

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 16th December, 1908.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE DOCK

Mr. BOLTON (without notice) asked the Premier: Has his attention been called to an article appearing in a daily paper of to-day's issue with regard to the dock at Fremantle. If so, has the decision of the Government to postpone or abandon the construction of that work been correctly reported?

The PREMIER replied: If I understand the hon. member correctly, he has asked two questions. The first is whether my attention had been drawn to the article; to that I reply "Yes." With regard to the second, the answer is "No."

QUESTION—NORTH-WEST SHIPPING, REPORT.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Premier: 1, Has the report of the Royal Commissioner (Mr. Sinclair) on the North-West Shipping, etcetera, been received by the Government? 2, If so, when will the report be made available to this House?

The PREMIER replied: 1, A departmental report was made by Mr. Sinclair, which is now under consideration.

QUESTION—EXPORTS, WHEAT AND LAMBS.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Minister for Agriculture: What provision are the

Government making at Fremantle for the storage and export of wheat, lambs, and other products for the ensuing year?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: Shed accommodation is available at Fremantle and North Fremantle. The lamb season is now over, but the provision of facilities for next season is under consideration. So also is the accommodation for fruit for export.

QUESTION—IMMIGRANTS' HOME, PERTH.

Mr. COLLIER asked the Premier: 1, What has been the expenditure from date of opening to December 1st for maintenance and upkeep of the Immigrants' Home, Perth? 2, What amount has been received from immigrants for board and lodging during the same period?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Maintenance and upkeep, £269 2s. 6d. 2, £141 6s. 6d.

QUESTION—STORM-WATER DRAIN, DAMAGE.

Mr. COLLIER asked the Minister for Works: 1, What has been the cost to the Government for damages to property caused by the construction of the George Street storm-water drain? 2, What amount (if any) was paid by the contractors?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, £404 10s. 2, The amount paid by contractors is not known.

QUESTION—ROTTNEST ISLAND COTTAGES.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Premier: 1, Have a number of cottages on Rottnest Island been granted for the use of several persons during the holiday season? 2, If so, what are the names of such persons, and what rent, if any, is being paid for the use of same?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, There are three vacant cottages on Rottnest Island within the penal settlement which are occasionally used by Ministers or officials during the holiday season.

QUESTION—AUSTRIAN IMMIGRANTS.

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware of the fact that two of the Austrians who landed in Fremantle from the German steamship "Roon" proceeded to Collie, where they arrived penniless, and had to secure the services of an interpreter to enable them to apply to the Resident Magistrate for rations? 2, If not, will the Premier cause inquiries to be made into the matter?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Yes.

QUESTION—LAND SETTLEMENT, SPECIAL SCHEME.

Mr. JACOBY asked the Premier: When he expects sufficient progress to be made with the details of the special land settlement scheme to enable all the men selected to take possession of the holdings allotted them?

The PREMIER replied: Thirty-five of the men are now settled on their blocks, whilst sufficient additional areas for the remainder have been surveyed. Wells are now being put down so as to ensure a water supply prior to the men taking up their residence on their blocks.

QUESTION—GRAIN HARVEST ESTIMATES.

Mr. JACOBY asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the official estimates of the approaching grain harvest in all the Australian States, with the exception of Western Australia, were published some time ago? 2, When may the estimate for this State be expected?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The official estimate for Victoria has been received by the Government, but not from the other States of the Commonwealth. 2, The information has been delayed through the unusually heavy amount of work to be done by the inspectors of the Lands Department. Special efforts are being made to obtain figures from the few districts which have not yet supplied them, and the estimate should be ready within one week.

QUESTION—TUBERCULOSIS IN COWS.

Mr. JACOBY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it true, as stated in yesterday's *Morning Herald*, that one of the cows condemned last July by the Central Board of Health was slaughtered at the Zoological Gardens yesterday in the presence of Mr. R. E. Weir, Chief Veterinary Surgeon, Mr. J. A. Kinsella, Government Dairy Expert, and Mr. E. A. Le Souef, V.S., and found by them to be in a very good condition of health, practically free from tuberculosis and quite fit for the supply of pure milk. 2, Has the Minister received from any of the above-mentioned experts a report or reports concerning this cow, and if so, will he please embody it or them in his reply to this question? 3, Is it not true that two months or so ago a post mortem examination was made upon another of the condemned animals, with the result that it was found free of any disease that would necessitate its death or exclusion from a dairy herd? 4, In view of the practical evidence provided by the two post mortem examinations referred to, is he still of opinion that the drastic order for the destruction of 91 cows should now be carried out? 5, Has the Minister received a report from the Chief Veterinary Officer on the general subject of the policy pursued by the Central Board of Health in this matter? If so, what is the nature of the report?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, No. The animal was diseased and manifested tuberculosis in two entirely separate series of glands, one of which was in a breaking-down stage. As is frequently the case in advanced tuberculosis the general condition of the cow was good. 2, Yes, from one officer. On receipt of other reports called for the information will be given. 3, No. No properly-conducted post mortem examination of any of the condemned cows has shown that they were free from tuberculosis. 4, In *re* the post mortem examination: this question is answered by the replies to Nos. 1 and 3. The orders for destruction are contingent and only made on the refusal by the dairymen to brand and remove the dis-

eased cows from their dairy herds to an approved paddock. 5, The report on the general question was signed jointly by Drs. Lovegrove and Cleland and Messrs. Weir and Crosby, and was read to the House on the 5th inst.

QUESTION — MEAT COMMISSION REPORT.

Mr. HARDWICK asked the Premier: 1, When will this House receive the report of the Royal Commission appointed to consider the meat question? 2, Have all the witnesses been paid their expenses for attending and giving evidence? 3, If so, what amount?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The report will be handed to His Excellency the Governor to-morrow. 2, No. 3, No expenses have been paid, with the exception of a sum of £1 for horse-hire to enable one witness to attend a sitting at Northam.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Treasurer.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) moved—

That the Bill be now read a first time.

Mr. HEITMANN: Was this a long Bill? Was there any intention to put it through this session?

The TREASURER: It was intended to put it through this session. It was only a small Bill in connection with borrowing powers.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a first time.

PAPERS—RAILWAY INDUSTRIAL AGREEMENTS.

Minister's Statement during Election.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) moved—

That all papers in connection with the disputes, conferences, industrial agreements, and industrial arbitration case between the Minister and Commissioner of Railways and the railway

employees in the years 1904 and 1905 be laid upon the Table.

He said: I have worded my motion in this way to give the Minister for Railways every opportunity to get all the information available on the matter that I am bringing forward to-day. During the recent election campaign at Menzies, the tactics adopted by the Minister for Railways were anything but honourable or fair. On more than one occasion deliberate misstatements were made about myself as to the time when I had the honour of being Minister for Railways. Going through the district I found that statements, calculated to do me a considerable amount of injury, had been published broadcast throughout the various parts of the Menzies electorate. I believe in fighting and in fighting hard, but I despise any man who will adopt tactics unworthy of a man contesting a seat for Parliament or doing anything to better his position. If a man, in order to try to raise himself, has to make false statements at the expense of another man, he should not receive any consideration in this House or anywhere. I do not intend to deal with all the statements made during that campaign, but on more than one occasion men came to me, when I was in the district for two or three days, and pointed out to me that absolutely unfair statements had been made in connection with myself as to the time when I was administering the Railway Department.

Mr. Collier: There were scores of them made.

Mr. HOLMAN: We all know that, but I am only going to protect myself in this instance. I think other members are quite able to do the same for themselves. I have a leaflet here which was published by the Minister; it will show what value can be placed on a thing like this that was published by the Minister during the campaign. In the very first statement is the point to which I took exception, and I think I will prove that the statements made by the Minister on that occasion and in this article were absolutely untrue. It is headed "Are the railway men sweated? Mr. Bath's statement disproved." Then it goes on to say:

"On several occasions Mr. Bath has made statements to the effect that the arbitration award in regard to the railway men had been taken advantage of by the Minister for Railways, who to prove the inaccuracy of such assertions, has made the following statement :—One charge that has been made without any effort to substantiate it is that I have connived at sweating upon the railways. To fully realise the situation it is necessary to go back to 1905. At that time, Mr. Holman being Minister for Railways, the men were working under an industrial agreement. The men desired concessions which the Commissioner would not grant, and it is clearly evident that they received no assistance in any shape or form from Mr. Holman, or from Mr. Johnson who succeeded him. Appeal after appeal was made to Mr. Holman without effect. The relations between the Commissioner and the association daily grew more strained, with the result that on the 25th July, 1905, the Commissioner notified the Clerk of the Awards of his intention to retire from the industrial agreement under which they had previously worked, this taking effect on the 24th day of August, 1905, the second last day of Mr. Johnson's administration of the Railways, with the result that both the parties were forced into the Arbitration Court. I have been blamed for not interfering with the Commissioner in the interests of the workmen, but what did Mr. Holman and Mr. Johnson do when they were in a position to voice their claims? They stand charged by their own followers with apathy and neglect, and ignoring in every way the demands of the men for a renewal of the industrial agreement."

I do not intend to deal with any of the statements made in connection with Mr. Johnson, but these remarks are made relative to myself. Mr. Johnson is able to look after himself in a matter like this, as on a previous occasion when he proved that certain statements made in this same rag were utterly wrong. After this statement the Minister went on to

give a lot of figures that it would be a useless waste of time to go into on this occasion. He said further on:—

"This short history of past events should convince the railway men and wage-earners generally that I took up a strong attitude on their behalf, in striking contrast to that adopted either by Mr. Holman or Mr. Johnson when they occupied the position of Minister for Railways."

In connection with this matter the Minister said—

"To fully realise the situation it is necessary to go back to 1905. At that time Mr. Holman being Minister for Railways, the men were working under an industrial agreement. The men desired concessions which the Commissioner would not grant, and it is clearly evident that they received no assistance in any shape or form from Mr. Holman or from Mr. Johnson, who succeeded him. Appeal after appeal was made to Mr. Holman without effect."

And then he goes on to say that I was practically responsible for forcing these men to the Arbitration Court.

The Minister for Railways : I gave the dates.

MR. HOLMAN : I am not quoting the whole article, but I want to deal with the statement that I did nothing to assist these men, that I was practically one of those who forced them into the Arbitration Court; and in dealing with this question it is necessary for me to go back to 1904. The Labour Government assumed office in August, 1904, and when the House adjourned I went to the Murchison and was away several weeks. I came back some time in September, and shortly after that the House sat, but at the first opportunity after I returned from my visit to the Murchison I made it my business to see the Commissioner of Railways and go into the position with him. An industrial agreement had expired on the 1st January, 1904, and since then, until I assumed the position of Minister for Railways, efforts had been made by the railway union to bring about a conference with a view to settling the industrial trouble and getting an industrial

agreement made. These men could not get a conference with the Commissioner of Railways, and shortly after I assumed office the secretary of the union called upon me and asked if I could arrange a conference. Previously I had seen the Commissioner, and he had asked what was the policy of the Labour Government in connection with the railway employees. I informed him that it was to treat the employees in a fair and just manner, to have industrial agreements made with every branch of the employees so far as it was possible to make them; because, as I said at the time, if the Government could not make industrial agreements and give their employees fair terms, it would be unfair to ask outside employers to adopt a course the Government themselves would not undertake. The Commissioner had for some considerable time refused to hold any communication with the men, but when I assumed office, Mr. Casson, the secretary of the railway union, rang me up on the telephone, and I told him to come around and see me. This he did, and immediately he came into my office, without consulting the Commissioner, I arranged for a conference to be held on a certain date, with the understanding that if the Commissioner did not have time to go into the matter on that date he could fix a suitable time when he could go fully into the question. When Mr. Casson left my office I informed the Commissioner, and I told him of the date of the conference and that if it were not satisfactory he could arrange a different day when he could meet the men. The first conference was held on the 21st September. I attended the opening of the conference after bringing the two bodies together, the employer, that is the nominal employer, and the employees. I said that I was desirous that an industrial agreement should be made, and that I was satisfied fair and just treatment could be brought about between the Commissioner and the men. I mentioned that Mr. Casson had rung me up on the telephone, and I said I considered it would be a good opportunity to discuss the matter, because I was always of the opinion that if men went to a conference difficulties could be satis-

factorily settled. I also stated that I was anxious that the whole of the railway employees should belong to one union, because I was satisfied that one industrial dispute could be settled more easily than half a dozen. So far as that body of men was concerned I think I have shown that everything possible was done to bring about a settlement, but I will go into that matter a little more fully later on. However, to show what was done while I was Minister, and what was carried out by the Commissioner after consulting with me and getting my views and ideas, I have something here which I shall quote. We heard the Minister for Railways a little while ago pointing out what was done in fixing up one or two industrial agreements. When I was in office, after I returned from the Murchison, there was an agreement drawn up with the boilermakers on the 29th October; it was to last for three years. Then on the 1st November an industrial agreement was signed between the Commissioner and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers; that was also for three years. Another agreement was signed on the 2nd November between the Commissioner and the Coastal Iron, Brass and Metal Moulders' Union; that was to last for three years. On the 19th September an agreement for three years was made with the West Australian Locomotive Engine-drivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Union. So four industrial agreements were made with four different bodies of men for a period of three years. The main difficulty in the way was with regard to the W.A. Society of Railway Employees. As I have said, the Commissioner refused to meet that body. I dealt with the matter and arranged a conference myself by which the Commissioner was to meet the men. I took part at the conference which, however, was not completed when I had to leave for Parliament House. There was much business for me to do in Parliament at that time and I remember well that there were two measures which I had to introduce by second reading speeches on that day. There were also several other matters in which I was taking an active part and which had to be dealt with. The first conference was

held on the 21st September, and at that time the whole question was gone into, but not fully or thoroughly. It was arranged, however, that a further conference should be held on the 9th November. This met in due course and another one was held on the 16th November to deal with the question in dispute.

The Minister for Railways : Where was the first conference held ?

Mr. HOLMAN : In the office of the Commissioner of Railways. That was the one on the 21st September. I was present. At the meetings held on the 9th and 16th November some 50 or 60 of the matters in dispute were practically settled.

The Minister for Railways : There is nothing on the file to show it.

Mr. HOLMAN : Then there should be. I have my own notes which I took at the time the conference was held. It took place in the Commissioner's office and the Press were excluded.

The Minister for Railways : Do you say that prior to arranging a day the Commissioner would not meet the representative of the union ?

Mr. HOLMAN : Yes, and I arranged the conference myself. It was because it was stated to me at the time that the Commissioner would not meet the representatives of the union that I made the arrangements.

The Minister for Railways : The trouble with Casson occurred later.

Mr. HOLMAN : As the question at issue was a big one I took a considerable part in the proceedings myself, for I was anxious that a fair settlement all round should be made. At the conference held in November almost all the matters were fixed up; that is with the exception of about six. We were very busy at that time and no further progress was made for some little time afterwards. The secretary of the railway Employees' Union waited on me and then there was a deputation some time in April, 1905. I saw the Commissioner in connection with this matter and he not only refused to meet the men but practically refused to have any conference with Mr. Casson, the secretary of

the union. I wrote a minute which was pretty strongly worded. I do not know the exact words, but the effect was that as the law in this State allowed men to form unions and to have matters fixed up either through the Arbitration Court or by industrial agreements, the unions must be recognised. I stated that whatever personal feeling Mr. George had against Mr. Casson he had to recognise the latter as the mouthpiece of the union he represented. I again brought them into communication with one another. Shortly afterwards I met the Commissioner and we went into the whole of the six matters in dispute. I gave him my ideas upon them, and said that he and the men were to fix up as many points as they could in connection with the dispute, and then I would arrange for the balance to be referred back to me and would take the responsibility myself of seeing that they were fixed up and an industrial agreement brought into existence.

The Minister for Railways : Have you the date of that minute ?

Mr. HOLMAN : I do not remember the date. It was a strongly worded minute and I remember I wrote it at a time when Mr. Casson was in my office.

The Minister for Railways : About when would that be ?

Mr. HOLMAN : Some time early in 1905. A deputation waited upon me from the Railway Employees' Union some time in April and I went into all the matters in dispute. I then expressed my opinion on those questions. I was not afraid to express an opinion on any question that cropped up, and I was satisfied that the claims of the men were absolutely just. After holding that conference with the representatives of the men I sent on a copy of the proceedings to the Commissioner, accompanied by a minute in which I stated that I had met the railway employees' representatives and that in my opinion their difficulties should be fixed up. I then asked the Commissioner to meet the men and see that the trouble was satisfactorily settled. I asked him

to treat the matter as an urgent one, as the position was serious. Just prior to that matters were almost completed when the railway employees held their annual picnic. In replying to the toast of the Minister for Railways, I stated that matters were proceeding satisfactorily and I hoped that in the near future they would be more favourable than they were at that time. I said we were there not to speak on matters in connection with the policy of the Government or with the railways, but to enjoy ourselves. Unfortunately some indiscreet remarks were made by representatives of the employees which the Commissioner took exception to. I was then anxious for the matter to be fixed up and I met the men in conference and arranged that they should again see the Commissioner. After that the Commissioner wrote to the representatives of the union and stated he would meet them. Just about this time the Commissioner left Western Australia to attend a commissioners' conference, and it was his absence that prevented the matter being fixed up definitely once and for all. He did not return from the Eastern States for two or three months and arrived back early in June, or late in May, I am not sure which. Just about that time I intended to go to the Murchison and the last letter I wrote as Minister for Railways was sent at that time. In that letter I asked the Commissioner to fix the whole matter up. I gave him in detail my opinions as to how the question should be settled and specially stated that the hours of work should be fixed in the agreement at 48 a week as the Government had carried a resolution in Parliament some time previously that the eight hours a day principle should be brought into force in the railways, wherever possible. Another question was that of employees performing higher duties, and I said strongly in that letter that men performing higher duties should receive a higher rate of pay, as the Arbitration Court had decided on that point when I myself applied for an interpretation of an award. Another point in dispute was that of the goldfields allowance,

and I expressed my opinion strongly that if the salaried staff received from £30 to £50 a year goldfields allowance the ordinary labourers and low paid men should receive what they were asking for, namely, one and sixpence a day as a goldfields allowance. Another matter in dispute was the question of increment. I did not know very much about that and was not too strong on it. The question of accident pay was in dispute also, and I gave my opinion that workmen who were injured should receive half pay from the day they met with the injury. I pointed out that that was practically the law in New Zealand and that it was intended to introduce an amendment to that end to the Workers' Compensation Act here. I was administering the Act at that time as Minister for Labour and I was of opinion that we should pay accident pay from the day on which the injury was received. The reason why I could not settle these matters at once myself was because I was leaving for the Murchison. The letter to which I have just referred was the last I wrote as Minister and I defy any individual to say correctly or with fairness that I did not do everything possible while a Minister to bring about a settlement of the difficulties between the men and the Commissioner. Had there been time for me to do it I would have made the agreement then. So far as I was concerned the remarks I made to the Commissioner were that no body of workmen in the railways should be forced into the Arbitration Court while I was Minister. Had I remained in office long enough the agreement would have been fixed up. Several circumstances were against the drawing up of the agreement and, as I say, had I but had the time there would have been an agreement for three years. It would have been completely satisfactory to the association. The Minister made deliberate and wilful misstatements against me in the course of the election. I do not know why he did so or why I was brought into the question at all or why he should endeavour by making false statements in connection with me when I was Minister—

The Minister for Railways: On a point of order the hon. member should not use that word.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not use the words "false statement."

Mr. HOLMAN: I was dealing with the man and not a member of Parliament, although he was the Minister for Railways at that time. I have not only said it here but I have said it in public elsewhere and I will do so anywhere the Minister likes. I will make exactly the same statement anywhere. This is the wire I sent to Mr. Scaddan when I saw what the Minister had published in a pamphlet or in an electioneering sheet in which he asked for the support of the men.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better use the word "incorrect," although at the time the remark was made the Minister was not a member of Parliament.

Mr. HOLMAN: Had I been there I would have used a stronger word.

Mr. SPEAKER: You must comply with the requirements of the House.

Mr. HOLMAN: I will endeavour to do so, and act in accordance with the rules of the House. The wire I sent to Mr. Scaddan was as follows:—

"Gregory's statement with reference to myself when Minister published in an appeal to the electors absolutely false. Will immediately resign my seat if he can prove his statement. I publicly accuse him of making misleading and lying statements. Authorise you to repeat this to the Press and all centres."

Mr. Scaddan: And I may say I did so.

Mr. HOLMAN: I saw the statement in the *North Coolgardie Herald* and knowing it was owned or largely owned by the Minister I took no notice of it; but when the Minister adopted such tactics as to publish in electioneering sheets a statement which is absolutely incorrect I considered it was time for me to protect myself. Now, when my telegram was placed before the Minister for Railways, this is what he said. This I may say is another budget of facts for the electors to digest. This is No. 2. It is headed "The Railway Service. Attitude of Min-

isters towards the workers," and it reads—

"Mr. Scaddan has received a wire from Mr. Holman, M.L.A., who is stationed at Waverley, pending progress of election, stating that he challenges the statement by Mr. Gregory, regarding his (Holman's) action in regard to the railway workers whilst Minister. Asked if he had anything to say in regard to the matter, Mr. Gregory remarked that the statements he had made were based upon facts, and in support of his statement he quoted the following extracts from a metropolitan paper, dated January, 1905."

Then he quoted certain facts from a Perth paper. If I were to quote a statement made in the same paper about the same Minister I would be ordered out of the Chamber.

The Minister for Railways: It was put upon your file.

Mr. HOLMAN: Certainly, I always put such statements on my file. It would be better if you did the same.

The Minister for Railways: I do not interfere with the railway files.

Mr. HOLMAN: The statements made were absolutely wilful and deliberate mis-statements and no man with a spark of honesty could make such statements, absolutely incorrect as they are. This is the author the Minister for Railways quotes as his authority; and when we know that the information was given by one recently dismissed from the service we know what reliance can be placed upon those statements. The Minister for Railways like a lizard on a warm stone, went out of his way to try and crawl back into the sunshine and keep another man out of the warmth. At a place I visited myself he made statements and spoke rather strongly, though not so strongly as he would have spoken had I not been there to defend myself. Not only was that done, but individual men have come to me and informed me of his statements made in connection with myself when I was Minister for Railways—statements that were absolutely incorrect. However, those statements are matters of personal concern between the Minister and the man

to whom he was talking. But these other statements were made publicly, and no man with a spark of honour could have made them. We must expect at times, when a man's blood gets a little warm, that he will make statements a little strong; because I maintain that if a man can sit coolly down at all times when he is trying to fight for the people of the State, his blood must be milk and water and something else. If we are fighting strong men in a strong cause we sometimes use strong language, although perhaps we are sorry for it afterwards; but when a man in cold blood makes statements that are absolutely untrue I maintain that the man is not fit to be a member of this House or to be Minister for Railways; because such a man will stoop to the lowest possible level. He makes incorrect statements and when the fact is pointed out to him he tries to crawl out of them. I have fought on behalf of labour for many years, but I defy any individual to point to one instance in which I have not done my best for the interests of the workers, and at the same time endeavoured to prevent trouble. If members will only give a fair and a just vote on the facts I have placed before them I am satisfied that the unanimous vote of this House will be given on the side of justice and truth; and that hon. members will maintain that the statements made by the Minister for Railways are totally incorrect, unjust and uncalled for. I move the motion.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. Gregory): The hon. member says his political reputation has been assailed by me in connection with the recent elections. He says that statements I have made have thrown a tarnish upon his political reputation. I think that the attitude of the hon. member, and the language he has used here to-day fully uphold the reputation he has enjoyed ever since he came into this Parliament.

Mr. Scaddan: No stronger than you used at Mount Ida in my presence.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member kept outside.

Mr. Scaddan: I heard you call men unmitigated liars.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In connection with the statements made at Mount Ida it had been said that I was interested in the purchase of certain battery parts. I declared that the person who made that statement was an unmitigated liar. I say it again. I am not talking to any hon. member of this House; no member of this House made it to my knowledge. It was made by my opponent.

Mr. Scaddan: He made it on the authority of statements made by members of this Chamber.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Then it was a scandalous statement. No person here dares to insinuate for a single moment that I was ever interested in the purchase of those parts.

Mr. Scaddan: The statement made by Mr. Buzacott was that you tried to suppress the report of the State Battery Inquiry Board. You said he was an unmitigated liar.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No; I said that in connection with the scandalous statement made with regard to the purchase of battery parts. I shall go into this matter more fully later on. I shall give the whole particulars to the Press, more especially in connection with the statement made with regard to sectarianism. I do not want to keep the House on this matter now, but I shall give a full report to the Press to show where all these statements have originated. If one wants to descend to scandalous abuse it is only necessary to read the circular letter sent out asking for funds, appealing to the electors, and which was authorised by J. Scaddan. However, I do not want to deal with that here to-night. The question is, did I, in connection with this election, say anything reflecting upon the honour of the hon. member opposite. In respect to this last election I made practically only one speech; that is to say, I stuck to the same notes right through the whole piece, and this matter which is here printed was written by myself and forms part of an electoral appeal. In dealing with these charges made time after time to the effect that while the Government gave certain promises to the

railway men we have always endeavoured to sweat these employees—in my speech to the people of my constituency I was answering the charge made by hon. members opposite, that we had tried to sweat the railway men, and I was endeavouring to point out that as far as my actions were concerned they were very different from the actions of certain others. Having been charged with sweating these men I was in every sense justified in trying to put as clear a statement as possible before the people to show them what we had done. This is what I said—

“One charge that has been made without any effort to substantiate it is that I have connived at sweating upon the railways. To fully realise the situation it is necessary to go back to 1905. At that time, Mr. Holman being Minister for Railways, the men were working under an industrial agreement. The men desired concessions which the Commissioner would not grant, and it is clearly evident that they received no assistance in any shape or form from Mr. Holman, or from Mr. Johnson, who succeeded him.”

Mr. Swan : That is not true.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must not say that.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : The hon. member does not know much about the rules of the House so it does not matter. I went on to state—

“Appeal after appeal was made to Mr. Holman without effect. The relations between the Commissioner and the association daily grew more strained, with the result that on the 25th July, 1905, the Commissioner notified the clerk of the awards of his intention to retire from the industrial agreement under which they had previously worked, this taking effect on the 24th day of August, 1905, the second last day of Mr. Johnson’s administration of the railways, with the result that both the parties were forced into the Arbitration Court. I have been blamed for not interfering with the Commissioner in the interests of the workmen; but what did Mr. Hol-

man or Mr. Johnson do when they were in a position to voice their claims? They stand charged by their own followers with apathy and neglect, and with ignoring in every way the demands of the men for a renewal of the industrial agreement, and ultimately forcing them into the Arbitration Court. Do not forget that it was the members of the Labour Government who were in power when the industrial agreement was so suddenly terminated and arbitration forced upon them. And the result of the appeal was disastrous to the workmen, as the figures I will give you will show.”

That was the language I used in connection with this matter. I then went on to say that the rates of wages paid to the men discloses in nearly every instance a higher rate than that set down under the award. The hon. member who has just spoken says as far as he was concerned this is not correct. He might easily have said nothing. I think the hon. member was more troubled about some questions which were asked him when he was out in the back country, and that may make him a little more bitter. When I heard the hon. member was going to certain parts I said, “You might ask him who paid a portion of his election expenses when he was first elected to Parliament.” I did it, and there is nothing I have been more ashamed of in my life.

Mr. Bolton : There is plenty you ought to be more ashamed of.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Chickens come home to roost occasionally, and mine have come home very forcibly in this case. The hon. member has spoken of this matter, and said the Railway Commissioner refused to meet the men in connection with this conference. There was no question of a conference until a wire was sent on the 19th September. The hon. member sent a wire to the Commissioner as follows:—

“Deputation consisting of Railway Association’s Conference desirous meeting you and me; would Wednesday 2 o’clock suit you? Wire im-

mediately if convenient or state any more suitable arrangement."

This was the wire the hon. member tells us of when the Commissioner would not meet the railway workmen—that is the W.A.G.R. Association—but he sends a wire and arranges a conference. That is the wire which was sent on the 19th September. Here is a letter on the 23rd August from the general secretary of the W.A.G.R. Association; it is as follows:—

"In reply to your letter of the 18th instant, I have to inform you that the matter referred to will have full consideration, and as I hope to be in a position to meet your delegates very shortly now, anything further may be left until then."

Apparently the member was misinformed when he said the Railway Commissioner would not meet these men. Again, on the 8th September we have this letter from the Commissioner to the general secretary (Mr. Casson)—

"Referring to the conference we had a little time ago, by which I understood distinctly from your members that they desired to have one agreement including the whole of the persons employed by this department, I have to say that I have communicated with the unions who signed the tradesmen's agreement, and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and the moulders, decidedly object to your proposition, and state that you have nothing like a majority of the tradesmen in your society."

And so on. We find the Commissioner was dealing with the Secretary of the W.A.G.R. at that time. Then we have Mr. Casson saying on 16th September—

"I am directed, in reply to your communication of the 8th instant, to inform you that this Society has decided that it is prepared to meet you with a view to further discussing the classifications of the servants, but while they do not stipulate as a hard and fast rule that it will be one and only one agreement, at the same time they are not prepared to discuss these matters jointly with other unions, neither are they prepared to sign any agreement jointly with other unions."

So that the Commissioner and the secretary of this association were quite in touch with these matters. There was correspondence, and as far as my memory serves me the whole trouble between the Commissioner and the secretary of this association occurred at the time of one of the railway employees' picnics, when Mr. Casson made some remarks in reference to the Commissioner which he resented. From that date the Commissioner refused to have anything to do with Mr. Casson, for some time at any rate, and refused to meet him in any shape or form.

Mr. Holman: Have you the minutes of the first conference?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The papers do not show that any conference took place, but from what the hon. member has told me I believe the conference did take place, because I saw his telegram asking for a conference. There is a letter here containing a list of matters to be brought before the conference. Still, I would not admit a conference was held, because it says here, "I beg to forward you a list of matters which it is desired should be laid before you," but there is nothing to show on the file that a conference was held, in any shape or form, except some shorthand notes at the bottom. The papers will be laid on the Table presently. That is all we have to show that the conference was held. The conference may have taken place, I believe it did, but it will make no difference in any shape or form. The fact that a conference does not improve the conditions of the workmen only emphasises the position. We find the hon. member is "between the devil and the deep blue sea," for the members of the association were desiring certain things to be done, and the Commissioner was on the other side, and it ended by nothing being done. The hon. member indulged in a lot of talk about the railway work and the Commissioner himself, but he did not do anything during the whole time he was in office as to this special agreement. I said the men desired to have certain concessions and the Commis-

sioner refused to grant these concessions, and I say the hon. member was standing between the Commissioner and the workmen. And what was the result of his efforts?

Mr. Holman: They received the rate of wages and no reduction the whole time I was there.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They were asking for certain concessions; here is the list of the concessions asked for.

Mr. Bath: They were narrowed down to five or six, the hon. member said.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I can only go by the file and the file does not show more.

Mr. Holman: It will be at the Mines Office.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If they are at the Mines Office then they are at the office. I have not the official records in my pocket. A perusal of the file will show that this is the only accusation I made against the hon. member in connection with the industrial dispute. There was friction between the men and the Commissioner when the hon. member was in power and he did nothing to alleviate the condition of the men. The member may have tried on several occasions to get some concession granted to the men, but it ended in nothing. It does not appear to me that anything was done. The hon. member attacked me because I quoted from an extract that was on the file placed there when he himself was Minister for Railways. I had nothing to do with placing the extract there, I was surprised to see it on the file. Here we have this railway servant—and I think I can put my finger on the man who wrote this; he has done more harm for the railway workmen than all the others put together, including the hon. member himself. My belief is that this was written by Mr. Casson.

Mr. Bolton: Done more harm you say?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, done more harm.

Mr. Bolton: Not so much as you have.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is a matter of opinion. This article charges the Minister with refusing to

take any action. He says here—and the man who writes this knows all about the Railway Act—

“Mr. Holman, the Minister for Railways, absolutely refuses to take a hand in the abolition of the agreement; he has already announced that the Commissioner is paramount in the railways, therefore he cannot extend a friendly helping hand to the employees.”

He goes on dealing with all the other regulations framed; he thoroughly understands the position from a railway point of view. He then writes in the same class of language that the hon. member indulged in with regard to myself which I purposely kept out of any of the notes which were published in connection with the matter. Anything offensive, and there were some very dirty and very offensive things said here, I refrained from having printed in connection with this matter. During the time that the member for Murchison was in charge of the railways, no benefit to the men was effected. After this we have a long interview between Mr. Casson in the Press. He writes nearly two columns of matter pointing out frequent breaches of the previous agreement and so on, and by no word does he mention the Minister in the nature of an appeal to him, or in any form whatever. Apparently he followed up the opinions voiced in this other article, saying that the Minister shielded himself behind the Railway Act which made the Commissioner paramount on questions of that sort. As far as I can see by these files the member has, as he stated, written to the Commissioner on two occasions pointing out that certain things required to be done. He does not issue any instructions, he does not send the matter to Cabinet so as to get something done for the men, but he says he believes that certain things can and should be done, but he refrains from interfering in any shape or form. I am only going by the files, they show no record of the hon. member having done anything. I have been told since that the hon. member has interfered with the Commissioner in regard to the industrial agree-

ment under which the men were working. I was pointing out in this paper, which the hon. member takes such exception to and which compelled him to use the language he did this evening, that in regard to this agreement when the men were in trouble, they received no assistance from the hon. member. To go a little further, while the Leader of the Opposition was in office and while the member for Guildford was a Minister, at that time, Mr. George, the then Commissioner, served a notice on the men withdrawing from the industrial agreement, so that there was no chance of having an industrial agreement. He sent that notice to the clerk of the Arbitration Court, and it was served on the 25th July. The notice was of intention to retire from the agreement one month later, and on the date mentioned he retired from the industrial agreement. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Guildford had an opportunity of doing something for the men, because they were Ministers at that time, and the Leader of the Opposition was one who has induced me to make this statement. If it had not been for the hon. member's charges that we are sweating the workers, I would not have bothered, but the hon. member tried to make the country believe that I was endeavouring to sweat the workers and was making economies in that way. I was going before my constituents, and in decent language I put my case before the electors.

Mr. Bath : That does not justify a reply by misrepresentation.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Where is the misrepresentation? I think hon. members will consider that is perfectly fair. If I have failed to make myself clear I will read it; and perhaps it is just as well that I should read it so that it shall appear in *Hansard*.

Mr. Bath : You are supposed to be justifying your statements in regard to the member for Murchison.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I want to point out why I went specially into this matter. There were very few railway men in my electorate, and I

would have no need as far as these railway men were concerned, to make any special appeal to them because they formed so small a proportion of my constituents. The greater number of people in my electorate are men who are working for wages, and if I had endeavoured to make economies by trying to sweat the men in the Railway Department they would have voted against me as one man. I want to try and show that when my opponents were in office they had the opportunity of doing something, and did nothing, and when I went into office I got particulars from the records to show the action which I took in connection with the industrial agreement, and to compare it with the action of my opponents. It was a fair thing to do as long as there was no misrepresentation. With regard to the misrepresentation, we find here that the retirement from the industrial agreement was lodged with the clerk of the court on 25th July, 1905, when the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the Cabinet, and the member for Guildford was Minister for Railways. That expired on 24th August, 1905, or one or two days prior to their going out of office. The result was that the workmen were forced into the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Scaddan : You could have prevented it.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I was away electioneering at the time and that was used against me. The cross-citation of the Commissioner I saw in the newspaper when I was away in the back country. I took action immediately I came back. I reported the matter to Cabinet, and the instructions of Cabinet were that the wages of these men were not to be reduced. I say the hon. member is not justified in making the statements he has done. The records show clearly that the hon. member by his efforts did nothing to assist the men at the time. He went out of office leaving the men in the position they were in some few months before. There was still friction when he left office between the men and the Commissioner. They wanted concessions and the Commis-

sioner would not grant them. I think the hon. member will admit that.

Mr. Holman: The matter was practically fixed up when I left office.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: When did the hon. member leave office?

Mr. Holman: About the 8th June.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: And on the 25th June notice is served from those men of their intention to retire from the industrial agreement.

Mr. Bath: On the 25th July.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, it was the 25th July, not June, and that is six weeks after the hon. member went out.

Mr. Scaddan: You did not interfere until after the court made the award.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: How could the hon. member expect me to interfere? When I came back from my election I found there was an appeal to the court and the result was that in almost every branch of the service big reductions were made. I consulted the Commissioner in regard to this matter and told him that there was no desire that the men who could least afford it should have their wages reduced. I do not want to waste time by going through all the minutes that I wrote, but I would like to say that I went to Cabinet and told them I believed it was possible to effect big economies in the railway service, but not by cutting down those men who could least afford to be cut down. To show that these reductions were possible I need only mention that the railways to-day are costing £200,000 less; and this economy has been effected without cutting down the wages men.

Members: No.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I say it has. And in many instances we are paying exactly the same rates of wages that were in force years ago. Now we have been able to complete industrial agreements with every section of the department.

Mr. Holman: You are only carrying out the agreements made in my time.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have completed agreements with every section excepting a couple, without any friction; and probably we would

have made effective agreements with all the sections but for interference on the part of some members. We have been able to fix up an agreement with the iron-moulders without the slightest trouble, and I feel quite satisfied that the efforts we have made with the W.A. association of workers—that we will be able to effect an industrial agreement with them also. I do not want to say anything more on this matter. The language I used on this question no person in the world could take exception to. When the hon. member was Minister for Railways friction existed between the men and the Commissioner and I used the words, that they received no assistance in any shape or form from Mr. Holman, or Mr. Johnson who succeeded him. The hon. member has not sought to show that he endeavoured to effect any improvement. He wrote two letters which are here upon the file.

Mr. Holman: There should be more letters upon the file.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member may have some time to go through the file. I was going to suggest—in fact I would have been pleased if he had formally moved his motion, examined the papers, and then when the railway Estimates were before the House to have referred to the matter. I know that the hon. member did not write more than a couple of letters. I did not think at the time that the Commissioner was justified in economising by cutting down the wages of the men who were poorly paid. I told him he had too many men both among the officials and the workmen, that his staffs were too large, and that they would have to be reduced. At the same time the Government of the day insisted that those men should be paid the old rate of wages, and as I have already said, we stuck to that. I have nothing further to say, except that I have no desire to prevent these papers going on the table. There are some other papers in connection with this matter which I have not brought along; but after this motion is carried, all will be presented to the House.

Mr. SWAN (North Perth): I do not want to have a great deal to say on

this question, although perhaps I know as much about the details of the matter as any one in the House. With regard to the statement credited to the Minister for Railways in connection with the action of Mr. Holman when he occupied the position of Minister for Railways, I want to say I consider those statements are absolutely incorrect. I held the position of president of this particular organisation, and know what took place. I know Mr. Holman did attempt to assist us in bringing about a settlement with the Commissioner.

The Minister for Railways: What did he do?

Mr. SWAN: We had a conference with Mr. Holman, and after that, he attended a conference—which has been questioned by the Minister for Railways—at which we met the Commissioner of Railways and discussed the matter. I do not want to take up the cudgels for the hon. member for Murchison; he is able to defend himself; but as far as giving us assistance when Minister for Railways, I say that he certainly did.

The Minister for Railways: What did he do?

Mr. SWAN: He attended two conferences, but what took place between him as the then Minister for Railways and the Commissioner I do not know; but I am prepared to take the word of the hon. member, and what occurred then bears out his statement, that he was attempting to bring about an agreement between the Commissioner and the organisation.

The Minister for Railways: I want to know what good resulted.

Mr. Bath: It took you five months to appoint a Superintendent of State batteries.

Mr. SWAN: I cannot say what took place behind the scenes; but I was satisfied in my own mind, as one who took an active interest in that particular business, that the then Minister for Railways was doing a fair thing to assist us in bringing about an agreement. I know well what was the cause of no agreement being arrived at; it was the headstrong action of the then Commissioner: the absolute unreasoning stand he took on the matter.

The Minister for Railways: And nothing was done?

Mr. SWAN: With regard to the present Minister for Railways: he seems to take credit to himself for what was done. I understand that he said in that address to the electors, that Mr. Holman the then Minister for Railways assisted to force the matter into the Arbitration Court. If that statement was made it was absolutely incorrect. Mr. Holman at no time did anything that would have tended to force the men into the Arbitration Court. After Mr. Holman went out of office, another Minister came along and we did not succeed in getting the agreement with the Commissioner; but that does not prove that nothing was done by the gentleman occupying that office to bring about the agreement.

The Minister for Railways: As a matter of explanation I would like to say what I stated was that the men received no assistance in any shape or form from Mr. Holman, or Mr. Johnson who succeeded him. Let the hon. member tell us what good resulted.

Mr. SWAN: That statement says that no assistance was given by these gentlemen. Assistance was given. If I were not here that statement might go uncontradicted; and I care not what position a man holds, when I hear a misstatement made I will certainly contradict it. The then Minister for Railways did attempt to assist us. I do not think that his efforts were successful, but he certainly did attempt to assist us in every way possible. Now we come to the time when these men were forced into the Arbitration Court and an award was given. The Minister for Railways tells us that he took such action as prevented the award of the Arbitration Court being given effect to. So far as I know the men give no thanks to the present Minister for Railways for anything he did in that direction.

The Minister for Railways: I know that perfectly well.

Mr. SWAN: I know perfectly well what prevented that arbitration award being given effect to. It was the strength of the organisations working in the interests of the men. The authorities dared not give effect to the award, because they

knew what the result would be; that is to give effect to it directly, but to a large extent it has been given effect to indirectly. The Minister says no reduction has been made in the rates of pay of railway men. I agree that no man who has continued to be employed in the department has had his wages reduced say from 8s. to 7s., but I defy contradiction when I say that men were dismissed from the service, who were receiving 8s. a day, and as much as 9s. a day, and in a week or so afterwards they were again employed at 7s. a day. That is a method of reducing wages that is not as honest as the direct method of reducing them, say from 8s. to 7s.

Several Opposition Members: That is sweating.

Mr. SWAN: I say there is sweating on the railways to-day, and while men continue to be employed at 6s. 6d. a day, with wives and families dependent on them, it is sweating of the worst kind.

The Minister for Railways: I suppose you know what we have offered them in that regard.

Mr. SWAN: Yes, an increase of from 6s. 6d. a day to 7s.

Mr. Gill: And that is only when a vacancy occurs.

Mr. SWAN: Yes; it is surrounded by such conditions, conditions which I have had long experience of, and I know the capacity of officers of this department to get round and manœuvre these conditions to suit their own ends. I am not attacking the Minister, or any man, but whether the Minister is aware of it or not, these things go on in the Railway Department.

The Minister for Railways: You must give me some concrete cases.

Mr. SWAN: I will give you concrete cases. The Minister says that no man who has passed his examination is kept on at the minimum rate of wage, but I know a man, who has put in many years in the State service, and who has a wife and six children, who is working on the Perth station at 6s. 6d. a day, and he has passed his examinations. Is that not sweating? Is the Minister not aware of that? I am not going to say that the Minister is responsible for the sweating that exists, or for the injustice done in

that department, but if he is not aware of this he has not got the grip of the department he should have. I am prepared to assist him, if possible, in remedying these matters, but it is no use the Minister saying these things do not exist, because I know they do, and I do not think the Minister has dealt systematically with the question. Any man, knowing that married men with families are employed and have been employed for years at 6s. 6d. a day, should take some action to see whether justice is being done.

The Minister for Railways: You are guilty for not letting us know of these things. Instead, you keep silent until you come here. Of course I know it is politics.

Mr. SWAN: Politics? No man has ever seen my name figuring in the Press, making charges against Ministers or anyone else. I always give a man a fair deal while he gives me, and the class to which I belong, a fair deal. If he does not, I am going to get up against him every time, and I do not care whether he squeals or not.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet): I have knowledge of some of these sweated railway men, because two years I brought it under the notice of the Minister, and asked a question in the House whether the Minister was aware that numbers of men on the Perth station, married men were receiving 6s. 6d. a day, so that the Minister was aware of it then, and he gave us his word that he would make an alteration and bring about better conditions. Unfortunately it would appear this has not been done. The Minister cannot very well complain regarding the statement made by the member for Murchison, because the Minister was most thorough in the statement that there was no sweating. Now, the Minister must admit, bearing in mind what the member for North Perth has said, that sweating exists in the railways. The Minister said that as he was fighting an election, when Mr. George, the then Commissioner of Railways, took the railway servants to court, he had no power to take action.

The Minister for Railways: I was not fighting an election, but I was in the back country.

Mr. TROY: The Minister could take other action when it suited his purpose. When Mr. Johnson raised the battery charges the Minister made such political capital out of it as to take action at once.

The Minister for Railways: Do you know the difference between the two departments?

Mr. TROY: I do not know the difference between the two actions, but when it suited your purpose you did not take action in connection with the Railway Department.

The Minister for Railways: I did take action.

Mr. TROY: The Minister could have insisted on better conditions being given to those railway men if he had cared to take action.

Mr. HOLMAN (in reply): I am pleased I have brought this matter before the House, because I have dragged from the Minister a statement which showed that he, while going through the electorate, was trying to prompt some of his puppets with questions to put to me, insinuating things against me that never happened. It only goes to show that the statements I have made are borne out, and there are many other matters brought forward in the same slimy manner by the same gentleman—insinuations that he was afraid to come out in the open and make, and statements he dared not openly make against me that were made solely for the purpose of trying, in an under-hand manner, to lower my reputation. The Minister said that he paid my election expenses during the campaign when I was first elected to Parliament. That is a wilfully and deliberately incorrect statement. I have the receipts in my own cheque book to show where I paid for the whole of the trap hire, costing £25, and for the whole of the advertising; while in most of the centres visited the expenses were paid by the people, that is the halls were paid for by them, and the only expense the Minister paid was perhaps for the beer he bought and drank during the progress of that tour. At that time the statements he made were somewhat on a par with statements he made in the recent election. He referred to his present colleague, the Treasurer, as the

greatest boodler in the country. He described the Ministry of the day as being the greatest thieves it was possible for them to be.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must not say that.

The Minister for Railways: It is quite untrue, and I ask that the hon. member withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: I did not catch the word the hon. member used.

The Minister for Railways: The hon. member said I called my present colleagues boodlers and thieves. I demand a withdrawal of that statement.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member says it is not correct the member for Murchison must withdraw.

Mr. Holman: The statement I made was that the present Minister (Hon. H. Gregory) referred to his colleague (Hon. Frank Wilson) as a boodler.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has denied that he said that.

Mr. Holman: But I can produce proof to show he did.

Mr. Speaker: That does not matter; you must withdraw.

Mr. Holman: A man can make a statement and deny it, and another member is forced to withdraw? I have to accept the Minister's denial, while I can bring hundreds to prove that he did say it?

Mr. Speaker: That may be true, but you must withdraw.

Mr. Holman: I withdraw, but I can prove it.

Mr. Speaker: You must withdraw unconditionally.

Mr. Holman: I withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER: At this stage I wish to draw attention to the fact that a lot of this matter has no bearing on the question. The hon. member was dealing with an important matter in asking for these papers, and had a great deal of liberty allowed him, but now in reply he is going back on matters entirely foreign to the question before the House. I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks.

Mr. Bath: But the Minister himself raised that question as to the payment of election expenses.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have allowed the hon. member to explain that, but I think

it is desirable at this stage for the hon. member to confine himself to the question.

Mr. HOLMAN : I referred to the fact that various statements were made covered by this motion, but the main point was one on which I gave the Minister every chance of defending himself. Now I do not think it was fair for him to come to this House and make statements in an underhand manner, which were incorrect and uncalled for. He said he was sorry indeed he had assisted me to get into this House. It was not the fact that he desired to get me into this House that brought him to the Murchison ; he had not seen me in his life before ; all he wanted was to get back his portfolio of Minister for Mines, and that is what led him to assist me. My political reputation has been injured by the Minister's statements, but really I do not think when people know the Minister that much injury will be done. At any rate the Minister referred to the statement that my reputation, if I had any, was upheld to-day as it had been upheld since I had been in the House. I am glad to hear it, because whatever I have tried to do and have done has been in the best interests of the State I have the honour to live in, and of the people I represent, immaterial of what good or harm it has done to me. The only evidence the Minister produced when he was challenged on the point was as follows: he was asked if he had anything to say in regard to the matter and he remarked that the statements he had made were based upon facts, and in support of his statement, he quoted from a metropolitan paper, dated January, 1905. This appeared in *Truth* of the 14th January, 1905. It only goes to show how he will try to get out of criticism. If I were to quote statements made in the same paper about the Minister there would be some rising to order in this Chamber. The Minister has said that the railway men received no assistance from me. I maintain they received every assistance it was possible to give. It was not within my province at that time to make an agreement. The fact that it was not made while I was there was solely because the Commissioner of Railways went East for six or eight weeks.

The Minister for Railways : You could have hustled it ; you were 11 or 12 months in office.

Mr. HOLMAN : During that time the conference was arranged. This document is missing from the files. The Minister insinuated that I carried them about in my pocket, but when I was in office there were two files kept, one in the Minister's office and the other in the Commissioner's office. They never came into my office at all. Everything done was duplicated, and so they should be procurable now. But when the Minister makes insinuations about files, I have seen files in the Mines Department which have been mutilated and parts missing bearing minutes from the member for Guildford, the present Minister's excuse being that a bottle of ink had been spilt on them, and that they had to be taken off and others put in. But that is a poor way of dealing with files. The stained sheets should not have been removed.

(*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*)

Mr. HOLMAN : The Minister has said he did not go round his electorate with departmental files in his pocket. Why, in his own appeal to the electors we find that expressions are taken from the official files and used as an electioneering dodge by that gentleman. All the departmental files were kept in the Railway Department when I was in office, and away from the Minister altogether. The Minister, in trying to shield himself, has admitted that, during the election, he made statements that were absolutely incorrect in connection with myself. These I dealt with before the dinner adjournment. I will take the earliest opportunity of asking him to withdraw certain statements with regard to the payment of my expenses during the election some years ago. I deny that he paid any of the expenses in connection with the election that took place seven years back. I can produce the butts of my cheques to show I made the payments myself. In most of the places we visited during the time we were going through the district, all the expenses were paid by those who met and welcomed us. I think I have shown clearly that the remarks of the

Minister were absolutely incorrect. He endeavoured by making incorrect statements in connection with me to feather his own cap during the election. Had he been man enough to make in public the same statements that he did in an underhand manner by insidiously priming up his supporters to ask certain questions on absolutely untrue matters, I would have had a stronger case against him.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member must not use that expression.

Mr. HOLMAN: In a matter of this sort where a man feels strongly owing to the misstatements made about him, it is hard for him to choose his language and confine himself to words in accordance with the rulings of the House. The Minister has said that nothing was done by me when I was in office to assist the men. When speaking to-night he said he had fixed up a certain agreement, whereas as a matter of fact that agreement was brought into existence while I was a Minister. Each agreement referred to was consummated during my period of office and yet he says nothing was done by me to assist the men, because the agreements have since then expired. He now boasts of what he has done in the way of getting them renewed. While I was in office no reduction took place in the wages of the men at work, but immediately the Minister got back into the department there were wholesale reductions throughout the service, and they are going to-day. In trying to uphold the deliberately incorrect statements he made, the Minister now says that he is the one man who has protected the workers in the railway service. Had it not been for the fact that the Commissioner left Western Australia and was away for six weeks or two months attending a Commissioners' Conference in the Eastern States just previously to my vacating office, every employee in the railway service would have been under an industrial agreement. We find that from the file produced by the Minister, the most important facts are missing. The member for North Perth (Mr. Swan) attended that conference in the Commissioner's office, as did Mr. Roche, and Mr. Casson, and others. I arranged the conference without the knowledge of the Commis-

sioner and brought forward the requirements of the men. I then left the representatives to settle the matter for themselves. As to the statements of the Minister that these improvements do not appear on the file, all I can say is, that if they are not there, I want to know why. I hope when the papers are tabled we will not find as recently occurred, according to the statement of an hon. member, that most of the important papers are missing. I have proved beyond doubt that the statements made by the Minister with regard to what I did for the railway service during my period of office were absolutely incorrect. During the time I was there, the railway service suffered from no reduction in wages. I protected the interests of every man in the service, and prevented the employees from being forced into the Arbitration Court, where the Commissioner was anxious to get them. The work I did for these men was very valuable, and I am only sorry that I was not in office long enough to complete the agreement and see it brought into force. We have the admission of the Minister to-night that he made statements in connection with me. Railway men have told me of other matters that came from the Minister during the campaign, but I do not intend to use these, as I have not the proof. It is clear, therefore, that the statements published by the Minister in his appeal to the electors, and also the No. 2 statement in which he tried to prove the former one to be correct, and quoted authorities in support of it, were absolutely incorrect; they merely show that during the election tactics were adopted by the Minister which were unworthy of any honourable man. I think the time is not far distant when we shall have another opportunity of placing the Minister in the position he was in a few weeks ago, when he took the departmental files in his pocket, published extracts from them in pamphlets, and used Government money to further his own interests.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member must not say that; he is accusing the Minister of using the moneys of the State.

Mr. HOLMAN: He was receiving a salary as Minister for Mines when he

was not a member of Parliament, and was doing so in the furtherance of his candidature. He met his opponent on very unequal terms. If he had the manliness to fight as he should have done, and had not adopted tactics unworthy of an honourable man, the result might have been different. I trust that every paper will be included on the file placed on the Table. While I was in office, the minutes I sent down were seen by more than one individual, and the fact that the Conference was held cannot be denied. If the file is not complete, the Minister will hear more about this case. This debate has gone to show what the tactics really were as adopted by the Minister, when trying to secure his return. They were of anything but an honourable kind.

The Minister for Railways: Your speech shows what I had to put up with. Question put and passed.

RETURN—AMERICAN FLEET ENTERTAINMENT, COST.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle) moved—

That there be prepared and laid up on the Table of the House a return showing the detailed expenditure incurred in connection with the celebrations and entertaining during the visit of the American Fleet at Albany.

There was a very large expenditure on the entertainment of the American Fleet as shown by the Estimates and it was advisable that members should know how the amount was spent. Certain statements have been made in the Press and elsewhere to the effect that certain persons were subsidised, and it was well that members should be able to obtain all information about the expenditure before the item was reached in the Estimates.

Mr. TROY seconded the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): There was no objection to the motion, and the gentleman who acted as secretary to the committee would be instructed to prepare the statement.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—STATE BATTERIES, SHOES AND DIES.

On motion by Mr. Bath ordered: That all the papers in connection with the trial manufacture of shoes and dies for State Batteries be laid upon the Table.

MOTION—PAIRS ON DIVISIONS.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan) moved—

That there be kept an official record of members who have paired, that pairs be recorded, when used, in "Hansard" reports, and that the Standing Orders Committee be directed to arrange accordingly.

It was to be hoped members would recognise generally that the ordinary courtesies shown in all Parliaments by members of both sides of the House towards one another should be introduced to this Parliament; also that an official record should be kept to show those members who had paired, and that the pairs should be reported in *Hansard* and recorded in the public Press. The motion should be supported by both sides of the House, so that we should be able to extend to each other those little courtesies, and that when we did so, the votes would be recorded. He had no desire to press the motion unless it was desired by both sides that it should be carried. He understood there was a general agreement on the part of members that the motion should be carried.

Mr. LAYMAN (Nelson) seconded the motion.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue): Whether there was an agreement on the question or not he intended to oppose the motion, because he considered the constituents of Western Australia did not send members here to pair, but to attend to business. As far as pairs were concerned, he had found some difficulty at times in getting returned to him the courtesy which other members expect from him. On one particular occasion when he had wanted to get away on very urgent business, and had waited until ten minutes before the train left for his district, he was refused a pair. He was not complaining of this. But he would remind those members who

were sometimes heard opposing the principle of payment of members that they were paid to attend to their business in the House and not to make use of the excuse that on some particular vote they had paired with another member.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): Hon. members should oppose the motion if only for the reason expressed by the member for Cne. Members were paid to do their business in the House and not to pair. Many members on the Government side of the House considered they were overpaid; but if they would attend to their Parliamentary duties they would be convinced that £200 a year was not too much. When acting as Whip for his party he had frequently been refused pairs by the Government Whip.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): The member for Pilbara was taking a peculiar view of the question. He (Mr. Scaddan) would prefer to see the votes of all hon. members recorded one way or another on every question before the House. By the recording of these pairs it would be shown how absent members had regarded the question at issue. Again, it would serve to prevent any hon. members having recourse to the expedient of absenting themselves from the Chamber on critical divisions. The recording of the pairs would show the electors exactly how their representatives had voted. It was a practice observed in nearly every Parliament throughout the British Dominions. The carrying of the motion would not induce him to give a pair to anybody during the next week, except indeed it were a case of sickness. It was not at all likely to prove an inducement to hon. members to pair. He would support the motion.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) agreed with the member for Ivanhoe. It would be well, he thought, to adopt the practice of other Parliaments in this respect. Sometimes it was virtually impossible for

a man to be present. Why then should that man not be given an opportunity of having his name recorded on one side or the other of the division list? He himself had experienced such a difficulty on more than one occasion. The recording of these pairs would be a great convenience to most members of the House. It would have little or no effect upon the attendance of members; for if a man found it practically impossible to be present at a particular division it was hardly likely that he would be in his place when a division was taken. Unfortunately there were in the House certain members who, while professedly holding strong opinions on various questions were conveniently absent when a vote was being taken. He knew of hon. members who had given pledges on the hustings to oppose certain legislation, and who nevertheless had been out of the Chamber when the division bells rang. He hoped the motion would be carried.

Mr. GORDON (Canning): Hon. members, he thought, ought to support the motion. In his capacity as Government Whip he had on more than one occasion gone looking for a pair for a member who was more or less seriously indisposed; and he had to say that he had always found members on the Opposition side of the House generous enough to convenience him.

Mr. UNDERWOOD rose to a point of order. He wished to say that the hon. member had not been generous to him when he had asked for a pair in the case of sickness.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If not a point of order it was a fact.

Mr. GORDON: As he had said, members on the Opposition side had met him generously enough. He thought it was only fair that the names of those pairing should be recorded in *Hansard*.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): The question of recording the names of pairs did not in any way affect the desirability or the undesirability of the principle of pairing. Members would continue to pair

or not to pair whether the motion passed or not. All that the motion did was to provide that those who had paired should have their names recorded. Surely that was fair. The House had a right to know the opinions of those who, being absent from a division were still members of the House; and to know on which side they were on any great question. He did not know that the recording of pairs in other Parliaments had worked any serious injury; had diminished the number of those who had attended or had lessened the number of those who had voted on great occasions. In no Parliament would pairs be easy to obtain when a vital question was before the House. The carrying of the motion would not compel any member to pair or not to pair. What harm, therefore, could be done in recording a pair?

Mr. Underwood: Let them attend.

Mr. WALKER: It was easy to say let them attend. But it sometimes happened that a member had duties to his constituents to perform which took him away from the House. How, under the present system, were the electors to know on which side of the fence stood a member who deliberately absented himself from a division list?

Mr. Underwood: He should be here.

Mr. WALKER: It was well enough to say he should be here; but if a man were on a bed of sickness it might be impracticable for him to be in the House.

Mr. Underwood: He should be here.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member persists in this manner of conducting himself I shall certainly name him. I have called him to order several times during this debate.

Mr. WALKER: If an hon. member were sick in bed and a vital question were to be brought before the House how could that member satisfactorily show to his electors his attitude on the question?

Mr. Underwood: By attending.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member could not argue, so he would persist in interrupting. It was not possible in the course of nature sometimes; there were occasions when members must be absent. Duties equally as important as being in the House compelled members at times to be absent, but it was right that mem-

bers' constituents should know on what side of the division members stood. The object of the motion was to enable constituents to know how a member stood on a question. At present a member could sneak out, but if he did sneak out, after the motion was carried, his constituents could pull him up.

Mr. Underwood: Why alter it?

Mr. WALKER: Because we desired to get a record as to how a member stood.

Mr. Collier: But if he did not like to register his opinion there would be no record, although the motion was carried.

Mr. WALKER: The person who paired would have to pair through the Whips. There would be a record kept, and if a member did not like to record his opinion he would have to explain the reasons if called upon by his constituents.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): It seemed strange that there was any opposition to such a common sense motion. It was all very well to talk about members being absent on every occasion, but there was such a thing as sickness in one's family, as well as the sickness of a member himself. So little was asked that he was surprised at the opposition shown to the motion. If he were to leave the House on any important occasion and he desired to pair with someone who would pair with him, it was right that he should have an opportunity of pairing.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) entered his protest against the motion. The arguments of those in favour emphasised in no small degree that it would not facilitate pairing. It offered no inducement for members to pair, and if there was nothing underlying the motion why this burning desire to have it passed, so that a member's name would appear as having voted when he was absent? He ventured to say on many occasions the vote would not be recorded in the manner the member would have voted if he had been present. Members often asked for a pair for three or four days, and on questions that were not party questions how could a member tell how he would be likely to vote? One would have to pair on party lines

on every subject; it was impossible for a member to know what business was going on three or four days ahead. The Premier, who arranged the Notice Paper, could not tell that. If members knew their names would be placed on the records of Parliament as having paired it might induce them to pair. But something more would be wanting to make the Government side of the House anxious to give pairs than the motion. Last session when the Government side was represented by 33 members, and the Opposition had 17 members, a pair could rarely be arranged by the Whips. It could only be arranged on personal grounds. Since he had been a member of the House he had very little difficulty in getting a pair if he desired. He did not think any member of the House or of any previous Parliament could accuse him of not being willing to give a pair if a member was ill, or had a reasonable excuse for being absent. He had no desire to facilitate pairing in this Chamber. We were here to transact the business and we were ever anxious during election campaigns to tell the electors that we would come here to fight their battles and do our duty. On many occasions members were absent when debates were going on. The first duty of a member was to attend in Parliament. He did not say that because a member was paid, because the remuneration which a member received was not sufficient to be called a salary for the work performed. Members wished to make it easy for their names to appear in *Hansard* as having paired, with the possibility of being able to say, "I was there during the debate, but was not present when the vote was taken," when possibly the member had not been in the Chamber for several days. The motion would facilitate the absence of members. He was not concerned as to how a member voted, but he wanted members present so that they would give their opinions on questions which were brought forward. We should not allow ourselves to be controlled by precedent in this matter. This Parliament had never recorded pairs, and he hoped it would not adopt the system now.

Mr. JACOBY (in reply): There was no desire to utilise the provision compulsorily. Pairs had frequently been given this session and not recorded. He only asked that the pairs should be recorded. He was sorry a member who had just been elected to a position as an officer of the House would not be guided by precedent. He hoped the member would follow precedent on this occasion.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	36
Noes	..	..	..	10
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	26

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Barnett	Mr. Male
Mr. Bath	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Monger
Mr. Butcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Carson	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Davies	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Draper	Mr. Price
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Troy
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hayward	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Layman

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Gill	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Holman	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Heilmann

(Teller).

MOTION—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) moved—

"That for the remainder of the session Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day."

This motion was usually brought forward some few weeks prior to the end of the session.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): Under the circumstances which we had arrived at

at the present time, the general consensus of opinion was that it was impossible to finish the business of the session before Christmas. We failed to see the justification or the fairness of the motion, that Government business should take precedence. It might apply to some formal motions calling for papers, but there were other matters which although moved by private members were of equal or greater importance than some of the business on the Notice Paper submitted by the Government. The condition of affairs in regard to financial matters as disclosed in the Auditor General's report, made it almost imperative that such a motion as submitted by himself should be carried, and he failed to see why in acceding to the motion before the House, he should be prevented during the remainder of this session from having any opportunity of ventilating that matter.

The Premier: It does not follow; you know that.

Mr. BATH: It did not follow, but where is was a question of trying to finish speedily, private members would have little opportunity, especially on a matter which would naturally occasion debate and probably would arouse the opposition of the Treasurer—

The Treasurer: Why should it—

Mr. BATH: The Treasurer had a habit of opposing anything which was regarded in the light of criticism.

The Treasurer: Oh no, he has not.

Mr. BATH: Anyhow, he only anticipated that such opposition might be shown. At least no hon. member would differ from him when he said that if we carried this motion, private members' business would have little chance of being discussed during the remainder of the session. He would not be inclined to oppose the motion if any understanding had been arrived at, or if there were any agreement that it would be advisable to finish the work of the session before Christmas; but the state of the business paper was such that he did not think any member would agree that we could possibly get through the work, and at the same time provide an opportunity for discussing some of the

matters that were on the Notice Paper. Under these circumstances it was not right that Government business should take precedence of motions and orders of the day during the remainder of the session. We should make up our minds for the inevitable, get through what business we could, and say early next week, adjourn for the Christmas holidays; come back afterwards and finish the business then. He failed to see the necessity to carry this motion, because if we carried it, it would mean that we would deny ourselves, or we would be practically denying ourselves the right of introducing motions. At least we would deny ourselves the right of private members' day, and if opportunities were given to discuss private members' business, it would be only when the Government said, "we will take certain motions at some sitting, and thus give opportunities of discussion which will not allow of them being completed." Under these circumstances he failed to see any necessity for the motion, and he would oppose it.

Mr. NANSON (Greenough) regretted he could not see his way to support the motion at the present stage of the session. A motion of this kind was usually brought forward when Parliament had been in session for a considerable time. Were this the case, in the present circumstances one would have no difficulty in coming to a decision about it, but he could not forget that we had been in session for only a little over a month, and he could not see that there was any very strong need why this session should be brought to a close this side of Christmas. There were very many important matters that had to be dealt with; we had not yet begun to consider the Estimates in detail and we had not even finished the general discussion. Had it been desirable to bring this session to a close with the end of the current year, he would have thought the Government would have called Parliament together at an earlier stage, or even if that had not been practicable, it would have been possible as had been suggested, not in this House, but privately, by a member,

to dispense with the debate on the Address-in-Reply, and make the debate on the Budget proposals take its place, or perhaps merge one into the other. We began this session with no great idea of haste. We spent a week at the beginning of the session dealing in a desultory sort of way with all sorts of matters, many of them of no supreme importance, and now when we came to the really important business of the session, this motion which always told of the endeavour of the Government to bring a session to an end was introduced. At a later stage he would be glad to support it, but he felt it necessary to say a few words as to his attitude on the subject, because he would find himself on this occasion voting away from those members with whom he was usually associated.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) did not desire to delay the debate, but he was not one of those anxious to give a silent vote. There was no justification for bringing down this motion. There was no other private members' day prior to the Christmas holidays, and there seemed to be no possible chance of Parliament proroguing before Christmas, and if we had to come back after Christmas, this motion would stand good, members' hands would be tied, private members would be hampered, and they would be placed at the mercy of the Government if they desired to bring forward any business. No matter how urgent it might be, anything that might happen between now and then, a member would have no chance of bringing it forward unless he adopted the procedure of moving the adjournment of the House. Hon. members were not anxious to do that while they could avail themselves of private members' day. If there were reasonable grounds brought forward to show that we could close this session before Christmas, the motion would receive his support, but when we were satisfied that we must come back in the early part of January, we would be indeed foolish as private members, no matter on which side of the House we sat, to vote away the right to

have private business dealt with, and to place ourselves wholly and solely at the mercy of the Government.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): The only necessity for the motion was that the Government had fully determined that the work of the session should close before Christmas. Was that the intention of the Government?

The Premier: No.

Mr. WALKER: Then if there was no intention to insist upon that it must be clear to the Government themselves, taking the business normally discussed, that this Chamber had no possibility of getting through the work before Christmas.

Mr. Scaddan: Is this not the way of dropping measures?

Mr. WALKER: If we were to do justice to the subjects we were to debate, and which must be debated, more particularly those alluded to by the member for Greenough, the Estimates, we could not get through by Christmas. And it was becoming a perfect scandal consequently in Western Australia the way the Estimates were debated. They were introduced at midnight or in the early hours of the morning when hon. members were exhausted and sometimes with the closure in operation so that it was absolutely impossible to debate them.

The Premier: You have not had much to complain of this session; we have adjourned at 11 o'clock.

Mr. WALKER: While approving of the course taken so far this session, complaint was necessary when there was any departure. It was proposed that we no longer have helpful debates on these subjects, and we would be compelled to attend in our places at all hours of the night. That was what one objected to. If it be intended to adjourn over the Christmas holidays then we should take things in the normal way and let private members have their motions discussed. Sometimes these were of equal importance to Government business, and sometimes they were of greater importance than Government business. Ministers should recognise that there was no hope of rushing the Estimates and getting

them through before Christmas. So if we had to come back after Christmas we should take things normally and have matters as they should be discussed with the deliberation necessary.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): The usual custom in this Parliament was to move a motion of this sort two or three weeks before the termination of the session. Last year it was four weeks before the termination of the session, and the motion was necessary in order that there might be a termination to the session of Parliament. The member for Kanowna had tried to make out a great case; that we would not have sufficient time to deliberate on the Estimates; and that it was becoming a perfect scandal the way the Estimates had been rushed through without mature deliberation, and without full debate on the different items. The hon. member made a statement that the Estimates had been introduced at midnight and carried through in the early hours of the morning. The hon. member had the wrong end of the stick. Last year the Estimates took two months to pass through, and there was no introducing them at midnight or rushing them through in the early hours of the morning, except when members opposite insisted on the Government sitting in their places on four all-night sittings. The Budget was delivered on the 15th October at 8.45 p.m. On the 23rd October the Lands Estimates were introduced in the afternoon and were finished at 11.28 p.m., and the House adjourned. On the 24th October the Treasury Estimates were introduced in the afternoon—not at midnight; progress was reported and the House adjourned at 9.30 p.m. The Treasury Estimates were continued on Compassionate Allowances on the 5th November; progress was reported and the House adjourned at 10.45 p.m. On the 6th November the Education Estimates were finished and the House adjourned at 8.3 a.m. on the 7th.

Mr. Walker: That is three nights for the Treasury Estimates alone.

The TREASURER: Three nights and one all-night sitting. On the 12th No-

vember the Mines Estimates were introduced in the afternoon and members opposite kept the Government sitting all night and they were finished at 6.10 a.m. On the 16th November the Railway Estimates were introduced in the afternoon, and the House adjourned at 11.8 p.m. On the 3rd December the Works Estimates were introduced immediately after tea and the House adjourned at 11.27 p.m. On the 5th December the Works Estimates were resumed and the House adjourned at 11.28 p.m. On the 6th December the Works Estimates were resumed in the afternoon. There was an all-night sitting; members opposite kept the Government sitting all night again, and the House adjourned at 4.34 p.m. The Works Estimates were concluded between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. and the Colonial Secretary's Estimates were then proceeded with, and on the 11th December the Estimates were finally passed after an all-night sitting, and the House adjourned at 3.20 a.m. What had members to complain of? The Government had never started the Estimates at midnight or in the early morning. All these complaints about rushing the Estimates through had no foundation. Any amount of latitude had always been given, and on this occasion the Premier would give any amount of latitude. The Government would do their utmost to finish business by Christmas; but if they failed members would naturally want to meet again as early as possible after Christmas. The Premier was willing that any important motions should be considered. The Leader of the Opposition would be given the opportunity of having consideration given to his proposal for a financial committee; but not with the object the hon. member seemed to aim at—to stigmatise the Treasurer with all the faults reported in the Auditor General's report, extending over the last 10 years which were laid at his, the Treasurer's, door by the Leader of the Opposition. He would take an opportunity of replying in connection with those charges made in that report, but he did not desire to do it now. It was only a fair thing members should assist the Government to expedite Government

business, and in return the Premier would assist private members on any important motion they desired to bring forward.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): Unless we really intended to rise before Christmas the motion was unnecessary; and even if we did intend to finish before Christmas the motion was unnecessary because we would be through the business of Parliament before the next private members' day came on.

The Premier: It gives us this evening. We can go on with Government business now.

Mr. HOLMAN did not think the Premier would break the promise given to the House that he would allow the full sitting for private members' business on private members' day. The Premier must have forgotten that promise, otherwise he would be treating private members unfairly. Surely the Premier would not take away from private members the few hours remaining to-night. There were one or two private matters he (Mr. Holman) would like to see dealt with. There was notably the Vaccination Act Amendment Bill which should pass. In previous years the Estimates were invariably introduced early in October, and there were occasions when they were passed early in December, but yet we sat after the Christmas holidays. Evidently it was the desire of the Government merely to pass the Estimates and get into recess. That was not a satisfactory way of doing business. If the Government really desired to facilitate business and get through before Christmas they should do away with many of the paltry measures set down for our consideration, and which we should not waste time in discussing. A motion of this nature could come in very well after the holidays if the Government wished to bring the session to an early termination. He (Mr. Holman) had no desire to sit through the hot weather, and if the Government had only introduced measures of some importance and given the information that should be given, and had introduced the measures in due order we would have been much further advanced than we were now.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): On several occasions the Government were requested to bring in a Bill dealing with the Fremantle tramway system. It was desired that additional borrowing powers should be granted. In 1907 they were informed that owing to the closing of the session it could not be introduced. In the last short session it was said that Parliament would only sit for a few weeks, and it could not possibly be introduced then. Now we were told that owing to the short time left this session once again it could not be brought down. This sort of thing was very detrimental to the local bodies. The Perth City Council also wished to have a Bill brought forward. At the beginning of the session he had drawn the attention of members to the fact that it was becoming the practice to take away the rights of private members, and in reply members were assured that sufficient time would be given them to bring forward matters of interest to their constituents. During this session there had been only two days on which private members' business could be brought forward. If the motion were carried it would be a case of good-bye to members' business for the rest of the session.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): Fair time should be given to matters brought forward by private members. He was paid £200 a year and was prepared to earn it. It was the fault of the Government that there had been such a short time for private members' business this session, for the last elections should have been held in May or June, and Parliament should have assembled in July. If Parliament were to prorogue before Christmas then the motion would have no effect, but if Parliament were to meet after Christmas private members should be able to bring up all the business now before the House. If we met after Christmas the session should last for two or three months. The Treasurer had said it was usual to pass such a resolution as this a few weeks before the close of the session. How did he know we were within two or three weeks of the close of the session? It usually took two months to pass the Estimates, and such an important matter should re-

ceive consideration for fully that time. If two months' consideration were to be given the Estimates after Christmas then private members should be given some time to bring forward their business.

Mr. GOURLEY (Leonora): Evidently the object of the Government was to get into recess as early as possible. They should have made an earlier start with the business of the House, and evidently the reason why they did not do so was because the Minister for Mines was defeated at Menzies. As there was a chance of appeal, and of the election being upset, the Government purposely withheld the business of the State until an opportunity was given to the Minister again to seek election. Private members had only been given two days this session for the transaction of their business. He was quite prepared to sit after the Christmas holidays and would oppose the motion. It was patent to all that the Government were endeavouring to close Parliament as early as possible and get into recess.

The PREMIER (in reply): Prior to the meeting of the House he had intimated to the Leader of the Opposition that he proposed to bring forward this motion, and as Mr. Bath did not say he was opposed to it he naturally anticipated that he would agree.

Mr. Bath: All along I said I did not think you would get through before Christmas.

The PREMIER: If the motion had been carried the Government business would have been gone on with to-night, and one evening would have been saved. As to what had fallen from the member for Leonora (Mr. Gourley) as to the meeting of Parliament he might say that Parliament met immediately the writ for Kimberley was returned.

Mr. Bolton: Why did you wait for Kimberley? You did not wait for the return before.

The PREMIER: On the last occasion there were other reasons. If the Government had a majority of from 15 to 20 the same necessity did not exist as there did on the present occasion. Members might realise that would be one of the reasons to prompt them if they were in a similar

position. The Government had enough "savee" to know what to do in arranging the Notice Paper or in fixing the meeting of Parliament. When the matter was referred to during the debate on the Address-in-Reply the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) said we would hardly get through before Christmas. His reply was that the Government were not particular if they did not rise before Christmas, but they did not desire to sit late at night. He added that possibly it would be necessary to extend the sitting until January. The Government had no desire to rush business, but this motion was always brought up towards the end of the session. Last session it was brought forward on the 20th November, and Parliament prorogued on the 20th December; while at the time the Labour party were in office the motion was introduced on the 8th December, and Parliament was prorogued on the 24th. It was purely a formal motion, and members knew well that when they had told him they were anxious for the House to deal with a particular motion they were always given an opportunity to bring it forward. No member could deny that.

Mr. Bath: We might have been given a chance to introduce it, but there was no finality.

The PREMIER: In many instances last year private members' motions were carried towards the end of the session. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) had one or two which came on just prior to the prorogation. One of these was the celebrated Nannine-Meekatharra railway proposal. It did not necessarily follow that if the motion were carried the Government would insist upon private members not being given an opportunity to bring matters forward. From what had happened in the past members might be satisfied to trust the Government.

Mr. Gourley: The Government can close the session when they like, whether this motion is carried or not.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	22
				—
Majority for	..			3

AYES.

Mr. Barnett
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Carson
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Davies
Mr. Draper
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hopkins

Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Osborn
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Price
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Layman
(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Collier
Mr. Gill
Mr. Gourley
Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Holman
Mr. Horan
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. McDowall

Mr. Nanson
Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Swan
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Walker
Mr. Ware
Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Troy
(Teller).

Question thus passed.

MOTION—SITTING DAY, ADDITIONAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) moved—

"That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Monday, at 4.30 p.m., in addition to the days already provided, and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 onwards."

He was moving this because he considered it would be preferable to sit on Monday and Tuesday rather than on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. It would enable the House to adjourn for the Christmas holidays on the Wednesday or Thursday at the latest.

Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle) had refrained from saying anything on the previous motion, but he would have to say a few words on this one. Would it not be better for the Premier to take the House into his confidence in this matter? Surely he did not expect to get the Estimates through before the Christmas holidays. There were at most five sittings and never yet had the Estimates gone through in five sittings. Seeing

that it was considered necessary to come back after Christmas it was a most unusual procedure to ask members to sit probably right up to Christmas Eve, or at best until one day before that. Surely it would be fair to close on Friday next and allow hon. members to get away. The Premier had said the House would probably adjourn on Monday or Tuesday. That would mean Wednesday or Thursday. How then could members living at a distance get home for Christmas? If country members on the Government side of the House were allowed to get away earlier he (Mr. Bolton) would not assist the Premier to keep a House afterwards.

The Premier: That is not much of an argument.

Mr. BOLTON: It was a good enough argument. He did not think it was fair to ask the members to sit right up to Christmas Eve, when it was known that they would have to come back afterwards. If the Premier would say on what day he proposed to adjourn members would know what he meant.

The Premier: I have already intimated that it would be Tuesday or Wednesday.

Mr. BOLTON: The Premier had said that perhaps the House would not have to meet on Thursday. But surely he had made up his mind as to the day of adjournment, and the day of reassembling.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): Although he had opposed the Government on the preceding motion he desired to assist them this time. The Premier evidently wished to give attention to the business of the country and in order to further him in this he (Mr. Taylor) moved an amendment—

That the figure "4" be struck out and "2" inserted in lieu.

Members would then be able to get at least an extra hour for the business of the country. If there was a desire on the part of the Government to get through business, they could not reasonably oppose the amendment. He (Mr. Taylor) had always urged that members should meet early in the day, and not remain until the small hours of the morning.

The Premier: If the hon. member would make it "3" instead of "2" it would allow country members to attend.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was no objection to the suggested alteration.

Amendment altered to read: That "4" be struck out and "3" inserted in lieu.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): To make it 3.30 would be to waste an hour. Because it was impossible to do any work between luncheon and 3.30 p.m. It would be much preferable to make it 2.30 p.m. If the Premier was desirous of concluding the session before Christmas, why not sit on Saturday and Sunday? That was to say if the Premier would promise to pay overtime. In such a case he would find many ready to attend. In the circumstances hon. members would relish a little bit of overtime.

The Premier: Submit a case to the Arbitration Court.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Premier having such a name as arbitrator, probably hon. members would take an early opportunity of submitting the matter to him. However, it was little better than useless to sit at 3.30 p.m., because it would mean wasting the hour after luncheon. Why should members not sit down to business at 2.30 p.m. instead of wasting an hour? The convenience of the majority should be studied, and undoubtedly the majority were living in town. He (Mr. Holman) would prefer to sit at 10.30 a.m. every day and to sit on Saturday next.

Mr. NANSON (Greenough): Before the motion was put he would like to know from the Premier, supposing we did not finish by Christmas and supposing we met in the new year, whether it was intended that the House should sit five days a week; or did the motion apply merely to the period before Christmas? If there was going to be an endeavour made to bring the session to a close before Christmas it would be nothing short of a public scandal. For it would be an impossibility to give consideration to the Estimates within the time. Yet the only possible object of a motion of this kind was to allow of

finishing before Christmas. The motion should be put in clearer form.

The PREMIER: There was no objection to inserting the word "next." He moved as an amendment—

That the word "next" be inserted after the word "Monday."

Mr. SPEAKER: The amendment before the House was upon figures which occurred further along the line; so that to that point the House had agreed to the motion. However, if hon. members had no objection the Premier might move his amendment.

Amendment to insert the word "next," agreed to.

Amendment to strike out the figure "4" and insert "3" in lieu put and passed.

Mr. SCADDAN: Was it not intended to meet at 3.30 p.m. on the Tuesday and the Wednesday?

The PREMIER: There was no objection to its applying right through. The reason he had suggested 3.30 p.m. instead of 2.30 p.m. was that the hon. members arriving by the South-Western railway could not attend at the earlier hour.

Question as amended put and passed.

BILL—FINES AND PENALTIES APPROPRIATION.

On motion by *the Treasurer*, the report of the Committee adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES—1908-9.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 15th December on the Treasurer's financial statement and on the Annual Estimates; *Mr. Taylor* in the Chair.

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £1,148:

Mr. JACOBY (Swan): Though I was not able altogether to agree with every item of the policy propounded by the Treasurer, yet I wish before proceeding further to congratulate that gentleman upon the way in which he handled the case when he delivered his Budget speech. It certainly was a pleasure to listen to the speech he made, owing to its lucidness and the evident grip that the Minister had of all the subjects on which he then addressed us. The question of the manage-

ment of our finances is the most important function that this Parliament has to perform. There is no subject that could come before the House that is of so much importance to this State; and unless we can succeed in convincing the country that we can satisfactorily manage the finances of the State, then we cannot satisfy the public that we are properly fulfilling our duties as a Parliament. It is to be regretted that so few who have a good deal of financial ability; men whose business has brought them into contact with large measures of finance and large measures of commerce, are unable to find time to give that attention to public affairs which will permit them to appeal to the constituencies; and even if they did it is quite possible under the present circumstances these men would not be able to appeal with success to the constituencies to enable them to be elected. I regret there are not more men of this class in our Parliament or in any of the Parliaments of Australia, because, however one may differ from them in some directions, there is no question whatever the advice they could give and the data they could put before the House on matters of finance would be of the utmost value to the State.

Mr. Collier: Who are they?

Mr. JACOBY: I notice there is a motion on the Paper dealing with the appointment of a standing committee on public accounts. In passing I wish to say that I hope that it will not be long before such a committee is appointed in this House. Anyone who has to follow the public accounts finds many difficulties in being able clearly to understand them, and it would be far better if the Auditor General were to work with a committee appointed by this House and get the various accounts of the State so set out that they could be easily understood by the ordinary member when he has an opportunity of speaking. I wish to state that one of the disappointments, to me, at any rate, in connection with the Budget speech of the Treasurer, was that the Government found it necessary that further taxation should be required, when I feel that probably we could, by instituting some economies in the administra-

tion of the departments of the State—provide a sum equal to the extra amount of taxation proposed to be raised. I think the time should arrive soon when the country should recognise that there should be some other remedy for squaring the finances of the State than that of further taxation. We have had an example in the Railway Department—an example of economy successfully effected. That has been practically the only department of this State that has shown any reasonable and successful effort to economise. If it was possible in the Railway Department to effect this economy, it is reasonable—arguing from analogy—that further economies can be effected in other departments. In that connection I trust the Government will take this important task in hand. It is a most difficult task. I do not envy any Government who have to undertake it; but no doubt serious economy can be effected in other Government departments, and it can only be brought about by securing in the various sub-heads who have charge of the different branches men thoroughly efficient in their work, and if they are not that we should see that other men are secured who are efficient. It must be well-known to members, and to the public at large, that there are officers in our departments who have made mistakes and have cost the country a good deal of money; yet I find these officers who we must recognise have made most expensive mistakes are still retained in the service to make further mistakes. In connection with our State departments we should not give so much latitude to officers of this description.

Mr. Anguin: Everyone is liable to make mistakes.

Mr. JACOBY: Just so. But we cannot keep officers who are continually making mistakes. I do not wish to make an attack on any officer; but it is certainly known that we have men in the departments who have made blunder after blunder and they are kept in the service of the State, perhaps to make more blunders. I must express my regret that we are still continuing the policy of centralising our expenditure, and if there is to be one thing more than another in the ad-

ministration of this State that is going to increase the revenue and give expansion to our industries, and give greater vitality to the producing industries of the State, it can only result from rigidly attacking the whole centralising policy of expenditure and decentralising the expenditure. In the discussion that arose on the Bunbury Harbour Bill it was pointed out that one of the favourable features of the Bill was that it provided something of a decentralising nature. It took away from the control of the Colonial Secretary's Department the Bunbury harbour and gave it to Bunbury. It is not so much the decentralising of management that is required, but the decentralising of expenditure that is necessary. Anyone who looks through the Estimates must be struck by the fact that though in this time of financial stringency we find large sums still being given to those portions of the State close to the metropolitan area, the producing districts have suffered to a much greater extent than one could think possible. In connection with our roads grants: we have this year something like £35,000; whereas the municipal grants are no less than £52,000. The view I take is this; if we find it necessary to economise our expenditure surely we should start on that class of expenditure that does not directly help to produce new wealth in this State. The very last expenditure we should tackle is that expenditure that is helping to produce new wealth. It is the production of new wealth that is necessary for our welfare. Scheme after scheme is brought up, proposed by the Government, that must only aid to further concentrate expenditure in the metropolitan area. If there was an over-flowing Treasury one could perhaps find excuse for this, but the fact that we have not sufficient revenue proves to my mind it is a fatal mistake, that when reductions are to be made they should be made in the producing districts and not made in the non-producing districts of the State. We have proposals outlined for instituting a system of secondary education which must cost a large sum of money, and when we look into the producing districts and the far back districts we find a great difficulty in securing pro-

per educational facilities for the children. Recently we have had a certain number of bursaries, or prizes of some kind, granted by the Government, and it is instructive to note that out of 30 of these bursaries only five of them have been distributed outside the metropolitan area. The farming districts and the goldfields districts got five of these, whereas 25 went to children in the metropolitan area. That in itself indicates that the education given to the country districts and the goldfields districts is not on the same standard as that given in the metropolitan area. The wealth of the State depends on the wealth of the country. If you are going to build up your country, and fill your country with people, you must give the children of country people every educational facility and give the people as much comfort as you can. It would be the wisest policy for members sitting for metropolitan districts if they were to discourage further expenditure in the metropolitan area and encourage its distribution wider afield. I say that, to make the metropolitan area rich, the quickest policy would be to secure the richness of the country. I consider the country has really a grievance against the Government in connection with the roads grant expenditure, and I trust that when the Loan Bill comes down we will have some provision made in that Loan Bill for the extension of our country road system. I do not propose this should be an unproductive expenditure. I hope to see in the Roads Board Bill to be introduced a provision whereby roads boards can borrow money, get a portion of the loan money that has been specially provided for the building of roads, on condition that they provide interest and sinking fund on the money so borrowed. I do not advocate that we should spend money on building roads that are not reproductive, but money should be available for the various roads boards of the State out of loan on condition that the interest and sinking fund is provided by these people.

Mr. Angwin: They should raise the money themselves.

Mr. JACOBY: They could not do it in such advantageous circumstances as the Government. It is unquestioned that

we are suffering from a serious depression in the State, and when one looks round for the cause of that depression one cannot find the cause to be incidental to the country itself, because we find in every direction cultivation is being successfully carried out, and though it is possible that this year we may have perhaps an average of one bushel per acre less than last year, still our harvest last year was a good one, being nearly $10\frac{1}{2}$ bushels, for comparatively new wheat country. Where we have large areas opened up under conditions which do not give the ground the best opportunity of yielding the best returns, an average of 10 bushels is a good result. If we are able to start at this early stage of agricultural development with a return of that nature it will not be many years before we will be able to increase it by intense cultivation to 20 bushels per acre. It is not any shortage in the production of the primary wealth of this State that is the cause of our depression. There are other causes, and I think most people will agree with me that the principal cause is the shortage of actual cash for the ordinary services of the people of the State. That has been brought about partly by the fact that the exports from Australia during last year owing to the drought in the Eastern States, were short in value something like six millions sterling, and instead of getting back as much hard cash for the material that we exported as during the previous year we were that much short. That has had a bad effect upon the finances of Australia as a whole and has affected this State, because whatever shortage there is in Australia must be particularly felt in Western Australia. In addition to that fact it is also to be remembered that there has been for years past a heavy drain upon the cash resources of this State. We have been exporting a large amount of gold, and part of that has been utilised for the payment of dividends to people who reside outside our borders. We find that dividends that have been paid for years past by gold-mining companies, nearly the whole of which are owned outside the State, amount to between one and two millions

sterling per annum, and that means that the wealth produced in this State is being deposited outside the borders of the State. I am not complaining about that, I am endeavouring to explain some of the reasons that have led up to the causes of the present shortage of cash in this State. And it must be remembered that this large amount of wealth goes to fill the pockets of people who live outside the State, and it can be recognised how unfortunate it is as far as it concerns the cash deposits and reserves of the State. In addition we have another important factor that is helping to bring about the present position. Interest and sinking fund, most of which is sent abroad for the public loans of this State, amounted to £600,000 in the year 1901-2, and it has gradually risen to £900,000 in the year 1907-8. That has been another important factor which has led to the financial depression from which we are suffering. I intend to offer some suggestions in connection with the proposal to remedy these matters, but before doing so I want to point out yet another factor that is working to the disadvantage of this State, and that is the fact that of the six banking institutions that are operating in the State three of them are doing anything but their duty to the State. From the financial returns we find the West Australian Bank has on hand deposits totalling nearly two millions sterling, and it has advanced a little over £63,000 more than it has received in deposits. The National Bank has a splendid record in that respect, because it has on deposit £493,000, and it has advanced to the people of the State over a million pounds. The Union Bank has on deposit £1,172,000, and it has advanced to the people of the State £1,479,000. Those three banks are admittedly doing their duty to the people of the State; they are advancing not only deposits received but portion of their capital to assist in the development of the State; but with regard to the other banks there is a different tale to tell. The Bank of New South Wales has £548,994 on deposit, but it has only loaned to the people of the State £256,497; the New South Wales bank is therefore retaining of the deposits re-

ceived, £292,497. The Commercial Bank has received deposits to the extent of £344,497, and it has only advanced to its customers £250,866, or £93,631 less than it has received in deposits. The Bank of Australasia has received in deposits £492,423, and has advanced to its customers £361,669, or £130,754 less than the amount they received. I think steps should be taken to discourage this state of affairs as far as these three latter banks are concerned. The Government has some arrangement, I believe, whereby it equally distributes what funds it has, in fairly equal proportions, among the various banks in the State, and the effect is this, that if the Government deposits with either of the three banks last mentioned, it must allow them to set free moneys for use in this State and elsewhere, and no suggestion can be made than that this sum equal to over half a million of money of State and private deposits has been transmitted to the Eastern States for use over there.

Mr. Bath : As long as they are private corporations they are looking for the best investments.

Mr. JACOBY : We are dealing with the position as it at present exists in this State, and I think if the hon. member comes to the question of a State bank he will find that a large proportion of the class of business done by these banks cannot be attempted by a State Bank. I am arguing that the Government should not make use of the banks that are doing this injustice to the State; the Government should refuse to do any business whatever with banks such as these which are failing so lamentably in their duty to the State. I want to refer to the proposal of the Government that a duty should be placed on the banks. When the Government bring down that measure I shall then have an opportunity of examining the arguments that will be advanced in support of it, but at present I cannot see my way clear to support the motion.

Mr. Bath : They are not going to bring it down.

Mr. JACOBY : If it should get into Committee I hope that amendments will be carried to more equitably distribute

the taxation so that it will hit those banks that are not doing their duty to the State, and not so heavily hit those banks that are.

Mr. Bath : I do not think we will see the Bill.

Mr. JACOBY : Take, for instance, the Western Australian bank, which has been established by the capital of the people of this State. We find that that bank has 53 branches, and the proposal of the Government will hit them to the extent of £1,570. The proposal to charge a sum per branch is most inequitable. Now the National Bank has 21 branches and the Union Bank has 15. These two banks and the local bank are doing their duty as joint stock banks to the people of the State, and they are pushing out into the back blocks, and giving banking facilities to the people there. But they are the banks that will have to pay most of the taxation proposed by the Government, while the banks that are not progressive, the timid banks that have not sufficient faith in the State to put back their deposits among the people of the State, but send it away to other States, are going to get off lightest under this scheme of taxation. I hope, if the tax gets through, its incidence will be so arranged that it will hit all banks to an equal amount, and not necessarily those that are doing so much good to the State. I listened with much interest to the proposal of the Treasurer in regard to sinking funds, and to his opinion that in future our loans should only carry a half per cent. sinking fund instead of one per cent. as now. I must express this opinion, that so far as our railways are concerned I do not consider it necessary that we should have any sinking fund at all. We maintain our railways not only at the value they were when constructed, but we have appreciated them out of ordinary railway revenue and increased their value. In these circumstances the security for the loans is much better to-day than when we borrowed the money. Therefore, as I am agreeable to the abolition of the sinking fund in so far as it affects reproductive works in the nature of railways, I certainly welcome the Treasurer's

suggestion as one instalment of relief in this direction.

Mr. Bath: When the mono-rail comes, the existing railways will be scrap-heaped, and what will be the position then?

Mr. JACOBY: When flying machines come, the mono-rails will be scrap-heaped, but I think we should follow the system followed in the old country, and that is, in good seasons we should put by out of surpluses. I think the sinking fund should be provided out of the surplus railway revenue when we can afford it, and according to the extent we can afford it; that is, if we can pay 2 per cent. or 3 per cent. one year, we should do it, and the next year if business is not so good, we might bring it down to a half or a quarter per cent., or even set by nothing at all.

Mr. Heitmann: It would be at the will of the Minister.

Mr. JACOBY: I admit at once there is some danger in departing altogether from the sinking fund provision, because I am afraid we do not always have Treasurers with sufficient virtue to be able to insist upon utilising surpluses for the purpose of the reduction of the national debt, and I am afraid it is quite possible the money might be utilised in other directions.

Mr. Bath: If you knock off the sinking fund you will find the same thing will crop up in regard to interest.

Mr. JACOBY: I do not agree with that, because that means that the State would repudiate. There are many loans that are permanent; they can be paid off at any moment, or not at all. The greater proportion of the British National Debt has no terminal date. They pay it off just as they think fit, or as circumstances allow. It is impossible to think that any British State is likely to attempt anything in the way of repudiation. A British State's stock is the finest security offered to-day. The stocks of British dominions are most favoured, and are generally treated as gilt-edged securities.

Mr. Heitmann: But the sooner the loan is paid off the better.

Mr. JACOBY: We must continue to

borrow from London until we are able to accumulate within the borders of Australia sufficient money for our own needs, but we cannot do that until we reach that stage in the export of our products when the exportation more than counterbalances the imports. When we reach that stage, instead of sending away hard cash for our requirements, we would send away our wheat and wool and other products. Then we can think of borrowing in Australia instead of outside, but until that time arrives we must borrow from outside to get more of the medium of exchange into the State, because that is necessary for our development. The interest and sinking fund charge is now a pretty serious item in connection with our railways. The interest charge works out at 22.17d. per train mile, and the sinking fund charge amounts to 5.32d. per train mile. It is a pretty big sum to pay, but in this respect we are far better off than is the case elsewhere in Australia, because the interest paid on Australian railways is 30.9d. per train mile run during 1906-7. I want to deal with the question of the Sinking Fund Trust Account. In London we had on the 13th of November the sum of £1,993,196. Nearly the whole of that is invested in Western Australian stocks, and we have this peculiar position, that every year we transmit to London interest on nearly two million pounds to pay ourselves. I think the time has arrived when we should consider the whole question of the sinking fund. I am not quite sure whether it would not be better to arrange in future that, instead of continuing our own bonds that we may purchase, we might cancel them as soon as they are purchased. I admit there are some difficulties that would have to be worked out by actuaries, because it is necessary that a sinking fund should accumulate by combined interest for the purpose of ultimately redeeming the whole of the loan which it concerns, but I believe that the result would show that it would pay us better to cancel the stock immediately we purchase it, instead of keeping it in London and transmitting money there to pay ourselves each year

on our own stock. There is unquestionably the need in this State for further money as a medium of exchange, and there is abundant scope for its investment. I was informed by one of the leading bankers in this State recently, that he could easily find investment each year for a quarter of a million more money than he has now available. It appears to me, seeing the condition of the country for the want of further cash, that it might be advisable for us to take into consideration the repealing of the Inscribed Stock Act which provides that this money should be kept in London. Then we might keep the money within our own borders. I can see no good reason why this money should be kept in London. Certainly it should be kept in the hands of trustees, but if we keep it within the borders of the State, it would make all the difference in the world. We could not get it here all at once, but if we could get it here in fairly large quantities it would turn our present depression into a state of prosperity; it would have a very buoyant effect upon our revenue, and throughout the State it would make a marvellous difference in the condition of affairs.

Mr. Bath: The money would be tied up just the same.

Mr. JACOBY: Yes, but it would set free funds in other directions which could be safely invested in the State. It would cause people looking for gilt-edged securities, the men who invest their money only in the most conservative way, to look for investments of a nature more likely to help the development of business or the development of the lands of the State. There are many people who have money to lend, but will not lend it outside the City. If money is lent on City property it does not help the producer, primary or secondary, it does nothing to increase production. If the sinking fund were kept here, it would practically take up a large proportion of investments of that sort, and would let free another two millions for the development of the State. This is a question of considerable importance, and I trust it will be given very careful thought. The

question of the investment of the fund would perhaps cause some little trouble, but I am satisfied it would be successfully overcome. We have an option over certain of our loans in April 1911; and as it appears money is likely to be cheaper in London within the course of a year or so, I trust the Government will find they are able to successfully take up this option and convert the present stock into cheaper stock, probably carrying lower interest. At any rate they can certainly provide that the stock will carry a smaller proportion of sinking fund than we are now paying. We might probably be able to get it on a lower than the present average rate. It will give us an opportunity to have a lower sinking fund upon this particular portion of our public debt, and that would be a big advantage. I do not propose to occupy the time of members longer; but before sitting down I would like to express my regret that when criticising the speech delivered by the Treasurer, the Leader of the Opposition should have accused him of having an absolute disregard to the first principles of honest commercial management of our affairs. I must express regret that the Leader of the Opposition evidently hardly realised the responsible position in which he stood as a critic of the Government and the effect his words were likely to have upon this State when published abroad. There is nothing in the conduct of the public affairs of this State, nothing that has been shown in the Auditor General's report that would justify in any sense the word "dishonest." There are certainly things that have been wrong; but they have been done for years in this State, and probably when the Labour Government were in power. But the point I want to make is this, that responsible public men in this State must have a sense of their responsibilities, and remember that what they say—especially the Leader of a party—may be taken as an indication of the actual state of affairs in the State. No other meaning can be attached to the words of the Leader of the Opposition, if read by those who know neither the member nor the facts of the case, that

there is corruption in the management of affairs.

Mr. Troy : So there is.

Point of Order.

The Premier : On a point of order. The member for Mt. Magnet says there is corruption in the conduct of the financial affairs of this State, and I demand a withdrawal.

The Chairman : I did not hear it; but if the hon. member made the remark he must withdraw.

The Premier : The hon. member knows he made the remark.

Mr. Troy : I cannot withdraw what I did not say.

The Premier : There is no use quibbling.

Mr. Troy : The hon. member for Swan made a remark. I did not say anything about corruption.

The Premier : You said, "So there is."

The Chairman : The Premier heard the hon. member make the remark and he must withdraw.

Mr. Troy : If I had made the remark I should withdraw; but I made no remark. Did the Premier hear me say the Government were given to corruption?

The Premier : The hon. member for Swan said that one would obtain the impression from the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition that there was corruption in the administration of the affairs of the State, and the member for Mt. Magnet said, "So there is."

Mr. Troy : Said that in reply to what?

The Premier : Be a man; what is the use of quibbling.

The Chairman : If the hon. member made use of the words attributed to him he must withdraw.

Mr. Troy : If you can tell me what is offensive in what I said I will withdraw. If I say, "So there is" can the Premier say that refers to anything the member for Swan said? I do not attribute so much importance to the statements of the member for Swan as to make any interjection; but if he thinks that is offensive, I will say, "so it is not."

The Chairman : The member for Swan made reference to words used by the Leader of the Opposition in a speech with

regard to the finances, and said that the meaning was conveyed, that the Government were guilty of corruption. The Premier says the hon. member for Mt. Magnet interjected, "So there is." If the member made use of those words—I admit I did not hear them for I was reading at the time—he certainly must withdraw.

Mr. Troy : First of all the Premier—

The Chairman : I cannot allow any discussion.

Mr. Troy : I say I did not say it, and I will not withdraw what I did not say. Let the Premier say what I said. I am not going to be jumped on in this House.

The Premier : Everybody knows that what I say is absolutely correct.

The Chairman : I must confess I did not hear the remark; but the Premier has pointed out that the member for Mt. Magnet made the remark and I must call upon him to withdraw.

Mr. Troy : You did not hear the remark—

The Chairman : I cannot allow any discussion.

Mr. Troy : I said I did not say it; why should I withdraw?

The Chairman : The member must withdraw the expression.

Mr. Troy : I deny having used the expression.

The Chairman : No further discussion; the member must withdraw.

Mr. Troy : In deference to the House; if the member for Swan is offended by a remark I made, I say there is no offence meant.

Mr. Jacoby : It has nothing to do with me.

Mr. Nanson : Other hon. members heard the expression.

The Chairman : The member has withdrawn.

Mr. Nanson : I did not hear him.

Debate resumed.

Mr. JACOBY : I had practically finished what I intended to say. I was just expressing regret that members who hold responsible positions are not more careful in their language. Although there may be many things to which we take exception, and although there are

acts of the Government committed, and perhaps to be committed, with which we do not agree. I say this: that there is nothing in the public management of this State that would allow anyone truthfully to say that there is anything corrupt.

Mr. Heitmann: Are you in a position to be a judge?

Mr. JACOBY: The Leader of the Opposition said there was an absolute disregard on the part of the Treasurer of the first principles of honest commercial management of our affairs, and I said the only construction that could be put upon that statement by anyone outside this State—anyone not conversant with the affairs of the State, and not knowing the individuals who make such statements as that made by the Leader of the Opposition—was that it was an accusation against the Government of corruption.

Mr. Scaddan: You have no right to put those words into his mouth.

Mr. Troy: On a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in saying the Leader of the Opposition accuses the Government of being corrupt?

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Swan (Mr. Jacoby) has not accused the member for Brown Hill (Mr. Bath); he is simply saying what the speech delivered by that gentleman conveyed to his mind.

Mr. Collier: He has a warped intellect.

Mr. JACOBY: That was the impression I received from his speech, and it is the impression anyone else will get if he does not know the individuals who make such remarks, and the affairs of the State. The time has arrived when we should decentralise our expenditure and take certain steps necessary, if within our power and advisable, to place in various parts of the State a larger command of the medium of exchange. Given that, there is nothing to prevent what is now a depression, caused by an actual shrinkage of cash, disappearing and prosperous times returning to this State.

Mr. Troy: I suppose the Premier does not call corruption giving his relatives

jobs. I will give him some cases before I have finished.

The CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): As to the construction put upon the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swan said that to his mind the words conveyed such a thing—well of course it is only to his mind. It appears to me to be usual in speaking to the Budget speech to refer to what someone else has said. I listened very carefully to the speeches by members, including the Treasurer, the Leader of the Opposition, and the members for Kanowna, Greenough, and Katanning; and that of the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) struck me as being rather peculiar. Anyhow the speech was characteristic, and made an impression on my mind. The hon. member spoke of speeches he had heard previously, and of the calm, placid, and deliberate speech of the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) which showed that the storm had passed. I listened to the previous speeches and did not know that there had been a storm. The member for Katanning said that the speakers previously had been disparaging the country, and in fact had been fouling their own nests. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kanowna had dealt with higher State politics, and the member for Katanning was “bushed”; being “bushed” he thought there was a storm, and when the member for Greenough spoke he was enlightened. We all appreciated the speech of the member for Greenough; but the recollection left in my mind was, that it was a speech of roads and bridges. It appeared to me to be the voice of Greenough calling, calling in faultless grammar, “give me my roads and bridges.” When the roads and bridges were mentioned the member for Katanning had struck a landmark; he knew where he was—like McGregor: his foot was on his native soil, and its name it was Katanning. I would like to take a few of the statements made by the member for Katanning. He claimed that this side of the House had been disparaging Western Australia. The Leader of the Op-

position had quoted a great deal from the Auditor General's report, and the member for Kanowna had made other statements. The member for Katanning did not exactly understand these things and he thought therefore that it must be something against Western Australia. I would like to point out to that hon. member that he has to bear this in mind—so far, at least, as I am concerned: that we have found nothing wrong with Western Australia. That is plain from the fact that we have stayed in it. We came to Western Australia and we found it the best place we had struck up to date, and so we stopped here. At the same time it must be borne in mind that the Government of Western Australia are not all that could be desired, and that by criticising the Government we are by no means criticising Western Australia. Again, I think if the Auditor General is allowed to make such criticisms as he did in his report, surely members of the Opposition are entitled to make a few also. I would like to say in regard to that Auditor General that the Government should either carry out the affairs of the State in accordance with the Audit Act or abolish Toppin. For this reason: I found that when his report was published the whole of the metropolitan and provincial Press was taken up with Toppin. "Pro bono publico," "Father of a family," "Constant Reader"—all these were clean out of it. There was no room for any but Toppin. Now I want a modicum of the space in that Press myself; and if the Government are not going to carry out the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's report they ought, I say, to abolish Toppin. And while Toppin makes the remarks he has made, the members on this side of the House also are entitled to criticise the actions of the Treasurer and of the Government. The Treasurer said he was not afraid of a deficit. He may not be, but he and his colleagues seemed very much afraid of it when Daglish was in power. We had Rason and others crying out that it was necessary to restore confidence and balance the ledger. There was no crying out then about not being afraid of a deficit. The deficit of the Daglish Gov-

ernment was what the Rason Government, and its continuation the Moore Government, went to the country to remedy. They remedied it by going further into debt. And now they say they are not afraid of a deficit. The member for Katanning says he would sooner see half a million deficit than a land tax; and straightway he goes and votes for the land tax. So I presume he wants both. On looking through the division lists I find that on every occasion the member for Katanning voted for the tax. Another statement of the hon. member's was in regard to the unemployed. He said, "There is a slight depression here. I am not afraid of a deficit. I have confidence in the country. There are a few unemployed, but those are the men who will not work." Here is a cutting from that very correct journal the *Western Mail*. It is dated from Newcastle, November 17th, and it reads:—

"A warning has been issued to labourers desirous of securing employment on the Newcastle-Bolgart railway. The contractors state that the material has not come to hand, and not more than 30 men are employed. There is little if any prospect of more men being employed for eight or ten days. Already upwards of 50 men unemployed are here, and if others come up the position will be serious."

The member for Katanning says these unemployed do not want work. I heard the Honorary Minister say that throwing sheaves of wheat up on to a waggon was hard work. I have thrown sheaves of wheat on to a waggon and have worked also in a contractor's ballast pit. And I can say that throwing sheaves of wheat is only gentle exercise as compared with the work in the ballast pit. Yet we find that these men—not wanting work, according to the member for Katanning—we find that there are 50 of them waiting for this ballast-pit employment. It is very easy for a man comfortably seated to say the other man does not want work. But the fact that there are 50 men camped at the head of this line, waiting for navvying work, convinces me that these men are looking for work or they would not be camped there. I have

heard a man say that whenever a railway contract was going he was prepared to walk 10 miles to dodge it. That man knew what it meant. Yet these men are up there waiting for it. Again, the hon. member said we should not be afraid to borrow. He said we require to borrow at least another three millions. The Treasurer said we must continue borrowing until we have constructed 35,000 miles of railway. The Treasurer went into the mileage of railway in Victoria, compared the area of Victoria with that of Western Australia, and said that to bring our railways into line with those of Victoria in respect to mileage we would require 35,000 miles of railway, and that we could not stop borrowing until this was constructed. The member for Katanning only said three million pounds. I have no objection to borrowing so long as I do the borrowing. But there is the man who lends. And we have to consider the last loan. Of that some £70,000 odd was taken up by the public. The other £930,000 was underwritten by the stockbrokers. That, I may say, clearly intimated to me that our borrowing days are nearly done. We have heard of messages to Australia; we have known a lot of great men, big men, who thought it necessary that they should send a message to Australia; we have heard of the silken bonds, we have heard of the message of the late President and others. But there was a message wafted across the 14,000 miles of storm-tossed ocean when that loan was floated; and that message was, "Uncle's buttoned up." It is right enough to say we want the loan; but the question we have to consider is, can we get it? And, judging by the last loan, and by the last South Australian loan, it must appear that there is some doubt on that question. And when we cannot get it we have to prepare to do without it. I hold that Western Australia can do without loans if compelled to do so; and I trust that the day when she will be compelled to do so is not far distant. I heard one hon. member say that we must borrow money to make money. That is a false position. The proper way to accumulate money is by lending money, and there are members

in this Chamber who know it. When we consider the history of the first great millionaire, Rothschild—let us consider how he made his millions, how when he got a bit of inside information with regard to the battle of Waterloo he hurried back to England and bought up Government bonds. In other words, he got information of what those great heroes had done in fighting for the property of Englishmen and in fighting for England. He hurried across, and taking advantage of the exigencies of the situation lent the money. And there are many thousands of the descendants of those same old Waterloo heroes who are living on the verge of starvation to-day, and have been so living for years past to pay interest to the descendants of that Jew Rothschild, who got in ahead of them at the time of Waterloo. I have studied this question of borrowing money to make money, and right through history the man who has accumulated money is not the man who borrowed it, but the man who lent it. I have heard people advise other people to follow the plough; and I have studied that question too, and am convinced that the man who follows the plough has not nearly the same chance of making money as the man who follows the mortgage. And the idea that we should borrow money to make money is absolutely false in the history of the world. The fact is that practically the only way to accumulate money is by lending it at interest and getting the other fellow to work for the lender. Again, the member for Katanning said we should follow the system universally adopted in the Eastern States. I am sure there are many things in the Eastern States which this State would do well to avoid. Take the State I myself was born in—a most prolific State for agriculture; one of the finest States in the Commonwealth; a great gold-producing State—and ask why the best men of that State have been driven out of it. Is the system that led to that position one we should follow? If we look at the emigration statistics of Australia for the last 15 years we shall see where the men of Victoria have been driven out of that State by the public debt, by the interest they have to pay.

and by the big landholders. Then tell me, is Western Australia to follow the example of Victoria? If she is, then Western Australia is doomed to be of not much consequence in the future. I trust there are many things that happen in the Eastern States that will be a warning to Western Australia. The loan legislation of Victoria, and the borrowing policy of Victoria and of New South Wales are something that should be avoided with both hands.

Mr. Daglish took the Chair.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I admit that they help to open up Western Australia, and I have done work myself. I would not be in Western Australia myself had it not been for such people as the Clarkes and Chirnsides who have driven out better people than myself. Again, the hon. member said that the Opposition, that is, this side of the House, was necessary to keep the Government up to the mark, but he deprecated the way in which we did it. If we are here and are absolutely necessary to keep the Government to their work we should be the judges as the best way to do that. I do not believe in having the Opposition under the control of the Government. I may say this, that if we have to take advice from the Government side as to what criticism we shall offer, our criticism will be a very poor thing, and not likely to keep them up to the mark. Notwithstanding that, we cannot keep them up to the mark with the criticism which we level against them now. The hon. member deprecated charges of dishonesty and incompetence being made by this side of the House, but it is not only the members on this side of the House who go in for that sort of thing. I listened to the Premier speaking at Menzies some time ago, and he told an audience there that with very few exceptions, the members of this (Opposition) side never did a day's work in their lives.

Mr. Collier: No, he said all of them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He did; he said members on this side never did an honest day's work in their lives.

The Minister for Mines: He did not say that.

Mr. Troy: He did, I heard him.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is all very well to make these remarks, but when you deprecate them, you certainly should not make use of such remarks yourselves. This side of the House is just as much entitled to make charges of dishonesty, loafing, and vagabondism as the other side. I would point out again that this side of the House had put up with a considerable amount of abuse, it is beyond abuse, they are absolute lies, from the classic Press, "Sunday Slimes"—the *Sunday Sun* and the *Mirror*. By the Government organs, the classic journals that support the Government, we have many charges of dishonesty laid against us, and I say while we have these charges laid against us, it is rather miserable, poor indeed that while they make these charges against us they disclaim a few and kick up a row about a few of the remarks made about themselves. The Premier when complaining about derogatory remarks made by this side reminds me of a great big kid coming home to his mother and crying, "a little boy hit me." Again, we have the member for Roebourne informing the House the other day that he would not give the sympathy that he intended to give to this side of the House.

Mr. Osborn: You adhere to the truth will you. I never said so.

Disorder, a Member named.

The Chairman: The hon. member should not debate what an hon. member said on another question.

Mr. Holman: He was sent in specially for that.

The Chairman: I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Holman: I will not withdraw it.

The Chairman: If the hon. member declines to withdraw I shall name him.

Mr. Holman: Then name me.

The Chairman: Under Standing Order 72 I name the hon. member for Murchison for having been guilty of abusing the rights of the House by making untruthful statements reflecting on the Chairman.

The Minister for Mines: I beg to move—

That the hon. member be suspended from the service of the House.

The Chairman: I have named the hon. member for Murchison and it has been proposed that the hon. member be suspended from the service of the House. Is that seconded?

The Attorney General: I second it.

Mr. Scaddan: Is it necessary to name him by name. Should it not be by the seat he represents?

The Chairman: I have named the hon. member, that is sufficient. The motion is that the hon. member be suspended from the service of the House.

Mr. Bolton: What is the true meaning of the motion?

The Chairman: That the hon. member be suspended from the service of the House.

Mr. Underwood: For how long?

The Chairman: I submit the motion to the Committee.

Mr. Bolton: But I want it explained.

The Minister for Mines: The Standing Order is very clear on this.

The Chairman: Any time can be moved subsequently. The motion for suspension is quite in order. I take this opportunity of adding that the hon. member was guilty of the most serious breach of order an hon. member can commit. He made a deliberate attack on the Chair and when asked to withdraw deliberately refused, and persisted in his refusal.

Mr. Scaddan: The Standing Order strictly provides that on a motion being made the Chairman shall put it without debate. It is unfair that a statement should be made. I ask that you put the motion forthwith in accordance with Standing Order 42.

The Chairman: Before members vote on it a statement should be made as to the circumstances.

Mr. Collier: Is it necessary for you to enlighten members who were not in the Chamber when the matter occurred. The Standing Order is very explicit. The question shall be put forthwith. If you

are permitted to make a statement derogatory to the member for Murchison, in all fairness a reply should be permitted also. The Standing Order is explicit, no debate shall take place, the motion must be put forthwith. It is absolutely unfair for you to make a statement to members who were not in the Chamber at the time the disorder occurred; they were not here. It is not right that the Chairman should inform members of the occurrence when the member is not able to reply. Under the Standing Order you are compelled to put the question without discussion and without debate.

The Chairman: I do not intend to make any further statement. I did not discuss the matter, I simply stated the question. I thought members on both sides should understand the reason of my naming the member. I will put the question that the member for Murchison be suspended.

Mr. Holman: Before putting the question I desire to say on your arrival in this House as Chairman of Committees, immediately you took the position of Chairman you took action to call the member for Pilbara to order. I said "He was sent in for that purpose," and I still maintain it.

The Chairman: The hon. member must resume his seat. I will put the question.

Question put, and a division called for.

Mr. Horan: May I ask, Mr. Chairman, whether this suspension will extend beyond one week or only one sitting?

The Chairman: It can be removed by the House at any time.

Mr. Horan: The hon. member has been suspended before.

The Chairman: The hon. member must not make any further remarks.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	19
				—
Majority for	..	..		6
				—

AYES.

Mr. Barnett
Mr. Brown
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Carson
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Davies
Mr. Draper
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Jacoby

Mr. Keenan
Mr. Layman
Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Nanson
Mr. Osborn
Mr. Price
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gordon
(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Collier
Mr. Gill
Mr. Gourley
Mr. Heilmann
Mr. Holman
Mr. Horan
Mr. Johnson

Mr. McDowall
Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Swan
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Walker
Mr. Ware
Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Troy
(Teller).

Question thus passed.

The Chairman: I intend now to report to the Speaker.

[*Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

The Chairman: I have to report that the member for Murchison has been suspended from the service of the House.

The Speaker: The question is that the hon. member be suspended from the service of the House.

Mr. Bolton: Who moved the motion, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: It is not necessary for a motion to be moved.

Question put and passed.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Murchison must leave the Chamber.

(The hon. member for Murchison then withdrew.)

Committee resumed.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Your ruling, sir, is that a member cannot mention anything except what has occurred on this particular debate; is that your ruling?

The CHAIRMAN: I ruled that the hon. member was out of order in referring to some remarks which were made by the hon. member for Roebourne, and which were made in a debate on an entirely different subject.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I take it your ruling is that a member can only discuss remarks made on this particular question now before the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already given my ruling.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I suppose I cannot mention the remark made by the Premier at Menzies?

Opposition Members: Yes you can.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Chairman has ruled I cannot.

Members: Go on.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I just want to say this: when that side of the House talks about insinuations, they know something about them; they have used them. We have stood them for years; for the last 20 years we have stood their insinuations, and the particular pet insinuation of the member for Menzies about agitators who batten and fatten on the workers. I have heard him use it, but we must not say anything derogatory to that side of the House; they have a majority. I am quite prepared to repeat the statement of the member for Roebourne, but I am not allowed to do so. If we have lost the sympathy of the member for Roebourne we have lost something we never had, and we can bear that loss with equanimity. Now I come to the question of land settlement; and after all I think there is no question better worthy of consideration than this. The hon. member for Katanning took me to task the other day on a question—that was not this question, so perhaps I cannot reply to it. But I do not want to reply to that. I just want to say that it has been stated by myself and by Senator Needham that there is no land in this State available for settlers on account of the millions of acres held by people who have locked them up and prevented them from being used. The member for Katanning says that is not correct. Members of the Legislative Council say that is not correct. The Colonial Secretary says the *Statistical Abstract* proves that there is great land settlement going on. Here is the *Statistical Abstract* and the figures are in it. The member for Katanning objected that there were $2\frac{3}{4}$ million

acres belonging to the Midland Railway Company. I am quite prepared to knock that out of the calculation. I will give those three million acres to the Midland Railway Co. We have the position on 31st. December, 1907, that we had thirteen million acres alienated. We take from that the three million acres of the Midland Railway Company and then we take the area cropped under artificially sown grasses; the area that is cleared; the ground cleared and prepared for next season; cropped land in fallow; and area of other cleared land previously cropped now used for grazing or lying idle. We take all these headings in the *Statistical Abstract* and we find the total is 1,084,000 acres. We have 13,000,000 acres alienated, and as three million belong to the Midland Railway Co., that leaves us 10,000,000 acres. We have 1,000,000 acres in use and we have 9,000,000 acres not in use. Yet the member for Katanning will come and say that I and others are making false statements. We have 9,000,000 acres according to the *Abstract*, and I will allow the country to say whether I am making a false statement or whether the hon. member for Katanning is, and I regret he is not earning his £200 a year by being present to-night.

Mr. Collier: He is only here when there is something concerning his own pocket.

The Minister for Mines: I would like to draw attention to the remark of the member for Boulder. I do not think such a comment is fair. Surely we can have a debate without reflecting on the member for Katanning, even if he is not present. I ask for a withdrawal of the statement.

The Chairman: If the hon. member made the statement I hope he will withdraw it.

Mr. Bolton: He said no such thing.

The Chairman: If the hon. member made that statement he must withdraw it.

Mr. Collier: I made the statement, certainly. The hon. member for Katanning is never present in the House except when matters are being discussed which affect his own pocket. I believe that statement to be true and I refuse to withdraw it.

The Chairman: The hon. member must withdraw a statement like that.

Mr. Bath: On a point of order. I would ask your ruling Mr. Chairman as to whether the statement is out of order. The statement that a member comes here when matters affecting his own pocket are being discussed, however the Minister for Mines may regard it, I submit is not out of order, according to the rules of the House. I ask your ruling as to whether the statement is out of order.

The Chairman: If the hon. member intended to imply that the member for Katanning came here for the purpose of serving his own interest, the statement is distinctly out of order. If that is what the hon. member meant I hope he will withdraw it.

Mr. Collier: I did not intend to imply anything. I only stated the hon. member was here when matters were discussed which affected his own pocket.

Mr. Walker: That is an historical fact.

The Attorney General: I submit the hon. member means that the member for Katanning is looking after his own constituency; but to say his own pocket is personal, and he should withdraw that.

Mr. Walker: It may be that the hon. member's pockets are directly identical with the interests of the whole of the State. The expression is capable of two constructions and it is unfair for the Committee to put the worst construction on. Supposing it is true that the hon. member was absent on some occasions, and present on others when measures were being passed affecting his pocket one way or another, it might be a statement of a historical truth.

Mr. Johnson: I take it a member is permitted to make a statement but it is not permitted to hon. members to interpret the statement as they think fit. The statement was not made as a reflection on the member for Katanning, unless the Committee consider it such. It is not our province to give an interpretation to an hon. member's utterances. An utterance is not out of order unless we put the worst possible construction on it.

The Chairman: I am very anxious to allow members the fullest latitude in expressing an opinion, and to interpret the

rules of the House most liberally. If the member for Boulder will assure me that he intended no offence or imputation on the member for Katanning, I shall be satisfied with his assurance.

Mr. Collier: I did not intend to reflect in any way upon the member for Katanning; I merely made the statement that the hon. member was present when matters affecting his own private affairs were concerned; meaning that all legislation passed in this House affects us. I intended no private reflection on the hon. member.

The Chairman: The member for Pilbara may proceed.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am glad to be able to proceed once more. I was saying that many statements had been made in regard to the amount of land available for settlement, and we have the member for Katanning saying that I was in error along with Senator Needham in making this statement. I am quite prepared to stand alongside Senator Needham and his statement as it has been published. Some members of the Legislative Council saw fit to move a motion practically censuring Senator Needham. It was not necessary for them to go to Melbourne to find some one to censure, because I have made this statement time and again inside and outside this House, and if Mr. Sommers wanted someone to attack why did he not attack me?

The Treasurer: You are not worth attacking.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I agree with every part of Mr. Needham's statement in regard to this immigration question. The Federal Parliament has voted £20,000 for advertising Australia to induce immigrants to come to the various States of the Commonwealth, and Senator Needham said he admitted there was any amount of room for a large population, but his idea was to have a judicious scheme of immigration, but it would be advisable before inviting people to come here to have land available on which they might settle.

Mr. Bath: That is what Lord Northcote said.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And a greater man than Lord Northcote has said it. I have said it several times, and I will say

it again. If we want agricultural immigrants it is necessary to get land for them to settle on, but we find from the various journals of the East that every time a block of land is put up in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, or South Australia there are hundreds of applicants for it. Only quite recently we had a cartoon of a man sentenced to death, and the jury returned a verdict of "Died from natural causes; trampled to death for trying to get land." While this condition of affairs obtains it is useless endeavouring to bring immigrants to this country. Let us go into this question of immigration. This country is paying roughly about £10,000 a year—we cannot get all the figures; and I presume the other States are paying a similar sum, which makes about £60,000 a year. In addition the Commonwealth pay £20,000 a year, and notwithstanding Mr. Sommers and the Colonial Secretary in regard to the great flow of immigration, the result for the last seven years has been that 17,000 immigrants have come to Australia, roughly 2,500 each year, so we spend about £80,000 a year to get 2,500 immigrants, and from these figures we see there must be something wrong in our methods. A man who calls attention to that is certainly one deserving some credit from his country. Of course he cannot expect to get it from Mr. Sommers. Mr. Sommers goes on to say that the utterances of Senator Needham were but what they might expect. He said this hon. gentleman who had occupied the exalted position of a boilermaker's assistant at 7s. 6d. a day and who was elected to Parliament had raised his own salary. In regard to that I wish to say from my experience that a man who is a boilermaker's assistant is as honest as a land agent, and is certainly not likely to get land agent's elbow. I spoke to Mr. Sommers to-night. I have a commission from electors in my constituency who have offered to give me the money to buy land for them; I speak of men of a most excellent type, but I cannot get the land. So I asked Mr. Sommers where this land is situated that is available, and he told me that he could not tell me. Then I told him it was no good talking to him.

Mr. Heitmann: The Lands Department cannot tell you.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am aware of that. I have asked at the Lands Office, and I have asked the land guides, and I have inspected plans, but I cannot get within easy distance of the railway from the Government land worth settling on. Of course I could get it if I paid Mr. Sommers and the other agents 5 per cent. on the selling price; that is what Mr. Sommers wants the immigrants for, to pay him 5 per cent. During the discussion in the Federal House, Mr. Dobson, of Tasmania, said that it was a nice thing to publish abroad that there was no land in Australia for the immigrants to go on. Well, all I can say is, that I am convinced it is the truth, and that the man who would publish abroad false statements should be in gaol, and that the man who says there is ample land for the immigrants to go on in Australia publishes a false statement. The land is not there, it is not available. The land that is worth settling on or worth living on is not in this State, and we are better situated in this respect than any State in the Commonwealth. This was a part of Senator Needham's remarks that was not quoted: Senator Needham said that along with the immigration policy there should be a tax on the unimproved value of land. That is the point that struck Mr. Sommers and Mr. Patrick and other members of another place. I wish to say that Australia wants immigrants badly; no one realises more than I do the absolute necessity for progress in Australia, and I know that the only progress we can make in this State is agricultural progress, with which other progress will come. We cannot expect to be a great exporting country with regard to manufactures for a considerable number of years; therefore, we have to extend our agricultural development. But in the past our immigration policy has been an absolute failure, both here and in the other States, as I have shown by the figures of the past seven years. It is all right for Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Irvine and others to talk of defending Australia; no one realises more than I do that Australia is in danger, and that it is absolutely necessary that we should

open up the agricultural lands of Australia for the people to go on as freeholders and not as farmers' slaves, as the Treasurer would like to have them.

The Treasurer: You said they could get no land.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If I said so, I will correct it. I say again as Senator Needham says that we have none the settlers can go on and make a living on.

Member: What about the North?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am well aware of that; later on I will deal with the point raised by the member for Beverley. The State owns millions of acres of splendid land, but a man cannot go away from a railway to cultivate, the cartage would kill him. But the land alongside our existing railways is all held and settlers are kept off it. There are nine million acres that the settlers cannot get on.

The Treasurer: How far is your land from the railway?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Nine miles.

The Treasurer: When did you take it up?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Last year.

The Treasurer: Then why show such a bad example?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It might be as well to deal with this question of my land. In the first place the great part of it was held as a free homestead farm—two blocks of it. There are two blocks which have been held for some years. As their name implies they are residence blocks. I found no residents on them, and I had the land ringbarked myself.

Mr. Bolton: How did you get it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: On my railway pass. Had I not been a member of Parliament I doubt whether I would have got it. I fluked it. It had been held for years before I got it but the holders did not fulfil the conditions. I saw the land gazetted, applied for it, and obtained it. It is a good block and I am pleased to have it. The member for York (Mr. Monger) has made many statements concerning the large tract of country I possess. I am opposed to any alienation of Crown land. The Treasurer might assume that

the fact that I have taken up land proves me to be insincere.

The Treasurer: Exactly.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He might just as well say that Mr. A. E. Morgans is insincere when he takes up a mining property. That gentleman is most sincerely in favour of no labour conditions on mines, but he still takes up mining leases. Although I object to the alienation of land just as much as that gentleman to the fulfilment of labour conditions, still I take up the land as he takes up mining properties. Again, I believe in a State steamship service on the North-West coast, but will the Treasurer suggest I am not sincere in this belief because I do not swim up to my electorate rather than take a privately owned steamer. I am opposed to the alienation of Crown lands and if the Government bring in a Bill preventing further alienation I am prepared to hand over the land I hold immediately the Bill is passed, and take a lease of the property. Take another example. If a bank were to turn out a box of sovereigns in the street I would try and get some of them and so would every other member of this Chamber. The man who obtained any of those sovereigns would not be to blame, but it would be a bad policy for the bank. It is a bad policy for Western Australia to allow me to get that land. By my vote I am prepared to stop further alienation of Crown lands, and if the Government will carry out that principle I will vote with them; but until they do that they have no right to sneer at me or at any other member. A few remarks regarding the Treasurer's statement in regard to the question of land settlement. The *West Australian*, dealing with the Budget speech, said:—"Mr. Wilson, however, possesses the exceptional power of being able to invest figures with interest." In looking through the speech we find that the Treasurer stated that the land under crop last year had increased from 364,000 to 460,000 acres, and the increase of arable and cleared land was over one million acres. On going through the *Statistical Abstract* I find he took as a comparison the year before last, and not

last year, as to the number of applications received. Then he concludes by saying that a record was established. There must be something wrong when he obtains the figures in that way. I agree that he makes the figures interesting, most interesting, and while he continues to quote the year before last for last year, he is likely to continue to be interesting. The member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) has accused us of disparaging Western Australia, but I may say I am doing nothing of the sort. Rather, I am praising it. I am calling attention to the magnificent natural resources of the Treasurer's imagination. A country that can grow an imagination like that can grow anything.

Mr. Walker: It is imported.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It developed in this State, I believe, and it is a credit to us. The member for Katanning said that according to my own practical knowledge, which he praised perhaps unduly, I knew that a man could not develop his land in the course of a year or two. I quite agree with him, but is it a year or two since this development started? Here is *Hansard*. I have a copy of the report of a speech made on the 29th July, 1903, by the then Minister for Lands, the present member for Beverley (Mr. Hopkins). Speaking on the Address-in-Reply he said—

"And to illustrate also to members the enormous amount of work this office is undertaking at present, I may say that from the 1st January to the 22nd July we have received 4,813 applications for land, and I am pleased to say that to-day land selection shows an increase of more than 100 per cent., the highest record ever achieved before in the history of the State."

That was six years ago. The Treasurer says the same thing to-day—the highest record ever achieved in the history of the State. I will guarantee that if one takes *Hansard* from 1900 to the present time, he will find that every year some responsible Minister stated that a record has been established in land settlement, and that the applications had been enormous. I do not say land can be de-

veloped in two or three years, but a period of six years provides a fair trial. There were 600,000 acres applied for in 1902, and surely it is only reasonable to expect that such land should now be under cultivation. It is not under cultivation. The Government have absolutely failed to settle people on the lands of the State. All they have done has been to sell land. In the circumstances, therefore, they should give way to someone else who would try other methods of settling the people on the land. I do not wish to go into the question of administration to-night, but one point I would mention is in regard to the Northam lands office. When speaking to the Address-in-Reply I said the officers of the department had issued to me a plan of certain land on which the whole of the land surveyed in that district had not been marked. A fortnight ago I saw a plan which had been issued by the Northam lands office, and on that plan there were not marked over 12 blocks which were held and surveyed. All the blocks were held by settlers established at the Tammin special settlement. It is not only a waste of money for the Government to issue incorrect plans, but it is absolutely a waste of time for the people applying to receive incorrect plans. The man who received the plan in question went out to the settlement to look at the land. He found that my block, that of Mr. Bath and those of others, were all marked on the plan as vacant, and on going further on he found that 50 people were settled, whereas no mark appeared on the plan. There was one block which he found to be vacant, and he went to the Northam lands office and attempted to apply for it. He was informed the block was not open for selection, and it was no use putting in an application. A few weeks later Mr. Munyard applied for the block and got it. The man I refer to was refused the block, but a member of the firm of Munyard and Kenworthy obtained it. I have here many statements regarding land settlement, and I may make use of them later on. While instances of this description occur, we are likely to have serious remarks made as to the administration of the Lands Depart-

ment. As to the remarks of the member for Beverley (Mr. Hopkins) that the land here could in no way be compared with the rich lands of the Eastern States, I have gone to some trouble to look up the statistics, and I find that for the last seven years the Western Australian average for wheat production is 11 bushels odd, while New South Wales is 10 bushels, Victoria 9, and the Commonwealth 9. With the exception of Tasmania and Queensland, in which States there are very small areas under wheat, Western Australia has the best average in the Commonwealth. Notwithstanding that, the member for Beverley says that the land is worse here than in the Eastern States. I am convinced that we have in this State millions of acres of the best wheat-growing land in Australia. Now, coming to the taxation proposals of the Government, I find on reading a leading article in the *West Australian* on the Treasurer's speech, it is said—

"The speech shows something of that combination of analysis and imagination so rare in financial experts."

I assume the Treasurer analysed the deficit, and imagined a surplus by putting on an amusement tax. During the recent electioneering campaign at Roebourne, an unsuccessful member was asked by an elector at the back of the hall "Is the candidate in favour of a bob in and the winner shouts?" It was thought this was only a jest, or, at least, an alcoholic irrelevancy, but when we examine the taxation proposals of the Government, we are convinced that that elector saw with true prophetic vision the taxes now proposed by the Moore Government, and he spoke in his crude, bush language and, like many of us bushmen, was misunderstood. What, however, could be a more apt illustration of the proposals of the Government than "A bob in and the winner shouts." First of all there is the amusement tax. Perhaps although this is not a case of a "bob in" it is one of "A sprat in and we sell a horse." I agree with the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) that amusements have been taxed to a great extent, and that the class of people taxed above all others in this or any other State is that which goes to horse races. Yet we propose to tax them

further. We get a ride to the racecourse on the Government railways for 2s. 6d., along what is really a threepenny trip. We have to pay the totalisator tax. Now we are to have a tax on tobaccoists. Tobacco is one of the most heavily taxed commodities in the State to-day. The amount of the tax is three times the value of the article itself. Yet the Government have decided on that tobacco tax. Then there is the brokers and land agents' tax. I regard this as "a bob in." It is more than sixpence. Considering what the land agents have done—what Sommers, Crick, Willis and others have done—I think we can impose this tax. Consequently I shall support it. Then again we are to have a tax on banks. I am of opinion that the banks can very well afford to pay the tax. And I am going to support that tax, if only to get even with them for the half-guinea charged me each half-year for keeping my poor little account. I am convinced that the Government have absolutely failed to advance the agricultural progress of this State, and that we as a State, and Australia as a whole, must absolutely rely on the agricultural progress. That progress can only be made by a solid land tax, with some stringent measures in regard to holding unused land. Until the Government have introduced that land tax, until they have fairly attempted to grapple with the question of land cultivation, they are certainly not likely to advance the progress of this State.

Progress reported.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

House adjourned at 11.34 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 17th December, 1908.

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Bills: Bridgetown-Wilgarrup Railway, 3s.	1096
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Fines and Penalties Appropriation, 1s.	1101
Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act Amendment, 2s.	1101
Nannine-Meekatharra Railway, 2s.	1109
Adjournment, Christmas holidays	1112

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY, NORTHAM SERVICE.

Hon. G. THROSSELL asked the Colonial Secretary: In view of the large amount of new settlement in the country North of Northam, and the consequent demand for water, will the Government give early consideration to the devising of some plan for supplying the settlers with water from the Coolgardie mains on more satisfactory conditions than now obtain, and so afford encouragement to further settlement?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Government are prepared to give consideration to any proposition that will enable these extensions to be carried out without loss to the State. The only alternative proposal to a guarantee of consumption equivalent to 10 per cent. on the capital cost of an extension yet suggested, is the introduction of legislation enabling a rate to be struck on all agricultural lands served by a branch main, which has not been favourably received.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1, Bridgetown-Wilgarrup Railway; 2, Land and Income Tax; 3, Upper Chapman railway—*passed*.

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day.
Postponed Clause 47—Funds of boards, rates: