

Hon. J. Ewing: They are doing it in Victoria.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes, so I understand. I wrote that letter as the result of having seen the power scheme operating between Niagara Falls and Buffalo City, a distance of a couple of hundred miles; and now, as I say, there is this other power scheme of 450 miles, over which current is taken and supplied for industrial purposes at one farthing per unit. In that scheme the current is generated by coal, not water. In many instances, this has been found to be the cheaper form of generation. It seems to me that even now, if we were to use the slack coal at Collie and generate the current at a high voltage, such as 60,000 volts, as they do in America, and transmit it to the power house here, where it could be transformed down, we should have some chance of getting electric current at a reasonable price. But while we continue to generate our current from coal carted over long distances at high rates of carriage, we shall never get it at the three farthings per unit which the Minister speaks about.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.18 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 2nd November, 1920.*

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

### QUESTION—RAILWAY PROJECT, YORKKRACHINE-NORTH BAANDEE.

Mr. PICKERING (for Mr. Harrison) asked the Premier: 1, In view of his promise, given to the deputation from the Yorkkrachine-North Baandee Railway League which waited upon him in August last, that, if the

report of the Railway Advisory Board was favourable, he would at once proceed to have the survey made, does he consider the report favourable? 2, If so, will he fulfil the promise given to the deputation that the survey would be proceeded with?

The PREMIER replied: 1. The report is, I consider, satisfactory. 2, Yes, in due course.

### QUESTION—ABORIGINAL CORPSE, RAILWAY TRANSPORT.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the following paragraph which appeared in the "Geraldton Express" of the 22nd October: "Our Yalgoo correspondent reports a free and easy but extremely disgusting method adopted by the authorities in conveying a corpse by train. At Wiluna, as related elsewhere, a drover has been arrested on a charge of murdering a blackfellow, and the latter's remains had to be brought to Perth. The course followed was to place the body in the lavatory of the compartment in which the constable and the aboriginal witnesses travelled. As the deceased native had been dead about two months, one can imagine what the effect would be. One would have thought that an air-tight coffin would have been provided and a truck used. Isn't it a mockery to have a Health Department and an army of sanitary inspectors when the Government of the day send a decomposed corpse over six hundred miles in a railway carriage with passengers?" 2, If the facts are as stated, will he issue instructions to prevent a recurrence of a similar deplorable incident?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, The paragraph in question had not come to the notice of the Hon. Minister for Public Health. 2, The facts of the case are substantially as stated in the paragraph in question, except that the remains were much dried up and consisted of bones and skin. No nuisance appears to have been caused, but the course followed in transmitting these remains was not a proper one, and instructions have been issued which will prevent a repetition.

### QUESTION—INDUSTRIES ASSIST- ANCE BOARD.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Premier: Do the operations of the Industries Assistance Board extend to the South-West and Great Southern districts of the State.

The PREMIER replied: To the South-West, no. To the Great Southern Railway districts, yes.

### QUESTION—OFFAL SUPPLIES, PRICES.

Mr. JONES (for Mr. Green) asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that the Prices Regulation Commission has recently fixed the

price of imported offal at £13 f.o.r Fremantle, and have also fixed the price to be charged for local offal at £11 per ton? 2, Is he aware that in defiance of this proclamation local offal has been charged for on a basis of £13 per ton by certain local traders?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. Officers of the Commission are keeping a close watch.

#### QUESTION—KALGOORLIE HOSPITAL, EMPLOYEES' WAGES.

Mr. JONES (for Mr. Green) asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that a schedule for increased wages, to meet the increased cost of living, was forwarded by the hospital employees at Kalgoorlie to the Medical and Health Department about a month ago? 2, Is he further aware that up to date a decision had not been received by the employees from the Government on the matter? 3, In order to remove the present dissatisfaction of the employees, will he have the matter dealt with at the earliest possible moment?

The PREMIER replied: 1, A joint request for an increase of wages, signed by the domestic and orderly staff of the Kalgoorlie Hospital, was received. 2, No decision has yet been arrived at. 3, The matter is now being dealt with, as one of urgency, by Mr. Trethowan, who is acting for Mr. Munt (Assistant Public Service Commissioner) and a decision is expected very shortly.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. O'Loughlen, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Holman (Murchison) on the ground of ill-health, and to Mr. Wilson (Collie) on the ground of urgent private business.

#### BILL—MEEKATHARRA-HORSE- SHOE RAILWAY.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

#### BILL—GUARDIANSHIP OF INFANTS.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### BILL—RAILWAYS CLASSIFICATION BOARD.

Second Reading.

Order of the day read for the resumption from 28th October of the debate on the second reading.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [4.40]: I do not know whether we should discuss this Bill at the present juncture. I understand that some negotiations are going on at the

present moment between the Minister and the officials of the W.A. Railway Officers' Union as to what the Bill contains and what some of its provisions amount to.

The Premier: I cannot help that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can make a speech on the second reading of the Bill if he likes.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am prepared to go on.

The Premier: I have no objection to postponing the debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will not forfeit his right to speak.

The Premier: There is no urgency about this matter and I move—

That consideration of this Order of the Day be postponed, together with Orders of the Day Nos. 3 and 4.

Motion put and passed.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1920-21.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from 27th October; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Colonial Treasurer's Department; Hon. J. Mitchell, Minister.

Vote—Treasury, £10,650.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.54]: In dealing with these Estimates we are not allowed to discuss items which have been expended without the vote of Parliament. I wish to point out that last week the Premier faithfully promised that he would place on the Table of the House the report of the Royal Commission dealing with the nationalist workers. That report so far has not been placed on the Table.

The Premier: Well, I have it here. I showed it to your leader.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Put it on the Table; it will save a lot of trouble.

The Premier: You can see it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In my opinion the reports of all Royal Commissions, together with the minutes of evidence, should be placed on the Table, for the information not only of Parliament but of the general public.

The Premier: You can have it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Everything might be satisfactory, but it appears to me that when a Royal Commission's report is presented to the Governor and by him to the Ministry and when the Ministry do not show any inclination to place the report on the Table—

The Premier: Yes, it is here.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I say that when the Ministry do not show any inclination to lay the report on the Table for the information of members and of the public, we are liable to draw the conclusion that everything is not satisfactory. Two commissions have sat and the report of neither has been placed on the Table. No member has seen

what took place with regard to the Andinach inquiry, although the Royal Commission was ordered by vote of the House. No member has had an opportunity to peruse the report or evidence submitted in that case. Since then the Royal Commission on nationalist workers has taken a good deal of evidence and statements were made, many of which were untrue; but no member has had an opportunity to peruse the report or the evidence. If members had had this opportunity probably they would have been in a position to point out errors which appear in the evidence. Members must protect their own positions to some extent. Certain statements were made in this Chamber regarding the nationalist workers, and if evidence given before the Royal Commission shows that members made statements which were wrong, such members should have an opportunity to enlighten the House on the position, so that the House could decide whether the statements made in evidence before the commission were correct or otherwise. The report, however, has been kept from us, and no member has had an opportunity to refute any of the statements made before the commission. The Estimates of the Colonial Treasurer's Department do not involve large expenditure in the way of administration, because some of the work of this department has been transferred to the Premier's Department. This might be an advantage, but I do not consider it an advantage to create another department at the present juncture. I was pleased to hear the Premier state by way of interjection that he was willing to lay the report of the commission, asked for by the leader of the Opposition, on the Table of the House. I am certain that statements which I made were quite correct, but I should like to know whether they have been contradicted by the evidence. It is only fair, after the State has been put to a large expenditure to conduct this inquiry regarding the nationalist workers, that members should have an opportunity to judge whether that expenditure was justified.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [4.50]: This is not the most satisfactory method of doing business. We are asked to discuss Estimates which provide for the expenditure of a sum of money, and we have not before us information to which we are entitled regarding one of the items. Since the session commenced applications have been made on two occasions for the report of this Royal Commission. The Premier promised that the report would be made available; that was many weeks ago. Later on, in the absence of the Premier, the acting Premier promised that the report would be made available on the following day. That promise was accepted by the House as being correct, but we find that though the report was brought to the House, it was merely shown to the leader of the Opposition. It was not laid on the Table. The leader of

the Opposition asked for the report in order that members might be able to see it, and there should be no question of special privilege in a matter of this kind. The Royal Commission was a public tribunal which conducted this investigation at big expense to the State. The legal firm representing the Government secured about £350 in legal fees, which is nothing short of scandalous for the services rendered and the good that resulted. I realise that, as the inquiry developed, the Government were justified in getting a representative to watch the interests of the State. If they had not done so judging by the way the evidence opened, the State would have been mulcted in scores of thousands of pounds for compensation. I had no idea that the Commission would be strung out to the extent that this legal firm alone collected over £300 for representing the Government. After all, I believe that the gentleman appointed as the Royal Commissioner, when he received his brief, did not receive definite instructions from the Government, because he opened the inquiry with the deliberate intention of awarding compensation, without inquiring whether the Government were liable.

The Premier: He had his commission.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: He should have received instructions from the Government. The report might indicate how the commission was framed. At any rate, we have a right to see it. Now, however, we are being asked to pass Estimates embracing an item dealing with the nationalist workers when we have not had an opportunity to peruse the report. It is six weeks since the leader of the Opposition asked that the report be laid on the Table and was promised that it would be forthcoming. It is three weeks since he asked the Acting Premier for the report and again received a promise that it would be made available. It is three days since the leader of the Opposition was shown the report, evidently for his own private information and not for the information of the House.

The Premier: Yes, it was.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They why was not it laid on the Table? Why does not the Premier carry out the promise which he himself and the Acting Premier gave to the leader of the Opposition? This report has not yet been laid on the Table. We are asked to pass this item without having had an opportunity to discuss it. I object to methods of this kind. Will the Premier tell us frankly and candidly that there is something in the report which should not be made public?

The Premier: No; it has been made public.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then why is this the only commission whose report, though furnished 12 months ago, has not been presented to Parliament?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Andinach Commission is similar.

**Mr. O'LOGHLEN:** But the Andinach case never aroused such public interest as did the Royal Commission on nationalist workers. Both cases involved the expenditure of public money. To-day we are asked to pass these Estimates without having anything to guide us as to the way in which the money has been expended. The Premier, unconsciously perhaps, has not played fairly with the House. It was his duty to lay the report on the Table of the House, instead of giving it to the leader of the Opposition. I claim that the leader of the Opposition alone was not entitled to see the report. When he asked for the report, he asked for it in the interests of the whole of the members of the House. He desired that it should be laid on the Table. It is public property, and the Press have a right to give publicity to the commissioner's finding. They have a right to tell the taxpayers how the money was expended, and exactly what the outcome and the findings of the Royal Commission were. When a Royal Commission is appointed surely it is of sufficient importance to warrant members and taxpayers asking for this information. The Premier has taken an unfair advantage. We have not the report before us. We have not had a chance to study it. Consequently I feel reluctant to assist in the passing of these items until we have had an opportunity to peruse the report and the evidence. There are other items in the Estimates to which I wish to direct attention later on, but I want the Premier to explain why he was reluctant in the first place to lay the report on the Table, and above all things why it was not presented after it had been twice promised?

**The Premier:** When was it promised?

**Mr. O'LOGHLEN:** I can dig up the dates in "Hansard." The leader of the Opposition asked for the report on the day after the House met, and the Premier promised that he would lay it on the Table. Many weeks went by and the report was not presented. In the absence of the Premier the Acting Premier was asked to make the report available, and only three or four days ago, the report was handed to the leader of the Opposition for his private information.

**The Premier:** No.

**Mr. O'LOGHLEN:** It was not laid on the Table as requested and as promised. It is not yet on the Table. We have no right to peruse it until it is laid on the Table. The Premier says he will give us an opportunity to peruse it. That will be after his Estimates have been passed, and any comment which we might desire to make will then be futile. I hope the Premier will explain the reasons for his action. It might not be his fault; it might be due to officers of his department.

**The Premier:** No, it is not.

**Mr. O'LOGHLEN:** If it is the Premier's fault, he should be censured for such action.

**The Premier:** I shall lay it on the Table now.

**Mr. O'LOGHLEN:** But does not the Premier realise the unfairness of the position? We are asked to pass these Estimates, and we have had no opportunity to see the report which the Premier has in his possession. We shall have no time to peruse it even if he lays it on the Table now.

**The Premier:** On which item?

**Mr. O'LOGHLEN:** I am not discussing items. I have very little fault to find with the general Estimates. The Premier apparently desires to get his Estimates passed before making the report available. Will the Premier tell us what actuated him in appointing the Royal Commission, what instructions he gave to the Commissioner, whether it was intended that the Government should be mulcted in wholesale compensation claims, and whether the methods adopted by the Commission were the right ones in calling such an army of witnesses and paying them fees to corroborate one another? It was nothing but an avalanche of unanimity; about 100 witnesses were called to state what three could have said. The Government, to protect themselves, appointed a legal gentleman, who promptly put in his bill for over £300. I want to know whether the Government are satisfied with the results of the Commission, whereby £17,000 was paid away. The report might indicate much which would have saved discussion if the Premier had only carried out the promise given by himself and by the Acting Premier. The Government, however, have held this information back in order to first get the Estimates through, and then they will not mind us seeing the report. Last week when we were discussing the London Agency the Premier told us that it had not been decided that the Agent General should come to Western Australia to brush up his knowledge of local affairs, but immediately after the items were passed, the announcement was made that the Agent General was about to visit Western Australia. The Premier did not show that candour which he might have done.

**The Premier:** I did not have the information at that time.

**Mr. O'LOGHLEN:** All I can say is that the Premier jolly soon got the information, for it was announced in Friday morning's paper. This is not the proper way to deal with the Committee, and I await with a degree of interest an explanation by the Premier as to the reason why the report of this Royal Commission was not presented as promised.

**The PREMIER and TREASURER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [5.1]:** I do not know that the presentation of the report of the Royal Commission on the nationalist workers would do very much good. Hon. members have discussed what led up to the appointment of that Commission. The Commission was appointed, and it was necessary that the Commission should be appointed. Everyone knows what these men suffered.

Mr. Jones: Everybody knows what they made the other men suffer.

The PREMIER: The inquiry showed what these men suffered. I do not propose to discuss the report at all. I have it here, and am quite willing to let hon. members have it, as is their right. Of course, the amount paid under it was paid last year.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is some to be paid this year. Why did we not get the report when you promised to give it to us?

The PREMIER: There is no reason at all. I promised some time ago that the report would be laid on the Table of the House, but I did not promise the other day that it would be laid on the Table.

Hon. T. Walker: Will you lay it on the Table now?

The PREMIER: Yes, I will now lay it formally on the Table.

Mr. Jones: Will you postpone the item concerned?

The PREMIER: The member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) knows full well all that happened. I do not know what good the laying of the report on the Table, or its discussion, will do, since the money has been paid to the men in question as the result of the report.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [5.3]: In the general discussion on this vote I desire to refer to an item considered on last year's Estimates, namely, a compassionate allowance to the widow of the late Chief Messenger of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. D. J. Troy. The member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) then drew the attention of the Committee to the matter, and the leader of the Opposition, the member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick), and other hon. members spoke on it. It took little consideration to persuade the Government that something needed to be done for the widow and orphans of the late Chief Messenger. In replying to the various statements the Premier said he thought something should be done, and that it was his intention to do something. The hon. gentleman placed an amount of £150 on the Estimates, and that sum was paid to Mrs. Troy. He also said he realised that £150 was very little, and that the late Mr. Troy did exceedingly good work while earning only a small salary, which, seeing that he had a wife and three young children, did not enable him to save much. The Premier also stated that the position was difficult, inasmuch as we could not treat the widow and children of the late Mr. Troy differently from the relatives of an ordinary officer. Finally the Premier said that if hon. members liked to make any representations, he would consider their wishes in the matter. The Premier's statement showed that he was willing to do something if members so desired. We all realise that we had a valuable officer in Mr. Troy. When the allotment was made to the widow, things were not so

bad as they are now. Mrs. Troy has been placed at a serious disadvantage merely because her late husband was not an officer under the Public Service Act, in which case she would have received a considerable sum as a right. Every member knowing the case, and knowing the widow's circumstances, will support a request to the Premier to carry out his promise to give the matter further consideration.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.8]: It seems to me quite impossible to discuss such matters as the Government Savings Bank and the Workers' Homes Board intelligently without having before us the reports of those institutions. We know the competition between our State Savings Bank and the Commonwealth Savings Bank, and it would have been interesting to members to learn the exact result of that competition—whether our bank is losing or gaining clients, and so on. We know there are great possibilities of usefulness in the Workers' Homes Board, usefulness to the general public of Western Australia. It has come to my knowledge indirectly—and I am very glad of the knowledge—that the board propose to extend their operations to the country districts as far as possible.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was always the intention as regards workers' homes.

Mr. PICKERING: But it is an intention which has not been carried into effect, at all events as regards my electorate. I believe a considerable amount of capital is coming back to the board and is lying idle instead of earning interest by being utilised in the erection of homes. I therefore trust the Premier will continue the policy of extending the operations of the board to the country districts. I am under the impression that the secretary to the Workers' Homes Board does not receive an adequate remuneration for his services. The position is one of much responsibility and calls for great business acumen; and certainly the present holder of the office has fully demonstrated his fitness for the position, so much so that efforts have been made to induce him to leave the public service for private employ.

Mr. Smith: The board have made a very handsome profit.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so, and the ability of the secretary should be recognised. I believe he is paid less than £350 a year, an utterly inadequate salary in view of the responsibilities of the position. I trust the Premier will give the Committee some information as to his intentions in this respect.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [5.12]: I am rather disappointed that the Premier has not chosen to give us more information on the Treasury vote; that he has chosen to introduce the vote in silence.

The Premier: I introduced the Estimates generally.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Premier has said that the Royal Commission on the Nationalist Workers made certain recommendations.

The Premier: There is no item on these Estimates referring to that Royal Commission.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is the reason why the matter has been brought up by the deputy leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Speaking on the Estimates generally, we can discuss any expenditure incurred by the Government.

The Minister for Mines: The item will be in the excess Bill, and can be discussed there.

Hon. T. WALKER: Notwithstanding more than one promise that the Royal Commission's report should be laid on the Table of the House—

The Premier: It is here now.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was promised eight weeks ago.

The Premier: You have it now.

Hon. T. WALKER: I can quite understand the Government wishing to forget all that is connected with the employment of the nationalist workers, and the trouble that ensued; but it is well for the Committee to know exactly what did occur. In fact, it is the Committee's duty to find out. I can understand the Government trying to forget all about that Royal Commission; but I cannot understand the Premier trying to forget his promises.

The Premier: I did not try to forget them.

Hon. T. WALKER: Then the hon. gentleman has forgotten without trying. The report in question is a valuable document in point of public interest.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was promised on the 10th August.

Hon. T. WALKER: There has been nothing of greater importance in the industrial world since we have had responsible government, than the report of this Royal Commission. We should have the report before us at the earliest possible moment so that we may be able intelligently to discuss the vote.

The Premier: The report is now on the Table of the House.

Hon. T. WALKER: Mention has also been made of the Savings Bank. I would like the Premier to give the Committee some information as to what is going on in regard to the conference and what has been done to safeguard the interests of the State.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing in this vote which deals with the question of the Nationalist workers and therefore I must ask hon. members to refrain from discussing that matter further.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Audit, £10,848:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When will the Auditor General's report be available?

The PREMIER: I have had an explanation from the Auditor General in regard to the delay that has taken place. Of course hon. members know that the strike has had considerable effect in retarding the comple-

tion of the report and the strike also delayed the completion of audits that were in hand. It is hoped to have the report ready in the very near future.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Compassionate Allowances, £600:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I would like the Premier to make a statement in regard to what he is prepared to do by way of making provision for the widow of the late Mr. Troy. Last year Mrs. Troy received £150. It has been pointed out that had her late husband been an officer under the Public Service Act the widow would have received a greater sum than that which was given to her. The late Mr. Troy was a servant of this House for a considerable period and it is not necessary for me to shower any eulogies on his administration during the period he was employed here. Members unanimously agree that he was an excellent officer, but owing to the fact that he was on a comparatively small salary, we hope to enlist the sympathy of the Premier. The sum voted for the widow last year was inadequate. The Speaker put up a proposition that a smaller sum might be voted annually until the youngest child had reached an age at which it would be able to earn its own livelihood. That suggestion, however, was not adopted. I hope the Premier will take up the matter seriously because I assure him I could get every member in this Chamber to sign a round robin in favour of further assistance being granted to the widow and children.

Mr. Thomson: And you would get every member's signature.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The widow has been to this building seeking employment as cleaner during the past couple of months. That shows how desperate her case must be. I regret that the House Committee were not able to do anything for her. It would have meant putting someone out of employment in order to find a position for her. The Premier should do something to carry the widow and her young family over for at least another year. If the suggestion made by the Speaker last year had been adopted, it would have been better. Members last year had no idea that the grant was going to terminate this year. If the Premier is reluctant to accede to the request which has been made, I can in less than half an hour secure the signature of every member here to support the proposal for continued assistance to Mrs. Troy. I hope, however, it will not be necessary to do that.

Mr. HARDWICK: The trend of the debate on this matter last year was that something should again be provided this year for the widow and children of the late Mr. Troy. The Premier certainly did say that the case would again be considered when the next Estimates were being framed. The case is a very deserving one.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I would not have taken part in the discussion but for the fact that my name was mentioned. I still hold

the view that I held last session, that it was unwise to place a lump sum on the Estimates and allow the matter to end there. I tried to persuade the Treasurer and the Committee that a smaller sum should be placed on last year's Estimates and that the amount should be a recurring one until the youngest child was able to help itself. The case is as has been stated by the member for Forrest. Mrs. Troy is now looking for employment and she offered her services here as a cleaner. If Mrs. Troy had not been the wife of an officer of this House, and she had found herself in straitened circumstances, she would have appealed to the Charities Department and obtained 8s. a week for each of her children and 8s. for herself, 32s. in all. If we now provided £75 annually for a period of years, it would only be what she would be entitled to receive. I remember the Premier stating last year that if the item went through he would do something again next year. Unfortunately, nothing appears on the current Estimates. The late Mr. Troy was employed here for 16 years and he did very good work. He received only a small salary but he showed what he was able to do with it by providing a home for his family. I hope the Premier will make some provision by which the widow and children will be removed from poverty.

The PREMIER: The Speaker did suggest last year that we should provide £75 per annum for several years. It is certainly impossible to treat this widow any more liberally than we have treated the widows of other members of the civil service. Mrs. Troy has had £150 and that amount ought to have been sufficient for two years. It is quite impossible for me to ask the House to pay £150 annually. After all, the officers of Parliament are in much the same position as any other officers in the service of the country. At all events, I think the officers here ought to be treated as public servants in every respect. Why should they not be? If there are advantages in being treated as public servants why should they not have them, while if there are disadvantages, why should they not suffer them? However, what I understood was that hon. members wished that Mrs. Troy should get £75 per annum instead of a lump sum of £150. If, after having had £150, she is in trouble, I do not know what can be done.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Put on £75 for next year.

The PREMIER: That might be done. I thought this £150 would at least cover two years.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did you intend then to follow it up with another £75?

The PREMIER: I intended, if the Committee wished, to submit another £75 next year.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Put £75 on the Estimates now. Next year things may be different.

The PREMIER: I am afraid the Chairman would not allow me.

The CHAIRMAN: No.

The PREMIER: However, that was in my mind, and in the mind of the Speaker also. I think every member of the Committee agreed to the suggestion.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will you agree to make £75 available?

The PREMIER: I do not think we should pay £150 in a lump sum and £75 per annum over an indefinite period.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Things may be better with her next year.

The PREMIER: If the Committee wish it, and if the proper officer of the House will make the suggestion, it can be considered.

Hon. G. Taylor: I will make the suggestion.

The PREMIER: Personally I think the late Mr. Troy was distinctly underpaid while in the service of the House. Altogether it would be much better for the officers of the House if they were brought under the Public Service Act.

Mr. HARRISON: In my opinion, the late officer having been an officer of this Chamber, and having served faithfully during the very long time he was here, it is the duty of the Committee and of the Colonial Treasurer to provide a further amount on these Estimates for the officer's widow and children.

The CHAIRMAN: It cannot be done.

Mr. HARRISON: Perhaps not on these Estimates. Still, we could not have a more deserving case. I trust something will be done to assist the lady.

Mr. FOLEY: I feel confident the Premier will make available to Mrs. Troy £75 per annum over a certain number of years. If this is done it will assist the lady materially. In my view, rather than provide pensions or retiring allowances, we should pay a sufficient wage to the officers of the House, so that they might be able to save something out of it. The late Mr. Troy's wages did not allow him to do any more than keep going. The great bulk of the money since paid to Mrs. Troy went in liquidation of debts contracted during the late Mr. Troy's illness. However, the Premier has now signified his intention of providing £75 per annum to the widow, and I am confident that he will fulfil his promise.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This opens up the old question of establishing an insurance or benefit fund, as is done by the police. Just before war broke out, it was proposed to provide a superannuation fund for all Government servants. If that had been done, this question would not have been before us today. I remind the Premier that we have a number of old ex-employees who were in the service of the State in days when salaries were very low, and whose pensions have been based on a wage of 6s. or 7s. per day, with the result that they are getting from the State very little more than they would get by way of old age pension, which they cannot get, because they are in receipt of this allowance. Several of these people, after 40 or 50 years in the service of the State, in consequence of the greatly increased cost of everything are now on the verge of desti-

tution. The State should, if possible, improve their condition.

The Premier. We have inquired into those cases.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some of them, but not all.

Item, Cant, William, member of Austin Exploration Expedition, 1854, at 10s. per week, £26:

Mr. WILLCOCK: This man was a valuable member of the expedition of 1854, and the Government of the day recognised his services with a pension of £26, a pension based on the cost of commodities at that time.

The Premier: It was not given him as something to live upon.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, it was given as a reward, but in view of the exceedingly high cost of commodities it is of very little use to him to-day. He is about 102 years of age and cannot for much longer claim his pension. He is practically an invalid, and although he gets his old age pension I think the Government should allow him a little more under this item.

The Premier: There are thousands not getting anything.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But in the circumstances in which he was granted this pension surely he is deserving of a little more, since the price of all commodities has so greatly increased. The late Lord Forrest was given a pension for similar services, the difference being that Lord Forrest had the leadership of the expedition, while this man was merely one of the rank and file. Considering that the purchasing power of money to-day is less than half that it was a few years ago, I think this item should be increased.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Government Savings Bank:

The CHAIRMAN: I must enter my emphatic protest against this vote. Owing to the manner in which it is placed before the Committee members cannot move to reduce any item in it. I have no desire to burke the general discussion on the vote, but I cannot under any consideration accept a motion to reduce any of the items. It is for the Committee to say whether they approve of the method adopted of putting this vote before members for discussion.

Mr. Smith: Can we not ask for information on any of the items?

The CHAIRMAN: There is no amount set down on this vote, and members cannot, therefore, move to reduce any of them.

Mr. FOLEY: I realise, as you do, Mr. Chairman, that no motion for a reduction on any of these items can properly be before the Committee, and I also take it that any call for a division will also be out of order. Because of the way that this vote is put before us, I am of opinion that we have no right to discuss this division as a whole.

The CHAIRMAN. I intend to allow Ministers to answer any questions that may be asked on this vote, but I cannot accept a motion for a reduction on any item.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Is this not a vote for £28,186?

The CHAIRMAN: No, it is a rebate to profit and loss account.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Are we not supposed to take notice of the foot notes that appear on the Estimates? This is entirely different from the votes for other departments that we have dealt with. The vote is one for £28,196, and the foot note merely gives information to the effect that the Savings Bank will meet the expenditure.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will see on page 39 that there is no amount set down against the words "Government Savings Bank." This vote is not placed before the Committee in proper form, or in the form in which votes for other departments are placed before members.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It has been stated here before that foot notes are only for the information of hon. members, and that they are not a part of the Estimates.

Mr. Smith: Move that they be sent back and brought up in proper form.

The PREMIER: The total expenditure involved under this vote is £28,196.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We should have the revenue stated.

The PREMIER: We are asking the Committee to authorise this expenditure. These Estimates are put together in the same way as the Estimates for other departments are. Your objection, Sir, is that no total is given on the first page.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Has anything been done with regard to the Commonwealth Savings Bank? What is the position of the State Savings Bank in relation to the Commonwealth institution? Will the Commonwealth Savings Bank take over the State banks, or will the position be reversed? I prefer that the State should take over the Commonwealth Savings Bank, which is encroaching on the State institution. The capital of the Commonwealth Savings Bank is increasing considerably, as are also the deposits. We must do something in the matter. The revenue received by the State Savings Bank will be greatly decreased this year. We must watch carefully to see that the Commonwealth do not encroach too much on the State in this matter. If they continue to encroach in the way they are doing it might be of advantage to the State to enter into negotiations with them, and secure some such benefit as has been secured in one or two of the other States.

The PREMIER: Owing to the operations of the Commonwealth Savings Bank, a difficult position has arisen in this State. My opinion is that the Commonwealth Government should never have opened their banks at all in opposition to ours. The competition they have brought about has been unfair to the State. It is not right that the Common-



wealth should have landed us in this position. I think we should pay a reasonable rate of interest on small savings up to, say, £300, but beyond that our citizens should have sufficient enterprise to invest their own money.

Hon. T. Walker: Is it not of great advantage to the State to have this money for the purposes of development?

The PREMIER: Yes, and it has been cheap money at times, but not always. We have to keep a large sum in reserve, and as things are the money is not as cheap as it seems to be. I doubt if it is a wise procedure to pay more than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on large sums of money. I do not know if we can adopt the principle followed in South Australia and Victoria, where in the case of South Australia a higher rate up to £350 is paid, and in Victoria up to £1,500, but we are going into the matter of increasing the rate of interest with a view to seeing if we cannot more successfully compete with the Commonwealth Savings Bank. If we can see our way to do that no doubt we shall get hold of a good many more depositors. The money deposited in the State Savings Bank is used within the State, but that is not wholly so in the case of the money deposited in the Commonwealth Savings Bank. The last time I looked up the figures I noticed that a very large sum of the money actually invested in the Commonwealth Savings Bank in Western Australia was sent out of the State. I cannot understand why the workers of Western Australia do not place their money in the State Savings Bank, because it is to their advantage, as citizens, to do so. There is no doubt that the Commonwealth is in competition with us, for they have a Savings Bank in every town in the State in opposition to us.

Mr. O'Loghlin: It is a reflection on us.

The PREMIER: Yes. It is nonsense that this should be the position.

Hon. T. Walker: Have you entered any protest against the new Bank Bill brought forward by the Federal Government? You may yet want to enlarge the scope of the State Savings Bank.

The PREMIER: Every hon. member knows the position just as we do. I do not see a way out of the difficulty just yet except at considerable loss of business.

Mr. PICKERING: The great disability under which the State Savings Bank labours is largely due to the taking over by the Federal Government of the Post Offices. It will be interesting to know whether the business resulting from the introduction of definite branches of the State Savings Bank in various towns has been beneficial or not. In many country towns the business is transacted by associated banks and in some cases by stores.

The Premier: You must bear in mind that the post offices are the natural places for the people to go to.

Mr. PICKERING: It was a serious blow to the State Savings Bank when the Com-

monwealth took over the post offices. It has been suggested that we cannot reduce any of the items under this vote. It is hardly to be expected that any member would move for a reduction, seeing that the salaries paid to the officers employed in the State Savings Bank are so small, compared with the responsibility they have to carry.

The Minister for Mines: What would you do if you could move for a reduction?

Mr. PICKERING: If I could move in any way at all it would be in the direction of increasing these salaries. In order to direct attention to the small amounts set down here I would be prepared to move for a reduction of one of the items.

Mr. THOMSON: It is a pity that we have not been furnished with some information regarding the effect of the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the manner in which it has encroached upon the State Savings Bank.

The Premier: The Commonwealth Bank is not taking very much money from us. We are going ahead a little. Naturally every penny they get is money that we should have got.

Mr. THOMSON: That is the unfortunate part of the position. That money is going outside instead of benefiting us here. I suggest that the Government should increase the rate of interest.

The Minister for Mines: That would land us in a heavy loss.

Mr. THOMSON: You charged the Industries Assistance Board a higher rate of interest and that should show a substantial balance.

The Minister for Mines: The amount used for that is hardly noticeable.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You should wipe out the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. THOMSON: The Commonwealth Bank has increased the interest payable to depositors.

The Minister for Mines: Would you give  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest on new deposits and allow the old ones to continue at the old rate?

Mr. Pickering: Why not graduate it?

Mr. THOMSON: We could go into the question of the amount of interest we have on hand and graduate the payments as suggested by the Premier: On the smaller amounts we could give the greater amount of interest and regard the people with the bigger bank balances as being investors. I do not look upon the Savings Bank as an investment bank but rather an institution to encourage the people to be thrifty. We have to meet unfair competition, and I regret having to say it, but we have to hold out inducements to the people of Western Australia to support the State Savings Bank, for it is essential that they should do so.

Mr. ANGELO: I do not think it a good policy to allow branches of the chartered banks to act as agents for the Government Savings Bank as happens in so many towns in this State. I know of instances where

the branches of the chartered banks act on behalf of the State Savings Bank, while at the same time, we have branches of the Treasury in the same town.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And they give higher interest, too.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, that is to obtain depositors. Consequently, if a new depositor comes along, then the chartered bank does everything possible to secure that depositor as they pay a higher rate of interest for fixed deposits. The hours that chartered banks keep open are also shorter than the hours of the Government Savings Bank. That tells against the competition with the Commonwealth Savings Bank. I can cite an instance to show what the effect of this is. I was approached by workmen numbering between 80 and 100 who are engaged in the Carnarvon meat works. They wanted the State Savings Bank to open for an hour on Saturday nights. I found that it was impossible to secure this concession, because the agency was in the hands of the branch of a chartered bank, and consequently the bank would not bring their officials back for an hour's work.

Mr. O'Loghlen: That should not be necessary in an important town like Carnarvon.

Mr. ANGELO: The works are three miles away and in order to transact business at the bank the men would have to lose a shift.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It should be easy to get a suitable agent in a town like Carnarvon.

Mr. ANGELO: Exactly, that is my point. I approached the Commonwealth Savings Bank on the occasion I mentioned and they agreed to open their bank as desired.

Mr. Teesdale: You should be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. ANGELO: Absolutely, but we could not get the State Savings Bank to open, because the agency was in the hands of a chartered bank. Had the agency been in the hands of the local Treasury paymaster, we would have been able to save that money for the State and prevent it going to the Federal authorities. I hope that whenever possible, savings bank agencies will be placed in the hands of Government officials or some other suitable persons rather than in the hands of branches of chartered banks.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have had hopes for years past that we would not be discussing the State Savings Bank on the Estimates any more, and that an amalgamation would have been effected. It appears, however, that we shall go on for years with this foolish competitive policy. I appreciate the difficulties which confront the Treasurer in making the State Savings Bank a successful institution. It has been suggested that the rate of interest should be increased, but when we look into the margin of profit over and above the cost of administration, it will be seen that the margin is not sufficient. In these circumstances, the institution must exist on an appeal to local patriotism which,

however, is not very pronounced. The point raised by the member for Carnarvon (Mr. Angelo) was raised last session by myself. The State Savings Bank has been compelled to secure the services of agents who are not suitable from the State Savings Bank's point of view. I know of country storekeepers and employers' representatives in some of the big industrial centres who hold the local agency, and the result is in these cases that the men anxious to make deposits will not avail themselves of the opportunity. They will not divulge to such agents the amount of money they desire to draw or deposit, as the case may be. On the other hand, they rush wholesale to the post office and transact their business with the Commonwealth Savings Bank agency, despite the fact that, for patriotic reasons, they would like to bank with the State. We recognise that the State is up against the financial problem. We can meet people in the community who do not appear to have the same high regard for the solvency of the State as compared with the Federal institution. We have heard of runs on banks. There was one recently in Queensland, which was engineered, I suppose. There was also one suggested recently in Western Australia. It would be interesting to have a report showing the withdrawals which took place from the State Savings Bank at the time of the civil service strike. People went to the bank on the eve of the strike and withdrew their deposits which they lodged with the Commonwealth Bank. The total may not have amounted to a very considerable sum, but it was a serious matter. There seems to be less confidence in the State institution than in the Commonwealth Bank.

The Premier: I do not think so.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is the position, and I think the Minister of Mines agrees with me, because when the Labour Government were in power we heard people talking along these lines.

Mr. Pickering: We have had a Labour Government in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is so, but foolish people think that one institution is more sound than the other. There was a time when people withdrew their deposits, and we had another instance when the civil service strike was about to take place. The point about these withdrawals is that once a depositor takes his money away from one bank and lodges it with another, it is difficult to get him to return to the former institution. For this reason, we should be particularly careful to get agencies established in the different towns that will be acceptable to the depositors. The authorities made a blunder, when they were ousted from the post offices, in appointing country storekeepers as agents. In the case of a man desiring to lodge money in the bank, the agency for which was in the hands of a local storekeeper, he would not care to do so if he owed money to that particular trades-

man. In such an instance that man would probably go to the Commonwealth Bank. It is unfortunate that these two institutions exist. They will continue to exist, I suppose, and if the State Savings Bank is to continue in public favour—

The Minister for Mines: The chartered banks should be more satisfactory than the storekeeper.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, but not as satisfactory as a private individual outside. I believe it is possible to get some shopkeeper who would be suitable.

The Minister for Mines: But that is what you object to.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There is a difference between the small shopkeeper and the big merchant.

The Minister for Mines: But the depositor probably does business with both.

Mr. Teesdale: They do not like going there because they have to buy tucker there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There are many Government officials, school teachers, and others who could be found to carry on this work in the interests of the State more economically. The instance cited at Carnarvon where the money was forced into the Commonwealth Bank because the local agency was in the hands of a chartered bank, lends point to the position. There was a desire to help the State, but because they could not secure the facilities there, the depositors were forced to bank with the Commonwealth institution. That is an instance where the chartered bank was not a satisfactory agent at all.

The Premier: They do the work fairly.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They take it on, but I do not know that they go out of their way to advertise the benefits of the State bank.

Mr. ANGELO: They are in competition with themselves.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I hope at the next Premier's conference the Premier will try to bring about the amalgamation of the savings banks, for it is ridiculous to have two such banks in the one line of business.

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

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Government Stores, £15,390; Taxation, £29,719—agreed to.

Vote—Workers' Homes Board, £2,592:

The CHAIRMAN: There is no numbered item on the Estimates. Still I will allow hon. members to ask any questions. Hon. members may ask for any information they desire.

Mr. PICKERING: I should like a definite statement from the Premier as to what he considers a fair salary for the secretary of the Workers' Homes Board. This officer is very able and efficient, and he has carried on for a number of years with an utterly insufficient remuneration. Under his careful management the operations of the board have been brought to a very successful issue, and

the beneficiaries under the board have no thing but gratitude for the secretary. The Premier should place this officer on a footing with officers holding equivalent positions in other departments.

The PREMIER: The hon. member know that this officer is under the Public Service Act, administered by the Public Service Commissioner, and has an appeal board to appeal to. I admit that this officer is very efficient and does his work well. The salary has been fixed by the Public Service Commissioner, not by the Government. The new reclassification is now in progress, and probably this officer, among others, will be reclassified.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I can only agree that the salary of this officer is insufficient. No doubt the new Public Service Appeal Board, to which the House has just agreed will deal with this officer. However, I wish to draw attention to the fact that no money is being advanced for the erection of workers' homes in the metropolitan area.

The Premier: Oh yes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Well very little, I any. I do not object to money being advanced for homes in the country, but I do not think the metropolitan area should be cut out entirely. According to the Premier's own statement, £30,000 controlled by the Workers' Homes Board is out at 5 per cent, £7,000 at 4½ per cent., £10,000 at 4 per cent., and £20,500 at 1 per cent.

The Premier: That is unavoidable.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, it is not. There are many people who desire to erect homes, and I think they should have an opportunity to avail themselves of the Workers' Homes Act. Another objection have to lodge is that the Government do not treat ex-soldiers as citizens. I cannot see why, because the Federal Government have inaugurated a scheme for the erection of homes for soldiers, an ex-soldier should be debarred from coming under the Workers' Homes Act. It is true that if he came under the State scheme a soldier would have to pay a little more interest than he pays under the Federal scheme; but at the same time he would have a much wider choice of building. The buildings erected under the War Service Homes Act are too expensive for the ordinary workers and, in consequence, some of the soldiers, realising this, have tried unavailingly to secure accommodation from the Workers' Homes Board.

The Minister for Works: Even our homes are more costly than they were.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Perhaps so, but not nearly so costly as are the war service homes. The soldiers should be placed on a footing with other citizens.

The CHAIRMAN: We cannot discuss soldiers under this vote.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But I am discussing the Workers' Homes Board, who have refused accommodation to ex-soldiers.

The Premier: I think we should accommodate them if we have the money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am pleased to hear the Premier say that. The State, of course, cannot go beyond the money at its disposal. But my objection is that the ex-soldier is not allowed to avail himself of the State Act.

Mr. DAVIES: Under the War Service Homes Act £800 is the limit.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Only the other day I saw plans for a house consisting of four rooms, a bathroom and a back verandah, the price being £948. The applicant could not go on with the proposal. At the same time he could not avail himself of the State Act. I hope the Premier will see to it that the soldiers have treatment at least equal to that meted out to other persons.

Mr. THOMSON: I agree with the member for North-East Fremantle. The war service homes have been very costly and, unfortunately, the policy adopted does not give the applicant much choice in respect to the class of home he would have. I trust the Premier will make the Workers' Homes Act available to the ex-soldiers. In my opinion the Workers' Homes Board should erect new buildings rather than take over existing houses. The secretary of the board, when at Katanning recently, was besieged with applications for homes. I have no desire to put any obstacles in the way of people in the metropolitan area coming under the provisions of the Workers' Homes Act, but I think the people of the country districts should be given even greater consideration. The interest charged, namely  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., appears to be a little on the light side, for I understand the Government are paying that for their money.

The Premier: We are paying 6 per cent.

Mr. THOMSON: It does not seem good business to borrow money at six per cent. and lend it out at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. However, I have no desire to see the rate to clients increased. Having had many dealings with the secretary, I consider his remuneration too low in comparison with that of other officers, though I know that his salary is a matter for the public service board. I understand the Government have ruled that returned soldiers are not entitled to have houses erected by the Workers' Homes Board. That ruling should be withdrawn, and our soldiers should receive the same consideration as private citizens. Indeed, the soldiers are more entitled to consideration.

Mr. DAVIES: The Government would do well to extend the operations of the Workers' Homes Board in every possible direction. The inquiries of the Basic Wage Commission and other bodies have shown that the congestion occasioned in the Eastern States by the lack of homes is something appalling. In Sydney, we learn, as many as three families are living in a five-roomed house, and as many as five persons in one room. We do not want a similar state of things to come about in Western Australia. The British Government are now offering houses up to £200, according to the style of building, to any person who will erect homes in the United Kingdom.

The bonus is an absolutely free gift. A person who avails himself of the offer can sell the home immediately he has built it, and then go in for another.

The Premier: I am afraid that is not correct.

Mr. DAVIES: The statement appears in the English newspaper files for August last. It is reported that under this system permits have already been given for 14,000 homes, involving about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions of money in bonuses. People to-day must have homes, and a number of people in Western Australia are living in places not worthy of the name of home. I admit that the position of the Government is difficult because of the impossibility of getting building material at reasonable rates, and also because of what I believe to be a real shortage of tradesmen in the building line. I know of cases where material has been lying on the ground for three months, awaiting tradesmen to build the house. The operations of the Workers' Homes Board should extend to the country districts.

The Premier: There are 100 workers' homes at Narrogin.

Mr. Willcock: There are a number at Geraldton.

Mr. Underwood: There are some at Carnarvon.

Mr. DAVIES: The shortage of house accommodation in this State will be accentuated by the arrival of immigrants in large numbers, as, for instance, those who are coming out on board the "Zealandic."

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Miscellaneous Services, £57,122:

Item, Children's Protection Society, £100:

Mr. THOMSON: While I am pleased to see this and kindred items on the Estimates—items totalling £2,585—I consider the time has arrived for levying a special tax to meet the cost of upkeep of benevolent societies and institutions. The present practice is to send collectors round annually for donations; and that practice must be costly, inasmuch as the collectors' salaries and expenses come out of the funds collected from the public. To many individuals, therefore, the payment of a charities tax would mean considerably less expense than the present system. I have no objection whatever to raise to any amount placed on these Estimates in this connection, but I urge the introduction of a charities tax.

Item, Amount required to cover over-payment by a Minister during public service strike, £6:

Mr. LAMBERT: The Committee ought to have some explanation of this item, which appears under "Defalcations." Who was the paymaster that lost the £6?

The PREMIER: During the public service strike Ministers had to pay thousands of workmen throughout the country, which involved a tremendous amount of work. The Minister for Works rendered yeoman service during that period, and had it not been for

him a great many of the men would have been without pay. This item of £6 represents various small amounts over-paid by him. I do not think any hon. member will, in the circumstances, object to passing the item.

Item, "Hansard" Staff, Reporting Royal Commissions, £250:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I would like some information from the Premier regarding an amount that is in dispute, an amount which is being claimed by a member of the "Hansard" staff.

The Premier: You cannot discuss it on this vote.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is the only vote on which I can discuss it. The amount in dispute is a little over £100.

The Premier: I think it is £96.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Is it the intention of the Government to pay this sum? The point I desire to bring under notice is that the sum of £250 was set apart as payment for reporting Royal Commissions, and was shared in by five members of the "Hansard" staff.

The Premier: I will tell you all about it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the Premier will say that he will agree to pay the amount I will not discuss it. The position is that one of the "Hansard" staff enlisted and went to the Front. He was absent for about three years, and while he was away his share of the payment amounted to about £100. His agent for the collecting of this money was the then Chief "Hansard" Reporter. The money was collected but was never paid to the member of the staff who went to the Front. It was not until his return that it was discovered that the money had been collected but not paid over. The Printing Committee who control the "Hansard" staff had no power to do anything in connection with the matter except to make a recommendation. I trust, therefore, that the Premier will see that as the officer who received the money was acting as the agent of the Government, that the Government will recoup the member of the "Hansard" staff who has suffered the loss. The claim is a perfectly legitimate one, and it has been in abeyance for a long time. I will not say any more if the Premier gives me an assurance that the amount will be paid.

The PREMIER: It is true that the former Chief "Hansard" Reporter received the money. He had an agreement with the Government to do certain work for which an amount of £250 per annum was paid. I do not agree quite that he acted as agent; he had a contract with the Government to report Royal Commissions. Four other members of the "Hansard" staff participated in the work, and the five shared in the payment, each taking £50. When the "Hansard" reporter referred to went to the war an arrangement was made whereby the Chief "Hansard" Reporter should pay this amount to the wife of the officer who went to the Front. No one apparently discovered the

fact that the money had not been paid on the return of the officer from the Front, and then it was found that the Chief "Hansard" Reporter had failed to make payments over a period of about 20 months. I do not agree with the hon. member that the Chief "Hansard" Reporter was the Government's agent who entered into a contract with the other reporters to do the work, and month by month he drew the money from the Treasury and distributed it amongst the members of the staff. I do not know, therefore, that the Government are responsible for the loss. I should be very glad, of course, to pay it. Undoubtedly the returned "Hansard" reporter has lost this money, and unless the Government pay it he will lose it for time.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I would like to clear up the point as to whether the late Chief "Hansard" Reporter did or did not act as agent for the Government. I will read the letter.

The Premier: How did you get that letter?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It does not matter how I got it.

The Premier: I think it does.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If it is any consolation to the Premier, I got it from the Australian Journalists' Association.

The Premier: Are you a member of it?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. The letter reads—

Referring to your letter of the 15 February, 1909, informing me that Cabinet has approved of the "Hansard" staff reporting and typing the evidence for Royal Commissions for £250 per annum, will you kindly inform me how this money is to be paid, whether one-twelfth of the amount is to be sent to me monthly to be disbursed amongst the staff or whether the amount will be paid to each reporter monthly by the Treasury Department. I presume the payment started on the date of Cabinet approval. (Sgd.) J. A. Wiggin, Chief "Hansard" Reporter.

Then in reply to that there is a minute in the Treasury file, page 105, signed by the late Mr. Frank Wilson, then Premier and Colonial Treasurer. This reads—

The amount should be paid to the chief of the "Hansard" staff in monthly instalments, payments to commence from the date of Cabinet approval, namely, 10 February, 1909.

The "Hansard" officer who went to the Front should not be deprived of this sum of money, which represents an accumulation of monthly payments.

Mr. Hudson: Did the then Chief "Hansard" Reporter have to employ someone in the officer's absence?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. The work was done for him as a voluntary act by the other members of the staff, and it was arranged that the money should be paid over to the officer's wife while her husband was at the war. Through an unfortunate catastrophe

something went wrong and as the result there was a victim—as a matter of fact there were two victims—and the soldier victim on his return found himself £100 short. The Premier should agree to recoup the officer. I understand there is a new arrangement now whereby the "Hansard" staff receive these payments direct, and not through any agent, and therefore there is no opportunity for any superior officer to purloin any money that does not belong to him. It would be a shame if this officer were to be deprived of the money which is justly his. The Printing Committee unfortunately have no power to give it to him; the Government are the only authority who can pay.

Mr. Hudson: The Printing Committee did not make the contract?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. It is a fair thing that this officer should be recouped, because it was through no fault of his that he lost this money.

The Minister for Mines: The question to be settled is whether the Government should pay a second time. If they have paid in other cases they should pay in this.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It has been done in other cases. Only last week I quoted the instance of two men who were in partnership, one of them being a returned soldier suffering from shell shock and who took a sum of money, portion of which should have been paid to his partner. The Government in this case paid a second time. A similar thing has happened in other cases. The Minister for Mines knows the circumstances of the "Hansard" case, and there is no need for me to repeat them. I would like the Premier to give me an assurance that the money will be paid.

The Premier: I would like to know where you got a copy of the file.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the Premier is going to question me I will keep him going for a couple of hours.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair will not agree to that. Moreover, the point the hon. member has raised has nothing to do with the vote the Committee are discussing. I have given the hon. member a considerable amount of latitude, and he should not say that he is going to keep the Committee here for a couple of hours.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If I may not discuss the matter on this vote I do not know on which vote I can discuss it. I want a reply from the Premier and if he does not give it to me I can keep the Committee going by debating the various items, and you, Mr. Chairman, cannot rule me out of order provided I do not indulge in repetition.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not discussing the vote before the Committee. The question he has raised has nothing to do with the item which was called. I am trying to inculcate that into the hon. member's mind.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I have a perfect right to insist on getting a reply from the Premier.

The CHAIRMAN: If the Premier does not feel disposed to reply, the hon. member has no right to say that he is going to stand there for a couple of hours, or until he does get a reply.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am asking the Premier to recoup the officer.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order.

The Minister for Mines: And the "Hansard" reporter is out of pocket.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have asked for information on a subject and this is the only item under which I can expect to get that information, and I am ruled out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: The subject the hon. member is discussing now is entirely out of order.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Well, it is an extraordinary decision.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not question my ruling. If he desires he can dissent from it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I will do so; it is an extraordinary decision.

The Premier: I can inform the hon. member that the matter is now being considered.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the Premier had said that before it would have saved a lot of trouble.

The Minister for Mines: The question is whether we shall be establishing a precedent which may become dangerous.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It has been done before.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member desire to dissent from my ruling?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No, I have no desire to hold up the business of the House.

Item, Parks, recreation grounds, etc.—grants for maintenance and improvements—King's Park Board, £1,900; other grounds, £400;

Mr. LAMBERT: The amount provided for other grounds is very small. There are some very fair parks outside the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Mines: Where?

Mr. LAMBERT: Coolgardie.

The Minister for Mines: The grasshoppers ate it out the other day.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Is this in order, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: I am keeping order, not you.

Mr. LAMBERT: There are important parks at Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie and other goldfields centres, and while some of them have received liberal treatment—

The Minister for Works: You still ask for free water.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, but the metropolitan area scores every time. There is no reasonable allocation of the money.

The Minister for Works: You at Coolgardie have done well in the past.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not criticising the benevolence of the Minister for Water Supply, but there should be a fairer allocation of this money. The King's Park Board receives a considerable sum, and the rest of the parks are practically starved unless they take the equivalent in water. The park at Kalgoorlie costs the ratepayers £400 to £1,000 a year. If the view is taken that the councils should maintain the parks, King's Park should be taken over by the Perth City Council.

The Minister for Mines: The Perth City Council have numerous parks to maintain.

Mr. LAMBERT: Tinpot parks.

The Minister for Mines: Queen's Gardens is not a tinpot park.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is only a flower garden; I am speaking of parks.

The Minister for Works: What about Hyde Park?

The Minister for Mines: And Loton Park?

Mr. LAMBERT: I recognise that Point Walter is a recreation ground for the whole of the people, but Queen's Gardens is not a park in the sense that people go there by the thousands.

Mr. Robinson: Thousands go there every week.

Mr. LAMBERT: A thousand would fill Queen's Gardens.

Mr. Robinson: Nonsense!

The CHAIRMAN: One member at a time, please.

Mr. LAMBERT: The parks in the more remote parts of the State should receive recognition.

Mr. THOMSON: Can the Premier tell us how the £400 is to be spent? I would remind him that there is a recreation ground at Katanning.

The PREMIER: No. Last year £1,920 was spent on King's Park and £100 on Point Walter.

Item, School sites—purchase of, including title fees, surveys, etc., £1,000:

Mr. PICKERING: Has provision been made for a new site for the Donnybrook school which was recently burnt down?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Was the site burnt also?

Mr. PICKERING: I understand that the old site was unsuitable.

The PREMIER: I have received no proposal regarding Donnybrook. This vote is intended to cover the purchase of all sites wherever required. I am aware that the old school site at Donnybrook near to the river is too small.

Item, Departmental advertising (except railways and State Steamship Service), £2,000:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This represents an increase of £500 over the vote of last year. Last year the Government spent £1,998. They should endeavour to keep advertising within the limits of the amount voted by Parliament. There should be no necessity for special ad-

vertising outside of railways and State steamships.

The Minister for Works: There are contracts and water supply notices.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Are those items covered by this amount, or are they charged up to the department?

The PREMIER: This is a small item considering all the advertising we have to do.

The Minister for Mines: Acts of Parliament have to be advertised in the district to which they apply.

The PREMIER: We advertise as little as possible. We may have to advertise the State Savings Bank if the competition with the Commonwealth Savings Bank continues.

Item, Subsidy South-East coast mail service (State steamship service), £1,150.

Mr. ANGELO: What amount is received from the Federal Government for the mail service run by the "Eucla," and is this subsidy in addition to the loss which the steamer is making on that run?

The PREMIER: This item represents the difference between the Postal Department's payment and the Adelaide Steamship Company's contract. We carry on the service instead of the Adelaide Steamship Company; there is no contract.

Mr. DAVIES: I want to speak on the item "Bonus suggestions for effecting economy in public service."

The CHAIRMAN: There is no amount set down against this item.

Mr. DAVIES: I want an explanation as to why this item has been discontinued. There is not £1 set down this year in connection with this.

The PREMIER: The only item against which an amount is set down is the item "Bonus on wheat, £250." That is provided to cover the bonus of 1s. 6d. for the settlers in the Esperance district, due to the fact that the railway has not yet been constructed.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Colonial Treasurer's department.

Education Department. Hon. H. P. Colbatch, Minister (Hon. J. Mitchell, Premier, in charge of the Estimates):

Vote—Salaries, £402,050:

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Norham) [8.33]: There is a considerable increase in this vote. It is due to increase in salaries.

Mr. Underwood: All of it!

The PREMIER: Practically all. In round figures, the total increase in salaries is £57,750, and in contingencies £2,550. The increase in salaries is divided as follows: administrative staff £574, teaching staff £53,166, clerical staff £1,852, and cleaners, caretakers, etc., £1,058. About £47,000 is due to increased rates of pay, and the remainder to normal development. There is an additional sum spent on books, apparatus, material, water, lighting, etc. Everything

has gone up in price compared with what it was, and the department have had to pay more for supplies than heretofore. Very little money is being spent apart from salaries, and the apparatus and materials necessary for the conduct of the schools. There are some exhibitions and scholarships, and an additional sum of £877 is included under this heading. Practically all the increase is due to the increased payments to the staff. The salaries of teachers all the world over are increasing and nowhere so much, perhaps, as in the Old Country. In this State we require higher qualifications on the part of our teachers. All through the Government service, except in the case of the higher grades, there have been considerable increases during the past 18 months. Naturally, too, the number of children is increasing. Not only is this the case in the more populous centres where schools already exist, but in the outback districts. The people are spreading far and wide, and schools have to be provided wherever the necessary number of children is found, whether in the agricultural areas, the mining areas or the timber areas. Every school costs a considerable sum of money. There are 625 schools altogether in Western Australia. Almost monthly we have requests for further schools. In a new country like this such expenditure cannot be avoided. I am sure no one would wish to see our system of education altered, especially in the back blocks. I was recently in a centre in the country where the people were asking for a school, but, unfortunately, there are not enough children yet to enable us to establish one. It is a sad thing to see seven or eight children from eight to 15 years of age growing up without education. Of course we have correspondence classes which are doing good work and filling the breach wherever possible. This vote must increase so long as the present system of education is in vogue. I doubt if members would wish to see it altered or interfered with unless in the direction of its being improved. High schools are being erected at Northam and Bunbury. It will be agreed that if the system has been improved in the metropolitan area, such improvements should extend to the more populous country centres. Why should children be compelled to come to Perth if there is a sufficient number of them in the country to justify the establishment of schools which will afford them facilities for higher education? It is better that the children should be taught as near to their homes as possible, and in places more in touch with the life that they follow.

Mr. Underwood: Give us an idea of what they are being taught.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows.

Mr. Underwood: I will tell you directly.

The PREMIER: The hon. member promises to tell the House, and I anticipate an interesting discussion. There is nothing the hon. member does not know. Schools have been improved wherever the

number of children warrants such improvement. At Albany the numbers of children in the higher classes have continued to grow, and naturally the expenditure has also grown. Continuation classes have cost a large sum of money and they are being held in large centres. Westonia, Meekatharra, Greenbushes, and North Perth have been added to the list of continuation classes. The work that is being done by these continuation classes is undoubtedly very good. There are 500 technical classes being conducted and these are open to students without fees. Additional classes are provided which are self-supporting. Students pay the fees of the instructor. It is sometimes thought that the whole of the cost of technical education is borne by the department. That is not so, for quite a number of students furnish the necessary fees to cover the cost of tuition.

Mr. Pickering: What is the total amount paid?

The PREMIER: Technical education costs £17,000 and there are 500 schools absolutely free. The training college contains 120 students, 50 of whom are being specially trained for work in the country schools. It is necessary that they should receive special tuition for this work. We have a great many lady teachers who take the smaller schools in the country. Naturally many of them get married. It is an expensive business training these lady teachers, because after we have had the use of their services for a year or two they apply for their marriage allowance and away they go. I do not know how this can be avoided.

Hon. T. Walker: You have the satisfaction of knowing that you have made educated wives.

The PREMIER: I hope they are good cooks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is a very small amount of the total expenditure.

The PREMIER: It means a considerable sum of money one way or the other, and certainly increases the expenditure of the department. One thing that it obviates is the employment of unclassified teachers in country schools. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) knows the difficulties which confront the Education Department, and how impossible it is to keep these lady teachers for very long after they have been trained. If we are to have properly trained teachers we must have training colleges. I suppose we cannot complain about the lady teachers getting married. What we want in this country is population and we want everyone to settle down. With regard to the correspondence classes, this work is most important. We find scattered about the country from Wyndham to Eucla, and even along the Great Western Railway, isolated settlements comprising a family or two of a few children. In the country I came across two or three children who had been taught by means of these correspondence



classes. The parents told me that they were getting on well and could not be educated by any other means than this, except by the employment of a tutor. There are five teachers conducting this correspondence work and the cost is comparatively small, but by this means we are reaching children in isolated places. The technical schools are also important, particularly in the teaching of trades. It is difficult to meet the demands of the various trades by any other means than the technical schools. The number of apprentices in each trade is strictly limited. These classes turn out very useful men, such as blacksmiths, plumbers, printers and so on. They do all sorts of useful work at these technical schools. Many apprentices also attend these schools and derive great benefit from them. I know that apprentices at the Midland Junction Railway Workshops are assisted in their work by attending these classes.

Hon. T. Walker: Very greatly.

The PREMIER: Yes. They are taught engineering and other matters of that kind. There are some self-supporting classes at the Perth Technical School. For example, there is a self-supporting class of 36 students in motor mechanics, one of 45 in wool classing, one of 11 in photography, and one of eight in tailor's cutting. This last class was started at the request of the master tailors, who pay the fee of 25s. per term for each student. Then there are self-supporting classes in art needlework, dress cutting, painting, accountancy, and clerical subjects. At the Kalgoorlie Technical School the students pay the full cost of the classes. I do not know that I need say more on this vote, seeing that it represents nothing but what was authorised last year, the increased expense being due to the natural growth of the schools and to the increased salaries being paid to the teachers. The school teachers, like the public servants, are being paid higher rates; and I think it is high time they were. As a class they have in the past been very badly paid. In view of the high cost of living they should be paid more than formerly, so that they may live at all. Teachers stationed at country schools may have a better chance of living economically than teachers in the cities. I consider that our teachers are now reasonably paid, but not over-paid. The increase in salaries accounts for £9,000. I hope hon. members realise that nothing new has been attempted since last year—at all events, nothing that means new expenditure. The system has been extended as it must be extended, but has not been added to except through the natural increase of population.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [8.50]: I move—

That the vote be reduced by £20,000.

I take this course because I desire a vote of the Committee on the question whether we are receiving value for the money we are spending on education. I hold it is time that

we had an audit of the position. I would have preferred to move for a reduction of £1 in the amount of the vote; but I was informed that if I moved such a reduction, any motion were defeated, the effect would be to prevent other members from subsequently moving reductions in the various items. Therefore I have moved for a reduction of £20,000. It is a considerable time since we have fairly and squarely considered the question of education. Free education was first advocated, I think, about 20 years ago.

Hon. T. Walker: More than 20 years ago.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Perhaps there are a few men in Australia who did more to bring about free education than did the present member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker). I make this statement now because later I am going to show the hon. member where he has gone too far. Some people seem to be under the impression that I am opposed to education altogether. That is quite wrong; but I think I can show that although education, or schooling, is a good thing, one can have too much of it, as of other good things, and also that one can pay too much for one's whistle. There is no finer subject to speak on than that of education. The orators of the world have dwelt on it in all ages. It is an infinitely more difficult task to endeavour to show that the State is spending too much money on education, or that the system adopted is not getting the best results. I am now essaying that difficult task. Older members may recollect that about 11 or 12 years ago there was a proposal to charge an extra weekly fee for the higher classes at the James-street school and other schools. An agitation resulted throughout the State and the proposal became so unpopular that it had to be dropped. Since the scarcely anyone, with the good exception of the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington), has raised his voice against education. On this vote I may be excused for quoting briefly the opinions of various Ministers for Education. Taking those Ministers at random I will quote the member for Kanowna speaking in 1912—

The first bright feature regarding the education system must be the increase. I am aware that the Government will be accused of not practising due economy but I am confident that there is no section of the administration, or portion of the work of government, where an increase would be so little regarded or so heartily approved as in matters of education.

The hon. member runs on in that style. The following year he said—

I do not think that in any other part of the world is the same spirit shown. Much of it is due to Mr. Clubb, who carries enthusiasm with him. It becomes contagious. The teachers get from him that esprit de corps, and the scholars take the same sentiment, and feel it a pleasure, a dignity, a something that elevates and lifts them up out of the ordinary rut of life, to pay

ticipate in the draught from the stream of knowledge. This is a matter that I think we cannot curtail our expenditure upon, and my only sorrow is that we cannot extend the blessings of these classes.

Now we come to the present Minister for Education, and he follows practically the lines of the member for Kanowna. It is always a question of more expenditure. Mr. Colebatch said—

In the Education Department we shall endeavour to do all possible within the means of the Government, particularly in the direction of extending secondary education. One of the chief lessons of the war has been that the future of the nation must depend upon the efficiency of the individual, and we feel that efficiency can be gained only by spreading as widely as possible the benefits of higher education. We regard it as a great national waste that we insist upon children going to school until they are 14 years of age, and then, no matter how clever a child may be, its future education, unless its parents are able to pay for secondary education, is neglected.

Similar passages are to be found throughout "Hansard" of the last eight years. The whole trend of the idea is that our people cannot possibly do anything unless they have a teacher to guide them. However, after reading through those speeches, I looked up a book I read 30 years ago. It is called "Self Help," by Samuel Smiles. This is a book that should be in every household where children are reared. I believe the book has almost gone out of print. Our Ministers for Education have set up the position that parents cannot teach their children, and that children cannot possibly teach themselves—conveying the impression that unless one is educated by teachers, one has no chance of success in life. This book, on the other hand, teaches self-reliance. It quotes hundreds of cases of men who attained to the highest positions in the world though they had had practically none of this kind of education. Let me say right here that no teacher can make anyone good without the effort of the person taught. No man has ever succeeded in accomplishing anything worth while in this world except by his own efforts. Teachers may in a small way assist, but without his own personal efforts a man will never achieve great success. It appears to me that our system of education is to some extent sapping the self-reliance of the rising generation. I am glad to observe that the Education Department's report for the last financial year is on the Table, while the reports of so many other departments are missing; but throughout that report there is one long wail for increased expenditure—not for maintaining the present expenditure, hear in mind. Paragraph after paragraph points out that our expenditure must be increased, and that it must go on increasing. I want to express the opinion that it is time we called

a halt in this expenditure, and had a look to see whether the department are the best judges of what to teach the child. There is one other quotation I would like to make, and then I am finished with the speeches of Ministers for Education. Those Ministers have contended as to who is entitled to the credit for the "great improvement" in the educational system. Speaking in 1913 the member for Kanowna said—

There is not a mail that comes to Perth but brings requests for schools, or additions to schools, or fresh teachers to be appointed. That shows that education is right through the whole community. Everyone is afire with the spirit and zeal of education. There is a wholesome thirst for knowledge, a genuine spirit of inquiry, a consciousness of the power that is stirring the whole State. I take it that the present Government have done something to fortify and cement that spirit existing throughout the State.

Mr. Stubbs: No one denies that.

The Minister for Education: I am surely entitled to make a speech, and make it from my heart.

Mr. Stubbs: But do not take all the credit.

The Minister for Education: The hon. member surely does not begrudge us any credit that may be reflected on us in that respect.

In 1918 the then Colonial Secretary—the present Minister—made the following statement—

It has been said that the educational system should be suited to the requirements of the community. During all the years the system has been in force in Western Australia, what effort was made to suit our education to the requirements of the community until I came into office? I did not appoint a Royal Commission to investigate matters; I appointed a committee of men who understood, to advise and report on this matter, and I hope hon. members have read the report. If they have not, it will pay them to do so, quite as much as it will pay them to read the report on Collie coal.

I may say in passing that I have the report here. It is of such importance that it took them a day to find it at the Education Department. Here we have a Minister in this House claiming that he did this, and the Minister in another House claiming that he did it.

Hon. T. Walker: Surely I did not claim that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It seems to me that if a sporting writer were to place the relative position of those concerned, he would fix them as follows: Personal Glorification of the Minister, 1st; Education of Children, 2nd; Taxpayer also started; he fell at the first fence, broke his neck, killed his jockey and never smiled again.

Mr. Johnston: Eurythmic, 4th.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Perhaps Taxpayer was never in it. Now we come to the question—What is the value of education, and what is the value of the subjects taught? The old original conception of education was embraced in the three "R's." I am of the opinion that we should now go back to the old position of the three "R's." There are only two subjects, to my mind, which form the groundwork of all education—English and arithmetic.

Member: Eurythmetic.

The Minister for Mines: That shows how we are progressing, all right.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Supposing some of our business people want an office boy. What do they want him to understand when he starts work—English and arithmetic! That is all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And shorthand and typewriting.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Is not shorthand English?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not altogether.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is English.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He has to learn it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It takes three months.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You try it on.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The geography and history and other stuff taught is absolutely of no use to an employer, and it is no use to the boy, for the simple reason that he forgets all he has learnt under those headings long before he is 21 years of age. I want to go into the question of teaching geography. Let members think for one moment. Most of us went to school—to a certain extent, I think. No doubt, about a quarter of the time at school was taken up in learning geography. How much do members know now? Can any member tell me the geographical position of the Bay of Biscay? Can any hon. member present, the member for Gascoyne barred, tell me what is the most westerly point of Australia?

Mr. Troy: The North-West Cape; what is the prize?

The CHAIRMAN: School is not in, Mr. Underwood.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: At least a quarter of the time of the pupils is taken up with the effort of memorising the thing called geography, which is one of the most useless brain sweats I can imagine any boy being put through, for the reason that he forgets it and even if he remembered it, what he learnt would be of no use to him in after life. What use would it be to members of this Chamber to know the geographical position of Wyndham. I do not know if the Minister for Works knows anything about it, but he knows how to run meat works there. In regard to geography, we might just take some of the examination papers set for the sixth standard of our primary schools. This is what is considered necessary to fit a boy to go out into life

and become a good Australian citizen. I shall not read them all, but here are some—

Name the principal rivers and mountains you would cross in a railway journey from Melbourne to Brisbane. Name also the six most important towns, not including Melbourne and Brisbane, on this line; say where each is situated, and mention any important facts that you know concerning each.

Give an account of the South Island of New Zealand under the following heads: (a) Build, (b) Climate, (c) Rivers and towns on the Eastern Coast.

The Minister for Mines: The boy is not taught that for the purpose of impressing it upon his mind all through his life, any more than the hon. member's speech which he is making to-night is delivered to be remembered by those listening to him for the rest of their lives.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: What is a child given this education for then?

The Minister for Mines: It trains the boys' minds to memorise information.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will finish with these questions before dealing with that aspect—

Say what you know regarding the cause of monsoons. Name the monsoon lands within the British Empire and explain clearly the effects of the monsoons on the productions of these countries.

Draw a sketch map of the St. Lawrence River and of the great American lakes with which it is connected. Write notes on the importance of this great highway of commerce.

Name the chief mineral fields of Great Britain; mention the chief industries of each, and give the name of the chief town in each.

Give a description of British Columbia, dealing specially with climate, productions, chief towns. A sketch map should accompany your answer.

These are taken from an examination paper set for a sixth standard boy, and I ask members to consider what is the use of it all? What is the use of a boy sweating his brain to memorise such information as that? It has been said regarding the learning of languages, that that also trains the memory. That is absolutely opposed to facts. All members probably know some person who cannot read or write. What is the outstanding characteristic of that man? It is his wonderful memory. Instead of improving children's memories, we are crowding their minds with useless stuff, and spending our money on that sort of teaching. Out of every thousand boys who could pass an examination of the sort I mention, few would remember one particle of the information in five years' time, or if they did remember any of it, it would only be an infinitesimal portion of it. In spending money in the direction we are doing at present, boys and girls are learning that which is useless. Why retard them learning

that which is useful? While learning geography, they are missing English and arithmetic. Next we come to an important subject and one in which a boy must pass before he can get his leaving certificate. I refer to history. I ask the hon. member for Kanowna: What is history?

The Minister for Mines: Deeds of the past.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I ask members to remember the accounts we have had during the past few years of happenings in Europe, events which have happened while we are alive. What stuff will they get about those happenings two or three hundred years hence?

The Honorary Minister: Pretty hot stuff.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We have heard numerous versions of how the late Czar of Russia was murdered. What will be taught the children a hundred years hence on this particular point? As Denis says—

"The brave and noble 'ero blokes uv old" were "the crook 'uns uv their day," but "jist let the Call uv Stoush give 'im 'is chance and the crook is the ' 'ero of Romance."

As a matter of fact history is romance. History has no actual value to the man who is living. It may be valuable to a man who is going to be a writer but if he is to be a writer, he can start learning. I will give some questions regarding history from an examination paper—

What were the worst evils of feudalism?

What King did a good deal to suppress these evils? What did he really do?

Mr. Chesson: Nothing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I can quite understand that a lad who had read "Ivanhoe" would say that Richard Cœur-de-Lion, assisted by Robin Hood and his gang of bushrangers, did it. I can also conceive that John Wren would have been stated as having had something to do with Magna Charta. If a boy wants to know much about feudalism, he will have to read for a long time after he is 14 years of age. Here are some more things—

Write what you know of the life and work of Simon de Montfort?

That has got me "bloust," anyhow.

The Minister for Mines: It is a case of Simon-de-thumbs-up.

The Minister for Works: I have heard about Simon the Cellarer.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Here are some more:

Mention the causes of the Peasants' Revolt, 1381. Give an account of the Revolt. Name the leading seamen of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Write fully about any one of them.

These are questions that a boy has to answer—

Give an account of the commercial and naval rivalry between England and Holland during the protectorate of Cromwell and the reign of Charles II.

What circumstances led to the drawing up of the Grand Remonstrance? Give an account of the subsequent events up to the outbreak of the Civil War.

It is quite possible that a boy with a good memory could retain what his teacher has taught him, and he could answer these questions quite correctly. The fact remains that such information is of no practical use to him. He forgets all about it in no time. Such information is futile. Would it make members of Parliament any better or would it improve the Chairman of Committees? I am not speaking of the university now, but I hope to deal with that later on when the University Bill comes down. I hope on that occasion the Premier will bring forward some examination forms and show us what they teach there and how much teaching they do. I would particularly like to hear some lectures from that man who is paid to lecture on political economy. One can imagine the brain sweat of a boy trying to memorise those questions I have quoted. And, in standing for an examination the boy has to learn, not only the answers to those questions, but at least 50 others. I remember a university examination in geography containing the question, "Name a certain railway in England and give the names of all the stations on that railway." The pity of it! Fine boys and girls, straining their utmost to become good citizens, and they are given that sort of stuff to sweat their intellects on. Both these subjects should be cut out of examinations. No doubt light lessons on alleged history and on geography are interesting and entertaining to the children, and as mental recreations have their purposes; but when we put up an examination on them we are sweating the brains of the children unnecessarily, and wasting our money besides. Another point: we say to our boys, "You have to go to school and learn geography and history. They are of no use to you, and it's a million to one that before you are 20 years of age you will have forgotten them; but if you do not learn those subjects you will never be employed in the Government service except as a navy!" It is against this sweating of the intellects of our children that I wish to enter a protest. There seems to be an insatiable desire on the part of the teacher to follow up the child from the kindergarten to the university. The lessons best learned are those which one learns himself. I admire our teachers. Undoubtedly they are working well, and working in what they believe to be a good cause, but very often injury is done with the best possible intentions. I read in the newspaper the other day a report by Mr. Milligan, a man whom I much appreciate. He went to America, and gave us some idea of the American system. Apparently in that country they not only keep at the child, keep on drilling their ideas into him on school days, but they follow him up on holidays, Saturday afternoons and Sundays, teaching him to put in garden plots, keep fowls, keep pigs, still

with a teacher over him. They have a bank, and they teach him how to go to the bank and get an overdraft. I think the average Australian knows quite enough about that. If anybody cannot find out for himself how to get an overdraft, well the bank would be foolish to give him one. I am certain this continual following up of the child is not good for the child. In yesterday's "West Australian" I read the following paragraph:—

Mr. H. McKail, secretary of the Boy Scouts' Association, points out that in view of the revision of senior cadet training a report received from Imperial Scout headquarters bearing on physical training deserves the earnest consideration of instructors, school teachers, and schoolmasters. The report sets out that in a certain school two sets of boys from among the elder scholars were picked out after careful medical examination. They were physically sound, and as nearly equal to one another as possible. One lot were given careful physical training, and the other were allowed instead to play games. The boys who had physical training developed their chest measurement in a marked degree, but their breathing capacity had not increased in the same ratio, and rupture of some of the air vessels on the lungs had occurred. The boys who had played about had developed less to the eye, but had incurred no disability. The writer of the report expresses the opinion that there is a very general evil in subjecting boys to efforts at the pace set by someone else, whereas boys who play even strenuous games do so at their own pace and slacken off naturally as exhausted nature dictates. Furthermore, the question arises, the report states, as to the advisableness of exercises devised by man supplanting those designed by nature for growing boys.

I think that is unanswerable.

The Minister for Mines: You cannot get 100 boys to stand the same strain.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Of course not. And who would say that the intellect is not more delicate than the physique? Yet we never consider the danger of overworking the intellects of our children. We have heard a good deal about the boys who win prizes and scholarships; but we know that there have been dull boys who proved to be bright men, and bright boys who have grown into dull men. I was a bright boy myself. The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) is always telling us what education has done. Yet so-called education was not responsible for the English language, the finest and most expressive language the world has known. It came into being, not with the assistance of educated people, but in spite of education. For over three centuries the educationists of the British Isles endeavoured to prevent the English language from getting a hold. It is the language of a people, built up by uneducated people. Those who talk so much about the great benefits of educa-

tion should remember that it was the educated people who opposed the coming of the English language. Before passing on to the question of higher education, let me say a word in regard to the sending of babies to school. I think we send them to school when they are only four years of age. No child under seven can possibly learn anything that he or she will retain in after life. The teaching of children below that age cannot be remembered when it is likely to be useful. There is no reason why parents should not teach their own children the alphabet. There seems to be an idea that parents should not undertake this labour. As a matter of fact, there is no more lovable labour for father or mother than teaching their little kiddies their letters.

Mr. Davies: It is all right if the families are restricted to one or two.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: You can have families of 700 if you like, because the elder children can teach the younger.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, for they would not all be four years of age.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But the teaching of the alphabet is not an occupation for which we should be paying £200 per annum. It is something that the kiddy, with the assistance of its mother or sister or brother, can pick up for itself. But we take them away from their mothers, shut them up in a school and discipline them, and so spoil the best time of their lives, when they should be learning for themselves more than they can ever learn from others. Why shut them up in schools and discipline them? Why not let them run about and give Nature a chance? If we were to shut out from our schools all children below seven years of age we would reduce this vote by the amount I have referred to.

Mr. Smith: With advantage to the kiddies.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Certainly so.

The Minister for Mines: What would you do about the kindergarten?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I never was cruel, but if Anderson has a room for them, I would send them down to him. There were two things for which the Australian soldiers were renowned, namely, their lack of discipline and their individual initiative. Discipline always saps individual initiative. We should be careful that we do not sap the best characteristic of mankind, namely, self reliance, which we can easily do by over education. We have heard many speeches on the benefits of education. We have had the member for Kanowna talking about the carrying on from the kindergarten through the primary and the secondary schools to the crowning glory of our educational system, the University. We heard the present Minister for Education at Northam the other day, when laying the foundation stone of a school to cost, I suppose, £20,000, and perhaps £10,000 to run. The Minister said—

In the whole of my career nothing has given me so much pleasure. I have always contended that the country child, reared

close to Nature's heart, provides the most promising material for educational effort. Taking the two propositions, for loose logic they stand almost alone. There is the crowning glory of the university diploma. Why, there is no glory at all in it! The glory is in the effort, and the effort is frequently made without the diploma. We know thousands of mediocre individuals who hold university diplomas; we know many arrant wasters who hold diplomas, yet we talk about the crowning glory. I say the crowning glory is effort. (Coming to the Minister's speech about living close to Nature's heart, just think of it for a moment! The school was built in Northam and the scholars who go to it will be the children of residents of Northam, the business people of Northam. There will not be half a dozen farmers' children attending that school; they will be unable to attend because it will be too far distant from the farms. The children at Northam are no closer to Nature's heart than are those at Fremantle. Those at Fremantle at least have the advantage of the sea which those at Northam have not. This is the sort of thing we are fed on and which we are building our expenditure on. This school at Northam must be the forerunner of schools at Binnbury, Albany, Geraldton, Katanning, Wagin, Pingelly, Narrogin, York, Moora, Mandurah, Bridgetown, Pinjarra—as a matter of fact, if this school is warranted, then 20 similar schools are warranted in the State. What do they teach? I am prepared to say that one good farm school on the lines of the Narrogin school, somewhere in the eastern wheat belt, would do fifty times as much for the education of the people as the school at Northam. I protest against the idea of continually building up such schools. Consider the high schools and what they teach. I asked the Premier what they taught but he did not tell me. I ask any Minister what they teach. They continue to teach grammar, arithmetic, history and geography, and in addition they teach various other subjects. The students learn a language; they may take Latin; French is the longsuit at present; before the war it was German. Unless a student is going to use the language in after life, why should we spend money in teaching it? Bear in mind that it is a compulsory subject. Why should we waste the time of children by compelling them to learn something which they are almost certain to forget and which, if they do not forget, they will never apply. How many of our rising generation are likely to apply the French language to any useful purpose? It might be a pleasant mental recreation for the students, but from the point of view of advantage as a citizen of Western Australia, of what use is it except to one in 500? Yet, to teach the language to one in 500, we are retarding the education of 499 students. This is a point which is always overlooked; 499 students are being taught a language when they could be taught those things which will be useful to them in this life. They are taught also a good deal of woodwork. The

member for Fremantle said they could learn a trade. The report says that this knowledge of woodwork will be very handy to them if they go on a farm. As a matter of fact, if they went on a farm, the first thing to do would be to unlearn almost everything they had learned. After all, they are not carpenters who can build a house. If they had to build a pigsty, a fowlhouse, or a cowshed, what they had learned in woodwork at school would not be an advantage to them; it would be a disadvantage.

The Minister for Mines: You would not have inlaid work in a cowshed, would you?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They also learn metal work.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier was talking about a technical school.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am speaking of the high school at Northam, which teaches these things.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The children in the primary schools learn wood work.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: At the Northam school they are taught metal work, in other words metal spoiling. They are taught wood butchering. If a boy wishes to learn wood work, let him become apprenticed to a carpenter. The students are also taught business methods; this is a fine large subject. Imagine some of our business men going to school under an ordinary school teacher to learn business methods! If there is anyone in this State who cannot pick up business methods for himself, he should not go into business, because he will fail. Who is teaching business methods? A man who himself has never been in business, or if he has been in business has failed; otherwise he would not be teaching. I undertake to say that the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) learnt more about business methods in three months whilst storekeeping in a navy camp than he would have learnt in 100 years in any school.

The Honorary Minister: And a new language, too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The students are also taught office routine. What on earth that is, I do not know, unless it be never to get to the office before 9 a.m. and to get out before 4 p.m. if possible. They learn shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping. I may as well deal with shorthand here as anywhere else. The essential equipment of a shorthand writer is a thorough knowledge of English. The signs of shorthand are a mere circumstance. The signs might be learnt by any intelligent youth in three months, but he would not be a shorthand writer after having merely learnt the signs. No schoolteacher could take the student further. There is no good shorthand writer who has not taught himself to a very great extent, and there never will be a shorthand writer of any merit except as a result of individual effort. Once a student has learnt the signs, it is quite possible to take up the book in later life

and brush up a knowledge of them again without any trouble.

The Minister for Works: No, you cannot.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The schools never turn out shorthand writers. The schools in Australia have turned out hundreds of thousands of boys and girls who have learnt the signs of shorthand, but that has been the end of them. In the higher classes those students who possess a good knowledge of English could easily be taught shorthand; it could form part of the English course, but if they wish to go further and become shorthand writers, they should be told that it depends entirely upon their own industry and efforts. The girls are taught cookery, fancy work—

The Minister for Works: And indigestion still prevails amongst us.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They learn laundry work, housewifery, care of children, shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping. These are the milestones on the road to the crowning glory—school cookery, wood butchery, fancy work, and housewifery. Not being educated, I regret that I cannot speak for educated people; I do not know their tastes, but I can say that to the great multitude of uneducated people, the very thought of school cookery gives them the belly-ache. Think of our action in paying teachers to teach fancy work! Womenkind have done fancy work ever since the time of Eve for she undoubtedly put a hem around the fig leaves.

Mr. Smith: When she turned over a new leaf?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Women have been doing fancy work ever since history began and will continue to do it, but only a woman who finds enjoyment in it and can pick it up for herself, is of any use at it. The women travel miles to see each other's fancy work and copy it, or get ideas for new designs, but we spend our hard earned money, and the money of many women who probably are working at the washtub and cannot afford time to take up fancy work, in order to teach the girls fancy work. Then we come to laundry work; think of it, girls going to school to learn laundry work when mother has a tub at home. Could not they stay at home with mother? This is the higher education that is closer to nature's heart. Then we read in the report of manual training, and I am told on good authority that quite a number of those instructing in manual training are themselves not carpenters. This higher education which leads to the crowning glory, the university diploma, consists of what? It consists of laundry work, housewifery and care of children taught by old maids, of business methods taught by men who have never been in business, and of carpentering taught by men who could not build a fowlhouse. These are some of the things on which we are spending our money, and I ask the Committee in all seriousness to make a general audit and see if we are getting value for our money.

The Minister for Works: You realise that it is a serious charge against the Director of Education?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is. Touching the technical schools, it is utterly impossible to teach a trade at the technical schools. Members should understand that straight away.

The Minister for Works: The technical schools give some very useful instruction.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A lad can go there and learn to weld a bit of iron and sharpen a chisel. That is all very well in its way, but the experience everywhere is that the amateur blacksmith spoils a tremendous lot of metal.

The Minister for Works: And so does the untrained reformer.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And it pays better to give the work to a blacksmith.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You cannot have a better school for apprentices.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am coming to the question of apprentices. A man cannot be taught a trade at a technical school. Unless he is working at a trade and is apprenticed to a trade it is useless to send him to a technical school. There are many young fellows clerks, some of them in the civil service, who go to the technical school to learn wood work, cabinet making, carving, and similar work. They will never be tradesmen, and we are wasting our money in teaching them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is not so much of it done now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then why the outcry for more room? The Minister for Works has that under consideration now.

The Honorary Minister: It is a great thing for boys working in a shop.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There are some trades in which not only the practice, but the theory is involved. An apprentice, a journeyman, or a master tradesman can go to a technical school and learn the theory of his trade, but there are many other trades in which no theory is required. There is no theory about blacksmithing, except that of hitting hard and often while the iron is hot. Once a man has acquired the practice of blacksmithing he is a blacksmith. There is no theory about printing but there is undoubtedly theory in carpentry, boiler-making, engineering, and the sanitary side of plumbing. A man cannot be taught to become a plumber, but he can be taught the sanitary side of plumbing. As engineer can be taught the theory of engineering, so that he may become a civil engineer as well as a practical engineer. There are many persons learning fitting, turning, carpentry and plumbing, who are not following those particular trades.

The Minister for Works: They are useful callings.

[Mr. Foley took the Chair.]

Mr. UNDERWOOD: An apprentice who is working for eight hours a day in a shop goes to school at night to learn theory. In

other words, he works 48 hours a week in a shop, at his bench or at a drill, and works two hours overtime at the technical school.

The Minister for Works: That is not hard on him.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It does him no good. If an extra two hours a week is good for a boy in his trade let him put in the time at the shop, where he is doing useful work.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The employers give a half a day off to enable apprentices to go to the technical school.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If employers are doing this others are not. A boy goes to the technical school to learn that which he cannot learn in the shop.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They only learn the practical side of their work and not the theoretical in the shop.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If they want the theoretical side they must take a turn at the practical side.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am talking of apprentices.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: So am I. An apprentice in engineering requires to go to a technical school to learn the theory of engineering. He must take one night a week at his trade.

The Minister for Works: He does something he does not get a chance of doing at the factory.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He does not always get it. I am speaking from my own knowledge. It is a shame to work a boy eight hours a day in a shop and send him to school for two hours in addition. Our technical schools require to be altered. We should not attempt to teach anyone who cannot make a practical tradesman. The work should be cut down by half. Apprentices should not be forced to do anything in their trade that they are learning in the day time.

The Minister for Works: What about draftsmanship?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is theory.

The Minister for Works: He learns that at a technical school.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Why put him again on to his drill? He is on it all day. He wants to learn draftsmanship. To do that he is given two hours on the drill.

The Minister for Works: He would probably go on to the lathe, and do something he would not have a chance of doing in the shop.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: An apprentice in carpentry is working at all kinds of tools all day. When he goes to the technical school he uses them again.

The Minister for Works: It is explained to him how this joint and that joint are made.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is the theory of the trade. Let the technical school teach the theory, and let the boys learn their trade in the shop in which they are working. If they are properly managed the technical schools form one of the best means of edu-

cation in all Australia so far as tradesmen are concerned. It is not right for a boy to work a day in a factory and do the same work at night at the technical school. He goes to school to learn that which is not taught in the shop. I hope hon. members will agree to reduce this vote. We can decrease our expenditure by £20,000 by declining to take scholars under seven years of age. That would save money and be better for the children. By excluding history and geography there would not be the same necessity for spending a long term in the higher schools. We would then turn out our boys and girls better fitted in English and arithmetic, which form the groundwork of all education. By cutting out all useless things from our technical schools the expenditure can be cut down by at least half the present sum.

The CHAIRMAN: Before putting the motion I would call the attention of hon. members to Standing Order 386. This reads—

When a motion is made in Committee of Supply to omit or reduce any item of a vote a question shall be proposed from the Chair for omitting or reducing such item accordingly; and members shall speak to such question only, until it has been disposed of.

That is as far as the Standing Order goes. The procedure is that after the question has been proposed for omitting or reducing any item no debate is allowed on any preceding item. I suggest to the member for Pillara that if his motion is put now it will debar hon. members from speaking generally on any preceding item, and that he might allow the general discussion to go on and move his motion afterwards.

The Minister for Mines: The motion affects the first stage of the vote, that is. Salaries.

The CHAIRMAN: If that is negatived it means that the vote stands as printed.

The Minister for Mines: The first stage is a vote for Salaries, £402,050.

The CHAIRMAN: That is my ruling. The Committee may dispute it.

Mr. Troy: Can we not discuss the items after this is disposed of?

The CHAIRMAN: Our Standing Orders are silent except so far as I have mentioned. The next authority that is taken when our Standing Orders are silent, reads as follows:—

After a question has been proposed from the Chair omitting or reducing any item, no motion may be made or debate allowed upon any preceding item.

Mr. Troy: What does that mean?

The CHAIRMAN: If the amendment is negatived hon. members will have voted either for the question or the amendment. If they have voted in the negative they have voted in favour of the Estimate as printed and the amount as stated by me, as representing the whole of these Estimates.



Mr. Troy: You mean that if a decision is arrived at on this total vote it will not be possible for members to discuss items or move for a reduction in any of them?

The CHAIRMAN: That is my ruling.

Mr. Troy: It is an extraordinary position.

Hon. T. WALKER: The mere rejection of the amendment will not imply that we either endorse or accept the Estimates as printed. There is still a further question to be put. We may not accept the reduction of the vote by £20,000, but we may equally not accept the Estimates as printed.

The Minister for Mines: The total amount is not an item; it is the vote. This Standing Order only deals with items.

Hon. T. WALKER: That would be a further point on which we might dissent from the Chairman's ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: I would rather the hon. member dissented from my ruling, so that we might get the matter cleared up. My ruling is that no discussion can be allowed on any item after the question for a reduction of the total vote has been decided in the affirmative or in the negative, other than a reduction of the vote by a lesser amount.

*Dissent from Chairman's ruling.*

Hon. T. Walker: I formally move—

That the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to, as contrary to practice and to the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on the Standing Orders.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Chairman (Mr. Foley): I have to report that on the vote "Minister for Education, £456,122," to which the member for Pilbara moved an amendment to reduce the vote by £20,000, I have ruled that no discussion can be allowed on any item after the question of the reduction of the total vote has been decided in the affirmative or in the negative, other than the reduction of the vote by a lesser amount. The member for Kanowna has moved that this ruling be dissented from, as contrary to practice and to the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on the Standing Orders.

Hon. T. Walker: It may be necessary to explain to you, Mr. Speaker, that since the introduction of the Education vote by the Premier there has been one speech upon that vote generally. That speech, made by the member for Pilbara, moved an amendment proposing the reduction of the total vote by £20,000. It was then explained by the Chairman, before any other member could rise to speak, that if the motion of the member for Pilbara were dealt with, it would preclude further discussion, and that the vote would be carried if that amendment were decided in the negative. The Chairman further stated that in this case there could be no discussion of the subsidiary items. I move to disagree with that ruling; and I ask for your ruling, Mr. Speaker, because I am of

opinion that the Chairman of Committees has misunderstood the reference he has made to the Standing Order mentioned on page 189 of the "Manual of Procedure of the House of Commons, 1912." Paragraph 3 on that page reads—

After a question has been proposed from the Chair for omitting or reducing any item, no motion may be made, or debate allowed, upon any preceding item.

The Chairman has taken the total vote as inclusive of the whole, and has ruled that all items precede the total vote, and therefore there can be no discussion on the items or otherwise. The total vote stands clear and is put there for the purpose of allowing a discussion, as if it were a second reading debate. After the general discussion is disposed of one way or the other, the items are taken serialim. That has been our practice and that is the recommendation of the Committee. Now we are on the general discussion of the Estimates of the Department of Education, and that being so, the second reading debate, or what is analogous to the second reading debate, is now in progress, and after that is disposed of, no matter how it be disposed of, all the items are open for discussion. True, if this vote were carried, there would have to be an adjustment by the Government of the items, but it would not preclude a discussion of the items. I submit that the negating of the amendment moved by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) will leave the whole question as it stood before he moved his amendment. It is not finally disposed of, and will have to be stated from the Chair. In these circumstances, I submit that the ruling of the Chairman of Committees is inaccurate as attested by our practice and by the recommendations of the Joint Committee. I lay emphasis on the practice.

Mr. Speaker: Our recommendation has not been adopted.

Hon. T. Walker: I believe it is in practise because we now allow under our Standing Orders a second reading debate on every department. It has been decided again and again under rulings from the Chair, and it is treated as if you, Mr. Speaker, were in the Chair, and members are allowed to speak only once. It is a full and complete debate covering the whole of the Estimates, and members have the right to discuss each and every item after that general debate has been disposed of.

Mr. Speaker: The temporary Chairman of Committees has ruled as follows:—

On the vote, Education Department, £456,122, I rule that no discussion can be allowed on any item after the question for the reduction of the total vote has been decided in the affirmative or negative, other than by the reduction of the vote by a lesser sum.

Our Standing Orders are not clear; they are not definite on this point, but the "House

of Commons Manual of Procedure, 1908," on page 187, states—

After a question has been proposed from the Chair for a reduction of the whole vote, no motion may be made for omitting or reducing any item.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes, but that does not affect this.

Mr. Speaker: The position is that if this amendment as moved by the member for Pilbara be negatived, the vote will stand as it was previously stated from the Chair. It will then be open to any hon. member to move to reduce the vote by any sum less than £20,000. If that further amendment be negatived, it will be an indication that there is no desire on the part of the Committee to reduce the total vote. Therefore it would be of no use to deal with the items with the object of reducing what the Committee had already decided should not be reduced and should stand as printed.

Hon. T. Walker: May I explain further? We have established a procedure and that governs the methods adopted in these debates. We have permitted not only a general discussion on the Estimates of the Department, but even on the Estimates of the sub-departments. After the general discussion has terminated with its review of the whole of the Estimates, either of a department or a sub-department as the case may be, we have gone on to the discussion of items. I wish to make the point perfectly clear that if this amendment be rejected, it is still open for us to discuss the whole of the items, and if a second amendment of a lesser sum proposed by way of a reduction were to be defeated, that would not of necessity establish that we endorsed the Estimates at all. We might in the end when the vote was put from the Chair, reject the whole amount. It is open to us to reject the whole amount, of course.

Mr. Speaker: The Chairman's ruling would not affect you in that respect.

Hon. T. Walker: The point is: Are we at liberty in the first instance to continue the general discussion and after the general discussion, to discuss items? The Committee may refuse to reduce the general vote because such a reduction would not indicate what item should be reduced; but how is a general vote to reduce by £20,000 to be put into operation? There is no instruction implied in it to the Government. It may be purely whimsical. The Committee have given no directions to the Government whatever. Suppose the Committee refuse to reduce the vote even by £10 in that way, that does not prove that they do not desire to reduce items when they come to them. The reduction of an item would be a direction to the Government. They would then know where the shoe pinches so to speak, but a general reduction affords no instruction whatever to the Government. We have been dealing with the Estimates generally. The motion is only in antipathy to the general Education vote, and gives no indi-

cation to the Government of the Committee's desire and, therefore, items are discussable afterwards. What is done under English procedure is to prevent members going back over the same ground when they have come to the end of the discussion. We have framed the Estimates so as to discuss the main sum at the beginning, and have set up a practice on our own account. I submit that we cannot go back on that practice and whatever be the fate of the amendment, the question of the general discussion is still open until finally the debate concludes and we commence upon items.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is relying more upon the general practice.

Hon. T. Walker: Our special practice and custom.

Mr. Speaker: That custom has never been questioned. If the hon. member can show me some precedent or ruling when the question has cropped up and when it has been ruled in his favour, I shall certainly give it consideration, but I have nothing before me of that nature to guide me in any way, and will have to uphold the Chairman in his ruling. Our Standing Orders are not definite and the authority I have quoted is absolutely definite. I uphold the ruling of the temporary Chairman of Committees.

Mr. Troy: Before you leave the Chair, Mr. Speaker, will you give us some further information? Suppose the House decides upon the reduction of any item; will it be competent to move a reduction in the whole vote when the whole vote is put to the Committee? As you are aware, after the discussion of the items is completed, the whole vote is put. Suppose an item is reduced, is it competent then to move a further reduction on the whole vote?

Mr. Speaker: If on the discussion of the items any item is reduced, the Chairman states the question to the Committee—That the vote stand as amended. The Committee will thereby know that the vote has been amended in certain directions on certain items. I take it that it is competent for any member to move a reduction on the total vote when it is finally put, but I will look that point up.

Mr. Troy: Any member can do that on the whole vote.

Mr. Speaker: I take it that that is the position without looking up the matter at the moment, because the question is put from the Chair that the vote as amended be agreed to and it is then open for debate. I think that would be quite in order.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: I do not wish to dispute your decision, Sir, but, if that decision is based on the Standing Orders then all I can say is that the Standing Orders do not seem to be in accordance with common-sense. The motion of the member for Pilbara, whether agreed to or rejected, is to prevent any further discussion of the items.

Mr. Speaker: No.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, that is the ruling.

Mr. Speaker: No, it does not stop discussion on the main vote, but it prevents any reversion to the items.

The Minister for Mines: Well, that is the same thing.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: The point is that the motion, even if rejected, will prevent our going back on the items.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes, that is the ruling.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: I do not wish to imply that you, Sir, are not ready to deal with it from a common-sense point of view. I am certain that if it were left to you, without reference to the Standing Orders, you would consider it from a common-sense point of view. But apparently you are considering it in the light of our Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker: And of the authority quoted.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: It appears to me that our Standing Orders are not in accordance with common-sense. Here we have a vote of £456,122 for education. The member for Pilbara has moved that it be reduced by £20,000.

Mr. Speaker: I do not wish to stop the hon. member, but I cannot allow discussion, unless the hon. member intends to move to dissent from my ruling.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: What will be the position if the hon. member's motion is carried? All discussion will be stopped, and the Premier will have to report progress.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed. I have given my ruling, and unless the hon. member moves to dissent from that ruling, I cannot allow further discussion.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: I do not wish to do that.

Hon. T. Walker: May I do it for you?

Mr. Speaker: I cannot allow any further debate.

#### *Dissent from Speaker's ruling.*

Hon. T. Walker: Then I move—

That the House dissents from the ruling of Mr. Speaker.

I am very sorry to have to ask the House to dissent from your ruling, but to my mind under that ruling we would stultify ourselves, we would shackle ourselves so that we could not freely and fully debate the main question and, afterwards, the items involved in the main question. The object of discussion in Committee is to allow full debate, and the only departure we have made from allowing any member to speak as often as he likes is in the general discussion. That has become as much a part of our system as any of our Standing Orders. In the general discussion we confine members to one speech, just as if it were a second reading debate. That is an innovation we have made, and we cannot depart from it. Whatever the outcome of that general discussion, the items can be discussed subsequently—unless indeed we were to reject the Estimates altogether and send them back, which would be a vote

of censure on the Government and would prevent their carrying on business. We have followed this practice all the way through. We have always gone on to items after the general discussion.

Mr. Speaker: After a motion of this character has been moved?

Hon. T. Walker: We have not had—

Mr. Speaker: No, I do not think so. That is the whole point.

Hon. T. Walker: But we have on other motions; and in the regular practice both of the House of Commons and of this Chamber we have had instances of the motion still being left for discussion after an amendment has been disposed of; after the amendment has been disposed of, the debate is just as if it were conducted regularly. Your ruling is, however the motion may be decided, whether in the negative or in the affirmative, it puts an end to all further discussion. I say that by the general practice on all motions that is a departure, a new ruling and, as has been pointed out by the member for Moore (Sir Henry Lefroy), against all common sense.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must not reflect on the Chair.

Hon. T. Walker: I am not reflecting on the Chair. I am stating the effect the carrying out of your ruling would have, because I am asking the House to dissent from that ruling, and therefore I am entitled to give my reasons. In one sense it is a disrespect to move that the House dissent from your ruling; but it is essential at times to recall the House to its own practice. Your ruling would put it in the power of any member to prevent discussion of any Estimates by simply moving an amendment at the first opportunity after the introducer had made his speech; he could simply move a reduction and, whether the motion was carried or rejected, we could not afterwards discuss the items.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would be a good weapon for a Minister.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes. It would create disorder and make the House a laughing-stock. It is against all common sense that such a procedure could take place. It would put it in the hands of any member to prevent discussion, whereas the object of the Chamber is to allow the freest and fullest discussion. That is why we go into Committee. And we limit it here by our own practice of allowing the general discussion in addition to the subsequent discussion of the items. We are in the general discussion now and, however that may be disposed of, the items have still to be discussed.

Mr. Troy: It seems to me the items should have been discussed first, after which the hon. member could have moved his amendment to the whole vote. I suggest that the member for Pilbara withdraw his amendment until after the items have been discussed.

Mr. Speaker: I was called upon to give a ruling on quite a different matter. Had it occurred at an earlier stage I might have

suggested to the member for Pilbara the danger of the attitude he was adopting, and that he should defer his motion until after the items had been dealt with.

Mr. Underwood: Which, of course, a man could not do.

The Minister for Mines: May I point out that the ruling is not in accordance with our Standing Orders, and, taken in conjunction with the suggestion by the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy), would put the House into a ridiculous position. We had difficulty over this question in 1913, when it was referred to the Standing Orders Committee. The difficulty arose out of the claim made by an hon. member then in Opposition that, the House being in Committee, a member was entitled to speak as often as he chose, so long as he did not indulge in repetition, on any matter submitted. The Standing Orders having been silent on the point, the matter was referred to the Standing Orders Committee who submitted to the House a new Standing Order which was finally adopted. That Standing Order sets out the procedure which should now be adopted. It is No. 386a, and reads—

Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 372, no member (except the Minister, who shall have the right of reply) shall speak more than once during (a) a general discussion on the whole of the Estimates held on the first vote. That is the discussion on the Budget—

(b) A general discussion on the administration of one department held on the first vote of that department. In both cases the reply of the Minister shall close the debate. In all other cases the rules of debate in Committee of the whole shall be maintained.

When we reach a department the Minister introduces it by a general discussion covering the whole of the items referring to the whole vote, and a general discussion is permitted in Committee on the same basis as discussion takes place in the House, namely, that a member may speak only once. Thus we deal with the whole of the items. That discussion having been concluded, we refer to the items in their turn and when the last item has been dealt with, we cannot revert to the total vote. The only way to get a decision of the Committee on a matter of policy affecting a department is by moving a reduction on the general discussion on the total vote.

Mr. Troy: Or by intimating intention to move to reduce a vote.

The Minister for Mines: Then we should defeat our Standing Orders because we permit a general discussion when the vote is first taken. After that we discuss the items and then, under the hon. member's suggestion, we would again introduce a general discussion if any member moved to reduce an item. How can that be possible?

Mr. Pilkington: It has been done twice during the present Parliament.

The Minister for Mines: It would be an absurd proposal if, after having agreed to all the items making the total, it were possible to move amendments to reduce the total. It would be a case of starting at the top, going to the bottom, starting at the top again, and going through once more. What the Standing Orders Committee had in mind was first of all that the question of policy affecting the whole of the Government departments should be discussed and the procedure of the House adopted, namely, that members could speak once only. In order to arrive at a decision regarding a question of policy, this could only be done by moving to amend the total vote. As suggested by the member for Pilbara, there is no other way, though I do not for a moment agree with the amendment. Our method of procedure should be simple and should not be jumbled as is likely to result under the ruling from the Chair. It might be in accordance with the Standing Order, but the procedure is to dispose of the general discussion and then deal with the items. It would be interesting if the amendment were withdrawn and we then had a general discussion on the items, and then another general discussion on the question to reduce the vote. I warrant that the ruling of the Chair would be that it could not be done.

Mr. Speaker: Members have not pointed to any case on all fours with the present case.

Hon. T. Walker: It is the first time it has arisen.

Mr. Speaker: That is the point, and our Standing Orders are not clear on it.

Mr. Underwood: Then make them clear.

Mr. Speaker: I am here to conduct the business of the House under our Standing Orders to the best of my ability, and where our Standing Orders do not make provision I take "May" or some other authority on Parliamentary practice to assist me. Standing Order 386a, paragraph (b), which was emphasised by the Minister for Mines, reads—

A general discussion on the administration of one department held on the first vote of that department. In both cases the reply of the Minister shall close the debate.

That is all right, but no vote has been taken. There was no amendment moved to the vote. The point was whether the Committee could discuss the department in a general way. I know of no case on all fours with the present case in which a ruling was given in any other way than that in which I have ruled, and I am supported by Ilbert's "Manual of Procedure of the House of Commons."

Hon. T. Walker: With all respect, I do not think it does support you.

Mr. Speaker: It states—

After a question has been proposed from the Chair for a reduction of the whole vote, no motion may be made for omitting or reducing any item.

If that is not perfectly clear I do not know what is.

Mr. Underwood: It is with some diffidence that I rise to support the motion against your ruling. The upsetting of your ruling will make a new Standing Order, and it is with the object of making a new Standing Order that I am opposing your decision.

Mr. Speaker: It will establish a precedent.

Mr. Underwood: Yes, which will lead us to make a new Standing Order. You have said that the Standing Order is not clear. Surely we can make it clear; that is what we are here for, and it is time we did so. I would like to state my position clearly. I had no desire to move a vote which might be considered in the nature of a motion of no-confidence. I have endeavoured to avoid that. I consulted with the authorities of the House as to how I should move, and I found that I could move to reduce the vote by £1, but that if I did and the amendment were not carried, the vote could not then be reduced at all. I had to take the risk of my amendment being considered a no-confidence motion by moving to reduce the vote by a solid sum, thus making it competent for any other member to move to reduce the vote by a lesser sum. That is the sense of our Standing Orders right through. If the amendment for reduction by the larger sum were not carried, a reduction by a lesser sum could be moved. That is why I named £20,000. I contend that to consider the whole of these items and then attempt to make a speech in a general way would be utter foolishness, and we are not here to do foolish things. If our Standing Orders place us in a foolish position we should alter the Standing Orders. We should have common sense enough to do this. On the wording of the Standing Order I agree that you are probably correct in your ruling, Sir, but I ask members to carry this motion in order that we may arrive at something like common sense in discussing our Estimates.

Mr. Brown: Alter the Standing Order before you disagree with the ruling.

Mr. Underwood: It generally rests with members to alter the Standing Orders. One or two Standing Orders we are now working on have been altered because rulings have been disagreed with by hon. members. We cannot follow other Parliaments because they seem not to discuss matters in the manner in which we discuss them. If it is not permissible under our Standing Orders to discuss these things we must disagree with this ruling so that we can make it permissible.

Mr. Robinson: Standing Order 386 seems to me to deal with items only. It is upon this that the deputy Chairman has based his ruling. I agree with the member for Kanowna. I am sorry the speech of the member for Moore was out of time. I am sure he did not mean to be disrespectful to the Chair in suggesting that if the ruling was adopted it would have a ring of lack of common sense about it. It would, however, lead us to an absurd position. When the Premier wanted

to get his Estimates through he could go to the member for "X" and ask him to move to reduce the vote by £10. That motion would be negatived, and members would then not have the right to discuss the Estimates further, and they would go through.

Mr. Speaker: Not necessarily: a further reduction could be moved.

Mr. Robinson: That would be the effect, and the same thing could apply to the Estimates of other Ministers. It was never intended that where a rule cannot stand criticism it should be a rule. In my opinion we have no Standing Order that prevents discussion on the Estimates, and that being so it must surely be in order to permit discussion.

Mr. Mullaury: I must support the motion moved by the member for Kanowna. There is in these particular Estimates no item preceding that on which the member for Pilbara moved for a reduction. I fail to see, therefore, on what ground the ruling has been given, even under our Standing Order relating to preceding items.

Mr. Pickering: I agree with your decision, Mr. Speaker. It is evident that in the whole vote is contained all the items, and therefore all the items must precede the total amount at issue. If we carry a motion to reduce the total amount we must take into consideration all the items that make up that amount. To cover the position we would want a new Standing Order to the effect that any motion for the reduction of the vote of a department, whether negatived or confirmed, shall not preclude discussion on the vote or the items. In my opinion your ruling, Sir, is in conformity with the Standing Orders, and a correct interpretation thereof.

Mr. Troy: I do not want to labour the matter unnecessarily, but I know the practice in this House has been for some time past that after a general discussion on the vote an hon. member is allowed to move a reduction in the vote, and if that is negatived or carried, then discussion is allowed on the items. There is a tendency to confuse item and vote, and I submit members are quite right in stating that after an item has been discussed and dealt with, no preceding item can be discussed.

Hon. T. Walker: That is sound.

Mr. Troy: But, unhappily, whether it be common sense or otherwise, the manual of the House of Commons from which you, Mr. Speaker, have quoted, sets out pretty clearly that after a question has been proposed from the Chair for a reduction of the whole vote, no motion may be made for omitting or reducing any item. I was prepared to question the ruling of the Chairman of Committees, but when I remembered that paragraph in the House of Commons manual my calculations were upset. I have traversed the matter further in "May," and I find the following reference to it in "May," 10th Edition, page 582:—

The form of amendment hitherto considered is to obtain a reduction of the

total grant proposed from the Chair. Following the like method of procedure, a motion for a grant can be dealt with, in detail, by proposals to omit or to reduce the items of expenditure which compose the grant, in the manner prescribed by the following rules, which were, on the 9th February, 1858, and the 28th April, 1868, adopted by the House: "That when a motion is made, in Committee of Supply, to omit or reduce any item of a vote, a question shall be proposed from the Chair for omitting or reducing such item accordingly; and members shall speak to such question only, until it has been disposed of. That when several motions are offered, they shall be taken in the order in which the items to which they relate appear in the printed Estimates. That after a question has been proposed from the Chair for omitting or reducing any item, no motion shall be made, or debate allowed, upon any preceding item. That when it has been proposed to omit or reduce items in a vote, the question shall be afterwards put upon the original vote, or upon the reduced vote, as the case may be. That after a question has been proposed from the Chair for a reduction of the whole vote, no motion shall be made for omitting or reducing any item."

I admit that according to those conclusions the attitude which you, Mr. Speaker, have taken up is correct. But it follows, in consequence, that what should have been done in the first instance—and I am surprised that the Chairman of Committees did not adopt this course—was to make members aware of the true position, to make them aware that the Chairman proposed to depart from the custom hitherto obtaining in this House. That departure from custom has brought about this conflict. The member for Pilbara moved the reduction of the vote, knowing the position; but members were not warned.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Pilbara perhaps conveyed to the House more than was intended. The matter was only casually referred to, with the officers.

Mr. Troy: The member for Pilbara addressed himself to the officers of the House regarding where he stood, and he was therefore well aware that the procedure now adopted by the Chairman of Committees and by yourself, Sir, was to be adopted. But that attitude is in conflict with what has been the procedure hitherto in this House.

Hon. T. Walker: But we have adopted another custom, to which that does not apply.

Mr. Troy: The authorities lay down that the items must be dealt with first, and that when the items have been passed or deleted or reduced, the vote is dealt with. I have no objection to this House determining its own methods of business or procedure; but in justice to the Chair I have to point out that the Chair has ruled in accordance with the authorities. So far as this parti-

cular vote is concerned, I think it is immaterial whether we discuss the items first and the vote afterwards, or the vote first and the items afterwards. It has been ruled, however, that if we pass over the vote now, we cannot discuss the items. The procedure should have been to discuss the items first, and then the vote. The confusion which has arisen would have been avoided had the House been advised in the first instance of the procedure to be followed. That is where the trouble came in. I want to discuss the vote; and if I vote against your ruling, Sir, it will not be because I disagree with it, but because I want that custom followed which has been adopted in this House for some time past.

The Minister for Mines: I support your ruling, Mr. Speaker, because I consider that it is in accordance with the Standing Orders. But if our Standing Orders are permitted to remain as they now are, a very peculiar and undesirable position might arise. Suppose a Minister comes along with a vote in which there is an item that he does not want discussed. Then he can put up a member on the Government side of the House to immediately enter into a general discussion. That member starts a general discussion, and concludes by moving to reduce the total of the vote. That motion must under our Standing Orders be stated from the Chair.

Hon. T. Walker: Under which Standing Order?

The Minister for Mines: Under paragraph (i.) of Standing Order 386, which reads—

When a motion is made in Committee of Supply to omit or reduce any item of a vote, a question shall be proposed from the Chair for omitting or reducing such item accordingly; and members shall speak to such question only, until it has been disposed of.

That is clear enough English.

Hon. T. Walker: But that refers to an item.

The Minister for Mines: This is held to be an item.

Mr. Speaker: No. The hon. member is confusing an item with a vote. This is a vote under discussion, not an item.

The Minister for Mines: Then I take it the member for Pilbara cannot move his amendment at this stage. Upon the completion of his speech on the vote generally, he moved to reduce the total of the vote. That having once been done, the motion is in the possession of the Committee; and once the motion is in the possession of the Committee, it cannot be withdrawn except by the unanimous consent of all members in the Chamber. Then all that need be done by a Minister desirous of burking discussion is to object to the withdrawal of the motion. Probably a Minister would not be permitted to use that stratagem a second time; but there is a possibility of its being availed of once under the Standing Orders as they

are now. So the House might find itself in a position which I do not think anyone desires.

Hon. T. Walker: But we have adopted a new procedure. Do not forget that.

The Minister for Mines: Where our Standing Orders are silent, the practice of the House of Commons shall prevail. But what has been quoted deals principally with the question of general discussion, and as to how often a member can speak in general discussion. Members cannot get away from the fact that where our Standing Orders are silent, the practice of the House of Commons prevails. If that is so, there can be no question regarding the present position.

Mr. Speaker: There can be no doubt but that the rulings are correct. In addition to the Standing Orders, May and Ilbert and all Parliamentary practice support the attitude taken up by the Chairman of Committees and by myself. Members are somewhat led away by a custom which has grown up here and that custom cannot be borne out. The point apparently emphasises the desire of members who may feel strongly that there is a necessity for an alteration in the Standing Orders. There is no necessity for the establishment of a precedent. If the House is anxious to have the matter dealt with, there is a Standing Orders Committee in existence. If members desire to do what is contrary to the Standing Orders and to Parliamentary practice and debate matters in Committee of Supply as suggested, the position can be quite easily got over.

The Premier: Let us do that first.

Mr. Speaker: I am entirely in the hands of the House. I am here to interpret the rules and Standing Orders as I find them. Perhaps if the matter were left in my hands, I could make the position more clear so that members would not look upon it as without common sense.

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

Ayes	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	17

Majority against . 4

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Jones	Mr. Walker
Mr. Money	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Mullany	Mr. Smith
Mr. Pilkington	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Maley
Mr. Broun	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Davies	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Draper	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. George	Mr. Troy
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Hickmott	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

Progress reported.

#### BILLS (2)—COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

1. Coroners.

2. Building Societies.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

House adjourned at 11.30 p.m.

## Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 3rd November, 1920.

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Leave of absence	1384
Return: Karri forests	1384
Bill: Public Service Appeal Board, 2nd, Com.	1385

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

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Hickey leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. T. Moore (Central) on the ground of urgent private business.

#### RETURN—KARRI FORESTS.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.35]: I move—

That there be laid upon the Table of the House a return showing: 1, The area of karri forest within the State. 2, Locality of same. 3, acreage already cut over. 4, Acreage of cut-over land (a) set apart for agriculture, (b) being departmentally reforested, (c) being naturally reforested. 5, Estimated quantity in tons of saplings between the ages of six and ten years now procurable in cut-over land; estimated quantity under six years. 6, Value per ton (2,240lbs.) of sawn merchantable karri f.o.r. mill.

My object in asking for this information is that an attempt is being made to manufacture paper in this State, and karri saplings is a suitable material for the purpose. Whether or not we can embark on the industry in this State depends on the quantity of karri saplings available. Before the