

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 8th December, 1904.

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MR. SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION — SOUTH-WESTERN RAILWAY DUPLICATION.

MR. GORDON (for Mr. N. J. Moore) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What was the total cost of duplication of the South-Western Railway between Perth and Armadale? 2, Was such duplication provided for out of revenue?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The duplication between Burswood and Armadale cost approximately £30,000. 2, No. The work has been charged to Additions and Improvements to, Opened, Railways.

QUESTION—ROADS TO SOUTH BEACH, CLOSURE.

MR. DIAMOND asked the Minister for Railways, Whether it was the intention of the Railway Department to close any roads or streets leading from the Mandurah and Rockingham Roads to the South Beach, and if so what roads and streets were affected?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: It is proposed to close all the streets between Lord Street and Robb's Jetty, which are as follows:—Lord Street, South Street, Louisa Street, Right-of-Way, Rose Street, Ada Street, Florence Street, Sydney Street, By-the-Sea Road, Road at Smelting Works, Road at Robb's Jetty.

BILL, FIRST READING.

EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT, introduced by the Minister for Railways and Labour.

MOTION—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish) moved:

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

This was a usual motion at this stage of the session. There was practically no important business by private members on the Notice Paper at the present time. There were one or two private Bills on the paper, which he hoped members would have an opportunity of dealing with without any difficulty. He desired to, as far as possible, consult the convenience and likewise the health of members, and therefore he was anxious that the House should not sit for any undue length of time through the summer months. The motion was submitted with the object of furthering that view.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): Already he had intimated to the Premier that he was not satisfied with the hon. gentleman's procedure in regard to the treatment of a Bill which he (Mr. Foulkes) had introduced. He referred to the Roads Act Amendment Bill, which was down on the Orders of the Day to be taken after the Estimates. He complained of this, particularly when he compared the treatment the hon. gentleman had given to members who happened to sit on his own side of the House. He specially referred to a Bill introduced by the member for Forrest, called the Distress for Rent Restriction Bill, which was discussed yesterday. This Roads Act Amendment Bill was purely a formal one. There was no objection to it in this House, and it had already been passed by the Assembly last session, but unfortunately it was thrown out for certain reasons in another place. Although he had the usual statements and general assurances from the Premier that he hoped there would be no difficulty in the passing of this Bill, he knew the hon. gentleman well enough now to know that general assurances of that character were really not of much assistance to any member, and he complained bitterly —

MR. MORAN: The hon. member was not going the way to get his Bill put through.

MR. FOULKES was speaking exactly as he felt on the subject. He did not

consider he had been dealt with fairly in connection with this particular Bill. There was no opposition whatever to the measure. He naturally complained of the favouritism shown to members who happened to sit on the same side as the Premier. He did not think he should be condemned because he did not happen to sit on the same side as the hon. gentleman. The Premier had not treated him fairly, but he still hoped the hon. gentleman would see that on the Orders of the Day for next Tuesday the Bill would take the place which it had occupied during the last two days.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): It was true, as the Premier said, that late in the session it was general for such a motion as this to appear; but let him remind the hon. gentleman that it was also usual for more notice to be given than was given in this instance. He had never yet known a motion which practically wiped out private members' business to come into effect the day after notice of such motion was given. Last year, for instance, a week's notice was given. The Premier stated that there was no important business amongst the motions introduced by private members. He (Mr. Rason) took it therefore that in the hon. gentleman's opinion increased payment to members, State ownership of coal mines, State fire insurance, the spread of tick cattle from East to West Kimberley, and several other matters were of no importance. There should be at least one day left for private members. It was rather too harsh treatment to move a motion to-day which would come into effect at the very next sitting of the House. There could not be any desire to throw obstacles in the way, but the desire rather was that the usual procedure should be adopted in this instance. He begged to move an amendment:

That the words "for the remainder of the session" be struck out with a view of inserting "after Wednesday, December the 14th."

That gave only the next private members' day, and it was not a week's notice. Surely there could be nothing very objectionable in the amendment.

MR. MORAN: We should lose to-morrow.

MR. RASON: The question of to-morrow or when we should be able to prorogue did not enter into this subject.

This motion was that Government business should take precedence. Surely if we said that such should be the case after next Wednesday, that would be reasonable; but to say that from to-day all members' private business should go by the board was rather too severe. Last year the motion was moved on the 22nd October, to take effect after the 28th. No matter what session of Parliament one looked at, it was most unusual, and unreasonable to a great extent, to suddenly, without warning, render it impossible for private members' business to proceed. He hoped the Premier would accept the amendment in the spirit in which it was made. It would have been following the usual procedure if he (Mr. Rason) had asked for a week's notice, but the hon. gentleman would see that he had only given one private members' day.

MR. W. B. GORDON (Canning) seconded the amendment.

THE PREMIER: In reply to the member for Guildford, one need only say that the hon. member gave the strongest reply to his own argument when he pointed out that last year, in a much longer session, private members' business was entirely suspended as early as October, whereas in this instance it was allowed to run on until December. Where there was any special urgent private members' business brought forward the House would, he was sure, support him in giving an opportunity for its discussion, and he was certain likewise that members who had looked down the Notice Paper would recognise that there were comparatively few subjects, if any, under notice by private members which necessitated in the interests of the community immediate discussion during the course of this session. He therefore was fully justified in asking that the House should accept the motion he had already moved. His only desire in proposing it was, as he had stated at the outset, to consider the convenience and advantage of the members. He had no other purpose to serve; and as he had requests from both sides of the House to expedite the closing of the session, he was endeavouring to carry out hon. members' wishes. He regretted that the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) thought it necessary to be

personally offensive to him. Surely no member who had sat in the House during his (the Premier's) parliamentary career could accuse him of misleading either individual members or the House, or of discourtesy to any member, no matter what his politics. Surely members in Opposition, as well as those on the Government side, must admit that he (the Premier) had been uniformly courteous and considerate to both sides; and he was astonished that because the member for Claremont's Bill was slightly lower on the Notice Paper than that of a Government supporter, the hon. member should make such remarks.

MR. FOULKES: It was more than slightly lower, as the Premier knew. The Premier was only misleading the House.

MR. NEEDHAM: Should that observation be made?

MR. SPEAKER: The observation must be withdrawn.

MR. FOULKES withdrew the observation.

THE PREMIER: If the Bill had not been soon enough considered by this House, the fault lay with the hon. member who gave notice of it; who knowing that it was needed, and that it had been discussed in vain last session, waited till the fog end of the present session before he thought it worth while to bring it in.

MR. FOULKES (in explanation): Possibly the Premier was not aware that it was not necessary to introduce the Bill till the Estimates were available; and the Bill would now be farther advanced but that the Minister for Works moved the adjournment of the second-reading debate.

THE PREMIER: What important bearing had this explanation on his remarks? As soon as the Bill was tabled, the hon. member asked him to give an opportunity for its discussion; and it was accordingly put before Government business on the succeeding day. It would have been impossible to do more. The Minister for Works moved the adjournment of the debate on the Bill for the purpose of allowing another Opposition member (Mr. H. Brown) an opportunity of tabling certain amendments. The Minister was actuated by a desire to serve an Opposition member. To-day's Notice Paper contained, a little higher up than that Bill, a Bill introduced by the member for Forrest (Mr.

A. J. Wilson). If the member for Claremont was aware of the practice of the House, he would know that a Bill which had reached the report stage was invariably put among the first Orders of the Day, irrespective of who had introduced it; therefore the Bill of the member for Forrest was in its proper position on the Notice Paper.

MR. FOULKES: Then why was not the same procedure adopted regarding the Transfer of Land Bill, which had reached the report stage?

THE PREMIER: Some members reminded him of spoilt children; and it was hardly worth while to notice their petty interjections. If the hon. member desired it, the House would be told the reason for the personal offensiveness he had for weeks past displayed toward him (the Premier). Ever since a new Agent General was appointed for Western Australia, the hon. member's criticisms in the House were offensive to every member of the Ministry; and he had not hesitated to make all sorts of nasty insinuations, without having the courage to make a direct attack.

MR. FOULKES: Was the Premier in order in accusing him of making nasty insinuations, and in imputing motives?

MR. SPEAKER: The Premier, if imputing motives to the hon. member, was out of order; but the imputation was not obvious.

THE PREMIER: The motives were imputed by the hon. member; and he (the Premier) had stated the reason for the imputation of those motives.

MR. FOULKES: Was the Premier in order in imputing motives?

MR. SPEAKER had not heard the Premier impute motives.

THE PREMIER: All were aware that a discussion of this sort did not enhance the dignity of the House; but there must be some consideration and forbearance shown on the part not of one member of the House but of all. It was time for some forbearance to be shown by members other than the Premier. He had been showing forbearance throughout the session, but there were limits even to the forbearance he could display; and he asked members to assist him in conducting the business of the Houses with dignity and decorum. He asked from the Opposition the same forbearance and

the same fair treatment that he had always endeavoured to extend to them. He regretted the necessity for defending himself from the attack of the member for Claremont, and repeated to the House the assurance privately given to the hon. member, that he (the Premier) would try to give the hon. member an opportunity of passing the Bill through the House during this week; not in order to oblige or to assist the hon. member, but to enable the House to deal with a subject believed to be of some importance.

MR. FOULKES frankly admitted that he had strongly criticised the Premier and some of his colleagues; and it was well that those criticisms appeared to have had some effect. But for no criticism he had passed on their conduct of public affairs had he ever been called to order by Mr. Speaker or by any Government supporter. His criticisms were political criticisms: and he would continue to criticise if he thought fit. He was not elected to sit muzzled in this House. Perhaps the Premier expected him to sit in dumb admiration of the hon. member's political career.

THE PREMIER only expected the hon. member to be gentlemanly.

MR. FOULKES had maintained a gentlemanly attitude which gave no cause for complaint. He regretted that the Premier was so thin-skinned as to accuse him of personal offensiveness for criticising the Premier's action. If his criticisms had appeared personally offensive, he could assure the Premier that this was never intended; and no other Minister had made such a complaint. He would appeal to the Minister for Justice, whom he had at all times assisted.

MR. MORAN: That was professional brotherhood.

MR. FOULKES had not sufficient presumption to approach the other distinguished Ministers who had attained to the dignity of seats on the Treasury bench as often as he had approached Ministers in the past. Some great transformation seemed to have come over Ministers; but they must expect criticism from the Opposition side of the House. The mere fact that they were members of a Government did not preclude them from it; but the criticism they had received from the Opposition had been far milder than that levelled against them by

their constituents. There was no need to repeat some of those strong criticisms, but the Government must be prepared for criticism in the future. The Premier claimed that since the appointment of the Agent General his (Mr. Foulkes's) attitude towards the Premier had been offensive. It was an ungracious statement. If there was any offence shown it was unintentional. The Premier could be assured that he would receive the same measure of criticism in the future from him (Mr. Foulkes) as he had received in the past.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	26

Majority against ... 12

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brown	Mr. Angwin
Mr. Burges	Mr. Bath
Mr. Carson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Diamond	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Connor
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Ellis
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Harper
Mr. Layman	Mr. Hastie
Mr. N. J. Moore	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. S. F. Moore	Mr. Henshaw
Mr. Rason	Mr. Holman
Mr. Frank Wilson	Mr. Horan
Mr. Gordon (Teller).	Mr. Johnson
	Mr. Keyser
	Mr. Lynch
	Mr. Moran
	Mr. Needham
	Mr. Nelson
	Mr. Scaddan
	Mr. Taylor
	Mr. Thomas
	Mr. Watts
	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gill (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

BUSINESS DAYS AND HOURS, ADDITIONAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish) moved:

That for the remainder of the session, unless otherwise ordered, the House shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesday, Thursdays, and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m.; and shall sit until 6.30 if necessary, and if requisite from 7.30 onwards.

Thus, if carried, would mean that the House must sit to-morrow; but he did not wish to ask members to submit to any inconvenience. It would be impossible to sit after tea to-morrow; and if it were the will of the House he would accept an amendment to the effect that

the motion should not come into operation until next week. The motion had been worded to apply this week because he (the Premier) was aware that many members who usually went away from the city on Friday morning would be staying in town this week all Friday, and because he had thought members might desire to spend their unoccupied hours in attending to the business of the country during the afternoon rather than following some lighter form of work or recreation.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. B. Holman) seconded the motion.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): In this as in the other case he intended to take a course which he believed was the proper constitutional course. In regard to the last vote some members had thought fit to take certain action which would be remembered in the future; but in regard to this motion, so far as he was concerned he would have no objection to sitting four days in the week if it would serve any good purpose. He understood the desire was that the House should be prorogued before Christmas. Was it at all likely? It was perfectly impossible for the House to be prorogued before Christmas; at any rate, it was extremely improbable.

MR. NEEDHAM: It all depended upon the Opposition.

MR. RASON was glad the hon. member had made that admission. Last year at this period the Estimates were much farther advanced than the Estimates were to-day; and public business generally in regard to Bills was much farther advanced. Last year the House sat five days a week, and every effort was made to get through before Christmas, but it was found utterly impossible.

THE PREMIER: That was owing to a difference between the two Houses.

MR. RASON: This House adjourned on the 23rd December until the 12th of January. The position of public business now was that we had made little progress with the Estimates, and that we still had the Loan Estimates to come down. We would also, be presumed, have a Loan Bill down for five or six millions, for that would be the least amount that would cover the recent proposals in regard to public works. Also we were to discuss the immigration proposals,

and that would take considerable time. This was a subject no one should try to scamp over. Many Bills were before the House which it would be utterly impossible to deal with before Christmas, among them being the Public Service Bill, the Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill, the Machinery Bill, the Licensing Act Suspension Bill, the Railway Traffic Bill, the Transfer of Land Act Amendment Bill, and the Public Health Bill. The last was one of the most important, if not the most important, of the measures brought down this session; and a select committee on that Bill at the request of the chairman—one of the Ministers—had been granted extension of time to bring up its report, and would not report until the 23rd of December. If that Bill was to go through this House and to pass another place, it would be impossible to prorogue before Christmas. Did it mean that the Bill was to be thrown overboard amongst other Bills of more or less importance? There were several select committees to report whose time for reporting had been extended. The Hamel select committee was to report on the 20th December. Was that also to go overboard? Then again several promised Bills were looked for with great interest. The Referendum (Legislative Council) Bill had not yet been dealt with. Was that to be dropped? Was no action to be taken in regard to it?

MR. MORAN: An effort should be made to save them somehow.

MR. RASON recognised it depended on the member for West Perth whether the Bills were to be dropped or not, and it was satisfaction that the hon. member would endeavour to see that some of them were passed. It would be utterly impossible, if the subjects mentioned were the only business to come before the House, to prorogue before Christmas. However, having last year agreed to sit five days a week, he could not oppose the motion; but if members thought that by sitting four days a week they were going to secure the prorogation of Parliament before Christmas, they were much mistaken. He had an amendment prepared, and was glad the Premier would have no objection to it. The motion as it was worded would mean that the House should sit on the extra day from and including to-morrow.

It would be very unfair to some country members who had reasonably hoped that they would be able to return home to-morrow. They came up to attend the sittings of the House, never dreaming that a motion would be brought forward to-day to come into operation to-morrow. He moved an amendment:

That the words "for the remainder of the session" be struck out, and "after Monday, December 12th" be inserted in lieu.

MR. W. B. GORDON (Canning) seconded the amendment.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverly) supported the amendment. It certainly was not fair that the Government should ask members to break engagements. We had been in the habit of relying on Friday for private engagements, and if the Government knocked that day out it meant that members would have to forfeit their private engagements or absent themselves from the House. That was not a position the Government should put members in. There was this difference between the present amendment and the amendment to the last motion: the last amendment had for its object an extension of debate and discussion in the House. We had had such wearisome debates of late that he (Mr. Harper) would do all he could to curtail them.

MR. HAYWARD (Wellington) protested against the proposal to sit to-morrow. Those members who came long distances made their arrangements for Friday, the only day they had in the week. It was to be hoped the Premier would not press the motion, but allow the amendment to pass.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): The Premier should consider the request of the country members, and try on this one occasion to meet their convenience. He quite believed in having an extra sitting day to complete the work of the session as soon as possible, and to have extra sitting hours; he was prepared even to go farther than that. But to start to-morrow, when members had made arrangements for their private business, was very inconvenient. Though he (Mr. Butcher) lived in town, he had country business that called him away from the city at the end of every week, and he had already made arrangements to leave town to-morrow. It would be inconvenient for him and for many members if the arrangement to sit on Friday commenced to-

morrow. He doubted if there would be a quorum if the arrangement came in force to-morrow.

MR. R. G. BURGESS (York): Country members attended pretty regularly. He had made arrangements to go away this evening or early in the morning. It took some country members nearly all the latter end of the week to get home, and then they had to be back by the following Tuesday. Last session Parliament sat from 11 o'clock a.m. and all night to get through the business, but did not do so. It was to be hoped the House would be able to get through the business before the end of the year.

THE PREMIER said he had intimated, when moving the motion, that he would willingly accept the amendment which had been moved. He reiterated the statement.

Amendment passed, and the motion as amended agreed to.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 4), £250,000.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. H. Daglish) moved (in reference to the Supply Bill introduced previously), to the effect that the House do resolve into Committee of Supply and Committee of Ways and Means, also that the Standing Orders be suspended to permit of the Bill being passed at one sitting. He said that as the Estimates had not yet been passed, it became necessary to again appeal to the House to grant supplies to carry on the ordinary services for another month. The total amount asked for was only £250,000. Of course the Estimates indicated the direction in which the money would be expended. It had been suggested that it should not be necessary, after the Estimates had been presented to Parliament, to introduce a Supply Bill at all; but the passing of the Estimates or any part did not enable the Treasurer to provide supplies to carry on the work of government. It was merely an indication as to how the money should be disposed of. The passing of any particular estimates did not appropriate for the service of the financial year the money necessary to be appropriated for the purpose of that department. The only granting of supply which resulted from the passing of the Estimates was that

which was obtained by means of the passing of an Appropriation Bill.

MR. RASON: Would it not be better to have the discussion on the second reading?

THE TREASURER: It was hoped we could deal with the whole question on the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders. There need not be any re-opening of the matter subsequently. The suspension of the Standing Orders was after all the main point of his request. If the whole Estimates had been passed, that would not make supply available for the purpose of carrying on until the Estimates had been embodied in an Appropriation Bill, and that Bill had gone through both Houses of Parliament. Members therefore understood that although the Estimates had been introduced, they did not place the Treasurer in a different or better position than he was in before the Estimates were introduced. The Estimates simply laid before members the precise lines on which it was proposed, if the Supply Bill were granted, that the supply would be used. Therefore to that extent members were in a position to understand the precise manner in which this quarter of a million of money would be disposed of if approved by the House. This was expenditure solely from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and the money would be expended in the direction indicated by the Estimates now before the House.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS seconded the motion.

MR. RASON (Guildford) gathered from the Treasurer that the main point was the suspension of the Standing Orders. No member of the Opposition would attempt to refuse supply; but the suspension of the Standing Orders was justified only in matters of extreme urgency. Was it possible that it was a matter of extreme urgency that the Supply Bill should pass through all stages to-day? Already supplies to the amount of one and three quarter millions had been voted, and if this Supply Bill went through, supplies to the amount of two millions would have been voted. In addition to that we had already passed on the Estimates roughly one and a quarter millions of money. Last year a Supply Bill was brought in on the 22nd July for a million of money, half a million

being from loan and half a million from revenue, and on the 22nd September another Supply Bill was brought in for half a million of money out of revenue. No farther Supply Bill was brought in. The Estimates were not brought down until the 6th October, and not passed until the end of December. If it was possible last year to do with only two Bills for a million and a half, and if it was not necessary to bring a Supply Bill down after the 22nd October, he failed to understand why it was now necessary to ask for farther supply, and he altogether failed to understand how it should be a matter of such extreme urgency as to justify the Treasurer in asking members to suspend the Standing Orders. So far as the granting of supplies was concerned he would raise no objection, but to suspend the Standing Orders he certainly would object. He did not think the House would be justified in suspending the Standing Orders to pass the Supply Bill through all stages, at this period of the month and at this stage of the year. The Treasurer could not say it was of vital importance that this Supply Bill should pass through to-day instead of Tuesday. If the Treasurer would consent to take the Bill through its stages in the usual course without suspending the Standing Orders, he personally would be glad to give the hon. gentleman every assistance; but he certainly objected as a matter of principle to the suspension of the Standing Orders except in case of urgency, and there could be no urgency on the present occasion.

Question passed, and the Standing Orders suspended.

Formal resolutions in Committee of Supply and Committee of Ways and Means passed and reported, the reports adopted.

SUPPLY BILL.

Bill read a second time, without debate.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Issue and application of £250,000:

MR. RASON merely wished to again enter his formal protest against the procedure which had been adopted to-day. If it was a matter of extreme urgency that this Bill should pass through to-day instead of on Tuesday next, the affairs of

the Treasury must be in a shocking condition, which he regretted very much. To his mind there was absolutely no justification for the procedure which had been adopted. He could not imagine how there possibly could be any justification. He would be glad if the Treasurer would explain the circumstances.

THE TREASURER: This year it had been necessary to introduce a Bill in order to carry on before the Estimates were passed by Parliament. The House was entitled to particulars as to the method in which the money voted was expended, and in the Estimates of Expenditure which had been laid before the Committee full information in regard to the matter had been given. The hon. member had to bear in mind that on this occasion he (the Treasurer) had adopted an unprecedented course in giving the amount of notice to the House which had been given. He questioned very much if the hon. member could find an instance where so extended a notice had been given.

MR. RASON: The last Supply Bill he (Mr. Rason) introduced was before the House for nearly a fortnight, he thought.

THE TREASURER: There were exceptional circumstances at the beginning of a financial year. It would not be to the advantage of the Treasurer to ask for supply needlessly. To ask for supply was one of the unpleasant duties of a Treasurer's lot. If the hon. member contended that there was any impropriety in the matter of expenditure, he (the Treasurer) would be quite prepared to meet, discuss, and he hoped disprove such a contention. In regard to the degree of urgency, we had not only to secure the passage of the Bill through this Chamber, but also before supply was available secure the passage of the measure through another place, and to get His Excellency's assent. Whilst regretting it had been necessary for him to make application for supply on a second occasion—he thought this was the second occasion on which he had applied—[**MR. RASON:** The third]—he would point out that had he on the last occasion followed the example of his friend opposite, and asked for just double the amount he did, he would not have needed to come down to the House and ask for supply on the present occasion.

MR. RASON: The hon. member had asked for half as much again.

THE TREASURER: Oh no. The first Supply Bill put through was one introduced by the hon. member, which proposed to appropriate £1,000,000. As yet he (the Treasurer) had only asked for amounts of £500,000 and £250,000, therefore the hon. member would see the difference between his (the Treasurer's) modesty and the hon. member's—what should he call it? [Laughter.] He trusted the hon. member would recognise the fact that he would not have come forward with this Bill asking for supply, and would not have asked for a suspension of the Standing Orders, had it not been necessary. Until a week ago he was hopeful it would be unnecessary for him to again ask for supply before the Estimates were passed.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Title, Preamble—agreed to.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

LICENSING ACT SUSPENSION BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

WITNESS DRAYTON, RELEASE FROM PRISON TO BE CONSIDERED.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): It will be remembered that a few weeks ago there occurred a novel event in the history of this Parliament—the refusal of a witness to be sworn before a select committee. It was then thought desirable—in fact there was no other possible course for this Parliament to adopt in order to assert its authority—to imprison the person in question. The one and only object of the resolution then passed was to vindicate the authority of Parliament; to show the country that in matters of this kind Parliament was supreme. I move:—

1. That the authority of Parliament in the matter of John Drayton has been fully vindicated. 2. That this being the first offence of its kind, the great power of Parliament does not need to be enforced to exact the full penalty. 3. That it would be a merciful act on the part of this House to request the leader of the House and the leader of the Opposition to

consult with the hon. the Speaker, with a view to the release of the said John Drayton.

The motion explains itself. For many days past I have been actuated by a desire to bring this before the House, feeling that the introduction of the new prison regulations has practically placed the man in question in solitary confinement, and that Parliament did not intend those regulations to apply to him. In speaking of the regulations I admit that the Government did their simple duty by making regulations for a new class of prisoner. That must needs be done. We must have regulations to govern prison life. But such regulations having come into force after John Drayton had been in prison for a fortnight or so, the passing of the regulations will look to the outside world as if Parliament wished to increase the punishment inflicted on Drayton. Nobody in this Parliament ever dreamt of so doing; and I am certain that the Government in passing the regulations had no such intention. I cannot imagine anyone in this parliament considering the personality of Drayton as being involved with Parliamentary dignity. What is our object? Must we exact the punishment in its full measure? Must the great power of Parliament, our undoubted authority over the liberty of the subject, be used to exact the full penalty from a man who, after all said and done, may have thought and may still think that he was fighting for the privileges of the fourth estate? At the time I strongly supported the action of Parliament. I have been for 11 years in this Parliament, and am as fully cognisant of its privileges and its dignity as is any other member in this Chamber. None has been more willing than I to defend these at all times and places. But I am cognisant also of the insignificance of the offender and his offence. We have heard to-day from the leader of the Opposition—and he does not speak without knowing what he means, having his party behind him—that there is no chance of our proroguing before Christmas; and I say it would be graceful on the part of this Parliament to ask the hon. the Speaker and the leader of the House—who after all is only our mouthpiece, whose hands are tied—to consult together; and if anyone wishes to add the leader of the Opposi-

tion, none will be more pleased than I, because I think he ought to be, and I believe he always has been, consulted in the matter. I am simply naming the leader of the House to cover the whole House, none knowing better than the leader of the Opposition that I fully appreciate his position as being in matters of this kind second only to the Premier. I think we shall lose nothing, even if the released man vaunts that Parliament has had to let him go. What does Parliament care? The power of Parliament has been vindicated. Enough said, enough done. As to the fines, I do not think this country will worry much about whether Mr. Drayton is compelled to pay a few pounds. That matter is too petty for consideration. I make a formal motion so that the Speaker, the leader of the House, and the leader of the Opposition may confer. This is no mandate of Parliament, no direction that Drayton shall be released; but merely that the House shall be informed whether it has the power to release him. I maintain it has; but after consultation with the hon. the Speaker, I find he holds that a motion which is a direct mandate to release Drayton cannot be passed. With due respect I hold an entirely different view; but in order that Mr. Speaker be consulted in the matter, I move that the gentlemen mentioned consult together with a view to the release of John Drayton. I take the view that the power that imprisons can set free. No matter how many resolutions were passed by this Parliament, we shall not stultify them by passing a resolution to release Drayton. No man is imprisoned by any court which cannot set him free. This question is not personal to any member of the House. We must not mix our personalities with Parliament. We are but passing flies on the great parliamentary machine. But I say that whatever was necessary has been done. A lesson has been taught. I hope the like will never occur again; and I think Parliament should be magnanimous in its power, remembering the old saying that

The quality of mercy is not strained.

MR. SPEAKER: As to this matter, I have already been consulted. The terms of the resolutions previously passed appear to me to create a difficulty which

at the moment I do not see my way to overcome. The resolution in pursuance of which Drayton was committed orders that John Drayton be imprisoned in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms in the gaol at Fremantle "until such fine has been paid or until the end of the now existing session, whichever event shall first happen." This clearly lays down that Drayton must be imprisoned until the end of the existing session, or until the fine shall be paid. Without rescinding the resolution already passed, we cannot pass a farther resolution dealing with the matter. The constitutional method is, before passing a resolution altering a resolution already passed, to rescind the former resolution. It is sometimes necessary to rescind even Bills which have passed through all their stages but have not been assented to. If we now wish to release Drayton before the end of the existing session or before the fine has been paid, then, so far as I have been able to discover, the only method is to rescind the former resolution; and if we rescind that resolution, we shall render our previous action illegal. That is the constitutional difficulty; but if it be the desire of the House, the difficulty may possibly be overcome.

MR. MORAN: My motion is not for the release of John Drayton. It suggests that Mr. Speaker and the leader of the House shall inquire into the point which you, Mr. Speaker, have raised. With great respect, I feel satisfied it would be an absurdity if Parliament had not under such conditions the power of an ordinary court to release a man from prison. I am satisfied that such power exists; for this session might go on indefinitely, and Drayton might be unable to pay the fine. Is it contemplated that his imprisonment should in that event be so unduly long? In deference to your ruling, sir, I suggest that you consult with the leaders of the House, and that the House be informed of the result. My motion neither commands nor suggests that the House wishes Drayton to be released. It is a motion for inquiry merely, with a view to his release.

MR. A. A. HORAN (Yilgarn): As the person who was largely responsible for setting in motion the machinery of Parliament in order to vindicate the dignity of this House, I have pleasure in

supporting the motion. I should like the mover and other members to support my statement that we are not taking this action with a view to personal advertisement, but because we feel, notwithstanding the abuse which may be heaped upon us by certain sections of the Press, no matter how virulent, how false, and how unjust their attacks may be we can rise superior to them and say that the House, having vindicated its dignity, does not desire to go any farther. I do not think punishment is intended to give pain to the offender, but rather to prevent other people from committing similar offences. Parliament has in this case vindicated itself with regard to Mr. Drayton, or the person generally known by the name of Drayton. There is no need to go farther. It is no pleasure to me or to other members to know that this person is now languishing in prison at Fremantle. It will give me great pleasure if Mr. Speaker, the Premier, and the leader of the Opposition confer together to ascertain by what means we may secure Drayton's release.

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish): I feel some degree of doubt as to what action I shall take in regard to this motion. The member for Guildford will not mind if I state that some little time ago he communicated with me, and suggested that I might move in the direction of asking the House to sanction the release of Mr. Drayton; and I replied to the effect that, in my opinion, the preliminary should be that Mr. Drayton should submit, by petition, to the will of Parliament. I have been all along willing and anxious to facilitate his release, though personally I have no feeling whatever in regard to the case. I have a desire only to see that Parliament is respected, and to see that its committees receive reasonable respect and assistance from citizens generally in carrying out the duties this House has imposed on them. Farther than that, I have no feeling whatever in regard to this matter; and had any petition been presented to this House concerning the release of Drayton weeks ago, I should have been happy indeed to have done my best to secure the granting of the petition. It seems to me it is altogether a matter for this House to decide the proper course to adopt in regard to a case like this. I

do not think any member has ever desired or does desire to punish any individual whatever; I do not think any member has any feeling one way or the other in regard to this case. It is true that certain regulations have been made by the Government in regard to first-class misdemeanants. This, I believe, is the first instance in which there has been a first-class misdemeanant incarcerated in Western Australia; and when the event happened, it came within the knowledge of the Government through the representations of the prison officers that there were no regulations whatever dealing with that class of offender, and the question arose as to what regulations should be adopted. It was certainly necessary that some should be adopted. In dealing with this matter the Government looked into the question of the regulations in force in the mother country, and adopted them without alteration, without either improving them on the one hand or interfering with them in the other direction. I think the Government took a perfectly right and proper and necessary course in adopting some regulations. Whether these were proper regulations, or whether we should have drawn up another scale of regulations from our own ideas, is another question. I looked carefully into the nature of the regulations before I agreed to them, and the Government consulted with the legal advisers of the Crown in regard to their fitness. It has been contended that Parliament never intended these regulations should apply in this instance; but in reply to that contention, I can only say that on the same line of argument it would be necessary to order a general gaol delivery before any alteration is made in prison regulations at any time. It might be argued that it was never intended new regulations should be made during the time of the incarceration of any particular individual, or that while a prisoner was incarcerated it was not right for the Governor-in-Council to make regulations not previously in existence affecting the control of that particular prisoner; but we recognise at once it is a somewhat futile argument. I am not concerned in it, except to show that the Government took the very proper course and very necessary course of adopting regulations which, so far, have not been

challenged, as far as I am aware. I have not seen in the Press, nor have I heard anything in this House or outside of it, in the direction of criticising the precise form and character of these regulations. In regard to this particular man, I recognise that the House has full power with respect to the method in which it will deal with the case. The motion is somewhat indefinite. It provides that the Speaker and the leader of the Opposition and myself shall confer in regard to this matter. I shall always be happy to confer with the hon. the Speaker and my friend the member for Guildford on this or any other subject, and I do not think I need offer any objection to the terms in which the motion is cast. I simply ask members, in dealing with the motion, to consider whether we should not expect, before taking any definite action, that the man affected should address himself to the House in the shape of a petition.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): It is true that I approached the Premier in respect to Mr. Drayton. Members will, I am sure, realise that having been so many years in the service of Western Australia, I have the dignity of Parliament as near to me as any other member; but thinking over this Drayton episode, it has appeared to me that the honour of Parliament and the privileges of Parliament have been sufficiently upheld, and that Drayton ought to be regarded as a political prisoner. He has been committed to prison for contempt of Parliament. I at first thought that Mr. Drayton should express regret for the action he took—a most foolish, misguided action, for which there could be no excuse, in my eyes; but when we reflect coolly and calmly over his action, we must realise that he refused to give evidence on a certain ground which he thought he was justified in taking. If he really did honestly consider himself justified in taking that action, it is, after all, rather hard to say “You shall be kept in prison until you admit that you are wrong.” That is practically what asking Drayton to petition this House for his release amounts to; and it seems to me that to some extent we unwittingly did an injustice to Drayton when we introduced regulations that had not existed before. There is no blame attachable to the Government in this matter. I do not insinuate that

any blame does attach to the Government; but when a prisoner, especially a political prisoner, is confined in a prison, we have, in my opinion, upon reflection, no right to alter for the worse the conditions that existed when he was confined, or to alter his surroundings in any respect. If we follow the practice in regard to any other prisoner, when there is an alteration it is an alteration for the better. Never are prisoners' surroundings altered for the worse, unless a prisoner has mis-conducted himself in prison. There were special circumstances in this case, it is true. Of course it is possible for myself and for all of us to be exceedingly wise after the event. I think myself now that we have made a mistake in fixing the sustenance charge at £2 2s. a day, though I believe the Standing Orders provide for that charge. If there are to be more cases of this kind, I submit it will be wise for us to alter the Standing Orders. If we charge a man two guineas a day sustenance fee, no matter whether he pays it or not, the man is entitled to two guineas' worth, and Drayton was committed under these circumstances, being told that he would be charged two guineas for sustenance fee. Manifestly, Drayton was entitled to two guineas' worth.

DR. ELLIS: It is detention fee, including sustenance.

MR. RASON: Sustenance is really what it amounts to. I shall be glad to consult with Mr. Speaker and the leader of the House in conference on this matter; but it is not much good meeting in conference to express individual views on the subject, unless to some extent we have the feeling of the House, and know what the House wishes to do.

MR. MORAN: The resolution is very clear, "that the dignity of Parliament is vindicated."

MR. RASON: This conference is to meet with a view of finding some means for the release of Drayton. That being so, the issue is clear; and although I hold myself that there should be some petition before Parliament takes action, if not by Mr. Drayton by someone else on his behalf, now I think we have some movement in that direction, and we may be justified in moving in the direction indicated by the member for West Perth.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): I cannot help thinking that the motion and

the remarks of the member for Guildford have somewhat confused the issue. I understand that this man Drayton constituted himself a judge, and that he maintains that position. Parliament says, "You have no right to make yourself a judge, and by so doing you have committed contempt." As long as a man maintains that position I do not think that the judgment of Parliament is satisfied until the term of punishment is finished. It would be a very simple thing for a man in Drayton's position to say, "I see I made a mistake, and I regret I did." That is all Parliament wants; but, so far as I understand it, the position is that the man says, "I made myself a judge, and I maintain I was right in so doing." Therefore, if we move to reduce the penalty, we pass censure upon Parliament itself by saying that we exercised a wrong judgment, or made an error of judgment in the award of punishment. That is how it appears to me, and I cannot help thinking it.

MR. MORAN: Does that apply to every prisoner who has a life sentence removed?

MR. HARPER: This is not a matter of a life sentence. It is a position in which Parliament has measured out a penalty for a deed.

MR. MORAN: And wants its "pound of flesh."

MR. HARPER: If we admit a mistake, there is a simpler way out of it than that proposed.

MR. MORAN: Why should we admit a mistake?

MR. HARPER: The resolution admits it by saying that Parliament is sufficiently vindicated by having its judgment scouted, and that its penalty has run sufficiently long to satisfy Parliament's decision. Once we take that position, we say that Parliament gave too long a sentence. If that is the opinion of the House, there is a much simpler way than that proposed, and that is by paying the fees out of the State funds and releasing the man. The position has not altered so far as the virtue of the case goes. The man persists that he was quite right in constituting himself a judge. If he expressed regret for his action, there would be ample ground for Parliament extending its leniency, but for Parliament to say by resolution that it had made a mistake and had awarded a sentence which had not

been justified does not maintain the dignity of Parliament. As far as the proposition, that there shall be a conference between Mr. Speaker and the leader on either side of the House, is concerned it does not appear to be a very practical one. It is throwing on those members the responsibility of indicating the will of Parliament, which Parliament should do itself. It appears that these members cannot take any definite action, only recommend to the House. Any recommendation that should be made to the House should be made on the floor of the House after debate and not by private discussion. These members will meet in secret conclave and discuss the question. I know of no precedent on this matter. The question should be decided in the House, and if it is decided that the House has done wrong, it should be done in open Parliament and not in private conclave. We can all realise the desire of those who have put forward this motion to release the man from an unpleasant position; but while that man contends that he is right and Parliament wrong, practically we are at a deadlock if we take the matter in that way. I cannot see how Parliament can alter its decision without some act on the part of the sufferer, by expressing contrition.

DR. ELLIS (Coolgardie): In dealing with this question there are two or three phases of considerable importance, and the first phase is in regard to rescinding a resolution, which seems to me to be a wrong move. Mr. Drayton is practically imprisoned under the Parliamentary Privileges Act, an Act which no resolution of the House or any Standing Order of the House can in any way override. An Act of Parliament is superior to any Standing Order or resolution of the House, and the Act of Parliament distinctly states that he shall remain incarcerated.

MR. MORAN: The resolution says that.

DR. ELLIS: I am dealing with the Act.

MR. MORAN: He could not have been imprisoned without a resolution.

DR. ELLIS: I am aware of that fact, but he is imprisoned according to a resolution passed in accordance with the Act. The statement in the Act becomes of supreme importance when considering the result. The Act says:—

Each House of the said Parliament is hereby empowered to punish in a summary manner

as for contempt by fine according to the Standing Orders of either House, and in the event of such fine not being immediately paid, by imprisonment in the custody of its own officer, in such place within the colony as the House may direct, until such fine shall have been paid, or until the end of the then existing session or any portion thereof.

It clearly states under the Act what is the procedure; consequently there is only one conceivable way of releasing Mr. Drayton, and that is by the House paying the fine and all charges in connection with his imprisonment.

MR. RASON: Or any portion thereof.

DR. ELLIS: It says:—

Until the end of the then existing session or any portion thereof.

The words "portion thereof" mean portion of the session, because the imprisonment occurs during the session. That is where the term "portion thereof" comes in. I am reading from page 46 of the Parliamentary Privileges Act, and as I read the Act the only conceivable way of releasing Mr. Drayton is by paying the fine for him; and that should be done by resolution of the House that the fine be paid, when a discussion on the whole matter will come on. I agree there is a good deal in the view held by the Premier, that is that Mr. Drayton has not consented to be judged by the House or purged his contempt in the manner open to him. It is a matter for consideration whether it is desirable to release him. Personally, I think it is desirable for two or three reasons; and one is, that this is the first time that such a thing has occurred. I believe Mr. Drayton himself did not think the House had the requisite power to imprison him.

MR. BOLTON: That did not excuse him.

DR. ELLIS: I am not excusing him. The First Offenders Act does not excuse a man. Mr. Drayton may have been labouring under a mistake. I hold that very keenly, for I know at the present time many people do not understand what the offence was. They still think we were trying to infringe the privileges of the Press. We were doing nothing of the kind. Mr. Drayton, or the newspaper with which he was connected, made certain charges against certain members of the House. This House deemed it desirable to appoint a select committee to

inquire into the charges. The select committee naturally and rightly summoned before them the man who was in authority and responsible for the publication of those charges. Mr. Drayton did not wait to see what questions were to be asked him, but refused to give any evidence whatever, and therein made the mistake. He would have been acting within his rights and within the privileges of the Press—which I myself would most certainly do all I could to protect—if he had consented to be sworn and taken advantage of the sections of the Act concerning privilege, and saved himself from answering any question that he wished. Suppose the committee had not summoned Mr. Drayton, what would have been the natural inference? That we refused to call anyone who could bring legitimate evidence before us. That would have clearly altered our position. To refuse to call such a person who made such charges would have been a greater dereliction of duty on our part than any refusal on the part of the witness to give evidence; therefore we were bound to summon Mr. Drayton, and he was bound to be sworn and give such evidence as did not interfere with the privileges of his calling. As to the privileges of his calling, that is a matter very dear to myself, because in medicine the privileges of our calling often come into conflict with the administration of justice. I wish to clear up certain views held universally in this State, opinions which I hear every week when I return to the fields. Mr. Drayton's action was absolutely wrong even on his own grounds, and the stand he took up that we were in any way trying to infringe privileges that his conscience or the custom of newspapers prevented him from divulging. When he was called to give evidence he adopted an attitude that we had no right to call him and he refused to be sworn. He committed that mistake, misinformed as he was. I am not sure whether he thought he was vindicating the privileges of the Press in what he was doing, but he was doing nothing of the kind. He was vindicating the absurdity of his own action. Mr. Drayton, when before the committee, could have pleaded privilege, and refused to answer certain questions. There is another point that comes up, and it is a matter which ought to be

seriously considered when taking the whole question into consideration. Under the Standing Order on which we acted the period of custody is put at 14 days, and the 14 days have elapsed. The Privileges Act says the punishment must be in accordance with the Standing Orders.

THE PREMIER : The fine, not the imprisonment, must be in accordance.

DR. ELLIS : I want to get at where the difficulty comes in. The imprisonment is under the Act, and the fine is under the Standing Orders, but the same Standing Order which dictates the amount of the fine puts 14 days as the period of imprisonment.

THE PREMIER : For a different offence altogether.

DR. ELLIS : It says, "in default of immediate payment to be imprisoned for 14 days."

THE PREMIER : That is a member or other person.

DR. ELLIS : I admit the Premier was a little skilful in trying to put me off the track. Any member or other person guilty of contempt may on resolution of the Assembly be fined in a penalty not exceeding £50.

THE PREMIER : But the contempt is different in the preceding Standing Order. It is a different contempt altogether.

DR. ELLIS : The Standing Order says :—

In default of immediate payment, be committed by warrant under the hand of the Speaker, for a period not exceeding 14 days, to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

What I wish to point out is that Drayton was committed under the Privileges Act, and the fine is inflicted under the Standing Order. This was the Standing Order which was quoted when we had to change the fine from £100 to £50. Therefore it was under this Standing Order the fine was imposed. I quite hold that he was imprisoned rightly, even with the Standing Order as it is, because it says under Section 78 that he must pay the two guineas a day. That I may inform the leader of the Opposition is not for sustenance; as he wishes to imagine he is going to have the luxuries of Australia immediately placed at his disposal.

MR. RASON : I do not want such attention.

DR. ELLIS: I am glad he does not. One would imagine a sum of two guineas a day for maintenance sufficient for a gourmand. The amount put here is, "for each day's detention," and then, in brackets, "including sustenance." That means he is not to feed himself, but the two guineas a day is for detention, and sustenance is an after-thought. It is that two guineas a day which keeps him there practically under the Standing Order, though if you held on the Act it would not be so. Consequently you have a considerable number of conflicting interests, and I think the matter is one which can fairly be left to those who have been suggested in the motion to favourably consider this question. It is a case of a first offender as far as this matter is concerned, and he thought at the time, I am quite convinced, that there was no power to do what has been done. We know there was one house in Australia which had not the power, and I am inclined to think he looked upon that as a precedent. I think this House will not be lowering its dignity or taking away the powers of its parliamentary position if on the one occasion it adds a little mercy to the justice it already has imposed.

MR. F. CONNOR (Kimberley): In supporting the motion of the member for West Perth, I think members who go back a little while in the history of Parliament will not accuse me of being too tender in my regard for the members of the "fourth estate." I notice that the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) is not paying any attention to my remarks. I would mention in that regard that if the Premier will cast his memory back to a debate in this House in 1901 in reference to a matter connected with the Press when a Bill was before this House, I am sure he will remember that I then expressed an opinion that undue punishment should not be given to anybody, even if a reporter. I have seen the gentleman in question within the last week, and I have no hesitation in telling members he is not in any defiant mood.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Let him apologise, then.

MR. CONNOR: I do not think he has any right to apologise.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: He ought to express his regret.

MR. CONNOR: I do not think an apology is necessary. If the law says a man is to be fined £5 or suffer imprisonment for 24 hours, and the man undergoes that punishment, I think he has purged the offence. And I ask members of this House whether they want to be so vindictive as to hold that man in durance vile because he made a mistake? Will members tell me this man is a felon? I say he is not, but we are treating him as a felon. Perhaps it will come somewhat strangely from me as having been abused by every paper in this State in reference to a matter somewhat the same as this, only more so personally. I think it is disgraceful if that is the position we are in. Suppose for example this House does not rise for three months, are members to say he shall remain there all through the summer and be kept away from his young family? He has to support a young family. [MEMBER: And his expected wife]. I think it is hardly fair to bring that phase of the question into the argument, although it ought to appeal to members of this House, particularly some members holding positions on the Treasury benches. Drayton says: "I have committed an offence, but I have been sufficiently punished for it." Let us ask ourselves, has he been sufficiently punished for it? Has a month in gaol not been sufficient for what he has done? If that is not sufficient punishment for what he has done, it is time that the Act under which he is incarcerated at present should be altered, and that Standing Orders should be provided so that such a thing as this should not occur again. I hold it was not the intention of the House that this man should be so long in gaol, when the resolution was passed which committed him to gaol. Supposing a man struck or assaulted a member of this House, he would be brought before the police magistrate, and surely the offence would be quite as serious as that for which Drayton has been committed. What would one's punishment be for that? Perhaps 24 hours in gaol; but it certainly would not be a month in gaol. The member for Guildford put the position fairly clearly when he said that after this man has put up with the punishment he has had to undergo, he himself would consider it an injustice for him to be asked to apologise

and to admit that he was doing wrong. I tell members it is not a question of justice, but it is a question of fact that he has been punished. He says: "I have been sufficiently punished. When I leave this place I will not harbour any resentment for the fact that I have been punished." He says that, although he considers the punishment was not just. I tell members he is not in any defiant mood. This man has really to look after his family; he has a young family waiting for him. Disagreements between members can easily be got over. There may be means whereby, without the dignity of the House being interfered with, that man could leave this week. I think it would be a cruel thing to keep him there longer. In my opinion 30 days' imprisonment has quite wiped out anything he has done. If it has not, I would recommend the Government be asked to institute laws whereby such a thing as this cannot occur again. I, and I am sure other members, would like to hear the member for Greenough on this question, because I know how feelingly and how forcibly he can speak upon it, for I have just had the pleasure of reading the speech he made from this (seat on the Government benches) position in the old House. I think it was from this very seat. I would like to hear him express his opinion upon it, and then if he has not changed from the time I have referred to he would be a very powerful pleader indeed in support of the contention that this man having been kept there for the length of time he has, that is quite sufficient punishment, and that some means should be found whereby he can be allowed to go home to his family again.

MR. P. J. LYNCH (Leonora): I am in thorough sympathy with the motion now before the House, because I believe that the resolution passed by the House some time ago would, if rigidly adhered to, mean the imprisonment of this man over Christmas time. I am sure that, notwithstanding our desire to maintain the authority of the House to its fullest extent, it is not the intention of the House to inflict any unnecessary hardship on this man. It has been mentioned in opposition to this proposal that it is necessary to make this

man come to an unqualified acknowledgment of his guilt before the ends of justice are fully served; but I would ask those who would urge such a suggestion, how would that be met suppose we were to have something in the nature of a long Parliament, and if when that time came this man Drayton emerged from prison just as fully convinced of the uprightness and justification of his action as when he entered prison? In such a case as that our efforts would be entirely futile, if we wanted to bring that man to a recognition of the unjustifiableness of the stand he has taken. I believe he would emerge from that prison still having the opinion that he was upholding the dignity and rights of the Press, by which he is earning his livelihood. I presume what is aimed at by the present motion is that we shall extend to this man a need of mercy, and when we look abroad in the world we find that is exercised in many States and in various quarters. It is often exercised simply when the person who for the time being is liable to punishment expresses some degree of contrition. It is also exercised on a birthday, burial day, or some other remarkable day in connection with prominent figures in society. The quality of mercy or rather the exercise of mercy is extended on such occasions. It is farther extended when those who exercise authority are fully satisfied that the ends of justice are completely met. I think in this instance we can rely upon it that there is justification for coming to the conclusion that this man should be released, that is to say, that the ends of justice and the authority of this Parliament have been fully vindicated; and it is only on that ground I am in favour of supporting this motion. I think that if members were to cast their minds to certain things which have been written in defence of the stand this man has taken, they might be slow to come to this motion, were they not of a broad disposition; but I believe that notwithstanding some violent things said about men being returned to this Chamber to do their duty to this State, they are above such petty consideration and can approach this subject in a calm and dispassionate way. I believe that "the quality of mercy is not strained." At this stage we recog-

nise that the authority of Parliament, the supreme power in this self-governing community, is fully vindicated ; and I hope the conference will find a way out of the difficulty, and that the power exercised to imprison this man will be exercised to release him. I have pleasure in supporting the motion, not because I fear any after-action that may be taken, but simply because this Parliament, now that it considers its authority fully vindicated, should set at liberty the man by whom that authority has been defied.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascogne) : It is quite unnecessary to speak at length on this subject. I reiterate with great pleasure the words of the mover in his opening speech, with which I am thoroughly in accord. I sincerely hope that the House will unanimously pass this motion, which simply asks three members of the House to consider this question in conference. We are not passing a motion to liberate this unfortunate man Drayton. He has committed an offence against the dignity of Parliament, for which offence we sent him to prison ; he has been in prison for a month, and that imprisonment should surely be a sufficient punishment. He was, we may say, unable to pay the fine inflicted ; consequently he had to go to gaol. Now, having been imprisoned, do we look to him to pay the fine ? I say, certainly not. We have punished him sufficiently ; and I am certain that the dignity of Parliament is fully vindicated without keeping him longer in gaol.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Greenough) : At this stage I think we may well allow Mr. Drayton to leave gaol. I do not regard him as an unfortunate man or as a martyr, but as a very foolish person. There is no doubt he took a wrong course when he refused to go before the select committee ; and his action is not one in which the liberties of the Press are in the slightest degree concerned. I take it that Drayton, when asked to go before the committee, should have gone. Then, had he been asked questions, say as to the identity of persons who supplied information to his paper, he should have refused to disclose the names of those persons. If the committee had then committed him for contempt, I know that in this House and out of it I should have done everything in my power on his behalf, and I think anyone else con-

nected with newspapers would have acted similarly. It is one of the sacred laws of journalism that information given to journals by an anonymous contributor shall not be disclosed. The editor publishes it, and takes the full responsibility for its publication. But Drayton did nothing of the kind. He was asked to go before the select committee. He did not know what questions were to be asked ; and without ascertaining whether the questions were proper or improper, he committed a serious contempt of Parliament by refusing to attend. However, he has been punished ; he has been in gaol, I understand, for about a month ; and though there can be no question that he should express regret, still in the circumstances Parliament will be acting neither wisely nor magnanimously if it insists on an apology. We have very clearly shown what may be expected by people who refuse to give evidence before a select committee. We have shown also that there would be no object in appointing select committees to ascertain the facts of certain cases if anyone were at liberty to flout the committees, and to refuse to give information which they were perfectly justified in seeking. I have much pleasure in supporting the other members who have suggested that the time has now arrived for allowing this man to go free.

MR. W. NELSON (Hannans) : Possibly no member of this House has better reason than I for cultivating a personal dislike of the subject of discussion ; but as a fact I feel absolutely no personal vindictiveness. [LABOUR MEMBER : Do not mention it.] It is only natural that the gentleman who interrupts should be amazed to find in others a quality which he does not possess. I have no reason to have any personal regard for the person in question. My own opinion was from the beginning that the select committee should not have asked for his evidence. [LABOUR MEMBER : What nonsense !] My opinion may have been wrong ; but it was my opinion, and I expressed it. I consider that his evidence could not but be the same kind of evidence already secured by that committee.

MR. HORAN : That in itself would have been evidence.

MR. NELSON : A mere repetition of evidence already taken.

LABOUR MEMBER: How do you know?

MR. NELSON: The committee examined all the leading parties to the case; secured all the first-hand evidence; and I was of opinion that Mr. Drayton, if examined, could tell us nothing new, and would merely try to make political capital out of the matter; and my prediction proved absolutely true.

MR. HORAN: Why were you not there?

MR. NELSON: I could not be there all the time. The meetings of the committee were too prolonged. It was sometimes a great weariness of the flesh to attend those meetings. Mr. Drayton undoubtedly did wrong; and when he did that wrong it was right to punish him. But taking all the facts into consideration, he has been adequately punished when a similar case was before the House. When the relations between the *Morning Herald* and the House were under discussion, I pointed out to the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) that the House was compelled, by the very nature of its Standing Orders, made not by us but before we were here, to do certain things which in all probability we should not have done voluntarily. And I believe that the punishment meted out to Mr. Drayton was not the punishment we should have meted out had it been in our power to decide the form which the punishment should take; that we, in other words, had to follow somewhat strictly old rules of which we did not altogether approve. According to the rules which guided the House, Mr. Drayton may remain in prison for the next six months. I think that punishment would be altogether disproportionate to the offence; and I am therefore earnestly of opinion that not only for the sake of Drayton but for the sake of the House we must and should be merciful. It is not only our duty to be just and merciful; it is also our duty that we should not even appear to be otherwise. As I think the punishment meted out to Drayton is adequate, I will support the motion.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): I desire to support the motion.

MR. MORAN (in reply as mover): I think the consensus of opinion in this House, except in one or two quarters, is that Drayton should be released. I do not want any misunderstanding as to the

nature of the motion. I am sure that the gentlemen named in it do not misunderstand it. I should have made a direct motion in a few and simple words, "That the honour of this Parliament has been vindicated, and that John Drayton be now released;" but Mr. Speaker would not have been able, according to his reading of the rules, to receive such a motion. I have therefore moved "That the authority of Parliament in the matter of John Drayton has been fully vindicated." We have authority to compel witnesses to answer questions put by select committees. The committee has reported; and it has been shown to the committee and the country that Parliament must have the questions put by committees answered. If another witness, after being sworn, declines to answer questions, we shall then deal with that phase of the question. It will remain to be seen whether an editor or anyone else has a right to refuse to supply any information required by a select committee. That phase of the question I decline to consider now. I do not wish to limit the powers of Parliament. But Drayton has been imprisoned. He is unable to pay the fine. What does the fine matter to this House? What does matter to this House is its authority over the residents of this State. That being so, I have asked the House to pass what is as nearly as possible a direct motion that Drayton be liberated. The leader of the Opposition knows that this motion if passed means that Drayton shall be released. The Premier is now absent; but by the motion we ask the hon. the Speaker and the leaders of the House to tell us what is the best way to go to work. I have no scruples. I disagree with Mr. Speaker's interpretation of his powers in this matter. This House must be supreme. Surely the House has a right to instruct its Sergeant-at-Arms to let Drayton go. If you wish to say you have not those powers, you may shelter yourself behind that fine plea.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member addressing that remark to me?

MR. MORAN: Every remark is addressed to you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member addressing the remark to myself personally?

MR. MORAN: I was not even thinking of you, sir, except in the absolutely impersonal capacity in which you preside. I hope your susceptibilities are not too tender on that question. All statements in this House are directed to the Chair; and no matter for whom they may be meant they must be directed to the Chair, otherwise the member speaking would be outside the Standing Orders. Therefore, to make the hon. the Speaker easy on this point, I may say that I am replying to the Premier's remarks about the indefiniteness of my motion. If anybody wished to say the motion was not definite enough, they might refuse to act immediately. What I expect, as mover of the motion, is that if these gentlemen agree, Drayton shall be released not later than to-morrow; and this House has given them the power, for the motion is only couched in its present form in deference to Mr. Speaker. I appreciate to the full the magnanimity of the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Horan) in his support of this motion. I specially appreciate support from that quarter for this motion which I hope will be carried unanimously.

Question put and passed.

[At a later stage of the sitting:]

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION—
PARDON.

MR. SPEAKER announced that the committee appointed by the House to consider the case of the witness Drayton now recommend that he be granted a free pardon.

THE PREMIER: In pursuance of the report just made, I beg to submit the following motion for the consideration of the House:—

That the report be adopted, and that in accordance therewith John Drayton, now in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms by order of this House, be granted a free pardon, and that Mr. Speaker do take action accordingly. I do not intend saying anything in submitting this proposal to the House, as the subject has already been discussed. I beg formally to move the motion I have read.

MR. H. GREGORY (in the absence of the leader of the Opposition): I second the motion.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): I wish simply to congratulate the leaders

of the House and Mr. Speaker upon the full and generous interpretation they have given to the evident wish of the House in connection with this matter; also to express a hope that the incident will be forgotten, and that we shall never again have occasion in the history of Western Australia to go through the same proceeding.

Question put and passed.

[Drayton released accordingly, on the next day.]

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1904-5.
IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from the previous day; MR. BATH in the Chair.

MINES DEPARTMENT (HON. R. HASTIE, Minister).

Generally, £31,436 (partly discussed):

[Discussion resumed on Mines Estimates generally.]

MR. RASON: In the discussion of the Mines Estimates, he had hoped to have the advantage of the presence of the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory), the late Minister for Mines; but owing to the temporary absence of the hon. member, the duty of criticising these estimates in a friendly spirit devolved upon him (Mr. Rason). The Minister was to be congratulated on his satisfactory statement of the progress of the mining industry, and on the satisfactory manner in which he had introduced the estimates for the department. Two statements appearing in the last report of the Mines Department in a few sentences showed the very satisfactory position in which the mining industry stood. The report said:—

The amount of ore raised per man employed during 1903 exceeds that for 1902 by 18·71 tons, and the ounces of gold produced per man employed above and below ground are increased by 16·23 ounces per man. The average value of the gold for the year being £3 12s. per ounce, over £479 worth of gold was produced for every man employed above and below ground, as against £427 for the previous year. This spoke volumes for the satisfactory condition of the industry. The next table in the Mines Department report showed that Western Australia produced 47·84 per cent. of the total output of Australasia; so that it only required an increase of 2·16 per cent. on the value of

the present output of gold from this State to equal the total value of the gold output of the Eastern States and New Zealand. Everything pointed to that increase being effected this year, which every member would be glad to realise. We found that there was an increase of £89,551 on the estimates of the Mines Department as against the estimates of last year. This was a very serious increase considering that the department had for years past received very liberal treatment. It was apparent the administrative cost of the department was becoming too great. The cost of administration in this department in 1900-1 was £59,695; in 1901-2 it was £55,238; in 1902-3 it was £50,834; in 1903-4 it was £49,224; and this year it was £51,516, an increase of £1,892 on the previous year. There did not appear to be this year any increases in salaries of officers receiving under £200. Last year out of 13 officers employed receiving under £100 per annum 12 received increases; and out of 33 receiving over £100 and under £200, 24 officers received increases; while out of 16 officers receiving over £200 and under £300, only seven received increases. This showed that the junior officers were considered and given advances rather than those receiving large salaries, the average advance to officers receiving under £100 being £18 15s., that to officers receiving over £100 being £14 3s. 4d., and that to officers receiving over £200 being £12 3s. The vote for State batteries showed an increase over last year's estimate, but not an increase on the amount actually expended. It was the policy of the member for Menzies, while Minister for Mines, to encourage the working of State batteries as far as possible. There was no work more calculated to benefit the mining industry and the prospector and the poor miner than the erection of State batteries wherever they could be justified. Unquestionably the batteries had done good work, having produced £1,021,718 worth of gold. The cost of cyaniding and crushing had been considerably reduced last year, and the Minister for Mines should see his way clear, if possible, to make still farther reductions. The great increase in the Mines Estimates undoubtedly was due to the provision for the purchase of ore at Phillips River, an item of £75,000 appearing for that pur-

pose. It had been absolutely necessary to erect a smelter at Phillips River. The past Government had not been anxious to go in for the smelter themselves, and had offered a bonus of £1,000 to anyone who would erect a smelter there, that offer being subsequently increased without result to £1,500. At last it had become necessary for the State to take the work in hand; but he (Mr. Rason) could not understand why it was necessary to provide so large a sum for the purchase of ore. The time was come when the word "advances" should be substituted for "purchase." Now that the smelter was erected, this money was only required for making advances against ore brought to the smelter. When speaking generally upon the Estimates he had pointed out that it was wrong to load the Estimates of revenue and expenditure by inserting items such as these.

MR. THOMAS: It had always been done. It was bad.

MR. RASON: These estimates showed an expenditure of £74,650, and a revenue of almost a corresponding amount. It was unduly swelling the revenue and expenditure. The position, to his mind, was that already the Government had an asset of £12,000 worth of copper. If another £25,000 was made available for the Mines Department to advance against copper brought to the smelters, that ought to be sufficient. We should treat this as a trading concern. Would any member say it would be impossible to run a smelter satisfactorily with an available capital of £37,000? Any man of business could do it, and would be glad indeed of the opportunity.

MR. THOMAS: One would like the chance.

MR. RASON: No doubt the hon. member would. The Minister for Mines was under the impression that such a course as had been suggested was not possible, as the Audit Act would prevent it. That was not the case. The Audit Act of last year was passed with the idea that there should be suspense accounts. Section 55 of the Audit Act provided that—

The Governor may direct that any sum voted by Parliament in connection with any undertaking or matter shall be carried to the credit of a suspense account, into and from which moneys receivable and payable in con-

nection with such undertaking or matter shall be paid and withdrawn.

If, therefore, Parliament would vote for the Minister for Mines, for advances against copper, £25,000, with that sum it would be possible to open a suspense account; and into that suspense account pay the sum of £12,000 already available, or which should be available directly for the copper previously bought: that would give a trading capital of some £40,000.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If the financial year began just now, that could be done.

MR. THOMAS: The smelter only started work about a week ago.

MR. RASON: Could the Minister inform members what advances had been made against copper since the smelter started, or whilst the smelter had been getting ready to start.

MR. THOMAS: It had been getting ready for the last two years.

MR. RASON: The amount up to a recent period had been included in the £12,000 advanced. If there had been considerable advances, it would be a question of only a short time when the profits of the copper so bought would be made available.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: How long, a few months?

MR. RASON: Say three months; at any rate, before the end of the financial year there would be profits from this copper. It was idle to say that with £37,000 or £40,000 capital, one could not satisfactorily run a smelter at Phillips River; and being of that opinion, when we reached the items on the Estimates he intended to move that the items be considerably reduced. He would not take that course if he thought it would, in any way, prejudice the operations at the Phillips River field; but he could not see how that could possibly affect the question. It would do this: if we could make a reduction in these items and a few more, we could avoid showing on the Estimates a deficit, and he was very anxious to avoid that, because with so many new schemes coming forward he recognised it would be impossible to borrow anything like the amount of money necessary to carry out the various works suggested, and he believed agreed upon, if we were to face the money market with an estimated deficit.

MR. THOMAS: We would get the money.

MR. RASON: When the items were reached he would move that considerable reductions be made. The next matter he wished to draw attention to was the Cue-Day Dawn water supply. The Estimates showed an expenditure of £17,060. There again the estimates of expenditure had been increased in a way that could easily have been avoided. The Minister last night referred to the Water Boards Act that he (Mr. Rason) introduced last year, and pointed out that that Act made it possible for works such as the Cue-Day Dawn water supply and similar works to be undertaken. That was quite true, but that Act provided also that municipalities or local authorities for whom works of that kind were undertaken should give debentures for the value of the work done, and could give debentures as the work proceeded. That was the course intended to be taken in this case. The Minister had said "if we could borrow the money." The Act provided that the Treasurer could advance the value of these debentures from the Savings Bank funds. It would be easily possible, therefore, for the municipalities of Cue and Day Dawn to issue debentures for the work as it proceeded, and for the debentures to be passed into the Treasury accounts, and thus avoid showing on the Estimates an expenditure of £17,060. It seemed to him in many respects in the Mines Department no care had been taken or no attempt made to avoid unduly swelling the Estimates, but rather that there had been an idea of showing as large an expenditure as possible. Whether that had been done with the idea of giving the public an inflated idea of the operations of the Mines Department, he did not know. The Government should treat trading concerns as trading concerns, and not increase either the revenue or the expenditure on the Estimates in the way that had been done this year and in the past. He would have to call attention to several items as we passed through Committee, but he would offer no factious opposition. He congratulated the Minister on the way in which he had introduced his Estimates.

MR. DIAMOND: The position of the accounts relating to the Phillips River

copper smelter emphasised the remarks made by him in the House from time to time as to keeping all trading accounts separate from the ordinary Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. That could not be too clearly laid before members, or be too often brought under notice. It was almost impossible to understand the accounts as placed before members, he was not blaming the present or any past Government. We had an arbitrary amount as expected revenue, but there was nothing to show how that amount had to be secured or where it was to be derived from. We were virtually told that a certain industry yielded so much, and we were told the revenue expected to meet the expenditure, or the expenditure to meet the revenue would amount to so much. The expenditure was detailed in a clearer manner than the revenue was. It would be far better if the House made it clear that in future members intended to have all trading accounts placed before the House in the same manner as an accountant would place the business of a private firm before his principals. The sale of ore should not be treated as revenue; it was not revenue. It was an expected result from the sale of certain products purchased by the Government for the public good and for the benefit of the industry. He had full sympathy with the idea of purchasing those ores, because it appeared to him, in this particular instance at any rate, that the amount of private capital was not forthcoming to develop the field. In future it should be clearly understood that we would expect the Government of the day to lay before members a clear business-like statement of the revenue and expenditure in connection with trading concerns.

MR. THOMAS: That was asked for last session, but the party to which the hon. member belonged refused it.

MR. DIAMOND: Nothing could be mentioned in the House without some member referring to party. This was not a matter of blame to the present Government or to any Government. We were told that the Government would derive £75,000 from this industry, but it was not said how it was expected that the amount would be derived. We were told to a certain limit how the expenditure was expected to be incurred; but if we had

a statement showing how many tons of ore were in hand, and how many tons were expected to be purchased, and what the average yield from the ore would be, that would be reasonable. It was a very simple thing to buy a large quantity of copper ore at a distant field averaging up to a certain amount per ton of copper and a yield of silver and gold. He had been told that there was a reasonable amount of silver and gold in the ore, so much so that he was led to believe it would pay for the cost of smelting, the freight, cartage, and realisation. But we ought to have these matters laid before members in detail. It could not be done under the existing system. He believed this would be a profitable transaction, but like all business transactions, it would never become profitable if it was laid before the House in the manner which had always obtained in the past.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.
At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. DIAMOND (continuing): Speaking farther on the Phillips River copper smelters as a business proposition, he would impress on members, especially on the Government, the necessity for instituting an entirely different system of keeping accounts, namely, a system showing cost, outlay, profit and loss for every commercial undertaking the Government had in hand. He understood that in the Treasury the rules were such that a department could not get its accounts kept under the same system as they would be kept in a commercial undertaking. He believed the Treasury had a certain system which must be adhered to. He understood that the Treasury system of bookkeeping prevented the officers from debiting these particular amounts and charges as they should be debited. For instance, the Gwalia Hotel and the particular proposition under notice should be debited with interest on the outlay of capital, also with depreciation and all items which would come under the cognizance of a commercial bookkeeper. He could in perhaps two hours show to a Treasury officer how these accounts could be kept without having an involved system of bookkeeping. Each account should be debited with outlay and credited with

income. It should be debited with the cost of maintenance percentage, interest on capital, and percentage for sinking fund, and various other charges which he understood as a rule were entirely omitted from accounts kept in connection with Government undertakings of this kind. This particular one had come under his notice during the last few days, and he saw very special reason why the account should be treated as he had endeavoured to show it should be. It would redound much to the credit of the present Treasurer if he would alter the existing system and institute a system of commercial bookkeeping for all commercial undertakings, including the railways. The railway account should be kept separate, the accounts of the Phillips River copper smelting should be kept separate, the accounts of crushing and cyaniding by public batteries should also be separate. Sometimes he was puzzled when he looked at Government accounts. We had at an early stage of the proceedings an amount set down as probable income, but there was nothing to show how it would be obtained. The income was set down at about £75,000, and the expenditure at £74,650, leaving a margin of £350, but it was probable that the balance would be on the other side. In this particular respect revenue was not revenue in the same sense as revenue derived say from the taxation of land—he did not think we had taxation of land here: he did not know why—but it was value for something bought by the Government, which they sold, and on which they realised a profit or loss. In regard to these smelters, if ore was smelted, and the proceeds consisted of so much matte, containing so much copper, so much silver, and so much gold, the proposition was far from being near its realisation. The product had to be sold. It had to go from the coast to Albany or Fremantle, whichever was the best port of shipment, then it had to be conveyed to London, or wherever the best market was likely to be, and then it had to be sold. If this valuable product was treated in the same way as many Government matters, there would be a loss. If certain agents were allowed, as they were in connection with another proposition, to take a little bit extra percentage which everybody did not know anything about,

say five per cent. on this sum of £75,000, there would be a loss to the State of £3,750. This, as a business concern, deserved the most careful consideration on the part of the Government, not only as to how ore was to be smelted under the most scientific and the cheapest principles, but what was to become of it after it was realised, that was after a profit had been obtained. There would be land carriage, freightage, wharfage, other freightage, and the charges of those gentlemen in London who conducted the operations relating to produce from various parts of the world. We ought to have an officer in the Agent General's office in London who would know what he was doing, and see that the State was getting the best value for the State's products. Produce going from Western Australia to the London market or any other great market virtually as the product of the State went to such market with a good name; but unfortunately some of our Australian produce had a bad name through the manipulation of agencies; for instance, Victorian butter and Victorian lamb. He trusted the Government of Western Australia would take care that we never fell into the hands of those sharks. It would be better, instead of utilising a gang of brokers, for the Government even to risk a little bit of loss at first, with a surety of eventually getting more profit, by controlling the business from start to finish. He looked upon the mines of Western Australia as being to a very great extent our future stand-by for many years, under careful management; and if the matter were dealt with in the way it deserved, these particular items with others would lead to a profit and not to a loss.

MR. A. E. THOMAS: On the Mines estimate generally he desired to make a few remarks, because he believed that in touching on various heads he might be able to give the Minister hints that might be advantageous to him in the working of the department. A point had been touched on which he would have preferred to deal with under the item; but since it had been alluded to by the leader of the Opposition and the member for South Fremantle, he thought he had better deal with it on the general question. Hereferred to copper smelting at Phillips River. For the benefit of members, he would

give a brief history of the movement for the erection of that smelter. Ever since he had represented the Dundas constituency, he, having investigated the capabilities of the Phillips River district, was convinced that it deserved some encouragement, and tried to get Government assistance for a copper smelter. After various interviews, the ex-Minister for Mines (Mr. Gregory) offered a bonus for the erection of a smelter. He (Mr. Thomas) tried to get the smelter erected on those terms, but failed. He then made in the House a motion affirming the desirability of extending the State battery system to the treating of the copper ores at Ravensthorpe. For the erection of the smelter he gave all possible credit to the ex-Minister, who listened to his representations, perused the papers, and induced his colleagues to assent to the request, though he (Mr. Thomas) was then sitting in Opposition and doing his utmost politically against the James Government. The smelter was erected; and he hoped the present Minister (Hon. R. Hastie) would be able to confirm the following statement. The position at Phillips River was not too satisfactory. To get to the bottom of the matter he (Mr. Thomas) had consulted the ex-Minister and had many interviews with the present Minister, with the result that Mr. Klug was recently sent to the district to make a full investigation. To assist the inquiry he (Mr. Thomas) carefully avoided allowing anyone in the district to know the full reasons for the presence of the expert. Having been in a sense responsible for the erection of the smelter, he felt obliged to defend his action, and to show new members that the enterprise was justified. After the examinations made by several experts in addition to Mr. Klug, there was no doubt of the wisdom of extending the public battery system to the copper industry. He agreed with the preceding speaker and the leader of the Opposition that it was wrong to include in the Mines estimates £75,000 as revenue from this copper-smelting business. It was wrong to put on the Estimates the income we expected to derive from our State batteries. But the same observation would apply to our railways. When the Government embarked on any commercial enterprise, it was wrong to

include in the public revenue the whole of the income from that enterprise. Such income should be passed to a suspense account; and instead of the Estimates including the whole of the anticipated revenue and expenditure, there should be proper balance-sheets at the end of the Estimates showing the profit or the loss on each trading concern. That would be infinitely better than the present system. The leader of the Opposition had shown by the Audit Act that such accounts could be opened and passed by the auditors. By the present system we seemed to an outsider the most heavily-taxed people on earth. But most people who perused our Estimates forgot that much of our revenue was capital temporarily embarked in trading concerns. He disagreed with the statement in the Estimates that £75,000 was required for a year's running of the smelter. Possibly during the whole 12 months there might be such a total out-going for the purchase of ore and for advances against ore brought to the smelter. But every business man knew there were returns from the treatment of the ore. Copper was being produced and sent home for sale. Now that the smelter was in full blast, £10,000 would be ample working capital. We had an income of £75,000 and an expenditure of £74,000 odd. As in a private business, all we needed was sufficient working capital. A man who had a turnover of £100,000 did not need a capital of that amount. On the contrary, £10,000 should suffice to run such a business.

MR. RASON: Anyhow, £25,000 would be ample.

MR. THOMAS: These trading concerns should not appear in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

MR. GREGORY: Last year, the cyanide treatment results were shown separately.

MR. THOMAS: Allocate a certain sum from revenue, as working capital for our trading concerns. As to State batteries, the Government might learn a lesson from Phillips River. The State batteries now crushed ore on a sliding scale, so much per ton according to the grade, making no stipulation as to where the ore came from. It was found at Phillips River that prospectors were stopeing the richest ore; and the ex-Minister made a regulation that no ore

should be purchased for the smelter unless it had been won from actual underground developments in the mines. The manager of the smelter was appointed an inspector to enforce that regulation. So should it be with our public batteries. Prospectors took up abandoned gold-mining claims, stoped out a little rich ore left by the former proprietors, took it to the public battery, abandoned the workings, and went elsewhere to repeat their performance. In the main, no serious development work had been undertaken by prospectors who raised ore for treatment at Government batteries. The gouging out the eyes of the mines, in lieu of solid and legitimate development work, had resulted in ready-made cemeteries throughout the goldfields, owing to the easy crushing terms granted to such prospectors by the State batteries. As at Phillips River, there ought to be a regulation that a certain proportion of the ore crushed by the State battery must represent actual development. Such regulation might at first be considered harsh by prospectors; but they, like the Ravens-thorpe copper-miners, would live to bless that regulation and to recognise its justice. He (Mr. Thomas) had time after time said that he believed in the establishment of schools of mines for the education of our growing youths in the technical subjects necessary to train them, not to work underground for £3 10s. a week, but to take the higher positions in the profession. While he had been in Parliament the Coolgardie School of Mines was established under the Mines Department, so that members knew we would provide a proper mining education under the control of the Minister for Mines; but it was afterwards thought fit to establish a school of mines at Kalgoorlie, and it was done. Now it was seen from these Estimates that the Coolgardie School of Mines no longer existed, and it was explained that, instead, there was a technical school at Coolgardie under the control of the Education Department. This was a matter upon which he felt strongly. Wherever there was a sufficient number of students coming forward, branch schools of mines should be established under the control of the Minister for Mines and not under the control of the Education Department. The late Minister for Mines (Mr. Gregory) would

agree that this had always been his (Mr. Thomas's) contention.

MR. GREGORY: The alteration was made by the last Government.

MR. THOMAS was making no charge, but was dealing, as he had always done with the Mines Estimates, purely from a non-party point of view. He simply objected to the school of mines being done away with at Coolgardie. No doubt the school was still there, not as a school of mines but as a technical school. There was a school of mines at Kalgoorlie, which was right; but we should have a branch school in each mining centre where there was a sufficient number of students to justify it, working in unison with the school of mines at Kalgoorlie. The system should not be to have a school of mines at Kalgoorlie and technical schools elsewhere. He cared not who was responsible for the change; it was a retrograde movement to abolish the school of mines at Coolgardie. Having had personal acquaintance with the State Mining Engineer and an opportunity of watching his work in Western Australia, being one of those who opposed the appointment, he now congratulated the late Minister for Mines on the acquisition the mining industry had got through the securing of the services of Mr. Montgomery. The salary (£800) was not sufficient to properly and adequately remunerate that gentleman for the work he was doing.

MR. GREGORY: It was according to agreement.

MR. THOMAS: Yes; but he was prepared to recognise work with anyone, and he thought the splendid work Mr. Montgomery had done in connection with the mining industry entitled him to bigger consideration than was shown by the sum on the Estimates. We must also remember that, if we carried out the recommendations of the Boulder Deep Levels and Perseverance Commission, we might at any time be called upon to give a final report in connection with a mine or to have a Government sampling, and presumably the man who would conduct the work would be the State Mining Engineer, who was in receipt of a salary in some cases less than a quarter of the salary paid to other mining engineers in Western Australia. The Government should take into consideration the splendid work Mr. Montgomery

had done, and should see that it was more adequately remunerated. He (Mr. Thomas) thanked the member for Menzies for the work done in connection with the Norseman and Princess Royal water supply. The late Minister (Mr. Gregory) at his (Mr. Thomas's) invitation, after being informed regarding the district, visited it and, after due inquiries made by the State Mining Engineer as well as by himself (Mr. Gregory), was satisfied to announce that in all mining centres his aim and object was to grant facilities for water supply. Only £250 remained now to complete the scheme, and he (Mr. Thomas) desired to give credit to whom credit was due. The present Minister for Mines should take his remarks generally in connection with mining in the same spirit in which they were offered, the spirit of healthy criticism where necessary and healthy advice given by one who had the greatest possible interest in seeing that the mining industry in Western Australia was made the most of, seeing that it was the mainstay of the State. He hoped the Minister would recognise, though perhaps others might not, that his (Mr. Thomas's) apparent silence to people elsewhere regarding the recent steps taken at his request and with his full concurrence in connection with the Phillips River smelting works, was in the best interests of the smelting works and in the best interests of the district also.

MR. FRANK WILSON : The member for Menzies must be gratified at the remarks of the member for Dundas. No greater tribute could be paid to the hon. member's administrative ability than the eulogistic remarks of the member for Dundas regarding the work the member for Menzies had performed in the Mines Department. The hon. member's efforts during the term of his office were recognised, not only by those directly interested in the mining pursuits of our country, but also by those who were indirectly interested, inasmuch as their business callings brought them into close contact with the industry. Members must feel gratified at the optimistic remarks of the present Minister for Mines. One was pleased to listen to the Minister stating that the industry was on a fair road to increase, and that the number of leases taken up at present was

in excess of the number taken up 12 months ago. Recognising the immense area of our auriferous country, from Phillips River in the South to Kimberley in the North, we must admit that it only required people and capital to very largely increase our great industry, to the advantage not only of people with capital invested in the industry, but of people engaged in commercial pursuits. He hoped every effort would be made by Parliament in supporting the Minister; but it was absolutely necessary, in order to advance this great industry, to take every legitimate means to encourage prospecting. During the last two or three years it seemed that we had not had that number of prospectors out searching for new finds there formerly was, and it appeared that those who had gone out had been disheartened through finding no market for their discoveries. He (Mr. Wilson) was not prepared to suggest any detailed methods that might be adopted to put this matter right; but he hoped the Minister would put his department into going order and would bring his undoubted knowledge on this problem with a view to solving it. We must get the prospector out through the hundreds of miles of gold-bearing country that had not yet been scratched. A proper system of prospecting and proper inducements offered to capital to be invested in the industry would bring its advancement. It was regrettable that the remarks of the member for Dundas with regard to the prospectors were borne out. Prospectors were in the habit of taking the eyes out of their shows and not developing them in the majority of cases, and sooner or later they had to abandon their shows because they could not carry on without a large expenditure of capital. If we could not agree to settle all the petty jealousies between capital and labour, we could not look for a successful solution of the difficulty which was at present deterring the advance of the gold-mining industry. He hoped the prophecy of the four erstwhile Independent members regarding a progressive policy in regard to the North-West would be fulfilled, or that, at any rate, some proposal should be brought forward to give to the people who had been struggling in the Pilbarra district for so many years the ordinary

facilities of transit enjoyed on the Eastern Goldfields. He believed sufficient inducement offered, and there was no reason why some proposal for railway communication should not be brought before the House in the near future to connect the mineral districts of Pilbarra with the coast. There were vast mineral resources undeveloped in that district. There was gold and there was tin in large quantities.

MR. GREGORY: There were over 900 square miles of tin country.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Surely it was worthy of our attention. He had advocated year after year in the old Parliament a policy of this description, but it always seemed that the district was too far away, that this portion of our country was to some extent looked on as foreign. We had listened to reports from time to time suggesting that certain things should be done, but nothing had been done. It was the fault of the Government—not only of the last Government, but of every preceding Government. He was satisfied that not only would our gold-mining industry be brought to a successful issue on the Pilbarra fields, but on the Kimberley fields it would be brought to a profitable result for the State. He listened with interest to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in regard to the smelter at Phillips River. There was good cause for complaint as to the methods adopted in keeping the accounts, not only with regard to works of this description, but he might also say in regard to public batteries and all commercial institutions. The amount of capital necessary to carry on an industry or commercial pursuit depended entirely on the nature of the business embarked on and the methods of payment for the work done. It was a very poor business indeed that required a capital equal to the annual turnover. Most businesses were carried on with one-fourth, one-sixth, or one-tenth of the turnover. If there was not power in the Audit Act to enable a proper system of bookkeeping in connection with the Government trading concerns to be carried out, then we ought to make the necessary amendment. We ought to have each year a profit and loss account showing how the institutions had been carried on. We ought to have proper commercial balance-sheets, and proper

provision made for maintenance in that profit and loss account. Glancing through the figures, we had the bare outgoing and the bare incoming, the labour and material in each case. He did not see any provision made for depreciation. It was not possible to make provision on Estimates of this description, but if a proper system of bookkeeping was adopted we would not run any risks, but we should make provision for all matters that had to be provided for such as a private firm would provide when entering into pursuits of this description. We knew the Government were apt to overlook such items, they were apt to think “sufficient for the day is the evil thereof,” and as long as the Government showed a revenue of £5 for every £5 put out in labour and material, they thought they had made a good bargain; but that would not be considered sufficient in a commercial business. It was to be hoped the Minister would effect some alteration, so that the commercial enterprises could be put before the House in a proper commercial light. He indorsed the remarks of the leader of the Opposition with regard to the swelling of the deficit. It was rather unfortunate at the present time that we should show a deficit at all. We were about to embark on an extensive progressive policy, brought forward by the four erstwhile Independents, and adopted by the Government. The Premier said he viewed with sympathy the requirements of our northern districts. He had promised the member for Dundas that he would refer the question of the Norseman railway to some board yet to be created. The Premier also talked of putting out spur lines anywhere along the Great Southern railway in order, one supposed, to win to some extent the approbation and support of agricultural members on the Opposition cross-benches. The Premier also said that a dry dock would be constructed at Fremantle, and sewerage works would have to be commenced almost immediately, according to the Minister for Works. All these things totted up ran into several millions of money. When we had publicly stated through the Government of the day that we were going to embark on this progressive policy and build railways here, there, and everywhere—

a few were wanted in the South-Western districts as well as on the goldfields or adjoining the Great Southern Railway—it would have been better if we could have shown by legitimate means a revenue account at any rate that would have balanced our expenditure. The leader of the Opposition referred to an item of £17,000 for a water supply for Day Dawn, and pointed out that the late Government had intended that this and other municipal water supplies should be taken over by the municipalities and paid for by debentures. That was a very good scheme in many ways. It would not only reduce the deficit on the Estimates, but would also place the responsibility directly on the shoulders of those who ought to bear it. These were his views, and he hoped the Ministry would take the matters into consideration. We had an immense country in our charge to develop; we had a country which was undoubtedly rich: there was nothing wrong with it. The only thing that was wrong to his mind was that we had been timid in our administration in the past. This applied not only to the gold-mining industry, but to every industry in Western Australia. It showed a lack of confidence in ourselves.

DR. ELLIS: The hon. member wished to make amends.

MR. FRANK WILSON: It was about time the Labour Government made some amends, showed more confidence in the country, and pushed on the country to that prosperity and progress which it deserved.

MR. SCADDAN: Members on the Government side must be deeply disappointed that the hon. member did not conclude with a no-confidence motion. The hon. member had taken advantage of the Mines Department Estimates to say very little about mining but a great deal about policy. It was unfortunate that on every vote policy was discussed. When we were dealing with estimates of this description we should deal with them outside of party altogether. The mining industry did not depend on Labour politics, nor on the Opposition party being in power. The industry must go forward: it could not stand still. We had heard a good deal of talk while the agricultural shows were on, that the

mining industry was going down. He could assure the agricultural members that it was a long way from going down. No doubt it would come to an end, but he doubted whether the mining industry or the world would end first: he thought the world. He would like agricultural members to be in their places while the Mines estimates were being discussed. We were not here for the purpose of looking after one particular industry, but for the benefit of the whole State, and agricultural members should assist in discussing mining matters. We were prepared to hear agricultural members and give them assistance whenever possible. The progress of the agricultural industry depended on the mining industry. Had not the mining industry built up the agricultural industry? Where would the agricultural industry have been if it had not been for the stability of the goldfields? People would not have flocked here. We wanted our produce to come from as near home as possible. We wanted agricultural produce cheap so as to reduce the cost of the mining industry. The question as to all trading concerns being placed in separate balance-sheets should not be dealt with in this discussion at the length it had been to-night. We had heard the same discussion on nearly every vote. Now that members had expressed their opinions about the Phillips River field, we might go on with these estimates from a mining standpoint. Every member had contended that although the estimates showed an increase. That increase was not to such extent as some thought might have been the case had it not been for the purchase of ore at the Phillips River and the Cue-Day Dawn water supply. These things were not connected with the mining industry at all. Although the Cue-Day Dawn water supply was a necessity, it should not have been included in the Mines Department estimates. The work should have been paid for out of loan money, and the people whom it benefited should have had to pay for it. The people of Cue and Day Dawn were prepared to pay for their water supply the same as the people on the Eastern Goldfields were prepared to pay for their scheme. If the cost of the Eastern Goldfields water supply had been placed on the Mines estimates in the past, those

estimates would have been inflated, and we should have heard complaints in reference to that matter. We might this year have provided for the Cue and Day Dawn water supply out of loan moneys instead of out of the annual Estimates. With regard to the purchase of copper ore, the amount was large, but when we considered that this was a revenue-producing item, it did not matter very much whether it appeared here or on some other item. It was certainly a trading concern, and he hoped in future it would be kept separate from other trading concerns and other estimates. There were one or two items he briefly wished to touch on, one being the purchase of 5,000 copies of the *West Australian Mining Industry*. There were many ways in which money might better be expended to encourage mining probably than by sending out a lot of copies of this particular paper, simply because it was printed in the old country. The mining industry of Western Australia did not require a great deal of advertising, for it was known all over the world as probably the richest gold-mining centre in the whole world. People knew the resources of Western Australia so far as the gold-bearing qualities were concerned. Another item was that touched on by the member for Dundas, namely mining schools. The hon. member complained most bitterly because the Coolgardie schools had been closed and the one at Kalgoorlie extended. He (Mr. Scaddan) thought the time had arrived when the school at Kalgoorlie should be made a very up-to-date one. There was no reason why this school should not be in advance even of those in the Eastern States, which were second to none in the world. We had men in Australia who received their mining education in Australia, and who would compare favourably, if not more than favourably, with men who had come from America. We had on the Eastern Goldfields such men as Richard Hamilton, J. W. Sutherland, Roberts, and Moss, who had done more than all the American bosses who were shipped out here or likely to be. Was it necessary to have a commission to inquire into scandals on mines managed by these men? He thought not. Our Australian men would not be pulled about and led by the nose like Yankee bosses would.

In regard to the development of mining, there was a sum of £7,000 on these estimates. That amount appeared on the estimates last year, but only £2,147 was expended. We should as far as possible develop the outlying districts. We had many prospectors who had small shows, but found they could not continue because they had not the capital in hand. The State should assist these men to carry on until they struck something favourable. We had a report from the State Mining Engineer, who said that, under the Mining Development Act of 1902, it was very difficult to discriminate between applications for assistance. Under the Act assistance could only be given in cases where it could be proved that the concern was going to turn out successfully; but it was very hard to say when lending money that a mine would be successful. As that gentleman himself pointed out, it would not be necessary for prospectors and other owners of small shows to go to the Government for assistance if they were sure their undertakings would be successful, for in that case they would probably be able to borrow on better terms privately. We should take into consideration the advisability of so amending the Act as to leave it to the discretion of the State Mining Engineer what loans we could grant, exactly in the same way as was done in regard to the Agricultural Bank. Recently there had not been that amount of development which we should have expected. We had miles and miles of country yet to be opened up, and he hoped the Government would take into consideration the advisability of assisting people to hold their mines when once they had opened them up, so that they need not have to sell them to foreign companies. He could instance the Boorara mines. The owners complained bitterly that although they had spent thousands of pounds out of their pockets, immediately they began to get a return on their money, they had the dividend tax imposed on them. He did not think it was intended to strike at locally-owned companies to that extent; and he thought we might relieve them until they recouped themselves for the money they had spent. People in the State did not assist the mining industry to the extent they ought, and we had to go to foreign countries

mostly British capitalists to carry on the industry. Prospectors went out with the idea of finding a show, and floating it on the London market. Local men of capital should give more assistance to the industry to keep these shows in the country.

MR. GREGORY: Capitalists were frightened away by the Labour party.

MR. SCADDAN: Possibly; but he was afraid it was those bosses they sent out themselves who would be likely to frighten people away. If the mines were managed by Australians, there would be more stability in our mining industries than at present. The member for Menzies should be complimented on the manner in which he had advanced State batteries. There were one or two difficulties with regard to them. We found that State batteries could not be built in places where there were already public batteries. Those batteries should not be a bar to the building of State batteries. There were cases where people wished to crush a low-grade ore, but could not do so because the charges for crushing were so high, and then the Government came along and said they would subsidise those batteries so as to reduce the cost. We were there spending money, with no possible chance of income. It was desirable to crush at a decent price, and at the same time assist in producing revenue in the industry. Another matter was with regard to explosives. Last night he interjected that the Minister for Mines would do a certain amount of good if, while removing some magazines, he removed also a considerable amount of the explosives themselves. The hon. gentleman stated that the Commission which had been sitting at Kalgoorlie could not find any bad explosives. That statement seemed incorrect, because during the sitting of the Commission in Kalgoorlie an explosion occurred. The Minister for Mines was asked some questions in regard to that, and certain papers were laid on the table of the House which disclosed the fact the chief inspector of explosives had found, on visiting Kalgoorlie, no less than nine cases which he condemned and destroyed. What would have been the result had the chief inspector not visited Kalgoorlie? Would those nine cases have walked out and condemned themselves, or would they have been used in the mines?

THE MINISTER: The inspector paid visits to Kalgoorlie?

MR. SCADDAN: The Minister said that every case arriving in Western Australia had three plugs taken from it; but he had heard men who had been handling those explosives on shipboard state that nothing of the kind occurred. Those boxes were loaded on trucks and sent directly to Kalgoorlie.

THE MINISTER: Would the hon. member give the names of those men?

MR. SCADDAN: No. He was not foolish enough to give the names. He had received the statement, and he gave it to the Minister for what it was worth. There was a considerable amount of explosives used in the mines to the detriment of the men's health. There were bitter complaints continually about the class of explosives used. He (Mr. Scaddan) was not going to speak in favour of one brand against another, but only the best explosives ought to be allowed to be used in our mines. He hoped the Minister would see into the matter and provide that in the future explosives should be examined before they left the coast.

MR. LYNCH: As to what had been urged on both sides of the House in the matter of keeping separate accounts, and our crushing business being treated absolutely as a trading concern, he did not think there was very much advantage, except for the purpose of bookkeeping. In his opinion it would be almost impossible to work out with mathematical accuracy what was the effect of those trading concerns such as the Phillips River undertaking and the public battery system. One of the best credentials that could be found with regard to crushing facilities, etc., was that the system, both on the goldfields and in the Phillips River district, was run at a loss. If we remembered the great advantage this industry had brought to the State and the benefit it offered in the matter of private employment and in renewing the vigour of every industry in the State, no member in the Chamber would, he thought, begrudge the extra expenditure of some eight or nine thousand pounds above the sum expended last year. If the Estimates were clearly analysed, it would, he thought, be seen that this additional outlay was in respect to the

Phillips River and the supply of water at Day Dawn. In regard to the supply of water at Day Dawn, he would not be a party to saddling this vote with the cost of installing the water service there if the people on the Eastern Goldfields were to escape scot free from payment on capital for their service. That would be altogether unfair. While £89,000 was a very respectable increase in expenditure, the objection of the leader of the Opposition to this increase was regrettable. Vigorously to encourage goldmining was only to carry out the policy of the Forrest Ministry and of the capable ex-Minister for Mines (Mr. Gregory). "This industry would galvanise life into other industries of the State. But for goldmining we should not hear the ring of the woodman's axe, nor would the wilderness be peopled with agriculturists, nor would our cattle industry and our coastal industries be farther stimulated. The expenditure on the inspection of mines was £3,200, the same as last year's. In view of the expansion of the industry, the great depth some of our mines were now attaining, the difficulty of inspection, the new properties being opened up at such places as Black Range, and between Burtville and Erlstoun, on which properties inspection was daily becoming more necessary, a larger expenditure was now desirable; and this was recognised by the appointment of a new inspector for the Kalgoorlie district.

MR. GREGORY: Where he was needed.

MR. LYNCH: The Mines Development expenditure should include a provision for assistance to drain some lines of reef. A pumping plant would make payable many properties which, though valuable, were on the point of abandonment owing to difficulty with water. The vote for mining schools was increased, and we were rivalling that pushful country, America, which, notwithstanding all said to the contrary, was still sending to our shores some of the ablest men who could be put in charge of mining operations. A substantial increase in the vote should encourage our youths, if they had sufficient grit and application, to compete with men who travelled thousands of miles to take places which should be occupied by Australians.

MR. H. GREGORY regretted his absence from the House during the earlier portion of the discussion. When dealing with mining, we should as far as possible sink all party feeling, knowing how much depended upon the expansion of this great industry, to which all our other industries were subservient. He regretted the increased cost of administration this year. For the preceding three years there had been a continual reduction. The member for Sussex spoke of the need for developing the industry by assisting our own people, both prospectors and leaseholders. We must remember that we had not only gold, but copper, coal, tin, and many other minerals well worth developing, though the gold industry was the greatest. Our efforts should be redoubled. He disagreed with the remarks of the member for Sussex regarding the Pilbarra district. Only within the last few years was anything done there. During this and last year the Government Geologist had inspected the district so that we might have an expert report on its potentialities. The late Government provided Pilbarra with a State battery; and the district was peppered with wells from one end to the other. Speaking of goldmining generally, the results of the work done in the past were not wholly satisfactory. The Minister spoke of the large number of new leases taken up; but the number of gold-producing leases in 1902 was 1,101, while in 1903 we had only 1,105, or an increase of four. That increase was not what we might have expected after the assistance given to prospectors by our State batteries. These had produced over £1,000,000 worth of gold up to date; gold which but for that assistance would probably be lying dormant to-day. At Mulline, apart from the cyanide plant, the State battery had produced over £180,000 worth of gold. There the whole of the workings were owned locally. At Lennonville the State battery produced some £98,000 worth, nearly all belonging to prospectors. At Darlôt there were no companies but prospectors only, and the State battery produced £71,000 worth. At Mt. Ida—a small district far north of Menzies and 70 miles from civilisation—the State battery produced some £67,000 worth of gold; and in some four or five other places the batteries produced some

£50,000 worth. One would have thought that with all this gold raised by State crushing we should be able to point with pride to many gold-mines opened up by prospectors thus assisted. But in few cases could we point to any. The Golden Cone, Davyhurst, was largely assisted by State battery crushings, but the proprietary included a large number of wealthy leaseholders. The Lady Gladys at Mulline was doing good development work wholly through the assistance of the State battery. But these instances were too few; and something must be done by the State to promote development work. There were too many instances, as the member for Dundas pointed out, of prospectors scooping out a little earth, bringing it to the battery, collecting the proceeds, and clearing off to another district. But a special regulation would be unworkable. It would be impossible for the battery manager to inspect the whole field to ascertain whether the stone was raised from development workings or from stopes; nor should stoping be prevented after development work was carried out. When small parties got down from 150 to 250 feet, it was impossible for them to effect the development necessary to make a gold-mine. Sometimes they ran into sulphide lodes; at other times they were met by water and could not buy pumping machinery: hence they were unable to carry on development which would reflect credit on the State battery system and would benefit themselves. Some time ago he asked if it would not be well to have a State stock exchange to report on mines, and to induce our own people to invest in mining. Metropolitan and farming people must recognise that the whole of our prosperity was due to mining; that it was now impossible to get foreign capital here for investment in mines; and that we should try some method of inducing our own people to seek such investments. In the early days of goldmining the West Australian was only too eager to invest. Probably he had been bitten too often, and was now somewhat shy. Not so in Victoria, where the greater part of the mining industry was conducted by Victorians, always willing to invest in any decent show. Here, apparently, mining had such a bad name that our own people could not be induced to come

to its assistance. They should cultivate a better spirit; but the Government should on the other hand let them understand that they would get a fair deal for their money. It was no use mincing matters. There was too much robbery in the past; too many bogus propositions unloaded on the public, swindle after swindle. Whether by State reports on mines or by the establishment of a State stock exchange, we must try to devise some system for safeguarding investors in our mines. He had always held that we must encourage capital and let capitalists know that they would have a fair deal, but that in order to have permanent prosperity we should see that some of the dividends were paid amongst our own people. We could also assist mining in the administration of the public batteries. Though he had had time as Minister to bring the public battery system to a state of perfection, he thought more could be done. When he first took charge of the Mines Department, we were suffering a loss on the public batteries; but by a reduction of 20 per cent. in the charges for treating ore and sands, a small profit was arrived at sufficient to cover repairs to plant. Batteries were now doing well, but they should be doing better. The charge of 10s. for treating sands was too high. In April last he had recommended Cabinet to reduce the charge to 8s. per ton, but Mr. James had thought it inadvisable to make a public announcement of such a reduction on the eve of the general elections, and the minute had been withdrawn. The present Minister should give this suggestion serious consideration; but no reduction could be made unless economies were effected. Batteries should be made to pay their way, but not to pay interest or sinking fund; because the State should give the industry a subsidy by the erection of the batteries, after which we had a right to expect the batteries to pay their upkeep. The Audit Department had made reports in this connection, but he (Mr. Gregory) had always held that the State battery system was a matter of policy directed by the Government as guided by Parliament. We should therefore assure the Minister that, as long as he made the public batteries pay expenses, it was all Parliament wanted him to do. We should have a pro-

per system of advisory boards where public batteries existed. There were amongst the managers of public batteries some fine men who worked 16 or 18 hours a day in trying to give the best returns to the people of the various districts; but some men got the idea that, as soon as they became associated with the Government, they were not supposed to work the economies they would have to work if their batteries were private concerns. If these batteries were privately owned, reduction in charges could be made; and in connection with each battery there should be a committee of local people who should supervise all accounts. This would allay to a great extent the feeling of irritation in various districts. These advisory boards had been tried in one or two districts without success. The suggestion was not put forward in a fractious spirit, but merely to emphasise what he (Mr. Gregory) thought could be done. He had the system at heart, and had spent more time, labour, and energy in regard to it than any other member; and he had thought for a long time over this system of advisory boards. If we could get the assistance of leaseholders in the way suggested, we could make a considerable reduction in the cost of treatment. It had been his intention as Minister to bring the batteries more up to date by the installation of rock-breakers and self-feeders, so as to bring about a considerable reduction in the cost of treatment. It was regrettable that there was only £30,000 available for the development of this branch of the mining industry. Last year promises had been made to have plants erected in various districts; and it seemed that the money available would not be sufficient to enable the Minister to give all these districts the promised plants, or to make the plants more up to date. An item appeared on the Estimates for the purchase of tailings. He hoped the principle of the past was not going to be departed from. If we started purchasing tailings there would be great danger. In the past tailings had been treated for people, the gold sent to the Mint, the cost of treatment deducted, and the balance of the money distributed *pro rata* amongst the customers of the battery according to values of sands. A departure from that system might result in a loss to the State. With regard to the smelter at

Phillips River, he could not see why we should have this large item of £70,000 on the Estimates. It had not been his intention to have such a large item appearing. It was a bad principle. If all the gold won by the State batteries had been put through the Treasury, we could easily swell our revenue returns. At present all that appeared on the Estimates was the cost of wages and maintenance and the amounts received from the treatment of the ores. The Audit Department had at one time compelled the Mines Department to pay into the Treasury gold won by cyaniding; but he (Mr. Gregory) had been able to make arrangements with the Audit Department so that the only amount paid to the Treasury was the payment for treatment. Why that principle was not adopted in regard to the smelter he could not understand. We were not going to buy copper. No copper had as yet been bought, and the Minister surely did not intend to buy any. So far the only money paid had been for advances on ore brought to the department. It was thought that under the Audit Act the Government would be able to have trading accounts; and it had been the intention of the previous Government to treat the smelting works at Phillips River as a trading concern with a sum of £25,000 for the working of the scheme, submitting the balance sheet to Parliament each year, and having the books audited by the Crown, so that there would be no undue swelling of the Estimates; but some exception had been taken by the Audit Department as to the real meaning of the Audit Act in this regard, and he (Mr. Gregory) had intended to ask Parliament this session to pass a small Bill which would enable this matter to be treated as a trading concern. Some people thought it was hardly right the Government should enter into such a dangerous undertaking as the erection of a smelter by which we might lose a great sum of money; but no one had come forward to erect a smelter notwithstanding that a bonus of £1,500 had been offered. It was impossible to carry on mining in the Phillips River district without a smelter. One leaseholder raised ten tons of ore to the value of £113 16s. 4d.; and after paying the charges for carting it to Hopetoun and sending it to

Walleroo, the amount received was £42 15s., the expenses not including the cost of bags, bagging, and mining. This showed that it was impossible for the miners in that district to continue mining unless they had exceptionally rich ore. The department took the greatest care, having report after report on the district and a special report by Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer; and then careful arrangements were made in regard to advances. Though copper was then valued at £57 and was now over £60 in value, the department would not allow the value of ore brought to the works to be fixed at more than £50, and 10 per cent. was deducted for smelting and other incidentals. Instructions were given that no advances would be made on ore unless it came from development works; and between June of last year and January of this year, 3,095 tons of ore were brought to the office of the department at Phillips River, for which an advance of £11,398 was made. As no person had come forward to erect a smelter the department came to the conclusion that the State must erect one; and having only £3,500 at his disposal, he (Mr. Gregory) stopped making advances on ore and proceeded at once to purchase and erect a smelter. The past Government were fortunately able to make arrangements with the banks to make advances to the mineowners to give them assistance so as to carry on their work until the smelter was going. He felt hopeful that with careful administration the smelter would turn out well. It was bound to do good work if it was properly administered. When we found that from these 3,000 odd tons of ore there would be a large sum of money derived, even with the reduction made by the Government, it showed how valuable the industry must be in the future. The action of the late Government should be appreciated by the people at Phillips River. If the Minister for Mines had asked the House to start a trading account, members would have been able to see how matters stood. The Government might have asked for a farther sum of £10,000 or £12,000, which, with the £12,000 from the ore, would give a capital of £20,000 to carry on this industry. We could then have had a balance-sheet every year, showing what profit or loss had

been made. As to the Steam Boilers Act he regretted the department had induced the Minister to increase the clerical cost of that department. For the past three years the department had always been represented as overworked, but he (Mr. Gregory) was confident that the work could be carried out well by the present staff. If increases had to be given, they should be given to men who had proved so successful as inspectors of machinery and boiler inspectors. A distinct promise was given by him (Mr. Gregory) that this year two inspectors should receive increases. Members would remember the accident on the Great Boulder mine when Mr. Latimer was brought down to make some tests. Mr. Latimer proved himself a good man, and when it was found that men travelled all over the goldfields on a salary of £200 a year, it was only right that such officers should receive increases. If we wished to keep good officials we must give them good salaries. There was a good man in the Malcolm and Cue district, and it would have been better if the Minister had given increases to these officers instead of increasing the cost of the local administration of the department. There was an increase of £2,500 in connection with the administration of the Mines Water Supply, which was for upkeep and the wages of the caretakers. Last year the amount was £12,608; this year it had increased to £15,188. When these items were reached it was to be hoped the Minister would be able to give good reasons for making the increases or it was to be hoped the Committee would reduce the items. Men had been kept on as caretakers long after there was no water in the wells. Bad as it was last year it was found that there were a good many cases where men should not have been kept on. As to the Day Dawn Water Supply, he could not understand the item. The people of Cue and Day Dawn asked that this sum of money should be lent to them. He believed the people now desired that the money should be lent to them. They wanted a trust created, so as to work the water scheme themselves. The late Government decided to complete the work, to form a trust and give the work over to the people. If that was the desire now well and good, but from the remarks of the Minister he

did not know if that was the proposal or not.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member had not seen the Revenue Estimates.

[MR. QUINLAN took the Chair.]

MR. GREGORY: If there was something there he would be pleased to look into the matter, but he had expected an item on the Estimates. In reference to schools of mines, some objection had been taken by the member for Dundas to closing down the Coolgardie school as a school of mines and re-opening it as a technical school. The best course to adopt in Western Australia was to have one good school of mines which people could look up to and which would be under the special control of the Mines Department. Because there was only one school of mines, that should not prevent people in other districts having technical education given to them in mining and other subjects. The school of mines should deal with mining subjects *in toto*. He would not like to go to the Kalgoorlie School of Mines and find dressmaking and cooking being taught there.

MR. T. H. BATH: It was done in the Adelaide School of Mines.

MR. GREGORY: That was not a school of mines, but a technical school. He desired to see one school for teaching purely mining subjects, but facilities should be given to other schools for having technical knowledge imparted. Although it was impossible to have a mining school at Coolgardie, that should not debar the people from obtaining mining knowledge at the technical school. There should be branches of the technical schools so that mining knowledge could be taught under the Education Department. There were technical schools at Boulder and Coolgardie, and there was a splendid technical school in Perth. He desired to see a technical school established at Cue, and he could not understand why no effort had been made in this direction. The people of Cue themselves had evidently been negligent in the matter, for he had urged them to bring the question forward. There were many outside districts where technical schools should be established, not only to deal with mining but with other subjects. The member for Dundas would agree

with him that technical schools under the Mines Department should be purely mining schools. The Coolgardie technical school should be a purely mining school; but because we could not have mining schools in other places we should not debar people from having technical schools so that mining subjects could be imparted by the Education Department. There was a promise that the knowledge imparted would be on the same lines as that given by the Mines Department, therefore the students could go in for the examinations held under the school of mines. Members would find that was the best principle to adopt so as to give facilities to all the people throughout the State. The scholarships would be open to the scholars from the Education Department or from the school of mines. By the Education Department giving mining instruction, that would enable students living away from Kalgoorlie to win scholarships and finish their education at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines. If there were to be two or three schools of mines, they were sure to reduce the value of the main school, and it would be found difficult to get a large sum of money voted for the main school. Members were willing to spend a large sum of money for a central school of mines, but if there were a number of smaller schools it would be impossible to get a large grant. The Education Department taught other subjects besides assaying and mining. In connection with the appointment of the State Mining Engineer he (Mr. Gregory) thanked the member for Dundas for the remarks made. There was no more honourable man in the service than Mr. Montgomery. He was a highly qualified scientific gentleman, not afraid of hard work, whose reports were well worth reading. When that officer's engagement was ended he felt sure members would be quite satisfied with the appointment. If other duties were placed on Mr. Montgomery, such as reporting on mines, we should have to consider whether we should not pay him a higher salary. It was not very far distant when we might call upon him to make such reports. At the present time there was no question of increase of salary, because Mr. Montgomery was working under an agreement with which he was well satisfied; and if members

were as well satisfied with Mr. Montgomery at the end of his engagement as he (Mr. Gregory) was to-day, no one would object to increasing his salary, knowing that we should have a man of talents, honesty, and integrity to make reports, if necessary, on the big mines of Western Australia. In regard to the water supply of Norseman, he saw a large tank there containing three million gallons of water which was costing the people 3s. 6d. per hundred gallons, and from which no revenue was being received, not even to pay the cost of a caretaker. A pump was secured and the department were able to supply the local people with water at 1s. 9d. instead of 3s. 6d. Some consideration should be given to the supply of water on the north-east fields. At the present time throughout the north-east fields there was great necessity for the expenditure of more money to give water facilities to the people. The Minister for Mines in reply to a question the other day said he did not think it was necessary at the present time to construct more dams. Members would remember that he (Mr. Gregory) opposed an extension of the Coolgardie Water Scheme to Menzies because of the great cost, and he could not see that it would be possible to make it a business undertaking; but he had promised to spend money in constructing dams. Last year the Railway Department conveyed thousands of gallons of water into that part of the country, and at the present time he (Mr. Gregory) had to make a request to the Railway Department to deliver water to Niagara. No places had more wretched water supplies than these districts. Something must be done to assist people by giving them a good water supply. There was no better way of assisting the prospector, no better way of assisting the miner, than by seeing that there was a fair supply of water. To carry water by train from Kalgoorlie right through Menzies and up past Kanowna, must entail a very heavy expense indeed; so he hoped the present Government would continue the work the late Government had started in trying to give better facilities for water to people in outside districts. They initiated a scheme by putting down bore holes in back country places, where water could be obtained at anything like a reasonable depth. By

perforating the bottom they were able to give the prospectors four or five gallons at a time. This was a cheap way of giving a small supply, and where the amount of money at the disposal of the Minister was small, it was a good way of giving facilities to the prospectors in the out-back country. We might say that the only district prospected up to the present time was the Kalgoorlie belt, and that could do with a lot of prospecting still; but we wanted to open up new gold-fields and try to give facilities for more people to be employed in the mining industry. We wanted no parochial spirit in this matter. Take places like Black Range, where a five-head plant was put up some time ago, and where it was now seen that a 10-head plant should be erected to keep the large number of leaseholders going. There were many other districts in which assistance could be given. The Minister could do a great deal more. He had carried out a large amount of work, and he (Mr. Gregory) was not cavilling at anything the hon. gentleman had done, but the policy of the past must be continued. He was sorry the Minister would not be able to get a much larger sum of money, so that he could give more help to people who were willing to prospect in the out-back districts.

MR. T. H. BATH wished to make some remarks of a general nature, adopting the adage that "brevity is the soul of wit." In regard to State batteries he accepted the view of other members to a large extent, that being that those who had stone crushed at State batteries in many cases took the best portions of their reefs to have them crushed. This was largely due to the fact that the initial work of opening up those mines, even if they only did it to a shallow depth, involved considerable cost. In the majority of instances these people had very limited means, and they must of necessity when they obtained a patch of gold take the best of it, in order to recoup themselves for the long period during which they had nothing. Although at one crushing they might have a large amount of gold, if it were spread over the time they had been getting nothing the amount per week would be a very insignificant sum. It would be well to make it known to the mining public, especially those

engaged in prospecting for themselves and having their stone crushed at State batteries, that we had a co-operative provident society in this State under which they could register small companies without any very great trouble and at a small expense. It would, he believed, be an advantage to encourage prospectors willing to amalgamate in such co-operative companies for the purpose of carrying on development work in a particular district. We had got into a very bad habit in regard to our mining resources when referring to them in a general way; mentioning the country extending from Phillips River in the south to Kimberley in the far north as country only awaiting prospecting development in order for us to discover the existence of enormous fields, perhaps not of the great magnitude and richness of the Kalgoorlie fields, but still of a very rich nature. Certainly that was an auriferous belt, inasmuch as we had many mines scattered over it; but we should only repeat, as far as Western Australia was concerned, the history of all the great countries of the world, when we admitted the really great mining fields were few and far between in that extensive country. We had extended our efforts over too large an area, and therefore had not expended the money to the best advantage. He believed our resources were sufficiently great and well known to people outside without our exaggerating them, and stating that we had rich fields only awaiting the expenditure of capital on them. He believed that by doing that we were raising false hopes; and the fact that in the past we had raised false hopes on the part of those who had invested in our mines was the reason at the present time why those people were chary of investing in our mining propositions. In connection with the amount of the vote for the purpose of copper ore at Phillips River and the erection of the smelter, it had been stated by some that the amount was altogether too large, and that a third of the sum named on the Estimates would be sufficient to enable the people to carry on operations in this particular centre. From personal experience extending over a considerable time in this class of mining, he asserted that a third of the sum on the Estimates would not be sufficient, and that this was

just one of those particular propositions where one wanted a large initial sum at his disposal in order to carry on such work without interruption. The first five years of his experience in mining circles were spent in localities with just a similar class of ore to this, in New South Wales, where the ore contained silver, copper, and a small amount of gold, and the copper had to be treated by smelting appliances such as blast furnaces. Blast furnaces would only produce matte, which was not immediately marketable, but had to be sent to works such as those at Friedburg in Germany, or Swansea in Wales. When one reckoned the time spent in smelting the ore, then having the matte shipped to the old country or Germany and dealt with there, and then the time which was spent while one was waiting for returns, a considerable period elapsed before one got any return from that product. He knew from his own experience of the silver and copper mining company at Captain's Flat that it was six and up to 12 months very often before they got a return from the smelting works in Germany or Wales for the product sent to them to be treated. And in this particular case of the Phillips River it would be absolutely necessary to have a large sum at the disposal of the Mines Department, if they intended to carry on the smelting operations there without interruption, and without putting these prospectors, and those who were in a small way supplying the ore, to a great deal of inconvenience. There was another question—that in regard to the sum placed on the Estimates for the inspection of our mines. He agreed with the remarks of the member for Leonora that there was necessity for an additional staff in order to efficiently carry out the inspection of our mines throughout this vast area. Those experienced in mining work would recognise that whilst the filling up of stopes to a safe extent might involve increased cost, in the end it tended to cheapen the cost of the mine, because it gave those engaged in the work a chance of carrying it on under safer conditions, and the efficiency was greatly increased. In the past we had had reason to object strongly that this branch of mining had not been sufficiently inspected. We had had during the past year a greatly increased percentage of accidents. He

believed that was in many instances due to the fact that stopes were not filled up to the extent they should be. It had been the practice in the past for those engaged in managing properties to indulge in the habit of gutting the mine. The reason for that was that they secured their engagement on the understanding that within a certain term they would see a considerable reduction in the amount of cost in mining. And that reduction in the cost of mining was secured in this way: they carried on their stopes very high without filling them up, and perhaps after 12 months or two years they could show a reduction in the cost of the mine; but afterwards someone else had to come in and take charge of the property and spend a considerable amount of money. In regard to the administration and development of mining, numerous requests were put in for assistance under the Act, but we found that the trouble applicants had to take in order to secure that assistance discouraged them to such an extent that they very often discontinued their proposals and took no farther interest in the matter. If we wanted this vote to be as useful as it should be, the operation of the Act to those who required assistance should be facilitated. He believed the matter should be left much to the State Mining Engineer, in whom we had confidence, to report and practically give a verdict as to whether the money should be granted or not. As to the total of the Mines Estimates, though it showed a considerable increase, surely no one, no matter in what industry he was interested, would cavil at the amount. Our great industries should, as far as possible, be worked in unison. They were interdependent. Agriculturists depended largely on the mining population for a ready and profitable market; and considering the uncertainties of mining, the mining population must largely rely on those engaged in agriculture to preserve the stability of the country. So expenditure, whether for encouraging mining or for agricultural development, must be regarded from a national standpoint, mining and agriculture being the two great staple industries of the country, and worthy of all encouragement.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Judging by the thinness of the House, adequate in-

terest was not taken in these important estimates. The member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) referred to agricultural members. On all occasions, every agricultural member had recognised that to the mining industry our present agricultural development was due. As the records would show, he (Mr. Piesse) had frequently given due prominence to the part played by the mining industry in promoting the general prosperity of the State. Agriculturists admitted the great impetus mining had given to their industry. The country's industries must be regarded as a whole. Each was necessary to the others; and when the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory) said that agriculture should be subservient to mining, he did not fully express his meaning; for the hon. member would doubtless admit that agriculture, though financially second to mining, was perhaps equally important. Had it not been for members of old Parliaments, prior to the discovery of gold—members closely connected with agriculture—the rapid development of our goldfields would have been impossible. Those known as the old West Australians, the pioneers of agriculture, had always been and were still ready to do their best for the mining industry. He would always support any reasonable and necessary proposal for the development of mining. The copper ore smelter at Phillips River seemed necessary, and would probably be successful. Though great credit was due to the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory) for putting State batteries on a payable footing, the credit of their initiation was due to the old Forrest Government, who committed the country to an expenditure which had resulted in a very satisfactory development of mining. Had they not initiated State batteries, we might, nevertheless, have such batteries to-day; but it must not be forgotten that the Forrest Government had to bear the brunt and incur the expense of the initiatory work. The succeeding Government had the advantage of their predecessors' experience, and of railway communication not available in the earlier days; and the State batteries were now payable, and were pointed to with pride by the people, and particularly by those responsible for their introduction. These batteries enabled the

small miner to develop shows which would otherwise remain unworked. The money earned by such prospectors remained in the country; and whether it was expended in mining, agriculture, or commerce, all were benefited as a result of the establishment of State batteries. The member for Ivanhoe spoke, doubtless with authority, of explosives. He (Mr. Piesse), during a recent visit to the fields, had made certain inquiries and gained much information. He was there while the Royal Commission was inquiring into the use of explosives, and making independent experiments. He indorsed the opinion of the ex-Minister for Mines (Mr. Gregory) as to the ability of the officers engaged in that inquiry. The country was to be congratulated on having such good men in the service as Mr. McDonald, and Mr. Mann the chief analyst. Though all the members of the commission did good work, Mr. Mann on many occasions risked his life by putting on a smoke dress and entering workings immediately after an explosion, to collect by means of a pump and bag the fumes it was desired to examine. Analyses showed that none of the explosives in use could be condemned, though doubtless objectionable explosives could be found, like those mentioned by the member for Ivanhoe. He (Mr. Piesse) was informed that some of the men themselves were very careless in using explosives, not waiting long enough before commencing work after firing. One instance was brought under his notice of a man who fired a shot, almost immediately went in to remove the debris, and sent up some 15 or 20 buckets of it before he felt the effect of the fumes which the fall of earth had imprisoned. He narrowly escaped with his life; but for that the explosive was not to blame. Nevertheless, all must agree with the hon. member that every precaution should be taken to minimise risk and to facilitate the examination of explosives before they reached the mining districts, such as were defective being condemned. We could rely on our present analyst and inspector of explosives, who took immense interest in his work. We needed enthusiasts, provided they were experienced. The recent inquiry would doubtless have a good result. The statement was made that

West Australians did not invest in mining. If by West Australians we meant the men who were here prior to the discovery of gold, their present number was very small compared with that of newcomers; but if the phrase meant the present residents in the country, we must remember that all our people were workers. Even business men needed all their capital to enable them to face the keen competition of rivals; and there was no spare capital for mining investments. But in the early days of gold-mining, the old West Australians spent probably more than any other section of the people. Many of them spent their all to develop mining in Kimberley and Southern Cross. The losses sustained by them in Kimberley were considerable in proportion to their wealth; and in mining development they had probably spent much more than was being spent to-day by any other people. Though our commerce was on a sound business footing, competition here was probably as keen as in any other part of Australia, or of the world. Rents and other expenses were so high that most business men had a struggle to keep going; hence they could not invest like people in the old country, where there was always a large fund, the accumulation of years, awaiting investment. The people of this State had great faith in the country and in its mineral resources, and if they had the money available they would not be afraid to venture it in this industry. It was an important industry, and it was the feeling of country members that they owed thanks to it for giving agriculture a great impetus. Agriculture was second only in many respects to mining, and it must ultimately become the first industry of the State.

[MR. BATH took the Chair.]

MR. W. NELSON: The small number of agricultural members in the House was clear evidence of the sympathy felt by them for the mining industry.

MR. RASON: There was also a small number of mining members present.

MR. NELSON: There was no antagonistic feeling between the various industries in the State. All industries were important in their way, and every member recognised the fact. Something

might be done in the way of electing mining boards in the various mining districts. These boards could be elected by the miners and by the general community to exercise some jurisdiction over sanitation and accidents, and things of that kind. Another matter that might ultimately be accomplished was that mine managers and people holding responsible positions in mines should have licenses which could be revoked if the holders were connected with transactions of a doubtful character, just as the licenses of land surveyors were revoked on occasions. The recent scandals in the mining industry would justify the Government adopting some such principle. By the comparatively generous Mines estimates the Government recognised the value of the mining industry, and they were wise in doing so, for money wisely spent in the development of this industry was not only a benefit to those engaged in it, but to all other industries in the State.

MR. F. CONNOR: There was not a large vote for prospecting. The most important part of the mining industry was to find out where auriferous areas existed; and the best way to spend money in developing the mining industry was to encourage prospecting in districts not very well prospected up to the present.

MR. SCADDAN: And to encourage prospectors to work the land when found.

MR. CONNOR: And to give them a better title than at present. In the far North there were areas known to be gold-bearing which had not yet been prospected. Unfortunately some of these areas ran across the border into South Australia; but even if a goldfield were found on the South Australian side of the border, it would pay Western Australia, on the chance of gold being found on our side of the border, to encourage prospecting in a district of which the Minister already knew something. At any rate, the whole of the trade must necessarily come to Western Australia, because there was no port on the South Australian side of the border. On the next Estimates we should have an amount for the specific purpose of prospecting in the direction indicated. Arrangements should also be made to send a geologist to the North to locate mineral country and to advise the Gov-

ernment where artesian water would probably be struck. The co-operation of the Minister for Lands could be obtained in this regard. It was in Kimberley that it was first proved that gold existed in Western Australia; and he (Mr. Connor) was one of the first to help to develop that goldfield and was the first to distribute stores on any goldfield in Western Australia. Even in the glamour of the Eastern Goldfields which had been such a great boon to the State, we should not forget that there were other places deserving of our consideration that were at present comparatively neglected. The Minister should keep Kimberley in mind; and as a matter of sentiment, should not neglect to provide a small sum on the next Estimates for its development.

DR. ELLIS: The prospecting vote was much too small. Seeing that it was proposed to spend £100,000 in immigration to develop agricultural settlement, £7,000 was a trifling amount to be expended on the development of the great industry of the State. The Minister would do well to treble or quadruple the vote. If we succeeded in getting one good goldfield we did more good than developing our agricultural area.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Question?

DR. ELLIS: So far as present circumstances went. All the agricultural areas in the world would not help the development of the goldfields. When the goldfields ceased it would be time to consider the question of developing agriculture. There was a prospector's conference sitting at Kalgoorlie.

MR. RASON: It was over.

DR. ELLIS: The recommendations they brought forward should be considered. He believed they were bringing forward recommendations in connection with this matter. A good sum of money should be devoted to developing shows at present in existence. It was as much to the interest of the State to develop good mines as to find new fields. One other matter which might engage the attention of the Minister was that the principle introduced as to the purchase of ore at Phillips River might be carried out in regard to the purchase of quartz and gold ore. The Government might purchase ore in districts with a view to erecting a battery.

No great injury could be done to the State by purchasing ore on a percentage. What had been found of great advantage in connection with the copper industry at Phillips River might also be carried out in regard to the gold-mining industry in places where there were no public batteries. The inspection of mines was insufficient, not only from the view of the miners, but from the view of the shareholders. It was to be hoped the Minister next year would see that some scheme of State inspection of mines was brought forward. It would do away with a great many disadvantages which at present existed as to the swindles in properties, and place gold mines on a better basis. It would have the advantage of encouraging people in the State to invest their capital in gold-mining here. At present there was no reasonable way of acquiring information as to mines, with a guarantee behind it. It was hardly necessary to go into the matter of State trading concerns; that had been fully dealt with, but next year it was to be hoped the Minister for Mines would bring down the accounts in a much better fashion than they were brought down this year. A good deal had been said about the use of bad explosives, but this was being overcome by spraying. Not so much care was now taken in regard to getting good explosives, for spraying the face after an explosion carried away the injurious fumes. This was all important to the State and might bring near at hand the manufacture of explosives. The member for Menzies was to be congratulated on his administration of the Mines Department in the past. No word had been heard of bad administration of the Mines Department under him. The fee of 10s. for cyaniding was an exorbitant charge. The amount should be brought down to 8s., and, if possible, to 6s. a ton. The cost to cyanide on a large scale was 3s. 6d. to 4s., and it never rose to more than 8s. He did not see why the cost should be so excessively high when private concerns could carry on cyaniding at an average cost of 8s. The prospectors and small holders had complained bitterly of the cost of cyaniding. The Government should not desire to make money out of the transaction; they should simply pay the bare expenses for the sake of the assistance given to mining.

MR. HEITMANN: Goldfield members should be pleased of the manner in which the Mines estimates had been received. All recognised that the mining industry should receive assistance to a greater extent than it had in the past. Something had been said about the prospecting vote. Not sufficient money appeared on these estimates for assistance to prospectors. The Government might grant money on the same lines as was done in Victoria, having a separate prospecting vote. It would be better for the whole State if this were done. In speaking of prospectors, one did not only mean men who went out prospecting new country but those who were working small shows, who after getting down to water were unable to carry on. It would pay the country if the Government helped these men to develop their shows. The same system in vogue in regard to buying copper ore should be initiated in regard to the purchase of gold ore. He welcomed any system by which there would be greater development of small shows, but he did not know how the Government would manage it. Small mineowners had evidently caught the complaint of nondevelopment from the old English companies in the past. There were many huge mining concerns in the State not doing sufficient development work. He (Mr. Heitmann) had worked in one mine where a sum of £250,000 had been spent, but out of that sum not £20,000 had been spent below the surface. Was there any reason why we could not get capital into the State? He was surprised that a sum of money had not been placed on the estimates for a school of mines on the Murchison. Ministries in the past had only thought of the Eastern Goldfields, but those who had travelled through the Murchison would say that the Murchison in the future might be a bigger field than any Eastern Goldfield. A large amount of money was going out of the State every year. The State did not get a fair benefit from the amount of gold won. He suggested that the Minister for Mines should bring in a Bill to provide that each company should lay aside a proportion of their dividends as a reserve fund, so that when the rich deposits worked out there would be something left for development. In connection

with the school of mines he was surprised to hear the member for Ivanhoe speak bitterly against American and English mine managers. It was a narrow view to take. While he recognised that Australian mine managers could hold their own with mining managers from any part of the world, he gave credit to some of the managers from other countries who had come to this State. The manager of the Fingal was an American, and the country lost a good man when this gentleman left; for he proved to be a practical mining manager, having cut the working expenses of the mine down from 19s. 6d. to 13s. 4d. Members had mentioned Roberts and Hamilton, but these men had not reduced the mining cost to 13s. 4d. He was sorry the Minister could not see his way to increase the vote for State batteries. The Government looked too much for a return. If a battery did not exactly pay its way directly, there was the indirect benefit to the community, therefore we should have more batteries established. Another matter in connection with the Mines Department, not mentioned this evening, and in relation to which he must give credit to the previous Government, was the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the ventilation and sanitation of mines. Many members believed that this money would be wasted, but for his part he thought that if there was one reform in connection with the industrial life of Western Australia that was required more than another, it consisted of better conditions for the miners. If something was not done for the mining whilst the mines were comparatively shallow, a time would come when half the miners would have to be kept by the State. We had had the experience of Victoria and many other mining countries in the world, and in his opinion if the appointment of this Royal Commission cost £100,000 the money would have been well spent if we got a good scheme of ventilation and sanitation for the miners. Another matter criticised by a majority of members this evening was the Day Dawn and Cue Water Supply. He could not see why members should take exception to this vote. Some members thought the scheme should be handed over to a board. As a matter of fact that had been done, and

this £17,000 was practically a loan to the municipalities of Day Dawn and Cue. He had sufficient confidence in those people to believe that they would charge a price for the water which would pay interest and sinking fund on the amount.

Mr. N. J. MOORE congratulated the Minister on his speech, and also the member for Menzies on his very able criticism of these estimates. At the same time he was rather surprised that in his speech the Minister did not refer to any mining industry but gold-mining. We had tin and copper mines, and there had been, or was at the present time going on, a considerable amount of prospecting with reference to oil in the Warren district. He hoped the Minister would take the opportunity a little later on of giving us a little information with regard to what was being done in the boring there, and also what was being done in boring for coal on the Irwin. Some members had complained that the increase of £88,208 in this year's Estimates was hardly enough; but considering the position of the finances of the State at present the Government were treating that industry liberally, and he thought members were prepared to support them in so doing. As to what had been said in relation to old West Australians regarding mining propositions, most of us had gone through the mill in the early days. In the days of Southern Cross everyone mortgaged his screw to put a little bit into Southern Cross, and when Bayley's turned up many old settlers were rather shy of putting anything into that, although those who had an opportunity of visiting the fields in the early days and inspecting what was then known as the jeweller's shop realised that it was far superior to anything ever seen before in Western Australia. It was very pleasing also to notice that the leases had gone up last year from 2,026, with an area of 27,044 acres, to 2,146 leases with an area of 28,350 acres to July of this year. We understood from the Minister that since then the leases had totalled up to 2,304. That was very pleasing indeed. And it was also pleasing to know that notwithstanding the output was not quite up to what it was last year, still the dividend had considerably increased. With reference to what had been stated as to mining schools,

that he thought was a question which would appeal to members. What had struck him in his visit to the fields after an absence of a few years was the difference between the calibre of the men who apparently were controlling the mines. In the early days we saw the old type of Cornish mine captain. Now we saw instead of an elderly man a smart bright young man educated up to the highest pitch ; and if we were to keep pace with the times it was absolutely necessary that the youth of Western Australia should have every opportunity of acquiring that technical knowledge which was so essential to the life of the country. The expenditure of any money in encouraging higher education, technical education, and scientific education would have the support of all those who were interested in the development and prosperity of Western Australia. The agricultural members had always given every support to any movement which had for its object the advancement and development of the mining industry. It would be recollected that in the early days of the development of the mining industry the support received by the then Premier, Sir John Forrest, for the railway and other pioneering works in connection with the eastern fields was from the agricultural members. We all knew as a matter of history that the Coolgardie Water Scheme was carried by Sir John Forrest with the support of the agricultural members against many members who were, he believed, representing goldfields interests. He felt sure that they in their wisdom would, when the time came for consideration to be given to the expenditure in regard to agricultural development, realise that these two great industries must advance side by side, and that the development of the agricultural industry was of no value unless the goldfields also provided a market and the goldfields developed with the agricultural industry. As far as he was personally concerned he was very pleased to see the way in which the Estimates had been received, and he hoped that when the items came along they would not be subject to captious criticism, but that we should realise that the Minister now in office and the member for Menzies had both devoted a great deal of time and attention to those Estimates. When we realised that they

were both satisfied that it was to the best interests of the country that they should remain as they stood, we as lay members, if he might so speak, would be satisfied to accept them as such.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (in reply generally) : Before the vote was put he would like to devote a few minutes, in the first place to thank members for their very generous criticism of the Mines estimates, and also for the large amount of good advice they had given him as to how to conduct this department. He would do his best to use the advice so far as he thought it would assist in the development of the mining industry. The hon. member who had just sat down called attention to one matter which he (the Minister) omitted in speaking last night. That was that there were one or two other minerals besides gold and copper. He omitted to mention them last night because he had already spoken for about three-quarters of an hour, and he did not wish to tire the House with farther details. He would now take this opportunity to state that so far as the coal industry was concerned, all members of the House were as well aware of the circumstances at the Collie as he himself. Dr. Jack was now conducting an inquiry as a Royal Commissioner ; and until his report was available it would be unwise to enlarge on this subject. Some time ago the Government arranged to assist people who were boring for coal at Mingenew, on the Midland line, with a view to supplying the Murchison mines. In the near future a large part of the Murchison district would be denuded of firewood. The boring at Mingenew had been unsuccessful, and had recently been abandoned in spite of a considerable outlay. Since then, in conformity with an old arrangement, the Government had arranged for boring to start next week near Mullewa, much closer to the Murchison field. Tin-mining still continued on a fair scale at Greenbushes and in the Pilbarra district. At both places the workings were confined to alluvial tin ; yet those two districts were probably as good as any other tin districts in Australia, though neither had sufficient water for hydraulic sluicing, otherwise our tin-fields would be much more valuable. In reply to the member for Bunbury, he might say that no one in Western Australia had

yet struck "ile," despite the work done and the money expended in the Warren district. The Government had given a fair subsidy for boring from the 100ft. level downward; but no result had yet been reported. Another syndicate was about to bore for oil at the Duke of Orleans Bay, in the Esperance district. Though the project had not been officially reported on, he was informed the syndicate felt confident that they had a good chance of success. With what was said by the members for Katanning and Bunbury as to the feeling of farming members towards the mining industry, he quite agreed; and he would never find fault with that feeling if it were always constant. But many agriculturists and many people in Perth itself were constantly pointing out that mining was temporary, that our goldfields would soon be worked out; yet those very men were wondering why people would not invest in our mines.

MR. RASON: Name them.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member knew them, and had heard many similar remarks even in this House. The blame for the reluctance of local and foreign investors to embark in our mining enterprises was largely due to the fears so constantly expressed by some of our own people. He (the Minister) had always held consistently that the mining industry was at least as stable as any other industry in the State. Though individual mines could be exhausted, yet generally speaking no goldfield in Australia had ever yet been exhausted unless worked for alluvial merely. There was no scientific or empirical reason for assuming that any of our goldfields were likely to be exhausted in this or the next generation. He was certain that 50, 60, or 80 years hence our goldfields would be in a far better position than they now occupied. Various members commented on the small number of local people who invested in our mines. That complaint should not be pushed too far. In proportion to population, we had as many local investors as other countries could claim, and our people as a whole had far more money to invest than had the people of any other country. The member for Sussex (Mr. Frank Wilson) surprised him by stating that prospecting was in this State almost a thing of the past, or was on the

decline. That was not his (the Minister's) experience. Surely there was more genuine prospecting now being done in the State than had ever been done before. True, people were not going out with horses and camels into the wilderness to pick out areas of scrub from which they could raise a few colours with a view to floating the proposition. Our people were engaged in legitimate prospecting. If a man found gold, he worked it; and much of the ground thus discovered was being worked with local capital. That, though perhaps not the rule in the out-back districts, was certainly true of Southern Cross, Kalgoorlie, and various other centres. It was gratifying to have an opportunity of showing the other side of the question to the hon. member, who was so accustomed to hearing his own statements elsewhere that he thought them fair statements to make in this House. The member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) considered that people in his district did not think he had been enthusiastic about the smelter; but members of last Parliament could scarcely realise that. Any member could bear testimony to the fact that, if it had not been for the persistency of the hon. member, there would have been little chance of the smelter being erected. At the time no one was accustomed to copper; and it was only the hon. member's persistent urgings that justified the member for Menzies in bringing that smelter about. The member for Dundas said he had been blamed for not doing a great deal more for the Phillips River part of his electorate, but if every member showed as much enthusiasm for the needs of his constituents as the member for Dundas, the position of the Minister for Mines would not be worth holding. [MR. RASON: How nice!] Considerable criticism was levelled at the manner in which the various items appeared on the Estimates, especially with regard to the smelter and the Cue-Day Dawn water scheme. No doubt these things should be treated as trading concerns, and should not unduly load our Estimates. It seemed to be one of the habits the Western Australian people had got into to place these things on the Estimates; but he (the Minister) had done his utmost to frame the Estimates in the way members wished, and had been unable to do so.

The member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) claimed it was easy to do so, but he (the Minister) had not found it easy. [MR. RASON: What about the Audit Act?] Every time the proposition had been brought forward, other people had put a different interpretation on the Act. [MR. RASON: What other people?] Must every authority be given? It was not necessary. The hon. gentleman could accept his (the Minister's) word for it. If there had been an opportunity of putting these matters into trading concerns, he would have been the first person to do so.

MR. GREGORY: Could not a small Bill be introduced to amend the Audit Act?

THE MINISTER: A small Bill introduced at the beginning of the session would have got over the difficulty. He had been desirous of getting an expression of opinion on the subject, and now had that expression of opinion which would enable him as soon as possible to make a difference to the Estimates; but members should not suppose that by making an alteration we would make any difference regarding the deficit. The leader of the Opposition declared he would take an opportunity of trying to reduce this amount, in order, if possible, to wipe out the deficit; but it would do nothing of the sort. It was only a bookkeeping item. The member for Dundas and others pointed out that people who crushed at public batteries did not develop their mines as they ought to develop them; and it was suggested that an inspection of mines might be made, and that the people who did not develop their mines should not get the same privileges at public batteries as those who did do so; but he (the Minister) did not think such a scheme would prove practicable. The same complaint was made on every mining field in the world of every class of people. In Victoria, where there were no public batteries, the trouble had been that people spent all their profits in dividends and did not devote them to developing their mines. It was the same here. Those who crushed at public batteries did not develop their mines, and a great proportion of the English companies working in this country was guilty of the same unfaithful kind of mining. It was an exception for an English company to go lower than 150 feet. All classes of

people had the same fault. When it became too troublesome to mine deeper, few would go to the expense of developing new portions of a mine. Some other method than any so far suggested would be required to get over the difficulty. Reference was made to the State Mining Engineer, and he (the Minister) need not say that he thoroughly indorsed everything. It was suggested that when his term of engagement expired, Mr. Montgomery should receive a higher remuneration. It was to be hoped Parliament would have an opportunity of considering that question; but it was doubtful. After his term of service in this State, Mr. Montgomery's services would be invaluable; and he would have the same weakness as most men and would sell his labour to those who would best appreciate it in a financial sense. Many mining men in far less responsible positions in this State were paid up to three times as much as Mr. Montgomery received.

MR. THOMAS: We must keep him.

THE MINISTER: That would be difficult. It was obviously impossible for the State to remunerate talent as it was remunerated outside the service.

MR. THOMAS: The State must get the best men.

THE MINISTER: Yes; and he would not be one who would show undue economy. When it came to the point, few members would like to pay too high a salary. The member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan), in one of his characteristic speeches, had mentioned some interesting points. The first one was in regard to the justification for the expenditure of £650 for 5,000 copies of the *West Australian Mining Industry*. The object of securing these copies was to advertise the State and its mineral resources. If the hon. gentleman had not seen a copy, he (the Minister) would take the opportunity of showing him an advance copy. It was well to advertise the State, especially in London, because there we had been connected as much with roguery as with gold. Many people in London believed that there were a great many dishonest people in Western Australia, and that the reports in the papers were untrue. It was to the interest of the State that we should tell the people in London exactly how we stood. One member stated that an amendment of the Mines

Development Act was necessary so that the Government could lend money more freely than was done at the present time. The member for Coolgardie complained that people had so much trouble in applying to the Government for assistance that very few applications were made, but he could assure members that statement was hardly correct, for if he agreed to one half or one-third of the applications made, any sum of money voted by Parliament would be gone long before the end of the financial year. The Government were never sure whether it was wise to assist people who applied or not. So far as experience went he was bound to admit that in few if in any cases good had resulted. If in a small proportion of cases good was done we were justified in spending money to develop the mining resources. The most astonishing remark of the member for Ivanhoe was in reference to explosives. He said that a large proportion of the explosives landed at Fremantle were not sound. He the Minister had previously stated that three per cent. of every case was examined. We had done more for explosives in this State than had been done in any other State or in any country in the world, and we were determined to see that we had good explosives in this State. With reference to what had been said by a member that nine cases of explosives had been condemned recently in Kalgoorlie, that was correct. Mr. Mann, the chief inspector of explosives, travelled about Kalgoorlie and the fields to see if the explosives were good. He had to see they were good when landed and that they were kept in a good condition. It was within the knowledge of members that after 18 months or two years or three years, explosives ceased to become reliable. If Mr. Mann came across explosives which he believed were of ancient date, he condemned them and saw that they were destroyed. A complaint had been made that the Government ought to give better crushing facilities. He (the Minister) would like to give better facilities for the treatment of sand, and was willing to do so if Parliament voted the money. At present the Government were crushing for people at a price that admittedly was not paying. So far as cyaniding sand was concerned the Government might be

making a profit, but we could not divorce the two processes. If we lost by one process we expected to make a little by the other. One member said it was possible to carry on cyaniding at a cheaper rate than 10s. That was true; but was not 10s. cheap enough? He (the Minister) had made inquiries, and found there was not a person in the State who crushed or cyanided for people at a cheaper rate. It could be done if the work were carried out on a very large scale. If the Government had a 40 or 50-head mill and everything up to date there would be no difficulty. If we were to unduly reduce the price for cyaniding we must incur a loss on the public battery system: it was a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. The member for Menzies said that the Government had not forgotten Pilbarra. He (the Minister) agreed in that statement. If we took into consideration the population of Pilbarra, more was done for Pilbarra than for any other mining district in Australia. Within a comparatively short time a battery had been erected at Pilbarra, and a number of wells were being sunk. Almost every reasonable assistance had been given, yet members wished more to be done. He did not know whether the Ministry would be justified in spending a greater amount in that district than in other mining districts. He could assure the member for Sussex that Pilbarra was not one of those districts that had waited a long time for assistance.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Was it not part of the policy of the Government to build a railway there?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No Government had promised to build a railway to Pilbarra, a district which had nothing to complain of. He was surprised to hear the member for Kimberley say that the North-West was in want of a geologist. The North-West district had had the services of probably the best geologist in Australia for the greater portion of the past two years. Mr. Maitland had spent a large amount of time recently in the Kimberley district and also at Pilbarra; therefore that district had not much to complain of. He would be glad to discuss various matters with members when the items were reached. He took that opportunity of thanking members for their fair criticism

of the Estimates, and he hoped the same spirit would be shown during the farther discussion of the items.

MR. THOMAS: In speaking previously he had omitted to mention one thing, and he craved the indulgence of the Committee to refer to it now. He had spoken previously in regard to the public battery system, and had stated that the Government should insist that a certain proportion of the ore crushed should be taken from development work. He would simply like to repeat that, and to urge upon the Minister for Mines as strongly as he possibly could that he should make regulations straight away that a certain proportion of the ore which was crushed at the public batteries should be taken from the development work. He would urge also that the hon. gentleman should make a reduction if necessary on that ore which was taken from development; and he wished to warn him as a mining man that if that was not done, instead of our public batteries proving a blessing to the mining industry of Western Australia, they would prove to be a curse. He was speaking of that which he knew.

MR. GREGORY: The position was a little serious just now. We were not getting the development we expected.

MR. THOMAS: We were not getting the development we expected. We were getting ready-made cemeteries throughout the length and breadth of the mining districts of Western Australia. As a mining man he knew what that meant. If he was called upon as the representative of foreign capital to examine these properties, he would find a hole in the ground, with no records as to the value of the reef, no records of what had been done and no development, but the prospector had gouged out the eyes of that property. He asked the Minister to bring in some regulations. It had been his intention to bring a motion before this House, but he had no desire to ask the House to sit one day beyond what was needful. He would bring that forward at a proper time. But he hoped the Minister would listen to him as a mining man when he asked him to bring forward regulations that these prospectors should be compelled to keep some record of the value of the ore they were crushing; where they took that ore from,

the width of the reef from which they took that ore, and let that be recorded in the book; and the Minister would see the necessity that they should take a certain proportion from development work, which they should have crushed at a reduced charge. And afterwards when someone wanted to buy that property there would be some record upon which one could act and work. He might not be here at a later time when the details of these Estimates were dealt with. He warned the House now as he had in the past, knowing from his own practical experience what this meant, he warned the Minister to make some regulations of this sort, to protect these men against themselves; and these men afterwards would be the first to bless him for the action he might take. He asked the indulgence of the Committee to allow him to make that statement in amplification of what he had said before. He would congratulate the House as he had done during the last three years upon the large number of members always ready to sit in this House when the Estimates were considered dealing with the industry on which the country depended. He looked around as he had done on various occasions during this sitting when we had been discussing these Estimates, and as he had looked in previous years, and he found about 9, 10 or a dozen men sitting here to discuss the Estimates dealing with an industry upon which the fate of the country depended. He congratulated members upon the splendid way in which they always attended the discussion on the Mining Estimates.

Item—Wardens, two at £700, one at £600, four at £500, one at £480 :

MR. GREGORY wished to call attention to this item. There was an increase in the vote. Perhaps the Minister would report progress.

THE MINISTER: Yes.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at eighteen minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next Tuesday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.
