

HON. J. M. DREW: The South-Western Division did not include Esperance.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was not intended to oppose the amendment. He was impressed with the interest which the hon. member took in the land administration of the State.

Question passed, the clause added.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at half-past nine o'clock, until the next day.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: Plans showing the routes of proposed railways from Wagin to Dumbleyung, from Katanning to Kojonup, and from Goomalling to Dowerin.

By the TREASURER: Statements under Section 60 of "The Life Assurance Companies Act, 1889."

QUESTION—SPONGES AND OYSTER BEDS.

MR. WALKER asked the Premier: 1, Has the Government been approached by private individuals for assistance, pecuniary or otherwise, in establishing an industry for placing sponges on the market, or otherwise to turn our marine treasures or productions to profitable account? If so, with what result? 2, What benefit has yet accrued from expenses already incurred in trawling? 3, Have payable sponges or oyster beds been located, and if so, where? 4, Is the Government aware that hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of sponges are sent yearly from the Mediterranean and other parts of the world to London?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes; several applications have been received for the exclusive right to gather and collect sponges over areas of our coastal water, varying in distance from one thousand five hundred miles of coast downwards. Monetary assistance from £300 downwards was also required in conjunction with these applications. The Government having no power to grant exclusive rights over any product of the sea other than pearlshell, all applications were refused. 2, General knowledge obtained of the ocean floor in the vicinity of our coast, and the discovery of a large area of good trawling ground in the vicinity of Bernier Island. 3, Commercial sponges have been discovered in our coastal waters from Esperance Bay in the South to Turtle Island in the North. Whether they exist in payable quantities has yet to be determined. Payable oyster beds are known to exist from Sharks Bay northwards. 4, Yes.

QUESTION—GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, AS TO ABOLISHING.

MR. HORAN asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the Premier of South Australia has stated that, at the conclusion of the term of the present Governor of that State, a suggestion will be made that a successor should not be appointed? 2, In view of the fact that a resolution was carried in the Legislative Assembly

of this State, agreeing to the abolition of the office of Governor, will he make representations to the Imperial Government to the effect that there is no necessity for the appointment of a successor to the present occupant of the position of Governor of Western Australia?

THE PREMIER replied: 1. Yes. 2. Will receive consideration; but the subject is too important and the issues involved are far too comprehensive to be dealt with in the form of a reply to a question.

QUESTION—JANDAKOT RAILWAY, REPORTS ON ROUTES.

MR. DIAMOND asked the Minister for Works: When will the engineers' reports of the rival routes of the railway line through Jandakot be available, and will they be at once laid on the table of the House?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Reports were being prepared, and would be submitted to Parliament as soon as possible.

ELECTORAL ROLLS COMPILATION.

SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. WALKER brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the compilation of electoral rolls.

Report received, read, and ordered to be printed.

BILL—RAILWAY FROM WAGIN TO DUMBLEYUNG.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson) moved for leave to introduce a Bill for "An Act to authorise the construction of a railway from Wagin to Dumbleyung."

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): Although it had not been the custom for members to debate the question of granting leave to introduce a Bill, in a particular instance such as this it would be well for the Minister to state what reasons or reports had actuated the Government in specifying this line in conjunction with the other two proposals for spur lines, giving them precedence over a number of other proposals which had been submitted to the Minister and his predecessors, and in relation to which reports had been supplied and favourable answers given. It was rather too late, in view of the

short time before us, to ask for leave to introduce Bills of this description, when we knew there were at least a dozen, if not more, projects before the country that had been submitted to Ministers and advocated by members, to which they attached equal if not greater importance than to the light lines mentioned. He would specify at least one which was of greater importance, that being a proposal to construct a line west of Beverley to Dale Bridge through the Dale Valley. That country, being settled and of such a fertile nature, was entitled to consideration before the proposal submitted for a railway from Wagin to Dumbleyung. Ample time should be given to the House to decide which of these spur lines were the most urgent, in view of the fact that only some of them could be constructed for some time to come.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): It was never contemplated, when the House agreed to suspend the Standing Orders, that measures such as this, involving very great issues, were going to be brought down at the eleventh hour. No doubt the lines indicated were very important, but their very importance was a sufficient justification for farther time being allowed to members to investigate and make themselves familiar with the merits. The second reading must go through to-morrow, or next day at latest. It was unfair to expect that in so short a time members could decide whether the work was justified.

MR. SPEAKER: Henceforth he intended to be guided by the following authority as to debate on motions for leave to introduce Bills:—

If the motion is opposed, the Speaker, after permitting (if he thinks fit) a brief explanatory statement from the member who moves and the member who opposes the motion, may, without farther debate, put the question thereon, or the question that the debate be now adjourned.

Enough had been said on this occasion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS, in reply to the Leader of the Opposition, pointed out that the Government had adopted the usual course, not taking advantage of the suspension of the Standing Orders. Notice to introduce was given yesterday; to-day leave was asked; and the second reading would be moved to-morrow. Members desiring to discuss the advisableness of constructing these

railways could do so on the Loan Estimates.

Question (that leave be given to introduce the Bill) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	26
Noes	...	...	...	11

Majority for ... 15

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brown	Mr. Bath
Mr. Carson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Collier
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Holman
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Horan
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Stone
Mr. Gull	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hicks	Mr. A. J. Wilson
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Heitmann (Teller).
Mr. Isdell	
Mr. Keenan	
Mr. Layman	
Mr. Lynch	
Mr. McLarty	
Mr. Male	
Mr. Mitchell	
Mr. Monger	
Mr. N. J. Moore	
Mr. S. F. Moore	
Mr. Price	
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Smith	
Mr. F. Wilson	
Mr. Gordon (Teller).	

Question thus passed; leave given.

MR. BATH (in explanation): There was no desire to prevent the first reading. On motion for the second reading, the Minister ought to explain his reasons for introducing the Bill, and to answer the questions asked during this debate.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

FIRST READING.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Bill read a first time.

BILLS—FIRST READING.

Railway, Katanning to Kojonup.
Railway, Goomalling to Dowerin.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT (CARTERS' HOLIDAY).

FIRST READING.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill) moved for leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Bread Act. A short amending Act was desired to secure to bread-carters the monthly holiday which they now enjoyed. As the result of a conference, the master bakers

agreed to grant this holiday to the carters on the understanding that the men should forego other holidays. The member for Balkatta (Mr. Veryard) had been negotiating with the master bakers, and would probably express his concurrence with the second reading.

Question passed; leave given.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

BILL—THIRD READING.

Statutes Compilation, returned to the Legislative Council with an amendment.

FISHERIES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8 — Proclamation of close fisheries:

THE PREMIER moved an amendment:

That the following paragraph be added to the clause: "Every proclamation made under the Fisheries Act of 1899 declaring any Western Australian waters to be closed waters shall be deemed to be made under this Act."

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 9, 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Boats to be licensed:

THE PREMIER moved an amendment:

That the following words, printed in erased type, be inserted: "The fee for such license shall be one pound, provided that if any such license is issued after the thirtieth day of June and before the thirty-first day of December in any year, the fee shall be ten shillings."

MR. DIAMOND: Should not the license be issued by the chief inspector? On paying his license fee, he (Mr. Diamond) had been offered a receipt on a piece of dirty paper evidently picked up in the street. Licenses should be issued from the head office.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member desired that the license should be issued as a mere matter of form, his wish could be met.

MR. DIAMOND: The simple payment of the fee and the immediate issue of the license from the inspector should not be valid. The inspector should receive the fee and account for it to the head office, and the license should be issued from the head office.

THE PREMIER: That would be the proper procedure.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 12, 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Form of and fees for licenses :

On motion by the **PREMIER** the following, printed in erased type, was added as Subclause 2:—

The fee for every such license shall be ten shillings, provided that if any such license is issued after the thirtieth day of June and before the thirtieth day of December in any year, the fee therefor shall be five shillings.

MR. STONE: Could licenses be obtained at any other places along the coast but Fremantle? It seemed to him there was no other place but Fremantle.

THE PREMIER: Wherever there was a fisheries inspector, application could be made to the inspector for a license.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Penalties for using unlawful nets :

MR. BATH: There was a possibility of injustice through the operation of this clause. It would be better to specify the size of the meshes of nets. A fisherman might purchase a net one day and the next day a proclamation might be issued prescribing as unlawful a net of the size the fisherman bought; and this would mean loss to the fisherman.

THE PREMIER: At the first glance one would think there was a great deal in the argument advanced, but in practice nets of varying meshes were used. In one water a net of a certain mesh might be used, while in another water a net of a larger size might be used. No doubt some hardship might be inflicted, but that could be guarded against by giving as much notice as possible of any alteration. To fix a hard and fast rule in an Act of Parliament that all nets should be of a certain mesh would be to inflict a greater hardship.

MR. SCADDAN: We could only fix a minimum size.

MR. BATH: We could place it in the schedule.

THE PREMIER: The matter was better left to regulations so long as they were not used in an arbitrary manner. He would see that the proper notice was given.

MR. STONE said he knew people who had bought expensive nets and afterwards found that they were not of the regulation size. The makers or sellers of nets should only be permitted to sell the nets allowed in certain localities.

MR. TAYLOR: Too much was left to regulation and proclamation, as he had complained on the second reading; but there was something in what the Premier had said in reference to a hard and fast line being drawn in the Bill.

THE PREMIER: This was the existing law.

MR. TAYLOR: But it had worked very badly; hence the necessity for the Bill. In administering the Act, many complaints were received that fishing with nets of small meshes had resulted in the destruction of a large quantity of small fish. The head of the Fisheries Department was capable of inserting something in the clause to meet the difficulty. Deep-sea fishing was another matter. He regretted something could not be done to regulate the size of meshes.

MR. DIAMOND said he had intimated on the second reading that though this was a matter he wished to see remedied, he was prepared to accept an assurance from the Premier that the representations he had made on account of a large number of fishermen would be properly considered during recess, with the idea of introducing a more comprehensive Bill next session. In the meantime he was inclined to trust to the regulations. Fishermen desired the nets used outside the river to be $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch mesh in the bunt or bag and not less than 2 inches in the wing, and those used in rivers to be $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh all over with no bag or bunt.

THE PREMIER was pleased to give hon. members the assurance that what they had brought forward would receive ample consideration. If we made a hard and fast line that all nets used outside a river should not be less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch mesh, we should never have any whiting. This showed that we should not rush things with a moment's consideration. We must have regulations that would meet varying conditions.

MR. BATH: Would due notice be given of any proclamation?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 20 to 26—agreed to.

Clause 27 — Minister may institute experiments :

MR. DIAMOND was dubious about giving this power to the Minister to expend money for experiments. He would be glad to know if past experiments had been successful. For instance, a schooner had been engaged in trawling experiments.

THE PREMIER: This clause did not authorise the Minister to incur expenditure on these experiments except with the authority of Parliament. The work done by the trawler had amply justified the small expenditure incurred. Certainly, the existence of very good fishing grounds and of a vast amount of marine wealth, of which we knew nothing before, had been demonstrated in the short time the trawler was used. Amongst other things, there had been discovered a large area, some miles square, where large-size prawns existed. These prawns, compared with what we got on the table, were as the mosquito to the bumble-bee.

MR. TAYLOR: The report submitted by the inspector of fisheries dealing with that expedition in a large measure was very favourable, and in addition to the discoveries spoken of by the Premier, a fine sponge was discovered on the northern coast. From the report of the inspector of fisheries, the State did not suffer any loss by the expedition. The vote had been expended, so that no fresh expedition was likely. Before farther experiments were made a vote would have to be passed by Parliament.

THE PREMIER: On the Estimates that had been passed a sum of £200 was voted for the purpose of exploiting sponges.

Clause passed.

Clause 28—Rewards for the destruction of certain birds :

MR. DIAMOND: Porpoises were very destructive to small fish.

THE PREMIER: The Government could hardly offer a reward for the destruction of porpoises. What the hon. member said was true that the porpoise was a greater destructor of fish life than cormorants or pelicans, but he did not see how the Government could offer sufficient inducement for their destruction. He would make a note of the matter.

Clause passed.

Clause 26—agreed to.

Clause 30—Exclusive license :

MR. SCADDAN: Some explanation was required in connection with this provision.

THE PREMIER: There could be no danger in giving an exclusive license for any portion of the coastal waters of the State, so long as the license did not apply to food fish. There were industries elsewhere in the world for catching sharks and rays, and such like fish. They were converted into oil and the flesh afterwards into manure, and a very valuable fertiliser indeed it made. Already we had application for the establishment of an industry like this on the northern coast. No one would embark the necessary capital in works of this nature unless he had the exclusive right to catch sharks, and rays, and kindred fish within a specified area. There could be no danger in giving licenses of this kind, when any fish good for human food were not included in the license.

Clause passed.

Clauses 31 to 45—agreed to.

First Schedule—agreed to.

Second Schedule :

MR. DIAMOND: In the regulations to be framed the fishermen wanted silver bream, 3 ounces ; mullet, 4 ounces instead of 6 ounces ; salmon trout increased from 2 ounces to 4 ounces ; and tailer reduced from 6 ounces to 4 ounces.

Schedule passed.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by the PREMIER, Bill re-committed for an amendment.

Clause 8—Proclamation of close fisheries :

The PREMIER moved that the following paragraph be added :

Every proclamation made under the Fisheries Act of 1899 declaring any Western Australian waters to be closed waters in force at the commencement of this Act shall be deemed to be made under this Act.

Amendment passed.

Bill reported with a farther amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—TOTALISATOR DUTY.

IN COMMITTEE.

Resumed from the 14th December.

MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the PREMIER in charge of the Bill.

[MR. BATH had moved an amendment in Clause 3, line 2, to strike out the words "The Colonial Treasurer for the use of His Majesty," and insert in lieu the following:—"Trustees to be nominated by the Colonial Treasurer for the purpose of the maintenance of parks open at all reasonable hours to the public, or of grants in aid of the maintenance of such parks, or for the purpose of supporting or assisting in the support of local charitable organisations in the district in which the sums hereinafter payable by any racing club were received by it from the public."]

THE PREMIER: There were amendments on the Notice Paper in regard to Clause 3, and he thought he could save considerable discussion and meet the views of the majority of members if he said that he was prepared this session to reduce considerably the charge that was proposed to be made on the receipts from totalisators. Perhaps after all it would come as a surprise to some clubs and act with some degree of harshness if the Government were to take the whole of the fractions and unclaimed dividends. He proposed therefore to meet members' wishes, and in order that the Bill might pass into law before the annual racing carnival, he would be content to take $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the gross takings of the totalisators, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the fractions, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the unclaimed dividends. No clubs would be able to say with any degree of justice that that inflicted any great hardship on them.

MR. GULL: In view of the remarks of the Premier, he would not move the amendments of which he had given notice.

MR. BATH had no objection to the percentage contained in the proposal of the Colonial Secretary, but certainly approved of the idea embodied in the amendment as to the disposal of the money. The Colonial Treasurer might think they were trying to prevent him from securing revenue, but after all, if this revenue were utilised in the direction he (Mr. Bath) desired, it would relieve

the hon. gentleman of a certain amount of responsibility; and in a measure of this kind, where the receipts from the tax would be paid by the people in a particular locality, those people were entitled to the expenditure of the money in that district.

MR. KEENAN wished to know whether, in the event of the amendment by the member for Brown Hill not being carried, he would be able to move an amendment that the amount received from the totalisator should be divided equally between trustees and the Colonial Treasurer.

THE CHAIRMAN: If this amendment were lost, the hon. member could move the amendment he suggested.

Question (to strike out words) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	14
Noes	...	...	...	25

Majority against ... 11

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Bath	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Collier	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Eddy	Mr. Brown
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Holman	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Horan	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Lynch	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Gull
Mr. Walker	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Ware	Mr. Hicks
Mr. A. J. Wilson	Mr. Isdell
Mr. Taylor (Teller).	Mr. Lavman
	Mr. McLarty
	Mr. Male
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. KEENAN proceeded to move an amendment to the effect he had mentioned.

THE CHAIRMAN: The amendment by the member for Brown Hill having been negatived, the words "for the use of His Majesty" must stand. He had understood the hon. member (Mr. Keenan) to ask whether, if the words proposed to be inserted were rejected, he could move to insert other words. Any addition made must be after the words "His Majesty."

MR. KEENAN: Then one was not in order in moving that amendment?

THE CHAIRMAN: Not in those words; but the matter could be dealt with on recomittal.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The hon. member could move his amendment in a way which would have the effect intended.

THE CHAIRMAN had already suggested that.

MR. KEENAN said he would move it in that form. The object was to allow funds for the purpose of maintenance of these public parks. He would move that after "Majesty" the words, "and to trustees to be appointed by the Colonial Treasurer, for the purpose of maintenance of public parks, in equal moieties."

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could hardly join the trustees with His Majesty. He thought the hon. member should think the matter over and ask for a recomittal.

MR. BATH suggested that after "His Majesty" the words "one moiety of the gross takings" be inserted; and then the hon. member could move at the end that the other moiety be paid to trustees.

THE PREMIER hoped members would not display such extraordinary ingenuity in order to deprive the revenue of such a small sum of money. In the last debate it was pointed out how very grossly he over-estimated the revenue he would derive from this source; that really it was infinitesimal and hardly worth considering. He had already announced that he was prepared to make it still more infinitesimal; yet some members of the Committee were racking their brains to find means for taking some portion of that infinitesimal amount away. The member for Kalgoorlie pointed to the present Estimates as being an example of how necessary it was that these public parks and recreation grounds should receive more assistance in some form. [MR. KEENAN: In certain parts.] Taking the parks, reserves, and recreation grounds throughout the State as a whole, there was no reason to complain of the treatment which had been received at the hands of the various Governments of this State. If any portion of these totalisator receipts were contributed to the parks and reserves throughout the State, it would not lessen the demands on the Treasurer one degree. The demands from these public bodies upon the State Treasurer would remain just the same.

However, as a concession to the clubs, and to avoid inflicting hardship, he would move that the words "Every portion," in line 1 of paragraph (b) be struck out, and "two and a half per centum" be inserted in lieu.

MR. EDDY moved an amendment—

That all words after "of," in line 3 of Sub-clause (b), be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu: "1½ per cent. on all amounts up to £5,000, 2 per cent. on amounts from £5,000 to £10,000, and 2½ per cent. on all amounts over £10,000, the per centum to apply to gross takings from each club's meetings."

The Premier's suggested amendment would be a great concession, but his (Mr. Eddy's) would be better for the Treasury and for racing generally, otherwise the smaller clubs would not run totalisators at all. A few of the large clubs put through the totalisator £300,000 a year, while the smaller clubs put through only about £30,000. If the Premier's amendment passed, it would pay the clubs much better to drop the totalisator and confine betting to bookmakers. Last year bookmakers subscribed to the several clubs £18,000. From such fees the Treasury would receive nothing. Many of the smaller clubs now paid five per cent. to collect the 10 per cent. they charged for running the "totes"; and if 2½ per cent. were levied by the Government on the gross totalisator receipts, the clubs must close their totes. The Premier's amendment would not realise more than £4,000 or £5,000.

MR. GULL: The amendment of the last speaker was surprising, in view of the Premier's concession, which should cause the disappearance of most of the amendments tabled by advocates of the clubs, whom the Premier was meeting fairly. Despite the tax of 2½ per cent., the country clubs would continue the totalisator, if only to protect themselves against a combination of bookmakers to cut down fees. Without totalisators, the smaller clubs would be entirely in the hands of the ring. Seeing that the Bill would not tax bookmakers' fees, the larger clubs were quite prepared to pay 2½ per cent. on the net takings of the totalisator.

MR. EDDY: But the smaller clubs objected.

MR. GULL: They put through so little that the tax would not seriously affect them.

MR. BOLTON: For over a year, the three proprietary clubs had not used their straight-out totalisators.

MR. GULL: But the machines were always there, to be used if the book-makers tried to cut down the fees. To the big clubs at least, the totalisator tax was fair. The W.A. Turf Club paid £300 for watering the roads between Perth and the racecourse during the four days of the carnival. If the club could afford that payment, it could afford to pay $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the net takings of the totalisator.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The amendment appeared somewhat contradictory. It would apply to totalisators only. The totalisator was a portion of the betting apparatus of the club. The duty should be on the club's gross takings, including bookmakers' fees and all other incidentals.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Bill dealt with totalisators only.

MR. A. J. WILSON would, if necessary, move to amend the title by substituting "race clubs" for "totalisators." The effect of the amendment would be either to curtail the use of the totalisator by small country clubs, or to cause the larger fractions of a shilling, now retained by the clubs, to be paid to the public. The consequence would be that our object in getting revenue would be null and void. Would it be competent to strike out "totalisator" and insert "racing clubs"?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. The Bill was introduced by a Message from the Governor, and the amendment proposed would impose fresh taxation.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The Bill being before the Committee, surely we were not debarred from moving such an amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: A member in Committee could not move a motion that would add to the taxation of the people, unless it be done by Message from the Governor.

THE PREMIER hoped the amendment would be withdrawn. No object would be gained by it if it passed. He had already met the wishes of the racing clubs to a greater extent than they had anticipated.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. KEENAN moved an amendment—

That all the words down to "dividend," in paragraph (b), be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu—"All those moneys constituting the net takings of every totalisator which, under the rules of any racing club, whereby any fraction of a shilling or of any lesser sum is not paid as a dividend, remain undistributed and stand to the credit of such club at the close of any day's racing."

It was the practice of goldfields clubs to make up a dividend to the nearest shilling, and to do that they used the fractions unpaid on previous races, so that at the end of the day's racing the amount in hand did not represent the fractions unpaid. The Bill would prohibit the payment of a fraction of 6d. He submitted that the first people who were entitled to consideration were those who invested on the totalisator, and we should not make it impossible to pay a fraction of 6d.

THE PREMIER: It could be done by altering the rules of racing.

MR. GULL: The amendment was purely a question of dodging the issue as to whether the Treasurer should get the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the totalisator receipts or not. The chairman of the Kalgoorlie Racing Club admitted before the select committee that his club on occasions made up a dividend to 1s., but that it was not the practice, while the representative of the Boulder Racing Club had not held to the unanimous view of the chairman of the Kalgoorlie Racing Club; and the outside clubs did nothing of the kind. There was nothing to entitle the goldfields clubs to have this amendment passed. Racing clubs were quite prepared to pay the duty.

Amendment negatived.

THE PREMIER moved an amendment—

That the words "every portion of" at the commencement of Subclause (b) be struck out with a view of inserting "Two and a half per centum on" in lieu.

MR. KEENAN: The Premier asked for $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the gross taking of the totalisator which was a legitimate portion of the business, but only asked for $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on that part of the business of a totalisator to which exception might be taken.

THE PREMIER: Some people seemed to be very hard to please. According to the hon. member it was bad to take a portion of the gross takings; but it was

still worse to take a smaller portion of the unpaid dividends.

Amendment (to strike out words) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	27
Noes	...	...	...	8

Majority for ... 19

AYES.
 Mr. Barnett
 Mr. Bolton
 Mr. Brown
 Mr. Collier
 Mr. Ewing
 Mr. Foulkes
 Mr. Gregory
 Mr. Gull
 Mr. Hayward
 Mr. Hicks
 Mr. Isdell
 Mr. Keenan
 Mr. Layman
 Mr. McLarty
 Mr. Male
 Mr. Mitchell
 Mr. Monger
 Mr. N. J. Moore
 Mr. S. F. Moore
 Mr. Price
 Mr. Rason
 Mr. Smith
 Mr. Stone
 Mr. Ware
 Mr. A. J. Wilson
 Mr. F. Wilson
 Mr. Gordon (Teller).

NOES.
 Mr. Daglish
 Mr. Eddy
 Mr. Holman
 Mr. Horan
 Mr. Lynch
 Mr. Taylor
 Mr. Walker
 Mr. Bath (Teller).

Question thus passed.

THE PREMIER farther moved that the words "2½ per centum" be inserted in lieu.

MR. DAGLISH opposed the insertion of the words, as they destroyed the whole purport of Subclause (b). We had certain moneys dealt with which undoubtedly were public moneys received as trustees by the various racing clubs. These moneys the racing clubs found it impossible to distribute; and because of the inconvenience in distributing them equitably, the racing clubs retained them. It would be a right and proper thing for the Government to retain these public moneys, because the Government were the trustees of the people of the State. The racing clubs had no claim whatever on these various fractions, and he (Mr. Daglish) was astonished at the Premier sacrificing 97½ per cent. of revenue he might reasonably expect. With the object of giving the Premier an opportunity of reconsidering the matter, he moved an amendment—

That "97½ per centum" be inserted instead of "2½ per centum."

Amendment (Mr. Daglish's) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	11
Noes	...	...	...	23

Majority against ... 12

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnett	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brown
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Collier
Mr. Eddy	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Horan	Mr. Gull
Mr. Layman	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Lynch	Mr. Hicks
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Isdell
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Holman (Teller).	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. S. F. Moore
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. Walker
	Mr. Ware
	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. LYNCH moved an amendment—

That "50 per centum" be inserted instead of "2½ per centum."

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (the Premier's) put and passed.

MR. BARNETT moved that the following be added to Subclause (b):—

From and after the passing of this Act, no racing club in declaring a totalisator dividend shall retain in respect of individual dividends any fractional part of a shilling greater than sixpence.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	15
Noes	...	...	...	18

Majority against ... 3

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnett	Mr. Brown
Mr. Bath	Mr. Collier
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Eddy	Mr. Gull
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Horan	Mr. Hicks
Mr. Isdell	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Monger
Mr. Layman	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Lynch	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Smith	Mr. Price
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Rason
Mr. Walker	Mr. Stone
Mr. Holman (Teller).	Mr. Ware
	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

THE PREMIER moved—

That in Subclause (c) the words "all dividends" be struck out and "2½ per centum" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment passed.

MR. KEENAN moved an amendment—

That the words "fourteen days" in Subclause (c) be struck out, and "three months" be inserted in lieu.

THE PREMIER accepted the amendment.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 10—agreed to.

Suggested Clause—Sweeps under Government control :

MR. GULL had given notice of the following new clause :—

There shall be established in Western Australia, on the lines of Tattersall's, Hobart, under Government supervision and with proper guarantees, one institution for the purpose of carrying out a limited number of sweeps or consultations.

He said that although he believed his amendment to be a good one, and the Government had admitted the principle by taxing the totalisators, and this amendment would give a very considerable amount of additional revenue to the Treasurer, still, in view of the length of the debate that would be likely to arise, he wished to withdraw it.

MR. A. J. WILSON : Was the motion in order at all ?

THE CHAIRMAN : The amendment was not in the compass of the Bill.

MR. GULL did not move the proposal.

New Clause :

MR. MONGER moved that the following be added as a clause :—

This Act shall come into operation on the fourth day of January, 1906.

The premier racing club of Western Australia had a liberal racing calendar, and had spent a tremendous sum of money in legitimate improvements to their grounds during the past few years. He hoped the Treasurer would fall in with his idea that the Bill should not come into operation until the 4th January, so as to give the club the benefits of any profits they might derive through the medium of the totalisator at this particular meeting. They had entered into a contract involving an obligation to the extent of nearly £25,000, never anticipating at the time they did so that this Bill would become

law. He asked the Premier to agree, with that generosity which he was so well known to possess, and in the interests of the racing people of Western Australia, to the insertion of the clause.

THE PREMIER : Already he had shown his appreciation of the arguments brought forward by the member for York by consenting to the reduction which had been made, and the taxation which would be inflicted upon the racing club referred to and other racing clubs would be very small indeed. His friend had referred to his (the Premier's) generosity, but there were exceptions to every rule, and he was afraid he could not see his way to agree to the hon. member's request. He would be glad to do so if he could, but the hon. member would see on reflection that a very small revenue would be derived from the totalisator duty tax, and if it were not brought into operation until the 4th January the result would be practically nil.

New Clause negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendment.

BILL — WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

RECOMMITTAL.

Bill recommitted for amendment; MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair.

New Clause :

THE PREMIER moved that the following be added as Clause 4 :—

Application of Act.—This Act shall apply to all publicans' general licenses granted after the passing of this Act, and also to all such licenses for the year one thousand nine hundred and six, whether granted before or after the passing of this Act.

The Bill was being discussed before the annual licenses were granted, so publicans were not called upon to pay their license fee before April. The new clause was to prevent evasion of the Act by persons who had chosen to pay the license fee now, if any had done so, in the hope of effecting such evasion.

Question passed, the clause added to the Bill.

New Clause :

THE PREMIER moved that the following be added as Clause 5 :—

Fees for licenses granted for 1906.—(5.) (1.) It shall be the duty of every holder of a pub-

lican's general license granted or renewed before the passing of this Act for the year one thousand nine hundred and six, to produce his license to the licensing magistrates for the district in which the licensed premises are situated, at the quarterly meeting to be held in March, one thousand nine hundred and six. (2.) The licensing magistrates shall thereupon assess the annual value of the licensed premises in accordance with section three of this Act, and indorse such assessment on the license under the hand of the Chairman. (3.) The licensee shall, before the first day of April, one thousand nine hundred and six, produce to the Collector of Inland Revenue, or such other person as may be appointed by the Governor for the purpose of issuing licenses under the principal Act, his license so indorsed, and shall pay the difference, if any, between the sum paid for such license and the sum payable under section two of this Act to the Collector of Inland Revenue, or such other person as aforesaid, who shall indorse the receipt thereof on the license. (4.) If any licensee shall neglect to observe the provisions of subsections one and three of this section, or either of them, his license shall be void.

The clauses were themselves explanatory, and were merely giving effect to the previous clause.

Question passed, the clause added.

New Clause:

MR. KEENAN moved that the following be added as a clause:—

Where, under the provisions of section three hereof, a tenant is empowered to set off any part of the licensing fee against rent payable by him in respect of the premises, the following conditions shall apply, that is to say:—

1. If the immediate landlord of such tenant be a former tenant under an original lease who has sublet to him at the same rental as that reserved in the original lease, and who has not received any greater sum by way of ingoing than that paid by him to the lessor named in such original lease, or if the immediate landlord of such tenant be a mortgagee in possession who has entered into possession of the premises under the powers of a mortgage registered against the original lease, and who has sublet to such tenant at the same rental as that reserved in the original lease, and who has not received by way of ingoing any greater sum than that paid to the lessor named in such original lease, then and in either such case the deduction of increased licensing fee shall be made from the rental payable to the lessor named in the original lease. 2. If the immediate landlord of such tenant be a former tenant under an original lease who has sublet to him at a higher rental than that reserved in such original lease, or who has received a greater sum by way of ingoing than that paid by him to the lessor named in such original lease, or if the immediate landlord of such tenant be a mortgagee in possession of the premises under the powers of a mortgage registered against

the original lease, and who has sublet to such tenant at a higher rental than that reserved in the original lease, or who has received a greater sum by way of ingoing than that paid by the original tenant to the lessor named in such original lease, then and in either such case the increased licensing fee arising from such increased rental or ingoing shall be payable by such immediate landlord.

He wanted the clause inserted in order that it might be clear who was the party liable to pay the increased duty under the Act.

Question passed, the clause added.

New Clause:

MR. A. J. WILSON moved that the following be added as a clause:—

Duty on Rent, etc., of Licensed Premises.—6.

(1.) There shall be levied upon the lessor of all licensed premises and paid to the Colonial Treasurer, for the use of His Majesty, a duty of fifteen per centum upon all rents and premiums received by the lessor in respect of such premises. (2.) The duty imposed by this section shall be a debt due to His Majesty from the lessor of the licensed premises, and shall become due and payable at the time when such rent or premium, or any instalment thereof, is received by the lessor. (3.) If the lessor of any licensed premises shall make default in payment of the duty imposed by this section, and such default shall continue for fourteen days, he shall be liable to pay to His Majesty treble the amount of such duty (or a penalty not exceeding five pounds for every day the default continues.) (4.) For the purposes of this section the term "licensed premises" means any house or premises in respect of which a publican's general license is held by any person; and the term "premium" includes any sum of money or other consideration paid to a lessor on or before the granting of a lease, or during its currency, in addition to the rent reserved thereby; and the term "lessor" includes any person who as trustee, agent, receiver, or otherwise receives any rent or premium on which duty is imposed by this section.

If we were to take hotels in Hay Street, Barrack Street, or any of the principal streets in Perth we should find that were an equal space of ground utilised for any other traffic than the drink traffic the rental would in many cases not be a quarter of the amount now received owing to the fact that licenses had been granted to sell wines, beer, and spirits. Under the circumstances he thought it only fair that a landlord, owner, or lessor should pay to the Government something for the privilege enjoyed.

THE PREMIER: This introduced a highly debatable matter. If the House was to prorogue before Christmas, we

could not do justice to the question in the time at our disposal. Next session we should be dealing, he hoped, in a comprehensive measure with the whole question, and if the hon. member would under those circumstances consent to withdraw the amendment, one would be glad to give the utmost consideration to his suggestion.

MR. A. J. WILSON had much pleasure in agreeing to the suggestion of the Premier, and as he also believed that the amendment itself was out of order he had consequently greater pleasure in withdrawing it.

Bill reported with farther amendments, and the report adopted.

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Legislative Council now considered in Committee.

No. 1, Clause 1, add the following:—
“Provided that the roadway and footpaths of the bridge crossing the Government railway at William Street, Perth, are hereby dedicated to the public use, and it shall be unlawful for any building to be erected thereon or on any part thereof. Provided farther that the aforesaid bridge, roadway, and footpaths shall be maintained and kept in repair by the Commissioner of Railways.”

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The object of this amendment was to secure to the public a right of way over the bridge referred to. In the absence of the amendment it was possible for trouble to arise, because the only portions of the bridge which would be on William Street would be the abutments. The amendment made the matter clear, by Parliament dedicating the roadway and footpaths of the bridge to the use of the public. It also provided in the latter portion of the amendment “that the aforesaid bridge, roadway, and footpaths shall be maintained and kept in repair by the Commissioner of Railways.” He moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to.

MR. TAYLOR: Was it customary for the Railway Department to keep in order and maintain the causeways over the railway?

THE PREMIER: The public would have at all times the right of access, but

the bridge was not handed over to any local authority, and it was the duty of the Railway Commissioner to maintain it.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2—Schedule, add the following:—
“In the town of Popanvinning. All that portion of a public road, bounded by lines starting at a point on the Eastern side of the Great Southern Railway Reserve, situated 14 chains 65 $\frac{7}{8}$ links South, and 4 chains 62 $\frac{7}{8}$ links East from the North-East corner of Popanvinning Town Lot 20, and extending 83° 54' 11 chains 22 $\frac{5}{8}$ links; thence 78° 26' 5 chains 38 $\frac{7}{8}$ links; thence 118° 0' 1 chain 57 links; thence 258° 26' 6 chains 70 links; thence 269° 54' 11 chains 42 $\frac{5}{8}$ links; and thence 5° 26' 1 chain and $\frac{1}{16}$ of a link to the starting point.”

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to. This road was really only one on paper, and was being closed at the request of the local people.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3—Title, add the words “And for other purposes.”

On motion by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

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

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT (Hon. H. Gregory, Minister).

Vote—*Railways*, £1,232,743:

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. Gregory): My experience of the Railway Department is very slight indeed, and on that account I was going to ask for the consideration of the House in dealing with the Railway Estimates. The department is one with which I have never had any concern in the past, and during the short period I have been in office I have not been able to obtain any official knowledge enabling me to give to the Committee a comprehensive report in connection with the work. First, I wish to express regret that the Railway

Report has come before members so late ; but I believe it has been almost impossible to get it out earlier. It must be remembered that in the Railway Department the report is made up to the 30th June each year, and not, as in the case of the other departments, up to the end of the calendar year. [MR. HOLMAN : Nearly two months earlier last year.] The reports were late this year, and it is a matter over which the present Government had no control. I wish to express regret, because it is almost impossible, owing to the delay which has occurred, for members to criticise these Estimates in a fair and impartial manner, as they have had so very little time in which to go through such a large mass of figures as that contained in the Railway Report. One of the first things to which I wish to draw attention is the amount of the capital cost of the railway system at the present time. If members will look at the report on page 3 they will find that our railways altogether have cost us £9,808,458, involving an interest bill of £331,382. This is a very greatly increased capital cost of our railways during the past four or five years, and although the greater portion of that cost has been highly necessary, yet I think that in the future greater care will have to be taken in regard to this expenditure, for this interest bill is growing very rapidly. No doubt the Commissioner of Railways has done good work during the past few years. There may have been possibly a lack of tact on his part in dealing with the public, but no doubt he has gone whole-souled into the question of the work of the department; and I feel quite sure that every member will at least give him credit for having tried to do his very best in the interests of the department. While I hold the position of Minister for Railways I do not intend to try to usurp any of the functions given to the Commissioner of Railways under the Railways Act. That Act gave him full power in certain matters; but there are matters in connection with the railway system placing great responsibility on the Minister. I refer more particularly to the expenditure of funds on capital account. Great supervision and control should be exercised by the Minister in regard to the expenditure of these moneys.

MR. BOLTON : And Parliament, too.

[MR. DAGLISH took the Chair.]

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : Parliament votes the money in the first instance. I want to feel that the responsibility for that expenditure must rest on the Minister, and not on the Commissioner. As I was saying, I have no intention of trying to take any of the privileges granted to the Commissioner under the Railways Act. He has certain powers given to him in that Act, but I feel that responsibility for the expenditure of public funds must rest with the Government of the day. Members will notice comparative tables in the annual report of the department. We find that the year's work ended with a surplus over working expenses of £354,126, being £54,000 less than in the previous year, but considerably in excess of the four years preceding. After paying interest and working expenses in connection with our railways in 1905 we had £22,744 available to be paid into the revenue, in 1904 there was £111,784, and in 1903 there was £80,887; or a total of £165,000, roughly, during the time the present Commissioner has been office, which has been paid into the Treasury over and above working expenses and interest on the working capital of the railways. The Commissioner claims that a sum of £78,213 should be deducted as special expenditure which should be extended over a period of at least five years. If members will look at the figures they will see in regard to improvements to permanent way the sum of £317,000; in 1904 it was £236,000; in 1903, £231,000; in 1902, £215,000. The Commissioner states that this special expenditure was in connection with replacing 8in. x 4in. sleepers with 9in. x 4½in., £28,998; replacing gravel ballast with blue-metal, £21,869; reballasting with screened gravel, £11,073; renewal of bridges, £7,965; and removal of workshops plant and staff from Fremantle to Midland Junction, £8,308; being a total of £78,213. I am sure that members will agree that the cost of removing the workshops to Midland Junction can hardly be a fair charge against last year's work. Of course, the money had to be provided; but it was special work, and

the argument could easily be sustained that the cost of the work should be extended over a period of years. The same argument will apply to replacing gravel ballast with blue-metal. This is quite a change in the work of the department—[Mr. BOLTON: And a good job!—but it was hardly necessary that it should be done in the currency of one year. These special works made an additional expenditure last year of £78,000, and the Commissioner thinks that he should be credited with this extra expenditure which shows in the expenditure for this year. The Commissioner has repaid to the Treasurer £165,000 for the last three years over and above working expenses and interest. If we allow for that special expenditure of £78,000, the profits on our railways during the time the present Commissioner has been in charge would be £227,000. The total profit on the railways since its inception has been £519,000. It shows that the Commissioner has not been lax in the conduct of the business. Our capital account has been increased considerably. It must be remembered that we had the cost of the Midland Junction Workshops, £468,000, added to the capital cost this year; and the working expenses show a slight reduction last year. It could hardly be expected in the short time that any special reductions could be made in the loco. costs. The Commissioner thinks that next year we will be able to show a very substantial reduction by the advantage given to the department of having repairs executed at Midland Junction. Then there is the addition of £190,000 in connection with the Laverton Railway. The railway has not brought much extra traffic to the department, though it has given extra facilities to the people of the district. A sum of £87,900 has been expended on rolling-stock, and £63,000 has been spent in additions and improvements to opened railways. That, of course, makes a large increase in the capital expenditure during last year. On page 56 of the report will be found a statement of the railway capital expenditure to the 30th June, 1905. It is only lately we have had a true interest bill in connection with the money expended on our railways. There has not been a proper statement made out before; and by the Commissioner it has now been

framed so that the railways are charged with the exact moneys borrowed on them at the proper rates of interest. This means an addition of £10,700 in interest to the railway charges. [MR. A. J. WILSON: It only means putting it on a correct basis.] Yes. It is on a correct basis now, which it has not been previously. Although the exact amount was previously charged, it has now been apportioned to the various loans. [MR. HOLMAN: They will pay an extra £11,000 on it this year.] That will always be. The result of apportioning the interest properly has been that a higher rate of interest is charged on these items than was formerly charged, and it means an increase of £10,700. Dealing generally with the report, I wish it understood that we intend to do all we possibly can to assist the agricultural producers in reference to making arrangements by way of grain sheds to give facilities to farmers to put their produce on the market. The department has done a good deal in the past by constructing platforms; and the producers are erecting their own grain sheds. We intend to carry on this policy, which has been found to be one of great advantage to the producers, enabling them to bring in their grain at any period of the year, thus giving them special opportunity to take advantage of a good market. It is also an advantage to the railway department, giving extra facilities to get the produce away. It is intended to follow the policy in the future. On page 16 of the report, dealing with the gradients, it will be seen that a large sum of money has been expended with a view to regrading our railways lines, so as to enable heavier loads to be hauled. It is intended to continue that work. Of course, it will mean the expenditure of a good deal of money; but no doubt it will have corresponding advantages in the future. The question of water supply has given a great deal of trouble to the department; but in the future I think we ought to be able to surmount this difficulty. A condenser has been erected at Geraldton capable of condensing water at 11s. per thousand gallons. Some £8,000 has been spent in the erection of the condenser, but the result has been to give a good supply of water at a moderate rate.

MR. BATH: Does it never rain at Geraldton?

THE MINISTER: I believe that at the present time there is a suggestion to obtain a local water supply; but I am assured that the erection of this condenser will repay itself in the next two years, so that even if they do get a good water supply at Geraldton, the condenser will have paid for itself in the meantime. At Leonora a water-softening plant is being erected. The report says that "The results of this experiment are being watched with keen interest, for on the success or otherwise of this plant will depend the extension of the process." It will mean a great deal to the department if they can get a process by which the water on these goldfields may be made available for locomotives. At Malcolm a large dam has been erected, and at Menzies a large tank is being put down; and with the extension of the Coolgardie Water Supply, I think we will find, after a few years, that there will be very little trouble in connection with the water supply for our railways. I do not wish to deal any farther with this, except to reply to any questions that may be asked on any points raised concerning the railways. As I stated before, I have not given any special attention to the Railway Department. It is impossible while the House is sitting to obtain anything like a thorough knowledge of the work in connection with the department. If it be within my power, I shall be very glad to give the fullest possible information.

[General discussion ensued.]

MR. BATH desired to refer to a remark made last night by the Premier and the member for Kalgoorlie, that members should not criticise any public officer because the officer was not in a position to reply on the floor of the House. He took this position, that though a public servant might not have the opportunity of replying on the floor of the House, still members of Parliament were the representatives of the people, and if, in the course of his duties, a public servant laid himself open to criticism, it was right and essential that members should offer that criticism. It was necessary however, before doing so, for the hon. member to be particularly careful to see that his

criticisms were well founded, and, so far as possible, to keep within the four corners of fact in offering any criticism. In the past the actions of the Commissioner of Railways had come in for a considerable amount of criticism, and throughout his report the Commissioner had not been slow to offer opinions which practically amounted to reflections on the Ministers controlling the department, and on the decisions of this House. The Minister had said that the Commissioner had done good work, and in some directions he (Mr. Bath) would concede that point. The Minister had also said that perhaps the Commissioner's greatest fault was a lack of tact. He (Mr. Bath) would not say that it was so much a lack of tact as a lack of "sweet reasonableness." He believed the Commissioner of Railways was essentially a man of strong prejudices, and that when once he took a view in regard to some department of the work he controlled, there was absolutely no possibility of his being convinced by any arguments, no matter how reasonable or logical they might be. He (Mr. Bath) had only to refer to page 2 of the report before members, and members would see that the Commissioner had gone outside the scope of his duty and dealt with a matter on which Parliament alone should pronounce, and not the Commissioner, unless, in the course of his duties, that gentleman was asked by Parliament or by the Government to offer a report. We had the statement with regard to the Jandakot Railway. Mr. George had said:—

This line, I understand, is designed to eventually connect with the South-Western Railway, and thus provide an alternative route from that district to Fremantle. The junction should be at Mundijong.

It was the duty of Parliament to say where the junction should be, after the fullest information had been laid before members, and after members were fully acquainted with the claims of rival routes. One might understand Mr. George making the statement if some evidence or argument had been adduced to back it up; but there was simply the bald statement, "The junction should be at Mundijong." In the course of the report the Commissioner had dealt with the profit for the year. This was shown to be a little over £22,000; but the Commissioner had

stated that special expenditure amounting to £78,213 under the various heads enumerated by the Minister should not legitimately be placed in the list of working expenses for the year. He (Mr. Bath) had not been able to find any statement in previous years with regard to works of a similar nature, though they had been carried out; nor had he been able to find where they had been gathered together in a paragraph such as this. Unless the Commissioner's proposal for the establishment of a railway renewals suspense account was acted on, we could only deal with these matters as items of expenditure for the year and judge of the results accordingly. If we spread this expenditure over five years, by the same argument we would need to spread the expenditure of several years past over a similar term. [Mr. HOLMAN: Nothing of the sort.] The only solution was to adopt the suggestion of the Commissioner with reference to a renewals suspense account, so long as care was taken to see that the account was placed on an adequate basis. We had for the present year a comparison of earnings and also a percentage on the train mileage basis. The Commissioner stated that the comparison on the train mileage basis was unreliable, and one to which he did not commit himself as an enthusiastic supporter; but in view of the alterations made in the class of engines and the increased loads the engines hauled, the working expenses and the net return per average mile would be a fairer basis. We found that the percentage of working expenses was worse last year than in 1903. In fact, for the last three or four years the expenses had been gradually increasing on the train mileage basis. While we recognised the great advantage our system was to the development of the State, care was also necessary in the administration of the department in view of the fact that the loan expenditure on our railways was amounting to such a considerable sum. The greatest economy should be exercised so that the returns would provide working expenses and interest and one per cent. for sinking fund. The Commissioner, in the course of the report, had dealt with the Audit Department and referred to the fact that in 1904 the auditor had made some reference to the method of financing or account-

ing adopted in the railway office. The report of the auditor had been very reasonable. One felt that the important question which should be apparent to every member was the emphasis laid on the fact that the railways did not last for ever, and that in time lines would need to be relaid at considerable expense; also that machinery and plant wore out and became obsolete, and that the major portion of the items under capital expenditure depreciated in some form or other. That was a reasonable report, and one we should expect the Auditor General to make; but the Commissioner had resented it and stated in his report:—

Nothing has occurred in the department to my knowledge, or with my consent, that can possibly warrant an implication conveyed in paragraph 56 of the report of the Auditor General for the year ended 30th June, 1904, page 6, that capital moneys may have been used for the purpose of reducing the maintenance costs. I am quite sure the Legislature never intended that words implying dishonesty and dishonourable conduct be used in such reports regarding matters where it would be impossible for a falsification of accounts to exist, in which people of equal experience or with more experience might take a different view from that adopted by the Auditor General.

He (Mr. Bath) failed to see where in the remarks of the Auditor General there had been any imputation of dishonesty. It was right to insist that care should be exercised in placing to capital account amounts really expended in maintenance of our railways and rolling-stock at the ordinary or stationary amount of efficiency. Again, the amount given in the report as the capital expenditure on the railways, and the reconciliation with the Treasury accounts, appeared somewhat confusing. He would have liked to have had the Auditor General's report for 1905 to ascertain the Auditor General's opinion in regard to railway accounts for the year. Unfortunately, we only had the published accounts, though we were told that the Auditor General's report was to follow. The consequence was we were unable to review the Auditor General's report, and find what he stated in regard to this question. But the balance-sheet on page 54 of the Commissioner's report showed appropriations from general loan fund and special loans, prior to 1896, £9,943,987, and in the statement of railway capital expenditure we had a total

loan capital of £9,228,325, whilst in the Treasurer's statement we had the loan expenditure set down at £9,408,832. It was difficult to reconcile these items. We desired to know which could be accepted as reliable, which were to be regarded as accurate, and it was regrettable that a report of such importance as that of the Auditor General was not on the table at an earlier date in the present year. In regard to amounts set down as additions and improvements to opened railways from loan receipts, there were many items which justified criticism; items which could only be regarded as necessary to maintain the railways at an ordinary degree of efficiency. Really they did not increase the capital value of the railways, and it was not accurate to place them to capital account. He wished also to refer to a statement he had made in the course of some remarks on a motion by the member for Kanowna, dealing with the unemployed. He (Mr. Bath) made a remark to the effect that railway men were being paid 6s., 6s. 6d., and 7s. per day. The Minister for Works denied that statement; but we had only to turn to the voluminous report at the back of the report of the Commissioner, shown as Appendix O, to see the number of people employed and the rate of wages. We had the very large number of 1,633 who were only receiving 8s. per day, and included amongst those were 472 repairers and other grades of workers. Then we had 257 receiving 7s. 6d., 151 receiving 7s., 178 6s. 6d., and 169 6s. It might of course be stated that those receiving 6s. per day were only porters; but he would like to emphasise the fact that so far as the goldfields were concerned, 6s. a day for the work performed by porters at those stations was altogether inadequate. [THE MINISTER: Did they not get goldfields allowance?] He understood that recently the goldfields allowance had been cut down. He had been told so. [MR. BOLTON: Even so, the amount was only 1s.] If the Minister told him it was not so, he would accept the assurance. [THE MINISTER did not know whether it was so.] The rate of wages was altogether inadequate, and in his opinion bore out the statement made by the member for Kanowna and himself. He would like to refer to the question of the Appeal

Board. We knew that when an amendment of the Railways Act was passed, fears were expressed that the constitution of the board would result in an enormous number of complaints being brought before the persons constituting that board. He found that the total number of appeals heard for 1905 was only 46. Of these, 33 were dismissed, 11 modified, and 4 allowed. He thought the figures showed that the constitution of that board was in the interests of the employees.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Some decisions had been ignored by the Commissioner.

MR. BATH: In a case that was brought personally under his notice, instructions were given for the reinstatement of an officer, but instead of being reinstated in his original position, that officer was placed in a subordinate post which did not carry the emolument or privileges he had previously enjoyed. He again protested, and his appeal was upheld. The Minister gave instructions that he was to be reinstated in exactly the same position as he was in previously, yet that decision of the Minister was not carried out. In view of the general opinion throughout Western Australia, especially on the goldfields, where rightly or wrongly people thought the Commissioner was imbued with strong prejudices against that portion of the State, the Government should take steps to give the requisite notice for the termination of the agreement with the Commissioner, so that at the end of that term we should be free if we thought it necessary to make a fresh arrangement in regard to that appointment. We should be able to call for fresh applications, and, if it were thought it necessary, to fix a bigger salary. We should give an opportunity to railway men throughout Australia to make application for that position, and the present Commissioner would be on equal terms with those applying. That line of action, if taken by the Government, would serve to allay the dissatisfaction which existed in regard to the administration of our railways and would be doing no injustice to the Commissioner himself.

MR. EWING: The time had come when this House would have to give full consideration with regard to railway matters. The Minister in charge of the

Railway Estimates had said straight out that he knew nothing about the work. The hon. gentleman had endeavoured to place before the House a glowing position in regard to the railways and their administration during the term of the Commissioner, the last three years; and of course in making that statement he was making a statement which had emanated from the Commissioner himself. It was a pity that this report had not been placed on the table of the House a month or so earlier. The Minister had said that during the term of the Commissioner £165,000 had been placed to the consolidated revenue, after paying interest and working expenses on our railways, and that this was a greater amount than during any other period of the railways. The *Statistical Abstract*, however, would show that it was a misstatement, because in 1900 there was a net credit to profit on the railways of £162,000. If we found that the management of the railways under the Commissioner was no better than it was during the previous three years, there could be no justification for an alteration of the system then in vogue. When the railways were under the control of the Minister, the working expenses in 1900 were 68·4 per cent.; 1901, 77·19; 1902, 82·58. In the years 1903-4-5 the percentages were 80·33, 74·28, and 78·01 respectively. The average for the first three years referred to was 76·05 per cent. as against 77·54 for the second three years, these figures showing a difference of 1·49 per cent. in favour of Ministerial management. Dealing with the profit during the respective terms, we should find that during 1900 the net profit, after paying interest and working expenses, was £162,066; 1901, £65,807; 1902, £12,168, making a total profit of £239,541 during the three years of Ministerial control. During the last three years 1903-4-5, under the Commissioner's control, we found that the net profits after paying interest and working expenses respectively for those years were £30,887, £111,784, and £22,744, making a total of £165,415, showing a difference in favour of Ministerial control of £74,126. The advantages which the present Commissioner had had during his term must be apparent. There must be a screw loose somewhere. Take the question of coal.

In the years 1900-1-2, 364,441 tons were consumed, at an average price of 16s. 9d. per ton. During the last three years 450,028 tons were consumed at an average price of 14s. 5d. There was a clear saving of 2s. 4d. a ton during the management of the Commissioner of Railways, and this must have been a means of saving him directly £52,000. This amount with the £74,126 referred to made a total of £126,126. It was only right to remember that during the years 1903-4-5 the Commissioner had to pay about £170,000 more in the way of interest; but the capital expended for which that interest was due was for the advantage of the railways, and the Commissioner should have had full results from that expenditure. Deducting the £126,126 from the additional interest there was left a balance of £44,313 in favour of the Commissioner. The Commissioner had great advantage from the Coolgardie Water Scheme. We all remembered the huge trains that used to go from Perth carrying water, and what immense cost there must have been. Moreover, the Commissioner had had extra advantages in the way of freights and should certainly have shown a much better result. In 1901-2 wages were increased 1s. a day through the action of Parliament; but in 1902 a new rate-book came out which increased freights practically for timber, coal, merchandise, and produce of every description. He (Mr. Ewing) did not hesitate to say that meant £150,000 a year probably, all round, and we knew that as far as timber was concerned it meant an increase of £50,000. It had always been a matter of impossibility to get the exact increases due to increased freight. After paying extra wages there must have been a balance of £70,000, yet we did not find that the position had been improved in any shape or form; and there was an ever-increasing cost of administration. Under the present management the profit in 1904 was £22,744, this being a decrease compared with 1903 of £89,040. The working expenses during the year 1904-5 increased by something like £76,379. Notwithstanding that there were a million and a-half more passengers in 1905 than in 1904 and 162,000 tons more goods, the total increase of revenue was only

£22,045. In his report the Commissioner stated that during 1903 the train mileage decreased by 17,081 miles; and that was the reason he had so decreased the working expenses in 1903-4. In the year 1904 the train mileage decreased 309,000 miles, and if the decrease of 17,081 miles in 1903-4 showed a material advantage to the Commissioner, why had not the reduction of train mileage of 309,000 miles had a similar result? We had the example of the Midland Railway Company which was working a system with nothing like the revenue we had on our system, and we found that during last year their working expenses were 58 per cent. of the gross earnings, and we had a statement from the general manager that if they had an increase in trade of 25 per cent. they could work their railway with 50 per cent. of the gross earnings; that was 28 per cent. less than in the case of the Government railways. We wanted to know why the Midland Railway was working so efficiently, whilst ours were practically working at a loss. Every time there appeared to be an increase in working expenses, we found there was an inclination to increase freights. We wanted railways for the advantage of the people, to open up industries and for the benefit of the country. We did not get the advantages for which the railways were constructed. The Midland Railway Company were carrying coal at three-eighths of a penny per ton per mile, whereas a halfpenny per ton per mile was charged on the Government railways, and there was a shilling terminal charge. Were we not losing trade on account of the raising of freights, and was it not possible to introduce a system by which these freights might be considerably reduced? Only the other day an order for something like 500,000 sleepers was lost to Western Australia on account of these heavy freights. It was necessary to consider the position and see whether something could not be done to keep this trade within our borders. The freights were a very heavy tax upon this community, and they were abnormally high at the present time. It would be a great advantage to all industries in this State if we could reduce freights. He would like to refer to a conference held in Sydney, in he thought May, 1904.

At that Commissioners' Conference in the Eastern States, which was attended by our own Commissioner, a decision was arrived at that preferential rates should be done away with. The present Commissioner had done this, and the hardship had been very great. The increase in relation to confectionery was something like 50 per cent. On buggies and sulkies the freight used to be 4d. per mile for the first hundred miles, 3d. per mile for the second hundred, and 2d. per mile for any distance over that. Those rates had now been wiped out, and there was a through charge of 4d. per mile. The same applied with regard to lorries, etc. These things were very disastrous, and would imperil industries. He had only to mention the tinfields at Greenbushes, a district which he represented. The freight on tin ore used to be 14s. 6d. per ton, and now it was 27s. 6d., there being an increase of 100 per cent. This was a serious matter indeed, and required grave consideration. He wished to express his disapproval of the action of the Commissioner in connection with many industries in this State, and he held that if the Commissioner would use his position to endeavour to kill an industry in the State he was unfit and unworthy to fill that position. We heard in the street and everywhere one liked to go that the Commissioner of Railways ought not to be reappointed. The Leader of the Opposition had said practically the same thing. He (Mr. Ewing) unhesitatingly said that in the interests of the State it would be far better if the Commissioner were paid the salary for the next 18 months and allowed to go about his business, and for us to consider what was best to be done.

MR. BOLTON: The Commissioner threatened to come back to Parliament.

MR. EWING: Let him come to Parliament. One agreed with the Leader of the Opposition that it was the bounden duty of members to criticise freely the action of any public servant, if they had justification to do so. He had been careful in these matters he brought before the House. He would show one instance to satisfy members as to the means the Commissioner of Railways was prepared to take to exterminate for all time the Collie coal industry. The Conference of Railway Commissioners at Sydney had

decided that there should be no preferential rates. Dr. Jack, well known to the Commissioner of Railways, had said in his report that if a rate of one penny per ton were placed on coal of an inferior character in any portion of Australia, the last word would be said in regard to that industry, and that if it were done the coal mining industry at Collie would be lost for all time.

MR. HOLMAN: The Commonwealth Constitution had abolished preferential rates. The Commissioners had decided it, because the Premiers in conference had decided to do away with preferential rates.

MR. EWING: No promise had been given by the Premiers. At the time of the Commissioners' Conference, Mr. Watson, then Prime Minister, had telegraphed to the Commissioners asking if they were going to have uniform rates in the different States, because, if so, there was no necessity for an Inter-State Commission. He (Mr. Ewing) took exception to any Railway Commissioner or public servant declaring what the representatives of the people in Parliament were prepared to do. It was a matter for Parliament to decide. [MR. WALKER: Hear, hear; the whole point.] The Railway Commissioner on returning had fixed freights exactly in the manner he (Mr. Ewing) had said; and it was a grave injustice to many of the struggling industries of the State. In a book which the Commissioner had submitted to the Labour Government, a rate of a penny per ton had been fixed for Collie coal. He (Mr. Ewing) was subject to correction, but he believed he was right that it was to the credit of the Labour Administration that they had seen what the result would be, and refused to allow Mr. George to do it. He believed those were the facts; if not, the Minister could correct him. Without hesitation he said that any civil servant endeavouring to exterminate an industry as Mr. George was doing was not worthy of the position he held. If the Commissioner would do it in regard to one industry he would do it in regard to any. The question came to this, and to this alone: whether we were owners of the railways, whether they were for the convenience and benefit of the people and for the development of our resources, or

whether they were for the aggrandisement of the present Commissioner? We must take the matter seriously into consideration. It was not part of his (Mr. Ewing's) character to make personal attacks on anybody; but during the time the Collie coal contracts were under consideration, the Commissioner had informed the people who had spent £60,000 or £70,000 on the industry, that he desired to exterminate it, or as he put it, "he desired to be cruel to be kind." This Government deserved credit for standing to an industry which would otherwise be exterminated. He (Mr. Ewing) took full responsibility for his words, knowing they would be recorded against him for all time if there was anything improper in them; but he would not be worthy of his position as a member of Parliament or as a representative of people who were struggling to open up one of our best industries, if he refused to condemn a man who endeavoured to exterminate that industry and to take away from people their means of livelihood. Perhaps he was somewhat warm on this matter, but he had endeavoured to show first of all in figures, perhaps wearisome and to be slurred over, but which were worthy of the consideration of members, that the administration and management of our railways was not better than it had been under Ministerial control. He had endeavoured to show that the time had arrived when the Government should take into consideration whether the system should be altered, or whether they should appoint three Commissioners to do away with some of the harm the present Commissioner was perhaps doing. He gave credit to the Commissioner for being a hard-working man, but not for the ungenerous and ungentlemanly way in which he treated those who desired to see him on many occasions. It was the privilege of every member of the community to lay his grievances at the feet of the right people; but it was a difficult matter for any person who had once been to see the Commissioner of Railways to see him again, if by any chance the Commissioner disagreed with the opinion of that person. He (Mr. Ewing) knew that from experience. The crux of the whole question was not to make money on our

railways, but to carry the wealth and produce of this country at the minimum amount of cost. How could we get that to-day when year after year the working expenses were going up? It was a matter for serious consideration; and he hoped the Government early next session would say what they were going to do in regard to it. We should not lead the Commissioner to believe that he had the approval of all members of Parliament. Any member who approved of the Commissioner should say so; and if any member did not approve of the Commissioner it was only fair that it should be said in the House so that the Commissioner would know his position. The Leader of the Opposition had drawn attention to certain matters in regard to the infringement of agreements. No doubt the hon. member's remarks would receive the due consideration of the Government. His (Mr. Ewing's) excuse for taking up the time of the House was that this was a matter that should not be passed over lightly, and that we should endeavour, as far as possible, to see that the railways were run for the advancement of the people of the State.

MR. BOLTON: The phase of the question dealt with by the member for Collie had been Ministerial control *versus* control by the Commissioner. No doubt considerable argument could be raised on the point, but it should not come under this heading of Railway Estimates; and such a discussion should be avoided if possible. He (Mr. Bolton) believed that the railways should be again under Ministerial control; but he gave the Commissioner credit when saying that under his management the railways in this State in any department would compare very favourably with any other railways in the Commonwealth. There were one or two objectionable features. It was not right that members of the House should be kept waiting for the annual report of the Railway Department until this time of the year. The report was headed "Advance Report," which showed that practically none but members of Parliament had received copies. It was one of the most interesting documents laid before members, and contained much food for thought, being usually bound up with reports of the departmental officers and being generally

well put together. The Commissioner usually made out a very good case for himself. No one blamed him; but Mr. George had gone beyond his functions in saying with regard to the Jandakot Railway that it should junction with the South-Western Railway at Mundijong. The Commissioner might as well have added, "and that settles it." He had a peculiar way of saying things, and no doubt a peculiar way of writing things. It was no part of the Commissioner's duty to make such remarks. Mr. George might necessarily be called upon by the Government to make a confidential report concerning this railway, but not to put it into the annual report of the department. It was unfortunate that when members dealt with an officer in the service it was looked upon as a personal matter. He desired to make it clear that he had nothing to say against the Commissioner as Mr. George. He was simply talking of the position; and in taking exception to anything he thought not in the best interests of the country, it should not be taken that he was talking of the Commissioner or of Mr. George. He was simply talking of the administration. He took exception to the Commissioner of Railways having the right to duplicate certain railways without the authority of Parliament. Probably the Minister would quote the Railway Acts in reply; but the Minister's trouble could be saved, because he (Mr. Bolton) was well aware of the sections of the Act, having had occasion to work under them and to closely study them. He objected to the Commissioner having only to obtain the sanction of the Minister, and probably the Cabinet, to duplicate a number of miles of railway, while Parliament had nothing to say with regard to it. In one instance a sum of £30,000 had been spent on a duplication which was absolutely useless. When the duplication of the railway from Burswood to Armadale had been started, the House had already authorised a railway to be built from Fremantle to Jandakot, the understanding being that the line would eventually junction with the South-Western Railway. Any extension of the Jandakot Railway would render the duplication to Armadale useless. Parliament had authorised the

building of a railway intended eventually to relieve the congested traffic in the Perth yard, and to take the traffic from the South-West direct to Fremantle instead of through Perth; so to duplicate the South-Western Railway to deal with the same traffic while constructing the Jandakot Railway would bring about a direct loss of £30,000. The Minister had said the money was voted and that it was there to spend; but that was a foolish idea. Ministers for Railways, as a rule, knew little about the railways, not being long enough in office to acquire the knowledge; and a Minister would not oppose a request by the Commissioner to spend money as the Commissioner had suggested. Undoubtedly the Commissioner had any amount of wisdom and was a good manager; and if he thought he could cut down expenses by duplicating a certain portion of a railway and he applied for a certain sum, it would be granted. It was always the rule that the full amount was spent and more asked for to continue the work. Recently the Commissioner had duplicated the railway from Lion Mill to Chidlow's Well. It was a very necessary work; but that did not do away with the necessity for asking the permission of the House. There was already a deviation between Lion Mill and Midland Junction. The Commissioner thought that, as he had been doing so well, he should extend the duplication to Wooroloo; and with the idea of reducing the grades between the two places, a deviation had been commenced, though only five years ago there had been a deviation to reduce the grades there. One of the finest objects on which we could spend money on our railways was in the reduction of grades; but when members came to see the Estimates they would find that another sum had been spent in duplication, of which we knew nothing; and next year we would have to deal with the item again.

THE MINISTER: It was a matter for the Loan Estimates.

MR. BOLTON did not think the duplication should all be done out of Loan Estimates. The Commissioner had said in his report:—

The section from Lion Mill to Chidlow's Well (3 miles 45 chains) was opened for traffic on 16th November, 1904, and the farther section from Chidlow's Well to Wooroloo (7

miles 33 chains), after approval by the Government, was commenced on 22nd February. It is now well in hand.

It took a lot of discussion to get a railway from Fremantle to Jandakot, but the Commissioner was able to build a railway for eleven miles without any authority except that of the Minister.

THE MINISTER: Had not the Commissioner got the authority under the Loan Act? He knew that in the Loan Bill coming forward a certain amount would be provided for duplications; and of course the authority was given there.

MR. BOLTON: Some of the money set aside in the Loan Bill would be for these duplications in hand.

THE MINISTER: Authority had been given by a previous Minister.

MR. BOLTON: Authorisations would be asked for duplications almost completed. The Commissioner calculated that £3,500 would be saved by the duplication, and that this sum would be increased by the time the duplication was carried to Northam, for which he hoped approval would be given. No doubt under the old single line there had been many delays which had now been obviated, and that meant a saving; but Parliament should be asked before the duplication was continued to Northam or beyond any certain point. The Commissioner referred to reductions in gradients, especially in regard to the suburban lines. Most people agreed that it was a good way to spend money. The Commissioner said that it was either necessary to reduce the grades on the present suburban lines or to have heavier engines. It would be absolutely wrong to replace locomotives and to leave the grades alone. If we reduced the grades each engine could take an increased load. The present engines on the suburban traffic were of a type that it would be hard to beat in Australia; and if they had failed, it was because they had been given too much to do. Recently, heavier carriages had been built which overloaded the engines, and it was no wonder that the trips now took longer. It had been found necessary to reduce the number of coaches, but notwithstanding they had been able to seat the same number of passengers as before because of the new coaches. If the department ran extra trains they could do it cheaper than any regrading or

replacing of obsolete stock. Engines taken off the suburban traffic would be useless in any other part of the service. It would be a waste of money to take them off the traffic on the paltry excuse that they could not haul the present loads. At holiday time there was a 15-minutes service, which worked well, and there was no over-crowding; but on ordinary days the service was run to suit the engines. We should increase the number of engines, but there was no excuse for changing the class of engines. It was rumoured that the department intended to get stronger engines, but he (Mr. Bolton) knew they were excellent for the work if not over-loaded. If anything was to be done it was to regrade; but we must not take the engines off. There was a class of engine which had done extremely good work in the State now rusting at Midland Junction, falling to pieces and not fit to be repaired.

At 6.30, MR. DAGLISH left the Chair.

At 7.30, MR. ILLINGWORTH resumed the Chair.

MR. BOLTON (continuing): In view of the fact that it was proposed to provide £40,000 to replace obsolete rolling-stock in the way of locomotives, he thought it necessary to call attention to this item, because it was not dealt with quite as plainly as it might be. He would like to refer to two or three lines. A paragraph in the Commissioner's report contained the following:—

An approximate estimate for reduction of grades between Fremantle and Midland Junction from 1 in 80 to 1 in 100 gives a cost of £80,000. This improvement would enable the present suburban type of locomotive to haul 180 tons at the same speed as it at present hauls 144 tons—an increased hauling capacity of 25 per cent.—which would be attained with very little additional cost beyond that for interest charges. To reduce the grades, though costly, would enable much heavier loads to be conveyed by all classes of locomotives, both goods and passenger. To increase the power of the suburban engine would require new engines.

But the bottom paragraph appealed to him on the same lines as it did with regard to this duplication:—

The solution of the problem in question, which may be viewed from so many different standpoints, will receive every consideration during the current year.

The Minister would, he hoped, go in for regrading or running additional trains rather than replacing really useful rolling-stock which would be of no use anywhere else. The difficulty was that the engines were side tank engines; they carried such a small quantity of water, and were only useful for suburban traffic. The Commissioner said that a sum of £10,000 was provided on the Revenue Estimates for the current year in relation to the continuous brake. That was one of the most useful channels in which to spend the money. The fact that a driver was killed a few months ago at West Perth was owing to the circumstance that the train had not sufficient brake power. There were not sufficient wagons fitted with these cylinders. It was a very common practice for the driver to step back on to the wagons and put the brakes down whilst the train was in motion. That was a very dangerous thing. By means of the automatic brake we should practically increase the speed of the trains, because they could pull up in such a much shorter space. The Minister referred to the water supply, which was rather a vexed question. He (Mr. Bolton) did not claim that it was through his representations, but he found that there was one instance in which water supply had been provided, that being at Bunbury. He was glad they had a bore there and saved the running of a water train for a paltry distance of four miles. Still, there was room for improvement. The Chief Mechanical Engineer claimed that £1,689 was spent in the year on the haulage of water from Perth to Fremantle. He (Mr. Bolton) thought it would have paid the department many years ago to have laid a pipe and had water directly pumped to Fremantle. Had that been done there would not have been this cost of £1,689 a year, and the water would always have been on hand. In relation to the Coolgardie Water Scheme there was something wrong when we had to send water to Beverley for the use of locomotives, a distance possibly of upwards of 40 miles. Beverley had been a local dépôt for many years, and they had never had water there. The Chief Mechanical Engineer said that already the engineers were looking out for a suitable site for a bore. It was somewhat surprising to him that this question had

never been dealt with before. The estimated saving by doing away with the necessity of running to Beverley with water was £3,295 a year. Another recommendation from the Chief Mechanical Engineer was one with which he entirely disagreed, namely that one central running shed should be provided for the metropolitan district. They complained that there were three depôts—one at Midland Junction, one at Perth, and one at Fremantle. From a business point of view he supposed it did look rather absurd; but the conditions obtaining in this State were different from those in any of the other States. We had a port, and we must have a depôt at the port, and he was sure the Colonial Treasurer would hardly agree that the locomotive depôt at Midland Junction should be removed, because it helped to keep that place alive. It was just as necessary to have a depôt at Fremantle, and possibly Midland Junction, as to have one at Perth. If there had to be one central depôt or metropolitan depôt, it would be far better for it to be at Fremantle, and for there to be another depôt at Midland Junction. At Midland Junction the grade was very much worse, and a different class of engine took up all the work from there. Passenger traffic and suburban goods traffic was taken on from there by far heavier engines. The site of the existing shed at West Perth would be invaluable for other purposes than those of a running shed, whilst for a running shed it was next to useless. The Commissioner said he did not expect to reap any revenue from the Jandakot line, but he supposed he would have to take it over. He (Mr. Bolton) considered it the duty of the Railway Department to take this railway over at once. The Chief Mechanical Engineer, in his report, said that all the employees were residing at Midland Junction; but that was absolutely incorrect. He hoped that this was not the forerunner of ceasing the workmen's train at present running. He would be quite content to let that matter drop if the Minister was convinced that it was not a source of warning that there was no necessity to run the train. He understood the train was not run at a loss, and he was quite satisfied it was filled to its utmost carrying capacity. The Chief

Mechanical Engineer also referred to some engines dealt with in the last Parliament. It would be remembered that the English-built engines "E" and "F" cost a shade more than any other engine ever built in the civilised world for a narrow gauge. They were certainly of a good big heavy type, and he believed in their usefulness. The Chief Mechanical Engineer reported that—

In the class "E" locomotives, the attachment of the front end of the boiler to the framing has proved too weak. The trailing bogie requires compensating with the coupled wheels, and the spiral bearing springs on the tenders require replacing with laminated ones. This work, which is absolutely necessary, will cost approximately £112 per engine.

There had been a good deal of that sort thing in this State right from the beginning. Engines had been brought here and found unsuitable. They still brought the engines and there were always alterations. These engines cost about £5,997 or something like that. "E" and "F" engines were the most expensive ever built. The £112 to which he referred did not include overhauling repairs. It was necessary that more care should be taken. He noticed that in the Agent General's Department there was an engineer appointed, but it seemed to him that his work was somewhat neglected. It was quite time that before they purchased locomotives some better provision in regard to inspection should apply. The Chief Mechanical Engineer said they found it was useless to purchase engines from an inferior firm for the sake of a few pounds. He (Mr. Bolton) hardly saw how that could apply, when the price charged for those locomotives was double that charged by the finest engine builders in the world—Peacocks.

HON. F. H. PRIESSE: Peacock's engines were booked ahead for years. One could not get an order filled under seven years.

MR. BOLTON: The Baldwin engine was a cheap one. The American engineers did not repair any part of an engine, but mostly replaced parts. The engine was actually replaced until the old locomotive disappeared. The English-built engines were always repaired, and they had a periodical overhaul in the shop. In regard to the Yankee locomotives brought here, they were the most useful the country had ever had.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: £112 was not much compared to the original cost, because the engines were the most effective that ever came to this country.

MR. BOLTON agreed that they were the most efficient, but the cost of operations was something like 23d. per train mile as against some tenpence. The additional cost was because one of these engines would draw just twice as much as an engine in relation to which the cost was tenpence per mile. But even that was not sufficient compensation. They hauled a tremendous tonnage. He happened to be engaged in running these engines on their first trial trips when they were tested. In every case these engines had to be looked to in their boilers, for they were leaking at all the joints. They were magnificent engines, but there was something wrong. One hundred and twelve pounds might not be a great amount in itself, but that and the cost of several previous alterations made the total a lot. These engines were continually being altered, and this was rather a serious matter, because it showed faulty design. In the last Parliament he referred to the necessity of doing something in relation to the Swan View tunnel. Then the Minister promised that the matter should be looked into. He (Mr. Bolton) did not claim that any serious accident had happened since then, but the arguments urged on that occasion still held good. He knew that on one occasion both the driver and fireman fainted, and the train ran back on a gradient of one in forty into the siding at Swan View. Had it not been for the runaway siding no one could tell where the thing would have ended. It was a serious matter. It would not be an expensive thing to put an air-shaft into that tunnel. He believed in some of the expenditure of the Commissioner of Railways. He believed in the expenditure devoted to the improvements of the Perth Station. When that work was finished the station would at least compare favourably with any station to which one could go. The improvements which had taken place since the Commissioner had taken over the control of the railways had been enormous. They were still going on, and he thought they were warranted. There was one big expenditure which had cost something like £37,000, he believed.

That was in replacing ironstone gravel ballast with blue metal ballast. He was satisfied that by placing a blue-metal ballast on the roads the cost of maintenance would be far less. It saved wear and tear on the rolling-stock. The authorities knew that the suburban lines would have to be pulled up and a heavier rail put down. The present rails could not last more than five years. It would be almost advisable to, if possible, take these rails up now and put the 100-lb. rails down. Those rails that could be taken up, which were the heaviest yet in the State, could be used for traffic not so severe as the suburban traffic, and then they would last for 10 or 15 years.

MR. KEENAN: There was a very pleasing sentiment in the report of the Commissioner, that the questions to be dealt with by the Railway Department were not only dealt with from the standpoint of a commercial proposition, but were viewed in the broadest possible manner from the standpoint of the interests of the State as a whole. He desired to apply that excellent axiom to some portion of the transactions of the department. He had asked the Minister in the House for information regarding the passenger fares charged, but the answer was of a deceptive character, probably owing to no fault of the Minister. By Appendix A of the report we learned that the excursion railway fare from Kalgoorlie to Perth was 60s. first class, and 40s. second class, being at the rate of 902d. first class per train mile, and 602d. second class per train mile, whereas from the suburban stations to Albany the excursion fare was 30s. first class, or 511d. per train mile, and 20s. second class, or 340d. per train mile, or approximately half the charge from Kalgoorlie per train mile. If the department was administered not entirely from the point of view of a commercial concern but in the broadest possible manner in the interests of the State, it was in the interests of the State that the people on the goldfields should visit the coast, as much as it was in the interests of the people on one part of the coast to visit another part of the coast. If the Minister were empowered to make the alteration there would be no difficulty in obtaining it; but unfortunately the position to-day was that the Minister appar-

ently could only act as an onlooker in many respects. The Minister's hands were tied when it came to carrying out reform urged by the House, and he found himself effectively blocked by the Commissioner. The next matter he (Mr. Keenan) desired to refer to was one which might be viewed in a light that it was not intended to have. He referred to the expenditure on the Fremantle station. It was stated on page 12 of the annual report of the department that "final plans having been approved successively by the Jaanes and Daglish Governments, and the necessary financial provision having been made, the work had been begun." Necessary financial provision made by whom? It would be interesting to know. [MR. HOLMAN: By this House.] We were to spend £80,000 on this work, and it would be interesting to know what proportion of it was to be charged to revenue, assuming for a moment that the expenditure of so large a sum would be justified; but the report was absolutely silent as to whether provision was to be made out of revenue. On page 14 of the report we found the Commissioner saying in connection with the Perth yard:—

Many alterations have been involved in connection with these works, and, as I wish to avoid placing on capital account any works which do not increase the capital assets of the department, over £1,750 of the cost has been charged against working expenses.

Would these alterations at Fremantle increase the capital asset of the department?

MEMBER: Poor "coast"!

MR. KEENAN: If any criticism on any expenditure in the coastal districts was to be viewed from the standpoint of the district the member represented, it would be better for all members who did not happen to be elected for the coastal districts to be absent. Goldfields members challenged contradiction on any goldfields expenditure. They invited it. The only criticism concerning goldfields expenditure came from goldfields members, who themselves objected to increases except those justified by the Minister. He hoped there would be an end, once and for all, to ejaculations that, after all, could have no foundation except prejudice. He understood that the expenditure of this £80,000 was not justified. He had been informed by those who took

the trouble to think things out that with half the expenditure we could meet all requirements.

MR. BOLTON: Half the money had gone for the purchase of land.

MR. KEENAN desired to emphasise the point that there was no objection to money being spent at Fremantle any more than anywhere else, but we should have some reason for the expenditure of a very large sum when apparently the needs of the locality could have been met with a much smaller amount. The Minister should explain the necessity for the acquisition of so much land. Was it absolutely necessary from a railway point of view? Was it recommended by the department, or was it merely the result, as often happened, of the recommendation of irresponsible people, only desirous to spend the funds of the State in the most rapid and sometimes the most irresponsible manner? No one objected to the expenditure on the station if it would give greater convenience to the travelling public at the least possible cost, or if the requirements of the railway were increased in an economical manner. We certainly could give greater facilities by spending money; but that was not the real question. Did the condition of affairs in the State justify us in spending so much money when other necessities demanded attention? If any money could be saved it was the duty of the member for the district to assist in saving it, and not to clamour for its expenditure. Concerning the question of reducing grades, he had recently had the pleasure of meeting a man who had seen a great deal of railway work in most parts of the world, and the observation that gentleman made when travelling over the railways was that apparently the State was prepared to spend large sums of money in obtaining engines of a very powerful class, when the same result could be achieved in a more economical and more permanent manner by reducing the grades. The remark applied more to the railway between Northam and the goldfields, where it was a matter of no great difficulty to reduce the ruling grade from 1 in 60 to perhaps 1 in 100, as on the suburban railways. It was absurd to purchase powerful engines to haul small loads when the existing engines, with a better grade,

could deal with the traffic. In view of some future events, he desired to draw attention to the opinion expressed by the Commissioner on page 19 of the report, that he was not in favour of spur lines. Apparently the Commissioner was not one who hesitated to express an opinion, whether asked or not.

MR. BATH: But the Commissioner did not supply any argument to back it up.

MR. KEENAN: If we accepted the Commissioner as a judge on these matters this showed that he was not inclined to recommend spur railways from the point of view of the economical working of the railways. The Leader of the Opposition had dealt with the question of how far maintenance charges were made up by loan moneys. He (Mr. Keenan) only desired to point out that even in the Estimates, on page 61, there was a deduction from Division 48 of £10,709, stated to be chargeable to loan. The Committee were entitled to some information. How they arrived at the figure 9 passed all comprehension. This sum was shown as deducted under the heading of salaries. It was a difficult thing to apportion a man's salary to Loan Funds, but presumably that difficult task was not beyond the Commissioner of Railways. The Leader of the Opposition had also referred to the question of the payment of employees on the railway. The view he (Mr. Keenan) held on this matter was that, if the State stepped into the shoes of an employer, when it demanded that the private employer should pay a standard rate of wage and when it forced him to do so by statute the State ought to be the last to infringe a rule it enforced on others; and if wages paid to railway servants on the goldfields were so far below the wages fixed by the Arbitration Court for people outside the service, as stated by the member for Brown Hill, it was a matter for the consideration of the Minister, who was responsible to this House for the moral conduct of the railways. He agreed with the members for Brown Hill and Collie that it was absolutely the duty of the Government, and the first step of wisdom, to give the requisite notice to the Commissioner, so that our hands might be free when the term of office of the Commissioner should terminate, and so that we could deal with

matters in the best way possible. It would be unfair if the Government were tied at a time Parliament desired to make a change. He congratulated the department on the initiation of the work of supplying their wagons and carriages, and also boilers for engines. This was a step in the right direction. If we could construct at anything approaching the cost of imported rolling-stock, it was our duty to keep the money in the pockets of our people. He hoped the policy would be extended, if possible, to the construction of engines. He believed that our own servants would have a far more valuable knowledge of our requirements than people abroad, and that they would construct engines which we could rely on would be suitable to our requirements.

MR. WALKER had no desire to make reference to figures. The member for North Fremantle had conferred on the House a very valuable service in his review of the working of the department, and his figures showed that the department was not under better administration than when under Ministerial control. We were also grateful to the member for Collie for demonstrating that the State had in no way benefited by the change of control. Though the State had materially advanced since Mr. George was made Commissioner, there had been no corresponding advance in the railways. No improvements had been made of importance to justify us in saying that Mr. George had turned over this enormous asset to a more payable concern. There was nothing to justify the change of control so far as the business of the department was concerned. It was not his (Mr. Walker's) intention to discuss the relative merits between the old system and the new system, except to say that it was very regrettable in all departments to see responsibility being whittled away and given over to what might be called irresponsible persons so far as this House was concerned. There was nothing so essential as that the House should be able to reach the responsible party; and although nominally we had a Minister for Railways, all the power of the Minister under which he could incur responsibility had been taken from him by a specific Act of Parliament; and in the management of this enormous asset

Mr. George was an autocrat, altogether independent of the Chamber, and in a position to defy the Minister and to ignore the wish or clamour of the public generally, and acting with more power than the Grand Dukes of Russia had lost their heads for trying to exercise in St. Petersburg. Giving such power to a man, we ought to be sure we got a man, and not a person who, by some deflection of his character, was purely and simply a self-willed, dogmatic, defiant—

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. member should not make such remarks about an officer in the service.

MR. WALKER regretted that, in dealing with a subject of this character, it should be necessary to single out a person and to tell the truth about him. He could not see that the truth was ever out of order. It had been expressed in general consensus of opinion that where a public officer obtruded himself in the policy of the State and was inimical to the welfare of the State and stood in the road of the development, the liberties, the hopes and aspirations of the State, and who crushed down the lowest and humblest people beneath his iron heels of tyranny—[**THE MINISTER :** Nonsense!] Of course he expected that of the Minister, because all Ministers were under the heels of Mr. George. They dared not breathe in his august presence. He (Mr. Walker) was not wilfully and purposely trying to throw words at a gentleman who did not deserve them. He would show that the Commissioner did deserve every word. The Commissioner defied not only the House, but the very laws of the land. He (Mr. Walker) would give one or two instances. He would not weary the House with a long list of grievances against the Commissioner, but would take one or two. A little time ago a railway servant had had occasion to appeal from the Commissioner's decision to the appeal board. The right of appeal was provided to the humblest servant in the Commissioner's charge by law, but the Commissioner had denied that right of appeal, and had refused to transmit the appeal to the proper quarter. The Commissioner had intercepted this man's claim to justice. In other words he had tyrannically suppressed the employee's right. An association, the fellow em-

ployees of the man, had taken up the case, and at some sacrifice and some humiliation it was taken to the highest tribunal of justice. The Supreme Court had decided that the man whose claims had been intercepted by Mr. George was perfectly within his province and that an injustice had been done to him, and that there was a right obtainable by law to every civil servant in the employ of Mr. George, to appeal to the appeal board. One would have thought that afterwards, the point having been removed beyond the possibility of doubt, Mr. George would not have attempted the same thing; but what could a man be but a despot and a tyrant who would repeat the same folly in the face of the decision of the Supreme Court? Another man, being dismissed, made his appeal, and again Mr. George intercepted it. The Minister, on being written to, had cautiously declined to give any opinion, and had written that it was not for the Minister to settle but for the Supreme Court. The object had been to avoid the Supreme Court, for the Supreme Court meant expense to the people of the State. The people had to pay for this luxury of Mr. George exercising his tyranny. The Commissioner was acting in spite of a decision of the Supreme Court. Was not that the course of a tyrant?

MR. FOULKES : There were hundreds of men in the State who ignored the decision of the Supreme Court.

MR. WALKER : Probably there were hundreds who would like to be as Mr. George, and there were hundreds of sycophants who would worship and crawl to a man who had decided to be as tyrannical as the Commissioner of Railways.

THE MINISTER : Why not blame the Act?

MR. WALKER : The Act under which the Commissioner worked was all right. At least he could not find fault with it. It might be possible to have it better administered if we had a better man filling the position of Commissioner. The very presence of that gentleman in the position of Commissioner of Railways was one of the greatest disgraces that ever fell upon this State. It was by virtue of a bargain that took place in the midst of quarrels and dubious dealings some few years ago, during the time of

the appointment of Mr. Justice Parker to the Bench. He (the Commissioner) was appointed to that position through the delinquencies and the suspected intrigues of a House now defunct, as a sort of reward for silence.

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was reflecting upon a previous House, and he must not do that.

MR. WALKER regretted that it was so, but he thought he was quoting history. It would be all very well if Mr. George had tried since to act honourably ; but was there a single one of his employees who felt he would receive respectful and manly treatment at the hands of the Commissioner of Railways ? Was not the test of manhood the evidence he gave of being able to make his employees feel at home in his presence, or at least feel that they were not overawed and wronged in his presence ? But what was ever the attitude of this autocrat of railways ? It was as far as possible to make his employees or whoever approached him feel that they were as dirt beneath his feet. Those who had grievances upon which they spoke to him were ignored and insulted, and very seldom indeed received with customary civility. We wanted a man with some magnanimous qualities, and not a man with that littleness of disposition which was exhibited by those who gave evidence of ill-breeding in every single act. He appealed to members who had ever had occasion to go into the presence of this gentleman if they had ever been received with that due courtesy which belonged to them as men, let alone as members of this august Assembly. [**MEMBER :** Yes.] [**ANOTHER MEMBER :** Plenty of them.] Had we not evidence on every hand of public bodies, of citizens of the highest respectability, whenever they approached him being equally snubbed ? Let us see what he presumed to say in reference to so high an authority as the Auditor General. In his report he said :—

I have desired my officers to regard the Audit Department as a friend to be welcomed rather than an antagonist to be shunned—

That was beautiful patronage for the Auditor General's Department !

as it is quite clear to me that with nothing to hide the Audit Department, by detecting any error, is really enabling the Railway De-

partment to perfect its work. It is, however, also clear that there are more ways than one of reading an Act of Parliament, and that some standard interpretation of the Audit Act is necessary, or friction will arise, and harassing interference with railway work will follow.

This was practically a threat to the Audit Department, a threat that expressed more than was revealed by mere verbiage, for as a matter of fact, even of late, there had been friction, and very severe friction, between the Audit Department and the Railway Department. The officers of the Audit Department had scarcely been able to perform the duty demanded of them by virtue of being connected with that department. Their work had been interfered with and they had been harassed by Mr. George in every possible way, and then Mr. George dared to write to the Audit Department, the most important department in the State, in these scathing terms :—

This has been borne upon me very closely during the past few months. I am therefore getting together certain typical cases, so that definite rulings on guiding principles may be obtained. Nothing has occurred in the department to my knowledge, or with my consent, that can possibly warrant the implication conveyed in paragraph 56 of the report of the Auditor General for the year ended 30th June, 1904 (page 196), that capital moneys may have been used for the purpose of reducing maintenance costs.

It seemed remarkable that the Commissioner, having nothing to do with the Legislature or the Auditor General, should presume to lecture in this matter :—

I am quite sure the Legislature never intended that words implying dishonesty or dishonourable conduct should be used in such reports regarding matters where it would be impossible for any falsification of accounts to exist, but in which people of equal experience, or with more experience, might take a different view from that adopted by the Auditor General.

A thing of that kind incorporated in the Commissioner's report was an insult to the dignity of the State. How Ministers could tolerate a department like the Audit Department being thus abused and slandered by a Railway Commissioner was more than he could understand. If the Legislature liked to sit down quietly and allow this man to ride roughshod over them as to what they were to do, what laws they were to pass, why have the Supreme Courts at all, why have the Judges or Ministers, or any heads of

great departments? Why not abolish them all and send them to Manchuria or Siberia, and let Mr. George reign supreme in the State? Evidently Mr. George thought he was capable of doing it. He told us where a railway should commence and end. He said:—

This line, I understand, is designed to eventually connect with the South-Western Railway, and thus provide an alternative route from that district to Fremantle. The junction should be at Mundijong.

How Ministers could sit still and allow this man of the railways to dictate their policy he could not understand. The Commissioner said:—

The view of this department is that loop lines are far more economical, both for the present and for the future and in the interest of all concerned, than the spur lines favoured in some quarters. Although it may be urged that the department looks mainly to the cost of working the traffic, this is not the case.

What right had the Commissioner to tell the State what was wanted for its development as a whole, as though he were more than a member of Parliament, more than a Minister, as though he were the sole guardian and protector of the State? Then he went on to quote the Royal Commission and patted the Royal Commission on the back in these words:—

The question is viewed in the broadest possible manner from the standpoint of the interests of the State as a whole, and the opinions given to the Royal Commission were arrived at only after the most careful thought of every consideration affecting the questions dealt with. Credit should be given to the evidence referred to in that light, and not in the light of its being narrowed simply to obtaining the most effective and favourable returns for the Railway Department alone.

It was marvellous how some men could claim such wonderful powers and use them with such extraordinary impudence, without being called to order or taken to task. The Commissioner went on farther, and returned to a subject upon which he had once been beaten. Referring to the building in front of Boan Brothers he said:—

It is a matter of keen regret to me that it has been impossible to carry out the scheme there outlined. The work of the year now under review has convinced me that a saving of £5,000 per annum would have been effected had the scheme been carried out, and I am confident that, when the public realised the fullness of the scheme, the position would have been finished just the same as it did with regard to the William Street Bridge, about

which little except commendation is now heard. The matter cannot rest, as the increasing work of the department renders the present cramped and scattered accommodation unsuitable and expensive. I propose to take farther action this year in the hope that, if the original scheme cannot be carried out, some modified one may be adopted.

He told us he was the only man throughout all this who had been right. It might appear that this characterisation of Mr. George, because of what might seem to some like abuse, however much it was warranted, might prevent the object he (Mr. Walker) had in view. But taking a calmer view, let the Committee ask what should be in any commissioner of this kind? Should he not only be a man of remarkable business attainments, remarkable commercial knowledge and skill in the particular branch over which he presided and exercised his judgment, but should he not above all be a gentleman, a gentleman in demeanour and in character, a man who knew whom to treat as equals, how to pay deference to superiors, who could recognise superiority when it was in his presence, and who yet had that manly courtesy that would not make a man even in dungarees feel humiliated in his presence? Should he not be a man of large-hearted character? Who in justice could say that Mr. George was such? Was not the whole State—every citizen in it—insulted when Mr. George so far forgot himself as to scuffle with an ordinary passenger because that passenger had got into a ladies' carriage by inadvertence? Was not the whole State humiliated when its highest railway officer was having fisticuffs, or next door to it, with an ordinary citizen in a railway van? Notice should be given to the Commissioner as speedily as possible that his services would not be required at the termination of his present agreement. Nay, more; he would suggest the advisability of altering the Act so as to again restore that Ministerial responsibility, if not to its full extent at least to some extent, which we forfeited when we gave Mr. George the position. It was essential that the Government should have some control over such a large asset as the railways. We were reducing men to live upon 6s. a day, others 6s. 6d. a day, and others 7s. a day, while others were sacked wholesale. We deprived poor

men of their rights. We dismissed them wrongfully, and then if they appealed we deprived them of their right of appeal. If they still insisted, we forced them to go to the expense of appealing in the Supreme Court. The railways were not a private concern to be run for the purpose of obtaining a profit. If we could pay working expenses, sinking fund and interest, we did well with the railways. We should run these railways as we ran our public schools, free, as they should be. The argument had been repeatedly used that the appointment of a Commissioner was to prevent political influence from being used; but that was a terribly weak argument. Ministers were supposed to be able to resist influences brought to bear upon them which were not right and proper. It was necessary for the Committee to impress upon the Ministry the absolute necessity for giving Mr. George speedy notice that at the end of his present term his career would cease, or at least it would have to be considered; and in the meantime the Government could also take into consideration the wisdom of altering that Act so as to restore once more Ministerial responsibility, which was part of responsible government, and should never have been parted with.

MR. PRICE: In regard to the remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie as to the expenditure of £80,000, it would have been a good deal more to the point if the hon. member had mentioned the names of his authorities. A good many people seemed to think it was simply a station that was being built at Fremantle, whereas this was really a rearrangement of sidings and conveniences for discharging and shipping cargo, and the alterations extended from Cliff Street for a distance of something like three quarters of a mile in the direction of Perth. The member for Kalgoorlie doubted whether the alteration would increase the capital assets of the department; but by doing away with the East Fremantle station and by leading to a reduction in the staff, and with increased facilities for marshalling the waggons in the Fremantle yard, the expenditure would be amply justified, and we would materially increase the capital assets of the department. The more the alteration was inquired into, the more justified it

appeared. The opinions of the responsible officers of the department were worth a good deal more on matters of this sort than the opinions of others. It would be agreed that this matter of the Fremantle station could not be considered by itself. Other bodies had to be considered. The interests of the Harbour Department, the Public Works Department, and the Railway Department about the Fremantle station were so intertwined that it was an utter impossibility to separate them, and any alterations proposed by one department should not be undertaken without the concurrence and opinion of the other interested parties being obtained. So far as he had ascertained, this expenditure had been arranged solely by the railway authorities; and he had yet to learn that the Harbour Department or the Public Works Department had been consulted. Mr. George had said that he had received the approbation of the James and Daglish Governments; but those Governments must have been remiss if they had approved of it without consulting these other departments. Here we had one department going to Fremantle and spending £80,000 for a convenience that must affect two other departments, and ramming it down their throats without consulting them. He (Mr. Price) was inclined to think that the three departments should outline a scheme towards which each should work, so that all would harmonise and so that at Fremantle we would have proper harbour accommodation. With reference to the terms of the Commissioner's agreement, a very pertinent position was taken up in regard to question of duplicating the railway to Armadale. It appeared that it was an alteration to existing lines, and as such was absolutely under the control of the Commissioner. The extension of the Jandakot Railway to the South-Western Railway, being a new work, was under the control of the Minister. If a line were built from Jandakot to the South-Western Railway a great deal of the traffic which the duplication was intended to deal with would go direct to Fremantle without passing through Perth. So the very action the Commissioner took in dealing with existing lines would affect the farther extension of a railway. It was well known when the Jandakot Railway was built that it would after-

wards be carried on to connect with the South-Western Railway; and in view of that fact, the expenditure of £30,000 in duplicating the existing railway to Armadale was particularly out of place; and it was unfortunate that the matter was only under the control of the Minister. It was inadvisable to adopt the heroic attitude of the member for Kanowna. It would be much more to the point if members could give instances, if such there be, of mismanagement, so that the House could form its judgment from facts. It was, he thought, Disraeli who once remarked that Mr. Gladstone was inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity. It seemed to him (Mr. Price) that we had a little of that to-night.

[MR. FOULKES took the Chair.]

MR. EDDY drew attention to the railway tariff. It was generally acknowledged that the tariff was not understood even by the ablest officers in the Railway Department. The contradictory state of the different charges on different articles had been brought before the attention of the Minister, but no notice had been taken. He would quote one or two instances to show how unreasonable the tariff was. Why should commercial men pay different rates on pearl barley and tapioca, on rice and sago, on carbonate of soda and cream of tartar, on fruits and treacle and jams? This showed the tariff had been drawn up by incompetent men. The other day he had cleared a truck of kerosene, and the railage was between £80 and £90 to the goldfields, which meant that the charge for railage alone on every case of kerosene was from 3s. 7d. to 3s. 9d., an altogether unfair and exorbitant charge. The Minister might see his way clear to have a reduction made. Under the present regulations it might cost 2s. to take an odd pound of tea from Perth to Kalgoorlie, not as one parcel but in with other tea. Also in regard to parcels, it was cheaper to send two parcels from different parts than one. If he desired to send a box of butter to Menzies it would be cheaper to send it to Kalgoorlie and re-consign it to Menzies afterwards. This showed the compilation of the work had been in incompetent hands. Clause

19 of the new regulations said that when any traffic in classes grain M, A, B, and C was loaded together or with other traffic from the same consignor or for the same consignee, making in the whole not less than 4 tons in the same waggon, the contents of the waggon might be charged the actual weight at the rate for each particular class to which such contents belonged, so long as the 4 tons was carried for and paid by the one person. That regulation seemed clear, and several merchants on the goldfields had acted upon it, but had found when their goods arrived that they were impounded because Mr. George had ruled the regulation out of order; and they had been compelled to pay double, or treble, what they should have paid under the regulation. Another extraordinary matter was the charge for tarpaulins. Merchants had to pay 1s. 6d. for the hire of a tarpaulin, and if a tarpaulin was full of holes the department put two or three on the truck and charged accordingly. His attention had been drawn only the other day to the fact that the department lent tarpaulins to racecourses and such like, altogether against private enterprise. With reference to the railway tariff of 1902, grievances had been brought before the Minister at that time, and it was expected that there would be a reduction on rates; but instead, the whole tariff was raised and no consideration was given to the goldfields. A deputation had asked the Minister to consider the sandalwood trade. The people in that trade had to pay £2 a ton for railage alone, while trucks were going back empty. A promise had been given that a reduction would be made, but it was forgotten, and the rates on sandalwood were raised. The rate for carrying sandalwood from the goldfields to Fremantle was up to £3, and the sandalwood was only worth £5 a ton at the port. With reference to passenger traffic, the same privileges should be given from the city to the goldfields as from the goldfields to the city. Also we found that agricultural machinery was carried at a cheaper rate than mining machinery. Much had been said regarding the Commissioner. He would refrain from adding more. Mr. George was in many respects a very able fellow; but at the same time he was not a man any important firm would employ as a shopwalker. The

men employed on the permanent way, more particularly in the outlying districts, should have their wages raised 1s. a day all round.

Mr. GULL: In the Minister's report on page 27, it was stated that the department had purchased four dams at Kalgoorlie at a cost of £500. The Commissioner had been reprimanded in the past for using water from outside sources when the Coolgardie water scheme was available, yet we found another item this year. The Commissioner claimed in another paragraph that the saving at the Kalgoorlie depôt in boiler repairs through the use of dam water instead of scheme water, had been £920 per annum. The Commissioner had said that the scheme water was everything that could be desired at Northam; but to show an advantage to this particular department he should not deprive the water scheme of the revenue to which it was absolutely entitled. The Commissioner seemed to adopt the policy that he would take on anything that would show an absolute revenue of 7 per cent. or 8 per cent. on the expenditure; but in a country like this, there should be a certain amount of latitude in this connection. If the Commissioner could see his way to meet the public by spending a few pounds to get a little more back, it would be a better policy. This remark applied to the case of sidings. He knew of a siding asked for, involving the extension of a few chains of railway. The people had spent about £3,000 in plant and land to place themselves in the position to sell bricks; but when they asked for a siding, for which they were fully prepared to pay £400 or £500 that should have been the cost, the Commissioner said that he could not break the line any more, but he would put in a siding from the station farther on, involving an extension of three-quarters of a mile and costing £1,500. In addition to the cost of the siding there was the annual rental of £25, and the charge of 6d. a wheel for shifting empties in the siding. There were many sidings along the railway, and even if it were objectionable to put in another, it would eventually be necessary to duplicate the line between Bellevue and Parkerville; so it was unfair to ask these people for £1,500 for work that should only cost about

£500. This was a way in which the Commissioner dodged revenue, instead of going half-way to meet it. When the big block occurred at Fremantle, district centres had been established where people could ascertain exactly where trucks were, and so that the department could handle the traffic better; but the conditions which rendered that system necessary did not exist now, and it prevented a man at Chidlow's Well getting trucks immediately. A customer's requisition to the local stationmaster for trucks had to go to Midland Junction, while trucks came down empty from the goldfields and passed him at Chidlow's Well on the way to Midland Junction. The customer must wait until they returned loaded. Generally speaking, trucks were hauled back to fill an order. If the stationmaster at Chidlow's Well, armed with the requisition for trucks, could take steps to impound empty trucks at Chidlow's Well, a great deal of train mileage would be avoided. It seemed to him that thousands of miles were included in the annual returns which were absolutely a dead letter. These were brought in as returns of mileage run. The Railway Report showed a very much smaller return for the railways per mile than should have been shown. Whatever came of the balance, it seemed to him that it was only covering up an evil administration which should not have existed. He was bringing these details under the notice of the Minister in the hope that they would be rectified. Mention was made of the duplication of the line to Armadale and so forth. He was not going to bother his head about that, for the simple reason that he thought these suburban stations were paying concerns, and the more facilities we gave for taking the people out of the centres and allowing them to live in the hills the better it would be. During the late elections there was a feeling that at all events the Commissioner's term should be seriously questioned when his office expired. He did not mince matters; he told his constituents what he was going to tell the Committee now—that he thought it absolutely necessary in the interests of the country that the Commissioner's appointment should be brought under review as soon as possible; and unless he saw very grave reasons for

changing his present opinion, he would vote in that direction.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Some exception had, he understood, been taken in regard to the duplication of the line beyond Chidlow's Well; but he felt there was no more necessary work than this duplication. In his opinion it was a most urgent work, and would effect a saving to the State. It probably would have been better if an opportunity had been given of expressing opinions upon it; but he thought that by such an important work the country would save very considerably in connection with its traffic. The delays occasioned in regard to the speed of trains could be lessened by the improvements effected; and the sooner the whole of the duplication was carried out between Spencer's Brook and Wooroloo, the termination of the present duplication, the better it would be for the country. In regard to rates, the member for Kalgoorlie had stated that mining machinery was carried at a rate in excess of the agricultural rates. He would refer the hon. member to the rate-book, page 30. If we referred to the rate-book we should, if we took Class 1, which was the rate by which agricultural machinery could be carried over our lines at owner's risk, find that, taking the distance as for Kalgoorlie, 387 miles, agricultural machinery would cost £5 0s. 10d., as against £3 8s. 5d. for mining machinery. He had always been in sympathy with the carriage of this machinery to the fields for mining purposes, because in comparison with the agricultural machinery it was much more economical for the Railway Department. Although very much in sympathy with his own agricultural people, still he felt the mining community were certainly entitled to the concession or advantage they were obtaining in truck-loads; because, taking mining machinery for a battery, there would be 40 or 50 tons carried, whereas the weight of agricultural machinery per truck would be considerably less. Therefore, in the circumstances, it seemed it was equitable as far as the conditions were concerned. He would not like it to go forth that an advantage had been given to the agriculturists in this direction, which had not been given to the miner, because he knew that every effort was made to try and make these rates apply

in a just and fair manner to the country. Much had been said in regard to anomalies which existed. He believed they still existed, and that it would take many years before they could be removed. At the same time, he felt that the accusations made from time to time with regard to unfairness to the miner and the favours shown to the agricultural community would, upon inquiry, cease to exist, because the arguments as from a mining point of view would certainly not be borne out by the facts. In regard to the Railway Department generally, if there was one department which came into close contact with the people, it was the Railway Department; and knowing the difficulties which existed and the great trouble which followed in regard to the carriage of a large amount of traffic, also the difficulty existing in regard to booking and the conveyance of traffic, the wonder to him was that there were not more complaints. He had had an experience of four and a half years as Minister controlling the department, and had since had, in addition to his previous experience as a merchant, a very large experience in connection with the carrying of traffic, and on the whole, although there were many causes of complaint, still, after all, they could be remedied at times, and very often they could be removed. When we thought perhaps the Railway Department was at fault, we found very often our own people were at fault in making consignments under classes or conditions when they should be made under other classes or conditions. When we looked at the thing from that standpoint, we found that the Railway Department worked as a whole satisfactorily to the people. He regretted that notwithstanding so much was attempted to minimise the errors and mistakes and annoyance to the public, and to endeavour to help them, there seemed to be a general abuse of the department which was not altogether warranted by the facts. No doubt there were many complaints, but it seemed to him that criticism levelled against the department was not always supported by authentic testimony in regard to specific cases. General complaints were made, and when they came forward he always took the opportunity of inquiring into them.

There were not good grounds in a number of cases, and not only were the complaints groundless, but vexatious. Admittedly there were some good grounds for complaints, and it was our duty and right to make those complaints; but let us by all means give support to these officials. They had a very difficult position and a very arduous task to perform. This being a Government concern, the public expected more from it than they would from other businesses of a similar character if carried on privately. He would like people to note how persons were treated in connection with the shipping companies, and compare that treatment with that on the Government railways. He thought the advantage would be with the railways, and very considerably so. The system gave great privileges in helping things forward in every direction possible, and was controlled by officers who did their best. They were not perfect, but no body would be found perfect, even in the best organised private establishment. We should give credit to those officers where credit was due. In regard to the question by the member for Kalgoorlie, who said the Minister was blocked by the Commissioner, yet in relation to fares and rates and every other thing in the carrying out of matters which came before him he wished to say that the Minister had to act in a politic manner. He had to be guided in great measure by the Commissioner. But, after all, it was reserved to the Cabinet to deal with the question of freights. Clause 10 gave power for freights to be fixed by regulation made in accordance with the Railways Act, and approved by the Governor and published in the *Government Gazette*. Therefore, the Cabinet still had the power in their hands, and fortunately so. He felt when that section was inserted in the Act we were taking a wise course and acting in the interests of the country. The final decision rested with the Cabinet, who could, if they pleased, disagree with the Commissioner's recommendations.

Mr. H. BROWN: The sooner the Commissioner took his proper place in regard to the control of the railways the better for the country. He believed that the Government railways cost 25 per cent. more to run than did the Midland Railway. [THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:

That was hardly a fair comparison.] That, possibly, could be explained by the Minister at another time. He intended to oppose putting practically a quarter of a million of money into the hands of the Commissioner without any reference to Parliament; we saw under "Contingencies," £356,134. The report of the Commissioner contained the following in reference to "central administration":—

It is a matter of keen regret to me that it has been impossible to carry out the scheme there outlined. The work of the year now under review has convinced me that a saving of £5,000 per annum would have been effected had the scheme been carried out, and I am confident that, when the public realised the fullness of the scheme, the position would have finished just the same as it did with regard to the William Street Bridge, about which little except commendation is now heard. The matter cannot rest, as the increasing work of the Department renders the present cramped and scattered accommodation unsuitable and expensive. I propose to take further action this year in the hope that, if the original scheme cannot be carried out, some modified one may be adopted.

It might be in the recollection of the Committee that he moved the suspension of the Standing Orders last year to draw attention to the blocking of that thoroughfare, namely Wellington Street, and it was carried. And we had had it direct from the Premier that these buildings would not be constructed. *Hansard* showed that the Premier said:—

After due inquiry and deliberation the Government concluded that it was not necessary that this particular land should be occupied by Government offices, and therefore the work was stopped; but when that decision was come to, a question naturally arose as to whether the city of Perth should have conceded to it the vacant plot of land belonging to the Railway Department.

He went on to say:—

We further decided that the best use to which the land could be put was to endeavour to beautify it a little; and for that purpose the re-erection of a fence, of an ornamental rather than a substantial nature, was necessary.

He drew attention to the rapid erection of the fence. Work was done in a couple of days which, under ordinary circumstances, would have occupied weeks; and the fence was erected practically despite the wishes of the residents. As to the re-ballasting of the lines, there must be some friction between the Works

and the Railways; and the sooner the Ministers of those departments conferred and prevented the Under Secretaries from fighting one another, the better for the country. From returns supplied, we found that during the 12 months the Labour Government were in power, £1,400 was paid to privately-owned quarries for blue-metal with which to re-ballast the Eastern Railway. During the greater portion of that time the Government had their own quarry idle, and absolutely gave to a private firm a lease of their blue-metal quarry, containing tons of stone which could have been used for that purpose. The cost of sidings at the quarry was over £2,500, and of machinery £1,600. An asset costing £4,000 was absolutely leased to a private individual by the Labour Government. This was what the Labour party called the nationalisation of monopolies! Now the department were purchasing metal from their own quarry. Would the Minister give his assurance that Wellington Street would not be blocked by the hideous offices which the Commissioner intended erecting? The Commissioner had now in his office plans, drawn by his draughtsmen, of the present station buildings, designed to carry three storeys.

THE MINISTER: As to buildings, nothing would be done without the permission of Parliament.

MR. H. BROWN: But Mr. George during last year started those buildings without reference to Parliament, and hundreds of pounds were spent in excavating for foundations.

MR. HOLMAN: Mr. George was authorised by the then Minister for Railways and present Premier.

MR. H. BROWN: The Minister was not Parliament. Had it not been for the citizens of Perth and ratepayers in the neighbourhood, Mr. George's pet scheme would have been carried out; and Mr. George, referring in his report to the quarter of a million he had in hand for "minor works," added: "I propose to take farther action this year, in the hope that if the original scheme cannot be carried out some modified one may be adopted." The draughtsman who designed the present station buildings told him (Mr. Brown) that they would carry another storey. Before blocking up Wellington Street, some attempt should

be made to carry out that original design.

THE MINISTER: Without parliamentary authority, nothing would be done as to buildings.

MR. H. BROWN would like the assurance of the Minister that facilities somewhat similar to those enjoyed by residents between Perth and Fremantle should be extended to residents between Perth and Guildford. A station should be erected near Fenian Crossing, and gates provided at the crossing. Had that been done, the subway would have been unnecessary. In view of the huge cost of constructing the Midland Workshops, these could not possibly compete with private enterprise; and the expenditure on the works was never warranted.

MR. HORAN: The large number of experts discussing these Estimates was bewildering. For the last two or three hours the discussion was a gross waste of time; because by Section 16 of the Railways Act the maintenance, management, and control of the Government Railways were vested in the Commissioner. If a charge of incompetence were levelled at the Commissioner, we might discuss his actions in detail; but on the Estimates petty criticism of boilers and steam-boxes was out of place, and would not be noticed by either Commissioner or Minister. The Minister, however, might devote attention to questions of high policy. He (Mr. Horan) laid special stress on the lack of consistency in our railway policy. He did not say the Minister was responsible any more than the Commissioner. The Minister had asked for the indulgence of members because he knew nothing about the railways. Neither did the Commissioner, though he would not admit it. Thousands of pounds had been expended from capital account and absolutely wasted. On the Eastern Goldfields alone 12 sidings had been closed that had been constructed at a cost of many thousands of pounds at different points. No sooner had they been constructed from capital account than it was found they were not needed by an alteration in the system of working. When the railway from Kalgoorlie to Coolgardie was duplicated, three or four stations were closed. These stations existed where anybody with an eye to the future would know that there was no

need for money to be lavished on them. A heavier class of engines had been introduced, and consequently many sidings were utterly useless. In another branch of the department, still from capital account, barracks had been erected at Wagin for guards, but by a change in the system they had been rendered useless. Then some individual had recommended Northam as a place for barracks; thousands of pounds were spent in erecting palatial buildings; but in the course of time, some other person recommended another change, and these barracks also become empty. At Southern Cross thousands had been spent in providing barracks which had become useless, and some cottages in the vicinity had also been rendered useless; but the distances separating the different points on the railway had always remained exactly the same. A Commissioner who was an expert would have the courage to contradict any recommendations by an officer with ever so much experience if the recommendations were not correct and not in the interests of the country; but our Commissioner was not an expert, and a large sum of money had been wasted by these constant changes. At least one million could be written off our capital expenditure as unremunerative expenditure. He was not inclined to criticise the Commissioner in the same free fashion as had been adopted by some members. So far as he knew, the Commissioner possessed many admirable qualities. No one would accuse the Commissioner of being an expert in railway matters, though he might have been in construction and might be excellent in the management of men and somewhat impetuous in his treatment of the public. He (Mr. Horan) had suffered from that treatment himself, but he had not any vindictiveness. The Commissioner, with a hard task to perform, brought to it a desire to get absolutely the best results for the State. The Commissioner might be biased in some directions, perhaps conscientiously, but it was unfair to make such a terrific onslaught on his character and attainments as apparently had been made to-night. He (Mr. Horan) held no brief for the Commissioner; the chances were the reverse; but he desired to see fairness to all men. There was another phase of the question, a continuity of

policy. He had been the first to write to the Minister for Railways to inquire who had authorised the duplication to Armadale. It transpired it was authorised by the present Premier. While not criticising this action, still there had been a mistake, because the next thing Parliament did was to authorise the construction of the railway to Jandakot, the understanding being that it would be extended to the South-Western Railway. Such an extension would divert that traffic from the duplication it was expected to facilitate. It was unnecessary for the two to exist. Either the duplication was unnecessary, or there was no need for the extension of the Jandakot Railway. There was necessity to work in harmony in matters of this kind and so save a great deal of expenditure. He would be glad to vote £50,000 a year to regrade many of the railways. Members would be startled at the improvements that could be made by reducing grades. Modern railway managers always aimed at reducing railway costs. The Simplon Tunnel could have been carried out by an increased gradient to save a couple of miles, but the owners of the railway had spent additional millions in order to put the tunnel at a lower level and decrease working expenses in the future. On the Kalgoorlie-Kanowna Railway there were two grades of one in sixty in 13 miles; but by reducing the grade 2 feet and by the expenditure of a few thousands in that short line we could reduce the train mileage, and the engines could haul twice the amount they did now. Similarly, on the highest point on the Eastern Railway no engineering difficulties were presented. The gradients could be reduced to one in a hundred by a small expenditure. Mr. Eddy, the late New South Wales Commissioner, when he first took charge of the New South Wales railways had seen the necessity to reduce grades, and set about it in a no half-hearted manner, and the railways which had been a losing concern previously he made into a profitable investment. The Minister should take serious notice of the subjects mentioned by him (Mr. Horan), because he knew something about it. He had not interfered with the internal arrangements of the railways. It would be beneficial if the present Commissioner's continuance in office was seriously considered. Did

the present Ministry intend to introduce an Act to reduce the powers of the Commissioner? Some steps should be taken during the recess to rectify the present unsatisfactory arrangement between the Minister, members of Parliament, the Commissioner, the Railway Department, and the public.

MR. A. J. WILSON said he only rose because he found in the report of the Commissioner of Railways some reference to a matter in which he took a little interest. Paragraph 18 of the report of the Commissioner spoke as follows :—

The increasing cost and difficulty of obtaining timber for railway requirements, sleepers, piles, bridge timbers, etc., led me to strongly recommend the reserve of timber areas to the Department in order that a supply of such timbers might be ensured. I regret the Government did not see their way to comply with my request in this direction, though Timber Associations, whether composed of capitalists or workers, appear to have no difficulty in obtaining such areas. If the export trade in timber maintains its present large proportions, the Railway Department will be compelled to pay more and more heavily for its supplies, and will eventually be compelled to import. I feel sure that the only practicable solution of the difficulty is to be found in the reserve of areas such as I have suggested. To do so would have many incidental advantages. The land so reserved would be closely cut over, and might be replanted. The cutting would be under the direct supervision of the department, in addition to that of the forest rangers. In our own interests, waste would be minimised, and this would afford a standard of cutting to be followed through forests open to the general licensed cutter. Such reserves would ensure an adequate and economical supply of timber as and when required, and would enable the Department not only to supply its current needs, but also to cut and season wood for stock.

That might be, from the Commissioner's standpoint, a most excellent recommendation, but it was one which he thought would meet with the unanimous condemnation of anyone who knew anything of the timber industry of the State. It might be true the Commissioner had to pay more heavily for his supplies of timber, but it was also true that for a long time the Commissioner had been in the habit of obtaining very extensive quantities of timber at prices which were not in keeping with the ordinary market rates of the day. Men were compelled to cut sleepers for the Commissioner of Railways at the rate of 11d. and 11½d.

per sleeper, when the recognised rate was 1s. 3d. per sleeper. If the Commissioner thought he was entitled to receive timber at less than the ordinary market rates, he was carrying out a policy which was not in keeping with the general ideas of the Government in that connection. It was always regarded in every State that the Government should be first of all a model employer. Whilst it was unreasonable to ask that the Government should pay more than the ordinary consumer, it was manifestly unfair and unjust that the Commissioner or the Government should obtain supplies of timber at less than any other section of the community. In this connection, he might say personally he was opposed to the State setting apart special reserves for the Commissioner. What was the position at present? A large area of country was set aside for various timber companies. Another area was set aside for those engaged exclusively in the operations of timber hewing, and it was interesting to remember that the Commissioner rightly tabooed the use of any timber other than what was hewn. The hewers, at the wise discretion of the Government, had been placed in possession of 17,000 acres of timber country on which they followed their avocation. He was sure the Commissioner could get adequate supplies of timber at the ordinary ruling market rate, and if the Commissioner expected to get it at less than that he would be rightly disappointed. The workers were justified in refusing to sell timber and their labour for less to the Commissioner of Railways than they could get for them from other people requiring the product of their labour. He regretted that the Commissioner should lend himself to the use of such language as was embodied in the second clause of the paragraph just read, in which he drew attention to the fact that if the export trade in timber maintained its present large dimensions, the Railway Department would be compelled to pay more heavily for its supplies. Not that there would be any falling off in the supplies or a depreciation in the supplies available, but because the people engaged in the industry were able to get certain prices for their timber which necessitated his paying a higher price, and justified the vendor

of the commodity getting a higher price. The Commissioner said the department would eventually be compelled to import. If a public servant in this State could so far forget the policy of the country in regard to the development of its natural resources as to suggest that while we at present had a supply to meet requirements for years to come, if he could so far forget himself to say that we should import foreign timber because he could get it cheaper, that was a very suicidal policy in the interests of the State as a whole. Paragraph 39 of the Commissioner's report gave expression to the following sentiment :—

Many inquiries have been made from all parts of the world during the year as to the durability of jarrah sleepers for railway use. From various British and foreign possessions information has been requested on this subject. Every effort has been made to supply the fullest and most reliable data, and I shall be most happy to reply to any future inquiries in similar manner.

He hoped in this matter the Government would be sufficiently well seized of the importance to the timber industry to have such data supplied, so as to prevent the Commissioner of Railways replying personally to inquiries of this nature. Whilst it was desirable in the timber trade to have a wide selection as far as we could, and authentic information as to the durability and nature of our woods, this ought not to be done except by a properly controlled information bureau where information could be regulated, and where there was no possibility of two sets of information being given as to the life of our native timber. Already a very serious blunder in this connection had been perpetrated by the Commissioner of Railways in regard to some information supplied to a gentleman who visited this State some time ago on behalf of an Indian company making inquiries as to the durability of our timber. The Commissioner supplied information which was very prejudicial to the trade, and it was to be hoped the Government would see the necessity of establishing, for this purpose, under the Lands Department or the Woods and Forests Department an information bureau where all the inquiries could be replied to, which would prevent any injurious statements being circulated in other parts of the world. As to the general question of the

administration of the railways, he preferred to leave that to experts in the House. The member for Kalgoorlie had drawn attention to the fact that certain members were not present during the discussion on the Mines Estimates. He (Mr. Wilson) pleaded guilty to that charge, and he had no excuse to offer except that he preferred to leave these questions to members who were supposed to have a special knowledge, than to thrust his knowledge on the Committee. He hoped members would not think that those who absented themselves during the discussion of the Mines Estimates did it out of discourtesy to them, but desired to pay a compliment to their wisdom and knowledge of that particular question.

MR. HOLMAN : At this late hour he did not intend to delay the Committee long. He expressed regret that the report of the Railway Department had not been laid on the table at an earlier date. It seemed to be a failing with the present Government to come down with their Estimates and reports so as not to allow members to look fully into the questions. The report of the Commissioner last year was on the table some seven or eight weeks earlier than it was this year ; why, he did not know. We had the Minister impressing upon members the desirability of being careful to not increase the loan expenditure on the railways. The loan expenditure at present amounted to £10,000,000, and in the face of that we had the Government coming down at this late hour of the day with a proposal to construct three railway lines, and to farther increase the loan expenditure on the railways. It was rather late to introduce a question that would increase the loan expenditure on the railways. It was to be regretted that during the discussion some members thought fit to make charges against the Commissioner, which the Commissioner was not in a position to refute. If a man in a public position was incompetent or incapable, there was a proper procedure to take. If he (Mr. Holman) had any charge of incompetency or misbehaviour against a public officer, he would impeach that public officer, so as to give him an opportunity of clearing himself. It was unfair for any member of the Assembly to make charges against

a public officer unless he could absolutely prove the charges. There were two or three matters in connection with the Estimates which he did not understand. Seeing that last year there was a considerable amount of what was considered necessary work done in re-sleeping and re-ballasting, it was astonishing to find that in three items this year there was a reduction of £58,000, and this amount would have gone almost solely in wages. Either there would be a large amount of work paid for out of loan money, or a number of men would have to be dispensed with. He would like the Minister to explain to the Committee how this reduction was brought about. Were the railways to be kept in a thorough and up-to-date manner? Was the maintenance to be carried on, or were the lines to fall into a condition similar to what had been seen in the other States? Would some future year be saddled with a large increase of expenditure in relation to absolutely necessary work, the same as in regard to the railways during last year? We had a report that on an average during last year there was an increase of 1,244 men employed as compared with the previous year. The expenses were supposed to be considerably reduced this year. The average number of men employed during the financial year was put at 6,660 as compared with 5,616 for 1903-4, the increase being as he had said 1,244, or 22 per cent. He wished to know how this great saving of wages was to be brought about; whether the wages were going to be reduced, or whether these men would be paid out of revenue or out of loan. During the debate we had heard rather personal matters. These were questions which should not be introduced. But when the question of Collie coal was brought forward, it was of great importance. From the warmth of the gentleman who introduced the question to-night, anyone would consider he had more than the interests of the public at heart. The attitude of the Commissioner of Railways in connection with Collie coal was correct, and to his mind the Commissioner had never made any attempt to retard the industry at Collie. In fact the Commissioner was prepared to give more than a fair share of the public money to foster that industry. But what

the Commissioner objected to strongly was to give to colliery owners at Collie 12s. 9d. per ton for coal which was not worth more than 7s. per ton. Although the present Government were giving 1s. 3d. or 1s. 6d. a ton more than the contract price, the fact that we were saving 3s. 9d. per ton from the efforts of the Commissioner went to show that the Commissioner worked in the interests of the public and not to retard the industry. That meant the saving of some £20,000 a year on coal alone, which was taken from the pockets of a few who owned the collieries at Collie. The Commissioner in his report stated that work done last year at a cost of some £60,000 or £70,000 could fairly have been extended over the next five years. That was the policy of the Railway Department some years ago, but the present Audit Act would not allow it to be done. When the condenser at Coolgardie was erected the cost was extended over three years. If it was fair to do that, it would be fair to extend payment for this extra maintenance work over five years. There was a question whether the rate of wages was going to be reduced on our railways. The rate was, however, little enough at the present time, and he would strongly protest against any reduction. He regretted a decision had been come to for the State to take advantage of the Arbitration Court, when the dispute could have been settled, to his mind, by an agreement between the men and the Commissioner of Railways. There were only four or five questions involved, and had it not been for the attitude of those directly connected with the railways union in Western Australia, the matter would have been settled much better than it was in the long run.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It was not the fault of the Commissioner.

MR. HOLMAN: No. The whole question would have been settled if the secretary of the union had only gone about the thing in a proper manner. Reference had been made to the working of the Midland line and that of the Government railways, but really there was no comparison between the two. We were asked to grant facilities which the Midland Company would not countenance for a moment. The railways of Western Australia should be run in the interests

of the people, to help to develop the State, which was sadly in need of development at the present time. He was pleased to know that when the Labour Government had the opportunity they saw that the railways or a portion thereof were not run in the interests of a few colliery owners. He was sorry that the present Government had seen fit to give what was practically a bonus of 1s. 3d. per ton for coal.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (in reply) : On account of the late hour, he would not answer all the questions raised in the discussion, as the Committee wished to proceed with other Estimates. However, in the interests not only of the department but of the Commissioner, it was necessary to reply to some assertions. The House should not take seriously the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) nor his statements about the Commissioner. If members were aware of certain transactions between that hon. member and the Commissioner, they might understand why the hon. member so roundly denounced the Commissioner to-night. The member for Collie (Mr. Ewing) compared the Estimates for 1901-2 with those for 1904-5, showing a difference in profits greatly to the disadvantage of last year. The Estimates for last year and the year before contained a sum of £58,454 for such items as vacuum cylinders, compensation, and replacing obsolete rolling-stock. No such charges appeared in the earlier Estimates. With such expenses it was very hard to show such profits as were made in the past. As to Collie coal, the hon. member was very severe on the Commissioner; but Dr. Jack's report stated that nothing had come to his knowledge to support the assertion frequently made that Mr. George was biased by a prejudice against Collie coal; and that, under instructions to run the railways on commercial principles without allowing himself to be swayed by sentiment, Mr. George's protest against paying too much for his fuel was perfectly comprehensible. That was the position. It was not the duty of the Commissioner of Railways to consider the best interests of the industries of the State. That was the duty of the Government. The Government must take the responsibility, and had taken the responsibility.

MR. HOLMAN : There was not much difference between the Commissioner's price and Dr. Jack's.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS : The Government would decide on such matters. Special inquiry would be made as to the statement of the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) concerning some engineers in Swan View tunnel. If that statement was correct, action should as soon as possible be taken. The matter of the rate book would be investigated soon after Parliament prorogued. The aspersions regarding the percentage of cost of the Midland Railway and that of the State system were answered by the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman). There could be no fair comparison between the Midland and the Government lines. As to the Commissioner of Railways, he undoubtedly exhibited want of tact. In almost the first sentence of his report this was apparent; for we read that "the junction should be at Mundijong." Presumably the Commissioner meant that he would advise in the interest of the railways to make the junction at Mundijong; but the wording was very bad and unsuitable to a report. Parliament did not need instructions from the Commissioner, and though the Government might be pleased to have his advice, that advice would certainly be confidential. The Railways Act gave the management, maintenance, and control of every Government railway to the Commissioner, but provided that the Commissioner, "with the approval of the Minister, may make additions and improvements to any railway." Such work could not be done without the approval of the Minister; and the responsibility rested upon the Minister for expenditure of any money on alterations, additions, or improvements. As Minister he (Mr. Gregory) would be pleased to take all the responsibility; nor was there any reason why the Ministry should try to avoid responsibility for such expenditure. Apparently the impression was abroad that the Commissioner could do as he liked in spending money. That was a fallacy. He (the Minister) would be neglecting his duty unless he carefully watched the expenditure of the public funds. The hour was too late, and the need for considering other Estimates too urgent, to permit of dealing at greater

length with the points raised in the discussion.

[MR. ILLINGWORTH took the Chair.]

Item—Chief Accountant, £700:

MR. HORAN moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £100.

The chief accountant (Mr. Triggs) was appointed by Mr. George. When Mr. Rotheram was engaged as chief mechanical engineer, he insisted that Mr. Triggs should be brought from New Zealand. The Government of the day gave way, and Mr. Triggs almost immediately supplanted Mr. Abbott, now secretary of the Engine-drivers' Union, as chief clerk of the loco. branch, Fremantle. Subsequently Mr. John Davies, General Manager of Railways, was dismissed.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Mr. Davies was not dismissed.

MR. HORAN so much the better. For Mr. Davies he had great respect. That gentleman had, according to English newspapers, achieved a great success in that country; and the greatest mistake ever made by a member of this House was made in dismissing one of the most distinguished railway experts who had ever worked in Australia.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: A great mistake.

MR. HORAN: However, after Mr. Davies left, Mr. Triggs was appointed chief accountant, Mr. Toppin, then chief accountant, being made Auditor General at a salary of £800 a year. Mr. George complimented Mr. Toppin on his securing that appointment, though when dealing with the Railway Estimates Mr. George considered that Mr. Toppin was not worth an increase of £10. Why should Mr. Triggs receive an increase of £100 when Mr. Patterson, the chief auditor of the department, who had satisfactorily held the position for many years and had long experience as a railway accountant both here and in the Eastern States, was to receive his former salary of £600? He (Mr. Horan) did not like the idea of increasing the salaries of comparatively well-paid officers while the remuneration of the wages staff was reduced by £3,884. Mr. Triggs' report, appearing in the general report of the Commissioner, read like a page of Walt Whitman's poetry.

Mr. Triggs might be an excellent accountant, but as a poet he was not a success.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:

Mr. Triggs was the chief executive officer in charge of all matters pertaining to accounts in the department. About three millions a year went inward and outward, and had to be accounted for by this gentleman. Mr. Triggs was a great organiser. Prior to his appointment there were several separate divisions in the department. These Mr. Triggs had brought together, and had effected great economy in accounting. If the item were struck out, there was a danger of losing his service. As to the vote for maintenance, the amount was estimated by the experience gained for the five months just elapsed; hence the reduction.

MR. HOLMAN supported the item. When Minister for Railways he acquired some knowledge of Mr. Triggs, and thought him well worth a salary of £700. While he would like to see the wages of the maintenance staff raised, it could not be denied that a man who had saved the railways about £2,000 a year deserved some recognition and encouragement.

MR. A. J. WILSON supported the amendment. In this time of financial stringency, no civil servant receiving £200 a year or over should have any increase. Time enough to recognise exceptional services when the finances warranted that recognition. Mr. Triggs might be the best officer in the State service; but he was already receiving a very decent salary, £600.

MR. KEENAN: Was there any board to consider what officers should receive increases, or was this a chance recommendation?

THE MINISTER: It was the recommendation of the Commissioner of Railways.

MR. KEENAN: Did the Commissioner at any period of the year consider the claims of all officers to increases? Other officers than Mr. Triggs might be equally deserving. The Minister should not advise the increase unless he were satisfied that other officers' cases had been considered.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. BATH: Did the department intend to resume the publication of sectional returns? After the publication of the

1903 report, these were discontinued on the ground that the train mileage basis was not accurate. He considered that if the figures were not on an accurate basis, the Commissioner should give a return of what was as nearly as possible an accurate basis. We should know what each individual branch was doing.

THE MINISTER thought that it should be done, and that the fullest information should be given to members. He was not responsible for the report.

MR. HORAN : Did the Minister promise sectional returns for each trunk line and branch line ?

THE MINISTER understood that it was the desire to have returns from each line.

MR. HORAN : Of revenue and expenditure ?

THE MINISTER : Yes.

MR. HOLMAN : It had never been done yet.

MR. HORAN : It was utterly impossible to do it.

Item—Inspectors of Accounts (2), £625 :

MR. A. J. WILSON : The Commissioner had not carried out an agreement to give certain increments to railway employers, yet here was an increase to an officer receiving over £200. As a protest he moved an amendment, that the item be reduced by £25.

Amendment negatived.

Item—District Traffic Superintendents (4), £1,750 :

MR. HORAN : The district traffic superintendent at Kalgoorlie had been one of the board reporting on the proposed Norseman Railway, but he had entirely overlooked the district of Burbanks in his calculations.

Item—Goods Agents (3), £935 :

MR. A. J. WILSON : There was an increase of £10 to a goods agent.

THE MINISTER : It was an increase to the Kalgoorlie agent.

MR. A. J. WILSON : This was an increase to a salary of £250. He moved an amendment:—

That the item be reduced by £20.

Amendment negatived.

Item — Night Station-masters (7), £1,270 :

MR. A. J. WILSON : Could not the long hours worked by these officers be reasonably curtailed ? The salaries were not proportionate to the long hours they worked.

THE MINISTER : That the matter would be inquired into, the hon. member could be assured.

Item — Chief Mechanical Engineer, £850 :

MR. A. J. WILSON : Here was an increase of £50. He moved an amendment:—

That the item be reduced by £50.

Amendment negatived.

Item — Chief Engineer of Existing Lines, £900 :

MR. HORAN moved an amendment:—

That the item be reduced by £1.

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was out of order. According to the Standing Orders, one could not move for a small reduction. It must be a substantial reduction.

MR. HORAN moved an amendment:—

That the item be reduced by £100.

He did this to draw attention to the fact that this officer had suggested that we should pay nearly £200,000 for the good-will of the Midland Railway. It would be difficult to understand where the good-will came in.

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was out of order. He must confine himself to the vote.

MR. HORAN said he was drawing attention to the inconsistency and stupidity of this officer's report.

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was discussing the Midland Railway.

MR. HORAN : No; he was discussing the report of this officer on the railway. This officer would have been responsible for adding £200,000 to the debt of this State had the motion to purchase the Midland Railway been passed.

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was out of order in dealing with a matter entirely beyond the vote. The hon. member was discussing the Midland Railway.

MR. HORAN: Could not reasons be given for proposing to reduce this officer's salary?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes; but the hon. member should confine himself to the subject.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item — Salaries chargeable to loan, £10,709:

MR. KEENAN asked how the figures were arrived at.

THE MINISTER: Officers of the Railway Department had to expend a certain amount of loan money, and a proportion of their salaries was charged to loan expenditure.

MR. KEENAN: What was the percentage?

THE MINISTER: About 6 per cent.

MR. BATH: Was it not based on the respective amounts?

THE MINISTER: It was based on the expenditure. This was based on the estimated expenditure. Probably less than £10,709 would represent the actual percentage at the end of the year.

MR. BATH: Was the amount computed on the same percentage as on the Public Works Estimates?

THE MINISTER: Yes.

MR. HOLMAN: This year considerably more work was to be done from loan expenditure than from revenue. Why this departure?

THE MINISTER: A larger sum was not proposed to be expended from loan this year than last year.

MR. HOLMAN: There was to be expended in new works and improvements £58,556 less this year than last year. Was this where the policy of economy came in?

MR. A. J. WILSON: Certain increments were due in regard to the wages staff. Did the Minister know what the policy of the Government was to be, whether it was intended to insist on the increments due being paid to the employees according to the settlement under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act?

THE MINISTER said he had not heard anything about the matter.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Would the Minister make inquiries?

THE MINISTER would be only too pleased. It was intended to spend £15,000 in minor works and improve-

ments. The balance was for the maintenance and the working of the railways.

MR. HOLMAN was not satisfied with the explanation. Work that was carried out last year from revenue was to be carried out this year from loan money. There was an actual reduction of £58,556 on this item. The Government should give some idea of what their policy was to be. Was it to bolster up the Estimates, or did the Government intend to starve the railways by not doing necessary work? Last year re-sleepering and re-ballasting to a considerable extent were carried out. Was similar work to be done this year?

THE MINISTER: There was to be no extravagance. The Commissioner believed that the sum on the Estimates would be ample to carry him on. There was no necessity for the member to imagine that the Government would allow the railways to get into a bad state of repair this year.

MR. HOLMAN: Would the Minister countenance any reduction in the rate of wages? It was within the power of the Government to enunciate a policy, and to say how the railways should be run. There should be an assurance from the Minister that there would be no reduction whatever in the rate of wages.

THE MINISTER declined to make any assurance. The Government policy was not under consideration just now.

MR. HOLMAN: The explanation was not satisfactory. Evidently the Minister did not know anything about the Estimates. This was a matter of vital importance, and he refused to allow the item to pass until he received some explanation.

Item—Materials and Stores, £267,527:

MR. HOLMAN: What work was to be done this year? Did the Government intend to push on with the re-sleepering and re-ballasting?

THE MINISTER: It was not proposed to spend any great amount in stone ballasting this year, but a certain proportion of work would be done. This vote also dealt with minor works and improvements. The amount was ample for the department.

MR. BATH: There seemed to be a great similarity between the two classes of work, and for that reason he was desirous of having the report of the

Auditor General, so as to know how the Government exercised a discrimination between the two classes of work. It seemed that there was some need for a working basis being established, either by the Railway Department or at the instigation of the Auditor General, so as to know the system of expenditure.

MR. H. BROWN: Was any attempt to be made to upset the lease granted last year by the Labour Government in connection with the Boya quarry?

THE MINISTER: Nothing was being done.

MR. HOLMAN: There was a decrease of £5,648 on last year's Estimates, and on the actual expenditure an increase of £4,000. This was perhaps fair, because on this item alone we saved this year somewhere about £8,000 or £9,000 on Collie coal. Material and stores were all in this, and coal was an important item.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—*Cossack and Roebourne Tramway*, £2,740:

MR. FOULKES: Could the Minister tell us the nature of this line, and its annual receipts?

MR. BATH: According to the Commissioner's report the loss on this tramway for the year ending 30th June, 1905, was £1,475, and when one noticed that the total estimate was £2,470, this appeared to be a white elephant, if there was a white elephant in Western Australia. It had been stated that a party of surveyors had been sent out to survey the line to junction with Point Sampson Jetty. What was the reason for the proposition to build another line to junction with Point Sampson? Was it true that a party of surveyors had been sent up to survey that line?

THE MINISTER had no knowledge of any other railway being proposed. This was not a very profitable tramway for us. Of course the department could not have the same control over it as over the system generally. It was to be hoped in the future there would be business sufficient to warrant farther expenditure, and that we should have similar prosperity in that part of the country to what we had been having at this end.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

This completed the votes for Railways.

WORKS DEPARTMENT (Minister, Hon. Frank Wilson).

Vote—*Public Works*, £309,985:

MR. A. J. WILSON hoped we were not going to be submitted to a policy of sneaking these Estimates in an important department like this through in this haphazard and slipshod manner. If the Minister thought he would get through the Estimates in this way, there would be something else to be said about it.

THE MINISTER was not going to be intimidated in this matter. He thought he would be economising the time of the Committee in not making an opening speech. There was nothing to say in submitting these Estimates, except that he had the privilege and honour to submit them. There was any number of items, and if any member wished for information, that information would be forthcoming as far as his ability went. He had no wish to sneak anything through, and the hon. member ought to know that. Let the hon. member tackle the items as they came forward. Did the hon. member want him to make a speech of two hours' duration at this late hour, and detain him and other members? Let us get to work.

[MR. DAGLISH took the Chair.]

MR. HOLMAN was sorry the Minister did not make a few remarks so as to give an idea of the public works policy for this year. The Estimates for public works this year showed a reduction, as compared with last year, of £77,512. Districts which needed assistance were absolutely starved and robbed, and other centres, such as that represented by the Minister himself, were spoon-fed at the expense of the people of Western Australia. There were no less than twenty-seven grants for roads and bridges in the district of the hon. gentleman, whilst other districts could not get a penny for necessary works. The twenty-seven or twenty-eight grants referred to totalled something like £7,000. He did not think that ever before in the history of responsible government in Western Australia had the same sad state of affairs been shown. The policy brought forward and

carried out by the Daglish Government was a creditable one: but when we looked at the Budget proposals this year we found that the present Government had practically no policy at all. We found them endeavouring to get through their Estimates without explanation, and they took up a policy of silence. Even the Minister refused to give explanation with regard to the department he controlled.

[THE MINISTER said he had not refused.] The Minister had refused, because it had always been the custom during the last few Parliaments for the Minister to get up and give a brief *résumé* of his intentions so as to enlighten members of the Committee in regard to the policy intended to be carried out. [THE

MINISTER: It never was the practice.] It had been since he (Mr. Holman) had been a member. If the Minister had made a statement he would have received more assistance than he would now. He (Mr. Holman) intended to ask for information on every item, and to get full explanation before being satisfied. Had the Minister thought fit to get up and enunciate the public works policy of the Government, the position would have been different. Members would then have been satisfied to listen to his explanation, and to make any suggestions they considered fit, and would probably have allowed the Estimates to go through without much farther discussion. He found it totally impossible to deal with the question until the Minister had made a statement. He would like to know how it was that, whereas last year the Estimates for public works amounted to £387,497, the Estimates this year amounted to £309,885. Members now on the Government side of the House treated the former Government most unfairly in the criticism with regard to their public works policy. At the end of the financial year we had spent £337,927, but this year the estimated expenditure, including district allowances, was £309,985, or a decrease on last year's vote of £77,512. If last year's was a mark-time policy, this year's was a full-stop policy; in fact, the only policy was to get into recess, and carry on the affairs of the country without criticism from the House. This it was the duty of members to prevent. The Opposition had made no compact to swallow holus

bolus any Estimates thrown at them. The compact was made in respect of the Notice Paper of last Monday; but to-day's paper contained many new items with which we were expected to deal before prorogation. As to the Works Estimates, were the proposed works to be carried out? Were the newer districts to be sacrificed for the benefit of the old settled districts, or the interests of the State for the sake of Ministers' electorates? Was the watchword to be, "Spoils to the victors"? Consider the district of Sussex, where the population was practically decreasing, and the electoral roll contained 900 names. Some £7,000 or £8,000 was allocated to this district, mainly in the Works Estimates, while other districts were practically starved.

MR. BATH: In his personal capacity the remarks he had made in comparing the Estimates of this year with those of the late Government were made as to the Estimates as a whole. If the Minister had shown more urbanity by making an introductory speech, we should be getting through the Estimates with greater celerity. The expenditure of £309,000 odd called for some explanation by the Minister.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON WORKS.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson): I can assure members that no discourtesy was intended by me, but that I refrained from making any introductory remarks because I understood that members in Opposition did not wish such remarks to be made. I had a direct request from a member on a cross-Opposition bench to refrain from making an introductory speech. If I have misunderstood that request, I shall be happy to make a few remarks on the Estimates. There is very little to explain, because the Estimates are self-explanatory. Any member glancing through the Estimates can see exactly what has been done; and I shall be most happy to answer any questions put to me on the items. Members will notice that a very large reduction is proposed this year; but it is intended to carry out the works detailed on the Estimates. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) has charged me with fostering my own electorate at the expense of his and other electorates. That charge is not justified. When the

hon. member comes to the items he will see that many of the works in my electorate were promised by his own Government. Others are urgent and necessary works, which I will explain to the Committee if desired. A goodly portion of the expenditure in my district is due to the requirements of the Caves Board, who, as members know, have their own vote for road-making and the development of the caves in the South-West. I should be sorry indeed if my position as a Minister forced me to neglect the absolutely necessary requirements of such an old and extensive district as Sussex. So long as I fill this position, I will deem it my duty to the State at large to consider justly the requirements of my own district, together with those of other districts. Every item on these Estimates has been carefully considered, not only by me but by the departmental officers; and every work set down is a necessary work. The Government have done everything possible to meet the requirements, so far as funds will permit. We know full well it is impossible to please everyone, and I for one must beg to be excused if I do not attempt that difficult task, in which no man can possibly succeed. But I hope that the majority of members, who have some generosity, will acquit me of having unduly favoured my own district. I represent a very large district, an old settled district, peopled originally by the early pioneers who for the last 40 years have been endeavouring to open up that country, which I say unhesitatingly has been sadly and absolutely neglected for years past; and it is time that someone looked after it. I will refer to only one matter of which you, sir, are well aware—a small footbridge to enable school children to cross the Blackwood River to school. At the present day, the school has 15 or 16 pupils, the majority of whom, together with the mistress, have to be carried across the river during the winter floods, as well as in summer, in a crazy punt, at the risk of their lives.

MR. HOLMAN: We do not object to that item.

THE MINISTER: I knew that no one would object.

MR. HOLMAN: What of the 27 other bridges?

THE MINISTER: An opportunity will arrive for discussing them. I am

sorry if the Committee and the Leader of the Opposition have thought me discourteous in refraining from making any remarks at the commencement of these items. I regret that the member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson) jumped up in such a fury to accuse me of wishing to rush through the Estimates.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Had I not risen, the Estimates would have been passed. The Chairman was putting the Works estimates, and the Minister said, "Ay." Then I rose.

THE MINISTER: Surely the hon. member did not wish me to say "No," and vote against my own Estimates.

MR. A. J. WILSON: It is not a question of what I wish. I knew what to expect.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member is ungenerous. He did not know what to expect. If he knew anything at all about the matter, he must have known that he would get justice at my hands. There is one matter to which I may briefly refer before sitting down—possibly it may be information to the member for Murchison, in connection with the railways—the percentage of salaries to work done. In 1904-5, £357,500 was voted for works, and the salaries were £30,000, the percentage being 8·4. The actual expenditure on works was £309,880, salaries £28,100, and the percentage 9. In 1905-6, there was voted for works £288,784; the salaries were £21,250, and the percentage 7·34. Out of loan, in 1904-5 there was voted for works £465,218; the salaries were £30,482, and the percentage 6·55. The actual expenditure was £424,780, the salaries £28,120, and the percentage 6·63. In 1905-6, it is estimated there will be voted £520,000, that the salaries will be £28,000, and the percentage therefore 5·38. The actual expenditure for 1904-5, counting both loan and revenue expenditure, was £734,160, and the salaries were £56,220, the percentage being 7·6. In the Estimates we allocate £308,785 for this year, and £49,215 for salaries, thus hoping that the salaries will amount to only 6 per cent. of the other expenditure. I am not making this comparison to the detriment of my predecessors; because, as the hon. member points out, a fair amount of work has been done departmentally. That work is

still being done departmentally; and I fear the system will continue till the end of the year. I repeat that the work that was being done departmentally by our predecessors is still being done departmentally. Therefore the argument hardly applies.

[12 o'clock midnight.]

MR. HOLMAN: Are you going to carry it on by day-labour?

THE MINISTER: I do not think so: I think we will let a contract for it. There is only one item on the Estimates to which I would like to refer, and that is the salary of the Under-Secretary. Hon. members will note that I have put on a little increase of £50 a year. The salary of the Under-Secretary will still be £100 below that of Mr. Stronach's predecessor. Mr. Stronach is a man filling a dual capacity. He is head of the Land Resumption Department, and also head of the Works Department. He is doing his prior duties of making all the valuations of properties and land in connection with all the departments, and he is also carrying out the duties of Under-Secretary for Public Works. He is one of the hardest-working officers I have come across. I have had only a few months' experience of his work. The member for Leonora (Mr. Lynch) will know as much about him as I do personally; and I hope the hon. member will endorse my recommendation to the Committee that this officer's energies and honest endeavour to carry out his multifarious duties may be recognised by permitting this item to pass. In addition to this expenditure, we will have our Loan Estimates down, and hon. members will find in them some amount of expenditure, notably for the completion of the lunacy asylum, the old men's dépôt, and the Fremantle gaol. I hope these few remarks on my part will have the effect of dispelling from the mind of the member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson) any idea that there was any intention on the part of the Government and myself to do what he calls "sneaking the Estimates through." We are here to defend our Estimates as they appear, and whether the hon. member likes it not, we will do so.

[General discussion ensued.]

MR. LYNCH: Turning to *Hansard* of last year, no less than 17 or 18 pages were devoted to a lengthy and keen criticism by members of the then Opposition before the first item of the Works Estimates was reached. Members of the present Government did not like to be reminded of the necessity for revising the opinions they held last year. They had then laid a charge against the Labour Government on account of the paltry vote for works; but now that they were in the position of responsibility themselves, they were forced to cut below the estimate of the Labour Government by £77,000. The remarks with reference to the proportion of salaries came rather late in the day as a vindication of the Labour Government. Prominent members of the Government, when in Opposition, had severely attacked the Labour Government for extravagance in administration; but the Minister must now recognise that he was this year reaping the advantage of the economical lines laid down last year.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The percentage now was 6, as against 7.06 last year.

MR. LYNCH: It was only because the retrenchment made by the Labour Administration could not come into operation that the percentage of 7.06 had not been smaller.

THE PREMIER: But last year it was higher than the year before.

MR. BATH: That was because of a smaller amount on the Estimates.

MR. LYNCH: Several officers had been retired in the early months of last year, but their salaries went on to swell the expenditure, while the department had not the advantage of their services. Even this year, salaries had been reduced to £56,220, but we found a farther saving effected of £5,000 that any Government could effect. There were savings of £1,310 in draftsmen, £2,200 in engineering cadets, and £2,200 on the Architectural Division, making £5,700, taken from the Labour Government's Estimates of last year, which would reduce the amount to £50,329 on this year. The Minister calculated this was the necessary amount to administer a vote £70,000 short of last estimate and short of the actual expenditure by £27,000. In other words, by this process of reduc-

tion, the salaries paid last year were equivalent to the estimated amount the Minister proposed this year to administer a department with £27,000 less to expend. There must be some explanation in connection with underdrafts. We had voted £387,000 and spent £337,000, the underdraft being £49,000. While administering the department he had found that during no previous year was the amount placed on the Estimates so fully expended to the time he left the department, and now this underdraft of £49,000 appeared without any due warrant. The Boulder courthouse had cost a little over £2,000, but the Labour Government received no credit for it on this year's Estimates as an item of expenditure in last year. In the same way other items were set out. As a set-off against the appearance of an underdraft, he desired to see in explanation that such and such of the works representing so much capital were now in progress and, in consequence, would go in the direction of reducing the underdraft that appeared. With reference to the stock routes, did the Minister intend to perpetuate the system of the Mines Department and the Works Department crossing each other's tracks in the back country? Had the Minister revoked the decision of the late Government to place this work under one department and so effect a saving? He noticed that the item of abattoirs for Kalgoorlie had been wiped out and provision made for spending £9,000 on a phthisical ward at Coolgardie. Indiscriminate slaughter of cattle took place on the goldfields without any supervision, and he would like to see the item reinstated. It was the lax manner in which meat was slaughtered that brought about so much danger of phthisis, and it seemed unreasonable not to first of all regulate the source of trouble.

THE MINISTER: The decision of the Labour Government with regard to stock routes had not been altered.

MR. A. J. WILSON: If in the heat of the moment he had been led to make a remark unpleasant to the Minister or unbecoming to the dignity of the Chamber, he exceedingly regretted it; but he could not help rising when he saw the Chairman putting the question without the Minister making any statement

to the House. He admitted he rose with considerable heat, when a Minister with so much experience treated the House in a cavalier manner on such an important vote. There was no department on which so keen a watch was kept, and there was no vote so susceptible to intrigue and machinations of people who desired to have their axes ground at the expense of the public exchequer. There was no department in the State which demanded closer scrutiny than that of the Works, and when he thought there was to be perpetrated one of the nicest *coups* ever perpetrated in any part of the world, if he made remarks which he ought not to have done he sincerely regretted them. He would have been sorry if the items had been permitted to go through without some pronouncement on the part of the Government as to their attitude in regard to a policy which was near and dear to the hearts of members sitting in Opposition. We remembered the stirring speech in favour of private enterprise and the contract system as opposed to the day labour system made by the Minister for Works. Was it any wonder we were anxious to know what action the member for Sussex intended to take now he presided over the Works Department; and as to permit Estimates to go through without hearing any pronouncement from that member as to that aspect of the case, he could not permit himself to be a party to it. We knew what had been the practical results of the operation of the system of day work in connection with important public works of the State during the past few years, and he thought, if it was the intention of the Ministry to make any important variation in connection with any of the contracts which had proved so satisfactory to the day-work system, before taking advantage of the opportunity which presented itself during recess to do so, the House was justified in hearing some reasons for the departure from that important principle. Could the Minister prove conclusively that the day labour system had worked disadvantageously as far as the State was concerned? We had the important question of the unfortunate condition in which the Parliament buildings were left. At the present time it might be said there was not a sufficiency of money; but there was no more un-

satisfactory advertisement in the whole of the State than the present incomplete condition of the Parliament buildings.

MR. BATH: They ought never to have been started.

MR. WILSON agreed with the member, but the mistake had been made and it did not improve the blunder by leaving the building in an unsightly and unfinished state. We found that on the Estimates there were a variety of proposals and new works suggested. Perhaps the Minister was prepared to give adequate information on every item, but if he was anxious to save the time of the Committee and facilitate the closing of the session he would have served his purpose much more effectually by giving some justification for the new votes to be incurred. Far better it would have been to have done that than suggest that each member ask for information on each item. Last year a general statement dealing with proposed expenditure of the Government was made, and the result of the explanation was to materially facilitate the passage of the Estimates through the Committee. He desired to enter an emphatic protest against what he considered improper procedure in an attempt to get the Estimates through in an entirely expeditious manner.

POINT OF ORDER—CLAIM TO SPEAK AGAIN.

MR. HOLMAN rose to speak.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Daglish): The hon. member has already spoken on the general discussion. The hon. member has the right of speaking on any item, but not again on the general discussion.

MR. HOLMAN: I sat down in deference to the Minister.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot speak again.

MR. BATH rose to speak.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has already spoken, and unless he wishes to rise to a point of order he cannot speak again.

MR. BATH on a point of order, if the hon. member will look up the Standing Orders he will see that a member can speak more than once in Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the member desires to object to my ruling he has an opportunity of doing so by adopting the proper

form. I have given my ruling and the hon. member can, if he likes, move that my ruling be disagreed with.

MR. BATH: I move that your ruling be disagreed with.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will you kindly submit it in writing?

MR. BATH submitted the point in writing.

[MR. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.]

MR. DAGLISH: I have to report that during the general discussion on the Public Works Estimates, item No. 1, the member for Murchison having spoken resumed his seat. He was followed by the member for Brown Hill, subsequently by the Minister for Works, and later on by the member for Leonora and the member for Forrest. The member for Murchison rose again to speak a second time, and I ruled that he was out of order in speaking on the general discussion, and the member then pleaded that he sat down to afford the Minister for Works an opportunity of making a statement. In spite of this the member did not object when the member for Brown Hill spoke, nor did he follow the Minister but allowed the members for Leonora and Forrest to speak subsequent to the Minister. After my ruling had been given, the member for Brown Hill objected to that ruling and submitted his grounds as follow:—

I have dissented from the ruling of the Deputy Chairman on the ground that under the Standing Order 372 a member may speak more than once in Committee, the only limit being the Standing Order as to irrelevancy and repetition of former remarks.

MR. SPEAKER: I rule in support of the Deputy Chairman and I contend that Standing Order 372 does not apply in this instance. It is the recognised custom and has always been so in every Parliament as far as I am aware, at any rate it has been so during my time since 1890, to only speak once on the general question; therefore I uphold the ruling of the Deputy Chairman.

MR. BATH: Do you rule that we were not in Committee when the question arose.

MR. SPEAKER: By no means. The House has been in Committee up to this moment, and will resume. This rule does not apply to the point raised by

the Leader of the Opposition in this instance. As I have said before, it is a recognised custom; therefore I intend to continue that custom, and I uphold the ruling of the Deputy Chairman.

MR. BATH: Does an established custom override the Standing Orders, or are we guided by the Standing Orders?

MR. SPEAKER: If the member will show me the Standing Order that applies, I shall be satisfied, because Rule 372 has always been recognised to apply to items only. I may be candid with the hon. member and tell him I have looked into this question before, for fear it might arise, and I cannot find the authority on which he has stated a member can speak more than once upon a general question; therefore custom is the proper course to follow. That is my ruling.

COMMITTEE RESUMED.

Item—Under Secretary for Public Works, £550:

MR. HOLMAN would like to know whether the position was going to be filled, and what salary the officer who filled it would take. The administration costs in the Public Works Department were out of all reason compared with the expenditure. He did not see any reason why this officer should receive an increase. He moved an amendment:—

That the item be decreased by £50.

Amendment negatived, and the item passed.

Item—Stores Manager, £400:

MR. A. J. WILSON thought that no increase should be given to any officers receiving £200 a year or more. Doubtless if officers had done good work for £325 last year, they would continue to do so for the same. He moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £75.

MR. HOLMAN supported the amendment. He saw no reason for the increase. It was the intention to decrease the expenditure on the Works Estimates some thousands of pounds, and if that were so the stores manager would not have so much responsibility. He would not have so much material to look after, handle, or control. If the Minister could

show that this officer was doing work which entitled him to the proposed increase in salary, he (Mr. Holman) would be one of the very first to support it.

THE MINISTER: This officer, Mr. Simpson, who had been receiving £325 a year, had not had any advance since 1900. He held a very responsible position as stores manager, being responsible for the purchase and custody of stores and plant. Since he had been getting his present salary he had been placed in the responsible position of chairman of the Supply Tender Board. The dual capacity entitled him to some recognition, and £400 a year would be little enough for the work done. He believed the officer to be thoroughly honest and straightforward, and capable in every respect of discharging the duties to the satisfaction of his superior officers.

MR. HOLMAN did not think the fact that this officer was chairman of the Tender Board entitled him to an increase of salary in connection with the Works Department. In his opinion the Tender Board was not wanted at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order in discussing the Tender Board.

MR. HOLMAN: Did the Chairman allow a difference between the Minister and himself?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was justified in replying to the Minister's allegations, but must not discuss the Tender Board.

MR. HOLMAN: A reason given why the officer was entitled to an increase was that he was chairman of the Tender Board and acting in a dual position. He (Mr. Holman) was dealing with the officer in that respect.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not discuss the Tender Board.

MR. HOLMAN: The Tender Board accepted tenders from Chinese, to the detriment of other people.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	8
Noes	...	...	...	30
Majority against				22

AYES.
Mr. Collier
Mr. Holman
Mr. Horn
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Stone
Mr. Ware
Mr. A. J. Wilson
Mr. Troy (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Brown
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Gull
Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Isdell
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Layman
Mr. Lynch
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Mouger
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Price
Mr. Rason
Mr. Smith
Mr. Verrard
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gordon (Teller).

the Municipalities Act provided that the Registrar of Titles should supply the boards or the councils with a certificate as to the title of any land. If there was no such provision, there ought to be. It was made in other States.

MR. H. BROWN: There was no provision that the Registrar of Titles should notify a municipality or a roads board of any transfers. It seemed absurd to keep a man at the Titles Office to make searches for roads boards. How many searches were made during the year?

THE MINISTER: The number was not known.

MR. HUDSON: The work should be done by the Registrar of Titles, who, on the application of roads boards secretaries, would furnish any information as to any lands in question. The Mines Department had officers who made searches. Surely these could reply to roads board inquiries.

MR. STONE did not see the necessity for this officer. It cost most districts £60 or £70 to get some gentleman in Perth to make searches to enable them to strike their rates. The general rate notices conveyed the information to the ratepayer that he must acquaint the roads board of any change in the ownership of land. It was a waste of money to pay £200 to an officer now that the work was nearly finished.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	13
Noes	...	...	...	22

Majority against ... 9

AYES.
Mr. Barnett
Mr. Collier
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Holman
Mr. Horn
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Price
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Stone
Mr. Troy
Mr. Ware
Mr. Brown (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Brebber
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Gull
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Isdell
Mr. Layman
Mr. Lynch
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Male
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Rason
Mr. Smith
Mr. Verrard
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item—Roads Board Searcher, £275:

MR. HOLMAN: This was a new departure. What were the officer's duties?

THE MINISTER: The appointment was made by the Public Service Commissioner, at the request of the Roads Board Conference. The officer's duty was to make searches in the Lands Titles Office on behalf of roads boards.

MR. H. BROWN moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

This officer was transferred from the Works Department to the Titles Office, and had no knowledge of the work required of him. Roads board searches should be made out of experts in the Titles Office. This officer had to report himself three times a day to the Works Department, and his work at the Titles Office was of no use to the roads boards, the majority of which had their searches fairly up to date for the last 12 months. The searcher would soon require two or three assistants. If the Works Department did not need the officer, let them say so. An experienced searcher could be secured in the Titles Office, at a lower salary. This appointment was not made by the Public Service Commissioner.

THE MINISTER: It was.

MR. HUDSON: Searching titles and reporting to roads boards were altogether unnecessary. Either the Roads Act or

Amendment thus negatived.

[1 a.m.]

Item — Superintendent Rabbit-proof Fence, £500 :

MR. HOLMAN : There was an increase of £178. What were this officer's duties? Would he be stationed in Perth?

THE MINISTER : The hon. member should know. This officer had been in charge of the construction of the fence for a couple of years. It was Mr. Anketell, a very able man. We had still about £100,000 to spend on this fence, so we could not do away with the engineer. The only difference in the salary this year was that the allowance previously paid had been included.

MR. HORAN regretted that the Government had not introduced a stock-tax to meet the expense of this fence. He had some questions which had been submitted to him. They said: For some time past a number of men were being privately engaged by Mr. Anketell and Mr. Johnston to go to Broome and work on the rabbit-proof fence. That was unfair to a great number of men out of work there. The positions should be open to all, or the men should be engaged at the Labour Bureau or by ballot. This matter was brought under the Premier's notice, and the Premier acknowledged his inability to in any way prevent Mr. Anketell from engaging men.

THE MINISTER : What was the name?

MR. HORAN : The name could not be given, because it was apparently private.

THE MINISTER : The hon. member should refrain from reading correspondence of this description without giving the name so that the charge might be inquired into. When we had an engineer recognised to be a capable and honest man, we must rely on his judgment in selecting the men to carry out the work. The idea of a ballot, as suggested, was absurd, and would not be compatible with good work.

MR. HORAN : Was this the Mr. Anketell in charge of the water scheme at one time?

THE MINISTER : Yes.

MR. HORAN said he was satisfied.

[MR. ILLINGWORTH took the Chair.]

MR. H. BROWN pointed out that he had moved for papers in reference to the

rabbit-proof fence to be laid on the table, and the motion had been carried, but the papers were not laid on the table. He had evidence that things were carried on in a very bad way in connection with the erection of the fence. If the papers were laid on the table, members could see how things were conducted.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : The papers had been received from the Agricultural Department during the afternoon and would be laid on the table at the earliest opportunity. Could they be laid on the table now?

THE CHAIRMAN : No. Only when the Speaker was in the Chair.

MR. HOLMAN : The salary was not more than this officer should get for the onerous and dangerous work that had to be performed. If anything, an extra allowance should be made while the officer was engaged in the North-West.

Item—Principal Architect, £500 :

MR. COLLIER : There was an increase of £120. He moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £120.

MR. HORAN : Was this the architect responsible for designing Parliament Houses? If so, did the disgraceful architecture justify any increase?

MR. IDELL drew attention to the class of buildings put up in the North-West for the accommodation of public servants. The buildings were unsuited to the climate. The verandah of the post office at Nullagine, where the thermometer often registered 120 in the shade, was only 8ft. high and 6ft. wide. The exercise yard of the lock-up in the same place was 10ft. square, with a wall of corrugated iron 10ft. high. He had explained to Mr. Grainger, the late Chief Architect, that it was a waste of money to put up this class of buildings, and he had gone so far as to instruct the corporal of police at Nullagine not to put an intoxicated man in the gaol during the summer months. On account of the white ants, the department had constructed a dwelling at Marble Bar entirely of iron, and they expected people to live in such a place during the summer months. It was not right that the Government should put up such a building to "balk the white ants" and at the same time to bake the policeman. He had asked that an architect from the department should be sent to

the North-West. If an architect did go there, he (Mr. Isdell) would give him three months in one of the buildings, and the experience the officer would gain would be worth thousands of pounds to the State. People would not live in the Government buildings, but built bush humpies alongside to live in.

THE MINISTER: The Chief Architect had been in receipt of £1,000 per annum, and prior to that for many years the salary had been £750. Mr. Beasley, the Principal Architect referred to in this item, had been acting during the absence of Mr. Grainger.

MR. HORAN: Was he responsible for the architecture of Parliament Houses?

THE MINISTER: No. About 18 months ago he (the Minister) had been severe in his criticism on the architecture of Parliament Houses, but since he had been in charge of the Works Department—[**MR. LYNCH:** It made all the difference.]—he had an opportunity of learning from Mr. Beasley that Mr. Grainger would allow no interference in the designing of Parliament Houses, and that Mr. Beasley had nothing to do with it. The salary last year had been £380, while there were many officers in the department receiving more.

MR. HORAN: Was Mr. Beasley an architect?

THE MINISTER: Yes.

MR. HORAN: What degrees did Mr. Beasley hold? because one had been assured that the gentleman was not an architect.

THE MINISTER: If Mr. Beasley was not capable of receiving the additional salary, he should not be in the position. If he was capable of filling the position, he should receive a decent salary, worthy of the position he occupied. Mr. Johnson, when Minister for Works, had paid a bonus of £125 to Mr. Beasley.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Supervisor, Kalgoorlie, £310:

MR. HOLMAN: Only £88 had been spent last year. Why the increase? And why were the allowances done away with and included in the salaries? Was this to be the universal method in dealing with allowances on the goldfields?

THE MINISTER: Last year provision had only been made for half the year's salary. It was intended in the case of

officers permanently on the goldfields to make the salary cover allowances.

Item—Transferred Officers, difference between salaries paid by Works Department and departments to which officers have been transferred, £288:

MR. HOLMAN: Was the Public Works Department called upon to pay for this work, or was the work done prior to the officers being transferred?

THE MINISTER: It was in accordance with Public Service Regulation 141, that when an officer was transferred by the Public Service Commissioner from one department to another at a lower salary, the department must provide by a special vote for the difference in salary. The officers still received the higher salary, though transferred to positions with lower salaries, until they obtained suitable positions which could afford to pay the higher salaries; but the difference had to be provided by special vote for every department. He (the Minister) maintained that it should be done by the department that gained the services of the officer; but in this case we were carrying out the instructions of the Public Service Commissioner.

Other items agreed to and the vote passed.

Vote—Generally, £10,000:

Item—Rents for Office Accommodation etc., £3,000:

MR. STONE understood the Government were going to give the old police court buildings to the Perth municipality; but instead of paying rent we should make use of these buildings. So far, the municipality had not received the deeds, and he hoped they would not receive them.

THE MINISTER: This was an item covering rents paid for office accommodation. All buildings that had to be hired by the Government were in charge of the Works Department. These were buildings used by any department such as schools, offices, quarters, etcetera. It was impossible to avoid paying rents in some cases; the Government were endeavouring to overcome the difficulty. At present we were paying rent for schoolhouses where there were not sufficient children to warrant a school being

erected. We were paying as rent for schools £427, that was a decrease since last year; school quarters £277, an increase of £143; offices in connection with the Lands Department £227, an increase; Mines Department £279; Colonial Secretary's Department £505, a decrease; Labour Department £374, an increase; Crown Law Department £125; Treasury £141; Public Service Commissioner £120; total rents payable this year £2,525, last year £3,078, showing a decrease of £553.

MR. HORAN: What was the explanation of pensioners' allowance in lieu of quarters?

THE MINISTER: The pensioners previously had quarters in the barracks, and when they were turned out an allowance was given them in lieu of quarters.

Item—Insurance on public buildings, £250:

MR. HORAN: Why this increase of £250? Were all public buildings in the State insured? If not, did the Government intend to consider the advisability of the Government becoming their own underwriters? Some years ago it was decided not to continue to insure public buildings.

THE MINISTER: The Government did not insure as a general rule, but there were some buildings such as the markets that were covered.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Roads and Bridges, £112,869:

Item—Roads and Bridges throughout the State, £70,000:

MR. SCADDAN: How was it intended to distribute this money? Was this the fund the Minister had at his disposal to meet engagements for districts that required grants during the year?

THE MINISTER: This was the usual roads board grant which was in the hands of the Minister to pay subsidies. At one time roads boards were paid pound for pound, or so much for each pound of rates raised. That was abolished by the Government in power last year, who resorted to the old plan of giving a lump sum to roads boards according to needs and requirements. But he (the Minister) had not gone into the question at all. The

amount would be distributed as previously. He was inclined to think the subsidy was the fairest way of dividing the money.

Item—Canning Road District, main road to Fremantle, £150:

MR. SCADDAN: This seemed to be a vote to complete a work for which a sum was granted last year.

MR. BATH: This was not the main road to Fremantle, for which there was a considerable grant. He understood that the local bodies along the route to Fremantle would look after the maintenance of this road. Last session the road was completed, so he understood.

THE MINISTER: This was not the road the Leader of the Opposition referred to, the main Fremantle road crossing the Canning Bridge from South Perth, but it started off the Albany road just near Woodlupine. Last year the first grant was given towards the construction of this road, and £150 was provided this year; only half a mile was made. As to the Welshpool road, that was the main road leading from Canning to the Darling range, which branched off the main Albany road and ran into the range.

MR. SCADDAN: Was this a fresh grant?

THE MINISTER: It was a fresh grant to continue the road.

Item—Coolgardie Road District, road to Government battery, £200:

MR. HORAN: This amount of money had been expended. It was not quite clear whether there was a liability under the Audit Act.

THE MINISTER: The work was done and the Government had to pay for it; £200 was voted for this road which was in the Coolgardie district, to improve the worst portions of it so as to reach the Government battery.

Item—Dundas-Coolgardie main road, Coolgardie and Dundas road districts, £1,834:

MR. HORAN: On the representations of the goldfields members £2,000 was voted by last Parliament and expended. There was £1,834 set down for the current year. The money had been injudiciously expended in the past, and he would like the Minister to take a note of

the fact that he had the assurance of hundreds of people who travelled over the Norseman route that the money was not expended on the portion of the track that it should have been. Unless there was an item on the Loan Estimates for the construction of a railway to Norseman this grant should be increased.

THE MINISTER: This was a work that was left as a legacy by our predecessors. The work was very necessary. It was news to him that the work had been done badly, and it was the first he had heard about it. It was the duty of anyone seeing a work of this description being badly carried out to let the department know before the work was completed. The work was put in hand by the previous Government, and the amount on the Estimates was a liability due on the contract to the end of the financial year. He could not give the member any promise as to the amount required to continue this road, nor could he give any promise as to the construction of the Norseman Railway.

MR. HOLMAN had been along the road two or three times, and of all back-country roads this was the worst. Teams could not get down the road, and the progress of Norseman and Princess Royal was retarded in consequence. The money had been wasted, and full inquiries should be held to prove who was responsible for the waste.

MR. HUDSON had travelled over 2,000 miles by coach between Coolgardie and Esperance during the last 12 months and knew something of the roads in the district. This particular road where the money was alleged to have been expended was in a very bad condition. Whoever was responsible for the expenditure of the money should be called to task, and a very rigid inquiry held as to the manner in which the money was expended. The money was spent on a small portion of the road, and if there had been any rain during the past season the road would have become impassable. Some money should be expended to make the road passable by teams, for people had to depend on their supplies being carried along this route. Passengers who had to travel by coach were sometimes kept on the road all night, being stuck up by the bad condition of the roadway. During the last month owing to the bad

state of the roads there was a famine in chaff, and people had to turn their horses out because they could not get chaff for them. The price of chaff was £13 per ton.

THE MINISTER: Would the member write to the department?

MR. HUDSON promised to write. This money was not actually expended in his district, but in a portion of the road which was in the Yilgarn district. People had to pass over this road to get to Coolgardie.

THE MINISTER was sorry if he had hurt the feelings of the hon. member. He thought the hon. member was poking fun at the officer in charge of the fence.

MR. HUDSON: There was a vote for £14,500.

THE MINISTER: Under rabbits?

MR. HUDSON: Yes.

THE MINISTER was sorry if he had misunderstood the hon. member. The officer referred to was engaged on the fence.

MR. HUDSON accepted the explanation given.

[2 a.m.]

Item—Forrest Road, via Lake Bibra (through Jandakot Agricultural Area), Extension, £450.

MR. STONE thought if people wanted railway accommodation the Government should not be so lavish with roads board votes.

THE MINISTER: This was a main road from the railway as far as Forrest Hall, or thereabouts. The road went about two miles beyond that, and the money was to continue the work. The money was badly wanted.

Item—Jandakot Road District, road from Armadale Railway Station towards Jandakot townsite, £150.

MR. STONE: Seeing that people were getting farther railway accommodation, these grants should not be so lavish.

THE MINISTER: This was the same road, starting from the other end; the Kelmscott end.

MR. BATH: These people seemed to get hold of a good deal in the way of grants through kicking up a considerable noise.

THE MINISTER: No doubt they did. He thought the previous Government

granted £1,000 last year regarding the construction of this road.

MR. HOLMAN: This was a new system of road, and very expensive. It seemed ridiculous to spend so much on roads like this. It was almost as expensive as a railway. If people were going to have railways, they did not want roads. There were some parts of the State which could not have a railway for some time, and they had not a road at present.

MR. GULL: This road was in a portion of his district, and he would be very willing to do away with the £100 grant if the Minister would tell him that the railway was going to Armadale.

Item—Perth-Albany and Bunbury main roads through Victoria Park, Canning and Kelmscott districts, £500:

MR. SCADDAN: Was this a farther vote to extend that road or to complete work already in progress?

THE MINISTER: This was a grant for the maintenance of the main road; it was the old Albany Road, and the amount was little enough. This portion of the road was 13 miles in length.

MR. SCADDAN: This road passed through Victoria Park, which was a thickly populated centre, and the local authority could well maintain a road of that description. It should not be the duty of the Government to be continually maintaining these main roads. When once they had given a grant for the construction they should allow the responsibility of maintenance to rest on the local authorities.

MR. HOLMAN did not see why £500 should be granted for the maintenance of this road. [THE MINISTER: The late Government gave £1,000.] At that time he travelled over the road, and it was in a bad condition. He rode over it a few months ago on a bicycle, and found it in fair order. The tramways were going through the Victoria Park district, and would have to maintain a considerable portion of that road. Through the Canning and Kelmscott there was never any heavy traffic over those roads, and he did not see why so much money was required for maintenance.

MR. SCADDAN: A former Minister had distinctly stated to the Committee that he intended to point out to these local bodies that when once they received

a grant to put a road in good order, it would be no good to come for a grant for maintenance.

THE MINISTER: There were 13 miles of this road.

MR. GORDON: Victoria Park had spent £700 on the road.

MR. LYNCH: If this road was going to be made, it seemed a clear refutation of the policy entered into by the James Ministry.

THE MINISTER: Then why did the hon. member give £1,000 last year?

MR. SCADDAN: The Minister who brought down the Estimates stated that the expenditure had been incurred, and it was a distinct promise given probably by a previous Minister that the Government would subsidise them to the extent of £ per £, but he laid it down that he would not give farther grants for construction or maintenance of the road.

THE MINISTER: The £1,000 had nothing to do with the regrading of the road. He had since had to make provision to carry out a promise for regrading that road. They claimed £500, which he would not pay, and the amount was fixed at something like £380. This £1,000 was the usual annual vote, and the £1,000 granted last year by the predecessors of the present Government was for the very purpose for which this £500 was put down. There were two roads boards and one municipality affected by it.

MR. SCADDAN: Were we to understand that the £500 would be expended in the municipality of Victoria Park?

THE MINISTER: Victoria Park, Canning, and Kelmscott districts. Perhaps Victoria Park would get £100 or £50.

MR. SCADDAN: There was hardly a road leading out of Perth for which we did not find a sum on the Estimates.

Item—Perth-Fremantle Road, maintenance, £2,000:

MR. COLLIER suggested an amendment—

That the amount be reduced by £1,000.

He could understand this being on the Estimates if it were for a new road, but he altogether objected to such large sums of money being given for maintenance. We were, by giving such large sums, offering a premium to municipalities to underrate themselves. It was the duty of the Government, when they had any money to spare, to give these grants for

the construction of new roads. On the goldfields they did not get any of these large grants for maintenance. If the Government gave a grant for the construction of a road, it was the duty of a municipality to maintain that road.

MR. BATH moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

He had been a member during the time in which four sets of annual Estimates had been dealt with. We had had considerable sums voted in relation to these Perth-Fremantle roads, amounting he thought to £10,000. We had been voting money to make them, and now we were asked to spend money on maintenance.

MR. STONE supported the striking out of the item. He had to pay rates in seven or eight road board districts, and nothing was given by the Government for maintenance. If they got a small grant to make a road, they were quite satisfied to maintain the road afterwards. People whose property increased in value through the construction of roads should be called upon at least to maintain them when once they were built. He strongly objected to grants like this being given for roads in districts where people were wealthy enough to maintain the roads themselves.

MR. LYNCH thought there was every justification for the amendment by the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. HOLMAN also supported the striking out of the item. The Government to which he belonged believed that roads in municipalities should be maintained by the municipalities. [MEMBER: The Government to which the hon. member belonged took this road over.] He failed to see why these amounts of money should be granted year after year for the maintenance of roads in the neighbourhood of Perth. In some cases people had to cut roads through virgin bush and did not get any contribution at all. When one found thousands of pounds paid in regard to these roads he wondered whether the amounts were really used or not, or frittered away.

MR. HUDSON: Before there was an increase for the maintenance of the road between Perth and Fremantle, provision should be made for roads in the outlying districts.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:

This road, ever since he had been in the country, had always been maintained by the Government. Extending from Point Lewis to the boundary of North Fremantle, that part of it nearest to Perth passed through a large extent of country that could not be taxed. King's Park bounded one side of the road, from Point Lewis to Crawley, and on the other side was the river. From the park and the river, rates could not be derived. This was the main road from Fremantle to Perth. True, it passed through Claremont and Cottesloe, but these municipalities could not pay for the upkeep of a main road, which, ever since Responsible Government was granted, was considered a Government road. Would members advocate letting the road fall into disrepair, so that it might cost some thousands of pounds to restore, as in the time of the late Government? This would be a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy. The Opposition, when in power, took over about a mile of the road from Point Lewis to the Stanley Brewery, on the understanding that the Government would retain the road and take the rates. The maintenance and watering of that one mile cost about £800 per annum, while the rates were about £180. He (the Minister) had handed back that portion of the road to the Perth Council. He agreed that in most instances the Government should be called on to construct only the original road, the local authority keeping it in repair; but this principle could not apply to main roads running through poor localities. To compare coastal with goldfields roads was unfair. The latter were natural roads, needing nought but clearing, the surface being hard. On the coast, roads must be maintained at a heavy cost, or traffic thereon would be impossible. There was nothing else for it but to pass the vote and maintain the road.

MR. SCADDAN: The item did not show the whole of the expenditure on the road, a farther sum of £800 appearing in item 193, making a total of £2,800.

THE MINISTER: By spending that £800, he was saving £700 a year.

MR. SCADDAN: In vain did goldfields and agricultural districts ask for grants to construct main roads where there were no railways and no motor cars.

They could not get enough money to grub stumps and fell trees. The goldfields did not possess natural roads. Many of the roads were absolutely impassable, and people could not get even their mails delivered. Yet between Perth and Fremantle, connected by rail and river, was a road maintained at an annual cost of some £3,000. The Minister said we must agree to the item. That was for the Committee to decide. The people using a road should maintain it, once constructed by the Government.

THE MINISTER: This was constructed by the late Government.

MR. HOLMAN disputed the statement that the Labour Government were responsible for these Estimates. Even if so, it was disgraceful that the present Government were unable to bring down a policy of their own. No Government with the interests of the State at heart would make such grants for Perth roads and starve the back country. This was not a necessary road, but a carriage drive, on which people who could afford it drove home. Such people could afford to keep the road in repair. Those who could not afford to drive went home by rail; and thus the road only interfered with railway traffic. People in distant centres had not only to pay for their own roads, but for metropolitan roads also. In the Murchison electorate was a road 150 or 160 miles long, connecting two centres. It was not a natural road. On it he had seen teams stuck up in dry weather. Another road in the same district, some 125 miles long, was not the shortest distance between its termini; and by spending a few hundred pounds, the track could be shortened by 25 or 30 miles. At times people in that district had to live on bran and pollard for two or three weeks at a stretch, owing to the impassable roads.

THE MINISTER: There was no request for a road vote from that district.

MR. HOLMAN: There was. He had made it personally, and had seen the Minister for Mines with regard to it. It was disgraceful, moreover, that the people at Norseman had to pay so much for their foodstuffs and machinery. Was the expenditure on Perth pleasure drives necessary? No. The Perth roads were fit for any sort of traffic. He had often biked along the Fremantle road.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Illingworth): The hon. member must not continually repeat himself.

MR. HOLMAN: The expenditure on the road was simply to keep it fit for motor cars.

THE MINISTER: Watering was costly.

MR. HOLMAN: People in the back country could not get water to drink. Spend the £2,000 on water conservation in the country, rather than on watering a Perth road.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must refrain from continual repetition.

MR. HOLMAN: This was the first time he had mentioned water.

THE PREMIER: Let the hon. member stonewall if he liked.

MR. HOLMAN: Stonewalling was far from his thoughts. If he had wished to stonewall, he could have done it on the general question.

Amendment (to strike out the item) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	15
Noes	...	...	...	19

Majority against ... 4

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Brown
Mr. Collier	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Eddy	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Holman	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Horan	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Gull
Mr. Layman	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Lynch	Mr. Hicks
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Isdell
Mr. Stoue	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Troy	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Ware	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. A. J. Wilson	Mr. Price
Mr. Daglish (Teller).	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Veryard
	Mr. Frank Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item—Perth to Guildford main road, maintenance, £500:

MR. COLLIER moved that the item be struck out.

Amendment negatived.

Item—Perth to Guildford road via Bayswater, £350:

MR. COLLIER moved that the item be struck out.

Amendment negatived.

Item—Phillips River road district, Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe road, £108:

MR. HUDSON protested against the reduction of this item by £100. If he were

permitted to confer with the Ministers for Works and Mines, he could fully explain the position. The importance of the district and the heavy Government traffic over the road should induce the Minister to replace the old item of £200 on future Estimates.

Item—Sussex coast road, Busselton-Yalingup Road, £500 :

MR. HOLMAN: For years past we had seen such items for roads to the caves, costing thousands of pounds. He protested against this yearly expenditure. Here was an increase of £400. In the goldfields districts, funds for roads over which all the local traffic passed were reduced, whereas on a road to a pleasure resort we were asked to vote £400 extra. He moved—

That the item be reduced by £400.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Sussex, Yalingup to Lake Cave, £300 :

MR. HOLMAN: Was this another new cave?

THE MINISTER: The Lake Cave at the Margaret River.

MR. HOLMAN: Here was another increase of £200. When were these increases to stop? He moved—

That the item be reduced by £200.

MR. STONE: The manner of distributing these moneys was an injustice to the country.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	8
Noes	...	...	...	21
				—
Majority against				13

AYES.

Mr. Bolton
Mr. Collier
Mr. Holman
Mr. Lynch
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Stone
Mr. Ware
Mr. Troy (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Brebber
Mr. Brown
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Gull
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Horan
Mr. Isdell
Mr. Layman
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Male
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Price
Mr. Rason
Mr. Smith
Mr. Veryard
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item—Bunbury-Busselton road, £100 :

MR. HOLMAN: What was the terminus of this road?

THE MINISTER: Capel.

[3 a.m.]

Item—Bunbury Municipality, King Road, £100 :

MR. HOLMAN: Was it advisable to reintroduce the system, partly abolished by the late Government, of giving special road grants to municipalities? Was this principle to be made universal, or extended to Bunbury and Busselton only?

THE MINISTER: Grants to municipalities were only given in exceptional circumstances and were limited as much as possible.

Item—Bunbury Municipality, King Road, £200 :

MR. LYNCH moved an amendment:

That the item be struck out.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This was a road between the municipality and the roads district, and was a quagmire at present. It was the only road in the municipality for which any assistance was given by the Government.

Amendment withdrawn.

Item—Katanning-Badgebup Road, £1,000 :

MR. HOLMAN: Was this for maintenance or to open a new road?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This district was to the East of Katanning. It was a new road to a new settlement, 12 miles away from Katanning. It was a wheat-growing area and there were no roads to it so far. A sand patch had to be passed over to reach it.

Item—Lower Blackwood, Road from 2-mile on Busselton road, through Cundinup, Heppington, and join road at Kirupp, about 6 miles, £100 :

MR. TROY: This was another work in the electorate of the Minister for Works. Why did it appear?

THE MINISTER: It was a main cross-country road. The Government had built a bridge at Cundinup, and this road was to connect the bridge with the road at Kirupp.

Item—Perth-Fremantle road, reconstruction, Point Lewis to Swan Brewery, £800:

MR. SCADDAN: It was to oppose items such as this he had stayed up all night. Too much money was spent on roads round Perth.

THE MINISTER: This was a portion of a road to be handed back to the municipality when made. The previous Minister for Works had taken over the road for the rates. It was intended to hand it back to the City Council, and thus save about £500.

Item—Sussex, Margaret road, £100:

MR. HOLMAN: Apparently provision had already been made for this road. He moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

Amendment negatived.

Item—Sussex, St. John's Brook, £100:

MR. HOLMAN moved—

That the item be struck out.

Amendment negatived.

Item—Sussex, Bunbury road, £100:

MR. COLLIER: These Estimates were all for Bunbury and Busselton. He moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

One would imagine there were no gold-fields in the State.

THE MINISTER: What about the £8,200 for Boulder?

Amendment negatived.

Item—Sussex, Causeway, £100:

MR. HOLMAN: What was this causeway?

THE MINISTER: A main road.

MR. HOLMAN moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

Amendment negatived.

Item—Sussex, grant extension Queen Street to jetty, £100:

MR. HOLMAN: What was this road to the jetty?

THE MINISTER: It was the road passing through railway land to the jetty.

MR. TROY: As it was in the municipality, the council should maintain the

road. To save the money he moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

Amendment negatived.

Item—Swan, Midland Junction-Guildford main road, £300:

MR. HOLMAN asked for information.

THE MINISTER: This was a main road on one side of which the railway ran.

MR. HOLMAN: Was it already metalled?

THE MINISTER: Yes; and it needed reconstruction.

Item—Beverley, reconstruction town bridge over Avon River, £1,400:

MR. COLLIER asked for information.

THE MINISTER: This was an old bridge. The Estimates had been anticipated and a contract let. A sum of £200 had been voted last year to widen the bridge, but the late Minister had decided that it must be rebuilt. This was carrying out the promise the late Minister made.

Item—Greenough, McCartney road bridge, £270:

MR. GULL asked for information.

THE MINISTER: This was a bridge in the Greenough district. The old bridge was completely worn out, and the work of repairs had been completed.

Item—Lower Blackwood, Darradup bridge over Blackwood River, £170:

MR. STONE: This sum was not likely to complete the bridge. Probably it would take another £1,000. It looked like a quibble to get this item passed and then find the cost of the work was enormously increased.

THE MINISTER: This was a bridge referred to previously to enable children to reach school. It was a foot-bridge. The bridge the hon. member referred to was miles away.

Item—Sussex, Toby's Inlet bridge, £125:

MR. HORAN: Where was this bridge to be constructed?

THE MINISTER: This was a historical bridge. It had been previously decided to pull it down and erect a new

bridge, but now he was advised it could be repaired.

MR. TROY: This bridge was not necessary. He moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

Amendment negatived.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—*Harbours and Rivers*, £15,451:

Item—Cottesloe Ocean Jetty (part cost) and accommodation for bathing, £900:

MR. H. BROWN: This jetty was to be constructed to enable some Pierrots to give performances. The wealthy inhabitants of Cottesloe Beach should be prepared to find the money. The expenditure was unwarrantable in view of the light way in which the people of the district were rated.

MR. FOULKES: This jetty was not to be erected at Cottesloe Beach, but at Cottesloe. The hon. member, thinking it was Cottesloe Beach, opposed it as he usually opposed any benefit to the working classes. The late Minister for Works had agreed to maintain the item on the Estimates, and the people of Cottesloe had agreed to provide £500 towards the cost. The Cottesloe Roads Board always levied the maximum rate.

MR. H. BROWN: The proportion paid by the roads board would probably come out of the Government subsidy.

Item—North-West Tramways, provision of new and heavier rolling-stock, £500:

MR. A. J. WILSON: Did this apply to the Roebourne-Cossack tramway?

THE MINISTER: At most of the North-West ports there had been an increase of traffic, and the trollies used on the tramways had become worn out and must be replaced.

Item—Plant, tools, and repairs to same, including dredges, £1,000:

MR. H. BROWN: The Government should lend a dredge to the Monger's Lake Board. It would do useful work in one of the beauty spots about Perth.

Item—Tramways, maintenance, rolling-stock, etc., £1,200:

MR. A. J. WILSON: What did this refer to?

THE MINISTER: To the tramways at the various ports along the coast.

Item—Busselton, reclamation foreshore, £100:

MR. TROY: What foreshore was to be reclaimed at Busselton? This was one of the votes that were a scandalous abuse of power. He moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

THE MINISTER: This was the foreshore of the river at Busselton. The money was put on the Estimates by his predecessor.

MR. DAGLISH: It was only fair to the Minister to say that after inspecting this particular locality he was satisfied the expenditure was necessary. Probably several other items referring to Busselton might be struck off the Estimates, but this item was necessary for the health of the people.

MR. STONE supported the item. After looking through the Estimates, Busselton seemed to be a most expensive place for the State.

Item—Northam, river improvement, £1,000:

MR. HORAN: Money had been expended on the Avon River at Northam for the construction of weirs. These weirs remained only until a freshet came down the river, and then they were swept away.

THE MINISTER: This money was to be spent in connection with the Avon River, the weir having been washed away by a flood. The Government engineer had visited the place and recommended a scheme which would cost several thousands of pounds—making a lake for recreation purposes. It was necessary for the health of the community at Northam. If the Committee passed the £1,000 it was proposed to ask the municipality to contribute a like amount so as to construct the lake.

MR. A. J. WILSON: In the present state of the finances we were hardly justified in providing a lake at Northam for the pleasure of the people. Unless the money was for some more practical purpose it should not be voted.

MR. HORAN: Had this item been recently placed on the Estimates, or was it there before the Government took office?

MR. MITCHELL: The last Premier promised that a considerable amount should be voted for the improvement of this river. It was a necessary work. This was the only item on the Estimates in connection with which it was stipulated that the people should pay half the cost.

MR. LYNCH: The Government should not be called upon to spend £1,000 in making an inland lake at Northam. Only the other day the people at Boulder were unable to get money to rid themselves of the water there.

MR. DAGLISH: With that reckless extravagance which characterised him while holding the position of Treasurer, he was rash enough to promise consideration for this work. If the Minister could show any good reason for it, he was still open to fulfil the promise he made when he held office.

MR. HOLMAN: There was no necessity for a weir at Northam. He failed to see the utility of the work. He moved—

That the item be struck out.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Point Sampson jetty, strengthening spring piles at head, etc., £1,200:

MR. A. J. WILSON: Before the Committee passed the sum of £1,200 for the improvement of the Point Sampson jetty it would be interesting to know what the total cost of the jetty had been to date, and what had been the revenue during the last 12 months, also what prospects there were of revenue from the jetty in future. He was informed the revenue was an infinitesimal amount.

THE MINISTER: If the member would move for a return, the information would be supplied. The engineer recommended that certain repairs should be effected to the jetty, which was damaged by steamers swinging off from it. The jetty required strengthening.

Item—Wannerup Estuary opening, £500:

MR. COLLIER: Could the Minister explain the necessity for this item? Perhaps because it was in the district of Sussex.

THE MINISTER: The Government took over this Wannerup estuary and guaranteed to keep it open. A contract was taken to keep it open, but it was not kept open. This amount would open up the estuary and keep it open.

MR. A. J. WILSON: How much more was it to cost to keep this estuary open? Was it to be an annual cost?

THE MINISTER: No.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—*Water Supply*, £18,640:

Item—Stock Routes, maintenance and minor improvements, £1,500:

MR. HOLMAN: This referred apparently to stock routes generally. In connection with the stock route from Peak Hill to Leonora, he had information which led him to believe that the route was in a very bad condition and that water supplies were very poor. He hoped inquiries would be made.

MR. LYNCH: Was it the practice of the Works Department to send out gangs of men to look after the stock routes, while the Mines Department also sent out gangs? We were informed that in future one gang would look after the water supply on these routes.

THE MINISTER: All stock routes ought to be under one department. The Mines Department controlled the supply of water on the goldfields, and it was a question whether the department should take over all the stock routes. That matter had not been decided.

Item—Water Supply, Broome, Derby, Wyndham and Esperance, maintenance, £1,650:

MR. ISDELL: There was an item, Kimberley to Fitzroy stock route. As showing the carelessness of the department in putting an item like this on the Estimates, he might point out that stating "Kimberley to Fitzroy" was like telling a person to go from Perth to St. George's Terrace.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—*Railway Construction*, £71—agreed to.

Vote—*Miscellaneous*, £2,660:

Item—Perth Markets, maintenance and upkeep, £870:

MR. H. BROWN: When the markets were under the control of the Perth Corporation and Perth was a growing town it was impossible to make them pay;

now he believed a majority of the stalls were let to wholesale people, and owing to the enterprise of the Government Whip these markets were a dying cause. Why should the money be expended?

THE MINISTER: The Government must pay wages, lighting, water rates, repairs and maintenance, and the upkeep of the markets. He admitted the markets were not as profitable an investment as he would like; still the markets were paying £600 or £700 a year profit. The Government could not close them down as long as they paid the interest on the capital.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Buildings, £126,379 :

Item — W.A. Museum, fittings for James Street wing, £1,730 :

MR. HOLMAN: There was a great deal of expenditure in connection with the Museum, the votes having been increased for that institution, and now it was found that £1,730 was to be voted for the James Street wing. He would like some information.

THE MINISTER: This was a large item, but it was over two years since the last cases were supplied to the Museum. Many complaints were received from the public, and any number of exhibits were lying in the vaults of the Museum in their original cases. The whole of the Western Australian fish and reptiles were waiting their proper cases. There were 200 mammal exhibits, 500 foreign birds, a present from the Hon. Walter Rothschild, and a large proportion of the Western Australian mollusca also many other exhibits which required opening up, which at present were lying in their original cases.

Item—Bunbury Court-house, £1,812 :

MR. HOLMAN: Why was such a large amount put down for a court-house at Bunbury?

THE MINISTER: Bunbury was a very old town and the court-house had been in existence for a great number of years. It was an old-fashioned building, the court was very small, and it was in a very insanitary condition. Bunbury had increased enormously as far as the court work was concerned. Of late a great quantity of shipping cases and other

court cases were heard. The work was absolutely necessary, as the court-house had been practically condemned. It would cost £300 to put the building in order, and in a couple of years it would have to be pulled down.

Item—Midland Junction Court-house, £1,474 :

MR. BOLTON: Was this item in consequence of the insanitary condition of the court-house at Midland Junction?

THE MINISTER: There was no court-house at Midland Junction. At present all cases had to be heard in a room 10 by 12. That state of affairs could not be continued.

[4 a.m.]

Items—Broome gaol, new cells, £400; Bunbury gaol, electric light, additions, and renovations, £295; Kalgoorlie gaol, additions, £400 :

MR. HOLMAN called attention to these items. Why did they want an electric light in the gaol at Bunbury?

THE MINISTER: Two new cells with necessary accommodation were required for females. The electric light was very much needed. The cells had to be lighted in some manner, and the electric light was as cheap and very much better than oil or gas.

Item—Busselton, quarters for officer in charge and married constable, and fencing, £976 :

MR. HOLMAN wished to know why such a large amount was needed.

THE MINISTER: There were three cottages in Busselton which were in a very insanitary condition, so much so that only one officer now occupied one of these cottages. The same remark applied to these cottages as to the court-house at Bunbury. A saving of £40 in allowance would be effected when the new quarters were erected.

Item — Yalingup Accommodation House, additions and improvements, £497 :

MR. HOLMAN thought that we should have a 'spell' from any expenditure on these things for the next two or three years, or until the State was in a better financial position than at present. When we could cater for the actual require-

ments of the people he would do all he could to assist in rendering our caves beauty spots to attract visitors, and to make Western Australia a pleasure resort in other respects as well. But until then he must protest against any farther expenditure on these roads and caves.

MR. BATH: Whilst perhaps we might gain in Western Australia by the encouragement of tourists from India and Singapore, as they had done in New Zealand by the development of their tourist department, he believed it necessary to increase the fees charged for seeing the caves. He did not think the people who went there would object to pay more than they paid now. That would help to recoup the State for the expenditure involved in relation to these caves. He would like the Minister also to let us know how the accommodation was panning out.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had not much information as to the accommodation house. This matter was run by the Caves Board. About 12 months ago the Cave House was let, and he believed that since then there had been greater facilities granted and better catering done at the house than previously. At any rate he had not heard any complaints since the new manager had taken it over. At one time we were losing from £8 to £10 per week; it was a perfect scandal; but now the institution was in a fair way to give a small return to the Caves Board. In November, 1904, we took only £27 10s. from the sale of coupons, but in November last the amount received was £127 14s. 6d. Any money we could expend in the direction of opening up these places was well spent.

MR. LYNCH: What was the intention of the Government in relation to abattoirs? The two previous Governments had committed themselves to abattoirs, but abattoirs were now off the list completely.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This question was brought under his notice by the members for Brown Hill, Kalgoorlie, and Ivanhoe. The Government did not intend to go on with the abattoirs at Fremantle, which they considered was very well served at present, and they were considering the question of obtaining information with a view of doing something with regard to abattoirs at

Kalgoorlie. That would be the first work undertaken in regard to abattoirs.

Item—Bunbury Quarantine Station, £600:

MR. HOLMAN: What was the quarantine station at Bunbury for?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Quite recently a vessel arrived from South Africa with cases of bubonic plague on board. At two days' notice the authorities at Bunbury had to erect temporary buildings. Two of the men died. It was decided to make application for this quarantine station. Two years ago the same amount, £600, was passed on the Estimates for the construction of a quarantine station at Bunbury, but such a station had never been built. With the large amount of shipping at Bunbury it was absolutely essential that some provision should be made.

Items—Kalgoorlie Hospital, X-Rays apparatus, £90; Kalgoorlie, laying out and planting hospital grounds, £200:

MR. SCADDAN: The predecessor of the present Minister for Commerce and Labour promised—not to him individually or to the House, but publicly—that a casualty ward should be erected on the Golden Mile for the purpose of receiving patients injured in the mines. He was extremely disappointed when he glanced over the Estimates and found there was no provision made for this.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Who made the promise?

MR. SCADDAN thought that Mr. Johnson made it, and the then Premier (Mr. Daglish) was present when the promise was made. What was desired was that a ward should be built in the centre of the mines, so that when a person or persons were injured, as we knew many were, they would not have to travel $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles over a rough road to be admitted to a hospital. Immediate treatment in the case of an accident was most necessary. There was no difference of opinion on the fields as to the necessity for the construction of this ward. The number of men employed below and above the surface at the mines was 6,149. Of the number of accidents which happened 16 were fatal. Some of those who were seriously injured died afterwards. Ninety-four were seriously in-

jured; that was, they were admitted to hospitals. The total number of accidents, serious and fatal, was 110. A return which he caused to be laid on the table of the House before the close of last session showed that 40 were admitted into the Government Hospital from the whole district, 11 were admitted into the St. John of God Hospital, 12 into Miss Egan's Hospital, and no less than 75 into St. Andrew's Hospital, which was controlled by the doctors in Boulder. A circular was issued, and nearly all the doctors outside the Boulder Hospital replied. One doctor in his reply said it appeared to him a monstrous injustice and inhuman that victims of accidents should be compelled to go some miles before they could receive proper treatment. He showed the necessity of injured persons having treatment immediately. It was necessary to have a hospital among the mines where a nurse could be in attendance, and when those injured persons had sufficiently recovered they could be removed and the ward could be closed up again.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was the first he had heard about a casualty ward. Looking through his list of requirements he could not find any reference to it. If members would furnish him with particulars he would have the matter looked into to see what had become of it. Either there was no record of the promise having been made or the authorities had cut it off as being unnecessary. He would inquire into the matter and see.

MR. BATH said the matter would be brought under the Minister's notice.

MR. HUDSON: Mr. Johnson gave a distinct promise that the ward should be built, and a committee which had been appointed was disbanded, so certain was that committee that provision would be made on the Estimates this year. The Committee was much disappointed.

Item—Perth old police courts, conversion into offices, £400:

MR. DAGLISH: Some two or three years ago the then Premier made a promise to the Perth City Council to the effect that these city court buildings should be handed to the City Council for the purpose of enabling them to build a town hall, on condition that they ex-

pend within a given term a certain amount of money; but the promise made by Mr. James was qualified by the statement that before the transfer of this land was made Parliament would be consulted. Subsequently when he (Mr. Daglish) was in office he was approached by the member for Perth on this question, and he told the hon. member his opinion, an opinion which he still held, that the whole of that square from Cathedral Avenue to Barrack Street in one direction, and from St. George's Terrace to Hay Street in the other, should be retained for the purpose of Government offices. It seemed to him a scandal that any part of that square should be parted with by the Government for any purpose whatsoever; but as soon as the present Government came into office the present Premier promised to hand over to the Perth City Council without consulting Parliament the particular property on which these police court offices stood. He desired very strongly to protest against any such action, and to say it seemed to him no less an infraction of the powers, rights, and privileges of Parliament to hand over the land, which represented considerable value, without consulting this House, than it would be for the Premier without consulting this House to hand over any given sum of money. Some people quibbled in regard to the question whether Parliament had been consulted, and said that when Mr. James was in power he came to the House and threw the papers relating to this matter on the table, and that this fact justified the statement that he consulted Parliament. Consultation of Parliament, however, meant something more than laying papers on the table of the House. It meant that some definite proposition should be placed before the House; that members should be asked to express an opinion and give a vote either for or against the proposition. Though he (Mr. Daglish) sat in the House at the time the papers were laid on the table, it was not until he took office and had occasion to refer to the file that he knew the papers were there. He was satisfied that more than half the members in the House at the time were equally lacking in knowledge in that respect; but they trusted the then Premier and his col-

league the present Premier, who was then Minister for Works. They believed that when the promise was given that Parliament should be consulted the Government would fulfil that promise to the fullest extent. He demanded that the present Premier should now justify the trust reposed in him. [THE PREMIER: Let us have no demand.] He would "ask," if it would be more likely to induce the Premier to do his duty to the State. He would ask the Premier before taking any action in this matter to allow the House an opportunity of dealing with this question. He asked him to come forward, before the session closed, if he intended immediate action, with a definite proposition, and, before he parted with this valuable public asset, to give this House a chance of either empowering him to do so or instructing him to refrain from doing so. The proper course for the Government to take was to endeavour to come to some arrangement with the City Council whereby we could acquire for the State that property on which the existing Perth Town Hall stood; because it seemed to him it would be of much greater advantage to acquire that site, both to the city of Perth, supposing fair value were given, and to the State, than it would be either to one party or the other to the transaction to hand over the old court offices for the purpose of erecting a new town hall. The present town hall site was not suitable for a town hall, but was eminently suitable for Government offices. We could not afford to part with any offices the Government now held. If the old court offices were given up, the officers must be housed elsewhere at a possible expenditure of £800 a year. The Government should endeavour to acquire, at a reasonable price, the site of the present town hall. When he (Mr. Daglish) was Premier, the City Council were not prepared to sell at such a price; but they might now be amenable to reason, and the Government, before taking any decisive action, should give the council another chance.

THE PREMIER: The last speaker's remarks were surprising. There was no need to demand information, or for the hon. member to instruct him in his duty. Did not the hon. member make an offer for the present town hall site, and did he

have the authority of Parliament to make that offer?

MR. DAGLISH: It was subject to the approval of Parliament.

THE PREMIER: A Minister should not play fast and loose with any public body. The file disclosed that when the papers were laid on the table he (the Premier) was Minister for Works in the James Government, and repeatedly asked Mr. James what action was to be taken regarding the police court buildings and site. The instructions were to lay the papers on the table, showing the promise made to the City Council. The papers did lie on the table during the whole of the session, and then came back to the Works Department. He minuted them on to Mr. James, and asked what farther action should be taken. The instruction was that, as no exception had been taken to the proposal, the title deed was to be prepared and kept in safe custody by the department until the City Council carried out their part of the agreement. What would the hon. member think of him if he (the Premier) had served under him, had received instructions, carried them out, and then adopted a course totally at variance with those instructions?

MR. DAGLISH: The instructions were wrong.

THE PREMIER: Probably the hon. member's colleagues had frequently carried out wrong instructions; but he had expected them to 'carry out the instructions, whether right or wrong.

MR. DAGLISH: No.

THE PREMIER: Every member should look carefully through the files for himself; and all must then agree that he (the Premier) had done his duty honestly. No one had a right to bamboozle any public body. The City Council had, not once but repeatedly, been promised that site. The whole square on which the town hall and Government buildings stood once belonged to the Perth municipality; so the hon. member should not be so ready to make accusations of hasty promises, when a little investigation would show him that the promises had been made repeatedly.

MR. DAGLISH had not accused the Premier of any wrong or dishonest action, or breach of duty. The point was whether Parliament had to be consulted before such valuable gifts were

conferred on any municipality. Mr. James, when Premier, had repeatedly promised the House that Parliament should be consulted before this land was given away. Had Parliament been consulted? Members who heard that promise expected a definite motion to be submitted before definite action was taken. If it were wrong to play fast and loose with the City Council, it was equally wrong to do so with Parliament. The Premier should keep faith with the House.

MR. H. BROWN: Mr. James promised the City Council the town hall site, in consideration of the council spending £30,000 on a suitable building. The gift was a kind of solatium for making the rising suburb of Subiaco, to which Perth gave some hundreds of acres of land.

MR. DAGLISH: Which Perth never possessed.

MR. H. BROWN: Which Perth did possess, in and around Subiaco. The present Premier, then Minister for Works, would not endorse the action of Mr. James until the papers were tabled, thus enabling the House to consent to granting the town hall site to the City Council, which not only agreed to spend £30,000 on the building, but wrote to the then Premier promising to spend £50,000. Credit was due to the present Premier for tabling the papers, so that no future Government could object that the grant was *ultra vires*. The Premier had done all he could to preserve the rights of Parliament, and the City Council had recently agreed to spend on the town hall £60,000, in order to have a building creditable to the city of Perth.

MR. DAGLISH moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £10.

MR. H. BROWN: Before this expenditure was incurred, he repeated to the member for Subiaco the promise of the Premier and the Minister for Works, pointing out that it was a waste of public money to convert the premises into offices for the Central Board of Health, when the City Council was ready to take over the site and to erect a new town hall. The council was still willing to erect a building immediately.

MR. EREBBER drew attention to the action of the member for Subiaco with

respect to the Perth town hall. Sir John Forrest offered for the town hall £40,000 and a site valued at £17,000; a total of £57,000. The City Council did not think it advisable to build on the site offered, but preferred the present site, which however was too small; hence the desire to get the land covered by the old police court. The council, and he believed the citizens, recognised that this was not the best town hall site, and offered to sell the site for a reasonable sum to the Daglish Government, who offered for it £31,000. The whole of the prosperity of Subiaco depended on its proximity to Perth; and every particle of public land given to that municipality was derived from the Perth Commonage, as the records of the city and of Parliament would show. The sites for the Subiaco Lunatic Asylum, the Small-pox Hospital, the Rifle Range, the Agricultural College and Agricultural Grounds, had all belonged to Perth, having been held under a Crown grant; and one of the most eminent barristers in Perth said that the Perth council had an indisputable title thereto. But Parliament pilfered as much as they could of the Commonage till it was practically of no value; and now the House would even take the present town hall site! In common justice that site should be given to Perth, together with a very substantial sum for the erection of a town hall worthy of the city.

MR. FOULKES: The Government were accused of being unduly generous in giving Perth the site of the old police court. Certainly it was a valuable site, but was given on condition that the council erected a town hall on which the council purposed spending £60,000. In other words, the people of Perth, far from receiving a gift, would have to pay £2,400 a year in perpetuity as the interest on that sum. The citizens would not be any the better.

MR. BOLTON: What about the rent derivable from the town hall building?

MR. FOULKES doubted whether the council would be allowed to let any part of it. The town hall would be used for political purposes, and would be a dead loss to Perth. The ratepayers would ultimately regret their huge expenditure on a town hall.

MR. DAGLISH: The members for Perth (Mr. Brown), North Perth (Mr. Brebber), and he were at variance because he insulted the City Council by having the town hall valued and making an offer according to the valuation. The City Council wished to sell at their own valuation, and he wished to buy at a fair valuation.

MR. H. BROWN: It was Stronach v. Victor.

MR. DAGLISH: The council offered to sell for £67,000.

MR. H. BROWN: On Victor's valuation.

MR. DAGLISH: The Government then had the property valued, and found that its true value was some £31,000.

MR. H. BROWN: Stronach, the valuer, had no experience.

MR. DAGLISH: The Government, acting on the advice of that experienced officer, offered a fair price for the site.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Illingworth): This discussion was entirely out of order, but he had allowed it because of its importance.

Amendment—that the item be reduced by £10—put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	15
Noes	...	...	22

Majority against ... 7

AYES.
Mr. Burnett
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Collier
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Holman
Mr. Horan
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Layman
Mr. Lynch
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Stone
Mr. Troy
Mr. Ware
Mr. A. J. Wilson
Mr. Bath (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Brebber
Mr. Brown
Mr. Carson
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Gull
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Isdell
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Price
Mr. Rason
Mr. Smith
Mr. Veryard
Mr. Frank Wilson
Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item—North Fremantle Institute, special grant, £250:

MR. HOLMAN: Why should North Fremantle be singled out for a special grant?

MR. BOLTON: This was a special grant to increase the accommodation to the institute at North Fremantle.

Vote (total for Public Works Department) put and passed.

[5 a.m.]

[MR. DAGLISH took the Chair.]

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS (HON. N. J. MOORE, Minister).

Vote—Lands and Surveys, £123,990:

GENERAL STATEMENT.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. N. J. Moore): In discussing the items in connection with the Lands Department last year, I did not anticipate that 12 months later I would have the honour of introducing the Estimates for 1905, but had I anticipated it, I do not think the criticism I made at that time would have been in any way altered. I think that members who have perused my speeches will see that the reforms I advocated while in Opposition I have endeavoured to bring into force since I have been Minister. One of the most gratifying features in connection with these Estimates is the fact that there is a reduction of £19,471 in the administration of the Lands and Surveys Department. I am pleased to say that land selection is being well maintained. In 1903-4 there were 5,643 blocks selected, aggregating 1,278,928 acres; in 1904-5 there were 5,601 selections aggregating 1,015,763 acres; while for the first five months of this year, there have been 2,539 selections, aggregating 514,861 acres. These figures would have been considerably inflated had we decided to continue granting grazing leases; but grazing leases have been hung up for some time, the Government having decided not to grant further grazing leases until arrears in conditional purchase inspections are up to date. The land revenue for 1904-5 was £177,309, while from the first July to the 16th December of this year £89,655 has been received; so that the revenue which the Premier anticipates to receive, £186,100, or an increase of something like £10,000 on last year, will possibly be reached. The expenditure Parliament is asked to authorise this year is £123,990, as against £143,461 last year. Under the timber regulations brought into force last year, it is anticipated that the revenue

from royalties, as against the system of licenses previously in force, will increase by something exceeding £2,000. It will be recognised that the special effort being made to settle people on the land has necessarily incurred a heavy expenditure. Land settlement has reached a stage when the greatest vigilance must be used to see that the conditions under which the land is held are carried out. In the eagerness to secure land settlement in past years, there has been considerable laxity in regard to inspection. We will endeavour, as far as possible, to see that the officers engaged in inspection work carry out their duties, and no effort will be wanting on my own part to see that this is done. The small Bill passed recently will have a beneficial effect in the manner stated. In regard to the Surveys branch, members will notice that the item "Surveys generally" has been reduced by £7,000. The reduction really is even more than this amount, as the items "Topographical surveys" and "Surveys, Kimberley," which appeared as separate items on last year's Estimates, have been merged into "Surveys generally." For the information of members I would like to say that for 1904 the surveys made were:—1,284,380 acres rural land, 1,681 miles roads, and 1,730 town lots; and for the ten months of 1905 to 31st October the figures are:—1,276,242 acres rural lands, 1,406 miles roads, and 1,711 town lots. Hon. members will thus see that the surveys for the ten months of this year practically amount to the same as the twelve months of last year. There are 36 staff and contract surveyors employed, and the value of the work at present in hand is £10,119, equal to £281 per man. This is the lowest average that has been reached for some years, the amount for last year being £530 per man. It means the value of the instructions in the hands of contract surveyors and surveyors in the field amounts to £281 now as against £530 last year.

MR. HUDSON: Does that mean less settlement?

THE MINISTER: No; it means that the surveys are practically up to date. In 1904 £44,087 was paid on account of contract surveys, and for first ten months of this year £34,970. In the Inspector of Plans' Branch the work done for 1904 was:—5,418 diagrams passed, 264 plans

passed, and 5,214 instructions issued. For the first ten months of this year the figures are:—5,104 diagrams passed, 443 plans passed, and 4,257 instructions issued. Although the survey work for 1904 was about double that of the previous year, it is evident that the present year is to be a record so far as survey work is concerned. In addition to the foregoing, classifications on an extensive scale have been carried out in parts of the South-Western Division, more especially between the two rabbit-proof fences, where a classification of something like a million acres has been carried out, principally by Mr. Fox, who has just returned after a trip of eight months, and by Mr. Rae and other surveyors. I am glad to report that Mr. Fox states there is a very excellent area of good land east of the rabbit-proof fence, and I hope ere long it will be selected for wheat-growing. Mr. Crossland, who is engaged on an extensive triangulation survey in the North-West, has just returned. He has been working eastward of the Leopold Range and opening up a track across that range. I feel sure that the information gained will be of great value in opening up this rich district. Members will be interested to learn that the cost per acre of the office staff in issuing instructions and passing plans is considerably less than it has been for some years, having been reduced to 1½d. per acre. In regard to departmental work, a considerable amount of adverse criticism has been levelled during recent years. While admitting that no doubt at times much of the criticism is justified, considering the enormous amount of business transacted I think it is not to be wondered at that very often delays occur. In the Correspondence Branch alone during 1904, 37,417 letters were received as against 44,562 to the 25th November of this year. The number of letters despatched by the department in 1904 was 78,597, as compared with 76,587 to the 25th November of this year. These do not represent the whole of the inward and outward correspondence, as applications on formal matters, instructions to surveyors and amendments to boundaries are not included in that return. Turning to the Land Selection Branch, which is really the hub of the department, there are 50 officers employed, 35 being in the office at a cost

in salaries of £5,900 a year, and 15 in the field at a cost of £5,610 a year, or a total annual cost of £11,510. The work of the field officers for 1904 and the first six months of 1905 was as follows: 1904—Agricultural Bank inspections, 723; other inspections, 1,839. For the first six months of this year—Agricultural Bank inspections, 486; other inspections, 1,917. The number of transfers and mortgages dealt with for the same periods were: 1904—2,410 transfers, 2,589 mortgages; first six months of 1905: 1,227 transfers, 1,660 mortgages. In the preparation of deeds and that sort of thing, a considerable amount of work has been involved. I have effected one little economy which, though not great, will mount up very considerably. I refer to the alteration in the size of Crown grants. Those who have had dealings with the Lands Office will recollect that the Crown grant is a very unwieldy document. We have reduced its size to about half, and this will save £50 a thousand in parchment alone and at the same time it will do away with the services of one draftsman. In the Collector of Lands Revenue division the 19 officers' salaries amount to £3,330, to deal with 36,000 customers. In addition to the ordinary work, half-yearly lists of all amounts payable and half-yearly and quarterly lists of all amounts outstanding are prepared, also statistical information for the Statistical Registrars in this State and the Eastern States. During the last few weeks a new system of accounts has been inaugurated in connection with the department, and Mr. Keltz, the late chief accountant of the Public Works Department, has been appointed to the position of accountant of the Lands and Surveys Branch. New books have been opened according to a scheme suggested by the Auditor General and Under Treasurer. This has necessitated appointing several additional men, but it is anticipated that some temporary assistance will be dispensed with at a later period. I think I have said enough to show that there is a great deal of work in connection with this department; and when it is realised that this enormous amount of work is in one office, members will understand that delays will often occur. This leads up to a most important proposal in regard

to administration. I refer to decentralisation. If carried out it will have the effect of distributing the work from the central office to different districts where selections can be dealt with more expeditiously. However, such an important change as this will be most carefully weighed; and in fixing the new lands districts where central offices may be established, it will be necessary to have the fullest possible information. In regard to the work of settlement, I referred yesterday to the success attending the Nangeenan settlement. I am sorry to say the same success has not attended the establishment at Hamel; but I hope there are better times in store for that settlement. The Woods and Forests Department is now under the Lands Administration, and the work of this branch has been altered considerably during the last year by the provisions of an Act passed in December of last year. An advisory board was appointed to advise concerning matters in the Forestry Department; and the board's work has given satisfaction. It was felt there was great necessity to have men as advisers who had had experience from all points of view. A representative board of three saw-millers was appointed, a representative of the saw-mill owners in the person of Mr. Port, and a representative of the hewing industry in the person of Mr. Adams. The late Government did me the honour to ask me to accept the chairmanship of that board, and I carried out the duties until the change of Government. I am pleased to say that the timber industry seems now to have turned the corner to a large extent. Both sleeper-hewers and mill-owners seem to have their hands pretty full, and orders appear to be coming in every day. It gave me great pleasure the other day, in looking over a copy of the *Timber Traders' Journal*, to see where a report had been sent home from Mr. Gunderson, the Norwegian Consul in Melbourne, to the effect that our jarrah scantling was to a large extent supplanting Norwegian softwoods in Melbourne. If we can manage to get the scantling trade established in Victoria, it will do a considerable amount of good; and I hope the forecast of Mr. Gunderson will be realised. Members will notice that four additional rangers have been appointed to carry out the

provision of this Act; but there will be a considerable increase in revenue in the receipts in connection with royalties. In regard to the Agricultural Department, members will recollect that quite recently, under the late Government, the portfolios of Lands and Agriculture were under separate Ministers; but it was decided by the present Premier, in forming his Cabinet, that one Minister should control both departments. The subject of agriculture is closely allied to that of land settlement; it is hard to see where the functions of one ends and the other begins. Then in the Agricultural Department, a most important change was effected during the last twelve months in the appointment by the late Government of Mr. Chaplin to the position of Director. Mr. Chaplin was selected from a considerable number of applicants, a board having been appointed to reduce the number to three. Mr. Chaplin has shown undoubted energy, and we all hope that his administration of the Agricultural Department will be a benefit to the State generally. Under the new arrangement, it was found that the services of certain officers could be dispensed with; and the office of assistant entomologist was abolished. Also the botanist and two orchard inspectors have been retired. It was found that there is not so much necessity for the inspectors now, as orchardists seem to realise the necessity of acquainting the department of any possibility of disease among their fruit trees. It is our intention to encourage horse-breeding as far as possible; and we hope, during the next year, to take some step to see if it is possible to establish a horse-breeding station. We realise that there is a splendid market for horses, not only within but outside the State; and we hope to be able to give an impetus to stock-raising. Quite recently the question of parasites has cropped up; and in this connection the gentleman in charge of the department has been subjected to rather severe criticism. No doubt the success that has attended the introduction of the parasite that destroys such garden pests as the cabbage aphids and moths has made it possible to grow cabbages in the vicinity of Perth. I have had experience of that myself; and the department has had any amount of correspondence from all over Western Australia speaking in appre-

ciative terms of the work done by Mr. Compere. It may not be out of place to state that the Governor of California, in delivering his speech at the opening of the State Parliament, made the following remarks:—

Perhaps the most important horticultural fact yet brought to light is that predacious insects, while in their native habitat and attended by their natural adversaries, are never or seldom so injurious to plant life as to make any form of husbandry unprofitable. It is only when one insect is imported without the company of its natural enemy that the balance of nature is disturbed, and injury inflicted on agricultural and horticultural production. To such advantage has this fact been employed in California, and mainly through the assiduous efforts of the State Horticultural Office, that the once dreaded San José scale is now rendered almost powerless for evil, and the various forms of orange scale are fast disappearing from the orchards. It is a reasonable estimate that the *Scutellista Cyanea*, which is clearing the trees of black scale, has proven itself worth a round million dollars to our Commonwealth, and it is hardly too much to say that the *Vedalia Cardinalis* rescued the great citrus fruit industry from imminent danger and destruction through the cottony cushion scale. Through an arrangement effected by the Horticultural Commissioner with the Government of West Australia, George Compere, the Entomologist, was sent during the past year upon an extended journey in South America, Europe, and Asia Minor at the joint expense of these two States. His principal mission, so far as this State is concerned, was to discover a parasite for the codlin moth, an insect so destructive that it has been estimated it takes annually 45 per cent. of the pear and apple crop. Mr. Compere thinks he has found parasites which will destroy the codlin moth, and he has sent to Commissioner Elwood Cooper colonies of these insects, which are now being bred and will be placed in the orchards next season. If the results hoped for are secured, every dollar expended in this enterprise will be returned a thousandfold.

I think that is evidence that Mr. Compere's work is being recognised outside Australia. An important division under this department is the Rabbit Branch. We all recognise this as one of the gravest problems the Government have to grapple with. Already a sum of £183,713 has been spent in the construction of 1,500 miles of fencing. The cost of the up-keep to date has been £22,783, the cost last year being £7,000. It is anticipated this year the cost will be £14,500. As the Premier has stated, the Government asked Mr. Day to report

on the rabbit question, and Mr. Day compiled a report which has now been handed to the Government. I have not had an opportunity of perusing that report, but in the main Mr. Day is satisfied indeed with the construction of the fence, and has made several recommendations which it will be my duty to take into my earnest consideration with a view to doing all we possibly can to combat this terrible invasion. I do not know that I need say more in connection with my department. If members peruse the Estimates of the department they will find that every attempt has been made to economise, and I do not think it will be found that any reduction of any item can possibly be made in the Estimates.

[Discussion ensued on the Lands Estimates generally.]

MR. BATH: The Minister in introducing the Estimates had supplied the Committee with interesting information. The present Minister had not had a long opportunity of becoming acquainted with the work, but he had given evidence of enthusiasm in connection with land settlement, and a desire to promote it. The Minister had also brought to bear practical knowledge which would be useful in the active administration of the Lands Department. The Minister had referred to the reduction of the Estimates; but by reference to the draft Estimates left behind when he (Mr. Bath) vacated the department, it would be seen that a reduction of £18,000 or £19,000 was provided for. He relied to a large extent on the recommendations of his officers, especially in the survey department. He was glad of the assurance of the Minister that, although there was to be a reduction in the survey department, he would be able to keep the work of that department up. The Estimates had also been reduced owing to the fact that surveys in the Kimberleys were not provided for. On the Estimates there was a reduction of £2,000 for providing water through agricultural lands. This was false economy. He believed the Minister would have been well advised if he had retained the same amount as was fixed last year, £3,000, of which £2,920 was expended. In his (Mr. Bath's) brief experience of the Lands Department he

found the work undertaken at Cowcowing, and an area to the east of Wagin, in connection with the provision of water for the settlers for a year or two, was good work, and to reduce that sum by £2,000 and making a miserable provision of £1,000 was false economy. Whatever reduction might have taken place elsewhere, there should not have been any reduction in this amount. We should assist the settlers for the first year or two, and after preliminary work had been got over they would be able to provide their own water supply. In these areas, where the summer was dry the settlers had a hard time unless the Government assisted them to secure water. There was another point to which he wished to refer, the large percentage monopolised by incidentals. In his small experience in the Lands Department he found that although the sums were small in themselves, when added together they amounted to a considerable percentage of the total. If economy were effected in this direction, great good would be done. It would materially reduce the Estimates yearly without militating against the success of the good work of the department. The Minister had referred to the fact that an alteration had been made in the Accountancy department and the employment of temporary hands had increased the cost of the lands and surveys branch. If we were to judge by the Auditor General as to the method of accounting in the branch, some alteration was necessary. It was stated that under the system any fraud could be perpetrated without discovery, and it was due to the honesty of the officers and of their loyalty that frauds had not taken place in the past. Every Minister from Dr. Jameson downwards had their say about decentralisation, and each one had expressed approval; still the question had been left to their successors to deal with. He believed decentralisation was an advantage, but those who laboured under the idea that we in Western Australia should superimpose on our system a system like they had in New Zealand were making a big mistake. After all New Zealand had from its inception, before the abolition of the provincial government, a system of decentralisation, and it only needed a little work to complete the system to make it fitted for the

needs of New Zealand. Their lands department was built up on that system and the people were accustomed to it, and no difficulty was experienced. When New Zealand was combined under one Government certain alterations had to be made, and the public were accustomed to the system of decentralisation. In Western Australia we had centralisation undoubtedly in administration, and although we had had a scheme put forward to bring about a change, when it was settled with increased expenditure the system might prove a failure without any added advantage. He (Mr. Bath) initiated one or two reforms in the shape of decentralisation when he was in the department, as he thought it would be better to go slowly and accustom the people to the system than make the change in one fell swoop. There was one matter which he wished to refer to. Quite recently, owing to the illness of the chief inspector of lands, an acting inspector was appointed, and the person appointed was an officer of the department, Mr. W. W. Thompson. He would like to refer the Minister for Lands to the fact that a few months ago this officer was suspended owing to charges brought against him, and the Public Service Commissioner held an inquiry and a certain recommendation was made. The officer was shifted from one centre to another and a small punishment inflicted. Whatever length of service this officer might have had, this should not have influenced the Minister in making the appointment, and the Minister should have appointed another officer as acting chief inspector of lands. The Minister had referred to the necessity for keeping the inspection work up to date, and in the course of some remarks made at Subiaco the Minister pointed to the fact that although we had 11 million acres of land alienated only $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions were under cultivation. That was a serious condition of affairs, and he believed it could only be remedied by insisting on the labour conditions under which the lands were held being faithfully carried out. He was glad to know the Minister was in favour of this, and intended to set about the task at the earliest possible moment. He would like to compare the Minister's proposals in regard to lands with the proposals of the Minister for Mines in regard to mining propositions. The

Minister for Mines instead of insisting on the conditions being carried out intended to relax them. In regard to the Woods and Forrest Branch, he wished to refer to some proceedings which had taken place prior to the time he took office, and during the term he was in the Lands Department. It was in regard to the terms and conditions and the observance of the conditions under which timber leases were held. He believed timber companies held areas without carrying out the conditions. Mr. Drew, who occupied the position of Minister for Lands in the last Administration, took some steps to see that the conditions were carried out and that if the conditions were not carried out the leases should be forfeited. In some instances it was desirable to concentrate work on one particular lease, but there were leases held to exclude others from working them. Mr. Drew took action, but owing to the fact that rent had been received the leases could not be forfeited. On the 1st July, knowing this had taken place, action had to be stayed owing to the fact that rents had been received; therefore the right of forfeiture had been waived, and he (Mr. Bath) gave instructions that no rents were to be received until the matter was settled. The Crown Solicitor's opinion was obtained as to whether the leases could be forfeited or not, and he stated that the proper course to pursue was to have the question decided in the Supreme Court as there was a legal doubt in the matter. He (Mr. Bath) gave instructions for that to be done, but he was astonished to find that the Minister who succeeded him gave instructions that these proceedings were to be discontinued and rents were to be received. He was always under the impression that the present Minister was against the holding of leases which were unworked and the conditions not observed, and he was astonished at the action which was in the direction of preventing the steps which he (Mr. Bath) had taken from being carried out. In regard to the much discussed question of insect pests, we had had the disclosures made in the newspapers recently, and he believed the opinions of the people in the community were that we wasted a considerable sum of money in sending Mr. Compere round the world to attempt to obtain parasites of some of the insect pests.

He (Mr. Bath) knew that the present Minister when he occupied a seat on the Opposition benches was very sarcastic at the expense of Mr. Compere, who he used to designate as the bug-hunter, and the hon. member had said that the money which was being spent in this direction would be better spent in another direction. He was glad to find that there was a change of front on the part of the Minister. Whatever opinions we might hold as to the controversy between Mr. Compere and the entomologist brought from England, the fact remained that the latter officer came out with the best credentials; he was chosen on the recommendation of eminent entomologists in the old country, and his opinions carried weight. This officer laid it down in a statement to the Press that much of the work undertaken by Mr. Compere was useless as far as the State was concerned.

THE MINISTER: He did not say so two months ago.

MR. BATH: The fact remained that he was not very enthusiastic in the other direction. In the first place he had to feel his way in a new country, therefore he was not competent to give an opinion at an early date. His opinions now, considering his credentials, should carry some weight. Perhaps in some directions Mr. Compere's work had been successful, but the journeyings of Mr. Compere had led to expense that was not of general benefit to the community. One recognised the Minister was new to his department, and his enthusiasm and his desire to carry out reform and to initiate a scheme for the employment of labour on the land, on which we placed new farmers, entitled him to a fair trial and if we gave him that fair trial no doubt he would endeavour to administer the Lands Department to the advantage of the State. During the recess which the Minister would enjoy he would have an opportunity of carrying out reforms, and if he did not do what was expected of him he would receive short shrift during the next session of Parliament.

MR. HORAN: There was little to say, except that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned one subject which the public had taken an interest in lately, that was in reference to the Entomologist. From the newspapers he observed that Mr.

Lowe was under the direction of Mr. Compere, and it was noticed that he had been distributing certain batches of parasites, and much to his (Mr. Horan's) surprise he found that according to the newspapers these parasites had been liberated, with only one exception, in Adelaide Terrace at a certain address. They had not been found at that same address since. He might also inquire if these were aristocratic parasites, or why were they liberated in Adelaide Terrace and not somewhere else where they could perform some immediate good? Were we going to allow our unscientific leg to be pulled by someone named Compere? It was said this gentleman was mostly kept by the Californian Government, but he appeared to hold the most rosy position of anyone in this State. He seemed to come here occasionally, and Mr. Lowe mentioned that when Mr. Compere had time to visit the place he gave certain instructions, and then disappeared to parts unknown, came back again with 11 ladybirds on one occasion, which he gave to a Chinaman at Leederville. One did not know if the Government were to spend sums of money in assisting Chinamen at Leederville, or whether we should spend sums of money in providing world-wide excursions for Mr. Compere. We wanted something more than the mere opinions of the man himself about his work. Two men had come together, one having come from an English college possessed of the highest credentials from the highest authorities; Mr. Compere selected that gentleman himself and the Minister appointed him, and we found these two experts differed seriously on important features of Mr. Compere's work.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was digressing somewhat. This was a general discussion and the member must not confine himself to one item, which he would have an opportunity of discussing later on.

MR. HORAN: The probabilities were that he would not be present.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was given a large amount of latitude. When the general discussion was on members must deal generally. If the member wished to deal with a special item like Entomologists, he must wait until that item came on.

MR. HORAN appreciated the action of the Minister for Lands in trying to assist settlers in the State, and he thought that as far as this Parliament was concerned we had a Minister who would adequately carry out the wishes of Parliament.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS thanked members for their generous criticism, and in regard to the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition as to the appointment of the senior inspector, he engaged Mr. Thompson, but had not had an opportunity of dealing with the file as to the previous inquiry. This officer was strongly recommended, and was sent to him during the month the inspector was laid up. With regard to the points raised by the member for Yilgarn, he (the Minister) had referred to the fact that Mr. Compere's services had been recognised in other places, and apparently from the correspondence received from orchardists and others they also appreciated his services. In regard to the item Margaret-Yallingup Caves, only £1,000 was provided this year. There had been a reduction of £2,000 on last year's estimate. This sum was granted to the Caves Board to pay the salaries of the staff, and effect necessary work to make the caves more get-at-able.

MR. HORAN: What did the Caves Board do with their income?

THE MINISTER: That was expended in additions and alterations to the caves. There was certain work in providing ladders and opening new caves.

Item—Yauchep Caves, Grant to Board, £300:

MR. HOLMAN: Where were these caves?

THE MINISTER: These were new caves at Wauneroo. A board had been established there, and had made an application for a large sum. It was pointed out that it would take £300 to open up the caves. The caves board consisted of the chairman of the roads board of the district and the members who constituted the Yallingup caves board.

MR. HOLMAN: Were the caves any good?

THE MINISTER: Although these caves were not as beautiful as the Yallingup caves, they were accessible to more people than were the Yallingup caves.

[6 a.m.]

Item—Freight and fares advanced to new settlers, £500:

MR. COLLIER: In what way was this money expended? The fact that the country had to advance money to intending settlers did not seem to show that these settlers would be permanent.

THE MINISTER explained that there was a decrease in this item of £500. The sum was provided for the purpose of advancing railway fares to selectors in certain cases, to be repaid by bills at 12 and 24 months. There was very little business done in this direction, and the item was constantly being reduced.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—*Woods and Forests*, £6,768:

Item—Incidentals, including postages, stationery, travelling, advertising, etc., £1,000:

MR. BATH: This sum was nearly 25 per cent. of the total amount of the vote.

THE MINISTER: The increase was necessary owing to the fact that additional rangers were appointed, and the extra money was required in connection with travelling expenses for rangers, buying horses for new rangers, etc.

Put and passed.

Vote—*Agriculture*, £50,775:

Item—Veterinary Surgeon, £325:

MR. HOLMAN: Was this veterinary surgeon allowed to do outside work in competition with other veterinary surgeons? Previously there were two veterinary surgeons engaged by the Government, but this year there was only one. He was informed that this veterinary surgeon worked against others who had no Government practice.

THE MINISTER: As far as his information went, the officer was not allowed to do so. If it were found that he did, a stop would be put to it immediately.

Item—Chief Inspector, £500:

MR. HUDSON: The South-East portion of this State was practically eaten out by rabbits, and the fences were on this side of that district. Some assistance should be given to the settlers on

the other side, and he suggested that the Chief Inspector be asked to report and see whether a scheme might not be arranged by which such aid could be granted; such a scheme as obtained in Victoria, where wire was advanced to settlers for the enclosure of their ground upon easy terms. He assumed the Government were buying this wire, and that they were getting it at a very much lower rate than an average selector would be able to obtain it for.

THE MINISTER: The State at present advanced wire netting on much the same conditions as those suggested. The Government had under consideration the question whether the same system could not be adopted as existed in South Australia at the present time, whereby repayment could be made extending over 20 years. He believed that the payment of £7 7s. 2d. per cent. per year for 20 years would pay interest and sinking fund and the capital involved in the charges on the wire netting.

Item—Rabbits, Chief Inspector, £500

MR. HOLMAN: Was it intended to appoint this officer? [**MINISTER:** Yes.] Would the officer be stationed in Perth, or what would be his duties? This was a big salary to pay to an inspector of rabbits, when two other inspectors already appointed were getting £600 a year between them.

THE MINISTER: The Government at present had made no appointment. When they had done so the man in the Public Works Department would have to go back to his own work in the Engineering Branch. This inspector would take charge of the erection and maintenance of the fence, and also have charge of rabbit destruction. He (the Minister) did not propose that if this officer were appointed he should live in Perth. His work would take him to all parts of the State, and it would be his duty to see that the boundary riders were carrying out their work in a proper manner.

MR. HORAN: The amount was rather exorbitant.

THE MINISTER: There was capital involved to the extent of something like £300,000. The position was a very important one, and he did not think we could get a good man for less than the

sum specified. In fact the recommendation of the Agricultural Department was to get a man to fill the billet at £750, but he could not see his way clear to make provision for that, and he put down £500 on the Estimates.

MR. HUDSON did not see the necessity for this officer. Already there were two inspectors at £300 a year each. He did not know whether the Minister knew the rabbits were on this side of the fence. He moved—

That the item be struck out.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	7
Noes	...	...	...	20

Majority against ... 13

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnett	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Bath	Mr. Carson
Mr. Collier	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Horan	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Scaddan (Teller).	Mr. Gregory
	Mr. Gull
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Hicks
	Mr. Illingworth
	Mr. Isdell
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. Varyand
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Price (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—*Agricultural Bank*, £2,953—agreed to.

This concluded the votes for Lands and Agriculture.

COMMERCE AND LABOUR DEPARTMENT (Hon. J. S. Hicks, Minister).

Vote—*Commerce and Labour*, £6,295:

THE MINISTER: I have not very much to say on this, because the items on the Estimates sufficiently explain themselves. As members will see, there is a slight increase this year of £965, and although there is an increase I regret very much to say that none of the officers in this department has received an increase. Several of them highly deserve an increase, and I have no doubt that if our finances improve in the coming year they will receive an increase. There

are four junior clerks to be appointed. The increases are chiefly due to the administration of the Factories Act. As members know, the Factories Act only came into force last January, consequently very much money could not be spent, there being only six months to run, whereas this year there will be the full 12 months, and that accounts for the increase. With regard to incidentals under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration and kindred Acts, the amount has been lowered from £1,850 to £1,400, this latter amount being made up as follows:—Travelling allowance to members of court £500, railway fares for court £100, reporting £300, stationery £25, postage £50, telephone £9, printing and forms £300, sundries £116. In addition, the fees paid to the two lay members of the court of arbitration are at the rate of £6 per week. They first started at £2 per sitting. The estimated revenue in reference to this department is £550, made up as follows:—Friendly societies £25, industrial (other than factories) £50, factories £475.

[Discussion ensued generally.]

[MR. ILLINGWORTH took the Chair.]

MR. BATH: Where did the commercial branch come in, in this department?

MR. HOLMAN was sorry the increase in the department was not a great deal more. This should be one of the most important departments in the State, seeing that it dealt with practically the whole of those who were seeking employment. The Labour Bureau had been criticised; but, conducted in a proper manner, the bureau should be of great assistance to those in search of employment and those in search of employees. One reason why the Labour Bureau got into such bad odour was because in the first place it was connected with a charities department. It was not charity to go to the bureau for the sake of obtaining employment. In regard to factories, he would have supported a substantial increase in the salary of the chief inspector. When we saw that £500 was to be paid for an inspector of rabbits and only £250 for a factories inspector who had to deal with the employment of human beings, it must be agreed that there was something wrong. Seeing the Estimates were prac-

tically the same as last year, they would receive his support; but he regretted the Minister had not seen fit to give the officials a salary somewhat equal to the work in which they were engaged. Some might ask why this was not done before. In the first place these were new appointments, and it was not known what work they would have to undertake. When it was found that they were doing work more than equal to the salaries given, we should recognise the fact and give them every possible assistance.

Vote put and passed.

ABORIGINES DEPARTMENT, also MEDICAL DEPARTMENT (Hon. J. S. Hicks, Minister).

Vote—Aborigines, £8,000—agreed to.

Vote—Medical, £74,923:

Item—Nurses, £3,154:

MR. BATH asked whether the Public Service Commissioner had made any inquiry as to the hours worked by the nurses and the salaries paid to them, or how long it was likely to be before he was likely to make such a report.

THE MINISTER did not think there was a report up to the present, but one was expected.

MR. BATH: On the last occasion when the question was discussed in the House it was agreed that in some particulars the nurses should receive better treatment. It was thought advisable that the Public Service Commissioner should report on the matter. We did not wish nurses to suffer any unjust conditions or hardships from the fact that the report could not be given for some considerable time.

MR. FOULKES: In regard to the Perth Hospital, he knew it was the desire of the board to treat the nurses more liberally in the future than they had been treated in the past, and to give them better accommodation. Up to the present there had not been really sufficient accommodation for them, and therefore they had had to work longer than would otherwise have been the case. There would be an improvement as soon as the new buildings were put up.

MR. COLLIER considered nurses the worst-treated class of public servants in

the State, particularly on the goldfields. The occupation at times was not congenial, and he much regretted that some provision had not been made whereby they should either get an increase in pay or have the number of hours reduced.

Item — Kalgoorlie Hospital, Röntgen Rays apparatus, £90:

MR. HOLMAN: There was an item passed in a previous vote for the same thing.

THE MINISTER explained that the item passed in the Works Estimates was for the purpose of getting a dark room in which the X-rays would be manipulated.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Annual Estimates.

IN COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolution passed, giving effect to the votes of supply already agreed to, and granting the required amount out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 27 minutes to 7 o'clock a.m. (Thursday), until the afternoon.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 21st December, 1905.

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Motion: Perth Town Hall New Site, to disapprove of gift	770

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Works Department: Tramways Act 1885, By-laws and Regulations of the Kalgoorlie Electric Tramways, Limited. 2, Department of Labour and Commerce: Report by the Chief Inspector of Factories on the working of The Factories Act, Early Closing Act, Employment Brokers' Act, Seats for Shop Assistants' Act. 3, Report of Board of Management of the Perth Public Hospital.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.

MOTION—PERTH TOWN HALL NEW SITE.

TO DISAPPROVE OF GIFT.

Debate resumed from the 14th December, on Mr. Connolly's motion to disapprove of gift of land and building in Barrack street.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central): The thanks of the House were due to Mr. Connolly for having brought this matter under public cognisance. One would hardly think that any Government pretending to represent the people would have parted with such a site as this without a *quid pro quo*. We were informed that the present Government felt obliged to carry out the promise of a former Government. Was there a record of any clear or definite promise in that direction? He believed there was a strong suggestion; but as far as he recollected, nothing more. The previous Government gave the matter every consideration, and found themselves unable to ratify the original promise of the James Government without first securing the approval of the Legislature; and they placed on record their views in that connection. He thought the only honourable course to pursue was to submit the question for the determination of both Houses of Parliament. He believed the authority under which the Government had acted was a section of the Land Act which enabled them, to endow municipal institutions; but he did not think it was ever intended by the Legislature when passing that section, that it should be utilised in the