the line last session.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member says I would not vote for the line. He knows perfectly well why I would not vote for it last session. The whole of these Bills were brought down, I think the day before the session closed; and therefore, in my opinion, the time for consideration was insufficient. I stated in my speech on these Railway Bills last session that I was prepared, in deference to the general opinion on this particular railway, to support this particular railway, and this one only. That feeling, I think, was a common feeling in this House.

MR. SCADDAN: You did not vote for it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. gentleman will take the trouble

to read *Hansard*, and to refresh his memory—

MR. SCADDAN: My memory is good enough. You know you did not vote for the railway.

MR. WALKER: You and Mr. Holmes went home.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I voted for this railway, but not for the other two. That was the position.

MR. SCADDAN: Refresh your memory.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will read *Hansard* he will find that my statement is perfectly correct. This is not the first instance tonight of members jumping to conclusions without being sure of their facts. At all events, this opinion from which the member for Perth quoted, while that of an engineer, is that of an engineer only. It is impossible to expect that this gentleman, Mr. Wilson, would be conversant with the general details of Government policy in so far as these railways are concerned, and I am bound to say that his report is very considerably discounted by a report which I unearthed within the last few days, the report which the same gentleman wrote on the 6th December. I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to this, and it is a matter which, whether a select committee is appointed or not, I wish to make clear. Mr. Wilson is out of town, and I am unable to obtain his assistance. I desire to draw the attention of members to the fact that a report was written condemning absolutely the line which is now nearing completion, and that this report was written by Mr. Wilson. Therefore, this is the report which was very extensively quoted from by the member for Perth, and that member's arguments against the line were based on observations in that report. Now, towards the end of last year, I think about November, Mr. Wilson was sent in charge of a survey party to survey a line from Katanning to Kojonup; and on the 6th December last year, that is some five months before the report from which the member for Perth has quoted, Mr. Wilson selected a route which practically covers the line on which the railway is now being constructed. In that report he makes the following remarks:—

I enclose a rough tracing showing the approximate position of what appears to me to be the best route.



Then again he says in paragraph 5 :—

Of course there is no doubt that by using a steeper grade, say one in forty, a reduction in cost would be effected; but for all the difference it might make, I do not recommend it.

To show that the route which Mr. Wilson then selected is almost identical with the route which the Government have now adopted, I wish to make clear the differences in the distance between the route which he advocated in his report of the 7th May, and which for the sake of ready distinction I shall call the north route, with the route which he advocated on the 6th December, which on the same ground I shall call the south route. The north route, at five miles out from Katanning, is two and a half miles distant from the present line; the south route is under one and a half miles distant. At ten miles from Katanning the south route, that recommended on the 5th December, is one mile distant from the present route, while the north route, that advocated on the 7th May, is five miles distant. At 15 miles, the south route is one mile distant from the adopted route, and the north route four miles. At 20 miles, the south route is under one mile distant from the adopted route, while the north route is four miles distant. At 25 miles, the south route is practically in the same place, while the north route is one mile distant. At 30 miles from Katanning, all the routes converge, or at all events are running over the same area shortly before that point is reached. It is most extraordinary that there should be this variation in the recommendation of Mr. Wilson, and had that gentleman been present in Perth since I found this file so that I could have heard his account of the matter, I am certain I could have come to the House with some explanation why there should be such change as far as the routes of this line are concerned. I will have this matter investigated and find out why on the 5th December he favoured what was practically the present route, whereas on the 7th May he condemned it. In connection with this line he admits practically that the route now adopted serves the most centres, because in regard to the route he is advocating, which is the

north route, or No. 2 route as he calls it, he said :—

The statement has been made publicly that No. 2 route [that is the route he first advocated on May 7th] was away from the bulk of the settlement. Whilst admitting that this to a certain extent is true, I would point out that there is no settlement along the first 12 miles of the adopted route.

I wish to draw members' attention to the fact that the first 12 miles of the adopted route is within the sphere of influence of the Great Southern Railway. What I regard as an important point actuating the Government in January last as to why this present route should be adopted was clearly set out by the Leader of the Opposition in his speech on the Railway Bill last year, when he said :—

I believe that of the three proposals, the one for a line from Katanning to Kojonup is the one most entitled to consideration, because it is not a spur line starting anywhere and ending nowhere, but it must go through a magnificent belt of country towards Bridgetown, and would ultimately resolve itself into a loop line.

MR BATH: Some new facts have cropped up since I made that statement.

THE MINISTER: I think many of us have heard new facts, but I fancy that in the case of any man who desires to get to the truth of this matter the new facts will rather tend to diminish his opposition to the line. The whole of the facts were before the Government in January last, and they decided what route was to be adopted. It must be remembered that Mr. Wilson at that time had no knowledge of the Government's intention of ultimately making this one section a section of a line from Katanning which would run right through the Preston Valley and so on to the sea. He no doubt looked upon it from an engineering point of view, that a line with a 1 in 40 grade could be more easily constructed than a line of 1 in 60. He advocated in his report of the 7th May that a 1 in 40 grade is all that can be obtained except at great expense. The Government, in view of the fact of the route adopted and that this line itself was looked upon as a section of a through line, felt it was absolutely necessary that a 1 in 60 grade should be adopted. The difference is this, that for every four tons which an engine can

draw along a 1 in 40 route it can draw six tons along a 1 in 60 route, so that in a through line this was a question of very considerable importance. Of so much importance was it that the present Premier and the Treasurer made themselves personally acquainted with the localities, taking in view the fact that more settlement would be served by the adopted line, that it would give a 1 in 60 grade, and that it would form a portion of a continuous line from Katanning right through say to Donnybrook. Therefore for those considerations, and also after carefully considering the country it went through, the Government of the day considered that this should be the route constructed. There were one or two inaccuracies which the member for Perth made when he was delivering his speech. I am quite sure they were not wilful, and I know that he will not mind my correcting him. He drew some attention to the sleepers which he stated were being used. From the information I have received I can tell him that the sleepers on this particular line are either of jarrah or white-gum. He also stated salmon-gum sleepers were being used, or something to that effect. Whoever gave him that information was incorrect. I am not going to admit that if salmon-gum had been used it would have been unsuitable, because we have experience in this State of salmon-gum sleepers which have been in use and apparently have not diminished in usefulness for some years on the goldfields. I am told—I do not profess to be an expert—that in some parts of the country salmon-gum is an excellent wood and can be used with safety, whereas in other parts it is dangerous and is liable to be attacked with white ants and so on. At all events the hon. member can rest assured that every inquiry is being made into this particular matter so far as the officers of my department are concerned. I am not going to oppose this select committee, because whilst in the hon. member's speech there is no direct charge against any particular person, there is an undercurrent of suggestion that improper things have been going on, which I for one do not like. I do not anticipate any new information will be made available to the House as the result of such inquiry, and it is very certain that the course of the line cannot possibly be altered,

because it is practically completed; but I am not going to burk this inquiry, and if the hon. gentleman insists, the country can be put to the expense and the whole thing can be inquired into. I am making this statement simply because he has made almost suggestions as to improprieties. He may know something I do not know, but I feel sure that all those who have been associated with this line have done what they believe to be in the best interests of this country. Looking at it from this point of view, I take it that whilst an engineer may express a strong objection to a route, it is not expected that he can look at it from the all-round standpoint of a man say like the Premier, who not only looks at the engineering aspect but also looks at the future development of the railway and takes into consideration many factors which an engineer is not called upon to decide. I am quite content to leave the matter in the hands of the House. If the hon. member persists in asking for that inquiry, he shall have it.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): A few minutes will content me on this question. I just desire to say that the speech of the member for Perth in introducing this motion absolutely justifies the attitude taken up by members on this (Opposition) side of the House as well as some on the other side as to the necessity for greater inquiry and consideration than was given to those railways when introduced last session. We pointed out then that the time for discussion was altogether too short, and that the information supplied was insufficient. I am quite satisfied, apart from the merits or demerits of the railway from Katanning to Kojonup, it would have been infinitely better in the interests of the railway itself and of this House and the people of the country that such consideration should have been extended, instead of these railway Bills being rushed through in the manner they were. I cannot say anything in regard to this railway—

THE TREASURER: It was the only line you supported.

MR. BATH: I cannot say a great deal in regard to this proposal other than I considered it was a portion of a cross-country line which would ultimately link it to the South-Western Railway and the Great

Southern, and it was from that point of view I regarded it as the best proposition of the three. I know from the experience of New South Wales and Victoria that the policy of spur railways has been disastrous in many respects, and the reports of the railway departments in those two States will bear out my contention. There is absolute justification for the argument advanced by members on this side that before we commit ourselves to such propositions, and even before we are asked to discuss them, we should have some sort of advisory board to report on them. I am going to vote for a select committee because I believe that while it will not be sufficient to prevent the construction of this line, which is almost completed, it will at least give some indication as to the advisability of pursuing this policy, and will give us an investigation into the construction of this line which will be of advantage to the House in regard to other railway proposals. Therefore, without farther remarks upon the question, I desire to support the motion.

**MR. A. C. GULL** (Swan): If a select committee is appointed, the scope of the inquiry should be extended to the Wagin-Dumbleyung line with a view to ascertaining what sort of life there is for salmon-gum sleepers, also the size and generally the way the salmon-gum timber is being put in. I admit that in some localities certain timbers belonging to those localities are good sound timbers, whereas the same timber in another place is rotten; and when I bear in mind that these salmon-gum sleepers are being put in on the half-round, it necessarily follows that there is a great deal of salmon wood used in sleepers. If these salmon-gum sleepers were pruned out of trees, I should be more inclined to agree that they would be all right; but where there are so many saplings I certainly think there is a considerable amount of danger, more especially as it would only be a matter of another twopence or threepence for sleeper freight to send white-gum sleepers where white-gum sleepers could not be obtained. As to the line from Katanning to Kojonup, the sleepers could be got there. The difference in the amount of freight would be very little to carry them on to the Wagin-Dumbleyung line. We know

as a fact that white-gum is one of the best woods we have in the country, and that being the case I think it would be very advisable that the scope of this inquiry, if granted, should extend to that line; and the inquiry would then determine whether it would not be better to place white-gum sleepers hewn from the slip on this Katanning-Kojonup line country in lieu of the experiment in the other direction. This is more particularly the case when we have already some 12 miles on the Goomalling-Dowerin line just completed with this wood. That is quite sufficient as an experiment; and where it is only a question of a few pence per sleeper I should be very much in favour of white-gum being used in lieu of the other. I move an amendment—

That the words "and the Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway" be inserted after "Railway".

**MR. J. C. G. FOULKES** (Claremont): I think the member for Perth has done good service by this motion, moved in order that members should have full information regarding the districts which the Government in office last session decided to provide with railways. I am quite satisfied that the Government have correctly estimated the necessity for the Katanning-Kojonup line. I have always looked on that railway as justified not in the interest of the Kojonup district alone; for I felt quite certain, particularly after the explanation given by Mr. Drew, Minister for Lands in the last Government, that after a short time there must be communication from the Great Southern line to the South-Western district. Any person who looks at a map of the district will see this is one of the first lines which should be made. Of course it is quite true, as the member for Perth mentioned, there is some element of doubt as to whether the route selected is the best. I am well aware some people in that district would prefer another route. For instance, I know the people of Broomehill would have been better pleased had the route been from Broomehill to Kojonup instead of from Katanning to Kojonup. Personally I have not sufficient knowledge to decide which town should have been selected for the starting-point. But in every district where a railway is proposed we never find the people unanimous on the question of route. If we waited till

the whole of the people of a district were unanimous as to the route, we should have to wait indefinitely for the construction of any railway. I feel sure the inquiry by the select committee will reveal the necessity for this railway, after the committee inspect the district and see the large number of settlers there. I hope in a year or two that the present Government, or whatever Government may be in power, will realise the need for constructing a line from Katanning to some town on the South-Western Railway.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning): In reference to the amendment of the member for Swan, if an inquiry is to be held it should embrace both the railways to be constructed in this district. It seems rather late in the day to make an inquiry, as I said when speaking on the main question; for the Dumbleyung line has already been built for a certain distance, and as to the other line, the earthworks are nearing completion. However, I am only too anxious to afford all the information I possess, believing as I do that when the information is obtained any fears expressed by members will be allayed by an examination of the country. I take it that the select committee, if appointed, will visit the district and see for themselves the nature of the country through which the lines pass. They will see also the residents along the lines and throughout the localities to be served. Of course there will always be jealousy in any district through which a railway is to be constructed; and the member for Claremont, who has just spoken, mentioned several possible points of junction with the main line. We have heard of rival points of junction in connection with other railway projects. To-night the Treasurer mentioned that because of the numerous points of junction proposed for the Chapman railway, no point has as yet been fixed. That is a reason why inquiry should be made, and it exemplifies the fact so often adduced in this House, that such inquiries are necessary. But I may point out that the many miles of railway built from time in this country have been built solely on the information obtained by the officials who inspected the country, from local residents who knew the country, and from men who travelled

through it. I feel that much good can be done by such an inquiry as is now proposed, for it will take members out of town to see the country. It is only on special occasions that we have the pleasure of seeing them in the country, and their knowledge of country districts is not gained by practical experience. They know some work is going on, but without ocular demonstration they do not know how important it is that the wants of the country districts should be supplied. I therefore feel such an inquiry as this will result in good. However, it seems to me an inquiry at this stage will not be a great advantage, but would be much more advantageous if it had reference to the new lines proposed by the Government. The information asked for by the mover should have been in the possession of members before we decided to build these important railways; and as notice of intended new railways has been given much earlier this session than last session, information will no doubt be laid on the table in time by the Government so as to justify their action. Such information was given last session, but because of the short period between the date when it was tabled and the consideration given to the Railway Bills, it could not be assimilated by members generally. If the routes of proposed railways and the districts they are to serve will not stand inspection by members, the projects are not justified; and if they are not justified, the sooner that is known the better, and the providing of the information in due course will save the need for such motions after the projects have been agreed to by the House. It would help us materially were such inquiries made before the Bills were passed. The Katanning-Kojonup is not a railway of a spur-line character. The Dumbleyung railway line will be ultimately extended far into the interior, and the Kojonup line will, we hope, connect ultimately with the South-Western railway. As I understand, the Government have proposed a railway from Preston towards Kojonup, and I think the better course for the select committee will be to go to Preston, travel from thence by the route proposed to Kojonup, thence to Katanning, thence to Wagin, and eventually to inspect the country between Wagin and Dumbleyung. They will thus have a good round

trip with an opportunity of seeing the country. Any information gained will be an advantage to them, and will expedite the passing of any measure connected with the proposed railways and routes I have mentioned. Much time can be saved in that manner, though cognisance must be taken of the reports presented in the first instance by those who inspected the country, reports which justify the lines, and of all the information given to the House by the Government themselves, who are in a position to obtain the information. It was from such information in the past that we built something like a thousand miles of railway under conditions very similar to those of the Katanning line. In years past we had no more information than was given in that case; and it is quite an unique experience to find that after a railway is sanctioned by Parliament and is practically built, an inquiry is demanded. At the same time I do not wish to oppose that inquiry, believing it will fully justify the action of the Government. Of course there will be some discontents; there will be people who wish the line to go nearer their homesteads, some who hoped it would go right through their homesteads. We shall find such people in every district where a railway is proposed, as well as people who say that some other point of junction than that selected would have been better. However, the inquiry will elicit the facts. I rose to support the amendment for an inquiry as to the Dumbleyung line also; and as to the timber, as I pointed out here, I am perfectly satisfied that the use of white-gum sleepers on the Katanning-Kojonup line is quite justified, and that the timber is most durable.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. H. BROWN (in reply as mover): I am pleased to find the Government do not oppose the appointment of the select committee. I think my motion quite justified by the papers placed on the file in another place. It seems passing strange, after a motion in another place that all the papers in connection with this railway be tabled, the Minister should come here with other papers not placed on the table in another place. I say those reports were dated back as far as last

December—I think I am right in quoting the Minister for Works—and the first notification on the existing file is dated the 11th January. It is very well for the Minister for Works to impress upon us that this is to be a loop line. Would anyone, considering the volume of traffic on this line, agree to its being constructed in the flimsy manner adopted? Last year the Minister for Lands stated such lines would cost a thousand pounds a mile. We now find the line from Owen's Anchorage to Jandakot, a short spur line, costing over £4,000 a mile. If this House had believed that a line costing a thousand pounds a mile was to be a loop line carrying practically the whole traffic of the Great Southern Railway through the country to the south-westward, would that line have been built? Even Mr. Price himself, now Minister for Works, said last year:—

We should receive information from the Lands Department as to the quality of the land to be opened up, I mean detailed information; we should get specific information as to the amount of settlement along the railways, and as to exactly how much cultivation is going on. We ought to hear from the Government what other lines they have under consideration of a similar nature; and reasons should be given to us why these three lines are selected before any others.

In conclusion, I think the arguments for the appointment of the select committee are fully justified; and my only reason for moving was the statement by the Engineer-in-Chief, that for years the Katanning-Kojonup line would mean a loss to the State of over £4,500 per annum. Surely it is within the province of members to pause before agreeing to the construction of any other spur lines such as we now see in the schedule to the present Loan Bill, until we have some information as to the likelihood of their paying. That is my sole reason for moving for this select committee, to see that the country is not pledging itself to an increased debt for lines that will not pay. It has been said by the Leader of the Opposition that the spur lines practically ruined Victoria for a great number of years. I thank the Government on this occasion and also the member for Katanning for the suggestion that the round trip should be made, so that members of the select committee can come to

this House and state practically whether the lines were justified or not.

Question as amended put and passed.

Ballot taken, and a committee appointed consisting of Mr. Angwin, Mr. Ewing, Mr. Monger, Mr. Underwood, with Mr. H. Brown as mover; with the usual powers, and to report on the 11th December.

#### BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

##### COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of five amendments requested by the Legislative Council now considered in Committee; MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair, the HONORARY MINISTER in charge of the Bill.

Clause 7, Subclause 2, line 2, strike out "three" and insert "two":

THE HONORARY MINISTER: This amendment provided that trustees should hold office for two years instead of three years. The alteration was immaterial. He moved that the amendment be made.

MR. HOLMAN: The period of three years was not too long. It was not advisable to accept the amendment.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: No matter for what period trustees were appointed they could be and probably would be reappointed, but there might be reasons why a term of two years might be convenient. For instance if a trustee decided to retire at the end of the second year it would give the Government an opportunity of appointing someone from another part of the State.

Question passed, the Council's request agreed to.

Clause 28--Subclause (3), line 2, insert after "to" the words "three-fourths of":

THE HONORARY MINISTER moved—

That the amendment be not made.

This altered a vital principle of the Bill. As a rule, the applications he approved of showed a considerable margin, averaging 50 per cent. Every application for a loan provided a security which in itself was sufficient for the advance. To alter the advance to three-fourths would make the Bill less liberal than the Act we were amending.

Question passed, the amendment not made.

Clause 41—amended verbally and consequentially, as requested.

Resolutions reported; the report adopted.

A committee consisting of Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Bath, and Mr. Foulkes drew up reasons for refusing to make the amendment in Clause 28.

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1906-7.

##### IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from the previous Thursday. AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT; the HONORARY MINISTER (Mr. J. Mitchell) in charge.

Vote—Agriculture, £43,338:

##### ON THESE ESTIMATES GENERALLY.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: In introducing these Estimates, I would like the Committee to realise that we have endeavoured to practise economy in framing them. It will be noticed that we have reduced the total amount by £5,900; and not only have we done this, but I think I can claim that the work of the department has considerably increased. Members will find that during the last ten years the number of stock throughout the State in almost every direction has increased. This is highly satisfactory. And whilst it is satisfactory I would like the Committee to realise that it all means additional work for the department. In connection with the stock branch the most satisfactory increase during the past ten years is in the number of cattle. They have multiplied about threefold during that time, and I think it may be taken for granted that within a short period many of these cattle will be employed in the important work of dairying. Amongst the work carried out by this department is the encouragement of the production of butter for export and in producing meat that will pass through the freezers. There has been a marked increase in fruit, and I hope in a very short time the 14,000 acres we now have under fruit trees will come into bearing, and that we shall supply the whole of the requirements of our people. It is quite certain that in this State we

shall have no need to import fruit at all, in fact there should be no need to import anything that we require to feed our people. In connection with the production of fruit the refrigerating works must play a very important part. As the result of experiments made in the Government freezing works in connection with fruit, the display of fruit at the Royal Agricultural Show indicated that the storage of fruit will be a very important question in the near future. There is no reason at all why the fruit from our own orchards should not be held for local consumption. We send home fruit in cool storage from this State, and fruit is being sent from other States for the purpose of feeding people in the old country. But it is more important to feed our own people, and I look forward to the time when we shall do this by the aid of the freezing works. In the report furnished by the department it will be seen that apples were put into the freezing works when they were worth 10s. a case, and were taken out within a few weeks when they were worth 22s. a case, showing a profit of about 100 per cent. That is highly satisfactory to the man who puts the fruit into the refrigerator, though it is not quite so satisfactory to the man requiring the fruit.

MR. BATH: What was the cost of keeping the fruit inside?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: About 2d. per week, or about 2s. 10d. altogether, I think. It shows 100 per cent. profit on the first cost of the fruit; which is highly satisfactory as far as it goes. I hope the freezers will be used extensively, and, if they are, it will not only put up the price to the producer but will also put down the price to the consumer.

MR. BATH: Is it the freezing that makes the apples dry and pithy, as those one buys at the present time are?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I cannot tell; but my friend opposite must often have eaten apples after they have been in cool storage in America for many months before they land here. That being so, I hope it will be possible for us to hold fruit without deterioration. I believe that apples held in the Government cool storage shed during the past year were turned out in excellent condi-

tion, and very little deteriorated in quality by being held for some months. An experiment has been made of holding fruit for some months—grapes, apples, pears, and some of the softer fruits—with very satisfactory results indeed. Orchardists in this State may well congratulate themselves upon the fact that by using the Government refrigerator they obtain a local market which will absorb all they can produce, and are guaranteed, over the year, prices that will be always payable. During the year we have spent a considerable sum of money, something over £5,000, in renovating the freezing works, with the result that our works are now in perfect order and it is possible for us to do a considerable amount of good work, and not only in the direction of storing fruit and eggs and other small articles of farm produce—we expect in a short time to be able to hold a considerable number of locally-produced lambs in the freezers, not only in the Government works but also we hope in other refrigerating works in the State. In this connection I wish to say that I think there is a great future before Western Australia. There is no reason at all, to my mind, why we should not in the very near future export frozen lambs in large quantities. During the past twelve months I have had opportunities of seeing a great deal of the lands of this State, and I am quite sure, from what I have seen, that there are great things ahead of us. In this lamb trade alone there is any amount of room for development. In my travels I have found that in many parts of the State sheep-owners are able to do very well indeed under present conditions; but it has to be remembered that the market is limited. Owing to our present method of dealing with fat stock a producer can only sell lambs for three months in the year, and unless he sells them during that time he runs a risk of overstocking, or at any rate of having left on his hands stock for which he should have had the cash. [Mr. H. Brown interjected.] In answer to the hon. member, I say that he is absolutely wrong. I had a telegram a few days ago from South Australia giving the price of lambs fit for export at from 12s. 6d. to 15s., whereas it is impossible here to get 15s. except for a few of the very best lambs we can produce. It is not a ques-

tion of meat being higher in price here than elsewhere, but a question of making the lands of this State do what they ought to do. If the people of other parts of Australia can turn their acres to good account, why should we not try to do so too? I think we should try to do as New Zealand has done. In a very few years, from exporting 8,000 lambs New Zealand in 1900—just six years after her export trade in lambs commenced—advanced to 3,000,000 lambs. If we could look forward to a similar export trade in lambs during the next six years it would be a glorious thing for this State. At any rate I have no fear about the business. I think this is one of the great works before the Government, and I hope that in the near future it will be undertaken seriously. In regard to stock generally, it is a good thing to be able to say that we are free from disease. We have a Stock Department which does a considerable amount of work; and, as I have said, the work is increasing. At the same time, it is a good thing to know that we are free indeed from disease amongst our stock. There are few countries in the world which have not difficulties in this connection. As members know, we have erected during the year a considerable mileage of rabbit-proof fence, and to-day there is something over 1,600 miles of the fence under the control of the department. So far the fence is entirely satisfactory, and has done its work thoroughly. The rabbits, of course, are not very plentiful, and between the fences there are very few rabbits; and if the work of extermination is as successful in the future as it has been in the past, I hope it will be many years before the pest becomes troublesome in the settled districts. At any rate, the fence has been well erected, and so far as we know there are no rabbits on the western side of it.

MR. SCADDAN: Of which fence?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The No. 2; the nearer fence. In regard to experimental farms I would like to make a few remarks. The farms have not been the success which might have been expected.

MR. BATH: All of them?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The farms generally. The Hamel farm may be cited as an exception; but generally

they have not done the work we expected. The Chapman farm did good work in opening up that country, and in that connection it has been very satisfactory; but it is a long way from Geraldton, and, being difficult to get at, it has not done the educational work it would have done if it had been more conveniently situated. In regard to the position of these farms, it was a good idea always to put down temporary experimental farms on poor land; in fact, whenever the land of this country requires to be opened up, I think it is the work of the Government to put down temporary experimental farms, and that might well be done on poor land, and land of every variety. But when it comes to putting down a permanent farm, the best land available ought to be selected. The Government farm is regarded as the show place of the district, and it certainly should be the show place of the country. If, as was the case with Narrogin, poor land is selected, it can have only one result. It is not possible to do very much with poor land, and it is a great mistake to suppose that the manager of a Government farm on poor land, and with poor tools, can do as good work as he would probably do with better. In this connection I wish to say that I saw a letter the other day from a director of agriculture in one of the Eastern States in which he referred to the fact that the farm he is controlling consists of some of the best land in the colony; and he also stated that as a result he was able to keep a considerable number of sheep of several varieties, and to keep them as they ought to be kept. Those who know anything about stock-raising know that only the best land produces the best stock. The result is to make it an easy matter for that gentleman not only to be keenly interested in his work, but also to make a great success of it. In this State, unfortunately the principal farm—I refer to the old farm at Narrogin—is poor land. The land recently purchased is of much better quality; still, I think we might have done better than that. I am sorry indeed we have not, somewhere near to Perth, established a farm on the best of our land, as I think it would have been a good development for our State, and certainly the work of education would not have been lessened by the fact that we were carrying out the



work on good land instead of very poor soil. In connection with agricultural education, as members know we have a certain number of students in that department, and it seems to me the idea of training these young men is a right one. I am not sure we are going to receive the result we might have received by different methods, but at the same time we are doing good work, and we are taking these students at a very low fee. Members will realise that these students are going to be cared for, and that the State has to bear this cost. In the minds of many members, this charge is written up against the work of the farms. That is not right. A certain number of these students are certainly helpful. A certain number of them carry on the work of ploughing and the other work on the farm, but in a general way they are simply students. There are 40 odd students now, and they cannot of course earn their living on the limited area of land they are called upon to cultivate. They are getting a practical education there, and I believe the State will, in the end, gain by the outlay. I mention this because I think it is right that the farms should not be debited with the education of these young men. In connection with our agricultural staff, members will find there is a vote of £3,000. This subsidy is doing a tremendous amount of good, I consider. An object lesson has been provided at several centres, which must make for good. Farmers have been able to see, for instance, stock of the very best quality exhibited at the Royal Show. Probably many farmers desirous of going into the breeding of stock of various kinds, while at that show and at other shows throughout the State, have gained a considerable amount of information which will be very useful to them. Altogether I consider that this subsidy is very well spent, when we remember that there are other advantages, and that the State does not lose the whole of this £3,000. There is a considerable amount of railway traffic, and in consequence much expenditure in various ways, which of course must mean revenue. There is one item at the bottom of the list which has been increased, unfortunately, namely the amount for the destruction of wild dogs. Dogs have been very troublesome during the last 12 months in destroying

many sheep in various parts of the State. We find it necessary to ask for an increase in this vote.

MR. BATH: You ought to ask for a vote for the destruction of wild cats.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: There are many animals we can well do without. I would like to assure the people of the State in this connection that we are not unmindful of our duty. It certainly is the duty of the State to keep wild animals in check, and we propose next session to introduce a Bill which will give local bodies power to tax, with the idea of raising an amount which will be subsidised by the Government. We have increased the vote to £2,500, and I think this will meet every obligation for the present, and do a considerable amount of good. The only other item, unfortunately, on my estimates is that of the Agricultural Bank. This institution, as members know, is in a very satisfactory position indeed. We have lent £600,000 to about 3,000 people. Three thousand farmers have had money from this bank during the past 12 years, and that money has done wonderfully good work. Seeing that the amount lent is only £600,000, members will agree that it has been very well spread. We could not very well have helped a much larger number of people than we have helped with the money available.

MEMBER: How many farms are on your hands?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Not a single farm is on our hands, and I do not think we are likely to have one. As I said when speaking a little while ago, the margin of security in almost every case is very considerable, very much more so than members would be likely to imagine. Of the three thousand loans we have made, about 380 have been repaid altogether; that is to say the borrowers have been able to repay us entirely. The amount of £86,668 has been repaid altogether. The period of repayment, that is the period at the end of five years, has been reached by many of our borrowers, and almost without exception they have responded to their obligations without any trouble. During the first ten months of this year, we have approved of 1,200 loans, amounting in all to £175,000. I think that generally

the work of this bank must be considered as satisfactory. I know it could not be more so. The Act has been administered by Mr. Paterson I think as liberally as we might have expected, and I trust that when the appointment of the three trustees is effected, such vexatious delays as have occurred in the past will disappear. I hope also that he may see his way to treat his customers a little more liberally in some cases. We have some complaints, of course. Where the whole of the responsibility rests on one man, I think it is strange we have not had more complaints. However, with the alteration of the law I hope there will be less cause for complaint on the part of our clients, and I sincerely hope, as far as I am concerned, that clients will have that £400,000 which will be available when my Bill becomes law.

MR. T. H. BATH : Looking at the estimates of the Agricultural Department controlled by the Minister who had just given such a lucid explanation of his estimates, one must say that taking them as they appeared before us the estimates of this Minister were the one bright spot in an atmosphere of gloom, so far as the Estimates as a whole were concerned. The labourer was worthy of his hire. From all appearances, the hon. gentleman had put good work into the department, and if the Treasurer thought he was getting £200 too much and his other colleagues considered they were being paid too highly, one hoped they would at least recognise the services of the Minister for Agriculture, and pass him along the £1,200 which would be docked from the other salaries. The State should assist to build up an export trade, so that farmers might find a market for their wares. In Adelaide the State Export Depôt was highly successful, reducing considerably the cost of marketing produce, and showing a profit of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the money invested by the Government. The money which we voted for the development of our agriculture would be more wisely expended on a State Export Depôt than on works which could by no stretch of imagination be termed reproductive, such as the provision of poultry pens at Claremont. Our farmers must shortly compete with

those of other States which provided export depôts; and the competition should be on equal terms. We should decide whether our experimental farms were to be purely experimental or to be schools of instruction in farming. If the latter, as in America, we could not expect them to pay. Many of the American farming schools were free, the advantage derived being that a number of intellectual young men were weaned from other pursuits to agriculture. The Minister was to be commended for his announcement that the State should not depart from business methods by selecting the worst possible land for experimental farms. The Narrogin farm land could not be regarded as a successful proposition. It was foredoomed to failure; in fact, considering the disadvantages, good work was done there, and the Press attack on the farm and on a former Administration was regrettable. Other States had had similar experiences. In New South Wales village settlements were started near Sydney, at the worst possible spot, where men new to agricultural pursuits were set to till the soil. South Australia effected a similar settlement in one of the most arid regions of the country. In both cases failure was inevitable. If we tried experimental farms we must select the best land available, and our methods must be up-to-date. The *Agricultural Journal* seemed to be a good production, apparently of great advantage to the agriculturists, amongst whom it was circulated free as a means of instruction; but considering its advertisements, why did it not show a profit?

THE HONORARY MINISTER : A profit was anticipated shortly.

MR. BATH : The report of the Department of agriculture stated that the loss was about £150 per annum; this in spite of 36 pages of advertisements in the *Journal*. As to rabbits, the department reported that good work was being done along the fence, and economy was shown in the smaller amount set down for the current year. Recognising the grave menace consequent on the rabbits, could the Minister assure the House that the cutting down of the item would not involve a possibility of danger in slackening the efforts to keep the rabbits on the other side of the fence?

because any temporary saving which might mean an increase of rabbits on this side of the fence would in the near future be more than counterbalanced by the increased cost involved in protecting the western agricultural districts from the rabbits.

[MR. DAGLISH took the Chair.]

HON. F. H. PIESSE had listened with considerable interest to the remarks of the Honorary Minister, who so clearly placed before members the facts in connection with his department. It was well that we had in charge of the department one so practical in work connected with land, and who brought to bear on the department influences which were beneficial to it because they came from such a practical man, and one who was so successful himself in agricultural matters in his own district. Even for the short time the Minister had had control of the department the country had benefited, and it would be disappointing if success did not follow the efforts the Minister had made. Economy was justified in certain directions; but at the same time we should not jeopardise the advantages which the expenditure of money was likely to have in certain directions, especially in the direction of the menace of rabbits. It would be a great disaster if the rabbits got west of No. 2 fence, but the Minister fully recognised the importance of carefully watching the interests of the country in this matter, and of preventing the large expenditure already incurred on the fence being lost to the State. It was frequently said that no matter how well fences were constructed they were not likely to be of benefit for a long period. It was said that this was the experience of the Eastern States; but on the Queensland border the erection of fences was of considerable advantage, and helped to keep back the inroads of rabbits, especially in some districts. Having had the experience of other countries we should be more successful than other places, and the large expenditure incurred would bear good fruit in preventing farther inroads of rabbits towards the west, and more especially into the rich and valuable northern areas. Having had an opportunity of seeing the fence and the methods

adopted in regard to supervision, he agreed that everything was being done that could be done to fully protect the interests of the State in the direction of keeping back the rabbit pest. Had the hour been earlier, one could perhaps have attempted to do more justice to these estimates and to place before members facts in regard to various points touched on, but he would touch on one or two matters briefly. In regard to the great development taking place, the Minister must have a most interesting department to look after, in watching the advances made in different parts of the country and in giving assistance by means of his officers and the means at his disposal. The Minister referred to the great increase of stock in the last year or two. It was most encouraging. Western Australia at one time was looked upon as a country that could not produce sufficient meat to satisfy requirements; but as a consequence of improved methods, such as ringbarking in wooded districts, the substantial fencing of all parts of the country, the sinking of dams, and improving the breed of stock, especially sheep, a tremendous increase in stock had been brought about, adding wealth to the community. In the Great Southern Districts there was evidence every day of the great increase of wealth being brought about by improved methods in regard to sheep. Wool was a great factor in building up the national wealth of a country, and the eyes of the people were now being directed towards the more temperate parts of the State. The improvement in the breed about doubled the yield in wool from the carcase. Off a crossbred Shropshire from the merino it took 72 fleeces to fill a bale, an average of a little over 5lbs., whereas with the improved breed of sheep 40 fleeces filled a bale with an average of 9½lbs., so that not only did the carcase carry an increased weight of wool, but the wool was of a superior class and meant greater wealth to the people. Yesterday two large train loads of sheep passed through Katanning to an estate about 15 miles east from Broome Hill taken up by a settler from the North-West. There were in these trains 6,000 sheep which had been brought from the North to be depastured in the Great Southern District, and that had been done in many cases recently. The sum

of £120,000 had been paid by North-West settlers to purchase land in the Great Southern District to carry on improved breeding methods. It was sometimes said that it was preferable to have wheat-growing on the Great Southern lands, but the sheep farmer was a pioneer not to be despised. He opened up the country in the direction indicated. The eyes of stock-breeders had been directed to the district because of its climatic conditions. The country was like the far-famed Western District of Victoria, known to be the richest of the pastoral districts of Victoria; and now the Great Southern District, which was previously looked upon as practically worthless from a stock point of view, was being sought for by people who knew the value of land. The steps taken in the direction indicated must lead to an increased production of lambs, a subject touched upon by the Minister. It had already given so much wealth to New Zealand and to the Australian States, particularly New South Wales and South Australia, and it would mean a great deal of wealth for Western Australia, because we were so well situated geographically, better in that respect than the other States of Australia, to deal with the sheep trade. We would have the advantage of the experience of the other States. We would have the best refrigerators to be obtained, and that at a less cost, because we had gained by the experience for which others had paid. Therefore we in Western Australia were in a much better position. This went to show that the words of the Minister could be borne out fully by experience, and showed what enormous wealth this country was capable of producing. It was indeed a fair land, and he hoped great advance would be made in every part of our country, especially in the favoured South-Western country, in the near future. He did not for a moment wish to despise the great advantage the country had obtained from the discovery of gold. It was the first incentive to help us forward, and we were now benefiting from it. At the same time, we must recognise that we must look to the land for our greatest and lasting wealth. The question of fruit growing had been touched on, and it was said that our fruit was equal to any fruit in the world: that

had been proved by the reports received. Our recent experience showed that we could hold our own with any part of Australia, especially in the growing of apples. As we had a land favoured for the growth of this fruit and other fruits, we must have a great future before us. We could grow apples and oranges in the same orchard, which was a unique experience and showed how well we were situated from a climatic standpoint. And when we looked at the advantages we possessed in having such a country capable of so much advancement, and compared our position with that of Tasmania, which country could not grow the immense quantity of grapes we could, it must become a great source of wealth, especially from the drying process of grapes. We must benefit from that in the near future, and our State would become one of the most important, if not the most important, of the Australian States. As to the question the Leader of the Opposition touched on, the egg-laying competition, which he said was not justified—

MR. BATH had not said it was not justified.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Here we again could go in the same direction in which people had gone hitherto in the improvement of stock. We must go in for encouraging the breeding of fowls which lay a large number of eggs, and that would be an advantage. Everything we could do in this connection was money well spent. At the same time one could endorse the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and others as to experimental farms. We had not been so successful in that respect as at one time we were led to believe. It was not altogether a question of management, it was a question of the selection of the land, and now we had better lands available, such as at Nankeen, we should have a better return. We must spend money if we wished to make a success of these farms, and we must have everything up to date not only in the management but in the equipment, and in that direction we should receive a greater benefit; it would be money judiciously expended. As to the question of our wine industry, a few days ago we had an opportunity of reading the report of Mr. Binney, who had travelled through France and had an opportunity of going through the vineyards there.

He went home with Australian experience, and he had pointed out that in France they produced 180 million gallons of wine, but that the output was 320 million gallons; thus the balance had to be obtained from somewhere: no doubt there was the water with the addition of chemicals. It was encouraging to find that in England Australian wines were coming into prominence and were more favoured by the wine-drinking people of England. Although England was not a wine-drinking country, still the people were beginning to develop a taste for Australian wines. Western Australia was noted for the wonderful growth of its grapes and the peculiar characteristics of its vintage, and it seemed to him we in this State had another great industry before us which ultimately would become one of our greatest industries and should be fostered. He only pointed this out to show how much we had to do. The important position occupied by the Minister for Agriculture was second to none. It was a department that was one of the most interesting to a man who was enthusiastic on these important subjects. We recognised that the Minister was a practical man with knowledge which it was necessary to have to make a success of such an undertaking. We could go through these estimates without making any material alteration. He was not afraid the estimates would be cut down, or that much exception would be taken to the various items. He sincerely congratulated the Government on having brought to their assistance so able and practical a coadjutor in their work as the member for Northam. He was glad to see him in that position knowing him to be a thoroughly practical man, and he looked to great advancement in the work of this department. If we gave the Government an opportunity of going into recess at an early date they would have such advantage as had been afforded to their predecessors of getting a grasp of their work, and next session they would be able to come forward with reports that would fully endorse the expressions he had uttered and the hopes which he had entertained.

**MR. H. BROWN:** The Minister for Agriculture must feel flattered indeed by

the eulogy of members on both sides. The Agricultural Department was a very important one, more especially the Agricultural Bank, but we must not be too optimistic in regard to the Agricultural Bank. At the present time very few of the borrowers had begun to pay back their principal. He believed it was five years before any portion of the principal had to be returned, therefore he thought we should wait before passing any great eulogy on the system.

**HON. F. H. PIESSE:** The bank had been in existence for nearly nine years, so that some of the borrowers must have been paying back for four years.

**MR. H. BROWN:** Optimistic remarks had been made about the refrigerating works by the Minister for Agriculture; but he asked the Minister to go carefully into the back reports of the refrigerating works before embarking to any great extent in Government administration. A few months ago he asked for a return of cost and of profit and loss account, which showed that up to the present time over £11,000 had been lost; yet in spite of this fact the present Government proposed to spend another £5,000 in the extension of the works. This was an absolute disgrace. It would be far better to adopt a system of bonuses. The attention of the inspectors of stock or of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ought to be drawn to the manner in which cattle were treated in transit from Perth to the goldfields, being boxed up without feed or water for over 24 hours. Attention must also be called to the treatment of orchardists in and about Perth by Mr. Compere and his staff. One orchardist alone last year lost an income of £300 through the Government inspectors entering his orchard and cutting down every tree; and there were other similar cases in which the Government had refused compensation. Farther, certain officials of the Agricultural Department should be either suspended or discharged. The report of the Auditor General on the department showed a rotten state of affairs. Two clerks were specially mentioned, the Auditor General stating that the entries in their books were not up to date and the additions incomplete. In this connection he wished also to men-

tion that the clerks who prepared the return of cost of construction and profit and loss for a period of five years in regard to the refrigerators took a full month over the work, and after going into the vaults of the Treasury to search for vouchers, had to come back with the humiliating story that they could present only an approximate return. Such a state of affairs reflected no credit on those who had had control of the department in the past.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (in reply generally): The books of the Agricultural Department were being brought up to date as speedily as possible, and a set of books adapted for a trading venture was also being obtained. The accounts would henceforth be in perfect order.

**MR. H. BROWN:** Were the officials referred to still in the department?

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** The work referred to was the work of one clerk only, and that clerk was still in the Government service. Regarding the rabbit-proof fence, to which the Leader of the Opposition had referred, the cost of upkeep and cost generally in connection with the fence was about £6 per mile per annum, and this sufficed to keep it in thorough order. The egg-laying competitions to which the same member had referred represented an important development in a big branch of the industry, and the loss in connection with them would not be very great, although perhaps the expenditure might have come from some other vote. The country would undoubtedly benefit from some comprehensive system of agricultural education, but the establishment of such a system would involve considerable cost and its organisation would take some considerable time. At present practical training was being given. He (the Honorary Minister) was much obliged by the complimentary remarks from both sides of the House, and he hoped the work of the department during the coming year would justify those compliments. The member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown), who as usual had cleared out after making a speech, had referred to the Agricultural Bank.

**MR. STONE** called attention to the state of the House. More members

should be present when important matters like these were being discussed.

Bells rung and quorum formed.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** We had now advanced £440,000, although the authorisation was £600,000. Of that amount, £36,000 had been returned: about 20 per cent. Considering that our loans had a currency of something like 30 years, he considered the repayments had been very satisfactory indeed. Nothing could be said against the securities we held. He could assure the member for Perth and other members that our advances were perfectly safe, and everything in connection with the bank was satisfactory.

[General discussion ended; votes and items followed.]

*Vote—Agriculture: £43,338.*

*Subdivision 1—Generally, £8,607:*

*Item—Salary of director (six months), £500:*

**MR. STONE:** Did the Ministry intend to make the appointment, or do without a director?

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** There was an amount on the Estimates for a director, but it was not his intention to appoint a man straight away; in fact, it was not his intention to appoint a director at all, unless a suitable person could be secured. In this country where the work of agricultural development was so important, it would be a good thing if we could secure the services of some well-known man. There was so much to do, and so much he might do. There were many farmers in the State, yet there was no man probably in a public position whose duty it was to help them all. If we could get a director who would do for us what Professor Lowrie did for South Australia, the money would be well expended.

*Subdivision 2—Government Refrigerating Works, £1,655:*

*Item—Wages of engineers, storemen, labourers, etc., £1,000:*

**MR. HOLMAN:** In regard to the wages of the labourers and storemen employed in the Government work, was

it the intention of the Government to increase the rate of wages?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: What were they being paid?

MR. HOLMAN could not say exactly. The Minister should know better than he. He had heard complaints from some of those employed on the Government refrigerating works, one of the best paying establishments the State had, he thought. It would be very unwise to cut down the wages of these employees. The work was arduous. Was it the intention of the Minister to increase the wages?

THE HONORARY MINISTER had looked into the matter of the wages paid to the casual hands. Whatever was right should be done. He was entirely opposed to the payment of less than a fair rate for any work.

MR. STONE: In regard to the item of £1,000, were there any charges which repaid the department?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: We expected the refrigerating works would more than pay their way this year. We anticipated an income of £5,000. Of course the income from a trading concern of this nature was always problematical. At present prices were very low for ice and for storage he supposed too, and it was impossible for us to estimate what the exact revenue would be.

MR. BATH: What was the original cost of the works? Had the Minister any idea?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: No.

MR. WARE was given to understand that the employees in this department worked every day in the week, as was necessary in connection with a work of this description, but they were not allowed any holidays throughout the year, nor were they paid any extra time in lieu of those holidays. He understood it was customary, some years ago, for these employees to have holidays, but under the recent management the employees had, he understood, been denied their holidays.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The question of holidays to the men referred to came up some time ago for consideration. It was settled by the Cabinet before he took charge, and when the manager spoke to him about it he (the

Minister) arranged that the matter should be brought up for farther consideration. The men were regarded as temporary hands. Now they were not on the wages staff.

MR. WARE: They had been for years, some of them.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: If so, when the matter came up for consideration they would receive fair treatment. Men who worked a year must be allowed to have certain holidays.

#### *Subdivision 3—Stock, £2,802:*

Item—Chief Inspector, £550:

MR. HOLMAN: What steps would be taken by the Chief Inspector of Stock to prevent the landing of any camels in Western Australia from any part of India or any of those places where there was bubonic plague?

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Daglish): The hon. member could not discuss that on this item.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: All stock was inspected at the port of entry, and any camels imported would have to go into quarantine for six weeks.

MR. BATH: The need for quarantining stock had been removed by a *Gazette* notice.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: For the purpose of the Royal Agricultural Show.

Item (Stock)—Poultry Expert, £225:

MR. WARE: Why this extra £25 for an expert whose duties were not very arduous? If a member of Parliament was worth only £200, a poultry expert could hardly be worth more. Recently this officer was sharply criticised in the Press. He (Mr. Ware) moved that the item be reduced by £25.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: The officer well deserved the increase.

Amendment withdrawn.

Item (Rabbits)—Boundary riders, rabbiters, and labourers occasionally employed, £9,000:

MR. HOLMAN: Was the amount sufficient? The Minister stated the rabbits were not on the west side of the fence. They were on both sides, having reached Nannine, from which point the dividing fence was not yet erected. They could thus overrun the whole State. The item showed a decrease of £3,225. The

effect on the agricultural and pastoral industries might be serious, resulting perhaps in a loss of hundreds of thousands.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** The amount provided was considered sufficient, representing £6 per mile, which ought to be ample to keep the fence in order. A heavier expenditure might maintain the fence in more lavish style, without increased efficiency. Reports showed that the rabbits were not on both sides of the fence, though they were between the two fences and to the eastward of the outer fence. Occasionally reports came to hand of rabbits seen on the west side, but the fence in course of erection from the northern end of the present fence to the sea would probably be completed in time to stop the progress of the rabbits, even if a few were on the western side.

*Subdivision 5—Generally:*

Item—Experimental Farms, £3,000:

**MR. STONE:** Why the reduction of £912? Did any of the farms show a profit?

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** A return of about £3,000 was expected from the farms this year, equal to the amount expended.

Item—Egg-laying Competitions, £750:

**MR. STONE:** There appeared to be room for saving here.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** The item could not be reduced.

Item—National Show:

**MR. STONE:** No amount appeared to be provided.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** Provision was made out of the Sale of Government Property Trust Account.

Item—Destruction of Wild Dogs, £2,500:

**MR. TROY:** Twelve months ago the present Premier promised a deputation of squatters to introduce a Bill creating boards that would levy on the squatters for the extermination of this pest. The ravages were becoming more acute, and something should be done without delay. A Bill was promised, but owing to the work the Minister had to do probably it could not be got ready. Next session it

was to be hoped a Bill would be brought down. There was a measure in South Australia which could be admirably adapted to this State, and be a great benefit to the country.

**MR. STONE:** There was an increase in the vote this year of £603. How was it intended to apply it? A deputation from the northern party had waited on the Premier to ask that boards to control pests should be appointed.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER:** A Bill was in course of preparation. It would be drafted during the recess and presented to the House early next session. The amount of the vote was increased. It was thought that by subsidising local effort assistance could be given. If people in a district voluntarily raised a certain sum, out of this vote they could be subsidised. At any rate, with the increased vote something could be done to check the ravages of this pest.

Other items agreed to; the vote passed.

Vote—Agricultural Bank, £2,825, agreed to.

This concluded the votes for the department.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.55, midnight, until the next day.

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