

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8.32 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 15th November, 1906.

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

PRAYERS.

ELECTION RETURN, EAST FREMANTLE.

The CLERK announced the return of writ for election extraordinary at East Fremantle, showing that Mr. William Charles Angwin had been duly elected.

MR. ANGWIN took the oath and subscribed the roll.

PRIVILEGE—MR. SPEAKER'S REMARKS AS TO ALL-NIGHT SITTINGS.

MOTION OF CENSURE.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): Before Notices are called for, I desire to bring up a matter of privilege, and I

think this is the proper stage at which to introduce it. I will preface my remarks by reading a motion which I purpose moving at the termination of my remarks:—

That Mr. Speaker having given utterance to the following words—"It would be out of place, holding the position I occupy, a neutral one, to make any comment farther than to say that I felt it incumbent on me to make this information known to the Assembly. It will perhaps be the means of calling the attention of the taxpayers of the country to the question whether they get full value for their money in oratorical effect or monetary value"—is guilty of a breach of the privileges of this House, and is deserving of censure.

I desire to say at the outset that I have looked up some decisions of a former Speaker, the late Sir James Lee Steere; and I notice on one occasion he said it was the duty of the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition to support the Honourable the Speaker in his position in the House. But seeing that the Speaker himself occupies the position of first gentleman in the land, a position higher than that of Leader of the Government or Leader of the Opposition, it is the primary duty of the Speaker to see that no reason is given to members of this House or to the leaders on either side to depart from their duty of upholding the Speaker's authority. I say the highest duty which you, sir, or anyone holding the position of Speaker, owes to this Assembly is to be ever watchful to defend the rights and privileges of members of this House, irrespective of which side of the House they occupy. In fact, it is the duty of a Speaker, when first elected at the beginning of a Parliament, when waiting on the representative of the Crown in this State, to request of His Excellency the Governor on behalf of the Crown that the rights and privileges of the House shall be continued to them, and that the most favourable construction shall be placed on their proceedings. In that same duty, almost the first duty which devolves upon the Speaker after his election, we see in what his primary duty consists—it is to act as a defender of the rights and privileges of the House; and we can have no greater exemplification of the responsibility attached to that position than the reply of a Speaker of the British House of Commons, the mother

of all Parliaments, when the King having demanded that certain members should be handed over to him, the Speaker said he had neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak but as the House might direct, of which he was the humble servant. I contend that this being the primary duty of the Speaker, a servant of this House, a wall of strength in defending it against any influence which may be brought to bear from outside, you, sir, in making use of the words which I have embodied in this motion, have been guilty of a derogation of that duty. I wish to say I take up this attitude not as a member of a party in this House, but as a member of the Assembly itself, as one who is actuated by the desire to defend the rights and privileges of members of this House, irrespective of their views, from any encroachment or infringement. I shall not discuss who is responsible for any all-night sitting of the Assembly. This is not the first session in which such sittings have been held; and the question of responsibility will rest between members of the House and their constituents. It is for us, when we go before our electors, either to give them information as to what has been accomplished in Parliament or again to solicit their suffrages, to leave them to judge; because in the last analysis they are the masters of Parliament, and it is with them that the right to judge our attitude rests. So I shall not enter into any controversy as to whether the members of the Government, the Opposition, or any individual member or members have been responsible for the all-night sittings held. This is not a question whether the speeches which any member has delivered in the House can or cannot be classed as oratory, or whether the words uttered are or are not worth the taxpayers' money. That is not a question which you, sir, I submit, should decide; but it also is a question which rests with the judgment of the electors who sent us to Parliament; and again I say that responsibility lies between members of the House and the electors who have sent them here. In the first place, knowing the strength of the *Hansard* staff, I quite expected there would come from it some request for assistance, in view of the long hours for which members have been called on to sit, and during which the

services of *Hansard* were of course requisite. I believe that you, sir, could have dealt with that letter in your position as the person controlling the domestic economy of the House, without any reference whatever to Parliament. But undoubtedly, when you deemed it your duty to bring that letter before members, it was certainly a derogation of that duty, holding as you ought to hold an impartial position in the House, to make any comment whatever, and especially comment such as I have quoted. I submit, as has already been stated by other members, that the *Hansard* staff is undermanned and underpaid; and we have only to consider that while in Western Australia we have five *Hansard* reporters to report the proceedings of two Houses of Parliament and select committees, in the other States, as mentioned by the *Hansard* reporters themselves, there are 10 or 11 reporters. It is true that in the Eastern States the number of members is larger, and probably they sit longer hours, which may require one or two additional reporters; but the fact remains that during any specified number of hours members of Parliament in the Eastern States cannot make demands on their *Hansard* reporters to any greater extent than are made on the *Hansard* reporters of this State for the same period; because, after all, averaging speakers, 10 members will say no more per hour in the Eastern Parliaments than will 10 members in this House. Therefore, seeing that we have only five reporters here, and they can just carry out the duties of reporting without any possibility of providing relays, it stands to reason that if long hours are worked, if we sit for 31 hours as we have sat, or all night as has happened, and *Hansard* has to report another place which meets in the afternoon at half-past four, some provision must be made for such extra sittings, or those who are charged with the control of the country's business, the Government, must see that the business is conducted within reasonable and proper hours. In order to show that your action, sir, was unprecedented and not in accordance with your duty as Speaker, as a servant of this Assembly, I have only to make some quotations from official documents, precedents, and proceedings in the House

of Commons, compiled by officers of the House and published by *Hansard* (England.) This authority says that—

On the 9th March 1620, there is a long debate in which the conduct of the Speaker is very much blamed: "That he came out of the Chair without consent of the House, being required by the greater voice of the House to sit still; that he sometimes neglects his duty to the House, in intrincating or deferring the question, and hath made many plausible motions abortive; that Mr. Speaker is but a servant of the House, and not a master nor a master's mate; and that he ought to respect the meanest member, as well as those about the Chair.

Again, on another occasion:—

The Speaker having adjourned the House the last day of the last Parliament, without leave of the House, and refusing to put a question that was moved, the House resolved that this behaviour was a breach of privilege, though after a verbal command from the King to adjourn.

Then we also have it laid down, not only in these precincts but in *May*, that—

The Speaker ought to be very cautious and pay an exact attention to the rule laid down on the 27th April 1604: That in matters of doubt he is to explain, but not to sway. In matters of doubt, or if he is referred to, to inform the House in a point of order or practice, it is his duty to state everything he knows upon the subject from the Journals or the history of Parliament; but he ought not to argue or draw conclusions from this information.

On this occasion the Speaker has infringed that rule and precedent of the Imperial Parliament, by arguing and drawing conclusions from the information which he submitted to the House. While there may not be many precedents in the history of the British Parliament, ranging over such a long period as it does, where the Speaker has called forth the censure of the House for a breach of the privileges, or failure to protect members in their rights and privileges, it is because Speakers in the House of Commons have always been aware of the rightful position which they occupy in relation to members. They have never been slow to remember that they are the servants of the House, and that they are there to do as the House directs, and it is because these men, gentlemen of long experience, who by reason of that experience and their mature knowledge have been selected as Speakers, it is because of the fact that they have

recognised their duty that there has been no occasion for members of that Parliament to impugn their position or censure them except in the few brief instances to which I have referred. As I have already stated in regard to this subject, I feel it is the duty of the Speaker to defend this House. We recognise that he is also here to see that members of this House do not abuse the privileges of this House; and if at any time in the history of this session there has been an occasion wherein he thinks that members have departed from that duty, where they have abused the forms and privileges of this House, it is his bounden duty at the time to correct the member and bring him to order. On any occasion when the Speaker rightfully calls a member to order, where he brings him to task for any abuse of the privileges of the House, or a breach of the Standing Orders, it is right and just that that member should submit to his ruling, and the House should support the Speaker in such a ruling. But above all, as I said before, the higher duty is due to members of this House, over and above the duty of any member to his fellow members, a duty from him who occupies the premier position, a duty to defend members in the enjoyment of their rights and privileges, especially to defend the House from libels and abuse by people outside. For after all it is a question of the integrity and prestige of Parliament being at stake, and the Speaker is here to see that the prestige and integrity of Parliament are defended. What can be said if, instead of doing that, the Speaker practically turns round and rends the House which he is here to protect, if he gives utterance to statements which reflect on members, and which practically in so many words say that members practically are wasting the taxpayers' money, defrauding them of money. The utterance to which the Speaker gave delivery in the House is holding up the Assembly to contempt and ridicule by people outside; it is giving an opportunity to the Press to libel members; and whoever may be guilty of that conduct, the Speaker of the Assembly should be the very last to do it. I say it is a sacrifice of the dignity of the position which you, sir, hold; it is dragging the position of Speaker down in a way that should not be done; and if the question were submitted to me, or if

the question were submitted to the calm judgment of the people of the State, I think they would be inclined to ask, not whether the utterances of members could be classed as oratorical displays, not as to whether the speeches made are wasting the taxpayers' money, but whether you, in the position you occupy, in traducing members of the House, are worthy of the position you hold or worthy of the taxpayers' money which is provided for you. It is with extreme regret I move this motion, because I thought there would never be an occasion for such a motion to be moved. I have been in the Assembly since 1902, and I have always regarded the position of Speaker as one that should be protected; and I say we are getting away from the high traditions of the office when members are traduced from the Chair of this Assembly. I therefore move the motion.

MR. SPEAKER (Hon. T. F. Quinlan) : Before any farther discussion takes place, and I am sure it would be out of place for me to enter into any discussion at all, I desire to say that I regret if my remarks should be accepted by any one section of the House as intended for them. I spoke as I felt. That communication was handed to me, and I think it is well known throughout the State in which I have lived almost all my life that I am perhaps somewhat kindly disposed; and that communication appealed to me from a humane point of view, that the *Hansard* staff had grave reasons for complaint. Not only they had the gravest reasons for complaint, but the attendants and officials, and those throughout this establishment. It occurred to me on more than one occasion that it was hardly fair for officials to continue in this House as they had to do and come to their duties on the following day. It appealed to me to such an extent that I thought it my duty to place the matter before the House, and as a matter of courtesy to convey the information given to me; but the remarks were not intended by me to apply to any section of the House. I have been in the Assembly about 13 or 14 years, since the first Parliament was elected under Responsible Government, and I hope and believe I have had the confidence not only of my fellow members throughout that period, but

also members must know, or I would not be here, that I have the confidence of my electors; therefore members may understand that what prompted me were my feelings towards these officers. The communication appealed to me and caused me to say what I did. I did not apply my expressions to any one section of the House.

THE TREASURER (Hon. F. Wilson) : I can only say that I regret exceedingly that an occasion of this sort has arisen. Any person having the privilege of your personal friendship must be aware, sir, it would be the farthest thing from your thoughts to commit an offence against the dignity of your office or against the dignity of the House. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition in all his remarks as to the duty of the Speaker, and that it is the duty on the other hand of the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition to uphold the Speaker in his rulings in connection with the debates in this House, and also to protest strongly if there is the slightest idea that the rights and privileges of the House are being entrenched upon. I think, however, that after we have heard your remarks, and considering the letter you had just read to the House last night, that members will readily accept your explanation that your feelings for the *Hansard* staff, who are undoubtedly overworked—

MR. UNDERWOOD : His remarks applied to the taxpayers, not to *Hansard*.

THE TREASURER : Who are undoubtedly overworked, and who everyone admits are being overworked—it is admitted by the Leader of the Opposition and by myself and all members of the Opposition—perhaps accounted for the words which you let fall. I think, with the Leader of the Opposition, that if it is necessary that the *Hansard* staff should be reinforced, and if additional assistance is required to carry out their duties to this House, that no one—at any rate speaking for the Government, and the Leader of the Opposition will agree with me—will object to extra assistance being provided. I cannot, however, let this question pass without expressing my deep regret that the Leader of the Opposition should have included in his remarks his opinion as to Mr. Speaker being worthy

of his salary. I do not think we are going to do any good by introducing into a discussion of this sort the personal question of the value of any official of the House; and I hope that the House having heard what you have said will recognise that it is not always possible on the spur of the moment to command one's language, perhaps within the bounds in which it ought to be confined in the circumstances.

MR. UNDERWOOD: But you can withdraw if you make a mistake.

THE TREASURER: Therefore I hope members, whilst they may view with regret any impression which members of the House may have, that your remarks were directed against any section of the House, will accept your statement that the remarks were generally applied to the House as a whole, and through the House to the electors. I am at one with the Leader of the Opposition that it would be unseemly to debate the matter of the responsibility for an all-night sitting, for these all-night sittings may be necessary in the interests of the country. If they are not necessary, I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it is a question entirely between members and their constituents. The people must decide. It is the tribunal to whom all must appeal and to whom we are responsible. If any member or any party does something which is against public opinion, undoubtedly we shall hear of it and suffer for our actions; but I for one am prepared to accept your explanation in regard to this matter, and I trust members will view it in the same light, and that the Leader of the Opposition will be content, having drawn attention to this matter—and undoubtedly be exercised his right in drawing attention to the fact that we should defend the rights and privileges of members—will agree to withdraw the motion which he has moved.

MR. T. WALKER (Kanowna): I feel some diffidence in rising to speak on a matter of this kind, especially after Mr. Speaker's explanation; but it seems to me, even with that explanation, a transgression of the rules and privileges of this House has been made; for by the principles which have hitherto governed British Parliaments, it is equally wrong to reflect upon one hon. member, upon a party in the House, or to reflect un-

generously or offensively on the whole House itself. You, Mr. Speaker, would I believe have been the first to assist this Chamber in protecting itself from insults by the Press, if attacking the whole of a party or the whole Chamber; you would be the one who would be called upon to deal with the editor of a great public journal who had abused this House as a court for the making of laws. Therefore if in an outsider it is wrong to reflect upon Parliament or upon a party in Parliament, or upon a single member of Parliament, if these offences by outsiders come strictly within the category of "privilege," then I venture to think it is a still more regrettable offence that he who should be the guardian of the privileges of Parliament, he who is elected to protect members even from the Crown itself as against this House, should so far, in the impulse of his nature, forget the dignity and the duty—I say it respectfully—of his office as to not only censure the House, but to go farther than that, to especially solicit the attention of the taxpayers of the country to what could not be otherwise than construed as misconduct of this Assembly, over which it should be and is the greatest honour in the land to preside. Whilst we all rejoice to record our appreciation of the generous impulses that have characterised you, sir, through life, and whilst we know that generosity, like other impulses, may deflect the judgment, yet I venture to believe that the deflection in this case was unpardonable. And humbly and respectfully may I say to you, sir, that the complaint from the reporting staff was a matter for you to remedy, a matter in which the country at large was in no wise concerned. The reporting staff is under your direction, under your command; for the time being the reporters are your servants, as are the messengers of the House, as are the other officers about this Assembly. But the complaint from the reporting staff was for you to consider; it was your work, part of the obligations conferred upon you, part of the disagreeable duties you undertook when you were elected to your dignified position. A simple "Please, engage the additional staff you require in press of work," from you would have supplied the staff with all it desired. That would have gratified your generous

impulses and would have fulfilled your duty, and the matter would have ended without going outside the mere routine of ordinary management. But to bring this as a special appeal before the House, and through the House to make a special appeal to the taxpayers, was altogether going beyond what the occasion required. As a matter of fact, it is only a little time ago since I drew attention to the fact that the *Hansard* staff, under normal conditions, is overworked and underpaid—I drew attention to that in Committee; and as you were not in the Chair, perhaps it escaped your notice that our *Hansard* staff is paid at a much lower rate than is paid to any *Hansard* staff of any Australian State or the staff of the Commonwealth. The difference in some instances is enormous. We do not reach £2,000 a year as a total for our *Hansard* reporting; in New South Wales the salaries paid amount to £5,000; in New Zealand, where they speak the least amount possible in passing their laws, it is over £4,000 a year—I am speaking now from memory, but the figures are in the *Hansard* report of my previous speech; and it is ridiculous to expect the staff we have, with the pay they receive, to do the full work of parliamentary reporting. But sympathy should have been shown before last night; the reporters should have had that sympathy years ago. A proper appreciation of the services of those gentlemen whose duty it is to report the speeches in this Assembly, and give that faithful picture so necessary to the proper understanding of the proceedings in this House, would long ago have increased the staff; and would, I venture to say, have also increased the pay, as a proper appreciation of their services. But that has been neglected, and so long neglected that I do not marvel at those gentlemen taking an opportunity of extreme pressure for drawing attention to it, in the ordinary course of their work, their life-duty; and as it was a matter merely between you and them, and concerned no one else, that great generosity which I do not question for a moment was the cause of the offence last night, could have been exercised more beneficially, inasmuch as it could have been done quietly, and would have avoided that outburst into what may possibly be considered by the uncharitable an ostenta-

tious sympathy. The good impulses of your nature were provided with a means by which this could have been arranged, without your needing to have to concern either the House or the country. Supposing a messenger were overworked, and his mother wrote you a pathetic letter stating that her boy was being kept too long hours in the House at night, and that some relief should be given him, would you have come to the House, out of sympathy for that boy, and said, "This poor mother is pleading for her darling boy, asking that he be relieved from his work, and I draw the attention of the taxpayers to the way you are keeping the boy out of bed?" And yet that boy would be just as wronged by being kept out of his bed as would be the *Hansard* staff—it is only a matter of degree. You yourself should regulate a matter of this kind; but even then no generous impulses can be an excuse for degrading this Assembly. That is the position. The excuse you have made does not in its terms withdraw that insult to this Assembly which draws the special attention of the taxpayers to the cost they have to pay. Asking the special attention of the taxpayers to the question whether they are "receiving the value in oratorical effort" is unnecessarily offensive, for there is not an orator in this House. Therefore, when that sneer—for what else can we call it?—as to monetary value is made, it is a direct reflection upon the speeches made on both sides of the House. There may not be orators here, no Pitts, Burkes, Sheridans, or other of the great names which have made British constitutional history famous; but it is not for you, Mr. Speaker, to discourage the efforts made here at the finest possible means of expressing thought. It should be, I venture to think, your duty rather to encourage that greatest of arts which has made famous names—for they live through the whole course of history. Men have lived, because they have been orators, through ages. It is an art that we all well may copy; and it certainly is in bad taste that the art of oratory should be discredited by the Speaker of an important Assembly like this. Neither is it for Mr. Speaker, I venture to think, to question the money value of members' speeches. They are

not here to weigh their speeches in hard coin: they are here to do their duty to their constituents, and if they do that to the best of their abilities they have discharged to the utmost of their possibilities what they were sent here to accomplish. It is not for you to judge them, to sum them up, or in any way to discourage the greatest or the weakest of us. In fact, we all trust to you to protect us. We who are weak, on the Opposition side, rely upon you for protection to fight against a majority that may be powerful against us, that may be inclined to put a check on those dearest privileges of the Britisher we look to you to protect; and yet I regret to have to say that it is you who draw public attention to the popular cry that there is too much talk in this House. There never can be too much talk in defence of great principles. I do not presume to lecture you, sir, upon your duty; but I cannot help thinking we are all too inclined to forget that memorable and remarkable occurrence in the British House of Commons in answer to the insults of a king—not the ordinary citizen in the street, not the ordinary club wine-bibbing chatterer, but a king who in all the fullness of his majesty was thus addressed in reply by the House of Commons, of which we are a distant offspring:—

The Commons now assembled in Parliament, being justly occasioned thereunto concerning sundry liberties, franchises, privileges, and jurisdictions of Parliament, amongst others not herein mentioned do make this protestation following: That the liberties, franchises, privileges and jurisdictions of Parliament are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England; and that the arduous and urgent affairs concerning the King, State, and the defence of the realm and of the Church of England, and the making and maintenance of laws, and redress of mischiefs and grievances which daily happen within this realm, are proper subjects and matter of counsel and debate in Parliament; and that in the handling and proceeding of those businesses, every member of the House hath, and of right ought to have, freedom of speech to propound, treat, reason and bring to conclusion the same; that the Commons in Parliament have like liberty and freedom to treat of those matters in such order as in their judgment shall seem fittest; and that every such member of the said House hath like freedom from all impeachment, imprisonment, and molestation (other than by the censure of the House itself) for or concerning any Bill, speak-

ing, reasoning, or declaring of any matter or matters touching the Parliament or Parliament business; and that if any of the said members be complained of and questioned for anything said or done in Parliament, the same is to be showed to the King by the advice and assent of all the Commons assembled in Parliament, before the King give credence to any private information.

How have we departed from those times when our own Speaker gets up and upbraids generally the members of this House for their speeches, all because there is an inadequate *Hansard* staff, underpaid and undermanned, a thing so easily remedied! Over such a small question as that this Assembly must shut up its proceedings and go home at an early hour each night. To save a few extra pounds' expense to *Hansard*! Was ever such a comparison made, that we should forego those ancient birthrights and privileges that are so time-honoured, that were fought for and won under such great difficulties, in order to save a few pounds being paid to *Hansard*? The attention of the public is to be drawn to the fact that we speak in defence of their rights. What do the people send us here for? Are we to be like children, to have a curfew bell in the Assembly, to be mere deputies, to be under the thumb of the Government or even of a Speaker, to forfeit what we believe to be our duty, not to open our mouths because the Government desire to force matters upon us after 12 o'clock at night, and vote millions away after midnight? Are we compelled to be silent to please the *Hansard* staff, to give them a few hours' extra rest, all because we begrudge giving them an extra man or giving them higher wages? Why, there is no comparison between the generous impulse to the staff and the great wrong that has been done. Let me say that I regret that it is not some more specific charge against one section of the House, because one desires to know who is considered the offender. This general condemnation meaning the whole House does not certainly hit some, and it must certainly hit others. It may not offend some members who seldom speak, because they cannot feel any guilt in that; but whom does it hit? Is it intended to be a menace to the Opposition? I know you say not; but what other interpretation will be put upon it outside? What meaning must be put upon it but that His Majesty's Opposition are betraying the country and

ceasing to perform their duties in abusing privileges and needlessly spending the taxpayers' money? There is no other interpretation for it. Somebody in this House is wasting the taxpayers' money. Who is it? We have a right to know. I refuse personally to sit under such an imputation, and the very general nature of it makes it all the more disagreeable; because say what may be said about the very general character of this accusation—because it comes to an accusation, and can have no other interpretation than an accusation—the public outside will take it as coming from you, sir, that the Opposition in this Assembly are abusing their privileges and that you disagree with the abuse of those privileges, and that you have given them a lecture, a severe lecture, and not only a lecture but a threat—for an appeal to the taxpayers is a threat; to call the attention of the country to those who are doing their duty here as if they were not doing their duty is to say to the taxpayers, "Look out that you treat these men as they deserve when they come before you next time. See to it that you take your vengeance on those who have occasioned me thus to speak." There is no other interpretation than that. You have not only accused some portion of the House, but you have threatened members and held them up to the wrath and malignity of the taxpayers outside. Is that not a wrong? Will any generous impulse wipe out that wrong? It is not that you did not do right in exercising the generous impulse, but that you did wrong in not exercising judgment, that you did not think how you were going to injure somebody, some person, some members of this august Assembly, and that you did not think you were degrading that very Assembly over which you were presiding. Goodness knows there are enough outside to mock at this Chamber, to deride it and belittle it, to sneer at its dignity and to throw mud at its privileges. We know that they need no encouragement. Everywhere outside this Assembly there are those who are envious of the position of those who are in it, and they seek to get a chance to get the dignity and privilege of membership, not by their merits or their qualities, but by degrading and debasing some of the hon. members who are in it, so that those members may fall and they

may step into their places. We know that this spirit exists not only here but in every country where there is a Parliament and where it is an honour to be a member of Parliament; but oh, it comes hard when our Speaker, the first com-moner in the country—

STRANGERS PRESENT.

MR. W. B. GORDON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to call your attention to the fact that strangers are present.

SEVERAL LABOUR MEMBERS: Shame!

MR. T. H. BATH: On a point of order, I submit that it is at your discretion, sir, whether you take notice of the presence of strangers or not.

MR. SPEAKER: I had better read the reference in the Standing Orders to this question:—

If any member shall take notice that strangers are present, the Speaker or the Chairman (as the case may be) shall forthwith put the question "That strangers be ordered to withdraw," without permitting any debate or amendment: Provided that the Speaker or the Chairman may, whenever he thinks fit, order the withdrawal of strangers from any part of the House.

Personally I would prefer that the hon. member should not press this. Of course if he does, I am bound to put it.

MR. GORDON: I withdraw.

DEBATE.

MR. WALKER (continuing): It shows your generous character, sir, to have criticism open to the daylight, and I am pleased you have taken that stand. I have but a few words to say. I was only going to bring it home that it makes us feel it all the more keenly when our own Speaker himself joins in the vulgar crowd, in the cry from the common herd, the thoughtless rabble, the cry of those in the streets who are always insulting the Assembly, or that you should have given occasion to anyone to make use of your words to belittle this institution. Upon you rests all the dignity of this Chamber. Every member here is under your protection. It is for you not to publish and to obtrude our defects, but if possible and if it can be done justly even to conceal them. That is the position you should take, and as has been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, never should it be forgotten that the position carries with it dignity which de-

mands the keenest justice and utmost impartiality, and which furthermore carries with it that character which almost belongs to a Judge upon one of our Supreme Court benches. That is the position, and it is by the observance of those features that the Speakers in the House of Commons have won their fame and their distinction. I sincerely again regret that your impulse has taken you so far as to forget that you are the servant of the House. You in your readings of history know well the incident of King Charles trying to extract from the Speaker a certain opinion regarding certain members. The King wanted to arrest the members. Who protected them? The Speaker, against the King; not against the ordinary rabble, but against the King himself; and that Speaker then expressed more tersely and I think more correctly than has ever been expressed since, the full functions of a Speaker when he said "Your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak but such as the House directs me." He placed himself implicitly in the hands of the House as its servant and mouth-piece and its protector against royalty, against all outside forces. We want to look on you, sir, in the same respect. While I have said this, I have said it with not one forfeiture of my respect to you personally, but I do feel it is necessary, even for you when you make a mistake, to be called to order as you would call me to order. If you transgress the privileges of this House, can you expect this House to respect those privileges? If you go beyond your province and set a bad example in imputing unworthy motives or unworthy conduct, either to individuals or parties, or to the whole of the House, how can you conscientiously call an individual member to order for the like offence? The best example should be set by the Chair, and while the Chair is in a commanding position it also has its duties. It must not produce disorder, it must do nothing to inflame or anger members, it must do nothing to lower their dignity, or to bring down their positions or their standing; but that is what has been done, and I regret for your sake that having drawn the attention of the taxpayers, I fear the vengeance of the taxpayers will not be placed upon those who have

done their duty upon this side of the House in resisting the tyranny of a thoughtless majority—the majority expressed by one member to-night in trying to rid the gallery of the Press in order that this debate may take place in secret—that the taxpayers will not bestow their vengeance upon us who are here upon these benches, but upon those who necessitate our fighting for those we represent, fighting for the constituencies who sent us here. The reflection I feel not upon me personally, but upon the constituency that has entrusted me. That constituency has been slighted by the imputation of wrong conduct that has been placed upon me even by you. I will not suggest, but I do wish that you had gone one step farther, and not only admitted that you did this from a generous impulse, but that you took a wrong step in drawing the attention of the taxpayers to the conduct of hon. members.

HON. F. H. PLESSE (Katanning): I regret I was not in the House when the remarks were made in reference to the incident of last night, and I also regret that I was not here to hear your remarks, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon. But I have listened during the time I have been here this afternoon to the remarks made. There is no doubt much in those remarks of the member who has just spoken; but it has to be remembered that the remarks made by Mr. Speaker were made under provocation.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: Who provoked the remarks?

HON. F. H. PLESSE: I feel that the previous speaker has touched on the question in a way in which it should not have been touched upon. We all recognise, sir, that during the time you have occupied your present position you have done your best to carry out the duties of your high office with justice and judgment; and I think, after your having expressed yourself as you did this afternoon, your explanation should have been accepted in the spirit in which it was tendered; for though the remarks which have fallen from members who have spoken represent their opinions, still the words uttered by you were uttered under great provocation, considering that the sittings have been lengthy.

MR. TAYLOR: Whose fault is it that they have been lengthy? The fault of the "brutal majority."

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The position of Speaker is a high and honourable one; but it is also a most difficult one, and due allowance should be made for an occurrence under such circumstances as were the cause of the remarks made by Mr. Speaker last night. I feel very sympathetic towards the occupant of the Chair, considering the length of time he has to preside over the debates. I agree that the curtailment of a debate, when it is in order and in the interests of the country, should not be permitted; but I also think that the circumstances surrounding this incident should be taken into consideration.

MR. TAYLOR: Tell us what they are.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Mr. Speaker's remarks should have been accepted in the manner intended, when he said that he regrets the occurrence and is sorry that he made the remark.

MR. WALKER: I do not think he said that.

MR. SPEAKER: I think I explained that in the clearest possible language; and in reply to the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) I certainly did express my regret, and I understood that every member recognised that I had done so. I could not do more than I have done.

MR. BATH (the mover): Having now brought this forward, as I felt impelled to do, I wish to say, as I said before, it was with extreme regret that I felt called upon to move such a motion. I have been a member of this Assembly since 1902—certainly not a very long period—but I think that members who have been with me in the House have recognised that at all times I have endeavoured to conduct myself with full regard to the dignity of the Assembly and regard for the position of Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately I was not here when the incident occurred; and I have been in a state of indignation that the Assembly should be placed in such a position. Therefore, I felt impelled to move this motion. However you, Mr. Speaker, having expressed your regret, and having vindicated my position and the position of members of this House,

which I felt should be vindicated, I now beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

QUESTION—SALARIES OF MINISTERS.

MR. DAGLISH asked the Premier: 1, Whether the salaries paid to and received by members of the present Government are at the rate provided by the Constitution Act Amendment Act, namely for six Ministerial salaries £6,200, or at the rate proposed in the Constitution Acts Amendment Bill, viz. £5,000? 2, Whether the Premier is aware that there is no legal obstacle to prevent Honourable Ministers from returning to the Treasury the difference between the present salaries and the amount which Ministers regard as proper?

THE TREASURER (for the Premier) replied: 1, At the rate provided under the Constitution Act Amendment Act, namely for six Ministerial salaries, £6,200. 2, Yes.

LAND TAX ASSESSMENT, AMENDMENTS.

AS TO PROCEDURE.

MR. DAGLISH: I desire to raise a point of order in regard to a proceeding that took place here on Tuesday night, when the question as to whether certain amendments requested by the Legislative Council in the Land Tax Assessment Bill which had been passed by this House should be discussed by this House in Committee, that course being then prevented by a resolution to ask for a conference. Subsequently a message was sent to another place to the effect that the Council's message had been considered and that a conference was requested on the suggested amendments. [Minute of Proceedings read.] On the same evening, I raised a point of order that members had been refused an opportunity of considering the message of another place, that when members had desired to discuss the message they had been ruled out of order by the Chairman of Committees, that therefore a conference was requested by resolution without any consideration having been given to the views of the Legislative Council. I drew attention to the fact

that the business on the Notice Paper, the consideration of the Council's message, had not been dealt with, but that new business by way of a motion, notice of which had not been given, had been substituted, and that members were thus debarred from dealing with the message in Committee.

THE TREASURER: How were they debarred?

MR. DAGLISH: By the Chairman's ruling. Some members desired to discuss the amendments requested by another place—[**MR. TAYLOR:** And the Chairman ruled us out of order]—which were embodied in that message; and those members were ruled out of order in proposing to discuss something entirely foreign to the matter then before the Committee. My point of order now is that while this Committee never discussed or considered the amendments of another place, a message has been sent to another place which states that this House has considered the message.

MR. TAYLOR: That is nothing, for this Government.

THE TREASURER: The Committee agreed to a conference.

MR. DAGLISH: I know that perfectly, and I have no objection to offer to the notification that this House had agreed to a conference; but I take strong objection to the statement that this House has considered a message which has never been discussed. That message could not have been considered unless the various amendments embodied in it were dealt with in their order. Not one of them has been considered; and as a matter of fact members were refused, and very properly so, the right by the Chairman of Committees of referring to the amendments, which would have been matter foreign to the motion then before the Committee. I wish it to be clearly understood that I in no way call into question the ruling by the Chairman of Committees, with which I entirely agree in view of the business then before the Committee. I am complaining that the statement has been made to the country that this House has done certain work, which in fact it neglected to do and delegated to five members. I am complaining that this message, inadvertently no doubt, is misleading to another place in saying that consideration has been

given to a message, when this House has been denied the right of giving that consideration. I raised the point two nights ago that it was our duty to consider the message from another place; but in spite of the protests raised by myself and others, hon. members insisted that we should not find out if there was any difference of opinion between the two Houses of Parliament, but should entirely delegate our functions as a deliberative body to five members of this House appointed at random. My point of order is that a message has been sent from this House which incorrectly states the position so far as this House is concerned.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: "Before considering."

MR. DAGLISH: It should have been "before considering." My point of order is only that an initial message from this House to another place should state correctly the facts of the case; and while I have no doubt the error made in this message is entirely inadvertent, while I make no accusation against the Government in this connection, I am drawing attention to a serious misstatement in a message from the Assembly, and asking that you, Mr. Speaker, will take upon yourself to direct that a correct message be sent, and that the message already sent be withdrawn.

MR. SPEAKER: The same form of message was used in 1903, at the last conference. There were amendments in that case, and a similar message was adopted.

MR. TAYLOR: The position was not the same.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is confusing the message and the amendments. On the consideration of a message some motion must be made—that the amendments be agreed to or not agreed to, or as was done in this case, that a conference be requested; and the consideration of the message was given effect to by the passing of the motion and by the so-called division. Anyway, if there is any clerical error, it can certainly be rectified at the request of the hon. member (Mr. Daglish), and I am sure the officials will see to that. The procedure follows that adopted in similar circumstances on a previous occasion in 1903.

MR. DAGLISH: I do not desire in any way to question your ruling, but I desire to point out that although the Assembly went into Committee to consider this message, before it could be considered a substantive motion of which no notice had been given was submitted by the Treasurer—not an amendment, but a substantive motion having no relation whatever to the consideration of the message, and intended to prevent the consideration of the message; and that substantive motion after debate was carried. In the case referred to, that of the Redistribution Bill of 1903, the amendments of another place were discussed, were considered; and they had been considered on a former occasion, because a conference was requested only after the Bill had twice gone up to another place, and after the Assembly had therefore been officially seized of the views of another place. In this instance a substantive motion which prevented the consideration of message No. 25 was moved, and the passing of that motion absolutely prevented the consideration. Had the motion been negatived, it would have been in the power of the Assembly to go on with the business on the Notice Paper, the consideration of the message. I desire to point out that consideration of the message could be entered upon only by dealing *seriatim* with the suggested amendments; and that until a specific motion to adopt say the first of those amendments was submitted, not one of them could be considered. I need hardly labour the point that it is impossible to deal *in globo* with a message containing a number of amendments from another place. Every amendment, or suggested amendment if it be in a Money Bill, has to be discussed in its order. It is quite impossible for members sitting in Committee to deal with the whole purport of a message, when it embraces, as this message did, a large number of amendments. Therefore I again respectfully point out that an error has been committed, and that a rectification is required to preserve the integrity of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: On the consideration of a message, a motion must necessarily be made, so that certain amendments may be agreed to or not agreed to.

MR. DAGLISH: The message was not considered.

MR. SPEAKER: An exactly similar case occurred in 1903, and a similar message was sent. Anyhow, attention will be directed to the matter.

THE TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): I submit with all due deference that the message is perfectly in order, being the outcome of the debate and the division in the Assembly.

MR. BOLTON: Debate on what?

THE TREASURER: The consideration of a message does not of necessity mean taking each item in detail.

MR. TAYLOR: You never touched one of the items.

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

THE TREASURER: We take a message into consideration. As you, sir, have already ruled, a motion has to be made. We might make a motion that the amendments be not agreed to, the whole lot; or as was done in this case, and was done many times before, we moved to ask for a conference and that managers be appointed to discuss the amendments. In debating and passing that motion we have considered the message. We need not consider each item in the message for the purpose of deciding whether a conference, shall be called. Unquestionably the procedure was perfectly in order. The matter was raised the other day. The Chairman thought it would perhaps be better to deal with the items of the message; but he said he could not rule that I was out of order. He gave his ruling, and the Committee by a majority accepted my view of the position. I maintain it is now highly irregular to try to upset the decision to which the Chairman came. I put the case as it appears to me; and it seems your view, Mr. Speaker, is exactly my view, that a motion having been moved regarding a message, that message has to all intents and purposes been considered; and this is the result of the decision of the Committee. I object to any alteration.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): I desire to point out that the statement just made by the Treasurer does not show the true position. When I entered this Chamber the other day a discussion was proceeding on a motion as to a conference with another place. I did not

arrive here till between five and six o'clock. I had not heard the commencement of the debate, and I had hardly referred to the Council's amendments when the Chairman pulled me up and told me I could not discuss the message from another place. I questioned his ruling. He pointed out we were discussing a motion for a conference with another place, and beyond that he could not let me go. I desired to discuss the necessity for dealing with the amendments, so that the House might perform its proper functions; but I had to oppose the motion, confining myself to arguments directly applicable to that motion. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) is quite correct in saying that the message sent to another place is misleading; that it does not put the position truly in any particular; that we never touched the message from another place: we discussed whether we should appoint managers to meet managers from another place. Will the Treasurer deny that is the function of the conference? The debate hinged for hours on giving the powers of this Committee to delegates, and not allowing the Committee to deal with the Council's amendments. When we send to another place a message to the effect that we have considered the Council's amendments, we are deceiving the Council, and the deceit, whether or not it be a clerical error, should be atoned for.

MR. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is going a little too far. I have already ruled that on the consideration of a message some motion must necessarily be made. A motion was made. The procedure in 1903 is a very good guide, because it was in the time of Sir James Steere, who did not make many mistakes; and on that occasion a similar message was sent. The tone of the hon. member's remarks would make it appear that the officials here conveyed to the other House a message contrary to what was carried in this House. I am sure the hon. member does not mean to reflect in any way on the officials.

MR. TAYLOR: No; I do not wish to reflect on the officials, but I wish to point out regarding the case you have cited, the Redistribution Bill of 1903, that the position of that Bill and the position of this Bill were not exactly the same. We

had considered, on I think two occasions, the amendments to the Redistribution Bill. I am speaking from memory.

MR. SPEAKER: I can guide the hon. member in that matter. In 1903 the amendments were not considered.

MR. TAYLOR: I am speaking from memory, and I should like to make this statement and allow it to stand till contradicted. In 1903 we had passed a Bill in the Lower House and sent it to the Upper House in the ordinary way. The Upper House made amendments and returned the Bill to us. We received the Bill, went into Committee, discussed the amendments, did not agree to some of them, and sent back the Bill to another place, who sent it back to us insisting on their amendments; and then the Assembly—as that was the last possible chance we had of dealing with the Bill, not being able to return it to the other House and have it again returned to us, because it had run its course—had either to accept it as it was, to lay it aside, or to ask for a conference. That position and the position on last Tuesday were not the same; and it would have been wise, as I said then, for the House to discuss the amendments, and not to take up time in discussing the necessity for a conference, because I believe the conference will be abortive. I have no desire to reflect on the officers of the House; but the wording of the message is misleading in so far as the Assembly have never discussed the amendments or suggestions of another place. We discussed the advisableness of passing a motion for a conference, which motion we passed; and it should not be said that we discussed their message.

MR. SPEAKER: To make the matter clearer, I will read the message, which I think will put a different complexion on what has happened so far:—

MR. PRESIDENT.—With reference to the message No. 25 of the Legislative Council, the Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council that it has considered the said message, and desires that a free conference may be granted on the subject of the amendments.

It does not say that the amendments were considered.

MR. BOLTON: What amendments?

MR. SPEAKER: The amendments requested by the Legislative Council.

MR. BOLTON: We have not seen any. We have not dealt with them.

MR. SPEAKER: The amendments were then before the Legislative Council. The message was on the subject of the amendments requested by the Council in the Land Tax Assessment Bill, and the Assembly has a perfect right to request a conference at any time.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH: May I just point out the procedure as far as I remember it, and I have occasion to remember it. It was this. On the Notice Paper was Message 35, and the Treasurer gave notice at that stage that in Committee he would move a motion. When the House went into Committee I called on Message 35, and the consideration of that message resulted in a resolution being carried which superseded dealing with the message itself, because it desired that there should be a conference. The message was considered, but the amendments were not, because they were superseded by motion.

The subject dropped.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the TREASURER: Expenses in connection with Municipal Conferences.

BILL—MUNICIPAL (WIDTH OF A STREET).

Read a third time, on motion by the MINISTER for WORKS, and *passed*.

BILL—FEDERATION REFERENDUM.

POINT OF PROCEDURE.

Order of the Day read.

MR. BATH (Brown Hill): Before the hon. member proceeds to move the second reading, I desire at this stage to state a point of order, and I do so because I think to a large extent it is taking up the time of the House.

MR. MONGER: We have had enough time taken up by the other side already.

MR. BATH: I desire to know if the hon. member is out of order at the present stage of this Bill. On the point of order I raised the other night the quotations from *May* which you, Mr.

Speaker, read and which I quoted were contradictory. Since then I have looked up all the constitutional authorities I could possibly procure in regard to this matter, and they all agree that the hon. member is out of order in proceeding with the Bill. In the *Law and Custom of the Constitution*, by Anson, it is stated:—

The responsible advisers of the Crown, the Ministers of State, are alone capable of proposing that public money should be raised, or if already raised should be spent; and the House would not entertain a motion by a private member for a specific outlay on any object which he might consider deserving of public support.

Bagehot on *The English Constitution* says:—

When the Cabinet is made the sole executive, it follows that it must have the sole financial charge, for all actions cost money, all policy depends on money, and it is in adjusting the relative goodness of action and policies that the executive is employed.

In a book which is a standard authority, *The Government of England*, by W. E. Hearn, it is stated:—

It is accordingly a fundamental rule of the House of Commons that the House will not entertain any petition or any notice for a grant of money, or which involves the expenditure of any money, or any motion that will involve a charge upon the public revenue, whether direct or out of money to be provided by Parliament.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: So far you are dealing only with resolutions; this is a Bill.

MR. BATH: I wish to point out there are two rulings in *May*; one which says the measure is out of order, and one that may be construed to say that the hon. member is justified in going to a certain stage. All these constitutional authorities that I have read agree in saying that the hon. member is out of order. They not only say that in regard to a certain motion, but any proceeding which involves the expenditure of public money must come from the Crown through the constitutional advisers. Therefore, I say the hon. member, being a private member, is out of order, and if the Bill is proceeded with at all it must be taken in hand by the Government.

THE TREASURER: That question was raised last week and decided.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not see any reason to alter the decision which I have

already given, but I desire to place before members that so far as Section 67 of the Constitution Act is concerned, that deals with a measure before it becomes an Act. If the member will read it he will find that is so. Standing Order No. 361 says that matters affecting finance must be discussed only in Committee of the whole House. In regard to the authority of *May* which was used the other night, I again quote that passage which has a special application in that case:—

If the charge created by a Bill is a subsidiary feature therein, resulting from the provisions it contains, the royal recommendation and preliminary committee are not needed in the first instance, and the Bill is brought in on motion. But before the clauses and provisions for the creation of incidental charges can be considered by a committee on the Bill, those clauses and provisions must be sanctioned by the resolution of a committee appointed upon the recommendation of the Crown and agreed to by the House; and in the presentation copies of the Bill, the clauses and provisions which create these charges are printed in italics—

That is so in this case. *May* goes on to say—

to mark that they do not form part of the Bill, and that no question can be proposed thereon, unless vitality has been imparted to those provisions by a committee resolution.

Until vitality is given to the Bill, such as a message from the Governor by a member or Minister, which is generally the course adopted, it has not any force. It has not become a Bill of a nature to be objected to at this stage; therefore I hold, as I expressed on a previous occasion, the hon. member is justified in proceeding. Possibly, as has been said, there may be a waste of time; but I am not prepared to go so far as to say that there should be no waste of time, for I am willing to give all parties a fair opportunity of dealing with matters if they are in order. Therefore the member is justified in proceeding, and the Bill is in order until the Committee stage is entered on.

MOTION—SECOND READING MOVED.

MR. F. C. MONGER (York): It is with feelings of both pleasure and regret that I rise to move the second reading of this Bill: feelings of pleasure at having an opportunity to introduce to the people of Western Australia so important a

measure; and feelings of regret that after a motion which this Bill has emanated from was passed by both Houses of Parliament, the Government have not thought fit to introduce the Bill themselves. Now that I am privileged to introduce this important measure, I must take exception to the attitude which has been assumed by members on the other side of the House from the time I first gave notice of my intention to bring forward this measure. The attitude assumed by members opposite has always been, "The Bill to the People." Six and a-half years ago that was the cry; six and a-half years have gone by, and we have suffered through allowing the Bill to go to the people. If there is any feeling in the composition of gentlemen on the other side of the House, let them say "We will once again trust the people." That is all I am asking in this small Bill, that we should once again trust the people of Western Australia to show whether their feelings are in the same direction now as they were six and a-half years ago.

MR. SCADDAN: You have no hope of carrying it.

MR. MONGER: We shall see. I have heard references to the fact that there may be a certain loss of time in discussing this small Bill. We have had enough loss of time during the last few months in listening to the oratory, the flow of rhetoric and the fancy flow of language, emanating from gentlemen on the other side of the House. We have listened to it with the greatest of patience.

MR. JOHNSON: You have not listened at all.

MR. MONGER: No; I agreeably refrained from listening for fear I might meet with those ungentlemanly rebuffs which emanate from gentlemen on the other side. When I gave notice of my intention of bringing forward this measure, it was said that it would take up the time of the House unnecessarily by those members who have taken up far more of the time of the House than I or any of my friends on this side are likely to take up during this or any session.

MR. TAYLOR: You are looking for trouble now.

MR. MONGER: I have not the time now to reply to interjections which

emanate from members opposite. I will give them an opportunity of replying to me later, and I only ask that they shall do so in the fair and manly spirit in which they expect this side to treat them when dealing with measures which emanate from that side. I must refer, before dealing with the Bill, to certain remarks that were made in another place. One hon. member referred to the passing of this motion which caused the introduction of this Bill as a discredit to Parliament; and I am surprised that when he made use of those words he was not called to order. I only wish to say that the passing of a motion by the popular Chamber should not have been referred to in that manner by a member of another place. I also desire to draw the attention of members here to remarks made by a gentleman occupying a very high position in the Federal Parliament, who referred to this motion as being a foolish and childish one, a motion emanating as he said from the "boy politician," of this State. I hope I will never emulate the last person who used to be referred to and spoken of as "the boy politician." Remarks like that, emanating from candidates for Federal positions, casting reflections upon the two local Houses of Parliament, is a reflection upon Parliament generally; and I say, with all due respect, that when members of the House of Representatives or of the Senate make remarks of that nature and an opportunity offers for us to reply, as it has done for me this afternoon, we are justified in replying that it is a piece of impertinence on their part to criticise the action or the attitude of our Houses of Parliament. There is little for me to say in connection with this Bill. I have already expressed my regret that the Government have not seen fit—I believe they will do so later on—to endorse the monetary clause which will later on need to be inserted in the Bill. At all events, I hope the people of Western Australia will be given this opportunity of expressing their opinion. I would like to point out that this Bill has not emanated from the fact that the Survey Bill (Transcontinental Railway) was thrown out recently in the Federal Parliament. We have greater claims for consideration even than that. No one knows better than

the Leader of the Opposition the feeling towards Western Australia which exists in the other States. No one has received greater rebuffs than he and the Treasurer on the occasion of their meeting at the recent conference in Melbourne. Why our representatives sat there and took those rebuffs in the mild and calm manner in which they did was absolutely inconceivable to the people of Western Australia.

MR. BATH: Have you read the report of the debates?

MR. MONGER: I have read portions, and the hon. member's remarks as reported were very mild in the circumstances, if one may take the expression of opinion of the Premier of Queensland when interviewed on his return to that State. According to the statement made in the Press by that gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition in this State went to Melbourne a staunch Federalist, and came back to Western Australia a Secessionist.

MR. BATH: That is incorrect.

MR. MONGER: Why did you not take an opportunity of correcting the statement on your return?

MR. BATH: I did not see it until after I came back.

MR. MONGER: You might even then have denied the report.

MR. BATH: I did not think it worth while.

MR. GORDON: Because you said it. That is why you were not game to contradict it.

MR. BATH (on a point of order): In answer to the member for York just now, I stated that I had not made such a statement; now, after I have said so, the member for Canning says I did say what has been reported. I think the hon. member is out of order. I desire to contradict again—and the Treasurer can, and doubtless will, bear me out—that I made any such statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must accept that explanation.

MR. GORDON: The words I used were that he was not game to contradict it.

MR. BATH: Those are not the words the hon. member made use of at all. The member for Canning said, after I had denied having used the words, that I did say it; and I say the hon.

member, after I had given the statement a denial, should withdraw.

THE TREASURER: The Leader of the Opposition is quite correct. He did not make such a statement.

MR. GORDON: Not in your presence, perhaps.

MR. MONGER (continuing): I was referring to a reported statement of certain remarks attributed to the Leader of the Opposition. Since his return to Western Australia, so far as I can remember he has never, through the medium of the Press at all events, repudiated having made such remarks.

MR. BATH: Then I do so now.

MR. MONGER: I am indeed glad to have given the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity this afternoon of making that repudiation, and I trust that the Press will give his denial every publicity. If the treatment that was meted out to our Treasurer and to the Leader of our Opposition at that conference is a sample of the kindly feelings which exist between the peoples of the various States of Australia, after the treatment those two gentlemen received whenever they did not support or advocate measures put forward by representatives of the other States, I shall be surprised if I do not receive the support of the House in my desire to give the people of this State an opportunity of once more voting on this question. It will be fresh in the minds of members that I was desirous of tabling a motion that Western Australia did not require representation at that conference; but that motion was withdrawn in order to get the present Bill brought forward. With all due deference, I say that the time has now arrived for taking strong and active measures to show the people of the other States that we in Western Australia resent the treatment we have so far received from them; that the time has arrived when the people of Western Australia should be given the opportunity of again saying whether they are prepared at all hazards, as some people would wish us to believe, to accept the position that the other States are desirous of placing us in. We have no friend in the Press of the other States, nor amongst the Premiers or Leaders of Oppositions in the other States; we have no friends outside our own representatives, practically speaking, in the Federal Parliament.

Every time it is possible to cast a slur at Western Australia, they do it; and are we who have been born and reared in this State to sit by quietly and say, as I am sure the member for Mt. Margaret would not say, "The more you hit us, the better we like you"? If that is to be the attitude of Western Australia in this matter, I appeal to the Government, to the Opposition, and to my friends on this side of the House to throw out without any farther consideration this short Bill, the second reading of which I now have the pleasure of moving.

At 6.30, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

MR. A. C. GULL (Swan): In rising to support the second reading of this Bill, I realise from the beginning that it is a Bill which will not meet with that response I should have hoped from the people of Western Australia. I regret that after a motion was carried by both branches of the legislature of this country, the Government should have, up to the present, refused to take this matter in hand. I feel strongly on this matter. I feel that the Government are shirking their responsibilities in not taking up this measure. In my opinion they should have done so. The Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition went to a conference of Premiers, Treasurers, and Leaders of Opposition of the other States, and they came back realising that we had nothing to hope from the representatives of the other States. That brings home to the people of this State the unfortunate position the State is likely to be in in the next few years. Grievous as they have been, our chief concern is not what we have suffered in the past in this State; but what we have to look forward to during the next three or four years. One thing that has always troubled me in this matter is the fact that the whole of the business houses in this country are now in the hands of firms from the other States. All our big houses now are distributing agents for big Eastern firms whom they represent. We all regret that the returns from our gold industry go away from this country to pay dividends to people in foreign countries, but it is the same with every ten-pound note that falls into the tills of any of the big trading concerns here. It goes out

of circulation. The only money that is circulated by these firms in Western Australia is the wages they pay and their current expenses, and then people wonder why it is that Western Australia is hard up, and how it is that, without recourse to raising loans in England, there are those occasional slumps that have occurred, and that are likely to occur in Western Australia. If we do go to England for money, as soon as we handle it once or twice at the outside it disappears from circulation. And so it goes on that in course of time there will be great difficulty in raising money. Of course we should not consider the question of raising money beyond our resources; yet we have to realise that all the money raised and brought into the country simply dribbles away every day. We have been told that the money that is not raised through the Customs remains in the pockets of the people; but I always challenge that statement. My own experience—and I am sure it is the experience of most members of the House—is that living is no cheaper to-day than it was before the duties were swept away.

MR. ANGWIN: Into whose pockets has the money gone?

MR. GULL: Into the pockets of a small section of the people, chiefly the importers and manufacturers of the other States.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What about duty on whisky?

MR. GULL: Whisky should be cheaper. We lose annually nearly £50,000 through the Federal Government reducing the duty on whisky; but the reduction has not affected the consumer here. And in other instances, food and everything else, where the duty has disappeared the price still remains the same to the consumer. Most of our boot factories here have shut down, and if one buys a pair of boots he pays the same price now as before the duty of 5s. was put on, the only difference being that he buys the Victorian article at the same price as was paid before the duty was put on. One of our worst troubles, it seems to me, is the fact that our manufacturing industries have been crippled, are being crippled, and will certainly to a very large extent go out of existence. The Federal Government propose to establish industries

by bonuses. It necessarily follows that anyone starting an industry with the aid of a bonus will go to Melbourne to do so rather than stay in Western Australia. The tendency is for all manufactories in this State to be gradually killed, and we really become a market for the other States. We have the Federal Treasurer proposing to impose special duties for special purposes. We know that is going to seriously affect us. On the top of that, when the Braddon clause ceases to operate, we will have to look forward to a *per capita* distribution. There is no reason to suppose from the attitude the Treasurer discovered when he was in Melbourne the other day that we have anything to hope for from that position. Apart from the fact of good fellowship between State and State there is no actual reason why this should not be done away with. We knew at the time we joined this Federation that such would be the outcome, and therefore I am not going to complain so bitterly of a thing we knew was bound to happen, but it only emphasises the more the fact that we should never have entered the Federation for at least another 20 years. Had we held our hand, had there been that loyal support to this country which there should have been, and had it not been that we were in the position of having a large population in the country that had not been acclimatised and that had no interest in this State and only realised the interests of the State it came from—[Interjections.] I think it was absolutely natural under the circumstances. I am positive that if this Bill went to a referendum to-day it would be carried with a good solid majority. After this motion was carried in both Houses of Parliament the Government should have taken control of it and have forced it to its natural conclusion. This Bill merely asks that the matter shall be referred once more to the people. Most distinctly the Government are afraid to let it go to the people. The labour members oppose the Bill because they belong to a party which seeks to dominate Australian politics through the Federal Parliament. I am not going to say that the Labour party in the Federal Parliament is bad or wicked or anything of that sort. If you asked my private opinion as to who is the best man in Australia to-day, I would

say Watson. Members on the Opposition side will I am sure admit that the Labour members hope to control the whole of Australia through the Federal Government.

MR. SCADDAN: Why should they not, as well as any other party?

MR. HOLMAN: Why should not the best men control it?

MR. GULL: The best men could control it provided they were not unfortunately tied. Our representatives here are the wing of a great organization. In matters such as the Transcontinental Railway no men could have worked better for us than our Labour representatives did. At the same time they are tied to an organization which seeks to impose a land tax over and above the State taxes, a tax which must bring Western Australia under a heavier burden than she is under at present. In regard to the feeling supposed to exist between Western Australia and the Eastern people, we have not only what was meted out to our Treasurer when he was in the East the other day, but the significant fact that for the first time I think in the last decade the *Age* and *Argus* in Victoria are in accord on this question, and when two papers such as those are united on the question it proves conclusively that having got the better of the argument they are going to retain it by every opportunity they can. No one denies that there was at all events an implied compact in regard to the railway. We had only the other day a disclosure from the Premier of South Australia as to what has been underlying the whole of their treatment to Western Australia. We know now that they have made a condition that unless the northern railway is built there is no hope of the transcontinental railway for Western Australia. That is a fact I want brought home to the people of Western Australia. I want that to influence them and to influence members in this House in discussing the question. Apart from the unfortunate position we are placed in, which was brought about largely through party politics in Western Australia, I admit that Federation should have been a good thing for the whole of Australia. Knowing that there are six States, including Tasmania, all of the same parentage and of the same blood, it

seems a peculiar thing that we should all have been at sixes and sevens in the way we were a few years ago. Until this State was given a fair and just chance of developing itself we were absolutely mad to go into that bond, and although it is represented we have no chance of getting out—

MR. MONGER: We have.

MR. GULL: Although that may be said, still the fact remains that whether we get out or not the passing of such a Bill as this will have a tendency to good. It will have a tendency to show to other States that at all events we realise that we cannot exist under the present circumstances, and if we are not given the measure of relief our Western Australian people are asking for, we may in the alternative appeal to the King with a view to dissolving so unprofitable a union to ourselves.

On motion of MR. BATH, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1906-7.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from the previous Tuesday.

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

On motion by the TREASURER, consideration of the Railway Estimates postponed until after the consideration of the remaining Estimates.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT (Hon. N. Keenan, Minister).

Vote—Crown Law Offices, £6,288:

ON DEPARTMENTAL ESTIMATES GENERALLY.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, in introducing the Estimates of his department, said: I feel a difficulty in attempting to make any interesting announcement in regard to a vote dealing with this department, because to most members it must represent a subject which they have not given very much consideration to, and which perhaps in popular parlance may be described as dry-as-dust.

MR. HOLMAN: We want to learn something.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: However, I hope to be able to make the

matter a little interesting, and in doing so I shall take advantage of the indulgence of the House in dealing not merely with the first subdepartment (Crown Law Offices) but with the various subdepartments under my control. Perhaps the first feature which members would like me to dilate upon and explain to them is the financial state which arises in connection with these Estimates. Members will see by perusing the Estimates that in regard to the Crown Law Offices there is an increase this year of some £220 over the expenditure of last year. That increase is due on a balance largely in the bank, but we are asking authority of the House to add to the establishment one additional clerk. The charge for the present year will only cover nine months at an estimated total annual salary of £150, and the balance of the increase is due to the additional salaries payable to members of the staff in consequence of the recommendation by the Public Service Commissioner, which was accepted by the Government. Members will see that in the Electoral Department there is a decrease of £5,395. That decrease is entirely due to the fact that provision has not been considered necessary in these Estimates for a general election during the current financial year.

MR. HOLMAN: You never know what will happen.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If it does become necessary to incur that expense, it will have to be anticipated as against the following year; but in framing one's Estimates one is justified in asking Parliament to vote no more than the sum one can reasonably say is required for the ordinary expenditure of the financial year. The Lands Titles Office shows an increase of £55, due on a balance arising from better supervision being made for contingencies, and due also to a slight increase in clerks' salaries. The contingencies consist almost entirely of a sum for the purchase of parchment. To purchase this material economically it is always advisable to buy it in large quantities, and the quantity purchased this year will last for a considerable number of years, though the expenditure falls on the year in which the purchase is made. In the subdepartment Stipendiary Magistracy, there is a net decrease of £340, the largest item of decrease being a sum of

£731 for incidentals, which include postage, stationery, travelling, water, fuel, sanitation, etcetera, and in last year's vote was a large increase which I will explain. When we had a Commissioner acting in place of a fourth Judge it became necessary to appoint acting magistrates to relieve him of his duties in Perth, and it was necessary to provide for the travelling expenses of those who came to Perth to take his place. As there is now a fourth Judge there is no need for the appointment of a Commissioner, and we are thus effecting a saving which accounts for the largest item of decrease. In the Supreme Court there is an increase of £561, largely due to the expenditure for witnesses and jurors. In circuit courts there is a sum of £173 over and above the estimated expenditure, and an increase of £189 in the Official Receiver's Department. The expenditure on witnesses and jurors is undoubtedly an item that we can hope to curtail considerably; but to do so we shall have to make some alteration in our jury system. To-day we are obliged to summon a whole panel for civil cases in circuit courts; so although we obtain from the parties the fees payable in respect of the jurors sworn in the case tried, the Crown has to bear the expense of the balance of the panel. I intend to ask the House to pass a short measure which will enable the Crown to summon only that number necessary to form the jury needed for any particular case; that is to say, we shall summon enough to allow of the necessary challenges, and no more. We are now obliged to summon the whole panel because one of the Supreme Court Judges, when on circuit, pointed out that this was the duty of the Crown, so that there might never be a deficiency in the number of jurors present. However, that difficulty does not arise in Perth, where a separate system obtains, and where possibly the expense is not so great; and I feel sure members will assent to altering the law, because all that parties in civil cases have a right to claim is that the Crown should summon enough jurors to allow of the plaintiff and the defendant challenging the number allowed by statute, and a sufficient number remaining to constitute a jury after the challenges have been exhausted. If any are absent, as sometimes happens, it

remains for the parties to agree to waive some challenge, or to proceed to trial with less than the full number of jurors.

MR. DAGLISH: Will you bring in a Bill this session?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I hope so. It is a Bill there can be no difficulty in passing unless the hon. member intends to oppose it. In the vote for Trade Marks there is a large decrease, entirely due to the fact that Trade Marks have been taken over by the Commonwealth, and that the only expenditure necessary on our Estimates is what I may call a finishing-up expenditure. We must catalogue properly and put in order certain records of our past transactions, and when that work is completed the office will disappear and will be handed over entirely to the Commonwealth. I should like to point out that during the past financial year the work of the Crown Law Department, the first department on my Estimates, has largely increased. This is due to the gradual increase of our population, to the fact that as population becomes more settled there arises more business with which the Crown Law Department have to deal, and owing to the incidence of that increase the Crown is becoming daily more and more involved in the business life of the State. Many matters arise which have to be adjusted by the Crown Law Department, and therefore give the department more work to do. As an illustration of the work I should like to mention that during 1904-5 the Advance and Trust Accounts dealt with by the Crown Law Department amounted to £312,352; during 1905-6 the same accounts amounted to £347,000. In the district courts or local courts throughout the State the same accounts in 1904-5 totalled £81,000, and in 1905-6 £93,000; and the totals of the two compare as £393,352 in 1904-5, and £440,000 odd in 1905-6. There is besides a substantial increase in the vouchers which pass through the department, and which have to be dealt with there before certain public expenditure is incurred. Members will recognise that as a strong reason for the increase of business which the department must discharge. The appointment of the new clerk is rendered necessary, and I hope the House will justify the appoint-

ment, for the following reason. The Crown Solicitor applied to be accompanied into court by an assistant with knowledge acquired in a legal office, and with ability to take notes in shorthand, to assist the Crown Solicitor in properly discharging his work in court. We have not now in the department any clerk who is detailed for that work; consequently we have to employ for this purpose a man who is paid a high salary to do more important work; and from this results a very apparent loss to the State. The Crown Solicitor suggests that instead of a clerk to whom we pay a considerable salary for the discharge of important duties attending on him in court and during most hours of the day, being practically a mere observer of events, being made use of only when emergency arises, though that emergency is likely to arise on many occasions during the day—we should add to the establishment a clerk with the necessary ability; and we have requested the Public Service Commissioner to appoint an officer for this purpose. The Commissioner recognised that to adopt the suggestion would mean a saving to the public purse, but he suggested that we take over an officer from some other department who was not wanted, and should give him the necessary legal training in the forms and practices of the courts, and that by so doing we should absorb some officer otherwise perhaps unnecessary. However, the Crown Solicitor made what seems to me, and I hope the House will agree with it, the natural objection that to do so would handicap him to a great extent. He would be obliged to teach this man the very *incipia* of his work, though he could for the salary proposed secure a man with all the knowledge necessary. For that reason, although the appointment is approved of, it has hung fire for some months; consequently the Estimates carry a request for the authorisation of nine months' expenditure instead of expenditure for the whole of the financial year. As to the Electoral Department, the present Chief Electoral Officer has with great and commendable energy thrown himself into the work of reorganising the department and placing it on a satisfactory basis. He has already completed a plan for that reorganisation, which will avoid much unnecessary expenditure incurred in the past. I should

like to say at once that in matters of this kind, while the Minister would appear to deserve credit, as he always takes the blame, for the administration, it is only right on my part to acknowledge that the whole credit in this case is due to the new electoral officer, who has acted in this matter, as I say, with great energy, and I think with considerable knowledge also. He points out in his new proposal that by the present system the work of registering electoral claims is multiplied two or three-fold. Suppose a person whose name begins with S lodges a claim, and is followed by one whose name begins with B, these electoral claims are in chronological but not in alphabetical order; hence there is first the work of receiving claims and putting the names on the roll in this irregular order; and when it becomes necessary to print the roll, all the names have to be copied out in alphabetical order on cards, the whole of which are sent to the printer. The officer suggests that instead of having claims enrolled in the present form, a perfectly safe system of electoral cards should be introduced, the cards being kept in a locked file, which prevents any tampering with them. They are placed in alphabetical order in the file, and when the time comes for printing the rolls, all that is necessary is to hand over to the printer these cards in the order in which they are filed. It seems to me the plan is absolutely feasible, and it will eliminate what is almost the entire expense of the Electoral Department, the copying of rolls and the arrangement of them. If this can be done with safety—I have not had the opportunity finally of going into the matter with the chief electoral officer, but I am assured that absolute safety will be achieved—if that can be done with absolute safety it will eliminate not temporarily but for all time a great deal of the cost that has been incurred in the past.

MR. ANGWIN: There will be no roll at all?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The rolls will be on files instead of in a book as previously. The cards go through a kind of pipe that secures them. There will be no difficulty in obtaining any information required from those files.

MR. DAGLISH: How about a by-election? How long would the printing take?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Possibly about 24 hours. At present if a by-election suddenly takes place it is impossible to produce the rolls in time.

MR. SCADDAN: Before you leave the Electoral Department, have you received any communication from the Federal authorities about combining the offices?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: A communication was received from the Federal authorities as to working the two departments together, but an initial difficulty blocked any farther attempt to do so, as the boundaries of the State and the Federal electorates must be coterminous, and until we adopted some redistribution of seats Bill it would be impossible to have rolls which could be used in common. To illustrate the matter, let us take the Kalgoorlie seat in the Federal Parliament. That comprises portions of our present State seats. In order to make the rolls in common we should have to make the boundaries of the State seats coterminous with the boundaries of the Federal seat, and in order to do that we should require a redistribution of seats Bill, and I do not know whether a provision necessary in order to make the boundaries coterminous would recommend itself to the House. If the Federal authorities choose to take action it will be welcomed by the State department. We shall be only too pleased to share the result of our work with the Federal authorities when it is convenient to do so. At present there is an initial difficulty in the way that blocks the affair completely, and until we can overcome that difficulty it is impossible to go farther. We have pointed out the initial difficulty to the Electoral Department of the Commonwealth. Until this House is prepared, or their House is prepared, to readjust the boundaries, we can go no farther. I am personally not prepared to ask the House to take up a new distribution of seats Bill, seeing that we so recently passed such a measure. As regards the Lauds Titles Office, I wish to point out the work done during the past year, and the efficiency the office has arrived at. Incidentally I may mention the fact that for the first time for a number of years our insurance fund has

suffered a loss owing to an action which was successfully brought against the department by a person who was injured through some action of the department. The injury was purely a technical one, but damages were awarded by the court. They were not damages that any ordinary person would have imagined the claimant was entitled to. Still I do not wish to discuss anyone's rights, especially when those rights have been determined by a court of law. I mention the fact in order that the House may learn that we have suffered a loss of about £3,000.

MR. TAYLOR: Is the matter finished?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. The fees collected during the past year were slightly under the fees collected for 1904, being £16,470 as against £16,464. On the other hand the expenses of the staff have been reduced by £400 odd, the figures being £10,000 odd against £10,573. The profit of the department for the past financial year shows an increase of £300, the figures being £6,146 for 1905-6 as against £6,113 for the year 1904-5. The Lands Titles Office deals with an enormous amount of business, although it is largely of a technical and routine character. Our insurance fund, although drawn on in the manner I have explained to the House, stands at the substantial figure of £13,934.

MR. DAGLISH: How is that fund made up?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Every person who obtains a certificate of title pays a small amount which goes into the insurance fund.

MR. DAGLISH: His fee for the title?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: When taking out a certificate of title a person pays a small fee to the insurance fund. We have accumulated for years past, since the Land Transfer Act was passed, the amount which now stands to the credit of that fund. It has suffered its first and I hope its last loss.

MR. DAGLISH: Was that Spencer's case?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

MR. DAGLISH: Are you doing anything about the offices?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I presume the member wishes to direct attention more particularly to the vaults in which the certificates of title are stored, and which are undoubtedly unsuitable.

MR. WALKER: And the other storage where the titles are kept in the post-office section.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is the portion the member is referring to, in Cathedral Avenue. The vaults are not suitable. When the Supreme Court building was constructed it was intended to remove the documents of title to special vaults there, and there are to-day magnificent vaults in that building of which any State in the Commonwealth might be proud. Unfortunately they have been built over a number of natural springs or drains, with the result that although every effort has been made to keep the vaults dry they are always damp, and with any document put in there, especially parchment documents, the ink runs and becomes destroyed. We have made every effort to make the vaults of the use they were designed to be, but nature is an extremely hard opponent to deal with. It is hopeless without a large expenditure which is not justified to make the vaults under the Supreme Court available for any purpose except storing printed documents, on which a certain amount of damp does not have the same effect as it does on parchment. The idea at one time was to construct vaults on the Irwin Street site between Hay Street and St. George's Terrace, and the plans had been prepared for the construction of the necessary vaults there, when the proposal was made by the Perth Council to exchange the town hall site for the Irwin Street site and a certain amount of money added. The Bill has been before the House this session. That hung up the proposal to build the vaults on the Irwin Street site, and undoubtedly if the referendum of the ratepayers of Perth endorses the opinion of the council we shall have the town hall site where we can construct public works buildings, and we could have no better site to construct vaults for storing these documents. As regards the stipendiary magistracy, it is a matter of extreme difficulty in this country, owing to the enormous area we have to provide for, to make proper provision in regard to the stipendiary magistracy. It is a matter I am sure all members regret that we are not in a position to employ so many men who have professional training in this capacity.

MR. DAGLISH : I question that.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : The particular Act the hon. member was most responsible for, the Public Service Act, requires that every appointment to the stipendiary magistracy shall, for exceptional reasons, be of professional men. There is a farther difficulty as regards the stipendiary magistracy which arises from the fact that in many districts in the State we are compelled to appoint local medical officers to also be stipendiary magistrates. That arises from the fact that the amount of business to be transacted as medical officers and magistrates is of small volume in both cases. The result has been that we have men sitting as magistrates whom no doubt members criticise from the point of view of qualification, because they are far more qualified to act in their natural capacity as doctors than in the enforced capacity of magistrates. There is a farther difficulty arising in this way. The arrangement between the two departments is that in certain parts of the State the stipendiary magistrate is the servant of the Crown Law Department, and is also district medical officer, but remains the servant wholly of the Crown Law Department. In other parts the district medical officer is the servant of the Medical Department, and he is also a stipendiary magistrate, so that there are many stipendiary magistrates over whom the Crown Law Department has no control. The aim and object of the Crown Law Department is that whenever an opportunity arises, and whenever it is possible to economically do so, to do away with the dual appointment and to appoint a man who may take in a larger district, and who will be responsible entirely to the Crown Law Department, being specially selected to discharge his duties for his knowledge of law and his capacity to administer it. I hope the Committee will see that is a wise and proper policy to pursue. In the Supreme Court there have been some slight increases, one being in the Official Receiver's office. That is due to the work which has been congested there for years, and has become so owing to the department not being properly manned.

MR. HUDSON : Manned or managed ?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : I say manned. I think it is efficiently

managed. The result has been that they have had to fall back upon temporary assistance, which is the very worst form you can employ in the public service, because no man employed for the time being, just to get rid of a stress of work, takes the same interest in his work or makes the same attempt to discharge it efficiently as a man who knows that, given good conduct on his part, he has a permanent billet in the service. Members will see we have had to ask for an increase of £189 on the Estimates for extra clerical assistance in this department. That is due to the state of affairs I have pointed out, and the gradual augmentation of work, and the necessity for meeting it and putting it in proper order. There have undoubtedly been a good many insolvencies in this State, due no doubt members will say to the state of affairs which the Bill that has just been debated is meant to cure. The last department I have charge of—the Trade Marks Department—has, as I have already pointed out, practically ceased to exist. The only amount on the Estimates which I ask the House to agree to is the sum of £50. Of that amount £40 is to cover leave of absence prior to retirement for the officer transferred from the State to the Commonwealth service. Before entering the Commonwealth service he asked for leave of absence to which he was entitled under our rules on the abolition of the office ; and that £40 represents the amount we were called upon to pay during the time of his leave of absence. The other £10 is merely incidentals, including postage and stationery in keeping up the department, and finally putting an end to any matters in connection with the department before closing it up. I do not know that I can expand any farther on the department of which I have to submit the estimates to the Committee ; but I shall only be too pleased, if members will ask for information, to furnish it.

(General discussion ensued.)

MR. BATH wished to refer to the Electoral Department in the general discussion, and that would save farther discussion afterwards. He was pleased to hear from the Attorney General that the present officer in control was attacking

the work of reorganisation with a will, and that there was some hope that in the very near future the rearrangement of this office would give satisfaction. During the course of the last few weeks he noticed that revision courts were held at Subiaco and Murray.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: All over the place.

MR. BATH: They were the only places he noticed mentioned in the *Gazette*, and it seemed to him that the work was being done piecemeal. There was newspaper comment on the number of names struck off those rolls at Subiaco and Murray, and on the fact that very few names were put on. It seemed therefore that there must be a large number of electors in these places who were disfranchised. If this work of revision was to go on, it should be a work of revision, as far as possible, right throughout the State, of which ample notice should be given, not only in the *Gazette*, but in the Press throughout the State. The Attorney General might have some justification for saying there would be no need to indulge in the expense of a general election; but so long as the rolls of any electorate were in an unprepared condition and a large number of people were off the rolls the Committee should consent to vote an additional sum if they received an assurance that the electoral rolls in the various districts would be attended to.

MR. DAGLISH: We wanted to be ready for Ministerial elections.

MR. BATH: Certainly. Although the Attorney General had ventured an opinion that there would be no general election this year, he (Mr. Bath) would also venture an opinion that, unless the Ministry mended their ways, there were many things more improbable. The department should always be prepared for emergencies. There was no work to which money could be devoted with greater advantage than in ensuring that people who were entitled to have their names on the rolls had them there. There was one other matter to which he desired to draw attention, that being in relation to the Intestate Estates Department. On several occasions he received information from Mr. Dodd, secretary of the Miners' Union in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder district. That gentleman, from the posi-

tion he occupied, was called upon to act as adviser generally to not only members of his own union, but also very many who were non-members. When miners met with an accident or died intestate, Mr. Dodd was the person to whom people went for advice as to how they were to proceed in connection with the estate of the deceased. Mr. Dodd complained that there was great difficulty in securing a speedy arrangement of these affairs. He pointed out that if the value of the estate was over a certain sum, unless these people employed counsel and paid fairly substantial fees they had to go to Perth in order to wind up affairs of the estate and secure whatever value had accrued. That was not an advisable condition of affairs. Some amendment should be made in this department in the direction of a speedy adjustment of the affairs of these various estates. Mr. Dodd had assured him both by letter and verbally that there was great necessity for some amendment in this direction, and had even asked him to request the Government to introduce an amendment for the facilitation of the business of the department. Speaking in regard to the general votes, the Attorney General had referred to slight increases which appeared in the Crown Law Offices, Land Titles, and Supreme Court departments, and the hon. gentleman apologised for them in some sort of fashion, on the ground that they were only little ones. If the promise of reform and economy made in the debate on the Address-in-Reply had been carried out, we should have seen a substantial reduction in the department under the hon. gentleman's control.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Why?

MR. BATH: Because of all Ministers who occupied the Government benches the Attorney General was the keenest and loudest in his protestations of reform or his intention to reform, and the hon. gentleman said that economy must be exercised above all things. He even went to the extent of pointing out that, seeing Ministers themselves had decided they were going to cut their own salaries down, it was incumbent on everyone in this department, from the highest to the lowest, to also make a similar patriotic sacrifice on behalf of the State.

MR. DAGLISH: The Leader of the Opposition was somewhat unfair to the Attorney General in his criticism. The hon. member should recollect that for the past two or three years the department had been in charge of a layman, and naturally a layman would not require to expend as much on parchment and red tape as would a member of the legal profession. He understood some of these increases were due to the need for more parchment. Moreover, the Leader of the Opposition had not taken into consideration the increase of crime which had occurred since the present Government assumed office. When one considered some of the actions of the Government one could not altogether wonder at that increase of crime.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Had there been an increase?

MR. DAGLISH: During the time the Daglish Government was in office, there was not even a murder case. How long was the present Attorney General in office before there was a murder case? One did not assume that the hon. member's occupancy of office stirred up the worst passions of the people of this State; but it was at all events significant that the accession to office of the Attorney General and the commission of crimes of serious import were contemporaneous. There might be an entire want of connection between the two facts. There might be no connection between the fact of his accession to office and the fact that we had an increase in insolvencies, and consequently an increase in the expenditure on the Official Receiver's office during the first year of the hon. gentleman's occupancy of a Ministerial position.

MR. BATH: And there was an increase in inquests, too.

MR. DAGLISH: That was only natural. Probably before the present financial year had expired the Government would be dead; but the Ministry had been so dissected that there would be no necessity for a *post mortem* examination. The Minister should provide some improvement in the housing of the important documents in the Land Titles office. Under existing conditions at any moment by a fire enormous numbers of valuable documents that could not be replaced except after years of effort might be lost. No matter what the expense might be,

the work should be undertaken at the very earliest date in the interests of the State. Economy might be effected by transferring the titles work at present discharged by the Lands Department to the Land Titles office. We had in the Land Titles office officers dealing with the titles of freehold land throughout the State. We had in the Lands Department officers dealing with the titles held by conditional purchase holders and lessees from the Crown, and dealing also to some extent with Crown grants, while we had in the Mines Department a third staff. Unquestionably a considerable economy could be effected by the combination of these staffs under one head, and we could expect an increase in efficient administration by placing all the work under men of perhaps wider experience, if not greater competence, than those in a subordinate department who had other duties to attend to. One regretted to notice that there had not been some effort towards economy in a purely administrative department. Economy should begin at home. Possibly the Attorney General was debarred from effecting economy in his department by the fact that the Government had not fulfilled the promise made to the country with such glorious trumpet sounds at the Ministerial elections, to reduce Ministerial salaries. Why should Ministers wait until the Bill passed?

MR. HOLMAN: When the Bill came before us we would make it retrospective.

MR. DAGLISH: If the Government were honest in their talk of economy, they might begin with this economy. They might have begun with this economy on the first day they took office. Instead of that, it was simply something to be done to-morrow. We would find that on the day after they were defeated they were still going to do it to-morrow. The Attorney General's Department had nothing to do with development. Its work should not be increasing. Mr. Walter James, when Attorney General, recognised that it was a department where economy could easily be effected; and seeing that expenditure was being so curtailed in regard to the erection of public buildings, the construction of roads, municipal subsidies and the development of mines and agriculture, the Attorney General, instead of making these small

increases for parchment and redtape, should see if it was not possible to make some reduction at all events in expenditure for administrative purposes.

MR. WALKER: We should make provision for the better storage of the valuable documents now under the Treasury buildings and in the Land Titles office, not only because of the danger from a fire, but also because the vaults were condemned by those capable of giving an opinion on sanitary matters as absolutely unsafe and unhealthy to work in. There was such small space available in the vaults that the officers had been repeatedly censured by the Press and the public for delay in their work; but delay was due to the want of accommodation. The damage that was likely to be caused by a fire was incalculable. The Labour Government had placed a sum of £10,000 on the Estimates to provide better accommodation for these documents, but when the Bason Ministry came in the vote was removed. The Attorney General might explain this. We were told there were certain plans under consideration. First of all it was thought that the vaults at the law courts would be available, but now we understood they were unsuitable, and that a scheme was put forward for storing those documents on the Irwin Street block, which was involved in the town hall site exchange. There was nothing definite put forward, though it was one of those things that would brook no delay. Immediate steps should be taken, not only as a protection against fire, but for the sake of the health of the officers compelled to work in the present vaults. Knowing the danger, were we to go on doing nothing year after year, until it was too late?

MR. W. C. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): Having had during the past 12 months a great deal to do with electoral matters, he knew that the officers of the department were doing what they possibly could to effect reform, but their efforts had not been availed of in regard to the Fremantle election. The department had made a canvass and had spent a considerable amount of money in doing so, and had issued summonses for people to attend a revision court, and had fixed a day for the court, but the court was not availed of as people expected it should be,

and instead the department printed a supplementary roll containing the names of persons who were not residing in the district at the time. It showed that while the officers were willing to bring the rolls up to date, some influence was used whereby the officers were not allowed to carry out their intentions. In regard to postal votes, for 12 months East Fremantle was disfranchised, and if there had been a possibility of disfranchising it for another 12 months that would have been done. Complaints were made in the House during the past 12 months against certain officers taking postal votes, but these officers were re-appointed, and in the election held a few days ago an officer took 14 votes and refused to deliver them to the returning officer, and these 14 persons were disfranchised. This system should be put a stop to. When the attention of Ministers was called to these things they should remove officers who did not carry out their duties. If the majority in the East Fremantle election had been small, these 14 names would have been used for the express purpose of trying to disfranchise East Fremantle for another 12 months. No person should be allowed to take the votes unless they were prepared to carry out their duties in a proper manner.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Throughout the whole State at present we were engaged on electoral revision, and he had signed proclamations for revision courts for at least 12 or 13 districts. The reason why it was not done simultaneously was that we had to wait until the local registrar had completed the work of making inquiries as far as he could make them without additional help, before we could issue the proclamation for the revision courts. As to injustice being done to anyone in the State, members must recognise that the holding of a revision court did not prevent anyone from putting in a claim; a person could make a claim the same day as the revision court was held.

MR. BATH: If notice were given to people that their names were struck off the roll, or that their names were objected to, it might tend to make the court of some use.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Every person the registrar objected to received notice through the post.

MR. SCADDAN : Was supposed to. The notice was sent to a place where the person was not.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : The hon. member was not justified in saying that.

MR. SCADDAN : It was absolutely correct.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : If the hon. member would communicate to him any complaint as to the conduct of electoral registrars, and the complaint was justified, he would deal with the matter. Until we brought forward a new electoral law the revision courts were practically a farce, because those who, by the action of the court, were struck off, could lodge a farther claim, and it was impossible under the law to refuse to receive that claim. The only result from the holding of the revision court was that those who were dead and could not make a claim, and those who had left the place altogether, were struck off. In regard to the East Fremantle electorate, in that district he authorised the expenditure of a considerable sum of money to have a house to house canvass made by officers of the department, to secure, as far as possible, a pure roll. The canvass was carried out, and where it was found that persons residing in the locality were not on the roll, a claim was left, but in a number of cases these claims were returned to the department not signed. It was the apathy of people that prevented the getting of a good roll. The revision court was fixed at a date which, on computation, we thought would be the date that the High Court would adjudicate in the matter of the appeal. When the members of the High Court arrived here, personally he (the Attorney General) made an application to the court to remove the appeal case of the member for East Fremantle from the foot of the list to the first case, and the court acceded to the request and took the case first, with the result that the appeal having been dismissed he (the Attorney General) reported to the House the same day and a writ was issued. The result of the writ being issued was to prevent any interference by any person with the electoral roll, therefore we had to postpone the revision court. The department made every effort possible to secure a pure roll in the East Fremantle electo-

rate. In regard to the matter of the Curator of Intestate Estates, he would go into the matter mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, and if that member would give details he (the Attorney General) would go thoroughly into the subject. The question of reduction of expenditure to the permanent staff had cropped up, but that matter was now almost out of the hands of the Ministerial head of a department. The whole matter rested entirely in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner, who classified the public servants and allotted the salary.

MR. BATH : Did the clerk the member referred to come from outside the service?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : He came from a solicitor's office. There was no one in the service available, as the officer had to have special training. If the Minister thought there was opening for retrenchment, all he could do was to call the attention of the Public Service Commissioner to it, and the Commissioner could alter his classification in such a way as to reduce the expenditure. The classifications presented from the Public Service Commissioner so far from reducing the expenditure had increased it. A large proportion of the decreases were brought about by the repeal of Regulation 141, which he (the Attorney General) repealed immediately, as it was not a just imposition on the State. Why should such an absurd regulation continue? No matter what salary an officer was receiving he would have to remain in enjoyment of it. A reduction had been made in some items spread over five years. The classification by the Public Service Commissioner increased the cost of every department of the State. The only means a Minister had of making a reduction was by abolishing an office. He would like to deal with two items mentioned in the report of the Public Service Commissioner, under appointments not approved. One related to Boulder. An assistant clerk at Boulder was asked for, but the Public Service Commissioner refused to have a permanent officer appointed. He suggested that a temporary officer should be appointed, pending a transfer. An assistant clerk had been at Boulder, but instead of being paid a salary he was only paid £50 a year and allowed to take fees, and those

fees amounted to between £175 and £190 a year. It was a bad policy, and he (the Attorney General) would not be a party to having an officer paid by fees, for we did not know what he was getting, he might be receiving far too much or far too little. Instead of this system he (the Attorney General) thought it would be better to have a permanent officer, and pay the fees into the consolidated revenue. The Public Service Commissioner treated this as a new office, which was absurd, and a temporary officer had to be kept on, which increased the expenditure of the office. The other matter related to Day Dawn and Cue. There was a court at Day Dawn and Cue, and these two places being near together, the Commissioner recommended that it was unnecessary to have a court at both places, seeing that Day Dawn was only two and a-half miles distant from Cue, connected by a good road, there being a line of coaches and a line of telephone to that place. He farther said the salary proposed, £130, would develop into something greater. An attempt was made to carry out the Public Service Commissioner's recommendations by appointing a mining registrar for both places, having an assistant at each office, but complaints were made by the public. The Government were forced to increase expenditure because public convenience demanded it, although the amount of work would not justify the expenditure. While he was prepared to go to legitimate lengths for economy, one must go to certain lengths to meet the requirements of the public, and as one thing had to be sacrificed it should not be public requirements. There was only one other matter dealt with in the general discussion, and that was the housing of the documents of title. He was with the member for Kanowna in saying that this matter should be dealt with immediately. When the question of the town hall site had been settled one way or another the matter would be finally determined and plans would be immediately got out for the construction of proper vaults for storing these documents.

Item—Managing Clerks, £840 :

MR. TAYLOR : In the report of the Public Service Commissioner there was a paragraph dealing with allowance of ex-

penses. Page 17 showed the expenses for a fortnight's trip to Kalgoorlie of an officer receiving £420 a year amounted to £19 3s. 3d., and those of a junior receiving £140 to £15 0s. 3d. The amount in regard to the officer receiving £420 included tips 3s. 6d., dinner 3s. 9d. drinks 2s. 6d., breakfast 2s. 6d., porter Kalgoorlie 1s. and other items. There were cab fares and tips to guard, housemaid, and waiter. Billiards were charged for, and he noticed that billiards always came along after the drinks. The officer who received £140 went on in the same form. He (Mr. Taylor) wished to be fair to these officers. He believed that these statements of account were received by the department in good faith and were given to show the exact out-of-pocket expenses. No man of ordinary intelligence would submit an account of this character, if he thought it was going to be used against him. The Public Service Commissioner said that the official who received £420 per annum could claim under the scale regulations £10 18s. 1d., and the gross expenditure, including tips, which could be legitimately charged amounted to £11 7s. 3d., showing a loss on legitimate expenditure of 9s. 2d. on a trip covering a period of 14 days. In the case of the other official the figures were respectively £9 4s. 1d., £10 7s. 9d., £1 3s. 8d. Evidently some tips were recognised, and he (Mr. Taylor) wished to know what they were. He had gone somewhat into this case, and from what he could gather it was the express instruction of the Judge that these officers should be at the same hotel as himself ; that was the leading hotel at Kalgoorlie. Of course that entailed a somewhat heavier tariff than would be the case at a less prominent place. He thought that if tips were recognised anywhere it was only in the Attorney General's Department. Had the Attorney General done anything in the way of removing these expenses, or organised the department so that these expenses would not occur in future?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : On a former occasion he explained to the House how it was these items were furnished to the Public Service Commissioner. In October last year the Public Service Commissioner issued a certain scale for those carrying out duties of the

Crown Law Department, an allowance of 15s. a day being fixed. It was pointed out by the officers concerned that this amount was charged at the hotel, and did not even include a bath in the morning, for which 1s. extra was charged.

MR. TAYLOR: The bath was included now.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: At any rate they pointed out that they would be considerable losers of money personally if they were called upon to accept that allowance only. The following March the officer who went up to Kalgoorlie was told that if he made a complete return of all his expenses and gave it to the Secretary for Law to be furnished to the Public Service Commissioner, the Public Service Commissioner would then fix a scale which would be a legitimate one for the official who made the return, and also the clerk with him. Undoubtedly the items were open to severe criticism as items chargeable against the State, but it must be remembered that the officer was asked to make a complete return.

MR. TAYLOR: The hon. gentleman did not hold with the State paying such amounts as those in the return?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Oh no. That happened prior to his coming into office. When the matter came under his notice he had a circular issued to all our officers who travelled notifying that they must have the scale allowance fixed, but that he (the Attorney General) would be prepared to listen to any request to increase the amount, if the request were a legitimate one, but the full amount of the expenditure must be inserted. In particular he pointed out that they were not to indulge in tips, especially to railway porters, which was contrary to regulation, though he thought we all broke it. That was certainly not a charge they could put in their accounts and ask the State to pay.

MR. GULL: Were these amounts paid?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: They were paid. He (the Attorney General) objected personally to the use of the return made by the Public Service Commissioner. Had the Public Service Commissioner told the officers in question that he intended to get the information for the purpose of making them the butts for the jokes of the country, particularly for the gentlemen who made sketches in

the weekly newspapers in Perth, he certainly would not have obtained any assistance from them. The Committee could rest assured that expenditure of this class would be absolutely restricted to the scale authorised, and if the scale was insufficient he would be prepared to entertain any request by an officer.

MR. TAYLOR: What, roughly, was the scale?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The senior who went to represent the Crown Prosecutor would be allowed one guinea a day, and the other officer 14s. he thought; that was on the goldfields.

Other items agreed to, the vote passed.

Vote—*Electoral*, £5,077:

MR. HOLMAN: Would it be possible to get a complete scheme whereby the police at certain periods would see that all who were entitled to be electors had their names put on? The police objected to extra work without pay; and as they were underpaid on the goldfields it would be advantageous to pay them a little to keep the rolls up to date. Many people 200 miles from an electoral office would not trouble to send in claims.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The justification for the expenditure in East Fremantle was the reasonable anticipation of an election at an early date. The house-to-house canvass cost about £120; but a similar expenditure in the hon. member's electorate would be a waste, as the hon. member did not contemplate an early demise. In the Electoral Bill of next session an attempt would be made to facilitate the enrolment of out-back residents; but any temporary effort to employ the police force meanwhile was hopeless. The police, having now to work gratuitously for the Commonwealth Electoral Office, naturally put a notice under a door, knocked, and receiving no answer passed on immediately, making a record "Vacant House." Such honorary workers would not work efficiently.

Item—Chief Electoral Officer, £350:

MR. TAYLOR: Was this appointment made since the Attorney General took office?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, by the Commissioner.

MR. TAYLOR: The administration would be much more efficient had Mr.

Daly, the Inspector of Parliamentary Rolls, received the appointment. Mr. Daly, a most efficient officer, had many years' service to his credit, and had be (Mr. Taylor) remained in office would have been placed at the head of the department. It was surprising that a man without previous experience should be promoted over Mr. Daly. Probably, as in the past, Mr. Daly would have to do the work. In the past he had been prevented from giving his best work to the department by the attitude of the former Chief Electoral Officer. Mr. Daly was a practical man, though perhaps unable to answer catch questions in an examination paper, questions useless except to block a practical candidate.

MR. ANGWIN : Mr. Daly furnished an honest report about an officer.

MR. TAYLOR believed Mr. Daly's honesty and straightforward performance of duty had militated against his promotion. Two years ago Mr. Daly suggested the card system, outlined to-night by the Attorney General, for enrolling voters. Probably the Attorney General did not know the cost of initiating the other scheme devised by the former Chief Electoral Officer. Mr. Daly was not the only officer who had given the best years of his life to the service and had been harassed and oppressed because he was not sufficiently pliable to the Minister or to superior officers. The new Chief Electoral Officer was recommended by the Commissioner. He (Mr. Taylor) would like privately to see the recommendation.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : For him to compare the merits of Mr. Daly and the present Chief Electoral Officer would be invidious, he having no personal knowledge of either till the latter was appointed. However, he would say, without disparaging the Inspector of Parliamentary Rolls, that the Chief Electoral Officer was a great organiser, and that his work would doubtless benefit the State.

MR. HOLMAN : To-night the Attorney General objected to allowing the Commissioner to transfer a clerk to the Crown Law Department, yet did not protest against an equally inexperienced man being made Chief Electoral Officer. The Electoral Department, through

which lawmakers were appointed, was as important as the Crown Law. Mr. Daly had formerly the misfortune to work under a Chief Electoral Officer not in sympathy with democratic ideas ; and one must regret that another officer, though possibly a good man, had been promoted over Mr. Daly's head. Hundreds of other officers suffered under the same disabilities as Mr. Daly. The Attorney General deserved credit for the manner in which he had explained his Estimates, having gone into every item. Had other Ministers done the same thing the Estimates would have been much farther advanced.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Land Titles*, £10,226—agreed to.

Vote — *Stipendiary Magistracy*, £29,632 :

MR. ANGWIN : Reports appeared in the Press in regard to the manner in which evidence was given before some of the honorary magistrates. Evidence was given of past offences committed by the person being tried, and punishment was given for those offences and not for the offence with which the accused was charged.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : If the hon. member would give him the benefit of the facts disclosed he would, according to his invariable custom, refer the matter to the justice concerned for the justice's comments or denial. It was an invidious task to sit as a kind of judge on the duties performed by justices. In many cases we could not demand from them that severe exactitude we could demand from stipendiary magistrates. A justice did his duty if he did it honestly and according to his lights.

MR. TAYLOR : The magistrates at Northampton and Onslow were the local medical officers. Was a magistrate necessary for Onslow ? The members for the districts should be present to explain these items.

MR. UNDERWOOD, in the absence of the member for the district, explained that the magistrate at Onslow was the only magistrate between Carnarvon and Roebourne. The district extended down to Peak Hill, and included Bangemall

The system of appointing medical officers as magistrates was not a good one, but he did not know any better system. There was not sufficient work at Onslow to keep a magistrate solely.

MR. HOLMAN: Hall's Creek was almost deserted, but there was a magistrate there. Could not a saving be effected?

MR. TAYLOR: We should strike out the item for the Northampton magistrate unless the member for the district could explain the need for maintaining the item. Members took care to be present to move the gag when it was required and to frustrate the Opposition from getting fair play, but they were not present to explain items affecting their district.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Northampton magistrate was paid by the Colonial Secretary's department. At Hall's Creek the magistrate acted as his own clerk, and was postmaster also.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Supreme Court*, £17,114—agreed to.

Vote—*Trade Marks*, £50—agreed to.

This concluded the Estimates of the Attorney General's Department.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

BILL—LAND TAX ASSESSMENT.

MACHINERY MEASURE.

COUNCIL'S MESSAGE AS TO A CONFERENCE.

MR. SPEAKER: I have received the following message from the Legislative Council:—

With reference to Message No. 28 from the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has considered the said message and cannot agree that a free conference should now take place on the subject of the amendments suggested by the Council in the Land Tax Assessment Bill.—H. BRIGGS, President.

On motion by the TREASURER, the consideration of the message was made an Order for the next sitting.

MESSAGE—LOAN BILL.

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

MESSAGE—EXCESS BILL.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 20th November, 1906.

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THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

FISHING INDUSTRY INQUIRY.

TO ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS.

The report of the select committee having previously been brought up—

HON. W. KINGSMILL (chairman of the committee), in moving that the report be adopted, said: The remarks I have to make are few. I have first of all to regret that the findings of the committee, so far as they go—though the committee took considerable trouble, stuck well to their work, and examined a large number of witnesses—are principally negative. Members will see the committee were appointed to report on the circumstances that prevent a supply of fish to the public at a reasonable price, and secondly on the causes which debar persons of British origin from engaging in this industry. First, there is no doubt in the minds of the committee that the circum-