

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): This is a very serious matter to deal with offhand, without information. I do not know what this reserve is, and why its purpose should be changed. It would be only right that the member for the district should explain where the reserve is, what is its present use, and what it is required for. When an important matter like this is before the House we should have plans placed before members. A few words from the member for the district might enlighten members on the question.

Mr. F. C. MONGER (York): I am quite alive to the importance of the Bill, but really, I know nothing about it.

Mr. Stuart: Where is York?

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT OF HOUSE.

The House adjourned at seven minutes to 5 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 5th August, 1908.

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

Prayers.

QUESTION—BLACK RANGE RAILWAY.

Mr. TROY asked the Premier: 1, What progress is being made towards beginning the construction of the Black Range Rail-

way? 2, When does the Government anticipate having the work of construction put in hand?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Plans and specifications are expected to be ready in October for calling tenders. Tenders for rails have been accepted to-day. 2, Probably in November.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERY MANAGERS.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When the recent transfer of State Battery managers was decided upon, was a requisition received from Coolgardie urging that the present manager be retained? 2, Was the manager retained? 3, Why were the requests for the retention of the State Battery managers at Boogardie and Norseman refused? 4, Does the Minister intend to place the papers relating to the retention of the Coolgardie manager on the table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The transfer of the manager at Coolgardie was not recommended, but about a month after other transfers were announced a petition was received from Coolgardie requesting retention of the manager. 2, Yes, never having been recommended for transfer. 3, Owing to the fact that both the Norseman and Boogardie managers had been recommended for transfer by the Metallurgist and Engineer, State Batteries, whose recommendations or amendments regarding transfers of battery managers were not interfered with. 4, Certainly, if the ordinary procedure is adopted.

QUESTION—PERTH CO-OPERATIVE BAKERY, SUPPLY OF FLOUR.

Mr. BATH asked the Attorney General: 1, What action was taken by the Government re the refusal of flour milling firms to supply flour to the Perth Co-operative Bakery in 1907? 2, Does the Minister intend to place any papers connected with the matter on the table of the House?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Careful inquiries have been made and

in consequence a Bill has been prepared to be submitted to Parliament. 2, Any portion of the papers which are not confidential will be made available on the introduction of the Bill.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE (2).

On motion by *Mr. Gordon*, leave of absence for two weeks was granted to *Mr. Male* (Kimberley), on the ground of ill-health.

On motion by *Mr. Bath*, leave of absence for two weeks was granted to *Mr. Underwood* (Pilbarra), on the ground of urgent private business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS.

The TREASURER having handed in an Appropriation Message from the Governor, preparatory to dealing with Supply—

Mr. BATH asked why the procedure laid down in the Sessional Orders in regard to private business was being departed from?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Sessional Orders provided that Government business should take precedence, and the House had already agreed to that.

Mr. Bath: But this Wednesday was private members' day; last Wednesday was Government business day.

Mr. SPEAKER: This was the first Wednesday since the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. Of course, it rested with the Government to decide.

The PREMIER understood it was the practice that the Government would take the first Wednesday immediately after the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

Mr. Bath: What about the other Wednesday?

The PREMIER: As a matter of fact, no private business was taken until the Address-in-Reply was adopted.

SUPPLY BILL, £1,065,967.

All Stages.

Message from the Governor (previously handed in) was now read, recommending the appropriation out of Con-

solidated Revenue and General Loan Fund of the sum of £1,065,967 for the service of the year ending the 30th June, 1909.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) moved—

That this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of Supply, and also of Ways and Means, for the purpose of considering His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 1, recommending that an appropriation be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and from moneys to the credit of General Loan Fund, for the purposes of a Bill for "An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and from moneys to credit of the General Loan Fund the sum of One million and sixty-five thousand nine hundred and sixty-seven pounds to the service of the year ending 30th June, 1909," and that the Standing Orders be suspended so as to admit of the reporting and adopting of resolutions therefrom on the same day on which they shall have passed such Committees, and also the passing of the Bill through all its stages in one day.

Mr. BATH: This was the proper stage at which the Treasurer should give some explanation.

The Treasurer: That had always been done in Committee.

Mr. BATH: According to the Standing Orders, it was the correct time to give explanation on the motion to go into Committee of Supply, otherwise there was a possibility of the debate being restrained or limited when we were actually in Committee.

The Treasurer: It was better to have the explanation in Committee.

Mr. BATH: There was no objection to the particular stage when the matter was debated, so long as it was understood at what particular stage it was to be debated; but according to the Standing Orders and *May*, it appeared the present was the proper time for any explanation and for any discussion on the proposals.

The TREASURER explained that he was simply following the custom of the last two years, and he believed also the custom adopted in previous years by

other Treasurers, to formally move the Speaker out of the Chair and the House into Committee, and then to have the debate if any arose. However, he was quite willing to fall in with the view of the Leader of the Opposition if that gentleman deemed it better that we should debate the general question now. But one did not know what the Leader of the Opposition meant when he said that, according to the Standing Orders, this was the proper time to debate the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER could not recollect any Standing Order mandatory in that respect.

Mr. BATH: The desire was that if we did not debate the matter now, there would be no limitation later on in expressing actually the same views that one might express on the motion "that the Speaker do leave the Chair." Otherwise, he was willing to fall in with the Treasurer and wait until the actual Committee stage.

Mr. JOHNSON: There was another phase of the question. Why the necessity for suspending the Standing Orders when the Legislative Council was not sitting? By suspending the Standing Orders, the Government could pass the Supply Bill through all the stages this evening; but there was only justification for a motion of this description being passed at the end of the session when it was necessary to get the Bill to another place in time before the prorogation. We had not arrived at that stage now. Why therefore could we not discuss the Bill in the ordinary way, without suspending Standing Orders? He objected to the portion of the motion suggesting the suspension of Standing Orders, and would oppose it unless the Treasurer gave assurance that the Government were not going to rush the Bill through; because there was a lot of information he, and probably other members, desired; and if the Bill was rushed it would limit the discussion, when it was absolutely necessary to have discussion in order to get all the information hon. members desired. Was it the intention of the Treasurer to rush this measure through, even if the motion was passed? Could not the Treasurer see his way clear to delete the concluding portion of the mo-

tion, allowing the Bill to go through in the ordinary way?

The TREASURER: We were pursuing the course adopted in times past.

Mr. Johnson: Good gracious! Were we always going to have this trotted out?

The TREASURER: If the hon. member had patience, one could satisfy him; but the hon. member was so impatient that he would not await explanation. If we proceeded as the hon. member suggested and took the measure stage by stage, we would need to let a day elapse between each Committee stage; and the chances were that it would take to the end of next week to get the Bill through. The Legislative Council had adjourned till Tuesday, but surely members would not wish to be detained a week longer than necessary in order to allow a day to come between the Committee stages of this measure. The Bill must go to the Legislative Council, and it was our wish to have it finished either to-day or to-morrow in order to reach the Legislative Council on Tuesday. There was no desire to rush it through. The hon. member could have all the information he wanted, and all that was available.

Mr. Johnson: Was there any intention to rush the measure through to-night?

The TREASURER: Not necessarily. If the hon. member showed good cause why certain stages should be held over till to-morrow, the request might be met. There was no intention to force the measure through, but if the House chose to pass the Bill to-night the Government wished so to pass it. At any rate, it was the desire to pass the measure at latest to-morrow, in order that it would be available for the Upper House to consider on Tuesday.

Question put and passed.

In Committee of Supply.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

The TREASURER moved—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year 1908-9, a sum not exceeding £1,065,967.

He said: In moving this motion I may briefly explain to the Committee that we

are asking for four months' supplies, sufficient money to carry on the services of the State until the end of the month of October. It is well within the knowledge of members that Parliaments may come and Parliaments may go, but His Majesty's Departments have to be administered and carried on whether there is a Parliament sitting or not. We will be, unfortunately, in that position very shortly when we shall have to appeal to the electors for re-election. Meantime His Majesty's Ministers must carry on the affairs of the State; and to carry them on satisfactorily we naturally require the sanction and authority of Parliament to expend certain moneys. The usual plan has been adopted in this instance, although we have taken rather more care in estimating the requirements by taking the last year's Estimates of expenditure as a basis, and in this instance members will notice that in nearly every case one-third of the estimated expenditure with regard to the various departments has been put down on this temporary Supply Bill as the amount which we ask the sanction of this House to expend. In connection with this matter the several departments have been approached, and they have all approved of the estimates approximately made here. In addition to that the estimated expenditure on works from loan funds, which appears on the last sheet of the schedule, has been very carefully estimated by the officers of the Works Department. The works to be carried out are those which are now in progress, and it is not anticipated, nor do I think it would be proper, that the Government should commence any works during the interval we shall be absent from the House. The Government will commence no works that have not been authorised by Parliament.

Mr. Johnson: Will you make any promises of starting works?

The TREASURER: I am not making any promises at all.

Mr. Scaddan: But you will later on.

The TREASURER: I am pointing out that it is proposed, during the time the hon. member will be absent from the House—for I am sure he will be here

again when we meet—that we shall carry on the works which he and others have authorised to be constructed. The works proposed are chiefly railways now under construction. We have the Coolgardie-Norseman Railway, which is now being proceeded with, and the extension of the Donnybrook-Preston Railway, which is well in hand. There is the Ravensthorpe Railway, balances of contract which have to be provided for and payments to contractors. And then there is a sum of money to be provided for the Mount Magnet-Black Range Railway, and for the Narrogin Railway. A considerable sum is estimated, in all something like £92,000 is required, for the purchase of rails and fastenings to make a commencement with these railways. Then there is the northern railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, which has been authorised by this House. There are also works in connection with harbour and river improvements, water supply and sewerage, and a sum of money must be provided in order that the expenses in connection with these works may be met and wages paid. Under "Development of Agriculture" are the usual items that appear on the last financial year's Estimates — immigration, ring-barking, drainage, rabbit-proof netting, and the purchase of live-stock; adopting broadly the policy in which my friend who has control of that department has succeeded so well during the past twelve or eighteen months, importing stock to provide our settlers on deferred terms with the cattle and sheep that they require.

Mr. Johnson: What is the proposed expenditure on immigration out of this?

The TREASURER: The item is £2,700, and if the hon. member turns up the Estimates he will see this is approximately one-third of what was voted last year. The other items I have not mentioned specifically are all embraced in last year's Estimates, and it is unnecessary for me to go into them now. It is proposed to carry on the several departments as they have been administered during the past twelve months. It is not proposed to spend one penny more than is necessary in the efficient conduct of the departments; and although we ask

the House to vote up to one-third, in every case the strictest economy will prevail as heretofore, and Ministers will take care, as they have done in the past, that every pound that can be saved will be saved. In view of the fact that we are now entering on a stage when the Commonwealth Government are determined to expend the whole of their one-fourth—which means a considerable sum of money, something like £35,000 or £40,000 more than has been taken in the past—in view of that fact we have to be very careful indeed and watch every pound before expending it. That is exactly the position to-day.

Mr. Bath: You say this is one-third.

The TREASURER: Approximately, in nearly every case. That is the position to-day. We could do no other. Members see it would be impossible to get the books balanced and the accounts out and proper estimates submitted to this Parliament for the whole of the financial year; and were it possible, I hardly think it would be quite proper, seeing that Parliament will go out of existence almost immediately, and the new Parliament has to be elected. It is only right and fair, and I imagine only following the usual precedent, to delay the Estimates, if we may call it delay—it is not delay, it is a postponement of the full Estimates—until Parliament meets again.

Mr. Johnson: Do you expect the new Parliament to meet in October?

The TREASURER: I expect it to meet in November.

Mr. Johnson: This will not carry you over till then.

The TREASURER: It will carry on till the end of October; it is for July, August, September, and October.

Mr. Johnson: Why not take five months and be sure?

The TREASURER: Because the hon. member would be the first to object. If I had asked for five months money when I only want four, the first member who would have taken the strongest objection would have been the hon. member himself.

Mr. Johnson: All I wanted to get was an idea when the elections are likely to come off.

The TREASURER: The hon. member can form his own conclusion now. I move the motion which I have read.

Mr. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): In regard to this proposition, as has been pointed out by the Treasurer, it is on precisely similar lines to what has usually been the course in previous years; and although on many occasions the wish, in fact the general desire, has been expressed by members in this Chamber that the Estimates should be presented earlier in order to avoid this necessity of voting money in the dark, we do not appear to get away from the old precedent established.

The Treasurer: You will have to change your financial year.

Mr. BATH: One would have thought such a financial genius as the Treasurer would have been equal to such a slight task as that. The Treasurer has been very anxious to point out that in drawing up these Estimates, especially from the point of view of expenditure from Consolidated Revenue, the Government have exercised due regard to their intention to cut down expenses as much as possible. But so far as those items which have been submitted to this House are concerned, it seems to me it is only what the Government have been doing throughout the past three years, that is merely saving expenditure from Consolidated Revenue by transferring it to General Loan Fund. We are told that these Estimates are for four months, that is one-third of the estimated expenditure for the whole year. We have £832,684 supply asked for from the Consolidated Revenue, and that only represents a total expenditure of £2,498,000, or practically two and a-half millions. Even with all the large economy that can be effected, the Government will have to expend £100,000 or £200,000 over the three million pounds. And on the other hand we have an estimated loan expenditure of £233,283; that, being estimated at one-third of the loan expenditure, would make a total of £699,849 for the whole year. Surely that is in excess of the loan expenditure of last year, in excess of the expenditure by this Government for 1906-7 and for the year 1905-6.

It seems to me it is merely a question of transferring expenditure from Revenue Account to General Loan Fund. [*Mr. Holman*: That is what they call balancing]. In connection with these Estimates from General Loan Fund we find there is only an amount of £5,000 for development of goldfields and mineral resources. If that represents one-third of the total expenditure for the year, it means there will be only £15,000 spent on that item. [*Mr. Collier*: That is what was spent last year]. No; the amount was greater than that. As we know, the Government in the past two years have made no provision for revenue for assistance to mining, and it looks as if this is to be the only amount to be devoted to that purpose. As a comparison, there is the sum of £20,860 for "Development of Agriculture"; and we are informed by the Treasurer that included in this total from the loan vote is an item for "Immigration." In view of the existing circumstances, and in view of what can only be termed a misrepresentation of the Government, I do emphatically protest against loan funds being used for this purpose. We have the Government advertising not only in the local papers but also in the home papers, that they are ready to lend assistance to bring farm labourers to Western Australia. At one time we were assured by the Premier that all they desired to do was to bring men with money to go on the land, but we find now they are bringing out farm labourers under the absurd plea that they are coming out to learn farming. These men, who work for five shillings a week and their "tucker," in some instances are taught no farming but are put to the work of clearing the land, and thus prevent the local men, who depend on that work for their living, from obtaining employment. It is in consequence of this that we now have the unemployed trouble. [*Hon. F. H. Piessé*: Give some instances of this]. Let the hon. member look up some of the advertisements in the papers and he will soon find out whether or not I am correct. It is said that we are to teach these immigrants farming; but as a matter of fact they are only taught hard work and to do that

at a much cheaper rate than the local worker. It would be wrong to use consolidated revenue for that purpose; but the wrong is doubled when we pledge the country for it, when we build up its indebtedness and increase the interest and sinking fund burden by spending such money to bring men out here under false pretences with the result of swelling the ranks of the unemployed. As a protest, I am going to move for a reduction in that item. Apart from that, I cannot see why members of the House, whether on the Ministerial or Opposition side, should be put to the necessity of guessing from any remarks of the Treasurer when the elections will take place. It is the duty of the Premier to take the House into his confidence and give them some idea, straightforwardly, as to when he proposes to hold the elections. Surely there is no reason for secrecy.

The Premier: How could we know when the House would finish? Did you think the debate on the Address-in-Reply would be finished last night? I did not think it would be finished for another week or so—that some members would go on making electioneering speeches.

Mr. BATH: I can assure the Premier that if there is any willingness to make an arrangement, members of the Opposition will be agreeable to meet the members of the Ministerial party and the Premier with a view to trying to decide this issue, so that we will be able to have a fair field and no favour, a straightforward fight. Apart from that we recognise, in view of existing circumstances, that the Government must get supply, and that one cannot offer objection to the proposal of the Treasurer to secure supply in order to carry on departments in the usual way pending the election of a new Parliament and the passing of the usual Estimates.

Mr. J. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): I wish to draw attention to the ruling given by the Chairman last session, when a similar Bill was under discussion in Committee. When we arrived at the Schedule for the General Loan Fund, the Chairman ruled that no item could be reduced owing to the total sum having been passed in Clause 1 of the Bill. Do I understand that if we

pass this clause now, we will have no opportunity of reducing the items or protesting against them?

The CHAIRMAN: The present proposal is to grant supply to the amount of £1,065,967. If that supply be granted, it will be impossible later on to diminish the vote.

Mr. JOHNSON: Then is it imperative for us to discuss Clause 1 and come to a decision before we reach the schedules? or can the Committee deal with the different divisions and then decide the amount to be passed? At present we are placed in an awkward position. We want to discuss the schedules, but we will be debarred from taking definite action, and will be talking merely for talking sake and be able to do nothing, after we have once passed the full amount. I understand from you that we cannot reduce any amount once the total has been passed. The Leader of the Opposition has signified that he wants to reduce one item as a protest against spending loan funds on immigration. If we pass Clause 1 he cannot propose to reduce that vote. Will you assist the Committee so that we can have an opportunity to deal with the schedules without being as it were gagged by the decision arrived at last year?

The CHAIRMAN: My duty is to administer the Standing Orders as they appear to me, and to follow the procedure laid down therein. The existence of the schedules in this Bill is somewhat of an anomaly. The schedules are really equivalent to a return published for the purpose of informing members of the intentions of the Government if supply is conceded. It would be more satisfactory if the information supplied in the schedules to Supply Bills were published as returns, and not made part of the Bill, for I am afraid members are liable to be misled by the publication of information in the form of schedules. The formal putting of the schedules from the Chair necessarily leads members to the conclusion that they might be alterable. I am unable to find any justification for deciding that the schedules are alterable, once the supply has been granted. The time for an amendment to be made is when, in Committee of Supply, the amount is being discussed,

Mr. JOHNSON: Can we move an amendment in Committee of Ways and Means to the effect that the total, instead of being £233,000 should be £232,000?

The CHAIRMAN: No; the present question is to grant a sum not exceeding £1,065,967. Of course an amendment is receivable from any member to reduce that gross amount. The Committee can reduce supplies by any particular amount they choose; but after the Committee of Supply have agreed to the amount, it is impossible for a farther amendment to be considered.

Mr. W. C. ANGWIN: I wish to obtain information from the Treasurer or the Minister for Mines as to whether it is the intention of the Government to consider at an early date the question of rendering assistance from the mining vote to those engaged in developing the mining of the baser metals. We all know the goldfields are subsidised in many ways; but when we come to mining for tin, copper, lead, etcetera, it is found there is nothing whatever done to assist those persons who wish to develop mines of that description. [Mr. Holman: What about Kaufman's Railway?] I am not now dealing with the question of railways. They are built all over the State, and most of the mines have been developed by the railways. The mines are also subsidised in other ways, for where there are no railways and no crushing facilities the Government erect batteries. Is it possible during the next three or four months for the Government to take into consideration the advisability of subsidising, by way of smelter, or otherwise, a large number of mines in the North-West? Considering the present price it is absolutely impossible for the mines engaged in producing the baser metals to become properly developed unless some assistance is provided by the Government. The Government subsidise the prospector for gold by assisting to build batteries, and similar encouragement should be given to the miners of the baser metals. It would be well indeed if the Government granted assistance to those wishing to develop mines in the North-West. I believe the Minister has been approached in this direction and I contend

that either a bonus or a subsidy should be granted to those who are trying to develop the mines in the North-West.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): The question the member has raised is one that has received and is still receiving a good deal of consideration at the hands of the Government. What he desires to know is whether efforts will be made with a view of assisting to some extent those engaged in tin mining, and copper mining in the North and North-Western portions of the State. Some time ago we recognised the necessity of inquiring into matters affecting the North-West, and I went very fully into the question of what was best to be done for the purpose of trying to assist tin mining at Greenbushes and copper mining at Roebourne, Pilbarra, Onslow, and at any of the inland towns. There are big possibilities for copper mining in Western Australia, and time after time we hear of huge developments. Only recently I had the pleasure of seeing fine looking lodes, 50 or 60 miles this side of Wiluna, carrying a very high percentage of copper. This place at the present time is without railway communication. At the Anaconda I believe it is the intention of the people there to bring their ores down to the coast for smelting. Efforts have been made to induce people to erect small smelters, or to try to make arrangements with the shipping companies, by giving facilities to get the ore brought down cheaply. I saw the shipping companies and they at once offered to bring ore down from Port Hedland to Fremantle for 10s. a ton. I may say, in dealing with a question of this nature, it must be remembered that there is not only Port Hedland, but Roebourne and Onslow, where copper ore might be taken to Fremantle. We asked Mr. Sinclair, when investigating the question of the North-West trade, to go fully into this matter independently of any port. Geraldton might be considered a better place for the treatment of these ores than even Fremantle. Up to the present, however, we have not had that report and we have given no decision with regard to applications that have been made. Two of

these were made to the Mines Department. One was that a sum of money should be advanced by way of a loan—£2,000 it was—and in consideration of getting that advance the people promised to spend an equal amount. They were to undertake the treatment of the ores at the same rates as are charged by the smelters in the Eastern States. In the other application it was suggested that we should give assistance, or whether we gave assistance or not a bonus might be given of so much per ton on the quantity smelted, in order that they might be induced to start operations. I went fully into the matter, and then I passed these papers on to the Premier to allow him to deal with them; I was going away at that time. Up to the present time no negotiations have been entered into and we have done nothing. We want first to see the report in regard to the shipping facilities on the North-West coast, and to inquire farther into the applications being made to the Department to see which would be the best scheme to evolve. Until the report has come to hand, I shall do nothing. I am desirous of giving facilities because I recognise that there is a great quantity of ore that can be treated at Fremantle or somewhere else. There are great ore bodies in the Roebourne district, and with cheap freight facilities I think it would be possible to have these treated more cheaply at Geraldton, or even Fremantle, than would be the case in the northern parts of the State. But as I have said, we have not come to any decision yet. I can assure hon. members that I am very desirous of assisting the baser metal industry, and hon. members can rest quite satisfied that the Government will do everything in reason with the view of getting many of those mines in the far North re-worked.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON: Seeing that we must discuss the motion now, there are one or two items I desire to get some information on. In speaking on the Address-in-Reply, I drew special attention to the position of our goldfields water supply, and I regret to say that the Minister up to date has not replied in any way

outlining the position of the Government in connection with that matter, and the proposal to supply the metropolitan area. I do not propose to let any opportunity pass in the effort to get some definite announcement from the Government on this question. I made some remarks in connection with the goldfields water supply when speaking on the Address-in-Reply, and I could have made them considerably more alarming than I did. But I again impress on the House the absolute necessity of taking more interest in the administration of our goldfields water supply. As I stated, I have the utmost confidence in the officers administering that scheme, but the trouble is that certain difficulties that were not anticipated by the engineers at the outset have to be faced at the present time and are entailing a considerable increase in expenditure, much beyond what was originally anticipated. I have outlined the difficulties that are being experienced in connection with the main conduit. The engineer in his report refers to it very definitely. It is true that his language is moderate, but we have to bear in mind that his report necessarily minimises the difficulty. He is not going to let the people know the maximum difficulty, but we as members responsible to the country for the expenditure in connection with this scheme, should have more information than has been given to us. In order to impress upon members the magnitude of the difficulty that is being experienced, I would refer them to page 19 of the engineer's recent report, in which he states:—

"As anticipated, the expenditure on the maintenance of the 30-inch main shows a considerable increase. It has been at the rate of £40 5s. 2d. per mile of main, the total for the year being £14,151 (exclusive of reserve) as against £7,838 for last year—an increase of 80 per cent."

Mr. Gull: Is that due to the packing outside the pipes?

Mr. JOHNSON: If the hon. member will read the report he will see to what it is due. The maintenance of that year increased 80 per cent., and we are now on the verge of a serious difficulty. The

engineer also points out that the pumping expenditure has increased by $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and he states that the increased pumping is due to the corrosion and nodules that are being formed inside the 30-inch main. The friction is greater, and as this increases, I am strongly of the opinion that the pumps will not be equal to force the water through the mains, consequently we will have to instal new pumps between those that are already erected. If this goes on, the pumps will not be equal to the work, and in order to provide for difficulties that are facing us—due to corrosion and possibly mains bursting—it may be, indeed it will be, necessary to establish new storage reservoirs on the goldfields. When we realise this and when we see that the burden is increasing on the taxpayer, it is absolutely necessary that we should face this difficulty and face it at once. The burden on the taxpayer this year is to be £91,700. That is an enormous amount. And there is another phase of the question that hon. members will want information about, and that is the fact that the water is costing the taxpayers of this State 7s. $3\frac{3}{4}$ d.; and we are selling it to the Great Boulder mine—a dividend-paying proposition—at 1s. 6d. a thousand gallons. It is an alarming position when we realise the fall in the revenue. I am not casting a reflection on the Minister or the administration, but I want the House and the country to realise what we have to face in connection with this water supply in the very near future. The burden is getting greater on the taxpayer and it will increase. There is no stopping it. I am emphasising this because we have an agitation for an improved water supply for the metropolitan area. In face of the difficulties I have mentioned the consumption on the goldfields is decreasing in spite of the fact that agricultural areas have been supplied lately. I am more than pleased at the extensions that have been made to the agricultural districts; the water that is being consumed there has only just about counterbalanced the fall in the goldfields consumption. I want the Government to make an announcement that they will not

burden this State with the cost of an extra water supply. I want them to see that there is an absolute necessity to seriously view this position even now, and get away from the Canning scheme. I want to see the metropolitan area supplied from Mundaring. We find that the supply at Mundaring is after all very much greater than anyone anticipated. During the summer months a number of springs have been running, and the quantity of the water these poured into the weir more than compensated for what was taken out of it. I hope the Minister for Works will take the opportunity of making some announcement before the debate ends.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price): I am sure the hon. member will understand that if the opportunity had presented itself I would have dealt fairly fully with this question when the Address-in-Reply was before the House. However, as the question has been raised now, I will make one or two comments upon it. The hon. member must not talk as though he had made a discovery in connection with this matter. The officers of the Department have been well aware that this has been going on, and I would very much regret if the idea got abroad that no steps were being taken to remedy the position, which undoubtedly is a serious one. It would be wrong for me to say that the matter was of no importance whatever. At the present moment it is receiving the fullest investigation, and I venture to think that something will soon be done. In so far as the external corrosion of the main is concerned we have already opened up about 14 miles, and I think we have that trouble completely in hand. We have had the soils analysed, and find that external corrosion is going on more particularly in those portions of the main going through land retentive of moisture. So far as possible we are leaving the main where we have opened it up clear, and have coated it with tar and hessian. I believe we have the trouble well in hand, and that we have not much to fear in the way of external corrosion. But in the matter of internal corrosion we are on

different ground altogether; it is a much more serious problem. No doubt the internal corrosion has been going on inside the main for some considerable time, and we have become aware of it because of the increasing head, more particularly at No. 7 pumping station. Mr. Reynoldson, the Engineer in Charge of the Goldfields Water Supply, who was in the early part of this year in America, made inquiries there with a view to ascertaining if this state of affairs was obtaining in connection with any of the American water supplies, and what steps were being taken to obviate it. He ascertained that at Rochester, where, speaking from memory, there is a 30in. main 28 miles long, exactly the same problem has arisen; and I venture to think that after making comparisons as to the information obtained on this difficulty, we are somewhat ahead of them. But this encrustation, we believe, will probably not increase beyond a certain point. Mr. Reynoldson has in operation certain experiments to determine the question. We believe the encrustation will get to a certain thickness, and that then the extra velocity of the water due to forcing the water through a smaller main will tend to keep it down and prevent increase. The experiments are not completed, and will probably take another three or four weeks, but I think the probability is that we have reached the limit in the matter of the increase of head. I cannot say with certainty, but if it be so, there will be no reason to increase the pumping plant. But there is a still more serious matter to deal with. Underneath each of these nodules there is a certain amount of corrosion going on in the main itself. Various suggestions have been made as to the cause. It may be due to the action of chemicals in the water or to electrolytic action. The question is now being investigated by the Engineer in Charge. He is consulting with various scientific officers of the Government departments on the point, and I expect in the very near future to have a recommendation from him. Personally, I do not think that the encrustation is going to increase much more, and I think probably we shall not

require any increase in our pumping stations. If such should unfortunately be the case, we have surplus plant already in hand, so that there will be no necessity for the Government to go into a huge expenditure for machinery. However, I regard the internal corrosion going on underneath these nodules as a serious problem, and every effort is being made to ascertain the cause, and also determine, if possible, what method can be arrived at for checking it. I saw Mr. Reynoldson a week or two ago, and it may be I shall have to ask the Government to call in the advice of outside experts on this matter, but as yet I have not made up my mind on the point. Now, I would like to refer to one or two extraneous matters to which the hon member has called attention. He has called attention to the fact that the Great Boulder management are being supplied with water at 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. The hon. member should have made it clear that this is only portion of the water being supplied to the Great Boulder mine, and that it is not water used in the treatment of ore.

Mr. Johnson: It is water that costs us 7s. 3d.

The MINISTER: It is not water that costs us 7s. 3d. That is just the point. I contend that our pumping costs to the goldfields being under 1s.—[*Mr. Scaddan:* Maintenance and working costs only?—]if I can open up an absolutely new avenue of water consumption on the goldfields, which can be only got by selling the water at less than 2s., and which cannot be opened up if I charge 2s. 6d., I am justified in opening it up, because I should get approximately 1s. per 1,000 gallons on water so supplied, which at 2s. 6d. I could not possibly get, towards the interest and sinking fund charges on the scheme. That is exactly the position. The mines on the goldfields in the past have been distributing their refuse by mechanical means, but the Great Boulder management came to me and said if I could supply them with water at 1s. 6d. they would do away with their mechanical means of getting rid of the refuse.

Mr. Stuart: They are getting gold out of that water.

The MINISTER: They are not getting gold out of that water; the hon. member knows it perfectly well; and I make the statement advisedly that the Great Boulder are not getting a scrap of gold out of the water.

Mr. Stuart: Then someone else is.

The MINISTER: I know the Great Boulder are not. They are being supplied with water at 1s. 6d. in order that it may replace the mechanical means of getting rid of the refuse. That is the sole reason. It is no use the hon. member looking sceptical about the matter; that is exactly what is happening. I should be only too delighted to put the papers on the table explaining the whole matter. If I could make 6d. or 7d. profit over and above pumping expenses I felt that I was justified in doing this, because doing it meant at all events there was some assistance towards reducing the interest and sinking fund charges. The member for Guildford also said that the Government should make some announcement in connection with the Metropolitan Water Supply. With all due respect to the hon. member, I do not think that the time is yet quite ripe for making an announcement. I will explain this. During the past 12 months the position has materially altered, a set of circumstances having been set up by reason of the increased metering we have undertaken which very much modifies the position as it presented itself last year. Let me put it this way. Speaking from memory, in 1906 we had something like 32 per cent. of services in the metropolitan area metered. To-day we have something like 51 or 52 per cent. Again, the increase in the two years in the number of services, that is new connections, is something like 3,000. But despite this fact, owing to the increased meterage which checked the waste last summer, in the six months of last summer our consumption of water was 85 million gallons less than it was in the corresponding six months of the previous year, showing that the policy initiated by my colleague the Treasurer when he was Minister for Works has been successful. This decreased consumption now gives us time to look around and thoroughly in-

investigate this question, and it has some bearing on the question of supply. The hon. member made a remark in the House the other night and I disputed its accuracy. He made a statement that it was owing to the fact that his professional advisers were against the bringing of a main down to Perth when he was in office that he did not put that main down. Now, as a matter of fact the hon. member had a scheme put before him by one of the engineers of the Goldfields Water Supply administration, and that scheme provided for the distribution of 4 million gallons of water between Midland Junction and Perth, including both places, and it could have been carried out, if I remember aright, for £78,000. It was put before the hon. member when Minister as a question well worthy of his consideration.

Mr. Johnson: By whom?

The MINISTER: By the Engineer for the Goldfields Water Supply Administration.

Mr. Johnson: But what was the opinion of the other engineers?

The MINISTER: At all events the hon. member had one capable and qualified engineer to put this proposition before him, but then he was a responsible individual, with responsibilities of office upon him, and he did not then talk in the reckless and cocksure way he does now. With his minutes on the file I thoroughly agree. The hon. member felt the weight of responsibility and the difficulty of his position, and did not offer those dogmatic opinions to which he now treats us on this question of the Metropolitan Water Supply. The hon. member recognised that the possibilities of an increase in the consumption in the metropolitan area were so great that the reserves which he had at Mundaring might be useless and altogether too small within eight or ten years' time. That has been one of the questions that has faced the Government. The fact that this increased meterage has reduced the consumption so much is to my mind another phase of the question, and may make the project which the hon. member now advocates one which is more feasible. Owing to the reduced consumption in the metropolitan area I think we now have time to look into this

question, but I ask members who have not carefully gone into the question of water supply for the metropolitan area, not to form fixed opinions about the matter without giving it the most careful inquiry. It is one of the most difficult problems for solution the Government have in hand, but I can inform the House that the Government are approaching the question with no preconceived opinions, and that we have an open mind upon it, and are determined to recommend to the country what we believe to be the best and most business-like proposition.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: There is one portion of the Minister's remarks to which I take strong exception. It was not necessary for him to be so pronounced as to contradict me in the House the other night. I repeat the statement that the engineers who reported on the proposition to bring water from Mundaring to Perth were undoubtedly against it.

The Minister for Works: I do not say that there may not have been engineers who advised in that respect, but I came across one file within the last day or two showing that a responsible engineer put up this proposition for the hon. member.

Mr. JOHNSON: I will explain. I went in as Minister for Works with the fixed determination to bring the Mundaring water to Perth. At that time the matter had not been brought prominently before the attention of the public, but the *West Australian* newspaper was decidedly opposed to the proposition, and many members of this House were opposed to it, though the goldfields had not seriously considered it. Consequently, if I had taken up the proposition at that time, I would have had to face the possibility of hostile criticism from the public and the Press. So I started off by asking the Engineer for the Goldfields Water Supply to prepare me an outline of the cost of a scheme I had in mind. It is true that the report he prepared was decidedly and emphatically in support of bringing the Mundaring water to Perth; because Mr. Reynoldson, who was then and is now the engineer, has always been, with the secretary for the Goldfields Water Supply, a consistent ad-

vocate of bringing the Mundaring water to Perth. [*The Minister for Works* : Mr. Reynoldson was on the Commission that reported a few months ago]. At any rate, at that time Mr. Reynoldson was an advocate of bringing Mundaring water to Perth, and I think he is an advocate of it to-day. But I could not take the report of one engineer; I had my Engineer-in-Chief to consult; and the report was submitted to him and to Mr. Oldham, the Engineer for Water Supply in the Public Works Department; and an opinion was also ascertained from Mr. Faulkner, the Engineer in connection with the Metropolitan Water Supply; and I found that those engineers were decidedly against Mr. Reynoldson's report, and that I could only have brought the proposition to this House with the favourable report of one engineer, who could possibly have been said to be an interested party because he was engineer to the proposition that could have its consumption increased by supplying Perth. So when I faced the whole position, I do not think I even submitted it to Cabinet.

The Minister for Works: Yes, you did.

Mr. JOHNSON: I may have done so, but I did not think at the time that I could have a possible chance of successfully carrying out the proposition. Consequently as the agitation was going on to supply Midland Junction and Guildford, that influenced me to go on with the bigger question. The major portion of the report was against me, consequently I had to drop it, with the result that I only put in the small main to supply Midland Junction and Guildford with water. I regret that the Minister should go to the length of saying that I made a misstatement. I know what the Minister had in his mind, that the engineer of the Goldfields Water Supply favoured it, and that is so, but the other engineers were against it. I want to get back to the supply of water to the Great Boulder mine. I am of opinion that the Minister has made an error of judgment in supplying water at such a low price. The Minister stated at the outset that if he can get a new channel of consumption he should

take it, provided that it showed a profit over the pumping cost, which I think is 10d. per thousand gallons.

The Minister for Works: On new avenues of consumption.

Mr. JOHNSON: The Minister must remember he is competing against labour; he is giving the use of water to this mine in order to provide a labour saving appliance, and the Great Boulder mine is discharging men, consequently he is coming into competition with labour. When the Minister desires to go in for new channels of consumption, he should endeavour to go into those channels which will be of some benefit to the State, and where there will be no opposition to labour. We must bear in mind what the actual cost to the State is. The Minister says "If I can get a profit over the pumping cost it is a payable proposition." It is not. He must take into consideration the cost of pumping, the working expenses, and the interest and sinking fund; he must bear that in mind. When looking over the avenues of consumption we should see that it is of benefit to the State, but this new avenue is showing only a profit to the Great Boulder mine. Those who have seen the work in connection with the flying foxes for the removal of the sands from the mines will realise the number of hands employed in connection with the process. If you are going to do the work by gravitation, by using water, you do away with the labour, and it is in consequence of the saving that we are giving them that the water is now being used. If it were not for the wages we get from the miners on the goldfields our great mines would be practically returning us nothing. We are selling this water to the mines practically at a loss. We are charging 5s. 3d. per thousand gallons to other trading concerns in Kalgoorlie, where the use of cheaper water might increase the employment of labour.

The Minister for Works: What trades?

Mr. JOHNSON: If the Minister looks up the report he will see that it deals with this phase of the question.

The Minister for Works: What particular trade are you referring to?

Mr. JOHNSON: It says, "trades, businesses, or manufactures not otherwise specified, 5s. 3d. per thousand gallons."

The Minister for Works: What particular trades are you referring to?

Mr. JOHNSON: I am not particularising, but if we can create trading concerns by reducing the price of water why should we not do it? Why not reduce the price of water for market gardens?

The Minister for Works: Do you know what the price is for market gardens?

Mr. JOHNSON: About 2s. per thousand gallons. If it were a profitable proposition there is some argument in favour of reducing the price.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: When inquiring into the matter in Adelaide it was said that people could not make market gardens pay with water supplied at 6d. per thousand gallons.

Mr. JOHNSON: Men have been struggling and using the water at 2s. and making a profit on the goldfields. We have men on the goldfields to-day using the water at 2s. per thousand gallons and showing a profit. We have others who have failed, showing that the cost of water was too great. We have had deputations to the Government asking that the price of water be reduced to 1s. 6d. per one thousand gallons, but these deputations have been refused the request. This is an avenue of consumption which would be of direct benefit to the people on the goldfields, but 1s. 6d. to the Great Boulder is not an advantage, it is a disadvantage. I am strongly of opinion that an error of judgment has been committed by the Minister in selling water at this price. My main object has been to bring the water question forward, and try to draw public attention to the goldfields water supply, so that some interest will be taken in the supply of water for the metropolitan area. I regret that the Minister states that the time is not opportune, but he must remember that only recently he appointed a board to deal with the question.

The Minister for Works: I did not say the time was not opportune, but owing to the reduction of consumption we had more time to make inquiries.

Mr. JOHNSON: On the Loan Schedule an amount is to be passed for water

supply and sewerage. Can I get from the Minister a promise that no farther expenditure will be made in connection with the Canning proposal until the reassembling of Parliament. If I get that promise I am satisfied, because I know no blame is attachable to the Minister as to the goldfields water supply, only that the supply to the Great Boulder mine has been made at too low a price. The officers of the Water Supply Department are good, and I know the Minister cannot be held to blame for defects which have occurred, and the corrosion of the mains. I only drew attention to this matter to make the country realise the position we are in, and make the people think more about it. But if we are going to have no more expenditure on the Canning scheme until the new Parliament assembles I am perfectly satisfied.

Mr. J. SCADDAN: There are other aspects of the question which should be brought under the notice of the Minister. One of these is the fact that while supplying the Great Boulder with water at practically cost price, that is the cost of maintenance and working cost only, we must recognise that the general consumer on the goldfields has had to pay a price very much exceeding that, yet the general consumer has also to bear his share of the loss sustained on the general working of the scheme, that is the sinking fund and interest, while the Great Boulder mine, which is a foreign owned company, is going to be supplied with water at very much less than the price at which the water is supplied to the general consumer. That is the position so far as I can understand it.

Mr. Bath: The reduction ought to be shared all round.

Mr. SCADDAN: If the reduction is made it ought to be made all round, to the small consumer as well as the large. There is another aspect. While that is the position I take up as to the Great Boulder, yet there is another aspect and one on which the Minister should receive some support, that is in the direction of removing these unsightly dumps of tailings at present surrounding the Boulder City. It would be an advantage both there

and to the comfort of the people on the goldfields, if we compelled all the companies to utilise the water, which they can now receive at the low cost of 1s. 6d. per one thousand gallons, to remove these tailings from their present position.

The Attorney General: Where would they go to?

Mr. SCADDAN: If they get enough water up there they could run the dumps into the sea, but I believe it would be advisable to compel these companies to remove these dumps from their present positions. A great mistake was made when settlement was permitted adjacent to the mines on the eastern side of the hill. If settlement had been allowed on the western side it would have compelled the companies to place their dumps on the eastern side, and in the summer, when the gales blew from the west over the city the tailing dumps would not have been as much discomfort to the population as at the present time. The Ivanhoe mine dumps are on the Boulder side of the mine and I know a young fellow who was in Perth last year for a few months, who was examined by an eminent doctor; he had not worked in the mines at all but in a barber's shop, but he was told by the doctor that he was suffering from cyanide poisoning. The companies ought to be compelled to remove these dumps.

Mr. Collier: These dumps are driving the member's constituency out of existence.

Mr. SCADDAN: No wonder the hon. member for Boulder smiles: he is getting some very good constituents of mine. I agree that when a reduction is being made it should be made to the general consumer as well as to any corporation such as the Great Boulder mine, because the whole community has to pay the loss on the goldfields water scheme.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I may say a few words as to the reduced price of water to the Great Boulder mine, because quite a wrong impression might be created if the opinion went out that a reduction had been made to big mines like the Great Boulder; for the Great Boulder pays 5s. per thousand gallons, the same as the other companies in the trust, and they

take something like one million gallons a day. All these companies have to pay 5s. per thousand gallons for all the water which they use for mining purposes. I think the facts stated just now by the member for Ivanhoe had some influence with Mr. Hamilton in regard to taking the water. The dumps around the mine were getting very high, and whenever the wind blew, people around the district suffered much through the dust. Mountains were being built of residues, and the manager of the Great Boulder went to the Minister for Works with a proposition and said, "If you give us water at a little over actual cost of pumping, we will pump our residues two or three miles from the mine." They undertook, if water were supplied at the cheaper rate, to carry the stuff a considerable distance away. It was also promised that the water should not be used for mining purposes, but merely for sluicing the residues. Mr. Hamilton said that if the department supplied them with water for that purpose alone, instead of increasing the stack of tailings at the mine to a much greater height than at present, all the residues would be pumped away. It was clearly understood, however, that water granted for that purpose would not be used for mining operations. [*Mr. Scaddan:* They are not carrying away the whole of their residues now.] No; a certain quantity of them is needed for mullock. It is a pity they are not getting rid of all the residues and using some of the old stack for mullock, as were they to do so a great eye-sore would be removed. The scheme, as arranged with the mines, is a good one. The Minister makes about 8d. a thousand gallons profit over working expenses by the sale of water for this purpose. If the water were not supplied at that price, the residues would be allowed to collect near the mine instead of being pumped away three miles distant. It is for the betterment of the people in the district and also for the advantage of the Water Supply Department that the arrangement should be made. The Department now get rid of an extra supply of water at a small margin of profit which otherwise would not be made. The

Minister for Works spoke to me on the matter before the compact was entered into. I went into it thoroughly, and I thought, with him, it was a good business deal for the State. It would not be a bad plan if other companies would undertake to do the same thing. By granting this water a small profit is made, and the result is to get rid of the huge dumps at the Boulder mine.

Mr. J. C. G. FOULKES: I want to support the appeal of the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson), that the Government should not definitely decide upon the adoption of either the Canning or Mundaring scheme before the new Parliament has an opportunity of dealing with the question. The Government must be fully aware that this question has caused a great deal of anxiety to the people of Perth and suburbs and of the Fremantle district. [Mr. Butcher: And also residents of the agricultural areas.] Yes; that is so. I know, and the Government must also be well aware, that there is considerable dissatisfaction at the adoption of the Canning scheme. Many of those who will stand as candidates at the general elections will make this question a plank of their platform. I do not intend to discuss the merits of this question at the present time, for it is premature to decide now which scheme is right or wrong; but I am certain there is strong opposition to the adoption of the Canning proposal. I hope the Government will refrain from deciding as to the adoption of that scheme until after the general elections. Every new member will, during the coming elections, have to answer the question as to whether he is in favour of the Canning scheme or not.

Mr. P. COLLIER: With regard to this supply of cheap water for sluicing purposes, at the Boulder mine, we all appreciate the generosity of Mr. Hamilton when he expresses his willingness that the Government should make a profit; but what the residents of the goldfields want to know is why reductions are continually being made with regard to the mines—[The Minister for Works: Not continually]—whereas, during the time the

Minister has been in charge, there has been no reduction in the price of water for domestic purposes.

The Minister for Works: That is wrong. I have made reductions since I have been in office in the price of water for domestic purposes.

Mr. COLLIER: If the Department can supply the Boulder Mine at 1s. 6d. a thousand gallons and still make a profit of 8d., why should the people be compelled to pay 5s. extra? For water for domestic purposes the people up there are charged 6s. 8d. It would be more beneficial to the mining industry if the Government were to supply low-grade shows with water at 1s. 6d., thereby perhaps enabling propositions to be worked which are now lying idle. This would be much better than granting cheap water for sluicing purposes. As to the dumps, it would be a good thing if all the tailings were sent to Lakeside; but it is no use for the Boulder Mine to do that while other mines are piling up their dumps as at present. If the mines were compelled to send their tailings to Lakeside, it would be a good proposition for the town of Boulder.

The Minister for Works: We have been in communication with other mines in regard to adopting the same plan.

Mr. COLLIER: I hope something will come of the negotiations.

Mr. T. WALKER: While on the question of water supply I wish to enter my protest, and rather a strong one, against the differentiation going on in the Water Supply Department. It does not seem to me that there is any business system in the management. The Minister will remember, for it is not very long ago, when a large, and I may say influential, deputation from Kanowna waited on him with a view of getting water at a reduction; not at a reduction to 1s. 6d., but at a reduction to a price much above that, for the purpose of treating low-grade ore in the Kanowna district generally. On that occasion the Minister met us with a number of figures, doubtless prepared by the officers of the department, from which he showed what was required in order to make the department pay. He told us

deliberately that behind the conclusions of his officers he could not budge an inch. The deputation had to go away disappointed. What was the result of that? There was one enterprising townsman of Kanowna, who was working a low-grade show, putting in considerable capital, extraordinary energy and a vast amount of hope, fighting against odds to make his venture pay. He was convinced that if he could get that reduction in the price of water the venture would pay; but the Minister stood firm behind the figures of his department, and the consequence was that an enterprise which would have been of great benefit to Kanowna—for, if it had been a success, other shows like it in Kanowna proper and throughout the district would have also been made to pay—turned out to be a failure. This is not an isolated case, for I have had applications, which I have put through the proper quarter, from people working around Bulong and elsewhere asking for similar concessions; but in every case I was met with a blank refusal. There was one case at Bulong where a show had to be thrown up owing to the reduction in price of water not being granted. These are ventures which were earning wealth to the country, and very different from a case of merely shifting rubbish from one place to another, and the getting rid of big dumps which are eye-sores to the Golden Mile and perhaps objectionable in other respects. The amount of wealth that would result from the working of these propositions is almost impossible to estimate. The wealth exists there, as I have learned from the evidence of the best officers of the department who have spent their time in the district for the purpose of ascertaining the possibilities of the various shows. There is an enormous amount of wealth lying idle there which could be recovered if it were not for the red-tape, hard and fast regulations of the Water Supply Department. The officers of that department cannot adapt themselves to the growing and actual necessities of the country. The consequence is that not only is the wealth there unused, but at the same time the employment it would give to the miners

engaged on these enterprises is lost; and it follows that in every mining centre around Kanowna, with one or two bright exceptions, men have had to leave the district and go to other places prospecting. That is a wrong policy to take. One has not to run a department of this description for the ease and convenience of the officers of the department, nor for easy calculations and easy ledger-keeping.

At 6.15, *the Chairman* left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. WALKER: At the hour of adjournment I was complaining of the lack of management of the Water Department under the Minister for Works. That is not the only disadvantage which gold miners in my district particularly have to complain about. It so happens that the department of the water supply is under various heads. At Paddington and Broad Arrow the supply is controlled by the Commissioner of Railways. The Commissioner at one time took over the dams that were constructed in the early days of the goldfields for railway purposes, on the understanding of course that those who had been in the habit of using water at these dams should be allowed to continue to do so. But now we find that it is with the utmost reluctance apparently that the Commissioner will permit this water to be used for ordinary purposes. At Bardoe, for instance we find the supply of water is put up almost to a premium, and with the utmost difficulty in the world can the citizens get water from that dam even for domestic purposes. The caretaker was taken away from it only recently, the place was not fenced in, and the people of Bardoe desirous of using the water had perhaps to remove articles of refuse and sometimes dead dogs before they could get the water from the dam. They have had pipes laid on, on the understanding that the water should be supplied them at their small shows at a certain price. They have repeatedly petitioned that the price should be made light enough, at all events for those working small shows. Appeal after appeal has been made in vain: very little concession at all has been granted

to them for years past. I want to point out that mining is one of our great staple industries. It should be considered of as much importance as the development of our agricultural industry. We find in the Department of Agriculture every facility is put in the way of the consumer of water. I only read recently a speech delivered by the Speaker in this House in which he told us that the water scheme was to be extended right up to Goomalling, and that the usual guarantee of 10 per cent. which had been stipulated by the Minister for Works before the supply should be undertaken was to be abandoned.

The Minister for Works: There was some mistake.

Mr. WALKER: On whose part?

The Minister for Works: I should say on the Speaker's part.

Mr. WALKER: I just want to read a little of the speech reported in the *West Australian* of Tuesday, the 28th July. I find the Honourable the Speaker then said the cost of extending the gold-fields water scheme to Goomalling was estimated at £23,000 and the Government (the Minister for Works, I presume) had asked for a guarantee of 10 per cent. per annum, but the people were strongly prejudiced against signing bonds. Fresh negotiations were going on at the present time and it was possible that the supply would be secured along the whole route to Goomalling without any guarantee being asked for.

The Minister for Works: That is a very different thing from what you first said—without a guarantee.

Mr. WALKER: I want to know how the Minister could give such terms without having been in conference and having some understanding and reasonable anticipation of these terms being granted. Now could anyone occupying the position of Speaker of this House venture upon an assertion of that kind in an absolutely emphatic way if he had never been given that assurance? Could he have said that without having had grounds to go on? There must have been given by the Department the Minister for Works presides over some sort of assurance which is lacking clinching positiveness

and emphasis, to enable the Speaker to utter this sentence to his audience. That is what can be done in an agricultural district when represented by one occupying such a distinguished position as that held by the member for Toodyay. [*Member:* The fields have to give a guarantee.] They have to before they can get anything done for them, and what I object to is this, that while a rich mining company can get water at just over cost price of pumping, men desirous of working small shows cannot get it at twice the price that it is supplied to these rich companies for. The poor prospector, the man with a promising show if he only had water to work it without being obliged to enter into bonds, how much better off would he be. These poor people must guarantee so much per cent. on the working cost and guarantee to take so many gallons. [*Member:* They have not the influence of a Minister.] Undoubtedly, nor have they the influence of the Speaker. There has been discrimination of an unwise character, discrimination that to say the least of it is smacking of suspicion. I do not accuse the Minister of catering purely to Mr Hamilton because he represents a rich mining company; I do not say that for a moment, but I want to know how it is that the poor man working a small show cannot get a reduction when his very existence depends upon a cheap water supply. I say that there are instances that have come under my observation where men have had to desert their shows when a reduction in the price of water would have enabled them to continue. This is not the only difficulty we have to contend with. Supposing a constituent writes to me complaining about the difficulty he has of getting water, or cheap water, and I apply where I think I ought—to the Mines Department, very quickly I am told—but sometimes I regret to say not too quickly—that my letter has been sent on to the Works Department, and I have to wait until it has been considered there and sent back to the Mines Department. Then correspondence between these two departments takes place before I get an answer, and the answer I can generally

anticipate will be an adverse one. Or at another time I am told that the letter has been sent on to the Commissioner of Railways, and I have to wait this gentleman's pleasure or the pleasure of his officers before I get a reply, and almost as certainly as not—for what does this department care about mining—I am told the request cannot be conceded. Another time the matter is sent on to Mr. O'Brien for his report. His is another department controlling some water reservations. There are three departments all dealing with the water supply and all connected with the mining industry; that is to say, the mining industry has to depend upon these three sources of supply, and all within a few miles of each other. I venture to think that the red-tapeism that goes on between office and office and department and department, the excessive correspondence that takes place there, and the long delays, cost more to the country than it would cost to reduce the water supply to these miners. But we often get no reply whatever, and the spectacle frequently occurs of one department quarrelling with another as to who shall pay the piper. I have been to the Mines Department and the request there has been considered favourably, but I have been told "We cannot supply the water: the request will have to go before the Minister for Works." I interview the Minister for Works and he says, "Well, if the Mines Department will pay us out of their Prospecting or Development Vote we will grant the concession." Is that anything like wise government? What does it matter, so long as the country is benefited, whether the money comes from the Mines Department or from the Works Department. This mechanical, heartless, thoughtless method of administering the affairs of the country to me is laughable. Surely if the Ministry exists at all for any purpose, it exists for the benefit of the country and for the development of its resources, and here we have a Minister in charge of an important department of the State supplying water, refusing to move unless another department or another Minister of the same Government to which he belongs will pay him

to make the concession. There is no doubt about it that this water should be supplied cheaply, but the Minister for Works says "I am not going to do it unless the Mines Department out of their vote pay me for it." Governments exist for the purpose of developing the country, yet we find these quarrels between departments. One blocks the other. One will not move unless the other pays it to do it. Is the country run merely for the sake of showing figures on the Estimates making a Department pay? Is there no life or adaptability in the Ministerial composition? Are Ministers dead machines, merely to do what their officers tell them? Because Mr. McNulty says "I cannot afford to do it for less than so and so" or "We have an iron rule to that effect," has not the Minister any discretion? Cannot he exercise any judgment? Must he just simply be the dead, dumb automaton to work to the strings pulled—I do not say it disrespectfully—by the underlings of his office? That is the way in which this country is being governed. I notice the Treasurer laughs. I admit the Treasurer has been trying to do a bit of administration. He has been trying to make a balance sheet, trying to make it look as if the country would pay, and gaining credit for an apparently healthy state of affairs by refusing to pay the country's debts when they fall due, winning honour and glory for himself as Treasurer by refusing to meet the country's obligations.

The Treasurer: Rubbish!

Mr. WALKER: Why cases have come under my own observation of this pettifoggery, tiddly-winking kind of administration we have had. I know it is not eloquent language, but it suits the occasion. [*The Treasurer:* It suits the hon. member.] I am accusing the Treasurer on this ground, that we have had in connection with the Kanowna Municipal Council, if he wants an instance, accounts repudiated that were due from the Treasury: correspondence going on for months in connection with it, the mistake of the Treasury pointed out, but still delay month after month over the settlement of a few hundred pounds. Month after

month goes on, but in the meantime, while this correspondence is passing between the council and the Treasury, the Minister has the benefit of these few hundred pounds.

The Treasurer: What is the claim?

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member surely knows.

The Treasurer: I do not know.

Mr. WALKER: If the hon. member will consult his Under-Treasurer tomorrow he will ascertain the dispute that exists in his department in that respect. I know. I have had two or three rows down there in connection with it.

The Treasurer: Not with me.

Mr. WALKER: No; the hon. member is unapproachable. But this is what is being done. If the Minister will say that it is not within his knowledge or with his authority, then it only proves what I say, that the officers of the State and not the Ministers are managing affairs.

The Treasurer: Why do you not tell the House what are the hundreds of pounds to which you refer?

Mr. WALKER: I am speaking of the last subsidies due to the Kanowna council and particularly those referring to health matters.

The Treasurer: They have had all their subsidies—all they are entitled to.

Mr. WALKER: Yes; just about now. But these are accounts that should have been paid months ago. There was an account to balance, an overpayment, and the next account falling due was deducted as overpaid on a previous account. I cannot remember the exact figures. Correspondence took place on that sum which was claimed to be overpaid, but which was not overpaid, and the Treasury officers had to admit that all the mistake was theirs. This is the sort of blundering mistakes made. Then there is six months' correspondence over it before the Treasury gives in, and in the meantime the Treasurer holds the sum back. It is not in this one case, but in many. [*The Treasurer:* Wrong.] There are many cases of the kind. There is scarcely a public institution receiving subsidies in any form from the Government with which the same kind of delay and correspondence, red-tapeism if I may call it so, has

not taken place. [*The Treasurer:* They have all been paid monthly.] They have not been paid when the amounts were due, and the hon. member, if he makes any inquiry into the department he seems to know so little about now, will find what I am saying is perfectly accurate. I submit this is a fault that is going on through the State. It is not the Ministers who are applying themselves to the affairs of the country, but they are doing the machine work of merely giving their autographs to what their under secretaries and subordinates have agreed upon. It is the latter who are ruling the State, not the Ministers. [*Mr. Holman:* Did you say ruining or ruling?] Well, both. To return to the point, the only value of a Government should be the concentration of all efforts in the development of the best interests of the country, but there is no spirit of that kind in the whole business. I do admit there are Ministers who can pay attention to matters that sometimes look a little dubious. I am under the impression, rightly or wrongly, with the member for Guildford, that there is a likelihood of rushing on with the water scheme to supply Perth, and a grave possibility, from all appearances, of the Canning scheme being adopted by the Government. I submit that matter has not been properly discussed in this House and that figures are not before us to deal with it as it should be dealt with. It would be not only injudicious but wrongful and detrimental to the best interests of the State if this matter were to be dealt with before a new House can deal with it. It is of grave concern not only to the metropolis but also to the whole of the water scheme itself. I will go farther and say that before this matter is dealt with by the conflicting departments that are now, if I might say vulgarly, fladdling with it, all the water supplies of this State should be placed under one responsible body or board responsible to this Parliament. That should be a step taken precedent to any new scheme for supplying Perth with water. I do not know whether I am wasting my words on the desert air in speaking to a moribund Ministry in a dying Parliament in this way, but I do think

that if the Minister for Works is to continue in office he will have to get out of the parochialism that deals purely with coastal matters. He will have to look to the welfare of the mining districts as well as to that of the coast.

Mr. Angwin: We want to be placed on the same footing at Fremantle as the goldfields.

Mr. WALKER: You are a good deal better off. I do not think Fremantle can complain of having had no consideration. At all events it has had fair consideration sometimes. But it is not the coast against the goldfields; it is only the application of a sound principle to every part of the State. We want judgment in all these matters, and we want Ministers to take the responsibility and judgment. We do not want industries languishing, the sources of wealth neglected, because there is a hard and fast rule fixed by officers of a department with which the Minister will not interfere in any sense or form. We want judgment, discernment and applicability on the part of the Ministry, and I hope that if my words do not, at least the necessities of the case may spur the Minister into some change in that regard.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: After the eloquent address we have heard from the hon. member—a good deal of it imagination—perhaps it would be as well if I were to give a plain statement of the relationship between the Goldfields Water Supply Administration and the Mines Department. When the Goldfields Water Supply Act was passed it contained a clause at the end of the measure whereby the Minister for Works for the time being was made the administrator of the scheme. I was not in the House at the time and was not responsible for the provision. My personal opinion is that in a scheme so intimately affecting the mining industry it would possibly have been better had the Minister for Mines been administrator instead of the Minister for Works; for a man is usually chosen as Minister for Mines because he has some special and particular knowledge of mining, and while it is desirable that a man chosen as Minister for any

department should have a general acquaintance with the affairs of the whole of the State, I do not think it would be for a moment argued that a necessary qualification of a Minister for Works should be a special expert knowledge on mining questions. At all events, even if in the opinion of the member for Kanowna it be desirable, I do not possess that knowledge, nor have I ever laid claim to it. I was on the goldfields probably before the hon. member was there, certainly before many members on his side of the House, and I was out in parts of the goldfields many miles away from the railway, so that I have some general acquaintance with the conditions of life and affairs on the goldfields. But for the time being I happen to be Minister for Works and, not of my own volition, controlling the Goldfields Water Supply Administration, and the attitude I have taken up has been that when any concessions are applied for by mining companies or prospectors using water from the scheme these propositions and the necessity for making concessions have been submitted to the Mines Department for expert advice. As I understand the hon. member, his complaint is that if we have A, B, C, and D working prospecting shows, the Minister for Works who administers this scheme should in the most off-hand manner make one man a concession of 9d. a thousand gallons and the others concessions of varying sums, as he conceives the circumstances to be such that a greater or lesser concession is desirable. That may do in a man's private business, but I venture to think that when we are dealing with a Government department it is absolutely necessary to have some fairly broad principles whereby we can work in fixing prices. I can well imagine what the attitude of the hon. member would be if he found that Jones in the Kanowna electorate was getting water at 3s. 6d., especially if Jones happened to be a supporter of the present Government, and that Brown on the other hand, who is a supporter of the hon. member, happened to be paying sixpence more for his water. The righteous indignation and horror of the hon. member when he came to this House could be imagined by all who

would hear him speak. I should be a rogue, a scoundrel, a briber and everything - bad in that case. It is therefore necessary that the Minister for Works for his own protection should have fairly broad and well defined lines to go on. I contend that we have these broad lines and that we do differentiate between a payable proposition and one that is of a low-grade nature. I say this, if there is an exceptional case there is the mining development vote which is under the administration of the Mines Department from which assistance can be obtained. One would imagine, to hear the member speaking, that every mine that closes up in the Kanowna district closes up because of the high price of water. One mine that had closed up was mentioned before tea, and I have ascertained from the Minister for Mines that the actual value of the ore produced from that mine was 4s. per ton, and the hon. member expects the House to believe that the reason the mine closed up was because the owners could not get a lower price for water. He knows the gold was not in the mines. He knows that perfectly well.

Mr. Walker: I do not.

The MINISTER: He certainly does.

Mr. Walker: I do not.

The CHAIRMAN: Members must not argue one with another across the floor of the House.

The MINISTER: I venture to think if the member did not know it before he knows it now. I am only too glad to be the humble instrument of giving the hon. member some instruction of what goes on in his own district. That is not the only inaccurate statement the hon. member made. We heard him dilate on the concession which he said had been arranged between the Speaker and myself in connection with the Goomalling water supply. Before he read the extract from the *West Australian*, he told us the Speaker had gone to Goomalling and had announced that the 10 per cent. guarantee was not to be insisted on—in all probability, or possibly, or something of that sort.

Mr. Walker: Yes, something of that sort.

The MINISTER: He was not definite. He said this 10 per cent. guarantee was

to be done away with in this case; but I am not at the back of the Speaker's head, and do not know what induced the Speaker to tell the people of Goomalling that this 10 per cent. guarantee would not be required. Possibly he has reasons which I do not know of for making the statement.

Mr. Scaddan: You did not take the opportunity of contradicting it.

The MINISTER: In so far as I am concerned I have given no one to understand that this 10 per cent. would not be required in the agricultural districts. So far as I know, the only main laid down in the agricultural districts for which the 10 per cent. guarantee has not been asked is the main from Beverley to York. I think that is the only one. There is a possibility that the Speaker knew he could put up such a good case as to the rating which the Government may be able to get in that district, or believed that we should declare a water area with its accompanying rating, and thus be able to put in the main without asking for the 10 per cent. guarantee. That matter has never been discussed between the Speaker and myself, but possibly this is one way he has of getting over the difficulty. I strongly object to these definite statements being made as to the arrangements between the Minister and members of the House; especially, as in this case, when they are probed into we find the original statement is exaggerated. I venture to think in our dealings with the mining districts of this State we have always endeavoured to be fair and reasonable, and have not made flesh of one section and fowl of another section. The hon. member was hardly correct when he said that no supply had been given in connection with mining districts without a guarantee. I know of cases where services were laid down without the 10 per cent. guarantee being given. With the exception of that case which I have mentioned, I know of no case in agricultural districts where the 10 per cent. guarantee has not been given.

Mr. J. SCADDAN: I would like to print out to the Committee that it is all very well for the Minister to make the

statement he has, but he might make a complete statement, and point out that in some cases where districts have required assistance in obtaining water supplies, they have been compelled not only to give the guarantee of 10 per cent. on the cost for extending the scheme but to put up a deposit showing their good faith that the water shall be obtained from the water scheme. The Minister says that in the case mentioned nothing happened. I want to point this out to the Minister, we are not making the statement; the statement appeared in the *West Australian*, and it is very definite. It says, "negotiations are at present proceeding." Who are negotiating? The negotiations must be proceeding with the Water Supply Department which is controlling the scheme. If negotiations are proceeding why does not the Minister state what the negotiations are? If negotiations are proceeding then they must be behind the Minister's back.

The Minister for Works: Negotiations have been going on for months. I am not responsible for what the Speaker said.

Mr. SCADDAN: I want a denial from the Minister so that the public who require assistance from the scheme will get fair treatment as in the agricultural districts. The water main laid from the goldfields water scheme into York and Beverley passes through large estates which are practically sheep runs, and the owners are not called on to contribute anything towards the scheme, but if a main passes a vacant block of land on the goldfields, whether the owner uses the water or not he is compelled to pay the rate. That is differentiation. That is one instance. People on the goldfields who own small shows, as is the case in Barrara, are not only compelled to put up 10 per cent. on the total outlay, but have to put up a deposit which at the present time is held by the Government as a guarantee of good faith on the part of the consumers. That is a state of affairs which should not exist.

Mr. Bath: These owners of large estates which you mention refuse to pay.

Mr. SCADDAN: I want to know from the Minister if he will agree to the people

in the Goomalling district receiving the water supply at a cost to the Government of £23,000, or thereabouts, without putting up a guarantee.

The Minister for Works: You will have an opportunity of asking a question to-morrow.

Mr. SCADDAN: But the Minister can answer now. It is only when there is no opportunity of getting information that it is necessary to put a question to a Minister. I stated just now that the Minister did not take an opportunity of denying the statement made, and he ought to take the opportunity now if it is not correct, or substantiate it if it is correct. That is only fair to members, and it should be done.

Mr. W. J. BUTCHER: I have no desire to delay the passage of this Bill, nor have I any desire to prolong the discussion. The member for Guildford when speaking asked the Minister whether he would give the House an assurance that no money would be spent in the direction of this Canning scheme until the elections were over, and whether he would allow the new Parliament to discuss this matter. I think that is a reasonable request to make, and I feel quite sure the whole country is very much concerned in this matter, and I think it is up to the Minister to reply to that question. I can assure him there is a very strong feeling throughout the country, not altogether in agricultural districts but all over Western Australia in connection with this scheme, and I think it would be wise on the part of the Government if they delayed this matter until the new Parliament had an opportunity of discussing it, for during the next elections I am sure this question will be one of the principal matters discussed. I should like the Minister to give the assurance that has been asked for.

Mr. T. P. DRAPER: Until the member for Guildford spoke on this matter I was certainly under the impression that an undertaking was given by the Government not to proceed with the water scheme until another opportunity had been given to the House to thoroughly discuss the question, and go into all the merits of the

case. What I refer to took place on the last night, I think, of the last session. An amendment of the Waterworks and Sewerage Act was brought down to the House, and the Minister for Works in moving the second reading made this statement. He said:—

“At the present moment we are unable to control the house connections, and a promise was given that before the parent Act of 1904 was proclaimed, this House should have an opportunity of reviewing it. The Act is in certain particulars defective, but we desire to proclaim it and utilise it for the purpose of sewerage the metropolitan area. We are quite prepared not to take action under that portion of the Act dealing with the water supply until the House in a subsequent session has an opportunity of reviewing the position.”

I certainly understood that referred generally to the proposed water scheme, whatever it was. If there is any doubt about it I should like to receive some assurance from the Minister that that is what he intended.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price): What the member for West Perth is referring to is as follows. The Act of 1904 has not been proclaimed. Were it proclaimed it would apply to the present water supplies and I think it is quite probable—it is not clear in the Act—that it would mean one rate to the present water supply for the metropolitan area. I thought I made myself fairly clear when speaking that the Government were not going to rush this thing at all. I am quite willing to give the assurance to the House that between this date and the meeting of the next Parliament no irrevocable step will be taken in committing the country either to the Canning as a source of supply for the metropolitan area or Mundaring as the source of supply. I cannot give a guarantee that no expenditure will take place, because in connection with investigations we may have to make expenditure in connection with Mundaring or Canning; but the Government will not commit the country to either source of supply until the House again meets. I think that is fairly explicit, but if it is not

and some member will point out where the statement is defective, I will make it more clear. But I want to point out that we may have to spend money in making investigations.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported; report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

On motion by the Treasurer, resolved: “That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year 1908-9, a sum not exceeding £832,684 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Western Australia, and £233,283 from moneys to credit of the General Loan Fund.”

Resolution reported; report adopted.

Supply Bill introduced.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, a Supply Bill was introduced, and read a first and a second time without remark.

In Committee.

Clause 1—Issue and application of £1,065,967:

Mr. JOHNSON: There were one or two items in the schedule he desired farther information on. It would be necessary for him to discuss those matters on the present clause, for he understood the schedule could not be dealt with. Would the Chairman inform him whether the schedule could be discussed division by division. It was not his intention to discuss all the divisions, but to obtain information on one or two of them. If those matters could be brought up when the schedule was before the Committee he would refrain from touching upon them at this juncture.

The CHAIRMAN: The schedule would be put separately, and members would be given an opportunity of discussing it.

Mr. Holman: By reducing the items?

The CHAIRMAN: It would be impossible to amend the schedule, as he had ruled earlier.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Schedule—Consolidated revenue, £832,684:

His Excellency the Governor, £384:

Mr. SCADDAN: Was it the intention of the Government to ask the Home authorities not to make a fresh appointment to the position of Governor upon the expiration of the term of office of the present holder of it. In the last Parliament a resolution was passed to ask the Home Government not to make a fresh appointment to Western Australia. Did the Government intend to carry that resolution into effect?

The PREMIER: The matter was discussed in the last Parliament on the motion of the then member for Hannans, but so far as he could remember the resolution was not carried. As a matter of fact the Governor's term of office expired in May next year. It was not likely he would continue to hold the position longer than that. Cabinet had not taken into consideration who was likely to be the successor of the present Governor, or whether a recommendation such as that suggested should be forwarded to the Home authorities.

Mr. JOHNSON: If action were not taken until immediately before the expiration of the term of office of the present occupant of the position, the Governor would notify the Home authorities that it was not his intention to continue in office, and arrangements would be made for a new appointment. He hoped that another Governor would not be appointed to Western Australia. If action were taken in time it would be possible for Parliament, guided by a resolution already passed, to notify the Home Government that it was the desire of the people to dispense with the luxury of a State Governor. No better start could be made for economising than by doing away with the position of State Governor. He hoped the Government would give the House an assurance that they would go into the question and see if it were not necessary to make a move at once in this direction, and to communicate with the Home Government on the matter.

Mr. SCADDAN: *Hansard* showed that the last Parliament carried a motion to the following effect:—

"That at the termination of His Excellency the Governor's term of office the Colonial Office should be petitioned to reconsider the appointments of State Governors, with a view to permitting the duties of the office to be performed by the Chief Justice of the State."

This motion was introduced by the then member for Hannans (Mr. Nelson) and was eventually carried in the following amended form:—

"That a humble petition be presented to His Majesty the King, praying that on the completion of the present State Governor's term of office the appointment of future State Governors be taken into consideration."

Mr. JOHNSON: It would, perhaps, be well for the Premier to prepare the petition referred to, and as the ex-member for Hannans was now in London, possibly he might present it to His Majesty.

Mr. STUART: It might be well to treat the matter lightly, but many members were pledged to the abolition of State Governors. Without making any invidious distinction as to the personality of the next Governor, the matter might be left in the hands of the Premier if he would be prepared to take the stand the Premier of another State did some years ago, when he entered a protest against the appointment to the position of Governor of a man who was obnoxious to the people of that State. The Premier here might even go better than did the Premier of Queensland some 20 years ago, for he might state he would object, in the name of the people of the State of Western Australia, to the appointment of any Governor at all. The House might leave the matter in the Premier's hands. He hoped, however, that an assurance would be received from the Premier that during recess nothing would be done in the direction of having another Governor foisted on us.

Legislative Assembly, £1,057:

Mr. JOHNSON: On this vote there should be an announcement from the Governor as to the action taken by the

House Committee in reference to the Press reporters. This was not a matter we should leave absolutely to the discretion of the House Committee. It was true the Committee were elected by the House, but surely the presence or absence of members of the Press should be left to the discretion of this Chamber. He, for one, was not prepared to bow to the decision of the House Committee in the matter. He had no hesitation in saying he absolutely disagreed with the action of the Committee. He had been waiting for some time for an announcement from the Government as to whether they would settle the strike or lock-out, but nothing having been said he would like to get on the present vote a statement from the Premier as to what the Government proposed to do in the matter. It should not be allowed to drift on as it was doing at the present time.

The PREMIER: As members were aware, last week the House elected a House Committee, consisting of five members from this Chamber, who were to act with five members to be elected by another Chamber?

Mr. Scaddan: What had it to do with another Chamber?

The PREMIER: It was not desirable that there should be two House Committees to deal with questions affecting one House of Parliament.

Mr. Bolton: Members from the other Chamber were controlling this Chamber.

The PREMIER: The only information he had obtained was through the Press. So far as the accommodation generally was concerned there had been a good many complaints from others besides the members of the Press. There was no House of Parliament in Australia where there was such poor accommodation for the head of the Government. There was no possibility of his receiving a deputation, or of doing any business either with hon. members or outsiders without bringing them practically into the precincts of the Chamber. Personally he was not satisfied with the accommodation, but the House Committee having been elected, he did not think it was the duty of the Government to interfere with their decision, any more than we should

with the decisions of the Printing or the Library Committee or any Committee elected by the House. If members desired to do so, they could, on the next occasion, alter the personnel of the Committee.

Mr. BATH: As far as this trouble was concerned he had not intended to make any reference to it; but as the dispute had reached such a stage, we were in duty bound to give our support to the House Committee. We had elected the House Committee and entrusted them with certain duties, and when it came to a question of deciding whom we should support, the attitude of members should be in the direction of supporting the Committee.

Mr. HOLMAN: He had heard from members of the House Committee that no action was to be taken this year. Notice was given to the reporters on the 17th July of last year. Members were aware that the rooms in question were used by the Press during the greater part of last session, and no action should have been taken at the present time when Parliament was expiring. We found through the Press that when the Treasurer was delivering his Budget Speech, every consideration was shown to the reporters and every convenience afforded them; and he desired to say that if it was good enough to show the Press such consideration at that time, it was good enough to extend the same consideration to them on every occasion.

The Treasurer: No special conveniences were afforded them at the time. What did the hon. member mean?

Mr. HOLMAN: The Press declared they were allowed to use those rooms during the delivery of the Budget Speech.

The Premier: Did they not use them during the last two years?

Mr. HOLMAN: That was what he was complaining about. He wanted to know why, at the present juncture, when Parliament was dying, after the Press reporters had been allowed to use the rooms for such a long time, they should be driven out. In his opinion the Premier's remarks regarding the absence of conveniences generally were fully justified, and reflected no

credit on those who prepared the plans of the building. When we considered, too, that thousands of pounds had been spent on the structure, we failed to see that we had anything to be proud of.

The CHAIRMAN: The discussion was somewhat irrelevant to the schedule, as there was neither a vote nor an item affected by it. The action being discussed was not an action of administration by Ministers.

Mr. Horan: The Committee was nominated by the Premier.

The CHAIRMAN: Hon. members who wished to discuss the matter had another procedure open to them that they could have availed themselves of; that was by bringing a definite motion, after due notice had been given, and not entering on a discussion in Committee when no decision could be arrived at. He merely threw that out as a hint because he saw no gain by a lengthy discussion on the point.

Mr. SCADDAN: There was a provision in this vote for Contingencies, and if the House Committee decided to put up an addition to the building to house the Press reporters, that would be an expenditure under this heading, and we should take exception to it. The point he wanted to make was that he objected to the Committee selected from this Chamber being dictated to on the question by the other portion of the Committee from the other Chamber. The Speaker had given his views to the Press on the question, and it would have been an act of grace if the President and Committee from another place had permitted the members of the Legislative Assembly Committee to decide the question. The Speaker in a Press interview this morning said that for his part he could see no reason at all why the Press reporters should not be allowed to use the two rooms they wanted while the House was sitting. That was the question members should take into consideration. When the House was sitting the Ministerial and Opposition Rooms were rarely used; while the general Members' Room was never used at all. His opinion was that there was no occasion whatever for the dispute; the whole thing appeared to him to be

very suggestive. Before the Committee went any farther he wished to know whether provision had been made for an increase in the salaries paid to some of the officers of this Chamber. Members were given a promise by the Speaker last session, and also by the Treasurer, that the question of the readjustment of salaries to those officers would be taken into consideration when this year's Estimates were prepared. He wanted to know whether that had been done.

The TREASURER had no recollection of what took place last year, but was under the impression that the recommendation was to come from the Speaker. This however was not the right time to consider the question of increases.

Mr. Scaddan: Yes; it was.

The TREASURER: The Committee were being asked for temporary supplies to carry on as we had carried on for the last twelve months. Until a recommendation was received and the Estimates were framed, nothing could be done. He promised, however, that the matter would receive consideration and would appear on the Estimates in the form decided upon. He could not say more than that.

Mr. SCADDAN: The question was fairly well discussed during the debate on the last Estimates; and the Premier gave an assurance. He was prepared to take the assurance of the Treasurer that when the Estimates were being considered provision would be made for the increase in salaries, and that the increases would take effect as from the 30th June last.

The PREMIER: Yes; they would be made retrospective.

Treasury, £4,035:

Mr. H. BROWN asked the Treasurer whether he would deal in the next session with the refund of half the police court fines from the various municipalities. It would be within the memory of hon. members that last year he moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the over-payment of subsidies to various municipalities; and it was a peculiar thing that according to the evidence taken by that

committee the districts particularly interested were represented by two members of the Ministry—the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Works. Members were informed the other evening that it would cost over £1,000 to examine the various books of the municipalities to obtain the refunds. He claimed that more particularly with regard to Fremantle was it a business proposal. They owed the Government £7,000 or £8,000; and Northam owed the Government almost a similar amount. Was it fair to expect that they should receive back £1,000 or £2,000 in half the police court fines? Would the Treasurer himself, as a business man, with a contra account of £8,000, be prepared to settle with these various municipalities? In examination the Under Treasurer was asked a few questions, and in reply to one particularly with reference to Northam, he said that instead of getting at the Government for £2,600, the inference was that they had received £3,000 or £4,000 more than they should, for they would have gone in a lower grade by only striking a sufficiently high rate to cover their ordinary expenditure. The Under Treasurer was next asked whether he considered the amount in dispute during the last six years would run between £15,000 and £20,000, and he replied that judging by the return it would be between £20,000 and £30,000. He (Mr. Brown) was using these arguments owing to the Treasurer's statement some time ago that he would have to impose a land and income tax to enable him to refund a portion of these police court fines; and they had the assurance of the Mayor of Fremantle that they were going to get them. The Premier at Northam also gave a similar assurance. Mr. Eliot was also asked whether the over-payments amounted to £20,000 or £30,000, and he replied "I should think so, judging by the period covered by my examination." Mr. Edmondson, a Treasury clerk, was also examined by the committee. The statement had been made by the Treasurer that it was going to cost a thousand pounds to get back £20,000 or £30,000; but Mr. Edmondson when asked whether it would pay the Government to appoint for six months

a special auditor to examine each balance-sheet and go roughly through the books for the purpose of obtaining accurate information as to the refunds that should be made, replied that he certainly thought it would pay, because, judging by the experience the Department had of the balance-sheets, there would be a chance of getting back some £20,000 or £30,000 at an expenditure of a few hundred pounds. Mr. Edmondson was also asked if he knew the greatest delinquents, and he replied that Fremantle, Northam, and Kalgoorlie most readily occurred to his mind. [Mr. Davies: What about Perth?] Perth had to refund about £3,000. Mr. D'Alton, the town clerk of Northam, gave evidence and said that in 1905 the general rates collected were £2,078 8s. 11d. and that £1,366 5s. 11d. was taken from general revenue and put to local board of health account. He was then asked "Then all you would have needed to raise under a general account was roughly £700"; and he replied that the council in the first place prepared their estimates thinking their ordinary expenditure would meet that, but they had to stop some of the works on the estimates and put money voted to them to the more urgent question of health. He said that rates to the value of £700 would have been sufficient; that the general rate for that year was 1s. 6d., and that if the council had raised £2,078 on a 1s. 6d. rate the council could have raised £700 on a sixpenny rate. But if they had struck a sixpenny rate their subsidy would have been computed at about 10s. in the pound. He was asked, "Then the municipality were getting at the Government for a subsidy of £1,366?" He replied "Yes." He was also asked, "You admit that the corporations which adopted this course obtained an unfair advantage over those which did not?" He said, "I must admit that." Then Mr. Macmillan, town clerk of Fremantle, was examined, this being the municipality to which the Treasurer promised to refund half the police court fines; and taking the words of the Treasurer, these amounted to £7,000 or £8,000. Mr. Macmillan said the original rate for health at Fremantle before 1902 was 1d.

in the pound, but one year it was 3d. This was the honesty of the Fremantle corporation! They reduced the health rate from 3d. to 1d., and debited the health expenditure to general rate account. Mr. Macmillan also said that in 1902 there was £1,970 paid for the removal of household rubbish, and £1,164 in 1903, while in the same year there was an advance of £200 to the local board of health; also that in 1904 there was £1,371 11s. 6d. paid for the removal of household rubbish; that in 1902 the item "refuse service, municipalisation, £1,063," was capital account for plant, while the item "street cleaning and refuse removal" was also included. The two services had been running under one heading grouped together as one work, so that roughly from £1,000 to £1,300 would be on account of refuse removal. These few figures alone would show the necessity for action on the part of the Treasurer, and that before paying the police court fines the Treasurer should take the advice of his officers, and for the sake of expending a few hundred pounds should make a legitimate attempt at all events to obtain refund of the £30,000 due from the municipalities as shown by the select committee's report. The neglect of the Government should be very patent to members, but it appeared the chief delinquents were municipalities represented by Ministers, and so no action was taken. This House had already affirmed the recommendation of the select committee that an auditor should be appointed and some attempt made to obtain refunds.

The TREASURER denied that he had said the land and income tax would be required to pay the police court fines.

Mr. H. Brown : That assertion was made by the hon. member.

The TREASURER : The hon. member was absolutely wrong. It was only the interpretation the hon. member put on the remarks.

Mr. H. Brown : The hon. member was reported to have said so.

The TREASURER : The payment on account of police court fines to municipalities was quoted as part of the increased expenditure we would have to

face for the next 12 months. He had never made such a statement as that put into his mouth to-night by the member for Perth; nor had he said that the police court fines would be between £7,000 and £8,000—an imaginary figure of the hon. member's. [Mr. H. Brown had never mentioned it.] The Government were proceeded against in the Supreme Court by the municipality of Fremantle for the recovery of certain police court fines due to that municipality. The Government thought it was a wrong claim to make, but went down, judgment being given against them; and in view of that judgment they were obliged to settle the claim of Fremantle and did so. Then the Cabinet came to the conclusion that it was not fair to force each municipality throughout the State to proceed in the Supreme Court for the recovery of similar claims.

Mr. Bath : Did the legal adviser of the Government think it was a sound decision?

The Attorney General : At any rate the Government had to accept it.

Mr. Bath : The Government might have appealed, he thought.

The TREASURER : Cabinet had come to the conclusion that each municipality with a similar claim was entitled to similar treatment, and the Crown Law authorities advised that the Government must pay the claims. The matter was now in the hands of the Crown Law authorities, who were communicating with the different municipalities to adjust the amount due to them. A schedule had been made up—speaking from memory, it was something under £5,000. Each individual amount had to be gone into with the municipality concerned; and as the exact amounts due were ascertained, the Crown Law authorities settled the claims one by one. If they were not all settled by now, all would be in a short time. But these were claims absolutely due, and had nothing whatever to do with any municipal subsidies overpaid. With regard to these the position was different. Last year, as he had intimated, it was estimated by the officers of the Audit Department, who were pretty well worked at that time and ever since had been, that it

would take at least 12 months to inquire into the 1907 alleged over-payments. That work had been proceeding ever since and was just about completed, showing conclusively that what he had previously announced was the true state of affairs. To go back five or six years as recommended by the select committee—[*Mr. H. Brown*: And adopted by the House]—would necessitate the appointment of special auditors who would have to go through the whole of the accounts for the period under review, and this would cost, as he had said already, something near £1,000. He thought £800 or a little over that sum was the estimate of the Audit Department. The Government were placing a sum of money on the next Estimates—at any rate it had been noted to be placed on the draft Estimates and in due course it would come before the new Parliament—to provide the necessary money to engage these special auditors to carry on this work. The new Parliament would have the opportunity of reviewing the whole position. True there might be a just claim put up for over-payment to the extent of £20,000 or £30,000, as the member for Perth had said, but members should bear in mind that we were going to have some serious difficulty in making the municipalities disgorge these alleged over-payments, if they were proved to be over-payments, without bringing them to bankruptcy. He was not arguing against getting this money; in fact he would be very glad to recover £30,000 from municipalities; but he was not prepared to spend £800 or £1,000 of the State's money in putting on special auditors to go over six years' accounts throughout the State unless we could see our way to recover the money when we had the report and unless Parliament knew exactly what it was doing. We had already spent some money and if we were going to spend another £1,000, then what were we going to do? Of course the position was no worse if it was put off for another six months. The only way we could recover was to debit the over-payments against any subsidies passed by Parliament during this year or subsequent financial

years; but we could not set them off a claim proved in the Supreme Court against the Government. If the special report was completed, should the House in its wisdom agree to spend £800 for the purpose, then of course it was a question how we were going to recover any amounts that might be due from the different municipalities.

Mr. P. Stone: There was no difficulty; we could get judgment and put in receivers.

The TREASURER: One could guess what the hon. member would say if we put in a receiver at Geraldton to take charge of the town and sell it up. As soon as the reports were received—and the Department was receiving reports from municipalities through the Audit Department from time to time for the year 1907 now under consideration—action would be immediately taken. It was taken last year so far as there was information in the Treasury. Ever since he (the Treasurer) had been Treasurer action had been taken so far as the municipal balance sheets disclosed the illegal use of general rate funds. Wherever it was disclosed that payments had been made for health and other purposes from general rates, then the Department took care to deduct that amount in calculating the subsidy to be paid to the municipality; but this question went beyond that, being much more complicated, and it would take some considerable time before even auditors specially appointed could get at the bottom of the question. That was the position, and he hoped that members would agree that under the circumstances a little delay was justifiable. We had not the money to spend, and it was only right that Parliament should know what it was going to cost, when the estimates came before it, to get this return which the select committee had recommended.

Mr. DRAPER: We could not say what sum had been ascertained to be due from Fremantle, Northam, or Kalgoorlie. He was aware that before the Government could claim any specific amount from these municipalities, if anything was due at all, a considerable time must

elapse, but yet we had before the House a report of a committee showing *prima facie* that a considerable sum of money was due from the municipalities of Northam, Fremantle, and Kalgoorlie. The Treasurer proposed on the advice of the Crown Law authorities to pay over one-half of these fines to the municipalities throughout the State, and it was quite true that no counter-claim could at the present moment be sustained if any action were brought by these municipalities. But it had perhaps escaped the notice of the Crown Law authorities that if judgment were recovered against the Crown for a certain amount no execution could be issued against the Crown. For good cause the Government would be justified in refusing to pay over any judgment obtained against them. Good cause in this case would be that there was a large sum due from certain municipalities. Perth at the present time was the only municipality that had been singled out for punishment, for some years ago Perth had to refund £7,000. It was unfair that Perth should be punished and other municipalities treated in a lenient manner. It was only fair that the Government should refund to Perth the amount Perth had paid back in the past.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Members were aware that at one time only a moiety of the fines was payable to the municipalities, and then by reason of an amendment of the Police Act of 1902 another moiety which before was payable to the informer or the Crown became payable to the municipalities. The Government disputed the right on these grounds, that unless an appropriation was made by Parliament, although the Act said that the municipalities was entitled to these fines, that did not entitle them to recover. Parliament must appropriate a sum on the Estimates. And that argument was supplemented by bringing down the Journals of the House and the Municipalities Act and the Police Act, showing they were not introduced in accordance with the requirements of the House, where monetary obligation was placed on the revenue. That was the argument the Crown Law Department submitted why

the municipalities could not recover the one-half, but it was not held to be good by the Court. It must always remain the case that the view which one lawyer took of a case might not be the view which the Court took. He did not know if it was news—it might not be—but as a matter of fact through all these years Perth had been getting all the fines. They got the whole of the police court fines all along, while every other municipality only received one-half. This poor, unfortunate, ill-treated Perth was all along collaring every penny, whilst strictly speaking the municipality was only entitled to the fines in respect of offences committed within the municipality and where the prosecution was completed within the municipality. But on account of the Perth Police Court being centrally situated numbers of cases that occurred outside the boundaries were heard there and the Perth municipality got more money than they were entitled to for years. That was the position the other day in the municipality of Fremantle. A petition of right was heard and the petition went against the contention of the Crown Law Department. The member for West Perth suggested that although judgment was recovered, no execution could lie against the Crown. We knew that. We also knew that no Government of any British State in any part of the world had ever taken advantage of that.

Mr. Draper: New Zealand had.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If New Zealand had it was news to him and must have been under circumstances of an exceptional character. To say we could do it because we alleged we had a claim against the municipality seemed to him to be taking up a dangerous position. The honour of the Crown should not be lightly endangered. If judgment was recovered in a Court of law the Government should not shelter themselves behind the fact that execution did not lie against the Crown, and while he (the Attorney General) had anything to do with the Crown Law Department, he would not be a party to anything of that kind. Members should not rush hastily to the conclusion that because the Under Treasurer said that some municipality or other

had received more than it ought to have received in subsidy in any one year, that that was a fact. He was not prepared without an intimate knowledge of the figures, to say that a claim could not be sustained. But it would be news to him to say that a claim could be sustained in the Kalgoorlie municipality. Not a single witness was heard from that municipality, yet it was taken as an accepted fact that a claim would lie against the Kalgoorlie municipality. Before a single witness was heard from the party against whom an accusation was brought it was assumed that the charge was proved. He did not think that it was consonant with the dignity of the House that members should accept that doctrine, taking for granted that because the Under Treasurer thought a claim would lie, before the other side was heard in reply it was assumed the claim was good. If any money were due by the municipality of Kalgoorlie, and he would be surprised if it were so, it would be met honourably, he was sure, by the citizens of that town. In the meantime the Crown Law Department was not making payments to Perth of all the police court fines, or to Fremantle and refusing to make the same payment to all the other country towns, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, or any other place where the same rule applied.

Mr. HOLMAN: The member for Perth was to be commended for bringing this matter forward. Last session the report of the select committee was adopted by the House, and that being so the Government should have taken action on that report. But the Treasurer to-night held up his hands in horror and said that it would take £800 to have a special audit made, although it had been stated that some £30,000 was at stake, which rightly or wrongly it was said certain municipalities had obtained from the Government. Had it not been for the fact that some of those municipalities were in districts represented by members of the Government no doubt action would have been taken before this. Some years ago a case occurred in this State where money was paid by the Government. A select committee brought up a report and it was not accepted by the House. Action was

taken in the Supreme Court of the State against the Government asking for damages, but the case was lost. In spite of that and in spite of the vote of the House the Treasurer gave away £2,000 of the people's money, without a special vote of the House, not saying a word about it. When the matter came before the House we found that £2,000 had been covered up on the Estimates and no one knew where the money went to or where it came from.

The Treasurer: What case was that?

Mr. HOLMAN: The case of Faiz Mahomet. The money was granted by Mr. Rason when Treasurer. It was granted against a vote of the House and against the decision of the police court. Now because certain cases affected municipalities represented by members of the Government the Treasurer refused to take action.

Mr. ANGWIN: The inference he drew from the remarks of the member for Perth was that because Perth had been found out doing something wrong other municipal accounts ought to be inquired into. It was the old saying of "Set a thief to catch a thief." Perth wanted to find out if someone else was not in the same position as they themselves had been found out to be in. The member for Perth had tried to point out that as far as Fremantle was concerned the municipality managed the health department upon a rate of one penny in the pound, but in addition to that the ratepayers of Fremantle were paying 39s. per annum on every tenement for health matters. The member for Perth dealt with the question of Perth having to pay back a certain amount of money to the Government that Perth had drawn subsidy on. That was in regard to the loan rate. The Perth municipality were paying interest and sinking fund from the general revenue. According to what Perth was doing with its health rate it appeared that the health rate was very small indeed, but perhaps it was as high as the municipality could make it under the Act. There was a possibility that when the auditors had finished their work they would find Perth in a worse position than some of the other municipalities. The Government

were now sending auditors around. He knew that a special auditor had been sent to the East Fremantle municipality to make investigations.

Mr. Bath: That was for one year.

Mr. ANGWIN: No, their books for years past were being looked into.

Mr. Bath: They were not special auditors.

Mr. ANGWIN: Yes, special Government auditors. He had seen the auditor at East Fremantle and had spoken to him.

The Treasurer: Ordinary auditors were going around.

Mr. ANGWIN: This was a special auditor from the Government sent down to audit the municipal accounts.

Mr. Bath: Going into back years?

Mr. ANGWIN: Yes. The auditors of the municipality were elected by the rate-payers, and when he referred to special auditors he meant auditors sent down by the Government from the Audit Department. He knew that a special auditor had visited East Fremantle because he had seen him. That auditor was given all the information he required.

Mr. Stuart: The ordinary auditor did not cost any more to send out. The excuse was that it would cost £800 to send special auditors out.

Mr. ANGWIN: Why engage special auditors when there were the ordinary auditors to do the work?

Mr. Stuart: Because they would cost more money.

Mr. ANGWIN: If a special audit were made it might turn out that Perth would be much worse off. The member for Perth might not like to see the report when it came in. There was another question which the Attorney General brought forward. That was whether smaller municipalities would be given an opportunity to collect the fines levied upon persons for offences committed in their municipalities. At present the only courts were at Fremantle and Perth, and these municipalities had been drawing all the fines, many of which belonged to the smaller municipalities. [*Mr. Brown:* That was absolutely wrong.] The Attorney General had said so. According to the decision of the Crown Law Department the offences must be committed and the fines

recovered in the municipality in which the case was tried. The only alternative therefore for the smaller municipalities was to try and get new court-houses built in their own localities so that they would be able to recover the fines to which they were justly entitled. The reason for the action taken by the member for Perth with regard to the municipal subsidies was clear. Perth had done wrong, and therefore the member, as the late mayor of Perth, desired to find out whether someone else had not also done wrong and could be placed in the same position as his municipality had been in. There was a possibility, however, of it being a case of the biter bitten, and when the auditor's report was laid on the table of the House, as he hoped it would be, members could see how the various municipalities were placed on the question. He felt sure members would find matters nothing like so bad as had been stated by the member for Perth.

Mr. BATH: The recriminations by representatives of various municipalities towards one another seemed to show that the Treasurer would be quite warranted in embarking on the expenditure even of a sum of £800 in order to have this matter finally cleared up, although it involved the municipality represented by the member who had ventilated the matter. As to the police court fines, the municipalities in which the offences were committed had moral claim to them, and surely means could be devised, even if it needed a small amendment of the Act, in order to aid municipalities to get what they were entitled to, instead of Fremantle and Perth securing the whole. It was amusing to hear the Attorney General declaiming against the proposal tentatively put forward by the member for West Perth, that because no execution could lie against the Crown they need not pay the police court fines; while, at the same time, he acknowledged that the grounds upon which the Crown defended the case against the municipality of Fremantle were, first, that although it was embodied in the Act passed by this Parliament, there was no authorisation of Parliament that the money should be paid, and secondly, that although the measures had been passed

there was no message from His Excellency the Governor. The Attorney General talked about the honour of the Crown preventing them from taking advantage of the fact that no execution could lie against the Crown, but where was the honour of the Crown in disputing the case against the Fremantle municipality? They might have been perfectly legal in the minds of the Crown Law advisers, but not morally right, far from it. If the Crown were reduced to defend legal actions on those grounds it was time an alteration was made in the legal procedure.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member misunderstood the point involved, which was a very important one, and which had to be decided some time or other. It was this. If any money in the State went into Consolidated Revenue it could only be taken out by appropriation. An Act passed which was not an Appropriation Act, and which very often would go through the House without the consideration necessary for an Appropriation Act, could not take that money out of Consolidated Revenue. These particular Acts did take money out of Consolidated Revenue; but the pith of the decision of the Chief Justice was that the money in question did not go to Consolidated Revenue. If it had done so the decision must have been given in favour of the Crown. The point the member had not grasped was whether Acts of Parliament which were not intended to be Appropriation Acts at all, and which were passed without that consideration which Appropriation Acts received, should be allowed to amount to Appropriation Acts, and should give the right to take money out of Consolidated Revenue. It was only because the Chief Justice held that clerks of court were mere receivers and agents for municipalities that he came to the decision which he did. The Government did not oppose the claim on light grounds, but the case was one of the greatest possible gravity, for it meant that the procedure of Parliament would have to be radically altered if every Act passed by them was to take the force and effect of appropriation, notwithstanding that the proper pro-

cedure had not been followed in order to safeguard the legislation.

Mr. H. BROWN: Innuendoes had been cast at him concerning his reasons for moving in this matter. His reason for moving last year was solely to show the Treasurer that when he said he required land and income tax, there were other means of getting money than by taxation. The Treasurer, and other Ministers, had toured the country stating that towns would be taxed and that the country would get off without any great taxation. Now it appeared it was the intention of the Treasurer to throw the onus of the collection of the municipal subsidies on Parliament. A man with backbone like the late Treasurer, Mr. Gardiner, did not ask Parliament to take action, but as soon as he ascertained what was going on he called upon the offending parties to refund. As to the collection of fines, he knew well that the Perth municipality did not receive the whole of the police court fines. Some time ago the roads board with which he was connected were told that £17 or £18 was lying at the Perth police court for them. On application being made for it, however, payment was refused. As to the remarks of the member for East Fremantle, the whole of the amounts read out by him were clearly admitted by the town clerk of Fremantle as being legitimate charges on the health account, but were, however, charged to general revenue. With regard to Northam, in reply to a question put to a witness by the select committee, it was stated that that municipality alone had received £3,000 or £4,000 more than it should have done. The files before members would show that a very interesting advance was made to that municipality just before the election, when Mr. Throssell was returned. The proposal was put forward to the Minister for Works, who was then at Northam and was speaking for Mr. Throssell, that the sum of £400 should be lent to the municipality as it was very hard up. A strong minute was written by the Minister for Works to the Treasurer, urging the loan be granted, and this was supported by an even stronger minute written by the Honorary Minister. Within a few days of the election the

Treasurer advanced the Northam municipality, notwithstanding the admission that they had got at the Government for £4,000, the sum of £400 for two years free of interest.

The Minister for Works: It was incorrect of the Minister to say he (the Minister) was at Northam at the time of the election.

Mr. H. BROWN: The Minister for Works was at Northam, and he wrote a minute recommending that the advance of £400 should be made.

The Minister for Works: During the time the election was on he was not at the town of Northam.

Mr. Bath: But the Minister made the recommendation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS could not remember the minute referred to. A statement had been made that he was at Northam at that time, whereas he was not there. It would be more satisfactory if a member, instead of making general accusations such as were so common in the Chamber, would give dates and fix the matter by that means. If this were done in the present case the House would know when the minute was written, and whether it was about the time of the election or not. Anyhow, one statement made by the member was incorrect, for he (the Minister) was not at Northam at the time of the election.

Lithographic, £1,779:

Mr. BATH: The Treasurer had direct control over this department, and it was well that his attention should be drawn to it. Many of the Government departments got their lithographic work done by private firms in the State owing to the fact that the antiquated methods of the department were such that the work could be done much cheaper outside. Surely the department could well be amalgamated with the Government Printing Office. He failed to see the necessity for the two institutions, involving as they did a double set of officers to control them. There had been a great deal of boasting as to administrative economy, and the Treasurer might well see whether he could not

bring about the amalgamation, and thus dispense with the present supervision over the lithographic department, and place it entirely under the control of the Government Printer. Recently certain improvements were carried out in the lithographic department and considerable expense incurred, whereas if the work had been placed under the control of the Government Printer the reform could have been effected at a much less cost. By the amalgamation the work would be done more cheaply, and there would be no necessity to have it done by outside firms.

The TREASURER was not aware that the departments went outside the lithographic department because they could get their work done either more cheaply or better. He knew, however, that outsiders went to the department to get special work done, which they could not get done anywhere else in the State. The department was up-to-date, and should be able to turn out work as cheaply and as well as any firm in Perth or Western Australia. He was not sufficient of an expert to come to a conclusion as to whether the department could be amalgamated with the printing office, and so effect an economy. The suggestion, however, was worthy of consideration, and he would make inquiries concerning it. He would make a note of it and inquire whether such a scheme could be carried out. He would like to point out that the two establishments were absolutely independent at the present time, and the lithographic establishment was in Hay Street. He doubted whether it could be controlled any better by being placed under the Government Printer than under the present administrator, Mr. Pether. As a matter of fact the Government Printer could not be at both establishments at the same time. The work carried out at the Lithographic Department was rather different from work done at the Government Printing Office where printing and book-binding were done. The Photo-Lithographic Department was a sub-branch, and was one that required special care. There were a number of draftsmen employed there, and these men could not be placed under the control of the Government Printer. Again there

was the manufacture of stamps there, a special work which did not come within the ordinary ken of a printer or book-binder. He promised to make a note of the point and give it consideration.

Printing, £9,470:

Mr. BATH: With regard to this item he desired to call the attention of the Treasurer to the fact that a very considerable amount of printing was being done at the Fremantle prison. [*The Treasurer: Not very much.*] About £800 worth. After all, he presumed that was the actual cost of the printing. We had to bear in mind that the prisoners practically only got their keep, and that was pretty cheap at the Fremantle prison. [*Member: How did he know?*] He was an official visitor, and had tasted their bread and meat, and inquired into things generally. Everything was good and cheap. We had to bear in mind that if this work had to be paid for according to the ordinary rates ruling it would cost a great deal more. He recognised at the outset that the action was to be commended because they were attempting to teach those in prison a trade, or giving them an opportunity of learning a trade, which they could turn to useful and honest account when they came out, if they had any desire to reform. The Colonial Treasurer referred to the fact that this system was inaugurated in the gaol in 1904, but the amount involved in that year was only £55, and the work done was only that for the Fremantle harbour works.* [*The Treasurer: That was in the commencement.*] They got all the antiquated machinery and old type, everything that was cast off from the Government Printing Office, and took it down to the gaol to give these men a chance of learning the printing trade, but the position was that the livelihood of printers outside was involved, and if it were not for the fact that a great many were unemployed, there would be no objection. As a matter of fact we knew that men had been put off, with the result that many who had spent a lifetime at the trade, and were quite unable now to obtain a living at their late period in life at any other trade were forced to join the ranks of the unemployed, while in the

Fremantle prison £800 worth of work had recently been turned out. Until there was some better organisation of our social system, this was doing the very thing to drive men who were leading honest lives to desperation, and forcing them into prison. It was really only intensifying the evil that we were attempting to cure by the prison system. There should be some discretion in regard to giving a large amount of work to the prison. They could find employment for the prisoners by an extension of the Hamel system, in tree planting or forest planting. There were plenty of areas available to which we could send these men, where they would not be the object of curiosity that they were at Bunbury at the present time.

The Treasurer: That work was wanted for the unemployed.

Mr. BATH: They were not giving the unemployed that work, though they had had the opportunity of doing so for three years. Prisoners had been employed at Hamel.

The Treasurer: What about clearing work at the pine plantation?

Mr. BATH: Even if the Minister could find money to give the unemployed work, there would still be any amount for prisoners to do, and it would be really good work for them also. He wanted to point out that they were not giving a fair deal to the people, and there should be some restriction on the amount of work which was being given to the men in the Fremantle prison. He was satisfied that if the Government went in for a proper system of reforestation they could find any amount of work for all the unemployed, and over and above that they could find useful work for a great many of the prisoners at Fremantle.

Mr. SCADDAN would like to know whether the Treasurer could state what amount of printing was done by outside firms. He had a copy of the Statistical Abstract before him, and it appeared that the book had been recently printed by a newspaper at Fremantle. He would like to know how much had been expended on that.

Mr. Bath: That was printed in prison. It merely had the name of the instructor on it.

The TREASURER was unable to tell the hon. member how much printing was being done outside the Government printing establishment, but he knew that every effort was being made to have all the printing, which was done at the gaol, passed through the Government Printer's hands. They could thus see that not only was a proper amount of work done there, but also that a proper schedule rate was charged.

Mr. Bath: The gaol received the money and not the prisoners.

The TREASURER: Of course the prisoners were paid something, and he did not hesitate to say that they were just as well treated in Western Australia as in any other country. He wanted to point out it would be absurd to take away all employment of this description from the prisoners. We must employ them with legitimate work. We had no desire to sweat anyone. He was also aware that the department had expanded somewhat since 1904. It must be recognised that it had to increase, and he believed now that it was of great utility. The men were employed there, and when they were released they had something that they could do, which was more than was the case when they went inside. The same thing applied to the making of furniture and boot-making within the walls of that institution. These men, he would point out, were not allowed to compete with outside institutions. The whole of the work done in the prison was done for Government departments, and he maintained that it was perfectly legitimate employment. It might as well be contended that prisoners at Rottnest should not be employed in the making of roads on that island. Of course it was impossible to avoid some competition when the State was maintaining this class of people under control and under obedience to the laws and the judgments under the laws. As long as they were kept within moderation he did not think anyone could take exception to the work they did.

Education, £59,945:

Mr. HORAN: The Minister for Education was away in the Eastern States when a considerable amount of correspondence took place with the Education Department with regard to providing a school at Higginsville. The Education Vote was one members did not stint. The Minister was not stinted in making provision for teachers and schools in outlandish places. Before leaving for the Eastern States the Minister said that the representations made on behalf of Higginsville were sufficient to warrant the establishment of a school there; but the following article from the *Kalgoorlie Miner* would give the Minister some information with regard to the method adopted by the Education Department. The statement was approximately correct, and it was published in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* on the 9th June of this year, as follows:—

"This is the plain unvarnished tale of the difficulties which beset the paths of an M.L.A. when he endeavoured to do something for his constituents, as told by himself in Coolgardie. In June last year the inhabitants of Higginsville, which promises to become of some importance as a mining centre, besought the aid of their district representative in the Legislative Assembly in order that they might obtain a school in their young community. It was pointed out to them that the minimum number of scholars required in order to enable the Education Department to provide a teacher was 10, and they were asked to put their request in writing, stating the facts. They promptly acceded to this and stated that 11 children awaited the decision of the Education Department. Armed with this assurance as to the number of scholars and other facts, the member waited on the Minister, and was assured that the request would be granted—under no circumstances was such a request ever refused—and the matter would be placed in hand at once. Some two months after this assurance the member received a memo. from the Department, asking him if a suitable building for school purposes

was available. He duly inquired, and was informed that a large building recently erected as a workers' hall was placed at the disposal of the department. After still more delay the member was asked if the dimensions of the building were sufficient to provide the required number of cubic feet of air per child. This the member satisfied himself about personally and reported satisfactorily. The next question in the catechism, which reached the member in due course of time was, 'Is there a health board at the place?' As this, of course, was impossible in the circumstances, the department was told so. Under these conditions the member was instructed to apply for and obtained a grant of £100 for health purposes. No health rate was, or could be, struck. This difficulty overcome, the member was next asked if there was any provision made for sanitary accommodation, and he was able to assure the department that the matter was all right. The water supply then crossed the troubled mind of the chief panjandrum who was running the show. Were there adequate means for storing water? He was told yes—the inhabitants found the tanks and Providence the water. Would the department take its share and send along a teacher? Then a fresh difficulty arose. The teacher would be in receipt of a small salary only, and might not wish to stay at a hotel. Was there any extra accommodation besides the main building, such as a 'skillion,' where he or she could sleep? This was arranged for by the long suffering seekers after knowledge, and they built a skillion, having the required cubic measurement of air space. All this circumlocution occupied until about the end of October or beginning of November, and then it was hoped the teacher would come along. Again the sonniferous influences appeared, and the department said the Christmas holidays were approaching, and the teacher would not be installed until early in the year. This being apparently a sensible proposition, and the inhabitants having learned to wait, was

acceded to patiently. February was not considered too 'early in the year,' and in that month the member was again appealed to. He interviewed the head of the department, and learned to his amazement that no teacher was available, nor would be until after the Estimates. He suggested that a local teacher could be availed of for the time being, but it appeared that a local product would cost more under the Act than the properly trained and imported article, and could not be thought of. The inhabitants must wait. The member stated that if they waited much longer, despite the alleged decline of the birth-rate, the town would require the services of a staff of teachers—that is, unless some epidemic swept away the parents who were now seeking help and finding none, and even then the children would be still making the demand. It was, however, found impossible to upset the deliberative methods of the department, and at the present time of writing the people of the district—having gone to endless expense and trouble, assisted by their member, in the interests of the constituency and the State generally—are, so far as obtaining their object goes, worse off than twelve months ago. They have spent their money fruitlessly, and have lost the childlike faith that induced them to start on so hopeless a pursuit of knowledge."

He was not the author of the article, but it was correct in details. It was founded on information he had given to a newspaper man. He brought these details under the notice of the Minister because the files in the office might not come under the Minister's attention. It was desired to know whether under this vote there was to be provision for additional teachers throughout the State.

Mr. BATH: What action had the Government taken in regard to a promise made on several occasions as to setting aside an endowment of land to be thrown open from time to time for the purposes of education? Each twelve months we had a statement from the Treasurer that

he did not remember a statement he had already made. But we should have a permanent fund, apart altogether from the provision made each year on the Estimates for educational purposes. We knew that if there happened to be a stringency of the finances, although we were committed to a generous policy with regard to education, there was a tendency to carve down the Estimates for that purpose. But if we had some fund derived from endowment there would be always something available to supplement what was provided on the Estimates. There was a controversy taking place with regard to the recommendations of the Chief Inspector of Schools on the question of secondary education. He (Mr. Bath) was strongly in favour of the State undertaking secondary education, and believed if we were to have any complete educational system secondary education was just as essential as technical education. In the interests of the community it was just as essential that the State should undertake the work in preference to private enterprise. In Australia the aim of our educational institutions, as well as of our political institutions, should be as far as possible to avoid all the distinctions of caste and sect; and we would lay a better foundation for the removal of these things in the future by the State undertaking a proper system of secondary education. There were big demands on the money we could provide for our primary system in developing new agricultural centres, and it should be our first consideration to give everybody a good foundation in the direction of a primary education. But we should not lose sight of the fact that we needed secondary education and that the State should undertake it. That was why in every new area of land made available we should, as was done in the United States, set apart portion of it as an educational endowment. It certainly might not bring in much in the beginning, but within ten years it would amount to a sum that would be a very substantial addition to the amount provided by Parliament each year on the Estimates. He urged on the Treasurer, who was also Minister for Education, the desirability

of carrying out the promises made in this direction.

Mr. STUART: In verification of what the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Horan) had said there were many instances. It was not a desirable thing to see the Education Department taking up the position it did in regard to teachers in out-of-the-way places. Why had a teacher asked to go to such a place as Higginsville to face the problem of how to live? The Minister should frame regulations to guarantee a living wage for persons sent to such a locality. There were several places in the Mount Leonora electorate, Anaconda for instance. There the residents erected a building and put it at the disposal of the department; but because of some absurd departmental regulation fixing the salary for the school at a figure at which the teacher could not live, the school was now idle. There should be a little give and take in the department in this matter of salary. What would be ample where living was cheap was altogether absurd where living was so dear. Another undesirable feature in connection with these schools was that though the population of a place increased, the size of the school did not increase, and the teacher would be told that he should have some of the children in a bough shed away from the main building; but as there was only one teacher, one could imagine how he would get on with half the children in the school and half in the bough shed. One of the worst features in connection with the Education Department was the neglect and utter disregard for the children in out-of-the-way places, and it was time the regulations were overridden. There was no higher ambition for those who had children than to think that those children might some day become teachers; but what sort of ambition would it be for anyone to look forward to being in charge of a school in the back country at a salary of £2 5s. a week, where it cost 30s. a week to live? He urged the Minister to amplify the regulations so that the teachers might have some redress. In the country families were broken up because there was no education for the children; some children had to go to the other States and some to Perth to attend school.

The Treasurer : Where was that ?

Mr. STUART : Anaconda, for one place.

The Treasurer : There were only 10 children there.

Mr. STUART : If there were only 10 children there should be sufficient accommodation, but he was not prepared to say there were not 20 children. Another place was Gwalia. A school was built to accommodate 32 children, but now there were over 45 and the building was the same as the day it was erected. The Minister might give him credit for knowing something about these things before he spoke. It was not a credit to the department that a member could not get an answer to communications.

The Treasurer : In the Education Department?

Mr. STUART : Yes.

The Treasurer : That was the first complaint he had received of that sort.

Mr. STUART : Communications addressed to the Minister were not replied to; whether the Minister saw them or not was not his business. This was a state of affairs which was not a credit to the department.

The TREASURER : There must be some mistake in regard to the last complaint that members did not get replies from the Education Department. Any correspondence addressed to the Inspector General or himself he guaranteed were replied to. The hon. member would not be able to give instances of any letter that had not been acknowledged. He did not know what letter the member was referring to, but he made the statement that all correspondence was acknowledged.

Mr. STUART : When the Minister said acknowledged, there was a system in the department—a most absurd one—that when a letter was sent to the department possibly the correspondent got back a piece of pasteboard saying that the letter had been received. The Commonwealth, which undertook the control of the Postal Department, did not let letters go astray. But if this piece of pasteboard was what the Minister called replying, then he (Mr. Stuart) would not say the letter was not acknowledged.

Mr. HORAN : What the member for Leonora said was correct. Replies had not been sent to him from the Education Department, but instead they were sent to someone else who was an absentee.

The TREASURER could not imagine an officer of the department writing a letter to a third party who was not interested in the correspondence. Did the member mean to say that a letter addressed to the department by himself was replied to to a third party?

Mr. Horan : Addressed to the only representative body they could have there, but it should have been addressed to himself.

The TREASURER : This was too absurd to delay the time of the House discussing. If certain persons wrote to the department a reply would be sent in due course. If the member for the district wrote to the department about anything he was entitled to a reply, and got it. The member complained about an acknowledgment in the meantime. Was it not the right thing that a letter should be acknowledged at once to show that it had reached the department? The hon. member knew full well these letters with requests had to be referred to probably an inspector, and a report had to be obtained.

Mr. Horan : It was never referred to an inspector.

The TREASURER : If the member put his complaint in writing, or called at his office, he undertook to probe the grievance to the bottom, and he guaranteed the member would find the department was not so much to blame as he wished members to believe. There was one thing he (the Minister) had been proud of in the Education Department, and that was that the correspondence had been attended to as promptly as possible; and there was no letter addressed to himself personally which had not been replied to promptly, as a rule by return of post unless some information had to be sought first, then the letter was acknowledged, and when the information was obtained a reply was sent. With regard to the complaint as to school teachers and the very interesting article which the member for Yilgarn read to the House,

and which evidently was inspired, according to his own account, by some conversation he had with a reporter, it had a great deal of reference to the member, and he knew the member was very energetic in attending to the requirements of his district, and he was sure the member would give him (the Minister) credit for being energetic in replying to requests.

Mr. Horan: But the request did not come before the Minister.

The TREASURER: All correspondence did not come before him. There was correspondence from 900 teachers, and there were 381 schools in existence. All departmental correspondence could not possibly come before him, but any letter addressed to him personally did come before him, and received prompt attention. With regard to the complaint that there was no teacher, the reason why one was not appointed was not because of lack of funds but owing to the difficulty that existed in getting junior teachers to go to the very small schools. It was impossible to get them; there were at least eight or ten schools the Government would like to open, but they could not obtain teachers for the purpose. [*Mr. Heitmann:* Wages were rotten.] They were better in Western Australia than in any other portion of the continent. On the fields the teachers received proper goldfields allowances. They were very well paid in Western Australia. He had stated the reason why the department could not get a teacher to go to a place like Anaconda where there were 10 children, but where there was no accommodation. The member surely would not say the department should build a house for a teacher of 10 children. There was some talk of sending a schoolmistress up there, but she objected as she could not get even ordinary lodging accommodation. The department was trying to get a young man to go to that camp to rough it, and to put up with such accommodation as was forthcoming. On this question members were making a mountain out of a molehill. The department was well handled by the Inspector-General and his staff. There were better facilities given in this State than in any other part of the Commonwealth in pro-

portion to the population. Naturally there were individual cases where just complaints could be made, but whenever such were brought under his notice they were promptly rectified if it was in his power to do so. With regard to the land grants for educational purposes, that question had been placed in the hands of the Minister for Lands. Certain lands had been set aside, more especially down the Great Southern railway, as a nucleus for a grant for educational purposes. Wherever a new township was surveyed care was taken to make a provision of that nature.

Mr. TROY: The Minister said better facilities were given here in regard to education than in any of the other States. That was incorrect. He (Mr. Troy) had been associated with the Education Department of New South Wales, and knew many of those persons now associated with it. He had recently made inquiries and was well able to state how matters were managed there. He would admit that the primary system in Western Australia was much better than in any of the other States, but he would not admit that the same facilities were given to the people. The Minister had stated he had not supplied schools in certain districts because there were not sufficient children.

The Treasurer: They could get half-time schools if teachers were available.

Mr. TROY: Applications had frequently been made for schools where there were only nine or ten children, but none either full-time or half-time had been granted to his constituency. At Gullewa there were 10 children. The locality was somewhat remote but those children had as much need for education as any others in the State. Considering the fact that the parents were labouring under great disadvantages in pioneering the State they were entitled to more consideration than the parents in the metropolitan area. The people there had been asking for a teacher for 12 months. An inspector visited the locality recently, and at last promised to subsidise a teacher. Now, however, the department were putting a farther obstacle in the road, as they wanted the parents of the children to provide a school building. The people

did not feel justified in doing that. In New South Wales the position was totally different, and if there were only seven or eight children a half-time school was provided. The Treasurer had said this system obtained here, but personally he knew of no goldfields area where it existed. He hoped the Minister would remedy the existing evils as quickly as possible.

State batteries, £27,839:

Mr. TROY: On the previous day he gave notice of a question in regard to the manager of the Coolgardie public battery. In compliance with the general policy of the Mines Department the manager would have been removed from there, but because a requisition was sent down, which was alleged to bear the signatures of representative prospectors, leaseholders and others, he was retained in his position. The Minister gave him certain replies to a question on the subject, and then there was a request that the papers should be laid on the table of the House.

The Minister for Mines: The papers would be available on the following day.

Mr. TROY: In such circumstances he need refer to the matter no farther.

Mr. STUART would like some information with regard to State batteries and their management in the future. One item that was rather vexatious was with regard to prospectors and the position they stood in so far as the accumulated residues, previous to the taking of assays in 1905, were concerned; there was a great amount of uncertainty among the owners.

The Minister for Mines: Slimes or residues?

Mr. STUART: Slimes.

The Minister: The hon. member said residues.

Mr. STUART meant to say slimes. There was great uncertainty in regard to the position they stood in regarding these slimes, and it was the subject of continual argument. They did not know what value to attach to these accumulations. Was it the intention of the Minister to extend the State battery system in the North Coolgardie district? There were many places which had been hanging on, where people had been put-

ting money into shows relying on the promise that within a reasonable time crushing facilities would be provided. He would like to know whether it was the Minister's intention to provide those facilities within the next twelve months, at places such as Mt. Stirling or Mt. Sir Samuel. If it were known that no crushing facilities were going to be provided, the people who were putting money into shows there would cease to do so. With regard to the transfer of the State battery from Kalpini to Leonora, upon that he thought hinged the establishment of a State battery somewhere else. Would the State battery at Kalpini be taken to Leonora; and would the ten-head battery at Leonora be divided into two batteries of 5-head each and made available for some other place in that locality? He would like more information on these heads.

[Mr. Ewing took the Chair.]

Mr. HOLMAN: With regard to State batteries and the attitude adopted by the Minister in connection with the grants made to private individuals lately, he would like to say a few words. They found that instead of extending the State battery system and giving prospectors and leaseholders facilities for having stone treated, grants or loans had been made to private individuals and in the agreements that had been drawn up there was absolutely no protection to the leaseholder. The person who got a loan with which to build a battery could, if he liked, pay up that amount and was not compelled afterwards to treat stone for the public. That meant that prospectors and leaseholders who had been working their properties, expecting to have their stone treated at these privately-owned batteries, would not be able to do so, and the chances were that they would be compelled to sacrifice their properties. They had had unscrupulous individuals who would do everything possible to damage properties in order to bring about their abandonment. The Minister in granting loans to individuals was only assisting those people to perhaps ruin some promising district. It was

not giving the prospector or leaseholder any chance at all. It was a dangerous proceeding and should not be tolerated. He mentioned the case of Mr. Trude, of the Karangahaki, at the 8-Mile. In that case that person was the only company promoter in that district; and he was the only one who had got assistance. He was given a grant of £1,000 on a lease, practically not to erect machinery on it, but he was just given the money, and then he paid away the same amount for the purchase of leases. When a private individual had a battery and he treated stone for the public, they knew well that there was a possibility of the owners of that stone losing a great deal of their gold. This resulted sometimes in the abandonment of properties; and people who were looking for cheap properties were able to take them up at their own price, or perhaps nothing at all. It was found also that provision was made in the agreements that if sands were not removed from the battery within three days, the owner of the battery could take possession of them. He maintained that that was a very bad policy and in such cases he did not think the loans were warranted. There were other instances of a glaring nature which showed how unjust to the leaseholders and prospectors in outback places these conditions were. If the Government were justified in lending money to the extent of £1,000 to some individuals to erect batteries, they were justified in erecting the batteries themselves. People were dissatisfied with these proposals seeing that a new arrival could come in and get a loan of £1,000 simply because he had some influence and exercised it. It should be the policy of the Minister to do all he could to facilitate and push forward the interests of the people in all the mining centres. He had mentioned this question, which he contended should always be approached in a non-party spirit. If the Minister went on lending money to private individuals he would ruin the industry or throw back the movement for a very long time. He (Mr. Holman) entered a very strong protest against the procedure that had been adopted.

Mr. TROY: The Minister for Mines recognised that in many of the goldfields districts at the present time a great deal of prospecting was being done, and many new localities were being opened up. He also recognised that unless public batteries were erected the prospectors would not be able to hold on to their properties. He thought the expenditure of money would be better devoted to providing batteries for prospectors than in fitting out parties. He did not object to fitting out parties, but there were many prospectors who ought to be encouraged. At the same time they had to recognise that it was of no use finding new fields unless the prospectors were encouraged to stay there and develop the properties they found. During the past 12 months very little had been done in connection with the erection of State batteries. More of it should be done because it was the best way to assist the prospector.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In connection with the matter of slimes that had been accumulating at the various State batteries, it was in February, 1903, that instructions were given by him that from that date the values of the slimes should be taken and entered up, and that if at any future date the department erected slimes plants and recovered the value of the gold, the customers of the batteries would receive the value of those slimes, less the cost of treatment. That rule did not apply to-day, because since the 1st February of this year the department had been buying the slimes as well as the sands from the customers of the mills. The department had been anxious to organise some scheme for the treatment of slimes. There were different propositions in all the districts. For instance, at Wiluna it would be better to slime everything as it went through the mill and treat the whole resultant—slimes and sands—by one process. In other cases it would be impossible to do this, and a slimes plant would be needed as well as a cyanide plant. The department had now decided to erect slimes plants of the Cassells type, and instructions had been given for the immediate erection of these. It was necessary to do so. On an average the de-

partment had been paying 85 per cent. for the slimes and sands going through the mill and were not recovering more than 50 per cent. of the value by present processes, so that about 35 per cent. of the sands and slimes were not recovered. It was absolutely compulsory, in order that the department might recover the money already expended, to start the erection of slimes plants, and members could assure the various prospectors that as speedily as possible small slimes plants would be erected at the various mills where it was considered there was sufficient accumulation to warrant them; and as soon as the slimes for which the Government had already paid were treated the other slimes would be treated and the values given to the prospectors less the cost of treatment. Unfortunately, he had been induced to purchase a plant at Kalpini in the hope of opening up the district there. It had proved a failure and he had decided to remove the plant to Leonora, but when at Kanowna he was waited on and asked to stay his hand until the stone already in sight had been treated. This he had done, probably at the expense of the people at Leonora, but he did not feel justified in taking away the plant from Kalpini in the circumstances. He told the people of Leonora that they could rest satisfied that instead of a 10-head mill a smaller plant would be sent out capable of treating the stone in the district. At Mount Sir Samuel it was quite a different proposition altogether. The people there were anxious to get a battery, because the only means of crushing in the district was an old plant absolutely useless for the purpose. However, there was not a single lease being worked outside the Bellevue mine, and he had told the people of Mount Sir Samuel that it was impossible to spend State money in building a plant for crushing stone when there was not a man raising ore to bring to the mill, and that if they would set to work and open up the mining propositions their request would receive every consideration from the department. He had said it was an absurdity for him to go ahead of the prospector with a crushing plant, but he had promised that the

State Mining Engineer would go through the district and give an exhaustive report which might induce people to go through and start prospecting many of the abandoned shows. He had said he was not justified in promising to expend money unless the men worked the shows and got out stone in advance of the mill. The member for Mount Magnet knew the trouble he (the Minister) had gone to in travelling 60 miles out of his way to examine the Youandme district. Although having a report in his possession from the officer of the department to the effect that if a battery were sent to the district it would only prove the worthlessness of the district, he took the responsibility of promising that a small mill would be placed there as speedily as possible to give the people a chance to improve the value of their holdings, because he was satisfied from what he saw that the place had a future before it, and that if crushing facilities were not given the prospectors would be compelled to sell to the first man that came along, or to abandon their holdings altogether. As far as that district was concerned he had given an answer and taken a great deal of responsibility upon himself, but he felt satisfied that with crushing facilities the place would become a good little mining centre, and that the work would tend to improve an area of auriferous country he was led to believe extended still farther south. He was averse to putting a mill between Nannine and Meekatharra because he felt satisfied that in the very near future we would build a railway from Nannine to Meekatharra. The desire of the Government in erecting crushing plants was to have them continuously employed. We now had mills capable of crushing 300,000 tons per annum, but we only averaged 100,000 tons, so that the mills were not being used to more than a third of their capacity. If they were more fully employed no doubt the work would be far more economical than at present. He felt that if we built the railway line and fixed an ore bin at the station, we would be able to carry the ore to Meekatharra or Nannine much cheaper than we could crush it at a small mill in the centre

mentioned by the member for Murchison. In connection with the Trude application, in the first instance two applications were made, one by Mr. Trude who represented a company, and the other by Mr. James who represented a syndicate. The department were desirous of giving assistance to the syndicate, and he went to the trouble of telegraphing to Mr. James telling him that he could not wait longer, and asking Mr. James to come forward with his request for assistance from the department to erect a mill. Mr. James had not come forward, and Mr. Trude had asked for assistance on good security to the extent of £1,000 to enable him to build a mill.

Mr. Holman: The prospectors would not crush there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES felt satisfied they would. He had good security for the money that had been advanced to Mr. Trude. Some little time ago Mr. Trude heard that certain criticisms were being made in connection with the advance to him, and he offered the Government the £1,000 back again. He (the Minister) told Mr. Trude that he preferred Mr. Trude should carry on the agreement for 12 months at any rate, for crushing facilities were required for the people in the district, and at his request Mr. Trude refrained from paying the amount off. A clause was now being embodied in all agreements that where a loan was obtained from the department, and the person who obtained the loan desired to pay it off, he could not do so but that some £20 or £30 of the loan had to remain for a certain period, which ensured the agreement being carried out.

Mr. Troy: Was that loan made for the purpose of assisting crushing?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Especially to build the battery. The conditions were that Mr. Trude had to crush for the public at a price to be approved by the department.

Mr. Holman: Until the loan was paid off.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: All agreements were being amended in that respect. The idea was first put forward in connection with the loan to pastoralists

in the North-West. In that agreement the amount could not be paid off, but a small amount had to remain on mortgage for the period fixed in the agreement, and the loan must stand during that period, and the person obtaining the loan must carry out the agreement. That would apply to all advances in the future. In regard to the sale or purchase of sands the department found a difficulty in making a hard and fast rule. He was to-day dealing with an application sent in to the department by a Mr. Metters. Two men sent in some stone to be crushed at the battery at Birrigrin. Mr. Metters complained very bitterly that the battery was not crushing according to the agreement. In the agreement it was not compulsory that the sands had to be sold. The stone was very rich and the sands were equally rich, and the prospectors thought it would be better if they had their own sands plant. The owner of the battery wished to insist on the Government regulation applying, and that the prospectors be compelled to sell the sands according to the Government regulation, because the battery owner knew that he would make a profit on them. There was very little profit on the crushing. It was impossible to make a hard and fast rule to compel the sands to be purchased, but the person having the stone crushed could remove the sands.

Mr. Holman: If he did not remove them within three days he lost them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Where there were pits, these pits must be cleaned out, or another person could not come along with stone to be crushed. Sands had only to be removed a short distance.

Mr. Holman: But the battery would not be stopped to remove the sands at any time. They turned the next man's sands on the top of the others.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If a hard and fast rule were made injury would be done to the customers, which there was no desire to do. The system at the present time was in a sort of transient stage, but he was exceedingly hopeful that the promise made on the fields, that the sliding scale would be reverted to, would be carried out almost immediately. He did not intend to reduce the crushing

charges, but the payment would be according to the value of the stone. High grade ore would pay a higher rate than had been charged in the past; and for low grade ore the charge would be reduced to a minimum. Stone going 7dwts. would be crushed for 8s., and 15dwt. stone would come to about 15s. The department wished to insist on an average price of 10s. a ton.

[*Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister's explanation was in no way satisfactory, because the Minister could give £1,000 to Mr. Trude without safeguarding the prospectors or leaseholders in any way. It was usual when dealing with these matters for the Minister to grease the fatted sow. The prospectors at Yaloginda had not been considered at all. Mr. Trude came into the place, bought a property, gave a certain amount of money for it, and got £1,000 from the Government to complete the payment. The same thing obtained in other parts of the State. At Wiluna the leaseholders were practically fleeced for a good many years through the sands account. As the Minister had said, over 50 per cent. of the gold went away in the tailings, and during a good many years these sands played into the hands of private individuals to the detriment of the whole of those taking stone to the battery. 'It was very seldom that the leaseholders got a fair go. Instead of getting away from the present system the Minister encouraged it and gave Mr. Trude £1,000.

The Minister: That did not apply to Wiluna.

Mr. HOLMAN: It did not. He had been fighting for several years but the matter had been rectified. The first payment for sands was made about a month or six weeks ago. More consideration should be paid in such a district as that to the prospector and leaseholder who were working their own properties. The men who had paid as high as 12s. a ton for cartage and who had been in the district for many years should be treated with more consideration than the speculator who had been there for a short time. The latter had been placed in the position

of holding practically the welfare of every leaseholder in his hands. It would be possible for him, or for anyone in a similar position, to treat the prospectors' stone and cause such dissatisfaction at the poor returns that he would be able to get the properties in his own hands for practically nothing. After bad treatment at the batteries there were bad returns, which meant the throwing up of shows. He failed to see why the prospectors should be compelled to wait for assistance until the railway was run from Nannine to Meekatharra. All knew there was no place in the State where a railway was more warranted than over that short distance, or where a line would pay better from the start. It might be a year or two before the line was constructed.

The Minister for Mines: It was only a short line, and its construction would not take more than five months after authority was once obtained.

Mr. HOLMAN: Many members had visited the district, and were so convinced of the necessity for the line that had authority been asked for it would have been granted at any time. The question was whether they were going to encourage the prospectors and leaseholders to hold their properties and work them, or whether they are going to back up one individual in a community of 800 people, and give him something that the others were unable to obtain. With regard to the general system of private batteries, the Minister knew that in Cue where there were private batteries great dissatisfaction had existed. There had also been considerable dissatisfaction at Nannine, but as soon as the superintendent of batteries went up there and found the manager was not giving the men the treatment he should do an alteration was effected, and the dissatisfaction ceased. With regard to a crushing which had been taken there, it appeared that the stone was taken from some seven old dumps situated in different parts of the district. He knew that district very well and had gone all over it, and was sure it would be impossible to get a 2 dwt. prospect return from any of the dumps, yet the return provided at the battery showed something over 2 ozs. He had

seen samples taken from those various dumps, and would stake his reputation that when dollied the stone would not go more than 2 dwts. When the question of granting assistance to Mr. Trude was brought up in the district the prospectors at once expressed their dissatisfaction with the proposal. The agreement with that gentleman was absolutely useless as far as the leaseholders and prospectors of the district were concerned. He hoped the Minister would give farther consideration to the question.

Explosives and Analytical, £1,462.

Mr. SCADDAN : In connection with this item he noticed in the report of the Mines Department that some £97,310 of explosives were condemned, and statements were made against the various quantities condemned during the year. The remarks stated that some had been condemned "owing to chemical deterioration," and others had been condemned "owing to containing an unauthorised ingredient." He would like to know from the Minister how these quantities that were condemned were disposed of ? He had heard it rumoured that the department had permitted the people who imported them to take those explosives out of the State again.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : In connection with the Explosives Department tests were being made, and it was discovered that use, in a small degree, was being made of chloride of mercury in connection with the manufacture of these explosives. That was contrary to the formula prescribed by the State, but it was approved by the German authorities, and it had also been admitted by the English authorities. But it was contrary to the local tests. Cables were received from England stating that similar explosives had been made in Great Britain, and it was agreed that the explosives containing that ingredient should be allowed to go into use; but it was insisted that it should not occur again. The department had given the people concerned a warning that if the same ingredient were used in the manufacture of these explosives, and the discovery were made they would be penalised. The department discovered

that this chloride of mercury was contained in certain of these explosives, and insisted upon very heavy fines being imposed in each case, and the people were told that they could ship their gelignite back to Germany, or they could destroy it. They shipped it back to where they could find a market for it. The department allowed these people to ship the explosives back to Germany, and as far as the department were concerned, they levied a fine of £100 in each case.

Mr. SCADDAN : The statement of the Minister was correct to an extent, yet he found that by the report, in connection with this particular ingredient, that the case was not altogether as the Minister had stated. Mr. Mann in his report pointed out that he gave warning as long ago as 1898 and 1900, and in another case in 1905. Mr. Mann went on to say:—

"It was pleaded by the manufacturers of the explosives that the chloride of mercury was not added to deliberately mask the heat test of the explosive; that it was used in much of the nitro-cotton manufactured on the Continent as a preservative or antiseptic, and that there was no attempt to mislead either the inspector or the consumer. It is only fair to state that only in one instance there appeared to be some grounds to support these contentions, but in the other two cases, in view of the fact that they had been so explicitly and carefully warned that their explosives gave evidence of the presence of a masking agent, and also that they must have been aware that perchloride of mercury would act as such a masking agent, there did not appear to be any room for the exercise of that leniency for which these claims were made an excuse."

He contended that the department had not acted wisely in permitting those companies to take the explosives out of the State.

The Minister for Mines : There was no objection to using them in Germany.

Mr. SCADDAN : But what evidence was there that the explosives were taken back to Germany.

The Minister for Mines : They might have been taken to South Africa for all we knew.

Mr. SCADDAN : Yes; and perhaps used in some of the mines there. Or they were perhaps taken to Victoria. In view of the fact that it was against the law of the land, the companies should have sustained the loss of these explosives. The explosives should have been destroyed. He recognised that the explosives might not have been dangerous, but if these people masked them behind certain ingredients, which were against the law, they deserved the punishment that they received, especially when they had been previously warned, and in addition to the fines, the explosives should have been destroyed. Some brands of explosives admitted to Western Australia were inferior in quality and should not be used in the mines. But until we could prevent their being used nothing could be done.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: All in connection with this matter had been done on the recommendation of Mr. Mann, the Chief Inspector of Explosives. No one was more careful in regard to explosives than Mr. Mann, and the fact of making these discoveries showed that he was attentive to the work. As Minister he had merely insisted that the fine should not be less than £100. In the two cases there was a fine of £100 each.

Inspection of Machinery, £2,381:

Mr. SCADDAN: There were one or two matters in the report of the Inspection of Machinery Department contained in the report of the Mines Department requiring attention. The Chief Inspector of Machinery had in the report published a report furnished to him by one of the district inspectors, which was a gross breach of faith on his part. Moreover it contained statements to which he (Mr. Scaddan) took strong exception.

Mr. Bath: The man who made the statements admitted not being able to prove them.

Mr. SCADDAN: As a matter of fact, what was done was what the Minister often complained about. Assertions were made on the strength of someone else making them, and were published with the

admission that nobody could be found to prove any specific case, and the Minister permitted it by having this report placed on the table of the House. This was portion of the Chief Inspector's report:—

"Various reasons are given for the strong feeling against engine-drivers, but the chief one appears to be that unlike all other classes of labour, drivers have not to rely on good work alone for employment, but have the law to assist them to coerce employers to accept a very poor return of service for a high wage, especially in outback places where men are scarce."

When such assertions were made the inspector responsible should be compelled by the Minister to prove or withdraw them. It was an undue reflection on a large section of the community, and was entirely unwarranted. The report proceeded:—

"In a large engine-room where an engine-driver has nothing to do but to attend to bearings, etc., everything goes smoothly, but when, as in many places, the engine-driver is called upon to do his own firing, or attend to other things such as battery plates and pumps in his spare time, there is strong friction. The man considers he is doing work beneath his dignity, and the owner considers it unreasonable that he should be compelled to employ certificated men to look after an engine that practically needs no watching. Drunkenness is frequently complained of, but I cannot get anyone to come forward and substantiate general charges with a specific case, although I have tried repeatedly."

Probably Mr. Jones, the district inspector, had not intended this report to his chief to be made public. According to the next paragraph the Chief Inspector, a great lover of engine-drivers generally according to his actions, appeared to have issued circulars asking for all cases of carelessness, incompetence, drunkenness, and improper conduct on the part of drivers to be brought promptly under the notice of the board of examiners, but apparently the Chief Inspector could not get many instances, at any rate none re-

lating to drunkenness. The report went on to say:—

“I know scores of very worthy drivers, but many more who without certificates could not earn a living.”

That was also an undue reflection on a large section of the community, and should not be allowed to remain without being proved. The Minister might call on Mr. Jones to prove whether he knew so many engine-drivers who, without certificates, could not obtain a living. Probably the case might be reversed, and it might be said that without snug positions in the Machinery Department Mr. Jones and others might not obtain employment. However, it was an absolute disgrace that the Minister should allow an Inspector of Machinery to throw this at engine-drivers. The Chief Inspector, unless he were prejudiced against engine-drivers, would never have allowed a thing of this nature to appear in the report, and in such a cowardly fashion; not being prepared to say it himself, but using the words of one of the inspectors to do so. The step was unworthy of the Chief Inspector, and the Minister should call upon that officer to withdraw the statement. On page 217 of the report the Chief Inspector made reference to certain criticisms of the department made in this Chamber. This was also a most remarkable statement to have in any annual report. He (Mr. Scaddan) had not yet discovered where any officer of the public service had ever attempted to make such a statement criticising members of Parliament because they dared to make mention of certain things being carried on in a department. One of the privileges of members of Parliament was to deal with any question needing criticism. Ministers were always ready to defend their officers against unfair criticism, and surely Mr. Matthews should be satisfied with the manner in which the Minister for Mines had defended him on all occasions, rightly or wrongly, principally wrongly. In order that the Committee might understand what was in the report he would read the paragraph:—

“During last session of Parliament, certain strictures were made in the Legislative Assembly on the adminis-

tration of the Act, and I desire to take this opportunity of impressing upon the Hon. the Minister the urgent necessity and desirability of taking steps to have alleged complaints fully and thoroughly inquired into before being brought before Parliament and the public.”

Apparently the officer had a fair idea of how much influence he had over the Minister; but he seemed to have a false idea of the influence the Minister had over members. The Minister could not compel him (Mr. Scaddan) to have an inquiry made on any matter brought forward if he did not desire it. The worst feature of this paragraph appeared later on. It said:—

“I feel sure if this were done much misconception could be avoided, and wrong impressions which now get abroad and misrepresentations (unintentional and otherwise) might be arrested.”

He wanted the Minister, in defending that officer, to state to-night, or some other occasion after he had seen that officer, what were the misrepresentations made in the Assembly, that were intentional and otherwise. He had a fairly live idea that this paragraph was intended for himself, for he had made certain criticisms of the Machinery Department last session. He thought he was justified in making the criticisms and if in the future he thought he was justified he would make farther criticism. He had been unable to find out where he had made any misrepresentation intentionally and otherwise. He wanted Mr. Matthews or the Minister to show him where he had made misrepresentation, intentional and otherwise. The Chief Inspector of Machinery lately was running away with himself. He was having too much rope. Since his office had been removed to Wellington Street, far from the Mines Department, he was having such a swing that it was time the Minister brought him back to have proper control over him. He believed it was the intention of the Minister to pay some attention in the future to the Machinery Department. Undoubtedly this department was costing the country too much for the service it was rendering. Three

years ago he pointed out the cost; because of too much centralisation, too much red tape, and too much duplication of the work. One could hardly imagine that a district inspector, who came in contact with machinery and boilers, was not capable of saying whether it was safe or what was a safe pressure until he had received instructions from the Chief Inspector. He was not prejudiced against Mr. Matthews in any degree; personally he had nothing against him, only against his administration. The Machinery Act was not receiving that administration which was due to it. If the Machinery Act was properly administered it was a good Act, and would render good service to the State, but under the present administration it was not having a fair deal. In spite of this paragraph he (Mr. Scaddan) would make such criticism in the future as he thought necessary. He could give instances of matters in the Machinery Department which were carried out not in the best interests of the country. He desired to draw the Minister's attention to these particular paragraphs, and ask what he intended to do in connection with them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : This was the first time he had seen the report of the inspector. The department were very anxious to get the Mines Report out as usual so that it could be submitted to Parliament on the first day of meeting, and he had not seen the report previously. He agreed with the member to a great extent. He did not like the paragraph at all about the engine-drivers. If there was anything necessary to make inquiry about the report it should have been made to him as Minister, and it was the duty of the inspector first to report to the Minister. He thought in the report dealing with the Machinery Department there were statements that were no doubt offensive against a very deserving section of the community.

Mr. Scaddan : The way the paragraph got into the report was the worst feature.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : It was here, and it was exceedingly hard to justify it; he did not attempt to justify it. When anyone desired to make a charge about drivers being the worse for

drink in public, it wanted strong evidence before that was done. He would like the member to have brought the paragraphs under his notice beforehand; not that he wished to restrict the member from speaking in Parliament, but if the member had brought the matter under his (the Minister's) notice before, he would have made inquiries, and he would have come fully seized with the facts. Certainly he would not endorse the paragraphs, but he might be able to bring some reason or excuse from the Chief Inspector for having put such paragraphs in the report.

Mr. Holman : Surely there was no reason or excuse for it.

The MINISTER : There might be. He would like to find out why the paragraph was inserted, and if his attention had been drawn to it previously he would have been able to show what object the inspector had in placing the paragraph in the report. To his mind it was a statement deserving, to a very great extent, of censure. The other paragraph was equally bad. Members of Parliament could always please themselves whether they came to Parliament or to the department with their complaints. He did not like the paragraphs; he did not like either of them, and he would be only too pleased to inquire into the matter generally. He would draw the attention of the Under Secretary of Mines to the paragraphs, and ask for an explanation with regard to them. The inspector was quite justified in trying to exonerate himself as to any charge against his department, but this paragraph was so vague and dealt with generalities that he did not agree with it.

Mr. COLLIER : Would the Minister make a statement as to the criticism which had been indulged in lately as to the wages paid on the railways? If the Minister had spoken on the Address-in-Reply, no doubt he would have replied to the criticism that had taken place. Perhaps it would be well to hear something of the matter now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES would deal with the question of the appointment of Mr. Short on the following day, and would then go fully into the phase of the question just referred to.

Electoral, £3,310:

Mr. HOLMAN: This was a question requiring to be dealt with. He would like to receive an assurance from the Attorney General that in all centres where it was necessary polling places would be provided. In the recent elections for the Upper House provision was not made in places where polling booths should have been established. There were a good many isolated centres in Western Australia, and therefore extra precautions should be taken to enable people there to record their votes. As to appointing persons to take postal votes, it was known that in some places there was no provision made at all. Was it the intention of the Government to appoint extra persons to take those votes?

Mr. TROY: The chief electoral officer was a gentleman who, if he were given the necessary authority, would do his utmost to see that facilities were provided everywhere for electors to register their votes, but an assurance was needed that that authority would be given to him. In many electorates the population was so scattered that quite a number of booths were required, and possibly the department with the idea of saving money, might refuse to provide these conveniences. Every facility should be given to electors to record their votes. As to postal vote officers, considerable delay had occurred in connection with the Legislative Council elections through difficulty in getting postal votes registered, and it was to be hoped that similar trouble would not occur in connection with the general elections. It was desirable that partisans should not be appointed to take these postal votes. It was often the custom to appoint justices of the peace to the position, but even they had frequently caused dissatisfaction, and it was not altogether the best policy to decide that all justices of the peace should be appointed. A great majority of these gentlemen were of high character and would probably carry out their duties in a fair manner, but there were others who would be distinct partisans of one or other of the candidates. The best persons to appoint were civil servants, school teachers, railway station masters, etc. They were

generally persons not very prejudiced. Too often justices of the peace held pretty strong views in regard to politics. It was to be hoped that the justice of the peace for Fremantle who took votes for the East Fremantle district at the last elections would not be allowed to take any more. More attention should be paid in the Treasurer's electorate to the selection of these officers.

The Treasurer would take care of that.

Mr. TROY: On a previous occasion the Treasurer took care that one of these officers went canvassing to the Leeuwin on his behalf.

The Treasurer: That would be against the Act.

Mr. TROY was at Karridale on the day when that officer returned from taking postal votes at the Leeuwin.

The Treasurer: How did the hon. member know that the officer was canvassing?

Mr. TROY: The Minister would not deny that the officer had been canvassing. It was during the Ministerial election three years ago. Many people in the district knew the officer, and that he had been canvassing for the Minister.

The Treasurer: But he did not canvass.

Mr. TROY: Partisans should not be chosen to take postal votes.

Mr. SCADDAN agreed that if the Chief Electoral Officer was given an authority to act, he would do so in the best interests of all, and there would be very little to complain about at the next election. With regard to the rolls, he believed everything possible was being done by that officer, who was in a peculiar position. He was expected to declare that the rolls were complete; sometimes they were anything but complete, because he could not satisfy himself that all his canvassers had gone carefully through the localities allotted them. As a matter of fact some localities had very often been missed altogether. He believed it would have been better to have published in the papers a list of the names of the people objected to, rather than to send notices out. The work would not have been so expensive and would have been more satisfactory. At the present time unless a

person received a notice of objection he took it for granted that his name was still on the roll. Rolls had been issued up to the 25th of July, that was those that had been made up to that date. He was informed now that supplementary rolls would not be available until after the writs had been issued.

The Attorney General: That was not so. The rolls would be issued as soon as they could be completed.

Mr. SCADDAN: That at any rate was the information he had received, and the result would be that the same thing would apply as happened at the last general elections. Many claims were sent in, and people would have no opportunity of finding out, until it was too late, whether they were on the roll or not. Would it not be possible to get a list of the names and post them up at the office of the Chief Electoral Registrar? In that way persons could satisfy themselves that their names would appear on the roll.

Mr. T. L. BROWN endorsed the remark of the member for Mount Magnet that care should be exercised in connection with the appointment of postal officers. He would make the suggestion that a person receiving papers or books from the Chief Electoral Officer for the purpose of taking postal votes should immediately after the election was over return by post those papers or books to the Chief Electoral Officer, or to the returning officer of the district, and that then they should be checked. At the present time there was no check at all. [*The Attorney General:* There was the butt.] The butt was never called for. He had pointed that out last session, and if it had come into operation since then he would be very pleased to know of the fact. Any person who desired to be unscrupulous had the opportunity of destroying any vote he had received, and fill in another paper and send it along. An instance occurred in the district he represented, where a justice of the peace, appointed to receive postal votes, drove his own vehicle and pair of horses during the whole day of the election. After the poll was declared that night he (Mr Brown) took that justice of the peace to task. He thought they should appeal to reason in such a matter.

Was it likely that this justice of the peace was going to take people to the polling booth without asking them to vote for the person he was supporting? Again, during the recent election for the Central Province, a person was appointed to receive postal votes, and this person, it transpired, had left the district some 18 months previously, consequently some 20 or 25 persons were disfranchised. Many of these people were now living 30 or 40 miles from polling places, and were disfranchised because no facilities were given them to vote. Particularly, the Attorney General should recall the books for the purpose of examination immediately after an election.

Mr. ANGWIN: No doubt the Chief Electoral Officer should make inquiries in regard to persons appointed to take postal votes. Notwithstanding the Attorney General had written that it was not intended to close the electoral office at Fremantle during three days of the week as suggested, unless it was shown that such removal would not interfere with the work of the office, until after the next elections, the office of the West Province had been removed to Perth, and this took place before the election. The step taken had been the means of disfranchising at least one voter; because owing to the fact that the number of the house had been put on the claim instead of the number of the block, the claim was not allowed, and there was no time to make the correction before it was too late to get a vote for the last Legislative Council elections. Apparently there was something loose, because other claims in which the same information was given were accepted. Was it intended to close the Fremantle office or not? One recognised that every endeavour was being made to make the rolls as up-to-date as possible, but it would be far better to have permanent census officers to keep the rolls continually up to date.

[12 o'clock midnight.]

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In regard to the establishment of polling places, the Chief Electoral Officer had compiled as far as possible from records in the possession of the electoral office,

the numbers polled at the different polling places in the past, no record having been kept until recently. The result of this effort was that it was found that in some elections only one or two votes were recorded at some polling places, and on the other hand it was pointed out by those interested that polling places were not available where there was a large number of voters, owing to insufficient information being in the possession of the office, and owing to not having proper records. That omission was now being repaired as far as possible, but in many cases more facilities were given for voting by the postal-vote system than by establishing polling places. This applied in a large measure to agricultural centres where the establishment of a polling place might be thought to be a good thing; but if the settlers could use the postal vote between the issue of the writ and polling day, far better results would be achieved than by compelling them all to go into a common centre on one particular day.

Mr. Angwin: Could any person vote before the issue of the writ?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. As to postal-vote officers, care was taken to select desirable men, and the returning officers in the various districts were consulted on the matter. The appointments must depend on local information, for the department could not consult members of the House on the matter. Although he had great respect for members, he would not like to ask them to recommend men as postal vote officers. The member for Ivanhoe had now warned him as to any false economy. He was glad to hear it, because he had some fear as to being able to defend the large expenditure which had been incurred. Money had been spent to an amount which Parliament might find it hard to sanction, but he would be able to put in a defence and show that the money had been spent well. The Chief Electoral Officer had had to pay for work that was done, but it was necessary work. There had been a complaint that postal vote officers did not receive the necessary papers so as to enable people to record postal votes; but he believed this would not happen in the future. It did happen in the Northam election; but any postal

vote officer with common intelligence, if he had not a book of papers, would write or wire for them, and not let the department imagine that he was fully supplied. The roll, he was assured by the Chief Electoral Officer, would represent at least 90 per cent. of the electors; he hoped to be slightly in excess of that. Under our present electoral law it was necessary to give 14 days' notice of the intention to issue a writ; and until that notice was given, claims could be received. The question arose as to printing the supplementary rolls. In some cases these might be large in volume, but not in many instances. The estimate made was that the supplementary roll would not represent more than 5 or 6 per cent. In large centres the main roll would not be exhaustive, but would be very nearly exhaustive. Where there would be large supplementary rolls was in the country districts where the canvass had not been so complete as in the large centres, and owing to the weather conditions the claims had not been received in time. The supplementary roll would be issued within a few days of the issue of the writ. If all the names were put on one supplementary roll it would be beyond possibility to have that roll printed before the election, because claims could be admitted right up to the issue of the writ. But in cases where there were anything like a large number of names there would be more than one supplementary roll issued. It was all a question whether the department could produce the supplementary rolls. The Government were not prepared to undertake the expense of printing the names in the newspapers. The Government were spending a large amount of money in directions that were wise and proper, but if we added to that the publication of names in the newspapers it would swell the cost to such an extent that the department could not stand it.

Mr. Scaddan: What about posting the names on a list?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, the electoral officer would be advised to do that. The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) was anxious to know if the electoral office at Fremantle would be continued. When the prepara-

tion of the rolls was complete there would not be sufficient work to keep the officers employed permanently, and the Chief Electoral Officer suggested that the department should keep the Fremantle office open every day of the week at any time when an election was approaching, and when a considerable number of people would be inquiring about the rolls, but after the election was over it was anticipated that there would be some time when the public demand would have ceased and the department would not be justified in keeping the office open. For that reason after the elections had taken place, unless there was some reasonable cause, the electoral officer at Fremantle would attend on certain days of the week, as often as necessary, but that did not mean, in the opinion of the Chief Electoral Officer, that the officer should attend every day of the week.

Mr. Holman: What about a polling booth being erected at Yaloginda?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the returning officer thought it of sufficient importance to make that a polling place.

Mr. Holman: The residents wanted a permanent polling booth erected.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was not proposed to erect polling booths anywhere.

Stipendiary Magistracy, £10,456:

Mr. T. L. BROWN: Recently the Crown Law Department had seen fit to economise by taking from the resident local officer at Northampton the position of resident magistrate. The position was that the district was rather a small one for a resident medical officer who would not be able to live on the salary he got for that position, together with outside practice. With the positions of resident magistrate and warden added to it, however, it was worth while for a doctor to remain there. The present doctor being dissatisfied with the alteration made was now making arrangements to leave the district, which would mean there would be no medical officer nearer than 34 miles away. The settlement had a radius of from 25 to 30 miles, and was one of the most prominent agricultural districts in the State. The

officers of the Survey Department were now surveying new country which would be taken up immediately they concluded the work, and it would be a very bad thing for the district if it were left without a medical officer. It was one of the oldest districts in the State, and one of the most promising from an agricultural and mining standpoint. Certain duties previously performed by the officer had been added to the work of the official at Geraldton, the result being that anyone wishing to bring matters before the local court had to wait upon the convenience of the Geraldton Resident Magistrate, who would have to travel periodically to Northampton to undertake this work. The Government should fix the matter up speedily in fairness to the residents of the district.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The question of the abolition of the post of Resident Magistrate at Northampton was brought under his notice some time ago by the member for Greenough (*Mr. Stone*). There had been nothing more clearly emphasised in this House than the necessity, when the opportunity arose, of taking the administration of the law away from the medical officers. It had been pointed out again and again, that a medical officer was not suited, owing to his profession, to administer the law; therefore, when an opportunity did arise under the classification of magistrates for making an appointment of a Resident Magistrate pure and simple—true that officer was the Resident Magistrate of Geraldton, but Northampton was only 37 miles away by rail—it was done. It was therefore proposed to attach the magistracy at Northampton to the duties of the Geraldton Resident Magistrate. In order to assist in keeping a doctor there the Crown Law Department offered to pay £50 a year to whoever was selected by the Medical Department, on condition that he acted as clerk of courts, and would also act as deputy collector of revenue. The department thought that by this means a doctor would continue to reside at Northampton. It was absolutely unfair to ask the Attorney General's vote to carry the salary of a doctor. If it were wise that the law

should be administered by men other than doctors, the department could not possibly go farther than they had done in the present case. The present occupant of the position had been offered the sum he had mentioned, but would not accept it. The department could not revert to the position of having a Resident Magistrate at Northampton who was a doctor.

Mr. STONE : The explanation given with regard to the question by the Attorney General was not at all satisfactory, and certainly the arrangement arrived at by the department was not in the best interests of the community. It was a large centre with about one thousand people. There was much new settlement in the district, and a magistrate should be retained there. It was unfair that he should be removed to Geraldton, and it appeared to him to be merely the thin end of the wedge towards getting rid of the doctor. The department knew that no medical man would hold the position for the paltry salary he would receive for being in the district as doctor only. If no arrangements were made the people would be left without medical assistance, and anyone wanting a doctor would have to pay from £25 to £30 in order to obtain the services of one from Geraldton. There were many districts with less population having a Resident Magistrate and a resident doctor. [*The Attorney General* : Where were such districts ?] Carnarvon was one. It was a very unjust act on the part of the Government to enter on a cheese-paring policy of this kind, while at the same time they were throwing money away in other places. The district was not looked after properly in many ways. One officer should do all the work. He was not at all satisfied with the explanation of the Attorney General, and assured the Government they had not heard the last of it.

Mr. TROY : The residents of Northampton had asked him to assist their member in this matter. He thought it was very unwise to penalise a settlement where the population was small and scattered as it was at Northampton. The Government knew that unless a doctor received an adequate salary he

would not stay in such a small place. He hoped the Attorney General would not take away the salary in this case, and that he would keep the position combined as it was at present.

The Attorney General : It was the result of the classification of the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. TROY : Sometimes it was deemed wise to accept the classification of the Commissioner, but at other times, when it did not suit, the classification was scattered to the winds. In this district, he repeated, there were not enough people to provide among themselves an adequate salary.

Mr. SCADDAN : Members were lending too much importance to this little hamlet of Northampton. He knew of places on the goldfields that were without railway communication ; and while it was much more difficult to get a medical officer at those places, they heard no complaints from the people there. It was not a fair proposition to ask the State to pay this salary, and he was satisfied the Attorney General was taking the proper action in the matter.

Mr. T. L. BROWN regretted that some members had looked upon this matter in the light that they had done. It was all very well to say they had railway communication to Northampton, but the train, he would point out, ran only once a week. Accidents were likely to occur in such a place where mines were.

The Attorney General : But the mines were all shut down.

Mr. T. L. BROWN : The Attorney General would find there were men there struggling for a living, and they were not getting the assistance they deserved. The mines were far from being shut down. The request was a trifling one, and ought to be conceded.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : The matter had been viewed by him simply from the point of view of the administration of the law. Probably a case could be made out for the Medical Department to supply a doctor for the district, but certainly it was not necessary to keep a Resident Magistrate at Northampton. It would be far better to have an officer trained in the law residing at Geraldton.

However, the Crown Law Department were prepared to pay £50 to a resident medical gentleman subsidised to any extent by the Medical Department. The member for Greenough (Mr. Stone) should endeavour to get the Colonial Secretary to supplement this sum.

Mr. HOLMAN : It was absurd to keep a Resident Magistrate at Northampton when the Resident Magistrate at Cue had to travel 60 miles by rail and 120 miles by coach in order to get to Peak Hill. No one would object to a fair amount being paid for a medical officer at Northampton, but there was strong objection to allowing medical officers to attach the letters R.M. to their names, thus giving the district far greater importance than was warranted. There were already too many medical men as resident magistrates. One medical gentleman recently sentenced a man for life to the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum, and in another case a man charged with being of unsound mind was fined 5s. and costs. These were two samples of the manner in which these medical gentlemen fulfilled the duties of a resident magistrate. The sooner we did away with the appointment of these gentlemen as resident magistrates the better it would be for the administration of the law. Certainly it was not necessary to have a resident magistrate in a small hamlet like Northampton. It was time for members to smile when the need for a magistrate at Northampton was put forward.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The desire of the Colonial Secretary was to have a medical officer at Northampton and to give any reasonable assistance of that nature because the train service from Geraldton was not too good.

Mr. STONE was not satisfied with the Government in this matter. The idea was apparently to do away with both positions, that of magistrate and that of medical officer, because the sum placed on the Estimates for a doctor was altogether inadequate. It was necessary to have someone at Northampton in charge of the lands office, and to be registrar of mines as well as magistrate, and the position of medical officer should go with these positions. The people at Northamp-

ton did not wish to be put back in the old position when it often cost a man £25 to get a doctor out from Geraldton. Apparently the member for Murchison was not acquainted with the circumstances of the case.

Mr. SCADDAN had not indulged in any levity on the matter, but if Northampton, with railway communication to Geraldton, needed a medical officer, there were places in the Ivanhoe district where a medical officer was far more essential. At Boorara for instance, right away from railway communication, there were 250 men employed in one mine, and there was no medical officer in the place. If an accident occurred it would be necessary to get a doctor out from Kalgoorlie over a very rough road.

The Minister for Mines : The road was in good order. He had been over it lately.

Mr. SCADDAN : The road was not a decent one. The proposal of the Attorney General was a good one, and ought to be accepted.

Public Works and Buildings, £171,799 :

Mr. HOLMAN : The revenue expenditure on works and buildings had been decreased and loan expenditure increased, though, apparently, this time there was to be no expenditure from the General Loan Fund on public buildings. Public works, buildings, and roads were being neglected just now. Was it intended to pursue the same policy in the future as that which had been pursued during the past few years, and neglect to carry out these works from the Consolidated Revenue? Several important matters had been placed before the Minister lately. Was the expenditure on these works to be increased from loan, or would the work be carried out from revenue?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The amount on the schedule represented about one-third of last year's estimate, and it would be properly and fairly expended, no urgent works being neglected. While assistance from the coffers of the State was being decreased, the amount received from rates by the different roads boards was being increased, and there was

fair prospect in the coming year of many of the boards increasing their rates. As to the expenditure of money on unproductive works, it was a hard thing to draw the line between what was a reproductive and what was an unproductive public work. For instance, the Claremont Asylum would be regarded by the hon. member as an unproductive work; but he was told by the Colonial Secretary that as soon as those buildings were completed and all the patients placed there, the administrative cost for looking after insane patients would be reduced by £3,000 a year; therefore that work could not be altogether called unproductive. If sufficient money was not coming in for the erection of school buildings, he (the Minister) would not hesitate to erect them out of loan, because it was one of the best investments we could make. Then money had to be spent on roads which were feeders to railways, and bridges had to be erected. There was expenditure in the maintenance of harbours, the stock-yards, water supply generally, bores in agricultural areas, and artesian bores, and additions and repairs and maintenance of existing buildings, which last was a heavy item. [Mr. Holman : Would a police court be built at Meekatharra?] One could not give information now on every little item. Necessarily there had hardly been time to prepare the details as to every work, but everything to which the Government were committed was included in the vote.

[Mr. Ware took the Chair.]

Mr. TROY: The Minister prided himself on the fact that whilst the departmental vote had decreased, the amounts received by the local roads boards were increasing. The Minister would lead one to believe that while less was being spent by the department, the roads were in an equally good state as in former years. That was not so. In the mining electorates there had been heavy rains and roads had been swept away and bridges broken down. The local boards were unable to raise the money required to put the roads in order again. He hoped the roads boards would be able to carry out the necessary work of repairing so as to

assist in the development of the various districts of the State.

Colonial Secretary, £3,100 :

Mr. TROY (continuing) : The administration of the Colonial Secretary's department was worse than the administration of any other. Some time ago a select committee of this House gave serious consideration to the alleged existence of sweating in Western Australian industries; and while the report of the committee was couched in moderate language, it showed that sweating did exist to a considerable extent. Every effort had been made to get the Government to do something, but nothing was being done. A great deal was said by Ministers from time to time that this State was being developed and everything done to assist the people working in connection with some of the factories, particularly women-folk, but nothing was done to better their condition. Some women in factories were receiving from 10s. to 12s. a week, and how were these women expected to live under such conditions? At Foy & Gibson's it would be found there were a great many women working in their factory and shop who were not receiving more than 10s. a week; he supposed 70 per cent. of the employees were receiving from 12s. to 15s. per week. Surely that was sweating, and no country was in a proper state where that sort of thing existed. The manner in which the recommendations of the select committee had been ignored should be greatly condemned. Absolutely nothing had been done, and it was high time these people received consideration. Assistance was given to men engaged in the various industries, but nothing was done on behalf of the unfortunate women working in factories. This department was the worst-administered in Australia, and absolute incompetence marked every action taken.

Mr. T. L. BROWN: Recently a great deal had been said with regard to the treatment allotted to the police force. The present position needed serious consideration. From the Press reports and from remarks in the papers recently, it appeared that men who were entitled to promotion through vacancies occurring

were not permitted to be appointed to fill the place of men who had held higher positions unless they did so without receiving an advance in salary. Such statements as these had not been denied. Men were receiving 6s. 6d. or 7s. a day, whereas they were entitled to a considerable increase on that sum.

Mr. SCADDAN: The latest phase of the immigration question was one to which he desired to take the greatest possible exception. In last week's *Sunday Times* appeared the following advertisement:—

"Notice to Farmers and Others.—Colonial Secretary's Office, Perth, July 21st, 1908. The Government have decided to grant passages at £5 to suitable single farmers and farm labourers, upon their depositing with the Agent-General (in addition to the passage money of £5) the sum of £10, which will be refunded to them upon arrival in the State. It is desired, therefore, to bring under the notice of farmers throughout the State that experienced farmers and farm labourers are arriving fortnightly from the United Kingdom, and that many of them are open for engagement upon arrival. The Government will be glad to receive applications from those who desire to obtain any farm assistance or who can offer employment to farmers of any class. All applications, inquiries, etc., in this connection should be addressed to Mr. James Longmore, Superintendent, Government Labour Bureau, Perth.—F. D. North, Under Secretary."

It was apparent, from the statement made in the paper, that the Government were introducing labourers to the State to compete in the already over-stocked labour market. During the past few days a statement was made to him which he believed to be correct, that the Labour Bureau now was nothing more nor less than an immigration dépôt. The immigrants made application and were found work in the State, while hundreds of men were daily applying for employment and could not get it. Some of the immigrants had gone ringbarking. This was absolutely unfair to our own people. Some of the unemployed had spoken to

him on the previous Monday; they were farm labourers, but they objected to work for the wages offered in the agricultural districts. They mentioned cases of immigrants working at clearing the land and only earning 5s. a week. That was a disgrace. From the advertisements appearing in the papers, farmers were asked to communicate with Mr. Longmore if they wanted men; in response to these requests immigrants were sent to them to do the work, other men had also gone, but they discovered on getting to the spot they could not earn tucker. One man had said that while employed in this way he had lost even the few shillings he had previously to going to the district. Another complaint was that whereas the immigrants received every possible attention from the Labour Bureau the unemployed received none. There were numbers of unemployed who waited about outside the dépôt all day long in the hope of getting employment, but the instructions to the immigrants were that they should see Mr. Longmore after office hours, and they were interviewed at the back door. This was absolutely unfair. Another complaint was that men who had received railway passes to go into the country were treated harshly in the way of obtaining a refund of the amount. The sum advanced to them was deducted from the first money earned, and the result was that often these men had to work for the first week on half tucker in order that their railway fare might be paid. Surely with a fare costing from £1 to 30s. an arrangement should be made whereby the men should be allowed a few weeks in order to pay it back.

Mr. Troy: Did the immigrants refund their fares?

Mr. SCADDAN was not able to say as to that. He hoped the Government would see the folly of their way, if he could express it so, and he was satisfied that as the method became better known among the workers there would be a great outcry. If it was continued there would be worse effects than those existing at the present time. If a roll were called he was certain that there would be a muster of over 1,000 men. He thought the duty would devolve on the Opposition

to acquaint the people in England of the condition of things as they existed here. At the present time there was more depression in this State than in any State of the Commonwealth.

[1 o'clock a.m.]

Mr. Ewing: That was absolute nonsense.

Mr. Troy: Most certainly nonsense.

Mr. SCADDAN: Because there were only a few hundred names on the register at the Bureau, the Government were under the impression that was the total. There were many people, however, out of work who would not register at the Bureau. The Bureau was coupled with the Charity Department, and this meant that many people on that score refrained from going near it. The unemployed had lost faith in the Bureau, and unless something was done to rectify the mistakes made there, the Bureau would become a menace to everybody instead of a blessing. Hon. members would have him believe that there was practically no depression here; but go where we would, we would find there was an over-stocked labour market. [*Mr. Ewing:* That was not his experience.] Well, that was his own experience. The member for Collie did not move about in quarters where he could discover it. There was a good deal of truth in the statement that there was not sufficient discrimination at the other end when immigrants were selected for the State.

Mr. BATH: For the information of those hon. members who shouted out "nonsense," he had only to refer them to the report of the Superintendent of the Labour Bureau for last year. Of 7,038 registrations, the engagements were only a little more than half that number. It was also stated that work was provided by the Bureau for 128 immigrants. If they turned to the reports of the resident magistrates at Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, Yilgarn, Broad Arrow, and other places it would be found that the statement generally was "supply of labour is greater than the demand." Turning to the reports of the agricultural societies, it would be seen there that the questions asked were, what the demand was, if any,

and the prospects of employment. From Albany it would be seen that the demand was small, and that "nil" was the answer given to the other question. The secretary of the Albany Horticultural Society said there was a demand for men for clearing, but the place was so full of unemployed that the men were soon absorbed.

The Premier: The hon. member should refer to the wheat country, instead of quoting from coastal reports.

Mr. BATH: The secretary of the Great Southern Agricultural Society stated in his report that there was a demand for farm labourers, and after the 14th March a number of men would be able to obtain work clearing land. The secretary of the Greenhills Society said that there were any amount of men about. Anyhow, right through, the whole of this report bore out the contention of the member for Ivanhoe, that throughout the State there was a surplus of labour. In his opinion, therefore, it was criminal to bring men out to compete in the labour market, which, according to evidence, was overstocked. We had been assured that the effects in regard to immigration would be in the direction of encouraging people with capital to come out. If the policy that had been lately adopted was persisted in, the true position should be stated in some of the papers circulating throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

The PREMIER: With regard to the question of the unemployed, he was of opinion that that difficulty was not nearly as serious in Western Australia as it was in the other States. It was strange to him that it had not been brought under his notice before. It was only a fortnight ago that the gentleman who was in charge of the clearing work at Denmark travelled over the whole of the Great Southern railway with the intention of getting men. A fortnight ago that officer called on him and asked him what he should do. He replied, that if men were not available along the Great Southern line he should take 20 or 30 men from the gangs at Doodlakine, but before he did that, he had better advertise at the Labour Bureau and

see whether it was at all possible to secure men there. As a result of advertising, a certain number of men were sent to Denmark, and, as far as possible, were selected for their fitness to do the work. It was proposed to give 8s. per day, but at that money the Government wished to secure men able to earn it, because there had been experience on more than one occasion of men sent there at considerable expense, who, after a week or two's hard work, turned cocktail and gave up the work.

Mr. Scaddan : It was asserted they could not work half the time this year.

The PREMIER had worked the whole of the year and never lost a day at it. He had worked there for three years. He was assured that these men had practically lost no time during the winter; but men must expect to get a little wet weather in the winter. If men could not stand a little bit of rain they were not worthy of the name. He had put in a winter there at 30s. a week and tucker, and knew what the work was like.

Mr. Bath : Men could not burn off the stuff in the wet weather.

The PREMIER: It did not matter about burning off; they could get the stuff down and haul it together and burn it off in the summer. At any rate, arrangements had been made on the previous day by which another 40 men were to go to Denmark, and 15 to 20 men suitable for platelaying had been given the opportunity of going to the Jarrahwood line, while vacancies were made for 20 men on the Donnybrook extension, and 30 men would be absorbed by the work on the Leederville drain. That made something like 90 out of the 128 said to be unemployed at present. There possibly had been some slackness in regard to immigration in the stamp of men sent out just now. At the recent Premier's Conference the Prime Minister had suggested that the Commonwealth should be assisted in every way in their efforts to induce immigration; but he (the Premier) had maintained that it was necessary for the States interested to have the last say in the selection of men required for the various States, since Victoria, being a

manufacturing centre, could absorb a large number of artisans, but it would be impossible for Western Australia to do so, although we were prepared to welcome men ready to go on the land, or to work as agricultural labourers. He had pointed out that we did not propose to encourage the immigration of those who would compete in an already overstocked market so far as tradesmen were concerned. Mr. Ranford, now appointed to represent the State in London so far as immigration was concerned, was eminently qualified for the position, and had had practical experience as a farmer, and was a trusted officer of the Lands Department. As a result of his efforts there should be a better selection, and no one would be encouraged to come out here who was not a practical man and not likely to make a success. The Government had no interest in getting men to come here to become failures. But the people who came out now were not of the same breed as our fathers who came out here 40 or 50 years ago. Many now needed dry-nursing from the time they landed. However, Mr. Ranford's instructions were very explicit, and it was not likely there would be complaints in the future. The idea was that every man before coming here should have the opportunity of satisfying himself as to whether he was likely to make a success in his new sphere.

Mr. HOLMAN: None objected to people with a little capital coming out to settle on the land, but cases had been cited where some assisted immigrants had gone into the Old Men's Home, while others were in gaol. At least, there was one man in the Home, and very likely there were several in gaol, while others ought to be there. Again, large firms had been inducing labour to come here in order to get the men to work at a remuneration slightly below what others were receiving in the State, and the Government Labour Bureau had been used for the purpose. The country was poor enough already without bringing men here to take the place of those already working in the State. Some had secured work on the railways and displaced men already at work. In another case one took the place of an inspector of factories.

The Premier: Was that the man the hon. member had said was a brother-in-law of a Minister?

Mr. HOLMAN: No such remark was ever made. He might have said that the man came out here with a letter of recommendation from the sister of a Minister. This man took the position of another who had earned his position by merit, and who was now, with his wife and family, driven out of the State.

The Premier: Our forefathers had come to this country. We did not wish to make Australia a close borough; there was plenty of room.

Mr. HOLMAN: Our fathers had not driven others out of the country. It was a standing disgrace that this man should have been driven out of the State. This officer was robbed of his position simply to give it to someone's friend. This was not the only case; he could quote cases of a similar nature. On many occasions, men brought to this country replaced men who had been employed in the Railway Department. That state of affairs should not be allowed to obtain.

The Premier: The hon. member did a man out of his job when he got into Parliament.

Mr. HOLMAN: That was done on merit.

The Premier: Not by ability.

Mr. HOLMAN: Not by influence. If he (Mr. Holman) were to get into the Premier's position, he would be doing that Minister out of a job.

The Premier: The hon. member had Buckley's chance.

Mr. HOLMAN: On looking through the reports of the Labour Bureau, it would be seen there was more labour in the State than there was work to do. Although the Premier gave a challenge to the member for Guildford the other night, it was not carried out.

The Premier: Work was given to every man the member for Guildford sent along. The member for Guildford said he had from 15 to 20 men, and he (the Premier) replied, "Send them along."

Mr. HOLMAN: The Premier promised to find work for 30 men.

The Premier: All the men sent to him were engaged.

Mr. HOLMAN: The question was whether we should encourage the system of immigration now being carried out by the Government. He (Mr. Holman) was opposed to it, and would do all he could to expose the work of the Government, and let the people judge whether it was good. He suggested that progress should be reported at this stage.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Government were increasing the number of unemployed by bringing out immigrants of a certain class. If a man could not afford to pay more than £5 towards his passage money to come out here, he was unable to go on the land; therefore he had to find work, and then came into competition with the already over-stocked labour market. The genuine farm labourer of the old country was not likely to come to Western Australia. Plenty of immigrants came here; he had met a few, and they did not go into hysterics about the wages they received in this country, and they were not likely to send home letters to their friends telling them to come out. As far as he knew, the accounts sent to the old country by these people were anything but good. He would read a quotation published in the *Great Southern Leader* of July 10th, which gave some particulars in reference to immigrants. It said:—

"Referring to the immigrants now entering Western Australia, Mr. Clayton mentioned that of three of these whom he employed as experienced farm labourers, one was a cotton-mill employee, another the son of a horse dealer, whilst the third came a little nearer the mark by being a market gardener. Needless to say these men could not earn their tucker."

This state of affairs should be remedied, because these men, when out of work, invariably flocked into the towns, for it was easier to hear of work in towns than when scattered in the country. On Monday last he met a man who told him—and he was satisfied the statement was correct—that he had walked 25 miles from the Great Southern Railway and 25 miles back looking for work: that he called on every farmer along the road, but could not find work. That was not

a proper condition of things to exist in the country districts. The farmers should offer a fair rate of wages and fair conditions, for at present the conditions were not what were considered good. If a man could find work in the towns and cities, he was not likely to leave unless he could get some special inducement; and the wages offered at the present time, 15s. a week, were not sufficient to induce men to leave the city. Men were brought from the old country on the promise of land for nothing. These people thought it was land similar to that in the old country, where there was no clearing, and like the land in Canada where the clearing was almost *nil*. Under the circumstances we had no right to encourage these men to come here. A prosperous farming community did not require to advertise for men. The Premier knew that at the present time some of the best farmers we were getting came from Victoria, and the great majority were induced to come here by the success of their friends.

The Premier: Drawing them from our sister States.

Mr. SCADDAN: Undoubtedly. The position at present in Victoria, where farms had been in existence for a number of years, was that the farmers had families growing up, and it was absolutely impossible, without a huge capital, to get hold of anything like an area of land for their sons: therefore they had to look elsewhere for land. Until the Victorian Government obtained some of the large areas which were held in that State the Government could not provide land for the people. To bring out immigrants of that kind was a fatal policy, and likely to land the State in a difficult position in a few years. Without doubt the state of affairs existing here would soon get to the ears of the people in London. If immigrants were to be brought here let them settle on the land, but not work for others.

Mr. ANGWIN: With an increase in the special land settlement scheme which was initiated some little time ago, there would be no necessity to pay the passage of immigrants to the State. As was well known, some time ago 50 families were

settled on the land, and the average number to the family was seven. From the particular interest he had taken in this scheme, he was confident there were hundreds of people anxious to go on such a settlement as that at Tammin. If the Government were to bring such families as were there, it would cost them as much as £50 per family, and it would be far better for this sum to be advanced to people here who wanted to go on the land. If settlers could be obtained in this manner it would soon become difficult to obtain labour, and on ascertaining this people would soon flock to the State. It was to be hoped the Government would enlarge this special settlement scheme, for already several hundreds of persons had put their names down for blocks under it.

Charities, £12,648:

Mr. TROY: In the previous session a measure was passed for the protection of infants, and since then a number of ladies had been appointed a committee in connection with the boarding out of children. The committee consisted of Mesdames Fairbairn, Gregory, Cowan, Bird, and others, who were generally associated with the class of people which played at charity. It was now found that these ladies were represented on many institutions. The committee to deal with the boarding out of children should be a most representative one, and he protested against the confining of the representation to one class. Most of the ladies were members of the National Political League, and they simply played at charity. There were thousands of persons who did equally as good work as those appointed to the committee; in fact, much better work than that class of individual. He protested against the exclusive nature of the committee.

Mr. Angwin: People who wanted aid would not go to them at all.

Mr. TROY: There was no sincerity in it; they were simply playing the game of charity. His object in referring to the question was to protest against the exclusive nature of the appointments. Those persons might be the best of citizens in

the world, but a committee should be representative of the people.

The PREMIER: Such a matter as that complained of only required to be brought under the notice of the Colonial Secretary to be dealt with. The ladies in question had been associated with many similar institutions in the State.

Mr. Holman: And had never done anything.

The PREMIER: They had done a great deal of good work in the State. While the complaint that the committee was not a representative one might be fair and reasonable, it was not correct to say that good work had not been done by many of these ladies. They had gone about in the most unassuming way, and had done good work which possibly members knew nothing about. The Colonial Secretary did not desire to make the committee anything but a representative one, and any suggestions made to him as to the personnel of the various committees would receive every consideration. Up to the present, committees had been appointed in only one or two of the larger towns, but it was proposed to extend the system to the smaller towns as well. Without doubt any suggestion made by a member of Parliament that any particular lady was prepared to take up the work would receive every consideration, and if the lady were suitable she would be appointed.

Mr. ANGWIN: One of the lady members of the committee had been on a board on a previous occasion, for she had been appointed a visitor to the Fremantle gaol. During the twelve months of her office, however, she never once visited the institution, and another lady was compelled to do all her work. At the end of that term her name was removed from the list of visitors, but now it was found that she had received an appointment to the boarding-out committee. Where the department found that a lady did not do the work on one committee, surely she should not be appointed to another.

Mr. TROY also protested against the exclusiveness of these appointments. At

the present time they were a most exclusive set who played the game of charity, and that was most unfair in a State where people's money was used for such a purpose.

[Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.]

The PREMIER: Wherever a committee was appointed he endeavoured to make it as representative as possible; and when the first opportunity offered in connection with the board of management of the Perth Hospital, he asked the Leader of the Opposition to accept a seat on that board. Mr. Bath was unable to accept it, and Mr. Taylor was appointed. The Government endeavoured to carry out that principle right through.

Mr. COLLIER: Many of these appointments looked suspicious. Amongst the names in Perth it would be seen that many were those of members of the Women's National League. Did it not seem, therefore, that party politics had been responsible for these appointments. How was it we found these people were representative of one class only? Even on the goldfields a committee of three ladies was lately appointed, and the same thing was done there—the ladies were wives of ex-mayors, and not one of them had ever taken an interest in charitable work before. On the other hand there were a number of women in Kalgoorlie and Boulder who had deeply interested themselves in charitable movements, and some had actually come to Perth on a deputation to the Colonial Secretary with regard to neglected children. Yet we found these ladies had been passed over when appointments were made. If suggestions were made to the Government, the same old reply was made, that the matter would be given consideration. He did not know any ladies who were better able to fill such positions than the wives of miners. They were much more competent to undertake work of this kind than wives of ex-mayors. He desired to enter his protest, and say it was absolutely unfair that appointments should be made in such a one-sided way.

Observatory, £982:

Mr. ANGWIN: When the estimates were being considered last year, it was stated that this department would be taken over by the Commonwealth Government after 1st January, 1908. He noticed also in the Press the other day that a representative interviewed the Government Astronomer, who told him he was not a Commonwealth officer, and that for the information he required the reporter would have to go to the Commonwealth Meteorologist. What he (Mr. Angwin) wanted to know was, what the Observatory Vote was for this year—whether the whole department had not been taken over by the Commonwealth?

The PREMIER: As far as his memory served, the State had been relieved to the extent of meteorological observations. Purely astronomical work was in charge of the present Astronomer, and he was carrying out a certain duty which was considered to be very important indeed. A conference was held in one of the Continental centres recently, when it was decided that certain observatories in the world should be requested to make a series of observations with the object of correctly charting the sky. A portion of the sky was allocated to this particular Observatory, and at the present time the Government Astronomer was engaged on that work. The meteorological branch had been handed over to the Commonwealth authorities, and the paraphernalia in connection with it was to be treated as transferred property. At the present time he was corresponding with the Commonwealth Government on the subject. He was desirous that the State should receive cash payments for this transfer, but it was contended by the Prime Minister that it should be treated as transferred property.

At 1.50 a.m., Mr. Scaddan called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and quorum formed.

Police, £41,059:

Mr. T. L. BROWN: If the term "sweating" could be applied to any portion of the civil service, it could be aptly applied to the Police Department. Mem-

bers of the police force were poorly paid, and where vacancies occurred, instead of appointments being made from those entitled to be appointed to the vacancies, men were put into the positions and called upon to do the extra duties without extra remuneration. This was an undesirable position, and should be remedied without loss of time. Also, men were still kept on the minimum rate without any prospect of advancement. The Commonwealth rule should apply that where a lower-grade man was doing the work of a higher-grade officer, the remuneration should be that of the higher-grade officer. A great bone of contention among the members of the force was that the men had no say in the administration of the Police Benefit Fund. No objection might be taken to the Commissioner being chairman, but the other civil servants who controlled the fund with the Commissioner should be relieved of their responsibilities in this direction, and men from the force chosen to act. It was pointed out that on the goldfields the police constables were receiving 3s. to 4s. less than the municipal labourers. If we desired to see the police remain in their positions we should give them all the consideration they were entitled to in the shape of promotion.

Mr. TROY: It was unfair that in some localities the escort allowance to constables was higher than in other places. In the districts where the lower rate applied a constable did not receive nearly sufficient to pay his daily expenses. Between Lake Way and Nannine and Lawlers, constables received 12s. a day; between Lawlers and Leonora, 12s. a day was allowed. That was as high as constables were paid. But between Black Range and Mount Magnet the constables received only 9s. per day. As a constable had to pay 2s. 6d. for every meal and 2s. 6d. for his bed he did not receive sufficient to pay his actual expenses.

The Premier: How did the department discriminate between the two?

Mr. TROY did not know. He hoped the Premier would speak to the Colonial Secretary and see if something could be done.

[2 o'clock a.m.]

The PREMIER: The matter of expenses was regulated, he believed, by public service regulation. He knew, as far as the surveyors in the Lands Department were concerned, their expenses were regulated by the fact as to whether they were east or west of a certain degree of longitude, but it was purely a public service regulation. It seems to him that the expenses allowed to the constable between Lawlers and Leonora should be the same as between Black Range and Mt. Magnet. He would bring the matter under the attention of the Minister controlling the department, and see if this apparent anomaly could be overcome.

Mr. COLLIER: It was to be hoped something would be done to increase the payment of constables in the State. If the Premier looked into the matter, he would come to the conclusion that the police officers were under-paid on the goldfields. No one was so poorly paid as second-class constables, who received £3 7s. 1d. per week, and had to work seven days of eight hours; 36 hours of the week had to be worked between 5 p.m. and 5 a.m. Constables had also to hold themselves ready for all calls when not on actual duty, and this work had to be done without extra pay. During last session the Premier promised to look into the police constables' grievances, especially in regard to the Police Benefit Fund. He believed the Premier did make a genuine attempt as to the control of the police fund; but whoever had been carrying out the ballot had failed to give satisfaction. It was notified early in the year that a ballot would be taken for a person to represent police constables upon the board controlling the fund. At present the board consisted of the Commissioner, the Under Treasurer, and the Under Secretary of the Colonial Secretary's department. The ballot paper sent out was of the most extraordinary character. On the ballot paper the voter had to write his own name and rank, also his number and the name of the person for whom he voted, therefore the Commissioner of Police could see the person for whom every constable voted, and it was not likely that the constable would pass a vote of censure on his chief officer. A ballot

taken under such conditions was absolutely absurd. The Commissioner should have stood down from the board and there should have been a straight-out election. Nominations should first of all have been called for, and the men should then have been asked to choose between the names submitted. The men should be given some straight-out representation on the board. While the ballot was in progress an intimation was received on the goldfields that the whole of the metropolitan force were going for the Commissioner, which was a direct attempt to influence the vote on the goldfields in favour of the Commissioner. It showed that the Commissioner did not want to relinquish his position on the board, he desired to keep it, and that people should say he was elected by ballot. There was considerable dissatisfaction among a large section of the police force, and it was most undesirable that such a state of affairs should be allowed to continue. It was to be hoped an increase would be given to the second-class constables. Under the present system a second-class constable had to work for 12 years before he was promoted to the rank of a first-class constable; such a condition as that did not prevail in the Eastern States. A constable in Victoria received 6s. a day, and then obtained gradual increases at the rate of 6d. a day up to 8s. and 8s. 6d.; but here, so long as a man remained in the second-class, his pay was not increased. The sum of £3 7s. 1d. per week of seven days was absolutely insufficient for a man working on the fields if he desired to keep himself in a respectable manner, and to carry out his duties properly.

The PREMIER: There was some justification for the member's criticism as to the policy adopted in the election of a representative on the Police Benefit Fund Board. When the matter was brought under his notice he gave instructions that the promise he had given to the Leader of the Opposition should be carried out in its entirety, so that the men could signify in a rational manner their views as to a representative. He would take steps to see that the promise was not evaded owing to some official idea of a method of conducting the ballot which would not

appeal to a rational individual. As to the pay, he had not had an opportunity of considering that question, but if an anomaly did exist, as had been said by the member for Mount Magnet, the matter would be brought under the notice of the Minister responsible.

Mr. ANGWIN: The Treasurer when dealing with the Estimates last year promised to take the matter of the increases into consideration. The Premier now gave a similar promise, and it was to be hoped that between now and the arrival of the Estimates, something would be done in the direction of increasing the pay of constables.

General Loan Fund, £233,283:

Mr. TROY moved—

That progress be reported.

Question put and negatived.

Mr. TROY: In the schedule there were amounts for the development of goldfields and mineral resources. In connection with this question there were several matters which he desired to look up, and would be pleased if the farther consideration of the schedule were postponed until the following day.

The PREMIER: The amounts in the schedule were simply unexpended balances. A greater sum than that mentioned could not be put down because there had not been authorisation. While he had every desire to oblige the member, still, as the House had sat so late, they might as well make a job of it. Personally he had not been sitting there all that night for fun. If there were any point about which information was needed particulars would be provided by the various Ministers. The member for Guildford had asked for the postponement of the consideration of the schedule, but that hon. member had gone home.

Mr. Troy: An assurance was given by the Treasurer that an adjournment would be granted.

The TREASURER: The only assurance he had given was that if the member for Guildford showed reasonable grounds for adjourning the debate his request would be acceded to. The Government had no desire to rush the matter through, but it

was not a reasonable ground for adjournment that the hon. member wanted to look up certain matters upon which to ask questions of Ministers. What were those questions? If he mentioned them the Ministers would give him every information.

Mr. TROY: There was every reason for time being granted him to look up the matters. There was no justification for the desire to force the schedule through. If an adjournment were granted the schedule would be passed the following day in half an hour.

The PREMIER: Up to two or three years ago no schedule was attached to a Supply Bill. The reason why it was now provided was to give members information. The Treasurer had asked him if he should attach the schedule to the Bill as it would lead to a deal of discussion, but his reply was that he did not want to take any action that would give any member an opportunity of saying the Government had departed from the ordinary, orthodox method. As had been stated, the schedule after all was provided more as a return rather than as a portion of the Bill which could be altered.

Mr. SCADDAN: The request of the member for Mount Magnet was a reasonable one in view of the assurance given earlier in the evening by the Treasurer, that there would be another opportunity given to members to discuss the Loan Schedule. It was not fair to members to rush the schedule through. On the previous evening the House sat for 20 minutes, owing to the fact that the Government had no business ready to go on with.

The Treasurer: It was because the Opposition allowed the debate to fizzle out.

Mr. TROY wanted to look up some matter in connection with the development of goldfields and mineral resources, and if he got an assurance from the Minister that he would be furnished with papers on the following day he would let the thing go. Recently a loan was made to two men named Moxon and Wilson to enable them to erect a plant on a lease at Yalgoo. That was the matter he wanted to discuss on the following day. But if the Minister would permit him to see the papers—

The MINISTER FOR MINES would be pleased to let the hon. member have them next day, if he called at the Mines Department.

Mr. Troy: Thanks.

Question (that the Schedule be agreed to) put and passed.

Title, Preamble—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; the report adopted.

Third Reading.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 2.25 a.m., until the afternoon.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 6th August, 1908.

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

Prayers.

QUESTION — RAILWAY FENCING, GREAT SOUTHERN.

Mr. BARNETT asked the Minister for Railways: In view of the number of cattle and horses killed on the Great Southern Railway and the risk of accident to trains arising from that source, is it the intention of the Government to fence the Great Southern Railway line at an early date?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: No; but where financial considerations will allow, the Railways will be fenced in the more closely settled portions.

QUESTION—RAILWAY FREE PASS.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Was a free railway pass recently granted to a Mr. Simpson? 2, If so, why and on whose recommendation was this special consideration shown?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes, for 10 days. 2, On account of the work he has done in the interests of Western Australia by lecturing and otherwise making known its resources in New South Wales and other parts of the Commonwealth and New Zealand.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

Midland Junction Boundaries, introduced by the Attorney General.

Health Act Amendment (Rates), introduced by the Premier.

Permanent Reserves (Subiaco, two) Rededication, introduced by the Premier.

PERMANENT RESERVE (YORK) REDEDICATION BILL. In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1:

Mr. HOLMAN: The Premier had promised to give some information about this measure.

The PREMIER: This Bill was for the purpose of changing a reserve in York used for recreation purposes, and required now as a municipal endowment. This was done at the request of the municipal council and burgesses of York. The land was held and enjoyed by the people of York for recreation purposes, and the council pointed out now that the place was well provided with recreation grounds, and it wished this particular block to be dedicated for municipal purposes. The people of York were consulted at a public meeting assembled, and their assent