

Legislative Assembly, Wednesday, 18th January, 1911.

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

PRIVILEGE—INACCURATE PRESS REPORT.

Letter in reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following communication from the proprietors of the *Daily News* in response to a communication which I was directed to send to them by the members of this House:—

January 18, 1911

The Honourable The Speaker, Legislative Assembly,—

Sir.—We have to acknowledge, per courtesy of the Clerk, copy of official proceedings as requested by us, and now beg to further reply to yours of the 16th inst. as follows:—

1. Your letter complains of six specified statements in our report of the proceedings of the 12th inst., alleged as being according to Mr. Walker grossly inaccurate, and you, sir, assert that the official records of the proceedings prove his statement to be correct.

2. Having had an opportunity of perusing the official report, we are now constrained to assert that in our view—a view which, as will be seen presently, is supported by others competent to judge—our report was (with one exception to be referred to later on) substantially accurate, and most certainly was not grossly inaccurate, as described by Mr. Walker. Indeed ex-

cept as to this one instance, the accuracy of the six objectionable features you have drawn our attention to is fully corroborated by *Hansard*.

3. The six alleged misstatements complained of by Mr. Walker are these: "A wild scene," "Four members suspended," "You are a disgrace," "I will withdraw nothing," "Mr. Walker challenges Mr. Nanson," "Will you come outside." Subject to the qualification already referred to, we propose to justify each of these from the official report only.

4. "A wild scene." These words are the reporter's summary of certain facts which came under his notice in the course of his duty in the House. The same facts were shortly summarised by the *West Australian* as "Great disorder in Parliament"; and by the official reporters as "Disorder, members suspended and removed" (*Hansard*, page 2943). These summaries as regards language differ in degree only, and whether either of them can be justified, of course depends upon what actually occurred. The official report shows that during the lengthy sitting several gentlemen acting as Chairmen of Committees, and you, sir, yourself, were grossly insulted and your rulings challenged in scores of instances, and not only this, but honour was more than once impugned. Members imputed the lie direct to one another (page 2943), offensive terms such as "Shut-up, clothes-peg" (page 2944) were hurled across the Chamber. Conduct more becoming the larrikin than the legislator was not without its instances (pages 2944, 2945, 2947). On two occasions references were made to the unfortunate physical infirmities of members, swearing was not without its examples, and an accusation of drunkenness is to be found in the records at page 2945. Culminating upon all this was the expulsion of no less than four members, one after the other (page 2949). Surely, sir, no better, no more truthful, no more concise description could have been given to such occurrences than that they constituted "a wild scene."

5. If further justification for the expression be needed, we call in aid the remarks of the hon. the Attorney General (page 3007)—

"We have had unfortunate examples within the last couple of days of how some hon. members interpret the idea of being a law to themselves in a manner that would turn this Chamber from a deliberative Assembly into a place where we would have the whole orgy of mob rule."

And the words of the Premier (page 2966)—

" during the uproar, when it was difficult to distinguish voices, and, no doubt about it, an atmosphere of intense excitement pervaded the Chamber during those few minutes," etc.

6. Second Complaint.—"Four members suspended." True. See page 2947 *Hansard* report. Messrs. Collier, Underwood, Bath, and Holman were suspended.

7. Third Complaint. —"You are a disgrace."—Words reported in somewhat milder form than those actually used. See pages 2933, "Your conduct is a disgrace"; and 2944, "You are an absolute disgrace to the position you are in," "You are a disgrace as Chairman."

8. Fourth Complaint—"I will withdraw nothing."—Exact words as used. See page 2944. Upon which the hon. member for Boulder was named and suspended.

9. Fifth Complaint —"Mr. Walker challenges Mr. Nanson."—This is the exception to the general accuracy of the report before referred to herein. The incident, as reported, actually occurred. One member did challenge another member (see page 2947), but neither Mr. Walker nor the Attorney General was concerned in it. *Hansard* reports as follows:—

"The Chairman: Order!

"Mr. Scaddan: Order? It does not exist. You want to get order in those controlling it first.

"Mr. Walker. The public will suspend them (members on the Government side) by-and-by.

"Mr. Price: It is a dirty and contemptuous action. They are not men.

"Mr. Harper: They are better men than you are.

"The Chairman: Order!

"Mr. Price: Are you a better man than I?

"The Chairman: Order!

"Mr. Price: Come outside, and I will show you.

"The Chairman: Order!

"Mr. Price: Well, let him keep his mouth shut.

"The Chairman: Order!

"Mr. Swan: I am a bit out of condition, but I might do it.

"The Chairman: Order!

10. Immediately upon our attention being called to the error, and without waiting to receive your letter, we followed the only honourable course open to us—a course we hope we shall ever pursue in like circumstances—by inserting the following paragraph in our paper:—

A Correction.

It appears that, in our report of yesterday's proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, the writer attributed to Messrs. Walker and Nanson an exchange of amenities, for which two other members were responsible. That one member challenged another to go outside, as reported, is beyond dispute, but, as there is still some doubt as to the personnel of the offending members, we must await the publication of the official *Hansard* report before making any further statement upon the subject. The report of the debate, in which attention was directed to our mistake, as published in the *West Australian* of this morning, tends to show that even members themselves were by no means certain as to exactly what did occur. There is no doubt, however, that Messrs. Walker and Nanson must be excluded from those who participated in the unseemly proceedings, hence we hasten to make the correction, and to express our regret to both members. We are

bound to add that there is great excuse for error on the part of those who had to report under conditions which have prevailed in the Legislative Assembly during the past few days. In the midst of disorder, reporters have to depend entirely upon their hearing; they have no opportunity of seeing the Speaker standing in his place, and when an interchange of amenities takes place across the floor between members sitting near to one another on each side, as we are informed was the case in this instance, mistakes may easily be perpetrated, especially when the acoustic properties of the building are bad, as they undoubtedly are at Parliament House."

11. This paragraph makes the necessary correction. it expresses regret for the error, and is sufficient to satisfy any gentleman.

12. Sixth Complaint: "Will you come outside?" This is substantially correct. (See page 2947). *Hansard* reports:—"Come outside and I will show you."

13. From the foregoing it will be seen that with the exception referred to in paragraph 9 hereof, there is no foundation for the complaints. We are unable, therefore, without stultifying ourselves and belittling your honourable House, to either withdraw, express regret, or tender any apology. We have consequently adopted the alternative by offering what we hope will be considered as the "ample explanation" you have asked for or demanded.

14. As regards the incident referred to in paragraph 9, "Mr. Walker challenges Mr. Nanson," we desire to say that as the incident itself actually occurred, subject to the correction that those concerned in it were Messrs. Price and Harper, and not Mr. Walker and the hon. the Attorney General—an unfortunate error which we much regret—we feel that we have not been guilty of any offence against the House, and that the matter is entirely one between Messrs. Walker and Nanson and ourselves. As far as we are concerned, we have adopted an honourable atti-

tude, as appears from paragraphs 10 and 11 hereof, and it follows that if those honourable gentlemen are not satisfied, they have a remedy open to them which, unfortunately, is not available to ourselves and other members of the public when scurrilous attacks are made upon them by privileged members of Parliament, who are among the first to seek your Honour's protection against the slightest error on the part of others.—I have, Sir, the honour to be, on behalf of the proprietors of *The Daily News*, your obedient servant,

A. Lovekin.

Mr. Heitmann: I would suggest that it be treated with contempt.

Mr. Walker: What course is the leader of the House going to take in regard to it?

The PREMIER: I have a proof of the letter here, and I propose to take the matter into consideration and advise members to-morrow what course, if any, I propose to take.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): In these circumstances I shall say nothing, but may I be permitted an explanation. I am not dealing with the matter from any standpoint which the leader of the House will take, but I desire to make an explanation and correction as speedily as possible. In the first place the *Daily News* attributes to me an accusation against them of six misrepresentations. What I did was to read from the headlines in large black type, because they contained the error which I wanted immediately corrected. I read those headlines because I could not read the portion dealing with the Attorney General and myself without reading them first. It is now sought to make out that in trying to free myself from an accusation which is of an injurious character, I made complaint of other accusations, which reference to *Hansard* will clearly refute. I did not: I drew attention to the charge against myself and wanted that immediately corrected. The rest I read because the statements concerning myself were embodied in the other matter which I had to read.

QUESTION — LAND RESUMPTION FOR RAILWAY PURPOSES.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Railways: In view of the large amount being paid by the Government for the repurchase of City lands for railway purposes, does the Minister not think it advisable to (a) utilise the space occupied by the loco. running sheds at West Perth for station purposes, and (b) utilise the land reserved for railway purposes at Subiaco for the erection of loco. running sheds?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: (a) This will eventually have to be done, but will not affect the question of the land proposed to be resumed. (b) The matter has been repeatedly brought under notice by the members for Subiaco and East Perth, but the question has not yet been determined.

QUESTION—MODERN SCHOOL HEAD MASTER.

Mr. GILL asked the Minister for Education: 1. Has any appointment been made to the position of headmaster at the Modern School? 2. If so, who has received the appointment?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, Mr. F. G. Brown, B.A., B.Sc., formerly Principal of the Perth Normal School.

QUESTION — FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST, TREATMENT OF CLERKS.

Mr. MURPHY asked the Premier: 1, Has the Government any control over the administration of the Fremantle Harbour Trust? 2, If so, are they aware of the treatment being dealt out to the old servants of the Trust (the tally clerks) by the new wharfinger, Mr. Cleary? 3, Has the Premier already received complaints from old servants of the Trust as to their treatment by this gentleman? 4, Will the Government cause some inquiry as to the general administration of the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes; but the general administration is vested in the Trust under the Fremantle Harbour Trust

Act. 2. No. 3. Yes, and the complaints received were forwarded to the department concerned for inquiry. 4. No inquiry into the general administration is considered necessary, but the Minister is discussing the mode of employment of tally clerks with the Trust.

QUESTION—NAVIGATION ACT. EXAMINATION OF ENGINEERS.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Premier: 1, Is it proposed to appoint a board of examiners under the regulations recently gazetted under "The Navigation Act, 1904," to examine candidates and grant certificates to third-class engineers? 2, If so, what need exists for such board seeing that there exists at present a board of examiners under the Machinery Act who grant practically similar certificates? 3, Would it not be more economical and less likely to cause confusion to arrange that the board at present in existence should grant such certificates?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The examination will be conducted by the Engineer Surveyor of the Harbour and Light Department, who holds the necessary qualifications, and he will issue third-class engineers' certificates under the provisions of Section 54 of the Navigation Act, 1904.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Statement of Receipts and Payments of the Trustees of the University Endowment, 1909-10.

BILL—TAMBELLUP-ONGERUP RAILWAY.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—WICKEPIN-MERREDIN RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th January. The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish): With the permission of the House I desire to make an explanation

with regard to this Bill. Before the debate is resumed I wish to point out that a request has now been made by the Railway Department that this railway should be constructed with 60lb. rails so that a heavy road may be provided for the traffic between Albany and Bunbury and the goldfields, and thus enable the Railway Department to use their heavy engines which are now running between Northam and Kalgoorlie. It is essential in the interests of cheap working that this should be made possible. I desire to make the statement in order that members may have it before them at this stage of the debate. I may add that in connection with the return which members have in their possession, the alteration in the weight of the rails will mean an added cost of £350 per mile; the estimated cost was £1,658 per mile using 45lb. rails, and the construction of the line with 60lb. rails will increase that to £2,008.

Mr. A. A. WILSON (Collie): It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill. I had intended to speak about the advisability of using 60lb. rails, and I am glad now to hear the Minister state that it is intended to build the line with the heavier rails. I notice on looking at the plan that there are certain twists in the line, and if it is intended to make a connection between the goldfields and the coal fields it is essential that the twists should be taken out. I have here a letter which was written to the *West Australian* by the late member for Collie, Mr. Ewing, which, I think, throws a good deal of light on the subject. Mr. Ewing says—

I will endeavour to show how, while the agricultural districts (which will be opened up on this section) may receive due recognition, the two mining industries may also receive the full benefits to which they are entitled. By the adoption of the route advocated by me each of the industries will receive its fair share without any injustice being done to the other. It is necessary to go back some few years to the time when the Collie-Narrogin railway was first suggested. The strongest argument brought forward for its construction was that it was to form part of a

main trunk line from Collie to the goldfields railway, and with cheap freights enable the mines on our goldfields to obtain a cheap fuel supply.

A cheap fuel supply is needed at the present time owing to the fact that there is a dispute in existence, and it will be a disaster if we see the gold mines closed for the want of fuel.

Mr. Bath: This line will not help that.

Mr. A. A. WILSON: Not at present but in the near future, and it is essential that there should be plenty of fuel handy in case it is needed. Mr. Ewing goes on—

The construction of the first part of this line has been of great benefit to Collie and to the railways, and it was anticipated that when the section to Merredin was completed a still further impetus to the coal trade would follow. Undoubtedly the Railway Department have been large consumers of our coal, but for the proper development of this industry a large private trade is essential. At the present moment many inquiries are being made from Kalgoorlie for quotations for Collie coal, but the freight on this great distance, accentuated by the want of a direct route, militates against its successfully competing with the firewood tramways. For the successful exploitation of our low-grade mines every economy is necessary, and without the most direct route and low mileage freights a coal fuel for the Kalgoorlie mines seems impossible from an economic standpoint. The recent developments in the Southern Cross district, and the knowledge that the fuel of this district (mostly salmon gum and morrell) does not compare for fuel purposes with the mulga of the more eastern fields, induced the belief that with the construction of the section from Wickiepin to Merredin, Collie coal could be placed on the Southern Cross market at a rate which would enable it to prove more economical than the local woods. Apparently, however, in connection with this railway the Advisory Board have considered the question from an agricultural point of view, and have ignored all the considerations which induced the construction of the

first section. The Wickepin-Merredin line, if it follows the route suggested by the Board, may undoubtedly traverse the best agricultural country, and if the Board had not also advised other connecting lines with this section, viz., the Quairading extension east and the section from Brookton East, probably the agricultural necessities of the district would warrant their recommendation; but with the extension easterly from Brookton the northerly trend of the Wickepin line is a grave mistake from an agricultural standpoint, and, by the increased mileage, an effectual bar to the economic supply of coal to the goldfields. The course of this line should be in as direct a line as possible from Wickepin to some 40 miles south of Merredin, and I believe that once Collie coal gets on to the goldfields market it will be found necessary to continue the whole section in a north-easterly direction to Southern Cross, and that the trade will assume such dimensions as to warrant of its own trade alone the construction of the direct line from Collie to Southern Cross. The proposed deviation from Wickepin to Kunjin and the laying of 45lb. rails will effectually destroy the hope of the colliery owners of Collie of opening up a trade profitable to Collie, the railways, and the State. I hope that the Government will give this important matter due consideration before definitely deciding the route.

May I say that I agree generally with the contents of that letter, and as the advisory board have advised that the line from Brookton to Kunjin should be constructed at an early date, I see no reason why deviations should be put forward to meet the Kunjin people at the present time. If there was a straight line built it would save 10 or 12 miles of railway, and 10 or 12 miles is a large item, and it is also a big item in the question of freights for coal or timber for the fields. When the Bill is in Committee it is my intention to move an amendment with regard to the deviation. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): I also think this line should be made to run as direct as possible. At the present time we have an instance of the importance of the coal so far as the goldfields are concerned. In connection with this Wickepin line, if it ran directly across from Wickepin to Merredin it would tap splendid agricultural districts, and would be available for carrying fuel to the goldfields. This is a very important question indeed. When a line can be constructed which will serve the agricultural districts and also supply fuel to the goldfields this dual purpose should be taken into consideration. Of course I am going to support the railway, but at the same time I think the question of deviation should be considered so that the line can run direct across to the goldfields line.

Mr. COWCHER (Williams): I have pleasure in supporting the Bill. This is second to none of the agricultural railways in the State. I consider it is going to serve more agricultural country and settle more people than any other line which has been before the House. We all realise that this is not a spur line, but is actually a trunk line connecting the South-Western line with that of the Eastern goldfields. I was pleased to hear that the Government had decided to lay 60lb. rails. This is a trunk line, and that being so we may as well go to the expense in the first place as in the last.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): I am pleased to hear these favourable opinions in regard to the Bill. I desire to say that the plan submitted is a plan prepared by the advisory board, and is of course subject to survey, and therefore there may be a certain amount of deviation. In this case ten miles' deviation is provided for. The Government recognise the desirability of, as far as possible, straightening up the line as hon. members desire. The Government themselves desire to make it as short as it reasonably can be made, but the first object in making the survey will be to find, if possible, a one in eighty grade. That must be the first considera-

tion in order to have cheap working, and if that consideration can be met while taking a more direct route than that marked on the plan, the more direct route will be adopted. Since introducing the Bill I have made inquiries in regard to the saving in length to be effected by laying down an approximately straight line. The total saving as compared with the line on the plan submitted would be approximately eight miles, and therefore the length of line would be reduced from 120 miles to 112 miles. This, of course, would represent not only a saving in freight to the producers, whether of fuel or of agricultural products, but would represent a saving in working expenses to the Railway Department and would be of great advantage, especially when it is considered that it would further reduce the distance between the goldfields and, respectively, Albany, Bunbury, and Collie. If this direct route can be adopted the total saving in distance between Merredin and, respectively, Albany, Collie, and Bunbury would be about 71 miles. The total saving in distance between those places on the route submitted by the advisory board would be about 63 miles. The saving in cost if this direct route is proved practicable would represent somewhere about £12,000. I have pleasure in acknowledging the kindly and favourable manner in which the Bill has been received.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.,

Mr. Taylor in the Chair, the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

(Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Schedule:

Mr. A. A. WILSON: Would the Minister state whether he intended to take full advantage of the 10 miles deviation or whether on the other hand he would attempt to remove the twist from the route?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In his remarks in reply to the second reading debate he had endeavoured to make it clear that he desired to straighten up the line as far as possible. He agreed that Kunjinn would be well served by the con-

struction of the proposed line from Brookton to that place, and consequently there would not be much necessity for the curve westward about Kunjinn in the route of the railway under discussion.

Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—LEEDERVILLE AND COTESLOE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES ALTERATION.

Message received from the Legislative Council notifying that the Assembly's amendments had been agreed to.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1910-11.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 13th January.

Mr. Taylor in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the votes.

Public Works Department (Hon. H. Daglish, Minister).

Vote—*Public Works and Buildings*, £144,806.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was not his intention to go very far into the general debate on these Estimates. Opportunity would be taken for saying more when on the items. It was noticed that the policy was continued of neglecting the back country in regard to assistance for the construction of roads, whether in agricultural or goldmining districts. As the representative of one of the biggest districts in the State he could say it was a very difficult matter to secure this assistance from the Minister. If the Minister would travel through the back country and visit outlying districts such as Wiluna he would realise the difficulties under which the pioneers were working.

The Minister for Works: He has not had much chance yet.

Mr. HOLMAN: The only grant for assistance for an important place like that was a paltry £100; yet along the track were many miles of spinifex sand, and it took two days for a team to drag

through that sand. Surely the Minister could see his way clear to affording some assistance. Help should be given to the pioneers, whether in goldmining or agricultural districts. A very different policy had been adopted in regard to the Bullfuch district. There we had a mine held by one or two individuals and the place was not by any means sufficiently far advanced for anyone to express an opinion as to its permanency. But immediate action was taken and the State was involved in about £70,000 expenditure. There was no objection to assisting the district, but there was objection to so much assistance being granted to one spot when more deserving districts like Lawlers, Darlot, Wiluna, and Peak Hill, which ought to be assisted, were neglected. It was to be hoped the policy to be adopted in the future would materially change so that these outlying places would receive more consideration. There was reason for complaint in that, despite the improvement to the revenue of the State, the same policy of constructing works out of loan was being pursued. The sooner it was altered the better. For many years past loan expenditure was being built up and revenue expenditure reduced, and though this year it was proposed to slightly increase it by £20,000, in all probability, owing to the late passing of the Estimates, that expenditure would not be reached and we would still go on in the same old groove of constructing works, principally buildings, out of loan funds. He hoped the policy carried on in previous years would be resumed and that we would have the construction of public buildings and the maintenance of roads carried on not out of loan funds but, in the more reasonable and legitimate way, out of revenue. The Minister had not had a great opportunity to show what he was worth in his department, but he might give the outback places more consideration than was shown them in the past. These places were deserving of assistance, yet nothing was done for them, while in regard to more favoured places, even before they were opened up, the Government rushed in with assistance. One could only view with suspicion the

fact that several Ministers were interested in properties in these places. Though Ministers might be interested in some places it was to be hoped they would not devote the whole of their energies to those places but would give the same consideration to other places. It was to be hoped the Minister would give satisfactory explanation in regard to several items and that he would announce in regard to future estimates that he would give fair and reasonable consideration to those doing pioneering work.

Mr. BATH : In reference to the very objectionable policy of the Government in regard to railway construction, the details submitted to members in the shape of a return showed conclusively that the Government had given the private contractors a sum aggregating £11,000 during the last 12 months over and above the amount at which the efficient staff in the Public Works Department had declared the railways could be constructed. If the Minister were to dip into the Treasury and make a present of £11,000 to these individuals he would lay himself open to a criminal prosecution, but one could not see a very great degree of difference in calling it Ministerial or public policy and practically making a present of the same amount of money to these people without securing any amount of return. In New Zealand, New South Wales, and other places the works departments had declared emphatically that if they required work to be carried out thoroughly with good workmanship they had to carry it out departmentally and in many instances by day labour; yet here the Government were content with less efficient work and with undergoing the necessity for employing just as large a staff to watch contractors to see that cheap and inferior work was not carried out, while at the same time presenting these contractors with a considerable sum over and above what the Works Department could carry out the works for. No one could object to Ministers holding views in favour of private contractors, but hon. members and the public generally could complain about preference being shown to them and about the Ministers' views being carried

out at the expense of the taxpayers of the State. The present Minister might give us some more satisfactory assurance than his predecessor would give, namely, that in the future the general body of taxpayers would receive more consideration than was given in the past; because it was invariably shown the department could carry out the work better than contractors. Throughout the length and breadth of the country districts and in the goldfields areas there was a great demand for roads; people were continually complaining of the lack of assistance rendered in this regard; nevertheless the same old policy was pursued of continuing grants for main roads within the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Works: That is an arrangement of the Committee.

Mr. BATH: It was not carrying out that arrangement. In some instances the vote was in excess of the arrangement entered into with members when criticism was urged against this vote on previous occasions. Although there was an improvement in the finances there was no increase in the amount allocated for roads and bridges throughout the State. The excuse was always given that the condition of the finances necessitated the cutting down of the vote, but it was said that when there was an improvement in the finances the State would again undertake these very necessary works and give more generous assistance throughout the country, yet we found the vote was still £30,000, precisely what it was last year. It was playing fast and loose with the Committee. I was giving small evidence of the fact that the Government desired to render assistance to the primary industries when this policy of cheese-paring was continued. In regard to the assistance rendered it was incumbent upon local authorities to show their bona fides in the matter of raising money for this purpose, but in many of these centres they were not so far developed that they could raise the money essential in order to give ordinary decent facilities. Up to that stage it was the duty of any State pursuing a developmental policy to render general assistance; and if the matter was put fairly

and squarely before the older and more settled areas, if they were told that by generous assistance rendered to the primary industries the benefit would also be felt by the older districts, there would be no chance of appealing to parochial interests and we would find them readily complying with such a policy.

Mr. PIESSE: Some tribute must be paid to the excellent services performed by the officers of the Public Works Department during a most strenuous year. He was disappointed to hear the remarks of the member for West Perth in regard to the position of Inspector of Engineering Surveys. It was probably a matter concerning the Public Service Commissioner, but in view of the statements already made in the House this session in regard to important positions of this kind, members might very well take these complaints into consideration. There was not the least doubt if we were to retain the services of men with high qualifications, the country must be prepared to pay full value for their services. It must have been a continual disappointment to this officer who, at one time was receiving £700 a year, to find that he was now classified at £600 a year, and during the very busiest time in the history of the Works Department this officer has been subjected to gradual reduction each year until he would eventually be reduced to the amount fixed by the Commissioner. It was to be hoped the Government would take the item into consideration, because he knew this particular officer had carried out his work under very trying circumstances; he had had to travel in all kinds of weather, and he was sure the State was benefiting very greatly by the service which he had rendered to the country. The other question he wished to allude to was that of road construction. He was to some extent in accord with the remarks made by the member for Brown Hill, and when he had an opportunity he had advocated that the roads vote, that was the vote from revenue towards the maintenance of roads and bridges, should be greatly increased. He was aware that during the past two or three years the revenue had not permitted

a larger amount being expended in this direction, but he would point out that in view of the very large settlement that had taken place during the last five or six years the necessity was arising in consequence for the opening up of the country by the construction and maintenance of roads. We found that the money available by the local authorities was totally inadequate. In the year 1905-6 there was expended from revenue the sum of £112,869; in 1906-7 the amount expended was £73,264; in 1907-8 the amount expended was somewhat similar, £70,252; in 1908-9 the amount was £60,067, half of that expended in 1905-6; whilst in the last year we got down to the lowest on record, £38,094. This year he was pleased to note that there was a small increase provided.

The Minister for Works: It was £48,000 last year.

Mr. PIESSE: Not from revenue. This year there was an increase provided bringing the amount up to £53,704. This amount was to be divided amongst 104 roads boards in the State, therefore it would be seen the amount available for each board was very small indeed. He would also point out that in nearly every instance the local authority had rated up to a reasonable amount, in fact quite as far as they would be able to go in view of the fact that there was a Federal land tax, and a State land tax. When we took into consideration that during the year 1906 there was a total area of 1,010,398 acres alienated, and the amount then provided on the Estimates was £112,869 it could be realised that including 1906 no less an area than 7,309,383 acres had been selected, the amount now available to cater for this increased settlement was totally inadequate. That fact should bring members to realise that it was necessary for the Government to take into consideration the question of some new policy of road construction. It was absolutely impossible with the small sum available to even maintain the roads, let alone construct them. Therefore he sincerely hoped the Minister would give an assurance that it was the intention of the Government to take this question of road construction more sincerely into consideration. He understood

that in the other States, especially in South Australia, main roads were made entirely at the expense of the State, and the local authority afterwards maintained them. Although perhaps this had been done to some extent in old districts when the road boards were fewer, and the grants available larger, yet there had never been any systematic scheme of construction of main roads by the department. There was not the least doubt these roads helped very greatly to make successful our agricultural railway projects, and he considered that the construction of main roads should be part and parcel of the railway policy. He did not see why we should starve our country districts for want of proper communication in the way of road construction any more than we should starve them for the want of railway communication. After all a road was a means of transit, probably not as expeditious as a railway, still the roads should be part and parcel of the policy. When we had to consider the question of constructing a railway the Government should be prepared with an estimate showing a proper system of main feeder roads to each new railway to be carried out, if not from revenue, from loan. He did not see any reason why we should be afraid to borrow money to construct roads because the roads were a good asset. They improved the country and made the means of transit more expeditious, and were feeders to the railway. He therefore hoped we should hear something from the Government before the session closed of their intention in this direction.

Mr. SCADDAN: Parliament had neglected its duty in a large measure in permitting year after year the system that had been in operation of letting works on contract which should be carried out by the department, according to the estimate of the officers, at a much lower rate, thus giving to the contractors a considerable sum of money, more than in his (Mr. Scaddan's) opinion the work was really worth to the State. We had not only to look at it from the standpoint of the extra amount of money paid from the Treasury for the work, but also from the standpoint of the class of

work derived from contract as compared with departmental construction. It was generally known that quite a number of departmental officers were occupied in inspecting the work of contractors from time to time, and a number of officers and men of the Works Department were also employed in doing over a second time that which had been handed over by contractors as successfully performed. Independent of the extra amount of work paid for, there was an extra drain from the revenue in keeping the work in order. Men employed by the department if paid reasonable salaries would recognise that they should do work for the Government in the best possible manner, and would not be likely to slump their work and get up to the dodges that contractors were known to carry out to get their work passed by the department. The member for Cne was entitled to the thanks of the House for having brought before members one or two matters which were worthy of consideration, matters adopted by the department which left the door open to all. When tenders were called for, and were above the departmental estimates to such an extent as to warrant the department in turning down all the tenders, it was a wrong method to ask any one tenderer to see the Minister, and then to receive the contract at a price which was above the estimate made by the department. It was not a method that should be adopted, and the public could not feel that they could confidently leave matters such as these in the hands of the department. If one person was permitted to review his tender, then every other tenderer should be allowed to send in a fresh tender. That was generally understood in all such operations. Take the sale of goods. If a reserve was placed on an article, and the reserve was not reached, it was the usual practice to say to an individual, "If you come up three pounds you shall have the article," when perhaps there were others willing to go more than three pounds. In the case of tenders, all should have an opportunity of reconsidering their tenders instead of allowing one man to see the Minister and review his tender. It was practically tantamount to saying that the

departmental officers had not made a correct estimate of the work, and were not competent to make an estimate; or if they had done so they were not capable of carrying out the work on the estimate supplied to the Minister. That was not a principle that should be tolerated for a moment. He was satisfied now that the present Minister had charge of the department that such a procedure was not likely to exist in the Works Department in the future, and it was to be hoped that the Minister coming in contact with other members on the Treasury bench would not lead him to alter the principle which he had enunciated from time to time as to what was the proper safeguard for the public funds, and that the Minister would not practice the tactics for which his predecessor was noted. Dealing with the subject mentioned by the member for Kataning, after all the Government were not wholly responsible for the lack of proper road facilities in agricultural districts to serve the railways. He had been in some of the districts, and had found that immediately a railway line was constructed, there was a general demand on the part of roads boards for money either from the ratepayers or from the Government to construct a road running, in many cases, parallel with the railway itself. Even the Railway Advisory Board frequently took into consideration how near they could get to a main road when recommending a route for a railway, with the result that a huge expenditure of public money had taken place in the construction of roads covering almost exactly the same ground as proposed railways would cover, and then when the railways were constructed these roads were practically of no use, the great bulk of the people, who would be served by the railways, having really no road from the line to their holdings. It was the duty of the Government to give consideration to some system which would prevent that sort of thing happening in the future. Another thing that influenced the making of these roads in the fashion of which he complained was the fact that most of the roads boards were elected by the rate payers in common, there being no ward sys-

tem; and in some of the agricultural areas the more settled areas really dominated the roads-board, with the result that any expenditure of the money obtained from the ratepayers was usually for the purpose of keeping a road in good repair in or about that settled centre, and the making of roads further back, where the shelter really required more consideration than the man near the town, was overlooked by the roads board. The Government in spending money, when there was only a certain amount at their disposal, should make the grants only when they were satisfied that the money was going to serve a great number of settlers and also serve the railways which we were building, and was not to be expended in maintaining a road which was of no use to the people served by the line. The Minister for Works, together with one or two other members representing the metropolitan districts, had complained in the past about the reduction of the vote for the maintenance of roads leading into or out of Perth, and one would imagine that the State was going to suffer from that policy. But he would inform the member for Katanning that the reason why more money was provided to-day for the construction and maintenance of country roads was that the huge sum previously expended in metropolitan districts was not now being used in that way. As a matter of fact, last year there was a sum of £48,594 provided for roads and bridges generally, including grants, revotes, etcetera, and out of that amount £3,124 was expended in the maintenance of roads in and around Perth. This year there was a reduction in that item, which now stood at £1,902, and next year it would disappear altogether. Although that reduction had taken place in connection with the maintenance of these roads in the metropolitan districts, the total vote had been increased to the extent of about £5,000, showing that there had not been a less expenditure on the construction and maintenance of roads, but that the expenditure had been only diverted from one portion of the State to another. He held the view that if there was one portion of the community that was deriving an advantage

from the expenditure which was taking place in agricultural districts in the construction of railways and roads and the settlement of those areas, it was the metropolitan districts. They were deriving their advantage, in a large measure, from the enhanced values given to their properties, and the Government would be only asking a fair thing if they required these people to provide for the maintenance of their main roads when once they had been constructed by the State. The money taken from that vote could then be devoted to the making of roads in the back country. He did not desire to deal at any length with the question of the expenditure on public works generally, but if any argument was required one need only quote the Minister for Works himself during this session. Whilst he was prepared to admit that the Minister was not responsible, to any great extent, for the present Estimates, it must be remembered that the public works expenditure was going to do more for the development of the State than any form of public expenditure. The more the cost of wheat and other cereals in the far-back districts could be reduced by the wise expenditure of money the more would the Government be enhancing the value of property in all portions of the State. That being the case, we were justified at this stage, when it was claimed that the revenue was more buoyant than in previous years, in asking that this vote should be greater than hitherto. He had been misunderstood in the Chamber when he had referred to the desire of members to deal with purely district roads and bridges. His reference was not to roads and bridges, but rather to the endeavour to get an advantage for the one district as against proper consideration for other districts. After all, he recognised that the construction of roads for the purpose of serving the railways which the Government were building at the present time was an absolute necessity, and there was no member in the House who would complain if this vote were to be increased, probably at the expense of some other vote which was not assisting in the development of our primary industries. The policy in regard to the sale of Gov-

ernment property was also somewhat unwise. The member for Katanning had said that he was of opinion that it was a wise policy to expend loan money in making roads in out-back agricultural and mining district. He (Mr. Scaddan) was not so certain about that being the case, because we wanted to construct roads and railways at the least possible cost. The agricultural districts were expanding at a greater rate than the Government were able to meet the requirements of the settlers in the matter of roads, and when it was remembered that of the total revenue from all sources 30 per cent. was paid out in interest and sinking fund charges on the expenditure of loan moneys, the member for Katanning must recognise that if that policy were persisted in there would be left little or no money to expend on the making of roads in agricultural districts.

Mr. Butcher: It brings in additional revenue.

Mr. Piesse: It comes back indirectly.

Mr. SCADDAN: If that was a fact the proportion of the charge on the revenue would not be increased year after year.

Mr. Butcher: It has not yet had time to become reproductive.

Mr. SCADDAN: A road would never become directly reproductive until we arrived at the stage that those people, whose properties received an enhanced value by the construction of roads and railways, paid an increased return to the State. If the present policy were continued the Government would have to increase their revenue from other sources in order to meet the loan charges. He was opposed to that procedure because he was satisfied that with proper management of the revenue more money could be found for works in different parts of the State. Nearly the whole of this Government property had been purchased out of loan moneys, and it must not be forgotten that the sale of the property did not return anything like the amount that was charged to loan account: perhaps on the average there would not be more than 20 per cent. returned to the State. If originally £100,000 of loan money had been expended in the purchase of this property

the State would not receive more than £20,000 back, yet the Government were expending these Government property sale funds on other than reproductive works.

The Minister for Works: The amount is only £56,000.

Mr. SCADDAN: Of that amount of £56,000 probably not more than about £6,000 represented property which had been obtained from revenue. The great bulk of the property had been bought out of loan.

The Minister for Works: Ten shillings of it came from Parliament House.

Mr. SCADDAN: Some of it no doubt came from the sale of old cushions, which seemed to have brought more than their value. He wanted to again point out to agricultural members, who in many cases had required years of argument in the House to induce them to support his attitude, that they were now deriving the benefit from the adoption of the system he had advocated, because the money which previously had been expended on the roads in the metropolitan districts was being diverted to the agricultural districts, whilst in return the people in the metropolitan districts were receiving an enhanced value to their properties. He hoped that next year there would be no necessity for a complaint by the member for Cue in regard to the manner in which public works were let to contract, but that the department would undertake the works. If we had not officers competent to carry them out we should get them, but he believed that the department had the officers, and that they were often disheartened by the action of the Minister who, when they had pointed out that they could do the work for less than the prices submitted by the contractors, called in the lowest tenderer and gave him the contract at a price probably £6,000 more than the departmental estimate. In those circumstances it was not to be wondered at if the officers became disheartened.

Mr. Heitmann: There is a return by the department showing the result of five years' working, and it proves that they have saved several thousands of pounds on their own estimates.

Mr. SCADDAN: That was admitted. There was no denying the fact that the present Minister for Works' predecessor, who was now Premier, was totally out of sympathy with departmental construction. That hon. gentleman himself had been a contractor practically all his life and his sympathies naturally were towards contractors, but it was expected when a public man took charge of any department of the State, that whatever his tendencies might have been prior to being elevated to a responsible position, they should not lead him to arrive at anything but a proper conclusion with regard to the safety of the State funds. The State should be his first consideration, and not those who might have been his friends in private life. He (Mr. Scaddan) was confident that some of those instances brought under the notice of the Chamber by the member for Cue would not have occurred if the Minister had been spending his own money. If the officers of the department were capable of doing this work, and he contended they were, they were not being paid that which induced the best men to give their services to the State. This was a subject that Parliament should give consideration to as well. It was to be hoped that next year the Minister would see his way to considerably increase the expenditure from revenue in the direction of the public works and buildings, and particularly in the direction of constructing schools in scattered districts, where children required to be just as properly educated as those who lived in the towns.

Mr. HARPER: It was pleasing to hear the remarks which had been made by members with reference to the grant for the construction and maintenance of roads. In his travels he had realised how important it was that more money should be provided for the construction and maintenance of roads. The leader of the Opposition had referred to the roads of the back country, and the outlying districts, and he could assure the hon. member, as one who had been over a great deal of this State, that few people in Western Australia realised how important it was to have

good roads in these distant districts, particularly in the farming districts. We were all aware that there was a large amount provided for the construction and maintenance of roads, and the suggestion might be made to the Government that they should appoint a qualified engineer to look after and supervise the construction of these roads. He had been a member of some roads boards in the State and he knew from experience that it was rarely possible to secure the services of men with the necessary qualifications to properly carry out the work of constructing the roads. Very few members of roads boards were sufficiently qualified to look after the expenditure of money on roads, so that it was just as necessary to have expert knowledge in regard to road making as it was in connection with the construction of railway lines. In the other States there were district engineers who attended to this work, and it was about time that a system of this sort was introduced in Western Australia. The State would then get better value for the money it expended on roads. In his opinion there were too many roads in some of the agricultural districts of Western Australia. This was due to the selection of land before survey. He knew of instances where there were two or three parallel roads zigzagging in one district, but it would take an expert to decide which of these roads should be done away with, and on which road all the money should be concentrated. It would be to the advantage of the whole district if this were done. He had seen money frittered away in making repairs to roads and then after a shower the repairs which had been made had been washed away. He was glad that members on both sides of the House were of opinion that more money should be allocated for the making and maintenance of roads in the country districts. From his own experience he recognised that this was a serious question, especially in view of the selection of land which was going on so rapidly. We all knew that within the last two or three years a great amount of land had been taken up in various parts of the State, and it was the experience that where the

land was very good the more money was required for road construction; the better the land the more expensive were the roads to keep in order. The Government would be acting wisely if they were to increase the grants to the roads boards, and obtain expert advice in the direction of bringing about the wise and judicious expenditure of this money. It was noticed on the Estimates that it was proposed to reduce the salary of the Inspector of Engineering Surveys. He was not speaking of that officer in particular, but from what he could gather all the members of the engineering staff at the Works Department were underpaid. The case of the Inspector of Engineering Surveys was a most glaring one. This officer had been in the service for about twelve years; he was brought over to this State by the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, who was regarded as the most eminent engineer in Australia at that time, and 12 years ago the Inspector of Engineering Surveys was considered to be well worthy of £700 per annum. The work had increased enormously in the department since that time and this officer had surveyed many of the agricultural and the goldfields lines, and everyone knew how arduous the task of this officer always was. He had to travel throughout the country in all sorts of weather. At one time he (Mr. Harper) met that officer at Yalgoo, where he was carrying out a trial survey; it was raining at the time, and the officer had to put up with it and work night and day in the rain. Some 10 years ago he (Mr. Harper) was associated with others in giving the Inspector of Engineering Surveys a send-off when he was about to commence the survey of the route of the proposed Trans-continental railway. If that officer was capable of undertaking an important work of that description he should be paid at least £1,000 a year. We entrusted him with important works, and to reduce his salary now was to inflict a very serious injustice. No doubt the Public Service Commissioner had a very onerous and unenviable task to perform, and that official could not be blamed if he tried to keep down expenses, but in this case a fatal error had been committed.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It had been reduced to below what he was getting 12 years ago.

Mr. HARPER: To the extent of £100. He (Mr. Harper) had been an employer for a considerable time, and he could only say that if it came to a question of reducing a man's salary it would be better to get rid of him altogether.

Mr. ANGWIN: The statement which had been made, that there was a tendency in the department to drive the best men out of the service because they would not pay these good men salaries which were commensurate with the positions they occupied, he agreed with. Only a few weeks since it was found that the Government had sent to England for an engineer for dock construction, and it was noticed that there was an amount of £1,000 on the Estimates as this officer's salary. What chance had an officer in the department of rising to an important position if, when a vacancy occurred, or a position was created, it was filled from outside? It might be said that we did not have an officer who was qualified to carry out the particular work which this engineer from England would be called upon to fill, but we should not forget that in this State the officers who had been in the service of the Government had carried out such great works as the weir at Mundaring in connection with the water scheme, and others of almost equal magnitude, and therefore we should place a certain amount of confidence in them, and if the opportunity to rise in the department presented itself they should be given the first chance. It had been said that in connection with the work for which this officer was being brought out from England, that Sir Whateley Eliot had recommended that a certain system should be adopted in the construction of the works at the Fremantle Harbour, but it was said the engineer who was being brought from England had never been associated with any work that had been constructed in a similar manner to that which Sir Whateley Eliot suggested should be done at Fremantle, and therefore if this is so the new officer would be in exactly the same position as the officers in the State. Those who had

been in charge of the works at Fremantle had carried out their duties successfully and an injustice had been done to them by the engagement of a man from outside. It was to be hoped the Government in the future would see that the officers of the department got the first opportunity of filling positions which might become vacant.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): Reference had been made by the members for Cue and Brown Hill and the leader of the Opposition to the question of the construction of railways by the department as against by contract. This being a matter coming more properly under the railway construction policy it would be found embodied in the Loan Estimates. He proposed, therefore, to reserve his reply to the remarks of those honourable members until the Loan Estimates were reached. He would satisfy himself on the present occasion by merely pointing out that an estimate should not be confused with a tender, and that the hon. member for Cue was in error when he stated in effect that the making of an estimate carried with it an obligation that the work should be carried out at that estimate. As far as the officers could carry it they did so and were expected to do so, but there was not the same obligation on those officers making an estimate to carry out the work at that price as there was on persons who had accepted the contract, paid a deposit, and bound themselves by the agreement they had entered into to carry out the work at a certain price.

Mr. Heitmann: That applies to the Phillips River railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Phillips River railway was not one of those mentioned by the honourable member.

Mr. Heitmann: Yes; I mentioned that the Phillips River railway, let by contract, was handed back to the Government to be completed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not having a recollection of any reference to the Phillips River railway, he was not

in a position to answer the honourable member.

Mr. Scaddan: What obligation is there on the contractor to complete, except the loss of his deposit?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was a fairly satisfactory bond.

Mr. Scaddan: What about a departmental officer guilty of continually estimating under the amount?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No departmental officer would be guilty of wilfully under estimating at any time. Members should bear in mind that after all these big undertakings were largely speculative in character, and that, unfortunately, estimates could not always be realised. However, he had no desire to be drawn into a discussion which must come on again under the Loan Estimates.

Mr. Heitmann: We may not be here then.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was to be hoped the hon. member would be here, that his Parliamentary career would not be cut short by a sudden death before the Loan Estimates were discussed.

Mr. Heitmann: That is the only thing that will stop me.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the Loan Estimates come on he would be happy to go fully into the cases mentioned by the hon. member, and into the policy of the Government. That would be the opportunity for discussing policy. At present the proper subject for discussion was the question of administration. It was gratifying that all the remarks made in regard to the department during the short general discussion had been favourable to its administration. Deservedly the officers had been spoken of very highly, and the only complaint voiced by hon. members had been that in some cases those officers were not paid quite so highly as they should be. There was some ground for that assertion. In the case of Mr. Muir, who was head of the engineering surveys, there could be no doubt as to the merit of that officer, the good services he had rendered the department, and the valuable services he was now rendering. However, under the classification of

the Public Service Commissioner, Mr. Muir's salary had been reduced, and that officer was suffering the same proportionate reduction year by year as had fallen upon other officers similarly classified by the Public Service Commissioner at a lower salary than they cation. In his (the Minister's) opinion Mr. Muir's services were somewhat underrated by the Public Service Commissioner, and failing a reclassification he (the Minister) was prepared to take into consideration the desirability of making some special allowance for the special services Mr. Muir had been rendering during the past year. The case justified any demand that this should be done, especially as the particular branch of which Mr. Muir was the head had been busier during the past couple of years than for a long time previously, and that just at the time when the officer's salary was falling his duties had been increasing. The member for Cue had referred more particularly to the case of a comparatively young engineer, who, it was said, was being paid at a very low rate. Here, again, the payment was fixed under the provisions of the Public Service Act, and the officer had been classified by the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. Heitmann: Have you any personal views on the matter?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: While this young engineer was doing very important work his (the Minister's) predecessor had recognised; and he recognised, this young engineer was entitled to higher remuneration than could be paid him under the classification. At the present time he was getting, altogether in salary and allowances, £365 a year.

Mr. Heitmann: He was not getting that at the time I spoke of.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The officer in question had been in receipt of a substantial allowance in addition to his salary when working on the Black Range railway. At that time the reports of the department did not confirm the statement that the engineer in charge of that railway construction was frequently absent from his duties.

Mr. Heitmann: I found him absent on several occasions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Possibly the hon. member had chosen for his visits times when the officer was away. The information he (the Minister) had, showed that the officer was not absent with any frequency during the construction of the line. On the general principle of the payment of these engineers he (the Minister) was in accord with the policy that they should be paid liberally. He recognised that perhaps there should be some distinction between the payment given by a contractor and that given by the Government, for the reason that the contractor engaged an engineer for a job, while a Government engaged him for a lifetime. Naturally there was a requirement on the part of the man engaged for only a limited period that he should get a higher remuneration than he would demand from the same employer if permanently engaged by him. Still, allowing for that, it had been recognised by the Engineer-in-Chief that some of the officers in the engineering division were not paid as liberally, perhaps, as they ought to be. That view had been endorsed by his (the Minister's) predecessor. In regard to his own experience in the department it had not been sufficiently long to allow any of these cases being brought under his notice, but from the information received from the Engineer-in-Chief, it seemed there might be some reason for urging that the salary of some of the junior engineers should be brought up to a higher rate than that existing. The member for Murchison had urged that the Minister for Works should visit the back country in order to get a personal knowledge of the outlying districts. As a matter of fact he (the Minister) had had no opportunity of visiting these places since accepting office, owing to the demands made on his time by the House.

Mr. Heitmann: You ought to make the most of your opportunities during the next six months.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Such opportunities would not be missed. Admittedly, Ministers should make themselves personally acquainted with the requirements of the different districts. However, he could not admit that the country

roads had been unduly neglected. The department had to do their best to make their bricks with a very small amount of straw. The department were dependent upon the Treasurer for the funds allotted to be spent on public works of any description, and the Treasurer in making his allotments first of all must provide for the statutory requirements and the necessary administrative demands of the various other departments, the Public Works Department usually getting what was left. During the past few years the amount allotted was not so large as he or his predecessor or the public generally would like to have seen it.

Mr. HEITMANN: There was an opportunity for saving a good deal if the Government would consider the question of amalgamating different local bodies.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That question was being very seriously considered at the present moment, but amalgamation of local bodies when effected was, as a rule, effected under considerable difficulties. It was very easy to advocate it as a general principle, but it was far more difficult to give it practical effect. He fully realised, and the Government were convinced, of the need for liberal provision for making roads and bridges throughout the State in country districts. The making of roads was an essential means for providing for the development of our industries, and was a necessary corollary to making railways; and though the increase provided on the Estimates in regard to roads and bridges was not so large as one would like to have seen, there would be recommended on the Loan Estimates very liberal provision that would be adequate to the needs for the current financial year. It would be possible for the Government to allot the provision in a thoroughly methodical fashion so as to allow the districts with the larger claims to be the most liberally treated. It was necessary for a Minister in charge of the Works Department to be guided to a large extent by the information received from local bodies and from members, but the money spent in some districts on the advice tendered by local bodies was per-

haps not always spent to the best advantage. It should be possible to systematise the expenditure in the future, so that the country as a whole, as well as the district to be served, would get a pound's worth of value for every penny spent in the district. The Government realised that the making of roads should be, and they agreed it would be, an essential part of their policy of constructing railways in mining and in agricultural districts.

Mr. Brown: Help those who help themselves.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Murchison, while expressing much pleasure at the increase on the Estimates, expressed a doubt as to the expenditure; but during the last financial year no less than 96½ per cent. of the money voted by Parliament was expended by the Public Works Department. It showed the department were doing their best to carry out the works authorised by Parliament. The same policy of vigorously proceeding with the greatest expedition with the works on the present Estimates would be pursued during the balance of this financial year. Although the Estimates were being passed somewhat late, still it would be possible, he hoped, to come at the end of the financial year and inform members that he had been able to keep up the record, if not to slightly exceed it, made by the department in the last financial year. He thanked hon. members for the kindly fashion in which they had criticised the Estimates.

Mr. HEITMANN: While accepting the suggestion to defer further discussion on the question of departmental versus contract construction of railways, he desired to say that he spoke almost entirely upon the policy adopted by the Government. Not so long ago the Minister politely refused to give access to certain files.

The Minister for Works: I do not remember it.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Minister was approached in the corridor and asked with reference to these files. However, details would not enter into the discussion so much as the principle itself; but

the Premier some little time ago said in reply to a question—

The House will have the fullest information which hon. members may require placed before it when the Estimates are under consideration. In the meantime I desire merely to state that there is a vital difference between an estimate—be it ever so carefully made—and a tender. There is an obligation on the part of a contractor when his tender is accepted to carry out his undertaking, no matter at what cost to himself, at the price agreed upon. It is impossible to impose any such obligation on the officer who draws up the estimate.

In view of that promise, that the fullest possible information would be given, would the Minister give members access to a certain return made up by the officers of his department, showing the result of the departmental policy on works carried out departmentally during the last few years? He was prepared to discuss this question most fully with the Minister or his predecessor, and allow members to say whether the State was getting a fair deal from the present Government in their policy of handing these works over to contractors.

Salaries, £10,500:

Item, Under Secretary for Public Works, £550.

Mr. HOLMAN: This officer had a great deal of responsibility. Was it intended to increase his salary to the rate paid to other under secretaries? He should certainly get more than the Under Secretary for Law. It appeared those who had the greatest amount of work and bore the greatest amount of responsibility, were not treated too well.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was pleasing to hear a complaint about the lowness of the salary of this officer, who was doing good service. He (the Minister) was not in office at the time the Estimates were framed, the officer being away on long leave at the time, and he had no conversation with his predecessor on them, so that he could not say whether there was any consideration given to the relation of this salary to the salaries of

other heads of departments. He would certainly make a note of the matter and consider the desirability of recommending an increase to the Committee.

Item, Inspector of Engineering Surveys, £650.

Mr. HOLMAN: There was the case of another officer who was badly treated.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This had been already explained to the Committee. The Public Service Commissioner classified the office at £600. The officer was previously drawing £700, and the Government adopted with him, as with other officers, the policy of extending the reduction over a term of five years. The salary was too low for the work the officer was doing, and a special grant would be recommended for his services unless the Public Service Commissioner was prepared to reclassify the office at a higher salary.

Mr. HOLMAN: There were many complaints about our losing valuable officers through paying them too low salaries. This was a good officer doing good work, and the man who did good work deserved good pay. Unfortunately, the policy seemed to be to increase the salaries of those who had the greatest influence but did the least work.

Item, Roads Board Auditors (2), £501.

Mr. BROWN: If these officers were under the Public Service Commissioner a gross wrong was being done to them in comparison with the clerks in the Audit Department. These officers travelled over the whole of the State from Wyndham to Esperance, and to pay them £250 a year each was absolutely inadequate for the experience they obtained. In conjunction with Mr. Sanderson they were chiefly instrumental in framing the very up-to-date Roads Bill before Parliament. If the Public Service Commissioner did not see fit to increase their salaries, would the Minister see his way to do so, because these officers, by their searches and investigations, saved the Government several thousand pounds?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The matter would receive consideration. He knew the officer was a good officer doing important work and doing it well, and

he would give fair consideration to the representation of members.

Item, Supervisor in charge of furniture at £280 (6 months) £270 (6 months), £275.

Mr. HOLMAN: Another reduction appeared here, and with a lower paid officer of the department. Why did this occur in the Public Works Department? Were the officers not capable? The supervisor of furniture held a responsible position; he had to purchase all the furniture required by the Government, and some years he might have to purchase thousands of pounds' worth of stores. It would be wiser to pay a decent salary than to decrease this officer's salary and perhaps put temptation in his way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was a reduction following upon classification. The officer was receiving £300 at the time the classification was made, and he was now coming down to the salary of £250, which was the salary classified by the Commissioner. He would see that the matter received consideration. The bulk of the furniture was now purchased under contract, but the post was an important one and he would see if he could get a reclassification.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Commissioner was at one time the under secretary of the Works Department, and whilst he occupied that position certain salaries were paid to certain officers, but when the Commissioner got into another position he started to reduce the salaries of those officers. If there was no other evidence of the incompetence of this officer this was sufficient.

Contingencies, £85,029.

Item, Insurance on Public Buildings, £900.

Mr. SCADDAN: Last year provision was made for £50 and £868 was spent. This year the Government were providing £900. Was this not a change in the policy of the Government in regard to the insurance of public buildings?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amount represented one shilling per cent. on the capital value of the public buildings and was put into a Treasury trust account as a fund against loss by fire.

He wished to alter the wording of the item and would move an amendment—

That after "building" the words "contribution to insurance fund" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. HOLMAN: What was the amount now in the fund, and had any claims been paid since this policy had been adopted; also did the Government intend to extend this policy of insurance?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The fund had only just started, and the amount in it would be pretty nearly represented by the £868 shown as the expenditure for last year. There had been slight claims made on the fund for trivial fires but nothing worth mentioning, consequently there would be almost the whole amount mentioned in the last financial year available. The Government had not considered the question of extending the principle and they would not be justified in doing so until there was a fund available to work upon.

Mr. Holman: Was the Works Department running this fund on its own?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Treasury.

Mr. Holman: Surely the fund would be more than the amount shown on the Estimates. Did the Treasury pay the risks on all public buildings.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The railways had an exactly similar fund, but he thought it was separate. The Works Department looked after all the buildings. One shilling per cent. was, he thought, the insurance rate at the time of the slump and it would be sufficient, unless some heavy demand were made at an early date.

Roads and Bridges grants, etc., £53,704.

Item, Roads and Bridges throughout the State (Grants), £30,000.

Mr. HOLMAN: Could the Minister give any idea how the vote was to be allocated? Whether the money was to be spent in the more settled districts or would the out-back parts of the State receive some consideration?

Mr. JACOBY: Had the Minister gone into the question of the more equitable grading of the roads boards of the State? On looking at the return supplied by the

Works Department the amounts given to the various boards varied considerably. It had always been the custom of Ministers when approached by the various boards of the State to urge those boards to do all they possibly could to assist themselves in regard to increasing their taxation and then they could be sure that more help would be received from the Government. If members looked at the return they would find that the amounts varied considerably. Some boards got £100 for every £25 they spent, and this even occurred to boards situated in urban localities, whilst other boards situate in producing districts had to spend something like £150 or over in order to get £100 from the Government. He had in his mind one board which he wished to refer to as an illustration of what he meant. The Greenmount roads board was situate in a purely producing district, and in order to get £100 from the Government this board had to spend £144. Take the Chittering roads board in a purely farming district. That board had to spend more than £155 in order to get £100 from the Government, but the Albany roads board had to spend only £36 15s. 11d. in order to get £100 from the Government. He was not complaining of the amount given to the Albany roads board or any other board, but he wished to emphasise the urgent necessity that existed for a more equitable system of distributing money. The Greenmount roads board in having to spend £144 to enable them to receive £100 from the Government found themselves in an extraordinary position owing to the large development which had taken place in the district. They had taxed themselves to the full limit the law allowed, $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound, and even with this taxation they found themselves absolutely unable to give anything like adequate service to the fruit-growers and other producers in the district. There were many portions of that district absolutely unserved by roads allowing producers to get their produce to the railway system, and he had on several occasions urged upon the Government that they should attempt as far as possible to subsidise these boards on a pound for

pound basis. Such boards as Wanneroo and the others referred to by the member who had just spoken, owing to their special circumstances, would have to be treated differently from other districts where the making of roads was not so expensive; but, even after making these allowances, there was some difficulty in understanding the tremendous divergence and want of equity in the manner in which Government moneys were distributed. There was an urgent need that the Government should more liberally subsidise the efforts of the people in these districts. Whilst the boards should do all they possibly could to raise revenue locally still, when the board had gone to the full limit allowed by the Act for the purpose of giving facilities to the people carrying on the work of production, it seemed that the more the board did for themselves the less the Government was inclined to do for them. The work of road development was of the utmost importance to the South-western portion of the State, where the main product was that of fruit. Roads were equally as important as railways, and unless the Government could see their way clear to give road facilities to these districts they would seriously hamper the expansion of this great industry. It was making strides second only to wheat-growing as a producer and at the present time for every acre of fruit trees being planted in the whole of the other States one acre was being planted in the State of Western Australia. If the Government realised that the roads were necessary for the carrying on of the fruit industry they would need to have not only a more equitable distribution, but also a substantial increase in the total grant. There should be some attempt made at grouping the boards, but in no instance would it be fair to decrease the amount given to those boards who were doing so much to help themselves. He knew that the Minister was sympathetic, but although sympathetic assurances had been received time after time the amount available for roads had not increased. This year a large export of the surplus fruit of the State had been arranged, and if that product was to

be placed on the world's market in a condition which would enable it to command the best prices, it was essential that it should be delivered in good condition; and that would be impossible unless good roads were provided. The instance of the Greenmount roads board was sufficient to illustrate the inequity of the present method of distributing the grants, and he hoped that the Minister in allocating the grants this year would see whether he could not accept it as a guiding principle that as near as possible the grants would be made upon a pound for pound basis. He did not object to consideration being given to the Albany board but he would like other boards treated with equal consideration.

Mr. PRICE: The Minister helped those boards who helped themselves, and if the member for Swan had looked further into the figures he would have found that the Albany roads board had undoubtedly helped themselves. Where the Greenmount roads board imposed taxation to the amount of 2d. in the pound the Albany roads board taxed themselves to the extent of 2½d. in the pound. Again it was most unfair to take the amounts voted for specific works and attempt to draw an analogy between them and the ordinary annual grant of another board. The annual grant to the Albany board was £185 and the grant for specific works £1,115, whilst the Greenmount board's ordinary grant was £314 and for specific works £435; but, whilst the Albany board spent in administration only £169 in connection with an expenditure on works of £2,198, the Greenmount board spent £319 in administering an expenditure of £2,170. The Minister was to be commended for helping those who helped themselves and applied their money with the least expenditure on administration. These figures showed how unfortunate it was for the member for Swan to select Albany for the purpose of comparison with Greenmount. It had to be remembered also that it cost more on the average to make one mile of road between Albany and Grassmere, or Grassmere and Torbay, than it would to make five miles of road under ordinary conditions. Albany had had to fight for

any little assistance it had received from the department, and later, in dealing with the items he would show that the district was not receiving the liberal treatment which the member for Swan had endeavoured to indicate.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was desirable that members should consider the conditions of outback districts in order to see the inadvisability of making grants upon a pound for pound basis, as had been suggested by the member for Swan. For instance, Wiluna was distant from Nanine 130 miles and from Lawlers 120 miles. It was an isolated centre and the town furthest east of any in the State: the roads board had to maintain hundreds of miles of road, and how could the few people living there be expected to pay the necessary taxes for that purpose?

Mr. Jacoby: I do not object to that.

Mr. HOLMAN: In such a district it would be impossible to make the local people pay a very great proportion of the cost of maintaining these roads—hundreds of miles from their own doors. Such districts were in an entirely different position from that of the closely settled districts, and whatever system was adopted, those places must receive special consideration.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hon. members would recognise that the Minister had a somewhat difficult task in distributing the vote equitably, because of the necessity of having a variety of information at his disposal and of making allowances for districts that laboured under special and great disadvantages. In the past there had been a system of grading so far as possible, and the principle had been firstly to help those who helped themselves most, and secondly to help to a larger extent those that were least able to help themselves. In other words, those who showed a willingness to tax their own ratepayers received special consideration, and those who had very few ratepayers to tax and were a long way distant from centres of population received the greatest consideration. He proposed when dealing with this vote to give the fullest consideration to the re-

presentations of the members for Murchison, Swan, and Albany, and would endeavour to bear in mind those requirements that had a vital bearing on any important industries. At the same time, he would take into consideration the rate levied, and in doing that it would also be necessary to review the valuations on which these rates were based, because a rate of 2½d. in one district might not be equivalent to a rate of 2d. in another district, because of the discrepancy in valuation. Amongst the numerous duties which the roads board had to perform was that of giving particulars of valuations made by them, and although it might appear that some of these boards which helped themselves most did not get proper consideration, that might be due in part to the fact that the rate was not always an indubitable indication of the amount of taxation levied by the board. However he would do his best to treat equitably the different parts in allocating this vote, and he would again remind members of what he had told them earlier, that in addition to this particular vote a further and very substantial provision would be made on the Loan Estimates, and members should bear in mind when dealing with that proposition, the needs of the State, the needs of the industries, and the necessity for providing feeders for the railways, and to sacrifice their one principal objection against spending borrowed money on road making, because it was absurd to do the best possible for the whole of the State with the resources at the disposal of the Government. He could not do more than again repeat the assurance that he would very carefully consider the representations which had been made on the subject.

Item, Albany Roads Board: Albany-Grassmere Road (new Work), £125.

Mr. SCADDAN: Would the Minister explain to the Committee whether the Government had put into operation their proposal of last session to provide these funds only on the pound for pound basis. Did the Minister satisfy himself that the money was expended for the purpose for which it was granted, and whether the pound for pound was raised by the local

authorities for the specific work which was mentioned in the Estimates?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When a grant was made for a specific purpose a road board before receiving that amount had to enter into a bond that the money would be expended solely on the particular work. When the road board auditor visited the district one of his duties was to report with regard to the expenditure of these grants, and that officer had to assure himself from the vouchers, and if necessary from personal inspection, that the money had actually been spent for the purpose for which it was voted.

Mr. Scaddan: How many road board auditors are there?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There were two, and they were perpetually engaged. With regard to the pound for pound question, that was waived in some cases in special circumstances, and where it was found to be unworkable. The vote before the Committee was not on the pound for pound basis.

Mr. Scaddan: Do the auditors visit every road board each year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes: with very few exceptions. Of course it would not be possible for them to visit every year the road boards in the extreme North of the State, but if they did not go there every year inspection was made for the double time when they did go there. A very thorough and effective check was made by the auditors right throughout the State, and these auditors were doing their work very well. The road boards themselves agreed that the work was thoroughly done; indeed some thought it was too thoroughly done.

Item, Wiluna Road Board, Diorite Road (to Wiluna), (new work), £100.

Mr. HOLMAN: This roads board had some hundreds of miles of roads to maintain, and these roads were in very bad order, and very often impassable in places in summer and winter. There was a lot of new country opened up there, and what he would like to know was whether it was the Minister's intention in such isolated places to give the boards fair considera-

tion. There was no more isolated gold-field in Western Australia than Wiluna, and no place which had received so little consideration from the Government in the past.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The information in his possession about this item was that that road was portion of the main road from Nannine over which all the carting to Wiluna was done. He recognised the difficulties of the people resident at Wiluna and beyond, and he would be prepared to go into the correspondence which the member for Murchison had sent along to the department, and he would see that as liberal provision as possible was made for the district either from the funds provided under these Estimates or from the Loan Estimates.

Item, Repairing roads damaged by flood (new work), £1,100.

Mr. PRICE: Would the Minister explain where this money was to be expended? Some time ago he made application for some money when there had been some very severe floods through the Southern part of the State, and when a number of bridges were carried away, and some miles of road destroyed in the Plantagenet district. Unfortunately he could not get assistance to repair the roads, and he would like to know now where it was proposed that this money should be spent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member could be assured that he might have some hope of sharing in this vote. The amount was not allocated, and not even earmarked. Applications were received during the last severe winter from a very large number of road boards in the South and South-West for grants towards repairing damage done by floods. The outcome was that this item was provided, but nothing had yet been spent.

Mr. JACOBY: Speaking on bridges generally, he would like to draw attention to the fact that there was no provision on these Estimates for new roads and bridges. Provision should be made for a road which happened to be particularly important in connection with the export of grapes this year, the West Swan Road. There was a bridge required on this road, and the matter had been mentioned, but

he was not aware whether any provision had been made for it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member could not be answered generously. No provision had been made on these Estimates, but the hon. member would have a chance of bringing the matter up at a later stage.

Mr. JACOBY: This matter was of considerable importance in connection with the opening up of a very big industry in this State. Since the experimental shipment of grapes, arrangements had been made for space for the shipment of 6,000 cases of grapes this year to oversea markets, and the major portion of these grapes would be transported over the West Swan Road where a bridge was badly required over Ellen's Brook. The State was in a magnificent position for the development of this trade, and it was to be hoped the Minister would recognise the importance of the request.

Mr. SCADDAN: On last year's Estimates there had been an amount provided for repairs to the Helena River bridge at Guildford. Apparently this money had not been expended, nor was there any provision on this year's Estimates for a re-vote; yet it was understood the material for the work was on the Guildford railway station. The work was urgently needed. Would the Minister give an assurance that it would be carried out?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The reason why it appeared the money had not been expended was because the sum had been transferred to another item covering repairs to three different bridges in the Guildford municipality. For this purpose a total amount of £1,259 2s. 6d. had been spent last year. As for the question raised by the member for Swan, the Government realised the importance of the fruit export industry, and he hoped it would be possible to give every reasonable assistance to that industry.

(Mr. Brown took the Chair.)

Harbours and Rivers, £11,418.

Item, Derby Cattle Yards, reconstruction (new work), £1,000.

Mr. HOLMAN: Would the Minister give some information in connection with this item?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The item represented the reconstruction of the cattle yards, which had been rendered necessary by the destruction of the timber.

Mr. Osborn: It is to be hoped the Government will Powellise the new timber.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All timber used in the North-West was now being Powellised. In addition to the decay of the old timber there had been the desirability of removing the yards to a new site.

Mr. HOLMAN: With regard to the damage caused by white ants, had any experiments been made with white ant exterminators with the view to preventing the immense loss involved?

The Minister for Works: All these exterminators have been tried in the North.

Mr. HOLMAN: Why had the department not experimented with the local white ant exterminator instead of relying upon the imported article? Very serious complaints had been made a little while ago.

Mr. Swan: There is an improvement now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Every known white ant exterminator had been tested. If any new compound could be produced he could assure the hon. member that a few pounds' expenditure would not prevent the making of a trial.

Item, Rottnest, baths near jetty (new work), £248.

Mr. SCADDAN: Would the Minister give some information as to the intention of the Government in this connection? Some years ago the Labour Government had provided a sum of money for the construction of bathing sheds, etcetera, at Cottesloe. Recently he found that more up-to-date changing sheds had been provided, with the result that the sheds originally provided for the free use of the public were absolutely neglected, and had been allowed to fall into a disgraceful condition, presumably in order to compel people to use the newer sheds, for which they had to pay a fee. It was to be hoped this experience would not be repeated at Rottnest.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The present proposal was simply to provide a safe bathing place for the holiday makers at Rottnest. Nothing elaborate was contemplated, as would be seen by the amount provided. It was intended merely to make a shark-proof enclosure. The caretaker at Rottnest would see to it that the place was properly looked after.

Item, Swan River, improvements to foreshore at Nedlands, grant on pound for pound basis (new work), £500.

Mr. PRICE: Would the Minister tell the Committee which local authority, if any, had control of the foreshore at Nedlands, or whether, as a matter of fact, the foreshore at that place was not private property? It was well known the locality round about was private property and was being exploited in the interests of a particular individual.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The local authorities concerned were the Subiaco municipal council and the Claremont roads board. These two bodies exercised control over the foreshore, their division being the road along which the Nedlands tramline ran. As mayor of Subiaco at the time the Nedlands tramway scheme was developed he had had pleasure in arranging as one of the conditions of that scheme that these local authorities should get the ownership in fee simple of a certain portion of the foreshore. The local authorities held that fee simple, and in addition the Subiaco council had insisted upon a small camping area being set aside in fee simple. This beach was one of the most popular resorts around Perth today. He had visited the place himself on New Year's evening, when there was present one of the biggest crowds he had seen congregated on any river or ocean beach at one time. He was lucky in returning early because, owing to insufficient trams, numbers of people had to walk home. This vote was promised by his predecessor and was thoroughly warranted.

Mr. Scaddan: The Minister's pass for the Nedlands trams only gave him seating accommodation when there was room.

The Minister for Works: I have no pass.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Minister's tramway pass carried him over all the tramways. The Nedlands Park Bill was passed on certain conditions, one being that the promoter should deposit £1,000 as a guarantee to carry out certain works named in the provisional order. These works were now carried out, and in addition there were baths provided which, outside the surf bathing, were the best in the metropolitan district. The promoter desired to extend these baths but could not do so owing to lack of funds. The Minister might consider the advisability, now the works were carried out, of returning that deposit of £1,000. The promoter would probably give a guarantee that the money would be expended in further improvements which would be of benefit to the people generally.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So long as the Committee were satisfied, there was no objection to returning the deposit. The baths needed enlarging, and it would be to public advantage if the money was spent in that direction.

Buildings, £49,277.

Item, Hay River school, tent quarters (new work), £95.

Mr. PRICE: This was the school to which the teacher was sent who had to spend the night in the goods shed at Narrikup railway siding. What quarters was it intended to erect?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The quarters would be of the ordinary design for a single teacher, canvas and scantling with iron roof. They would not be elaborate, but would be cool and comfortable.

Mr. PRICE: This was one of the wettest districts in the State. The trouble was the building might be too cool. The department should erect a weatherboard building.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will show you the plan at the office and we will discuss it there.

Item, Victoria Park school, drainage and gravelling, renovations and other improvements (new work), £456.

Mr. GORDON: Though not in favour of the item, he did not intend to move its reduction, but it was a waste of money. Nearly £1,000 had been spent in trying

to improve the drainage of a building originally placed in a swamp and right at the end of the district. It would be better to abolish the school and build a new one in the centre of the district. It was doubtful whether the money now being spent would properly fulfil the object. On one occasion the health authorities condemned the building and took action to prevent the classes being continued until the Government commenced to improve it.

Mr. PRICE: The school would never be healthy in its present position, and there was always liability to an outbreak of illness among the children. The department would have done better had they erected a new school in a more suitable locality.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The officers of the department advised that the improvements proposed would be effective. The board of health saw the plans and considered the improvements would be likely to remove the trouble. In the circumstances the department were warranted in proceeding with the work. To remove the school would be an expensive proceeding. The item included general improvement to the school premises, the class rooms, and so forth. The building would be again inspected, if the member for Canning desired it, in order to make assurance doubly sure in regard to the effectiveness of the alterations. The health of the children must be the first consideration; and if the improvements would not prove effective, steps would be taken to meet the requirements of Victoria Park.

Item, Youanme tent school and quarters (new work), £210.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Was the erection of a tent school justified in a district where there were several hundred people, and a district which was one of the most promising in the State? The erection of flimsy structures, which could not be removed except at considerable cost, was a wrong policy. There were three of these tent schools in the Forrest electorate, costing from £150 to £200 each. In a district where scantlings were going to waste the price was altogether excessive. He

had suggested to the department placing these tent schools on trucks at the different timber camps, so that they could be easily removed on the rails at the end of six months, when operations were carried further afield; but the department, on the advice of Millars' Company, abandoned the idea, though it was worthy of a trial. The schools were doing some good, but there was too much delay on the part of the Education Department. One locality in his electorate had been asking for educational facilities for 12 months. There were four additional schools required to serve 30 or 40 children in each place. The Minister had promised that to-morrow he would make a special effort to have the work put in hand. There would be no difficulty in the Works Department getting on with the work at once.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: As to Youanme the report which he had stated that there were about 20 children there of the school age without educational facilities. Therefore it was necessary to provide a small school, and quarters for a single man. This was what was proposed to be done with the item.

Mr. Holman: There would be double the number of children there in a few months.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the item had not been anticipated, he would consider the propriety of getting a more suitable building erected. From what he had heard of Youanme it was likely to be a permanent and growing place, and perhaps worthy of better provision. As to the representations made by the member for Forrest, perhaps he would send to the Works Department the proposal which he had already sent to the Education Department, and a report would be made on it by the officers of the department.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How long would it take?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not more than a day or two if the staff was not busy, but the staff had been working to its fullest extent, and members should not therefore harshly criticise the delays which had taken place.

Mr. TROY: When he heard the department intended to erect a tent school at Youanme he went to the Education Department and pointed out the absurdity of it, because it would be a waste of money. However the department said they intended to go on with the erection of the school. The experience of Sandstone should have taught the department that the erection of a tent school at a place like Youanme would be a waste of money. Whilst there might be 20 children there at the present time, the population was 400 or 500 and would be double that by the end of the year. A great deal of development work was being done, and the population must increase. At the same stage in the history of Sandstone there was a population there of 700, and only 25 children in the place. Miners would not take their children there because no educational facilities were provided. Immediately a school was provided the people would bring their families, and in a few months there would be hundreds of children at Youanme which was likely to be one of the biggest mining towns in the State.

Item, Erection of humpy for Pensioner Leahy (Works Department, revote), £3.

Mr. BATH: One would think the department were going to erect a kennel for a dog by the way in which this item was stated on the Estimates, and it seemed that the job was so stupendous that the amount had to be carried over from one Estimate to another.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This person was camped on Government land, and had been turned off it. After he was turned off, provision, a little better than that practically taken from him, was made for him.

Mr. HOLMAN: Leahy was an old pioneer of the State; he had walked from Geraldton to the Kimberleys, and when the Works Department were building a home for an old battler such as this man, was they might treat him with reasonable consideration, and build him a comfortable home.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Inquiries would be made into the matter to see if further expenditure was warranted.

He (the Minister) had no personal knowledge of the man, or the circumstances.

Item, Grants-in-aid for construction and additions to Mechanics' Institutes, Miners' Institutes, and Agricultural Halls, £2,500.

Mr. SCADDAN: What action was it proposed to take as to the difficulties arising from time to time as to trustees of these halls? Trouble arose recently in his electorate by the trustees refusing to hand over the keys, and the people were not able to use the hall. The department might give further consideration to the appointment of trustees, and probably it would be better if all these halls were vested in the Works Department.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There had been a certain amount of trouble in other places in addition to that referred to by the hon. member, owing to trustees leaving the district, or trustees taking up a peculiar attitude in regard to the halls. He was inclined to think the most satisfactory solution for the Government was not to part with the fee simple of the land on which institutes were erected, and to avoid the appointment of trustees and allow the halls to be managed by committees of management. At present the usual procedure was for the land and buildings to be vested in permanent trustees. While there was an annual change of committees of management they were liable to get at loggerheads, and trustees were liable to come and go. He had already under consideration the desirability of altering the regulations in the direction he had indicated, and he proposed to make a recommendation to Cabinet on the subject.

Item, Grants for erection of roads board offices, £750.

Mr. HOLMAN: On what basis was the grant for the erection of roads board offices made?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These grants were all made under regulations, but he had not a copy with him; they were printed, and he would supply the member with a copy to-morrow.

Vote put and passed.

Vote, *Sale of Government Property Trust Account*, £56,553:

Mr. SCADDAN: It was found that the total proceeds from the sale of Government property amounted to £159,000.

The Minister for Works: The hon. member was taking the amount from the 1st of July, 1904.

Mr. SCADDAN: The whole of the proceeds to date amounted to about £159,000, of which no less than £153,401 was from the sale of property procured by the expenditure of loan moneys. This would really account for the expenditure of about four times that amount of loan moneys. When the property was sold, was each department permitted to deduct the amount expended from loan funds to procure this property, from the capital expended on the work? For instance, no less than £28,604 was provided by the sale of property secured with money raised in connection with the Goldfields Water Scheme. Did that affect the people who had provided the sinking fund and interest charges; was it deducted from the capital expenditure in connection with those works?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. SCADDAN: Where did the reduction operate in connection with the Goldfields Water Scheme? The figures for the capital expenditure had not altered, to his knowledge. This £28,000 really accounted for an original expenditure of £100,000. If that £100,000 had not been deducted from the capital expenditure in connection with the scheme, the people of the goldfields had to find approximately £6,000 per annum for the purpose of meeting the sinking fund and interest charges on that account, from which they derived no benefit whatever. Was it the £28,000 or the £100,000 which was deducted from the capital expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Whilst he could not give the hon. member definite information as to whether the original cost of the Government property sold was credited or the sale price was credited, he thought that it was the latter; and it had to be borne in mind that the scheme had had the use of that property from the time of the purchase until it had deteriorated to the value at which it was sold. In regard to the Goldfields

Water Scheme new expenditure was continually taking place and, therefore, the capital was liable to show an increase in spite of reductions of that description.

Vote put and passed.

This concluded the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Resolutions as passed in Committee of Supply granting supplies amounting to £2,489,018 from Consolidated Revenue, and a further sum of £56,553 from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account were formally reported.

On motion by the Premier report from Committee of Supply adopted.

House adjourned at 9.35.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 19th January, 1911.

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Redistribution of Seats, 2a., Com.	3125
Supply, £377,000, 1a.	3158
Adjournment, Friday Sitting	3158

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Resumption of pastoral leases. 2, By-laws of the Menzies Local Board of Health.

QUESTION—TIMBER LEASES, RETURN.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (without notice) asked the Colonial Secretary: When will the Minister lay on the Table the return with reference to timber leases?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: I have sent a reminder to the Lands Office to-day. I expected I would have had it to lay on the Table to-day, but it has not arrived. I will make in-

quiries. It will probably be laid on the Table at the next sitting.

BILL — BRIDGETOWN-WILGARRUP RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: It will not be necessary to speak at any length in moving the second reading of this Bill, inasmuch as it is simply a Bill for a short extension of the line now under construction from Bridgetown to Wilgarrup. The Bridgetown-Wilgarrup line, which was passed last session, is the first section of a railway which will eventually go from Bridgetown to the Southern Ocean about Denmark or in that locality.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: And on to Albany, of course.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It will go round by Albany because Denmark is connected with Albany.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Are you going to build it all from the one end?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, it will be built from the Bridgetown end. This railway runs into the karri country, and it is to tap this country that this short extension is asked for. The Railway Department some time ago called for tenders for 6,000 loads of karri for the building of wagons. Karri grows only in that corner of the State and is rather scarce, but by an extension of the Wilgarrup line for three miles in the direction it is intended the line shall ultimately follow, as I have already indicated, it will run into the good karri country. When the Railway Department called for tenders for this karri they received a tender at 75s. a load. Later on the contractors stipulated that if they were allowed to build three miles of railway from Wilgarrup southwards they could reduce their price by 5s. a load, which would make a difference of £1,500 to the department on that one contract. The Government, however, would not consent to allowing a private railway to be built into the State system, but if the contractors would make a larger reduction than 5s., or a reduction which the Government deemed sufficient,