

Clause 243—Order for possession—amended by altering “may” to “shall,” in line 6.

Clauses 244 to 280—agreed to.

Clause 281—Lien for wages :

On motions by HON. G. RANDELL, the word “existing” in line 6 was struck out; also after “encumbrance” the words “entered into or acquired after the commencement of this Act” were inserted.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 282—Caveats may be lodged—amended in Subclause 5 by inserting after “shareholder” the words “or miner” and a consequential amendment in Subclause 6.

Clauses 283 to 286—agreed to.

Clause 287—Declaration as to gold for exportation—amended by inserting the words “in respect of any” before “alluvial,” in line 14.

Clauses 298 to end—agreed to.

Schedules (two)—agreed to.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at three minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 15th December, 1903.

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

PRAYERS.

RABBITS INCURSION—LATER REPORT.

MR. R. G. BURGESS (York) craved the indulgence of the House to read some extracts from a letter received to-day by Mr. H. Ponton, of Messrs. Ponton Bros. and Sharpe, from Mr. W. H. Halford, who at Balladonia had on the 7th instant written this letter to his firm, and communicated with the Minister for Lands also. He (Mr. Burgess) had the assent of the member for the district in bringing the matter before the House. The points of interest were:—

I arrived here to-day. *Re* rabbits, 25,000 had been caught in three weeks at Nullabor station; and on the run they are uncountable, 3,740 having been caught in one night. At White Well nearly 38,000 had been caught in a few weeks. Wire netting yards were used in each case. Large numbers of rabbits are lying dead along the Nullabor rabbit and dog-proof fence. The rabbits have ring-barked about five sandalwood trees out of six, stripped a lot of blue bush, left no grass standing except in one place, are stripping limbs of trees and various bush to a height of six or seven feet; and as the supply of sappy bark or green leaves and twigs fails them, they are dying in large numbers, being too many for the feed available. In many instances I saw a dead rabbit for each tree in a clump of four to eight trees. I never saw a green cotton bush on my way from Eucla till I got within a few days' drive of Balladonia. On the famous plain behind the cliffs the cotton bush is all brown and apparently dead, and much of it has its broken taproots towards heaven, its lateral roots having all been cut by the rabbits as if with a knife. Mallee four inches

thick has been ringbarked by the rabbits, and only saltbush and myall escape.

This matter was too serious to permit of farther delay. It was evident the rabbits were thick within a day's march of Balladonia.

MR. THOMAS: Perhaps the Government would now believe what the Opposition had been telling them.

NEW MEMBER (NELSON).

MR. JOHN RUSSELL WALTER, returned as member for Nelson electorate, took the oath and subscribed the roll.

OBITUARY—LETTER FROM LADY STEERE.

THE SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from Lady Steere:—

Dear Mr. Speaker,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, enclosing a copy of a resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly, expressing sympathy with me and my family in our recent sad bereavement. I am very gratified for the kindness shown by the Assembly; and please convey to the members my heartfelt appreciation of the honour conferred by placing on record its satisfaction with the services rendered to the State by my late husband.—I am, dear Mr. Speaker, very truly yours,

KATE STEERE.

LOAN BILL, £1,582,000.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of Loan Bill, £1,582,000.

Bill introduced, and read a first time.

QUESTION—BATTERY AT LENNONVILLE.

MR. WALLACE asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What provision he proposes making at the Lennonville State battery so as to enable leaseholders' tailings to be treated with expedition and enable early payments to be made for same. 2, Whether he will agree to make payments for tailings on assay values. 3, When the proposed additions to the plant, if any, will be effected.

THE PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, It is proposed to add additional vats so that some will act as settlers to receive the tailings direct from the battery by tailings wheel. 2, Payments will be made according to present Regulations, viz. assay value compared

pro rata with resulting gold received at clean up. 3, As soon as plans are prepared to suit the proposed alterations, tenders will be called for the additional vats. Plant not likely to be working under the new system before the end of February.

QUESTION—MINING REGISTRAR'S DEPUTY.

MR. WALLACE asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When he intends appointing a deputy mining registrar at Lennonville. 2, If so, when.

THE PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, The special appointment of an officer as Mining Registrar at Lennonville is not warranted, but if any State officer's services were available there would be no objection to the appointment of a Deputy Registrar. 2, Answered by 1.

QUESTION—BATTERY AT BOOGARDIE.

MR. WALLACE asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When the cyanide plant at the Boogardie state battery will be ready for the treatment of customers' tailings. 2, Whether pryments for tailings will be made on assay values.

THE PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, About the end of January. 2, Payments will be made according to present Regulations, viz., assay value compared *pro rata* with resulting gold received at clean-up.

QUESTION—DEEP LEAD DRAIN, KANOWNA.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: What is the amount of money expended up to date in draining the "Deep Lead" at Kanowna, and what is the estimated cost of draining the lead.

THE PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, £1,206 8s. 8d. 2, The continuing of this work will depend upon the erection of a public crushing plant. Instructions have been issued to put down several bore holes to locate the lead in the deep ground, and the continuing of the work of draining will depend upon the erection of a State mill or the taking up of claims on guarantees of assistance towards drainage.

QUESTION—PUDDLER AT PADDINGTON.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What is the total cost of erection of the puddler at Paddington. 2, How much dirt has been treated. 3, What amount of gold has been won. 4, What are the prospects of the scheme. 5, On whose advice the puddler was erected.

THE PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, Less cost of engine removed to Mulline and other appliances available elsewhere, £520 19s. 2, 191 tons. 3, 46·80ozs., or about 5dwts. per ton. 4, The scheme was initiated to induce working miners to work the lead as claims, but although it was shown that the dirt could be treated for 5s. per ton a sufficient margin was not left for mining; and it is doubtful if the lead can be made payable unless it is worked on an extensive scale and in a systematic manner. 5, The Mayors and Councillors of Broad Arrow and Paddington, the member for the district, and the State Mining Engineer.

JANDAKOT RAILWAY BILL.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason) moved that the Bill be read a third time.

MR. THOMAS: To allow the members for East Fremantle and North Fremantle an opportunity of voting against the Bill, in accordance with their remarks, he opposed the motion.

Question put, and passed on the voices.

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

PERMANENT RESERVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

METROPOLITAN WATER AND SEWERAGE BILL.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the Speaker do leave the Chair for the purpose of considering the Bill in Committee.

MR. PIGOTT: The member for West Perth, who represented a district affected by this Bill, was unavoidably absent for about an hour; and as the hon. member

would be back shortly, the Bill might be postponed till later in the sitting.

THE PREMIER: The Bill ought to go on.

MR. PIGOTT: This was not showing very good grace towards a member representing one of the metropolitan constituencies.

MR. PURKISS also wished the Bill to be postponed. It had been brought down at a very late stage, and we knew that public bodies affected by the Bill moved slowly. He had been in touch with the municipality of Perth in reference to it, and he understood the Perth Council were in negotiation with other municipalities and public bodies affected by the Bill, with a view of having a joint conference to discuss the various changes which might be made on behalf of those public bodies. These bodies had not time to deliberately and fairly consider the scope of the Bill, many things having interfered with that desire. So far as he was concerned, it had eventuated in some very crude instructions for upwards of a hundred amendments, which it had been impossible for him to prepare in a state which would be acceptable or intelligible to the House. Under the circumstance he prayed the House to postpone the Bill. He believed in the principle of the Bill and its scope generally, his only regret being that the measure had not come down at the beginning of the session instead of now. Two or three days' farther time should be given for consideration.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: With regard to the suggested amendments, the House would agree with him that—seeing the importance of this Bill and that it was framed upon existing legislation elsewhere, and seeing that the administrative clauses of the measure so far as they generally affected the public could not possibly come into force until Parliament was again in session—it would be better to take the Bill now as it stood, and to deal with such of the suggested amendments as it might be considered advisable to adopt when dealing with an amending Bill next session.

MR. PURKISS: We did not want an amending Bill. We had been trying to consolidate.

THE MINISTER: It would be far better to adopt the course he had suggested, giving ample time to consider the amendments, rather than to adopt hastily suggested amendments, which although they might suit some would not suit others. If it were demonstrated that the amendments were necessary, those amendments could be made in an amending Act next session before any member of the public could possibly have been put to any inconvenience or injustice through the operations of this Bill. In order, however, to meet the desire of members, if it were the general wish, there would be no objection to postponing the Order of the Day until to-morrow, but he appealed to members to—no matter what happened—go on with the consideration of the measure in Committee then, because it was a vital necessity that the Bill should pass this session.

MR. PURKISS said he would like the adjournment till Friday; he believed the Bill would go through. Probably he would not agree with many of the suggested amendments, and he did not rise for the purpose of causing obstruction, but in his opinion it was only just and fair that opportunity should be given to public bodies.

THE PREMIER: They had had ample time.

MR. PURKISS: Then he would take every opportunity he possibly could to throw the Bill out.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. THOMAS: In view of the remarks by the member for Perth in giving his reasons for an adjournment, he (Mr. Thomas) protested against the action of the Government in trying to force the Bill through. He trusted that the Government would think better of it, and consent to the adjournment until Friday.

MR. HIGHAM moved that the debate be adjourned until the next day.

Motion passed, and the debate adjourned.

AUDIT BILL (No. 2).

SECOND READING.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner), in moving the second reading, said: I do not think it is necessary to weary the House with any elaborate details, seeing that earlier in the session

I went thoroughly into this matter. There are only one or two suggested alterations in this Bill, and both Houses are practically agreed on them, therefore I will only refer to those alterations so that members may see exactly their effect on the Bill. The first one is in Clause 33, Sub-clause 6, which provides that, "except as hereinafter provided or as prescribed by regulations, every public accountant shall, at the time of paying any account, obtain a receipt." The reason why we insert the words "as prescribed by regulations" is that we desire to pay the railway wages in future, as all big public bodies pay wages, without taking receipts. I have consulted the member for Wellington (Mr. Yelverton) who does a good deal of this, and also the member for the Murray (Mr. Atkins), and they assure me that they have never had, during the whole course of their experience, a second claim made for wages. There was another suggestion from the other place that there should be an alteration, but I am absolutely certain that this arose from a misreading altogether of the Act. They wanted a provision that—

The Governor may exempt from the operation of this Act any boards or trustees appointed by or under the authority of any statute passed before or after the commencement of this Act.

I may say this Bill only provides for the receipt of money and accounting for money that has been received for the benefit of the State. Those particular trustees have Acts guiding their actions, and all the Government do so far as they are concerned is to give them special grants. Should they at the end of the year have a surplus, it does not go into the consolidated revenue, and if they have a deficit the consolidated revenue does not have to pay it. Their dealings stand entirely by themselves, and consequently do not come under the operation of this Bill:—

"Public accountant" includes every person who, by any law, regulation, or appointment, is charged with the duty of collecting or receiving, or who does actually collect or receive, any public moneys or who does actually disburse any public moneys.

"Public moneys" includes all revenue, loan, trust or other moneys whatsoever received for or on account of the State, or referred to in this Act.

So I am sure that amendment was proposed entirely under a misapprehension.

There is a new clause, Clause 55, which did not appear before. I want to give the House an explanation why we are inserting it now, and I trust my reason will appear to the House sound. The clause relates to suspense accounts:—

The Governor may direct that any sum voted by Parliament in connection with any undertaking or matter shall be carried to the credit of a suspense account into and from which moneys receivable and payable in connection with such undertaking or matter shall be paid and withdrawn. Every such account shall be operated upon by such Minister of the Crown as the Governor may direct. The sum or sums standing to the credit of every such account shall be paid into the consolidated revenue at such time or times as the Auditor General shall direct, and every such account shall be audited once at least in every half-year. An annual return of the suspense accounts opened during the preceding financial year, and the reasons therefor, shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

The reason we are asking for this is that as a result of some of these trading accounts our revenue becomes unnecessarily inflated; there is a tendency to inflate our revenue and to cause people to have erroneous ideas.

MR. FIGOTT: Do you intend to put your railways in?

THE TREASURER: I intend to tell members what we propose doing with regard to the railways. We do not at present intend putting the railways in. Following up the interjection of the leader of the Opposition, in looking at our taxation one would naturally conclude from our revenue that the taxation amounted to something like £18 per head of population. That is due to the fact that we put the whole of the receipts from our railways into our revenue, instead of only putting in the absolute net profit after paying working expenses. When I attend the conference of State Treasurers I intend to suggest that, as this system has given rise to great misconception, all the States that have business concerns connected with them should only transfer to consolidated revenue the net profit of these concerns after paying working expenses. While at first it might appear a drastic measure needing some explanation, I am certain the suggested system does appeal to all business people who want our financial position to appear before the world exactly as it is, so that when we say we are taxed to a

certain amount it may be reasonably understood that it is true taxation.

MR. JACOBY: It would look like a decrease in revenue.

THE TREASURER: That only needs explanation. I am going to suggest the system to the State Treasurers. We adopt the system now in connection with the Harbour Trust, which pays in only the net profit after paying for working expenses, and also in connection with the Goldfields Water Supply, the balance of receipts after paying the expenses being paid into revenue. I maintain it is a sound business principle; and I am bringing in the system now because of the small business concerns of the State. In the State batteries we show in our expenditure this year £68,000. The actual profit on that trading concern for the year is £3,000, but we swell both the debit and credit side of the State balance sheet with £68,000 for the sake of getting £3,000 profit. Then we come to another State concern, the Gwalia Hotel, in connection with which we have to debit our expenditure with £6,000, £7,000 or £8,000, as the case may be, and to credit our revenue with £8,000, whereas the profit may be only £1,000. We do not want the system to apply to big accounts. A fair amount of power is given both to the Governor and to the Auditor General in this regard. All we want is not to unnecessarily swell our receipts or expenditure by specific accounts either to credit or debit of revenue, when we ought only to put in the actual result. I feel I am getting a little injustice from this, because I framed my Estimates for the current year on the old system; but I am satisfied, so far as these small trading concerns are affected, we should adopt this system.

MR. ATKINS: Does this alter the auditing of accounts in any way?

THE TREASURER: Not at all.

MR. ATKINS: If debits and credits are to be fixed up and the balance paid by one department, how do we know that that department is right?

THE TREASURER: The clause provides that every such account shall be operated upon by such Minister of the Crown as the Governor may direct, that the sum or sums standing to the credit of every such account shall be paid into

the consolidated revenue at such time or times as the Auditor General shall direct, and that every such account shall be audited at least once every half-year. I do not think I need make any farther explanation of this Bill. The House knows perfectly well that it is badly wanted. We shall have a new Auditor General almost immediately, and I want to get this Bill through so that, when he comes in, we can frame regulations under the Bill and give him sufficient opportunity of carrying out his duties as the House desires them to be carried out.

MR. S. C. FIGOTT (West Kimberley): I do not think this Bill will need much consideration, as it has practically passed through the House before. Clause 55 allows for suspense accounts being opened up, by which means all our trading accounts (we might say from railways down) shall be kept entirely separate from the ordinary accounts of revenue and expenditure. I think that clause will do a lot of good, and that the true position of the finances of the State will become much more easily known to people, not only of the State, but throughout the whole of the civilised world. No doubt our financial position is being watched very carefully; and though we have many criticisms upon our State finances, most of the critics do not understand the position of affairs. I think that if this new system suggested by the Treasurer is brought into force, it will save no end of trouble. People will be able to understand the true position of affairs, and a lot of trouble will be saved this House in future, and when we deal with the Estimates we shall be able to see at a glance which of our trading concerns are actually paying, because I take it the accounts of these trading concerns will be kept entirely separate.

THE TREASURER: They will be laid on the table of the House.

MR. FIGOTT: We will have every six months audited accounts of these concerns laid before Parliament.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. FOULKES in the Chair.

Clause 1—Short Title:

MR. HASTIE: The Treasurer might point out any clause that differed from the clauses of the previous Bill.

THE TREASURER: There were only two clauses in which any difference occurred, Clauses 33 and 55.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 to 32—agreed to.

Clause 33—Duty of paying and certifying officers:

THE TREASURER: This was one of the altered clauses, and it was provided now that public accountants could pay wages without receipts. This amendment was suggested by Mr. Percy Whitton, the Federal auditor.

MR. ATKINS: We would have to be careful to see that reliable men had the handling of money. As no signatures would be required, two men by collusion might pay out a lot of money to dummy men.

MR. HASTIE: It would be remembered that within the last few years a fairly large percentage of public servants misused money with which they were entrusted, so that it would be more necessary in the case of the Government than in the case of a private employer to see that the men handling the money were thoroughly reliable. It should be provided that a man could have no chance of manipulating the money and paying it out to dummies, especially in a State like this, where we carried on public works at such a great distance from Perth. There was a greater temptation where no signatures were required.

THE TREASURER: The easiest thing in the world was to manipulate signatures on pay sheets.

MR. HASTIE: That was not done very often, because people knew it was a serious matter to forge a signature. The offence of pretending that money had been paid was not considered so serious.

THE TREASURER: Members could rely on due care being exercised, as in private business; but in 99 per cent. of cases all depended on the honesty of the paymaster, and no check system would absolutely prevent stealing.

MR. ATKINS: In private contracts, either the contractor or his next in command acted as paymaster. The Government entrusted the duty to subordinate officers.

THE TREASURER: No. Paymasters were well remunerated.

MR. ATKINS: They ought to be guaranteed.

THE TREASURER: They were all guaranteed.

MR. ATKINS: There was no difficulty in forging signatures to pay-sheets. Many were forged when the men did not turn up to the pay, or could not write.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 34 to end—agreed to.

Schedule, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

Resumed from the previous sitting;
MR. FOULKES in the Chair.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Hon. C. H. Rason, Minister).

Public Works, £350,845 4s. :

STATEMENT ON WORKS ADMINISTRATION.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When introducing the Works Estimates, I think I shall best study the wishes of the Committee if I make my remarks as brief as possible. The other day I pointed out that the percentage of cost of administration to volume of work done is very low, and has been coming down year after year for the last few years; and I do not intend to labour that point any farther. It will be recollected that the ratio for last year on both loan and revenue works was some 5½ per cent. This year I anticipate it will not much exceed, if it at all exceeds, 5 per cent.; and there, as I previously said, I think we have reached the irreducible minimum. But be that as it may, the Committee will be glad to learn that there is no State in Australia whose Public Works Department can show a percentage of cost in administration to the volume of work done to compare with that of Western Australia. It may be said that the volume of work done is much larger here than elsewhere. My answer is that even in New South Wales, where the facilities for getting work done cheaply should be much greater than in Western Australia, and where the volume of work done is far larger than in this State, the percentage of cost of adminis-

tration is very much higher than the percentage shown by my department. In salaries the saving this year on loan and revenue estimates is £19,852 as compared with last year, and in revenue alone there is a saving of £12,097 in salaries, as against the estimated expenditure of last year, and a saving of £6,347 in salaries as against the actual expenditure of last year. The Committee will notice several increases of salary for officers in the Works Department, and I ask members to bear in mind when considering those increases the very large net saving which has been effected.

MR. FICOTT: Has the volume of work decreased?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The estimated volume of work this year is larger than it was last year. But if we can effect a net saving of £12,097, then surely members will not begrudge increases to a few officers. I ask the Committee to look at the net result rather than at individual increases. I am dealing with the work actually done, and shall refer presently to the work that was not done. I wish the Committee to bear in mind that these increases have not been given, shall I say, to favourites, nor solely to officers high in the service. I have here information carefully compiled for my own guidance as well for the guidance of the Committee. The total number of officers on the Works Estimates is 238. Of those, 110 receive increases. Of the 110, 63 are receiving salaries under £200 a year, and 47 salaries of over £200; so the Committee will perceive that a fair proportion of the officers has received increases. Much has been said as to the Works Department not having pushed on with public works last year, and not having done as much as they ought to have done, or as much as was done in years gone by. It is true there appears to have been a considerable amount of work left over, it is true there is a large unexpended balance, but I would like to point out to the Committee, although that was a fact, we actually spent last year out of revenue £428,000, just £100,000 more than was spent in any one of the previous four years. One would imagine that this condition of a large unexpended balance was a totally new thing; so new and so long as to fill the members of the Committee

with surprise and indignation. The percentage of unexpended balances to the total vote last year was 26·94, but in 1899-1900 it was 29·97, and there was no indignation then. Not only was the percentage very high, but the amount spent and the volume of the work done were very far less than the work completed last year. I should like just to analyse the works which were left undone. In the architectural division, the Estimates as passed in December called on the department to undertake 188 distinct works, and on the 30th June last, the end of the financial year, of these 188 works 107 had been actually completed, 53 were in progress, tenders had been called for seven, and the drawings and sketches were in hand for 12, six votes had lapsed for various reasons, leaving only three votes out of the 188 on which no action had been taken. These three votes were the Boulder Casualty Ward and Ambulance, on which the Government were awaiting communications from the Boulder people; the Perth Hospital Electric Lighting, about which we were waiting the instructions of the hospital committee; and the general Departmental Offices new block, on which the Government had not come to a decision. In the engineering division there were 69 items on the Estimates, and of these on the 30th of June 39 had been completed, 21 were in progress, tenders had been called for one, six votes had lapsed, and two were held in abeyance; that is the total. As regards the General Loan Fund, the total number of items was 31, nine had been completed, 21 were in progress, and tenders had been called for one, so that there was not a solitary work in the engineering division of Loan or Revenue Estimates on which some progress had not been made. It has also to be borne in mind, in regard to the unexpended sum on the works completed, £11,799 had been saved, that is the work had been completed for £11,799 less than the estimate, whilst on the other hand there is a contra against that. The excess of the estimates only amounted to £1,765; so that the Committee will see we completed such works, and they were completed for a very considerably less sum than the amount provided on the Estimates, and we exceed in a very few cases. Of the apparently large sum un-

expended there were a few very large works, accounting for nearly the whole amount. There was the Malcolm to Laverton Railway £55,000, Perth Central Police Court £4,000, Lunatic Asylum nearly £4,000, Fremantle Gaol additions £6,600, Fremantle Police Quarters £3,800, Fremantle Water Police Quarters £3,800, Perth Central Police Offices and Barracks £2,000, Perth Royal Mint £4,000, Mining School at Kalgoorlie £2,500, Abattoirs £3,000, and Perth general Departmental Offices new block £5,000. These 11 items account for £93,950 of the total unexpended balance of £157,904; so that members will see, if they look at the accounts from a fair standpoint and with a desire to be fair and reasonable, although the unexpended balance was somewhat large, yet there have been larger unexpended balances in the years before, and considering the late passage of the Estimates very good work was done, the best work that could have been done under the circumstances. In asking the consideration of the Committee to the Estimates the first items of course are the provision for salaries. I have asked the Committee and I hope they will bear in mind that where they see increases of salary they will accept my assurance to a very great extent that these are well deserved. These have not been arrived at in a haphazard manner. I hope members will keep in mind when considering these increases the very large amount of saving there is on the Estimates as a whole, a saving as I have pointed out of £12,097 on the Revenue Estimates of the Works Department as compared with last year. The principal item of the proposed expenditure is on roads and bridges £134,838, as against almost a similar amount last year of £139,000. There is a decrease in the amount proposed to be expended on bridges, but there is an increase in the amount proposed to be expended on roads and grants to roads boards. The Committee will agree that whilst we can make provision of this sort, there is no better work probably that we can do than endeavour to make roads throughout the State. There is an item of £118,000 for railway construction as against £73,000 last year. That makes provision for the balance of the Malcolm-Laverton line, £10,000 for the Jandakot line, and

there is a very large additional expenditure on hospitals and quarantine grounds as against the expenditure for last year, the expenditure on these Estimates being £48,475 as against £19,900 last year. For gaols and gaol quarters there is a proposed expenditure of practically the same as last year, and for schools and school buildings almost the same amount as last year is required, but not quite so much; this year the proposed expenditure is £44,505. That seems a very large sum of money to spend in school buildings, but I do not think the Committee will grudge one penny of that amount. It is undoubtedly money well spent, and we are endeavouring to provide schools throughout the length and breadth of the State. I do not intend to take up the time of the Committee farther at this stage. Any item to which attention is called it will be my duty to endeavour to give an explanation about as we reach the items in due course. I would like to point out in this connection that the Public Works Department must be looked at very much in the light of contractors. They are asked to provide works and buildings for the Education Department and the Medical Department, and sundry other departments. All the Works Department has to do is to see that the money Parliament votes for the erection of the buildings is expended with the utmost advantage and if possible that no money shall be wasted. Although I am not directly responsible for the amounts which appear on the Estimates, I shall endeavour to give members of the Committee the utmost information in my power as to any of the items.

[Discussion ensued on Works Estimates generally.]

MR. MORAN: This was where the Government surplus came from last year, and it would come from the same source at the end of the present year. It was a farce; but as long as the Government had a majority such as the present Government had, it would almost appear to be useless to dwell at length on the matter. The Government were responsible for framing the Estimates. They proposed for the approval of Parliament every vote. Through their responsible officers the Government asked the Committee to agree to the necessary works which appeared on the Estimates, and the Government would come down next

year and say they had not carried out £150,000 worth of works. Whose fault was that? The fault lay with the Ministry in every case. If the works were necessary they should have been carried out, and if they were not necessary then the Government were not treating the House with the respect which members deserved. This was about one of the worst phases of political life, if it went on to any great length. He unhesitatingly stated that there would be a surplus from this source next year; if not a surplus there would be a big underdraft on the works next year. The Committee would authorise nearly, if not all, the items on the Estimates, but these works would not be carried out; the Minister did not anticipate that himself.

THE MINISTER: That was not admitted.

MR. MORAN: It would be seen who was right at the end of the financial year. There would be a very large underdraft at the next reckoning when the Committee dealt with the votes a few months hence. The Government would be heralding a large surplus. What was the use of asking the Committee to pass the public works when item after item passed last year had not been touched?

THE MINISTER: What was the good of doing the same thing in 1900?

MR. MORAN: What had that to do with the argument?

THE MINISTER: A larger percentage was not carried out.

MR. MORAN: The Government came in to right all the wrongs that political flesh was heir to in Western Australia, and now we found them extolling all the virtues of a past Government and practising all their vices. There had been underdrafts in years gone by, no doubt; but while practising the vices of a previous Government, Ministers did not practise the virtues. The reasons for not going on with works which the Government asked this House to authorise last year and did not carry out, must have been apparent to the Government at the time they asked for the money to be voted.

[Sitting suspended for ten minutes.]

[MR. QUINLAN took the Chair.]

MR. MORAN (continuing) did not propose to refer to works in his own electorate which were promised but not

carried out. The surplus of the Government was not such as came from economy and administration, unless it came from accidental reimbursements or windfalls in the way of millionaires dying, or something of that sort. The best Government were they who considered carefully what they required for the coming year. The Government advised us that certain works were necessary, and why did not they start to carry them out? How long were things going to be the stalking horse as proposed expenditure, and made to appear afterwards as revenue?

MR. JOHNSON, referring generally to the Architectural Division, said every session during this Parliament he had drawn attention to the bad administration of this division of the Works Department, and on the last Estimates he devoted special attention to the division to try and bring about a better condition of affairs. He took a deep interest in the Law Courts during the construction of the building, and repeatedly drew attention to the way in which the work was being carried out by asking questions in the House. The building was completed, and then we found the work had been scamped and not carried out according to the specifications. There were numerous alterations from the original contract. A contractor's first move was to get the proprietor of a building to amend the specification or make some alterations in the plan, and immediately that was done the contractor got his extras. He (Mr. Johnson) failed to arrive at any conclusion as to how much the contractor got for the Supreme Court buildings over and above his original contract, owing to the number of alterations and extras. The alterations did not improve the building, and the head of this department was totally incompetent to carry out the construction of public works. No practical man could say that any Government buildings constructed by the contract system under the supervision of the present head of the department were a credit to the Public Works Department. We found exactly the same state of affairs going on in relation to the new Parliament Houses. The original contract was not carried out. There were numerous alterations and amendments to the specifications, and the contractor was having a really good time in connection

with that building. That work was not a credit to the Public Works Department, and it was, in the eyes of a practical man, a disgrace to that department. The head of the department was totally incompetent to see that the specifications were carried out. He was also totally incompetent to draw plans and specifications so that he would not have to put in numerous alterations. Practical men knew we had a splendid material in Donnybrook freestone. During the discussion as to the cutting out of that stone for the Law Courts, it was pointed out that owing to the difference in colour they could not use it on that building; but the Chief Architect told him, as a member of the Commission, that it was his intention to draw the plans of Parliament Houses to suit that stone, and said Donnybrook stone would be used, yet we found to-day that inferior stone was being used, and he (Mr. Johnson) ventured to say no Donnybrook stone would be put in the building, though it was one of the best stones we had in Australia. Seeing these things, he as a practical man desired to bring them before the Committee. The Minister should seriously consider the introduction of a system of day-work into the construction of buildings. Some members contended that we could not carry out that system; but he (Mr. Johnson) thought we could by adopting it get better work and more work for the money. Although the original contract might be cheaper than the estimate of the cost by day work, the numerous alterations in the specifications made the cost of the contract work greater than the cost by the day-work system. In connection with the William Street Bridge he had asked the Minister to see that no alterations would have to be made; but when the contract was let alterations were immediately effected, and the contractor had the better of it. We found this occurred in all public buildings. It was time the Minister should devote special attention to this department, so that we could get a better return for the large amount of money we spent on our public buildings.

MR. ATKINS: There was a great deal of truth in the remarks of the hon. member, though he (Mr. Atkins) could not agree with all that was said. He could not agree with the member for

Kalgoorlie on the question of day labour being cheaper than contract work under the Government; but if we had men working on day labour for the Government as they worked for private individuals, it would be a better system than the contract system.

MR. TAYLOR: We could have better supervision.

MR. ATKINS: Undoubtedly it was a great mistake on the part of the Government to allow contracts to be altered. The man in charge of these contracts should see that proper prices were put in for every item. For instance, the man should know, if he were fit to let a contract, exactly the value of each item, so that if a contractor put in bogus prices, items could be cut out and put at a proper value. On these two things alone the Government would save considerably, and it would prevent a great deal of heartburning. Surely the Government had men good enough to see that the work was clearly specified, that proper prices were allowed, and that the work was done as it ought to be. If not, the Government should get proper inspectors. The great trouble was that contractors speculated on alterations. In all the contracts mentioned by the member for Kalgoorlie it was known that, to a certain extent, alterations would probably be made; and the man who got the contract was the man who guessed what these alterations would be, and he made more money out of the work than it was intended he should make. The Government officers should be able to say what they wanted, and to stick to it. The fact was, however, that these officers did not trouble about contracts until they were let. Alterations in contracts provided loopholes for the Government to pay more than the proper value for the work done, because the contractor generally got the best of the Government. An honest contractor would rather have no alterations; and if the Government would only take care to prepare plans and specifications so that there would be no alterations, there would not be half the claims put in for extras. One of the worst phases of this question was the William Street Bridge. After the Public Works Department altered the plans to suit themselves, the railway engineers altered them, and then, when the Minister

had almost promised that he would not have any more alterations, they were again altered by Mr. George. With regard to the estimates, he wished to refer to the fact that there was no classification, a man's salary being raised at the sweet will of another man. This was unfair. A man should know what he was to get, not by favour but by right. With a classification men would try and work themselves up to get more money. Under the present system a man merely worked to keep himself good with the head of the department, and so got more money.

MR. HASTIE: During the last few years a great deal was heard about the freestone at Donnybrook. It was universally believed that this was the only good building stone in the State, and last year the Minister and others said that the Donnybrook stone would be opened up and given every opportunity of becoming a really marketable commodity. Having been at Donnybrook a few days since he (Mr. Hastie) made inquiry, and found that the stone quarry enterprise at Donnybrook was quite dead, and that only occasionally were a few loads of stone taken out, in spite of the Minister's assurance that it would be used for a number of public buildings such as the Supreme Court, the new Houses of Parliament, and the Railway Workshops. It was understood that in the future some stone was to be used on the front of the new Houses of Parliament; but the stone was not being used at present, and he would like the Minister to explain why that was the case.

MR. TAYLOR: The Minister should take note of the remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie, a tradesman, and of the member for the Murray, a contractor. A great deal of the fault of the Public Works Department was due to the architect. We found that tenders were called with prices to be scheduled, and that according to the schedule there was a large quantity of brickwork to be put into a building. One contractor would contract for the brickwork at a very low price when there was a very large quantity of brickwork to be done, and he would put in a very high price for the stone-work when there was to be only a very small portion of stone used. Consequently his tender would be accepted. We then found that alterations took

place, and that stone was substituted for brickwork or *vice versa*. So the cost of the contract was very high, yet if carried out according to the specifications the contractor would not be able to make any profit out of the job. He hoped the Minister would see into these points, and if it was the fault of our Chief Architect, it was necessary that the State should have an architect who would be able to frame proper specifications and call for tenders without requiring extensive alterations after the contract was let. Every time a contract was altered there was an increase of cost, and this increase was most marked in the case of Government contracts. In railway construction the alterations totalled a large amount in many of the sections, and the same applied to public buildings. He hoped that in future the Minister would prevent these mistakes, and that our public works would be carried on in a more satisfactory way. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson), who had worked on a large number of public buildings in this and other States, said it was impossible for competent workmen to go to some of the buildings put up for the Government without observing that the Government were "taken down" every time. In the building of the new Law Courts, men were said to have worked night-shifts to pull down defective work and remedy it, and that this occurred after the courts were formally opened. This sort of thing was most objectionable.

MR. DAGLISH: An inquiry was ordered and a commission appointed in regard to the new Parliament Houses and the new Law Courts, the commission consisting of two architects; and they reported that in the Law Courts certain defective work had been done. The Minister, on receiving that report, expressed an emphatic opinion; but subsequently the Chief Architect wrote a report on it, alleging that the cause of these attacks was that the Trades and Labour Council who had instigated the inquiry wished to knock out the contract system and get day labour substituted; also that certain architects who were associated together wanted to get the plums of the Government work distributed amongst them. Some men who were formerly employed in the Archi-

tectural Division of Public Works, and had since retired from it, condemned the work generally in that department as strongly as men could do. From inquiries made, he (Mr. Daglish) was satisfied that the Public Works Department had an efficient staff if it were efficiently administered, but the trouble was in the administration of the staff; and he urged the Minister not to lightly accept the view of his Chief Architect, but to make inquiry; bearing in mind that we were spending a larger amount in public buildings at the present time than was likely to occur again in the same space of time. The State was doing a foolish thing if it allowed a possibility of the work of the Architectural Division being carried on in any but the best manner. The Minister should give attention to the criticisms which had been made.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course the greatest respect would be shown to the representations which had been made by members; but it was not necessary to appeal to him to give special attention to the Architectural Branch of the Works Department, for he had done that already. It had been said that the Government should be able to obtain as efficient architects and supervisors as private contractors were able to do. He agreed with that view, but pointed out how difficult it was after all. We were told now that the Chief Architect was incompetent. The Chief Architect in this State enjoyed a very high reputation as an architect and engineer; he had built Princess Bridge and some of the largest public buildings in the other States, of which works a list was given to this House last year. However high the standing of an architect or whatever his skill might be, he was sure to make mistakes, and it was not claimed that the present Chief Architect was infallible, but he (the Minister) did claim that the Chief Architect was not incompetent. He believed him to be a highly competent officer. As to the Law Courts, he would show the file of papers relating to that matter to any member of the Committee who wished to see it, and it would then be found that he (the Minister) had tried to sift those complaints to the bottom; and had there been blame that could

have been brought home to anyone, that person would have been dealt with severely. But in regard to the commission that made the inquiry, one fact which was pointed out went very far to show that the Trades and Labour Council were not actuated wholly by disinterested motives ; for directly that commission was appointed, a member of the Trades and Labour Council waited on him as Minister and stated that some of the defects in the Law Courts were being remedied prior to the commission making their inspection. He (the Minister), finding that defects were being remedied at the expense of the contractor and during the maintenance period, at once said that was not fair to the Trades and Labour Council who made these complaints, nor to the commission who were asked to inspect the building, so he ordered that everything should remain as it was until after the inspection by the commission. When, however, that inspection was completed, and when it was claimed by the department that the defects had been made good, and that these defects had been noted and would have been made good during the maintenance period at the expense of the contractor, he (the Minister) was surprised and grieved to find that the Trades and Labour Council said that to bring forward this argument about the maintenance period was absurd, because the maintenance period had expired. So it had ; but it had expired at their request. They knew that defects were being remedied during the maintenance period, and they knew that he (the Minister) stopped the remedying of those defects at their request, until after the commission could complete their inspection. Then it was that the Trades and Labour Council turned round and said the argument was valueless because the maintenance period had expired. It was held by the members of the commission that defects did exist in the Law Courts buildings ; but here was the awkward position he was placed in as Minister, for the Trades and Labour Council were premature in their complaints, and if they had only waited until the maintenance period expired, then if defects existed after that period there would have been a case. But the answer of the department was that there

were certain defects which had been noted, and these were being put right at the expense of the contractor and during the maintenance period. That was a complete answer. Then in regard to the new Parliament Houses, the commission found there were no complaints there ; that the work was being well done and according to specifications. So far from the contractor having a good time in carrying through that contract, he (the Minister) assured members that hardly a day passed but that he got threats of legal actions from the contractor's solicitors. There had been too much alteration after contracts had been let, arising mainly from this fact, that there had been a desire to rattle on with works, which were put in hand without due regard to what they would ultimately cost, and after a contract had been let it was considered advisable to cut down the cost, and so the specifications had to be altered. In making this explanation he referred more to a past period than to the present. It was an unsatisfactory state of affairs, and the most positive instructions had been given that in no case should the specifications be departed from after a contract was let, without Ministerial approval being first obtained. He hoped there would be no more alterations of specifications in the future, after contracts were let. He felt bound to say also that the alterations made in the past, both prior to his time and since, had not been to the advantage of the contractor so far as price was concerned. Of course there might have been some intuition on the part of contractors that there was going to be some alteration, but prices had always been adjusted according to the schedule. For instance, if something cheaper had been put into the contract, a lower price had always been allowed for, and in some important ones like that of the Law Courts, for instance, the department had called in the services of an outside and disinterested party. In that respect, at all events, he trusted the Committee would disabuse their minds of any idea that anything like a bad practice existed between the contractor and the architect. [MR. JOHNSON : That idea was not suggested by him.] He was sure the hon. member would not suggest it. Although where alterations had been made prices had been

correspondingly adjusted, that was no justification for the practice, and the most positive instructions had been given to avoid a continuance of that practice in the future. As to Donnybrook stone, it was thought it would be possible to use this stone more than had been the case in connection with public buildings. The difficulty had been that the contractors or quarry-owners at Donnybrook did not seem disposed, or did not seem able, to demonstrate the existence of a large body of stone of uniform colour.

MR. JOHNSON: That difficulty could be got over.

THE MINISTER: The quarry needed opening up. It was reasonable to suppose that such body of stone existed, but the owners seemed to think the Government should demonstrate the existence of that body of stone, and it was suggested that the Government should open out a quarry there themselves. That was hardly advisable.

MR. TAYLOR: Was that suggested by the quarry-owners?

THE MINISTER: By stonemasons. The Government desired to afford opportunities for using this stone, which he himself believed was of excellent quality. For the new Police Court Donnybrook stone would be specified, and that would be of such a nature as to give the quarry-owners an opportunity of opening out a quarry. It did not matter much there about the stone being of uniform colour. He had every reason to believe that a large quantity of Donnybrook stone would be used in connection with Parliament House.

ARCHITECTURAL DIVISION—Item, District architects, £1,340 :

MR. JOHNSON: These district architects were scattered throughout the State. A system in force till lately—he did not know whether it had been altered—was that of having one head officer in Coolgardie and other supervisors scattered throughout the goldfields. There had been one man in Coolgardie who had the right of vetoing the suggestions of the supervisor or whatever he was called at Kalgoorlie. The man in Kalgoorlie was a capable officer who carried out all the large contracts and did the whole of the work, including the drawing out of plans and specifications for all small works.

The School of Mines was supervised by him. That officer, notwithstanding the work he did, had to submit the plans and specifications he drew out to a man in Coolgardie who was his superior officer, and who, to his (Mr. Johnson's) mind did practically nothing. It had always been a conundrum to him why that man at Coolgardie was kept. The Civil Service Commission noticed this state of things, and he believed were of opinion the officer was not required.

THE MINISTER: The officer at Coolgardie was in charge of the district, and it would be necessary to have a responsible officer in charge of an important district. For some time past he had been seriously considering whether it would not be advisable to have the head office at Kalgoorlie or Boulder. In that case the supervisor at Coolgardie would probably be removed a little farther up or perhaps be brought down to Perth.

MR. JOHNSON: If the officer at Coolgardie was wanted at all, or justified his position, he should prepare plans and specifications. There was no need for the office the supervisor at Coolgardie at present filled, and that officer should be placed where he would earn the money he received. It was ridiculous to have a middle-man who was doing nothing but drawing his salary, or, if he was doing anything, that same work could be done by the supervisors on the goldfields. An officer at Mount Malcolm drew plans and specifications.

Item—Supervisors, £2,455 :

MR. DAGLISH: Why was there such a large discrepancy as that between £250 and £190? Some supervisors were not getting the pay an ordinary foreman would receive for one class of work. If we were to get good work put into our buildings, our supervisors must be moderately paid at all events.

THE MINISTER: The highest salaried officers had been longer in the service and were looked upon as having more experience than officers drawing the lowest salaries. In regard to those having £190 a year, they had an increase on these Estimates of £10 per annum each.

MR. TAYLOR: Were all on the same class of work?

THE MINISTER: No; some were engaged on less important buildings than others. Too many of these officers were in his opinion underpaid. We expected good work from them and got it.

MR. TAYLOR: Had they all the same classifications?

THE MINISTER: No.

MR. PIGOTT: In regard to supervisors in the far North they carried on the work for the different departments. Expenses were very much heavier than in the southern district. These men were put to much heavier expense with regard to ordinary board and lodging and all that sort of thing, and on account of having to travel from one place to another, very often long journeys, and having to wait perhaps anything from a week to a fortnight at a time. It might appear at first sight that these did nothing very great for the money; still they had to be there with most important works to supervise, and their positions were responsible ones, because in these out-of-the-way places everything was left in the hands of the supervisor, who could either waste or save the money of the State. As we had in these districts some officers who were good men, he hoped the Government would take their cases into consideration on account of the extraordinary expense to which they were put.

MR. JOHNSON: On the goldfields supervisors received less money than the ordinary tradesman on the job.

MR. PIGOTT: That occurred very often. One supervisor got £200 a year, and the foreman £6 a week.

MR. JOHNSON: One supervisor, being a thoroughly competent tradesman, could earn more at his trade, but held to his position in the department hoping to advance. It was not fair to pay a supervisor less than he could earn at his trade. The officer should receive at least as much as a foreman. Supervisors for private contracts never received less than £1 a day. Government supervisors not only had to work eight hours a day on the jobs, but at night they often had to prepare plans and specifications for small jobs.

MR. PIGOTT: And they had a lot of trouble in getting their suggestions accepted.

MR. JOHNSON: We should give supervisors the power to carry out the specifications to the letter, because often supervisors were not allowed to go to the extreme to which they would like to go. They should be well paid for their services.

MR. ATKINS: The remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie he could thoroughly indorse. The great thing in contract work was inspection, and the Government should have the best men possible, and should pay them well. Some engineers were not half as good as the supervisors, who knew the practical part of carrying out work. If we were to have thoroughly honest and well-paid supervisors, strictly instructed to carry out to the letter, we would have work well done and cheaply. The supervisor did not have his reports attended to by the engineers in Perth, who were not aware of the circumstances. He (Mr. Atkins) had several times spoken to the engineers and advised them to allow a supervisor to carry out what that officer wanted done. If the supervisor had been called an engineer, his ideas would quickly be carried out. As an instance of the low remuneration paid to supervisors he would say that his (Mr. Atkins') son was receiving £6 or £7 a week at Wyndham to supervise a contract, whereas the Government supervisor who bossed the youth was only getting about £5 a week. This was an anomaly. Mr. Roy at Derby was a good supervisor, and a reliable and practical man who only received about £5 a week on which he had to keep himself and maintain his wife and family at Perth. How could a supervisor live on £5 a week and keep straight? Any contractor would pay a man £1 a day for the same kind of work on any big job. In fact supervisors did not ask less than £1 a day from private contractors. The Government must pay for good reliable men, and they must have men the contractor could not get behind. We should not have contractors saying to the supervisor "There is a £5 note sticking out over this." There were some supervisors who went to private firms and almost demanded backsheesh. In one case a man followed the plan of borrowing some money from the foreman, never intending to pay it back. With this sort of thing how could the Government expect to get work well done and

faithfully? We should have proper instructions, and should prepare plans and specifications so that the supervisors could stick to them. That was where the trouble lay, no matter whether we had contract or day labour.

Vote put and passed.

Contingencies generally, £11,237 4s. :

Item—Insurance public buildings, marine risks, etc., £250 :

MR. DAGLISH: Last year we expended £2,700 on this item. What were the changes leading to this low estimate of £250? Had the Minister considered the advisability of establishing a fund to deal with the insurance of all public buildings and State owned marine craft, which seemed a more desirable and cheaper method for Government to adopt.

THE MINISTER: The Government thought it was advisable that the State should do as other large owners of buildings or ships did, run the risks themselves and be their own underwriters, and with that end in view the item was very much reduced this year. The wisdom of the policy would be brought forcibly to the minds of members by the fact that during the last nine years the Public Works Department paid in premiums £15,461 8s. 2d., and received in insurance on account of all fires £3,090 1s. 3d. During this nine years, if the State took the risks we would have gained £12,000.

MR. PIGOTT: That was not much.

THE MINISTER: It was for the Public Works Department only. The amount of £250 for this year was for insurance premiums to cover stores held in bulk, the only matters to be insured this year by the Public Works Department.

Item—Office Accommodation, rented, £2,000 :

MR. PIGOTT: Did the Government intend erecting buildings for doing away with the offices now rented in Perth, and bringing all the departments and branches into one set of buildings? The present system of renting offices was expensive, and it would be cheaper for the Government to expend £25,000 or £30,000 in providing the necessary office accommodation than to continue the present system of renting many offices in Perth outside the public buildings. The cost

now incurred in paying rent, if capitalised, would more than pay interest on a sum for providing additional buildings.

MR. ATKINS: One serious objection to the present system was the trouble caused to the public in trying to find the different offices or departments outside of the main public buildings. Another thing that needed a remedy was the slow and unsatisfactory lift in the Public Offices.

THE MINISTER: As to the renting of offices in Perth, the Government realised that it was desirable to get rid of the outside offices, not only to save the cost of renting but to obtain better administration. It was impossible to exercise proper control when offices and departments were scattered in various parts of the city. It was hoped that about £775 out of the £2,000 would be saved when the Legislative Council buildings became available for office use. It was also proposed to build another storey over the Barrack Street end of the Public Offices, the same as was formerly done over the Lands Department offices. When this work was done and an extension made over the site of the present Legislative Assembly, all the outside departments could be brought under one roof, thereby effecting not only a great saving in rental, but a greater convenience to the people and a more effective supervision over the officers and staff. With reference to the lift in the Public offices, that had been a great nuisance to him for a considerable time. It would cost a large sum of money to make a good job of that lift. The existing machinery would have to be taken out entirely. The lift was a very small convenience to the public, and was used mostly for civil servants; but he thought the lift, on account of the small extent to which it was used, might be abolished. The only time the public wanted to go far up to the several floors was to see the Registrar. It would cost £700 or £800 to put in a new lift; but the small use made of it hitherto would not justify that expense, and there was also the cost of a man in charge. There was a time when the lift was in good working order, and then it was fairly rapid in working.

MR. ATKINS: When the lift was first put in, it was worked by an engine to pump the water; but the engine was

such a nuisance to civil servants, who must not be disturbed, that it had to be removed. A connection was made with the metropolitan water main to supply the pressure; but it did not work well, the reason being that a three-inch pipe was connected with a four-inch pipe, and the lift would not work fast enough. By putting in an electric lift, the cost of it would be saved in four or five years.

Vote put and passed.

ENGINEERING DIVISION—Roads and Bridges, £134,838:

MR. PIGOTT asked for information as to the expenditure of this large amount. Most of the details should be put separately, so that members could see the amount proposed to be expended on the different roads and bridges.

MR. BURGESS: This was one of the most important votes to help the development of the country. He hoped that a better system of distributing the money would be adopted. Roads should be graded into three classes: firstly, those where settlement existed at present, and where the land could be rated for road maintenance; secondly, for roads in districts partly settled, where more help from the grant was needed; thirdly, new districts where settlers going on the land required help from this vote to a larger extent than was needed in other parts of the State.

MR. MORAN: On what principle would the hon. member apportion the greatest amount of money where there were fewest people?

MR. BURGESS: New settlements required more help than older settlements, and this money should go where it was most needed.

MR. JACOBY: There should be more active supervision over the expenditure on roads and bridges, so as to ensure that the money was wisely expended. He suggested now, as he had done before, that a system of district engineers be employed by the different roads boards, the engineers to be men of a higher grade than those who now performed the work for local bodies. If the Government would adopt such a plan, a large sum of money in the aggregate would be saved by preventing waste and making the expenditure achieve better results. If the system were improved

in this way, the roads boards would be able to employ first-class engineers, and the cost of the whole would probably be less than at present, whilst the results would be much better. He was only giving an outline of the idea without attempting to go into the details. He felt sure that if the system could be followed out it would work satisfactorily. Most of the roads boards members with whom he had discussed the matter were quite in accord with his view. It might be arranged that independent reports should be sent to the Works Department at the request of the Minister. A tremendous amount of excellent work was done by members of these boards, and taking it all round he supposed that the system with all its defects worked very admirably. He regretted that roads boards had not seen fit to put into operation the Width of Tyres Act. He believed the Government gave a special grant to those boards which put that into operation. Wherever the Act had been put into operation it resulted in benefit to the roads, and he would like the Minister to bring a little more pressure to bear where the Act had not been in operation, in order to force it into operation.

[**MR. FOULKES** took the Chair.]

MR. HASTIE: Could the Minister state how many roads boards collected rates, and whether those roads boards which levied a rate were better treated than others? He noticed there were a number of special grants. We had roads between Perth and Fremantle, and at Claremont, Cottesloe, and other localities, and the authorities of those places got very substantial grants. There were also special grants for such places as Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and for other localities where they got very high rates. Would roads boards that did not get special grants be treated better in the allocation of money than those who got very large amounts from the special vote?

MR. YELVERTON: Information was desirable as to whether a more efficient method had been adopted with regard to auditing roads board accounts than had been the case in the past. Many delinquencies had taken place on the part of secretaries of these

roads boards owing to the audit being inefficient. Last year there was a sort of promise, he believed, that something would be done in the way of appointing an engineer and supervisor to overlook the construction of the roads throughout the country districts; a man whom the local boards might consult. In some cases work was very efficiently done by boards and in others there was no efficiency at all. If the promise made last year were carried out the effect would be very beneficial, for not only would the roads be better constructed but there would be a large saving of money.

THE MINISTER: Item No. 8 was the sum distributed amongst the different roads boards throughout the State. Last year £54,741 was so distributed, and this year it was proposed to allocate £60,000, there being more roads boards than last year. At present there were 98 roads boards, and instead of grading the roads the Government attempted to reach the same object by grading the roads boards. These roads boards were divided into four different classes, and the vote, or the greater portion of it, was distributed amongst them having regard to their necessities, the area which they covered, and any special circumstances brought under the notice of the department. In allocating the money the Government would endeavour, as far as practicable, to have regard to special items provided on the Estimates; but as to the expenditure on the Fremantle Road, that was a Government expenditure, the Government having taken over the road.

MR. THOMAS: That did not come in the £60,000?

THE MINISTER did not wish to infer that it did, but he was dealing with the general remark by the member for Kanowna. With regard to roads boards that would not strike rates, there were very few indeed. Some isolated boards had asked to be exempted for a year, and in very few cases they had been so exempted, but the Government in this respect were taking a very firm stand and insisting in nearly every case that, no matter how small a sum, a rate should be struck and collected. As to the appointment of an engineer and supervisor, and auditing, last year he stated that perhaps it would be possible to obtain a gentle-

man they intended to appoint, and whom they still intended to appoint, who in addition to having some engineering knowledge and knowledge of roads construction, would also have a special knowledge of accountancy enabling him to do auditing work. If that were possible, it would be a very happy combination indeed, because two officers would be able to do the work of four, and he did not think it impossible to find a gentleman who would unite those qualifications. It was intended to make these appointments shortly, but the time was hardly ripe yet, because so little time had passed under the Act and there were so very few accounts to audit. He was convinced of the necessity of having someone who would be competent to supervise roads boards and the construction of work done by those boards, and also to give them advice as to what was best to be done. Every attention would be given to the matter.

MR. HASTIE: Out of the vote for works in the metropolitan districts on the coast and goldfields, £9,950 was set apart for the coastal-metropolitan area and £3,850 for the goldfields-metropolitan area.

Item—Grant-in-aid for roads boards which have struck a general rate, £10,000:

MR. BATH and **MR. JACOBY** rose to speak.

POINT OF ORDER.

THE CHAIRMAN called upon Mr. Bath.

MR. BATH commenced to speak on the item.

MR. JACOBY was anxious to speak on the previous item.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bath had the floor.

MR. JACOBY: Surely he could speak on a previous item.

THE CHAIRMAN: As Mr. Bath had commenced his speech the hon. member was out of order.

MR. THOMAS: On a point of order, the member for Hannans and the member for the Swan both rose together, and the Chairman called on the member for Hannans, but immediately the member for Hannans decided to speak on this item, the member for the Swan rose again and intimated that he wanted to

speak on the previous item. Was the member for the Swan not in order ?

THE CHAIRMAN had not seen Mr. Jacoby, and as Mr. Bath had been speaking before Mr. Jacoby raised his voice, Mr. Bath could proceed.

MR. JACOBY: Members looked to the Chairman to have their rights protected. Until the hon. member had spoken for some little time he (Mr. Jacoby) was not aware that the member for Hannans had gone past the previous item. According to the ruling, if a member wished to jump to the last item he could block all discussion.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bath had distinctly prefaced his remarks by mentioning the item on which he intended to speak, and then Mr. Jacoby rose in his seat. Mr. Jacoby was not in order.

MR. JACOBY differed from the ruling.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must put his objection in writing.

THE SPEAKER being called in to decide the point stated, said: The custom generally followed in this House is that when a member wishes to speak to an item he mentions the number. Anyone wishing to speak to a previous item says "I have something previous that I want to speak on," and the member who wishes to speak to a later item gives way. The object is to give the freest possible discussion on every item. With regard to this point, it seems that the member for Hannans was speaking for some time before the member for the Swan spoke, and that the member for the Swan might have risen, but he had not called the attention of the Chairman. Strictly speaking, the Chairman was in order in the course he took; but it is customary to give members some latitude in discussing the Estimates. It is entirely within the Chairman's discretion to rule as he has done. I have found in discussions on the Estimates that time is saved by allowing members some latitude in speaking on items. Of course the opportunity is always given to recommit a vote with regard to any item on which a member wishes to speak and has not been able to do so.

DISCUSSION RESUMED.

MR. BATH called attention to the fact that in regard to grants in aid of roads, these grants were allocated on the

goldfields in the proportion of 7s. 6d. in the pound as compared with 10s. in the pound for coastal districts. This difference should be reversed, because roads boards on the goldfields had harder conditions in making and maintaining roads, and if there was any difference it should be in favour of roads boards on the goldfields.

MR. JACOBY: Referring to the Minister's remarks as to whether it it would be practicable to engage an engineer who was also an expert auditor, it might be that the man would be a good engineer and a bad or indifferent auditor, or it might be the reverse. Seldom would these two qualities be combined in the same person. It would be an advantage to roads boards to have an officer in charge of the roads branch of the Public Works Department located in Perth, so that roads boards conveniently near to Perth might visit the office and obtain information and expert assistance from the practical engineer in charge of the office. This would be a great help to many roads boards.

THE MINISTER agreed with the member for Hannans as to the principle of allotting the vote for roads. This would be the last year in which such a vote would appear on the Estimates, as the new Act provided that all roads boards must necessarily strike a rate; therefore no object would be gained in continuing the system of offering special inducement for roads boards to strike a rate, as they must all do it.

MR. WALLACE: Under the compulsory system mentioned by the Minister, it would probably be found that some roads boards would comply with the Act by striking a rate but would not collect it. The Government should provide against that.

MR. THOMAS, referring to the previous misunderstanding with the Chairman, said that it arose through the absence of numbers to the several items on the Estimates. Members desiring to speak on particular items did not know how to indicate them, as could easily be done if all items were numbered. As to the compulsory striking of a rate in each roads district, he hoped the Minister would not be satisfied to have a nominal rate of a halfpenny in the pound or something like that struck by some roads

boards, who fancied they were complying with the law, doing a smart thing, and gaining by that course. Any board which took that course should not receive a share of the grant.

THE TREASURER: Members might blame him for the absence of numbering in the items of these Estimates. It was a consequence of the adoption of the same form of Estimates as used in all the other States, and this had been done to obtain uniformity. The Government now realised that the system might be improved by numbering the items, and this would be done in future.

MR. WALLACE: As to some boards striking a very small rate, he presumed the Minister would obtain a report of the rateable value and the amount actually collected in districts where this expedient was adopted, so as to make each board self-sustaining.

Item — Bridge for Irwin River at Mountain's Crossing, £1,100 :

MR. WALLACE asked what amount was expended on this item last year.

THE MINISTER: Only a small sum was expended in preliminaries. A contract was let at £1,049, and the work would be completed for this sum, so that there would be a saving as compared with the £1,150 first estimated.

At 6:30, the **CHAIRMAN** left the Chair.

At 7:30, **MR. QUINLAN** took the Chair.

Item — Fremantle Road Bridges (2), lighting and maintenance, £400 :

MR. HIGHAM: On regatta days the old bridge, which as being unsafe was closed against vehicular traffic, was crowded by pedestrians. By the condition of two main arches the Government ran the risk of a collapse. The bridge should either be strengthened in order to stand the strain, or it should be pulled down. It was an annual expense and was of no great convenience to the public of Fremantle, who would be satisfied to see it pulled down.

THE MINISTER: Inquiry would be made into this matter. To strengthen the bridge would cost too much, but if on extraordinary occasions it was crowded with pedestrians, something would have to be done, either to remove it or to strengthen it.

Item — Guildford, Helena River Bridge, £10 :

MR. WALLACE: Last year £4,900 was voted for this bridge and evidently not spent. Why did the Minister require £10 now for this work ?

THE MINISTER: The item was not clearly shown on the Estimates. The amount voted last year was spent, and £9 was necessary to clear up the contract.

Item — Nelson, Donnybrook Bridge over Preston River, £650 :

MR. WALTER: The Minister should explain why this bridge was shown as in the Nelson district. No portion of that river was in the Nelson district.

THE MINISTER: The work was recommended by the late member for Nelson, also by the member for the South-West Mining District. It was found that the sum of £300 voted last year was too small, and that the bridge was a much more expensive affair than as originally proposed by the roads board. Therefore an additional sum was provided. The boundary of the district was not of much importance. There was no doubt about the locality of the bridge.

Item — York, Bridge at Gwambyine, £150 :

MR. PIGOTT: Was it really necessary to have another bridge in York ?

MR. THOMAS: There were bridges over the river at York everywhere.

MR. BURGESS: Where ?

MR. THOMAS: They were only a few feet apart. He understood Gwambyine was the native name of the member for the district. In other parts of the country bridges were urgently wanted. He had asked for important bridges which were necessary, because traffic was being stopped by reason of their absence.

MR. JOHNSON: If this was the price of the support of the member for York, the hon. member was giving it to the Minister rather cheaply. Why did we pass £60,000 for roads and bridges and then have special votes for bridges ?

MR. PIGOTT: These were for the roads and bridges members.

MR. JOHNSON: Who were they ?

MR. PIGOTT: Those on the Government side.

THE MINISTER: This was a very small amount for a bridge on the main road between York and Southern Cross, a very necessary bridge for a large amount of settlement which had recently taken place in the district. The £60,000 already passed was for distribution among roads boards. These were special votes. If these special votes were omitted, the item of £60,000 would have to be considerably increased. As regarded the roads and bridges members, no distinction could be made between members on either side of the House.

MR. TAYLOR moved that the item be struck out.

Amendment negatived, and the item passed.

Item—Balla Balla Causeway, widening £1,010 :

MR. PIGOTT: Would the Minister explain this item?

THE MINISTER: The sum of £300 provided on last year's Estimates was found to be of no use whatever. The causeway was used for an extensive traffic.

MR. PIGOTT: Was it built in connection with the copper mines?

THE MINISTER: It was on the coast. A good deal of the traffic from the copper mines went over the causeway. All he was concerned in was the necessity for the work and its cost. The causeway had now to be heightened to save maintenance because of the number of wash-aways, and widened because of its length in order to let two teams pass. The causeway was built in 1899.

MR. BUTCHER: This was a very necessary work, and had been used for many years for copper and wool traffic, and for the conveyance of station supplies. It was extensively used at present, and was likely to be used more in future. It crossed marshy country on the edge of the ocean.

MR. TAYLOR: Evidently nothing had been spent of the £300 voted last year for this work. Did the department think they could get the work done for £300?

THE MINISTER: That sum was placed on last year's Estimates because it was represented to the department as being all that was necessary for the work. On proper inquiry it was found that to

spend that amount would be practically throwing away money. Therefore nothing was spent, and it was decided to ask the House for a larger sum.

Item—Canning Road (Fremantle to Perth), £1,500 :

MR. TAYLOR: What was proposed to be done with this vote? Last year £500 was voted, and nothing was spent.

THE TREASURER: It was all spent.

MR. TAYLOR: Would the work cost £2,000?

THE MINISTER: For years past sums were provided to make a road between Fremantle and Perth *via* Lower Canning Bridge. It was almost completed, and this sum of £1,500 would cover a remaining gap of a mile and a-half. There would then be a good road between Perth and Fremantle *via* Lower Canning Bridge.

MR. HASTIE: A considerable amount of money was spent on the roads about the city, increasing the value of property nearly all held for residential purposes. We thus put into the pockets of the landowners thousands of pounds. Would the Minister apply the betterment principle to these lands? He found now that £11,050 was provided for roads on one side of the Swan.

THE MINISTER: This was on the south side of the Swan.

MR. HASTIE: Some scheme should be drawn up by which the landowners should contribute to the expense of the work. Roads boards spent their rates and subsidies on improving side streets to farther increase the value of the property of the landowners.

MR. TAYLOR: Were these sums to the roads boards as subsidies on rates?

THE MINISTER: These were special grants.

MR. THOMAS protested against any special grants. He would move to reduce this vote and others. In the past several members fruitlessly raised their voices against the expenditure of vast sums of money for the improvement of roads in Perth and Fremantle. As Perth and Fremantle comprised one of the richest communities on the face of the earth, he was surprised that these two places should so demean themselves as to ask the Minister for special grants to improve their roads. There were a number

of items of special grants to these two places for roads. We were asked later on to devote £25,000 for the reconstruction of the Perth-Fremantle Road. In fact thousands of pounds were to be voted for the betterment of the roads from Perth to Fremantle. As a country member, and a member for a district struggling for the want of proper road communication, he protested against this vast expenditure. Roads were badly wanted in the Erlistoun, Bulong, North Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie Districts. The member for North Murchison had shown last year that people in his district could not get from one part of the country to another because of floods, the Government having neglected to make any provision for roads in that part of the State. He protested against the expenditure of vast sums on roads in the neighbourhood of Perth and Fremantle when districts on the goldfields did not obtain reasonable assistance. He moved as an amendment that the item be reduced by £1,000.

MR. GORDON: The amount of money already expended on this road would be wasted unless the work was completed. The portion remaining to be made was about one and a-half miles in length. It was a wise Act of the Forrest Government to commence the making of this road, and he hoped the present Government would complete it. The road was not much used at present because it was not finished. When finished it would be a great convenience to a number of settlers and to people riding between Perth and Fremantle, and would also relieve the traffic on the main Perth-Fremantle road on the city side of the river.

MR. THOMAS: The Minister's statement showed that this road was costing at the rate of £1,000 a mile. A good railway could be built for £2,000 a mile and a light agricultural line for less than £1,000 a mile; yet the Minister asked members to pass an item of £1,500 for a mile and a-half of road that was not really wanted except for pleasure and holiday traffic. A deputation had waited on the Minister asking for improvements to be made to the Coolgardie-Norseman Road, which was 120 miles long, so as to put it in a condition for coaches to travel instead of their being stuck up frequently in wet weather and on sandy patches.

No money appeared on these Estimates for that road, but £1,500 was to be spent on the south side of Perth Water to complete a road over which there was little or no traffic. On the Coolgardie-Norseman Road coaches were delayed 12 to 14 hours owing to the terrible condition of the road; and to give an idea of the traffic there were 153 horses constantly employed in the coaching and other traffic on that road, and over 700 camels.

MR. TAYLOR supported the statement of the member for Dundas. Most of the money in these items for roads was to be expended in the coastal districts. In the Mount Margaret district coaches were stuck up for days together, sometimes five or six days in wet weather, owing to the bad condition of the roads, and nothing was done to improve them. Many country districts on the goldfields made applications for assistance in drainage and other small works, but were told that no money was available; yet in the coastal districts large sums were voted for roads and other conveniences. £200 or £300 spent in small country districts on the goldfields would give great assistance to people who were struggling under difficulties. Utility should be considered before spending money in pleasure resorts or on roads for enabling people to ride out on Sundays.

MR. GORDON: If the amendment were supported, the effect would be that the money already expended on this road would be thrown away.

MR. TAYLOR: Members should object to the Government bringing down an item of £500 one year for some work, and in the next year proposing a larger item for the same work, on the plea that if the larger item were not passed the smaller sum already expended would be useless.

THE MINISTER: The item for this road had been a recurring one for some years past. The member for Dundas objected to it principally because he said money was not expended on the Coolgardie-Norseman Road, and he cited that as a striking instance; but the hon. member should recollect that, when the deputation applied to him for assistance for the Coolgardie-Norseman Road, he told them that the Estimates were already made up for this year, but that he would do the best he could to treat them gene-

rously out of the general vote, as it was too late to make provision on the Estimates for this year. As to the complaint of the member for Mount Margaret in contrasting the expenditure in gold-field districts with the expenditure in coastal districts, it was not fair to say that members found it impossible to get necessary works done for the goldfields. He had here a list showing that a large total sum had been expended on roads and other works in the Mount Margaret district represented by the hon. member, and a later list showed that £1,786 was spent there during the last 12 months. The desire of the Government had been to treat as far as possible every district generously, wholly regardless as to which side of the House representatives sat on. As to the Canning Road now under discussion, it was for the Committee to say whether the £1,500 in this item should be voted, or whether the amount previously expended on the road should be wasted, as the road must be completed to make it of use.

MR. REID opposed the amendment because any money spent in improving the roads in this State was money well spent. He indorsed a good deal of what the member for Dundas said in reference to the Coolgardie-Norseman Road. No railway being yet provided in that district, the road should at least be put into a good state for traffic, and he agreed that its condition at present was wretched. Teams were stuck up there for weeks at a time in wet weather, and the road had never been properly cleared. He hoped the Minister would consider the great need for improving that road.

MR. CONNOR, while not opposing the present item, asked the Minister to explain why an item which was put on the Estimates and passed last year for the construction of a road from Rockingham Road (South Fremantle) to Owen's Anchorage had not been expended. That road was an urgent work, and only £150 was required to do it; yet though the money was passed by this House, the work remained undone. Was this because the member who asked for the work sat on the Opposition side of the House? It appeared to him that it was hopeless for members on the Opposition side to expect any consideration from the present Government.

MR. TAYLOR: If the hon. member considered the area of Mt. Margaret as compared with the district he mentioned, he would see that the sum expended in Mt. Margaret district was very small.

MR. CONNOR: Did the Minister refuse to supply the information?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The Minister for Works ought not to supply the information, after the hon. member's insinuation.

MR. CONNOR persisted in asking for a reply.

MR. FERGUSON: Was the hon. member in order? The item before the Committee was another work altogether.

THE CHAIRMAN: The member for East Kimberley was strictly not in order, but as the Minister had raised the question of other roads, latitude was given to the hon. member. In future he (the Chairman) would allow no departure from the item before the Committee. Members seemed to impose on him, but he did not intend to allow it any farther.

MR. THOMAS: The question of the betterment principle might be discussed on this item alone. Here we had a sand-patch through which we built a road, and so made the land on either side of considerable value; yet the people owning the land on either side were not asked to contribute a single penny.

MR. HOLMES: They were all rated.

MR. THOMAS: Only for a few shillings a year. He intended to divide the House on the item, for these people should be asked to contribute to the upkeep of the road.

MR. GORDON: The argument did not apply at all. This was a national work which had taken six years to complete.

MR. THOMAS: Who owned the land now?

MR. GORDON: The fowls of the air.

MR. THOMAS: The land would be improved.

MR. GORDON: If so, it would be good for working men, who would secure cheap residential blocks.

MR. HOLMES was sorry the hon. member intended to press his amendment. A sum of money was set apart year after year to connect Perth and Fremantle on the south side of the river, the expenditure being about £1,000 per annum; and now £1,500 was required to complete the

road. It would be an injustice to Perth and Fremantle to throw out the item now. On the coast it was the custom to build roads gradually out of revenue; but on the goldfields, where roads were matters of urgency, thousands of pounds were spent out of loan money. On the coast the roads boards maintained the roads once they were constructed, and the people whose land was improved in value had to pay higher rates in consequence. Though a direct supporter of the Government, East Fremantle received very little consideration on the Estimates.

MR. CONNOR: This road was for East Fremantle.

THE MINISTER: It was for South Perth and Melville Park.

MR. HOLMES: It was to connect two sections of the road miles outside of East Fremantle. The only sum on the Estimates for East Fremantle was £400. On the other hand, a sum of £7,000 was spent in one of the goldfields constituencies out of loan money, and not a word was said about it.

MR. ATKINS: We had as much right to tax the owners of land adjoining roads as we had to purchase land through which a railway passed. It was the Government policy, and there was no reason why we should not carry it out to the bitter end.

MR. BURGESS: The foolish end.

MR. ATKINS: It was said it was never too late to mend, when discussing the principle on the Woodman's Point-Jandakot Railway Bill. It was therefore never too late to adopt the principle in the matter of road construction.

MR. PIGOTT: Many members objected to the principle of the Government maintaining roads running through municipalities. The roads in the metropolitan area should be built by the municipality out of Government subsidies. If the municipalities would not take their share of the responsibility of maintenance of roads once built, thus going back years and years in regard to the policy of road maintenance, the Government should also go back years and years by keeping the roads in repair and putting up toll gates. This would soon bring municipalities to fall in with the views expressed that roads should be kept in order by the municipalities themselves out of the subsidies paid by the Government.

MR. THOMAS: Last year the member for South Perth considered this road was built merely for carting beer in Copley's carts from Victoria Park to Fremantle.

MR. GORDON: Having admitted he was wrong on that point, the hon. member was too late.

MR. THOMAS would read no more of the rubbish spoken by the member for South Perth, who now asked in a plaintive wail that the vote should not be struck out because it was urgently wanted.

MR. GORDON: The excuse was that last session he was sitting in Opposition, where the member for Dundas now sat. Circumstances altered cases.

MR. CONNOR: The road between Rockingham Road and Robb's Jetty ought to have been constructed. Two years ago he (Mr. Connor) was promised that the road should be made, and when the last Estimates were on the Minister promised it should be built. It had not yet been built. The Minister was asked by people interested if he would allow them to build the road and get the money back when the vote was passed.

THE MINISTER: When?

MR. CONNOR: Inside the last 18 months. The late member for North Fremantle approached the Minister in that regard. When members opposed anything proposed by the Government, they were absolutely condemned by the Press; but members on the Opposition side were attacked not long ago because they allowed the Government to do as they liked. This was not obstruction on his part. It was somebody's duty to criticise items, particularly those of the Works Department.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must keep to the question.

MR. HIGHAM: The hon. member brought in a question of a road, stating that it was put on the Estimates for his own interest. Had the roads boards at the South Perth end of the Canning Road worked as hard as the roads boards at the Fremantle end of the road, the road would have been completed long ago.

MR. THOMAS: There was no desire on his part to strike out the £1,000. The point he raised would be settled satisfactorily by reducing the vote by £100.

Amendment withdrawn.

MR. THOMAS moved that the item be reduced by £100.

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

Ayes	8
Noes	22

Majority against ... 14

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Atkins	Mr. Burges
Mr. Bath	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Hastie	Mr. Connor
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Pigott	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Ferris
Mr. Thomas (Teller).	Mr. Gardiner
	Mr. Gordon
	Mr. Gregory
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Holmes
	Mr. Hopkins
	Mr. McDonald
	Mr. Oats
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Reid
	Mr. Wallace
	Mr. Walter
	Mr. Yalverton
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item—Collie, main road to Williams, £500:

MR. TAYLOR: What was the object of this expenditure?

THE MINISTER: This was to continue the construction of a main road to connect Collie with the Williams. Last year £200 was spent. An immense amount of settlement was going on between those two districts.

Item—Fremantle to Rockingham, main road Fremantle and Rockingham districts, £1,000:

MR. HASTIE: Already a considerable amount of money had been spent on this road, and now it was proposed to spend another £1,000. Very good communication by sea existed between Fremantle and Rockingham, and that was the only way by which anyone wished to travel between the two places. There was very little, if any, traffic along that road.

THE MINISTER: The road passed the Quarantine Station and the Explosives Magazine. Very little of the road was within the boundaries of the Fremantle municipality, the rest being in the roads board district. The road was in a most terrible state, and it was absolutely necessary to reconstruct it. The roads board had very little money.

MR. McDONALD: The distance from Fremantle to Rockingham was about 12 miles, and the road was in a terrible state. There had been no reconstruction of it during the past eight or nine years.

MR. THOMAS: In three years £2,350 had been expended on this road; whereas the expenditure on the roads in the country districts did not average £10 a mile a year.

Item—Forrest Road via Lake Bibra (through Jandakot Agricultural Area), extension £1,500:

MR. TAYLOR: A railway was going into this district, which was only about nine or ten miles from Fremantle. Last year we spent £1,000 on the road, and this year we were going to spend £1,500.

MR. McDONALD: There had been an annual grant for this road during the past six or seven years.

MR. TAYLOR: That was all the more reason why it should be stopped.

MR. McDONALD: During the past year the roads board, instead of making roads with capstone, had started laying down a wooden tramway, which as far as he knew was the first piece of wooden tramway construction in the State for cart traffic. The ordinary road cost about £1,000 per mile, whereas this tramway was being built for about a quarter of the price. They would get through the heaviest of the sand with the expenditure of this £1,500.

MR. THOMAS: We passed a Bill for a railway to go into the Jandakot district, and in view of that fact he asked the Government to stop expenditure on the road.

THE MINISTER: It was refreshing to find how suddenly members' views changed. Reference had been made to the Jandakot railway, and members previously argued that, no matter whether the railway was built or not, roads would still be absolutely necessary.

MR. FIGOTT: The Government argued the other way.

THE MINISTER: Members argued that whether the Railway Bill was passed or not, roads would still be required in the Jandakot district. For many years there had been votes for the extension of the Forrest Road, and this item would continue that extension as a necessary work.

[MR. FOULKES took the Chair.]

MR. PIGOTT: There should be no objection to the item, because it was true that members had argued that roads were necessary in the Jandakot Area, and that the railway was not necessary. This item being for a necessary road, it ought to be passed.

MR. TAYLOR: Those who opposed the railway argued that a railway if made would not be used by the growers, who would convey their produce to Fremantle: That contention was now borne out by the Minister. Still if this road was to be extended by annual votes and a railway was also to be built in the same district, the double expenditure should not go on.

MR. BATH, having been through this district, supported the item because the people settled in the Jandakot Area were white gardeners, and they were a most desirable class to encourage. This item was to construct a road beyond the Forrest Hall; therefore the railway expenditure did not enter into the question.

MR. HASTIE: While not objecting that gardeners in the Jandakot Area were a desirable class, he asked whether they were more desirable than gardeners and other people in other parts of the State? Why should these people be taught to be spongers on the community at large? Already thousands of pounds had been spent in that district, and the expenditure increased the value of those people's property. We were asked now to spoil those people by making them feel that they need not rate themselves, but had only to ask the Government for money to do works which they should do out of rates. It would be interesting if the Minister would inform members how much Jandakot had cost the community up to the present, particularly for roads.

MR. HOLMES was at a loss to understand the action of some members on this question. Yesterday they argued that a railway for Jandakot would be no good to the gardeners because they would cart their produce to Fremantle, and now when the Government asked members to pass an item to make the necessary road to enable those gardeners to cart their produce to Fremantle, some members objected to the item as not necessary. This had too much the appearance of obstruction.

Item—Jandakot, Beenup road extension £200:

MR. THOMAS: Sums of this kind were scattered through the Estimates for districts near Perth and Fremantle, while country districts on the goldfields could not get proper attention from the Government. For that reason he protested against this item.

Item—Perth-Fremantle Road, reconstruction £5,000:

MR. PIGOTT: The Government had been paying a large sum annually for this road, averaging about £8,000 a year, being £7,000 for construction and £1,000 for maintenance. This road went through a portion of Perth, Claremont, Cottesloe, North Fremantle, and into Fremantle proper, so that it went through four of the wealthiest municipalities in the State; and yet these people refused to pay one sixpence towards maintenance and construction. What was the annual subsidy given to these local bodies for but to maintain roads? What action did the Government intend to take? Were these roads always to be a charge on the State, or were the municipalities to be forced to pay a share of the cost of construction?

THE MINISTER: The local bodies said, with some justice, that the Perth-Fremantle Road was used more by visitors and casual people than by the residents. To a great extent that was undoubtedly true. The Government tried to get this road kept in repair by way of subsidy, but the road got into a dreadful state; and the only solution of the difficulty was to declare it a Government road, make it thoroughly, and see that it was kept in good condition.

MR. HOLMES: And cut off the subsidies?

THE MINISTER: Undoubtedly; in allocating the subsidies due regard would be shown to that. There was a good deal in a suggestion made that this should be a turnpike road, with a toll on those who used it. He could not define at the moment the action of the Government, but he would say that the suggestion was worthy of consideration.

MR. PIGOTT: The explanation was certainly good, but it did not do away with the fact that hundreds of small places had to pay pound for pound for

the construction of roads. The Government should take some action, either by making this a turnpike road or by reduction of subsidy. He thoroughly believed in the principle of the local bodies paying pound for pound with the Government.

MR. DAGLISH : The cost of the construction and maintenance of this road seemed heavy. It appeared that over £15,300 had been spent on the 12 miles of road, and that £1,500 was to be spent in the maintenance of an entirely new road. With a well-made new road the maintenance charge should be exceedingly small. A road built with a proper foundation and with a reasonable thickness of blue-metal properly blinded on top, should stand at least two years after ordinary winter rains, in spite of heavy traffic.

THE TREASURER : It was known that this road conveyed all the heavy traffic between Perth and Fremantle, and it was interesting to note the incomes of the two municipalities through which it passed. The income of the Claremont Municipality was £1,350, and that of the North Fremantle Municipality £2,016.

MR. THOMAS : More shame on them with such low rates.

THE TREASURER : They were rated up to their full limit of 1s. 6d. in the £. North Fremantle was a poor municipality. These facts showed that some members should not be so cocksure of everything. As Lord Palmerston used to say, one would like to be as sure of any one thing as the hon. member (say the member for Dundas) was of everything.

MR. PIGOTT : Lord Palmerston did not say that, surely!

THE TREASURER : We would be asking too much of small municipalities to bear the upkeep of roads going through them for general traffic.

Item—Perth-Albany main road through Victoria Park, Canning, and Kelmscott districts, £750:

MR. BATH : This road was in splendid repair. We should take into consideration the roads which were in a very bad state of repair before dealing with roads in good repair.

Item—Perth-Fremantle road, maintenance £1,000:

MR. TAYLOR : Once the Government made a road, the local bodies should maintain it.

THE MINISTER : The Government had taken the control of this road entirely out of the hands of the local authorities.

MR. THOMAS : In 1897 the sum of £21,000 was spent on this road; in 1898 the sum of £10,000; and during the last three years, £19,000 was spent, making £50,000 in all for 12 miles of road. Now we were asked to spend £1,000 per annum on a road that should be constructed in the best possible manner.

MR. HASTIE : We must have spent £150,000 on these metropolitan roads to enrich the metropolitan landowners. The country could get its money back only by going in as soon as possible for an equitable land tax.

MR. TAYLOR : After the startling figures given by the member for Dundas, showing that over £50,000 had been expended on 12 miles of road, it was about time the Committee put its foot down. In outlying districts the roads were sadly neglected.

Item—Perth to Guildford main road, maintenance £1,000:

MR. THOMAS : We were now passing through municipalities that should pay for the maintenance of roads out of local rates, or there should be a system of toll-gates or some such charge for using the roads. This year there was £1,000 down, last year £1,000, the year before £1,500, the year before that £750, and the year previous £750. He had not time to go back farther.

Item—Sussex, Busselton - Yalingup Road £5,000:

MR. JOHNSON : We spent £4,000 last year, and it was now proposed to spend another £5,000. Would this be the final, or should we be asked for another amount next year?

THE MINISTER : It was believed that this sum would complete the road from Busselton to Yalingup, a distance of 20 miles; also that when it was completed motor cars would run from Busselton to the accommodation-house. Even after this expenditure, what was done would be a profitable stroke of business, because, from what he heard, the

accommodation-house would be patronised all the year round.

MR. YELVERTON: Only to-day a friend of his, who purposed putting motor cars on that road, asked him if it was proposed to spend sufficient upon the road to complete it. This item would complete the road, and he (Mr. Yelverton) fully believed that as soon as the road was completed motors would be run. The accommodation-house would in about eight or ten days from now be open to receive visitors. The furniture was on the way down, and a manager of the house had been appointed. The expenditure upon these roads and the caves in that district would, he believed, be fully warranted.

MR. TAYLOR: Since two years ago we had spent something like £10,000. Last night visitors from South Australia who had just come from the caves described the road as being splendid, the accommodation bad, and the caves a great success. He did not know whether it was necessary to pass an item of £5,000 for roads that were good.

MR. THOMAS: Last year the original item on the Estimate was £6,000, and there was a motion to strike out the item altogether. That was objected to, and then Mr. Hopkins moved that the item be reduced by £2,000. The Minister for Works stated the amounts had been arrived at not in a haphazard way, but mainly by the assistance of a board appointed to deal with the caves. The hon. gentleman stated that £6,000 would complete the whole job.

MR. YELVERTON: No; not complete it.

MR. THOMAS: At any rate the Minister said £4,500 might carry him far enough, and that he would do his best to make it complete the road. Now he asked for another £5,000.

MR. JOHNSON said he did not gather from the discussion last year that the sum then named was sufficient to complete these roads. Members expected there would be an extra sum this year. All he wanted to ascertain was whether this year's vote would complete the road; and he was assured it would. He desired to see the road completed, because it was necessary to open up these caves. As to motor cars, he wished to know whether the Government had given permission to

run motor cars, or were preparing to run them as Government cars. Presumably the cars would run between the accommodation-house and Busselton; and it would be advisable, if there was this communication along a road built solely by the Government, that such communication should be solely in the hands of the State.

THE MINISTER: When he said he hoped motor cars would be running on the road, he did not refer to any communication between the Government and any private party. The information given by the member for the district, that someone already had that object in view, was news to him. The Government could not prevent anyone from running motors upon roads, if that person wished to do so.

Item—Wanneroo (North), road construction, including extension of main road to Lake Pinjar £5,000 :

MR. HOLMES: Would the member for the Swan carry the principle he had previously advocated to its logical issue, and move to reduce this vote? If so, he (Mr. Holmes) and many other members on the Government side of the House would support him.

MR. TAYLOR: Many settlers in the district referred to were very dissatisfied with the direction the road was to take. They asserted it was going only to one or two settlers.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Oh, did they!

MR. THOMAS intended to move for a reduction of this vote, for the reason advanced on a previous occasion by the then leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nanson), who pointed out that he was deeply sorry to have to move the reduction of a vote so intimately connected with the member for the Swan, sitting behind him. Had his (Mr. Thomas's) leader been present, he (Mr. Pigott) would have been delighted to move a reduction of the vote, and in his absence he (Mr. Thomas) would do so. Whilst other districts were denied communication by road or railway, it was unfair to spend £5,000 for one small district. We passed £5,000 last year; nearly all of it had been spent, and we were asked now for another £5,000. Some six months of the year having elapsed, the Government could

not spend legitimately more than half the amount they were now asking for; therefore the item should be reduced. He did not propose to reduce by one-half, but moved that the item be reduced by £2,000.

THE MINISTER: When the House was asked last year to pass an item of £5,000 for this purpose, he said it would open a large area of country capable of close settlement, and to be reserved from selection for the time being; also that a farther sum would be required—he believed he said £5,000; and that the total expenditure of £10,000 would be justified by the enhanced value of the State land, and would be a profitable investment. Some settlers in the district wished to divert a portion of the money from the original intention, and perhaps some small portion could be spent for the benefit of those in the older settlement. The original proposition was to open up country to Lake Pinjar. The Lands Department were fully convinced as to the profitable nature of the investment.

MR. THOMAS reminded the Minister that he drew attention last year to the amount placed in the fourth column showing a total expenditure of £10,000, and that he then objected to the £5,000 asked for as being only a first portion. The Minister then asked members not to consider they were bound by any figures appearing in the fourth column; that the estimate had been revised since that amount was put down, and that he was asking then only for £5,000.

MR. TAYLOR, as one who had been worried about this road, said that when he learned to-night that the older settlers had been neglected and that this road was for the newer settlers, it did appear to him that the member for the district should explain the matter. It looked bad when the newer settlers were served first, and the older settlers had to be neglected.

MR. HOLMES did not think there was any necessity to debate the item farther. The member for the district could not justify the item, and would not say a word in support of it.

MR. JACOBY: The reason why he, as member for the district, had not risen earlier was that he wished the Minister to give the necessary explanation. He

regretted to find that the Minister was using the amount of this item to open up lands not for people already settled, but new lands which were to bring a future profit to the Lands Department. His object in asking the Government in the first place to place the item on the Estimates was to open up a considerable area of swamp land belonging to the Government, because having failed to induce the Government to undertake the construction of a railway in that district, he then pointed out that there was a large area of swamp, and if the Government could spend about £10,000 in opening it by a good road, the sale of that land would result in more profit to the State than would serve to make roads for the whole district. His proposition was accepted by the Government, who saw that it would relieve them for a time from agitation for a railway in that district, and that to make a good road would help the people who were settled along a chain of swamps surrounded by sandy country. Dr. Jameson, who was then Minister for Lands, had an idea of using this land for a scheme of settling working men on the soil, somewhat on the blocker system of South Australia. The new Minister for Lands, coming in with his great energy, wanted to spend more of this money in opening up new country for future settlement. This change of policy had caused serious disappointment to those who were settled in the district, and he as their member had been nearly torn to pieces by the contending factions in that part of his district. The change of plan was a terrible disappointment to him, and the settlers had a great grievance against the Government. If the plan he had first proposed were carried out, the settlers would be able to get capstone for making roads, and in that way the cost of making roads in the district would be greatly cheapened. He was pleased that the Government were making a start in opening a road to the caves in that district; and there were such attractions to sportsmen in a district so near to Perth that the road would be used by many people for that purpose in addition to others.

MR. THOMAS: Would the hon. member support a reduction?

MR. JACOBY: No. If the land there were thrown open for settlement

the whole of it would be taken up at once at a price which would more than doubly repay the amount spent on the road. He was disappointed that the scheme he had in view was not to be carried out.

MR. MORAN, representing an adjoining electorate, had a fair amount of deputations from the wild and woolly settlers of Wanneroo in connection with this road. It was wonderful to see the facility with which the Government penalised old settlers. Here was an old suburban part of Perth, whose settlers had been struggling through sand for years passed; but the Government went half way with a road for their benefit, and then turned off into the bush. It might be a laudable object so far as the Treasury was concerned, but the practice should be put down. We should not utilise votes for the purpose of securing the sale of new lands.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There was nothing of the kind.

MR. MORAN backed his knowledge against the Minister's. The road was taken away from the direct track that always existed.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There were two routes proposed on the Estimates.

MR. MORAN: The road was diverted, and there was unanimity on the part of the settlers that it did not go in the right direction. The Minister for Works did not care in what direction the House wished the road to go; but here was involved a principle of voting money to open up new country. We should serve the old man first and the new man afterwards.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There were two routes proposed. One led to the Yanchep caves, known as the old road or the stock road.

MR. JACOBY: The main road.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This was the road to which the member for West Perth referred. For that road provision was made for the expenditure of £750 this year. If that amount had been spent each year by Governments in the past, by now the road would have been completely formed to Geraldton. It would open up a tract of country now lying idle and undeveloped, and the upset price of the land would be increased

accordingly. The settlers would find they had done very well in comparison with other districts.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Port Hedland Causeway, repairs £910:

MR. TAYLOR: This seemed to be an item on which an explanation should be given.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This causeway was damaged by a cyclone.

MR. MORAN: Was this the same item as "Port Hedland Causeway over creek £800," already passed?

MR. TAYLOR: Were these two items the same?

MR. MORAN: Why did the Minister not explain, instead of standing there looking like a martyr?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the hon. members ceased, he would proceed. He was not so rude as to interrupt other speakers, like some people.

MR. MORAN: The Minister was too oily [or wily].

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw that remark, and apologise at once.

MR. MORAN: What remark?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member said to the Minister "You are too oily."

MR. MORAN denied using those words.

THE MINISTER: The previous item referred to was a vote passed last year and not expended in connection with a work to bridge a gap between the town-site and the jetty. A contract was now let for the work. The item to which the member for Mt. Margaret referred was the repair of the causeway. The items were not put together because the second item referred to the cost of the repairs to the causeway which was damaged by a cyclone, which cost was covered by the use of form J. As the causeway was damaged by a cyclone, it was necessary to put the repairs in hand at once.

MR. MORAN: We should have this matter settled. What was the difference between these two items? Having been to Port Hedland, he knew that there was a bridge across the creek which cost about £60. Was that damaged by the cyclone? If so, where did £900 come in for repairs?

THE MINISTER: It was utterly impossible to say whether the item referred to the bridge. The only information was that the causeway was damaged by a cyclone.

MR. MORAN: The bridge was built by the townspeople, and the Government paid for it afterwards.

THE MINISTER: The causeway was so damaged that it had to be immediately repaired. The hon. member could peruse the files in connection with the matter; but as there was no vote on the Estimates for the work, form J had to be used.* It was an unforeseen expenditure.

MR. MORAN: Were the two items one work?

THE MINISTER: The contract for the one item was just let. In the meantime immediate repairs to the causeway had to be put in hand under form J.

MR. TAYLOR: The two items aggregated £1,710. Was this sum required to repair a bridge which cost about £60?

MR. THOMAS: Had the £910 been expended in addition to the £134, or had only £134 been expended under form J?

MR. MORAN: Did the Minister know anything about this work? Was such damage likely to recur?

THE MINISTER: The information he gave was absolutely correct.

MR. MORAN was not doubting the Minister's word. He was not so sensitive as the Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not comment on the conduct of the Chair.

MR. MORAN said he knew his position perfectly well. When a standing dish had been on the Estimates for years, we should know when the end of the work was to take place.

THE MINISTER: It was hoped this would be the last expenditure necessary for the work, but of course one never knew what would happen in the North-West, which was liable to cyclones. The work could not have any reference to a bridge which cost only £60, because the contract was for £800.

MR. TAYLOR: It was a pity this item was not associated with item 62. He hoped the Minister would be more straightforward in dealing with Estimates in future.

OFFENSIVE WORDS.

MR. MORAN: Some little time ago the Chairman called upon him to withdraw something and apologise. He thought the Chairman was labouring under a mistake, and would like the Chairman to say so, because he (Mr. Moran) did not wish any such little incident to attach to his name. He considered it was not deserved, and that he was entitled to what he asked for. He thought the Chairman should wait till his attention was called to words in any way offensive. There was nothing offensive in what he had said, and he considered the Chairman was too hasty and had done him an injustice.

THE CHAIRMAN: A practice of waiting till his attention was called to language he considered offensive was not one he was going to adopt. At the time he was distinctly under the impression that Mr. Moran did make use of the words he charged him with. Mr. Moran said now that he did not use that language.

MR. MORAN: What was the word the Chairman thought he used? He would like to know.

THE CHAIRMAN: That was mentioned at the time. He asked the hon. member to withdraw the words, "You are too oily for that."

MR. MORAN: That was where the Chairman made a mistake. He (Mr. Moran) spoke to the Minister across the floor of the House in a bantering way, and said the Minister was "too wily" to do that. This showed how easily a mistake of the kind was made.

MR. WALLACE: It was about time the Chairman took some action.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member should mind his own business.

MR. WALLACE would uphold the dignity of the House.

DISCUSSION RESUMED.

Item—Sussex, Road from Upper Margaret Bridge to Boojidup Bridge £100:

MR. TAYLOR asked for information.

THE MINISTER: The sum of £300 was voted last year, but it was found on actual survey to be insufficient, and this £100 was to cover the deficit.

MR. DAGLISH: Application had been made by him in reference to certain

works in the municipality he represented (Subiaco). He was then told that the system of giving special grants to municipalities had been terminated in favour of the increased subsidies proposed in this year's Estimates. He found now, however, that a number of municipalities, in spite of increases in subsidy, were benefited by special grants for roads and similar objects. The same principle should be applied to all municipalities.

MR. THOMAS complained of unfair distribution of money allocated to the goldfields. The districts of Boulder, Hannans, and Kalgoorlie were receiving £6,100, while the rest of the goldfields were receiving a total of only £350, this being allocated to a road between Coolgardie and Burbanks.

MR. HASTIE: Of the total amounts for the goldfields, all the money was devoted to the Kalgoorlie district excepting two items given to portions of the Dundas constituency. How did the hon. member manage to get these sums, while the representative of other goldfields constituencies outside the Kalgoorlie district failed to get any?

MR. EWING: As to the item for Collie, that was for the roads district and not for the township of Collie.

THE TREASURER: The majority of these items were for roads outside the boundaries of municipalities, generally for roads leading from districts into municipalities. He had taken care in trying to keep everything outside of municipalities from sharing in the sums for new works. There was an item of £500 for a new work in his constituency of Albany, but that was to redeem a promise made by Mr. Leake, and a promise previously given by Sir John Forrest. So far as Coolgardie was concerned assistance for the road to Burbanks was promised by Mr. Leake, and this was to redeem the promise. As to Boulder, Hannans, and Kalgoorlie, the sums for those districts were for roads not within municipalities, but for roads connecting with them.

MR. JOHNSON: The Boulder road was not used by ratepayers of the municipality, but was for the general mining traffic of the district as a through road.

MR. THOMAS: This was the same old gag as was used by the Minister in reference to the Perth-Fremantle road,

that it was a road carrying through traffic connecting municipalities. Roads of this kind, whether on the coast or the goldfields, must benefit the municipalities which they connected and to which they brought traffic. How was it that out of a total of £20,300 spent in roads board districts, and out of £6,450 allocated for goldfields, £6,100 was to be spent in the districts of Boulder and Kalgoorlie, and only £350 in country districts on the goldfields?

MR. TAYLOR asked for information as to the various items set down for new works. The fullest information ought to be supplied, especially after what had been discovered by members in connection with one vote discussed this evening.

MR. BATH: The portion of the road between Kalgoorlie and Boulder was in the roads board district and a portion in the municipality. The road was in a bad condition, and it was about time assistance was given to have the roads in this district put in decent condition. The votes on the Estimates were inadequate, and the districts were treated shamefully in the past.

MR. HASTIE: The municipality alongside the road received great benefit from the traffic. Kalgoorlie received great benefit from traffic on the road to the mines, and some system should be instituted by which the municipalities should look after roads from which they received such benefit.

MR. BATH: After the hon. member had got all he wanted for Kanowna.

MR. HASTIE: That was not correct. If a roads board got assistance one year, it always asked for greater assistance in future years; and all the Committee could go by was the comparison of this year's with the previous year's vote. The Government should see that these special grants were stopped as soon as possible.

THE MINISTER: Attention had been directed to several items. In regard to the first item, "Agricultural Areas, roads in, £2,000," no explanation should be wanted. It was a necessary item on each year's Estimates. So far as possible, no special grants were made in regard to new works for roads, but it was necessary that the Government should build a road from the principal goldfields centre to the proposed abattoirs near Kalgoorlie, and that the Government should

contribute towards the asphaltting of footpaths along property from which the municipality of Boulder received no rates. Again the municipality of Coolgardie received no rates from the property in the neighbourhood of Burbanks Road. With regard to the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Road, a small sum of £750 was voted for the portion of the road within the municipality. The rest of the road was in the roads board district. It was all very well to say that the greatest amount of expenditure on the goldfields was in the Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Hannans and Boulder districts, but these were the most important places.

MR. MORAN: Were these ante-election promises?

THE MINISTER: They had no connection with these at all. The principle of giving no special grants to municipalities had as far as possible been adhered to.

Item—Agricultural Areas, roads in, £2,000:

MR. MORAN: Were these to be new roads?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This was for clearing by-ways through various agricultural areas, and was not for making roads. Some culverts or crossings might have to be made.

Item—Albany, Road through reserve to deepwater jetty, £550:

MR. MORAN: The Treasurer pointed out that the money had already been paid, so that it was no use arguing on this item.

THE TREASURER: The municipality of Albany said the work had to be done, and that they would provide the funds if we would put the item on the Estimates. If the item were struck out the municipality knew what might happen.

MR. TAYLOR had no desire to strike out the item, but it was not fair to have items anticipated. The municipality should not provide the money knowing that when the item came forward on the Estimates here members would be aware that the municipality had provided the funds and would not strike out the item. He hoped it would not be a principle to be followed in future.

MR. CONNOR: There was no municipality at Wyndham; but supposing

the people there wanted a certain work carried out, and he told them to spend their money and he would try to get the amount put on the Estimates, what would happen if he could not?

MR. MORAN: The hon. member would need to be in the Government to do that.

MR. CONNOR: It seemed peculiar that such a course should be taken. If this had been done two or three years ago when the present Treasurer was sitting in Opposition, there would have been a terrible row, a great talk of corruption and bribery. Although the item should not be struck out, the course adopted should be made known. Members who tried to put a brake on the Government were told that they were obstructing; but it was as well before we passed these items to have some explanation. It was a dangerous precedent to spend the money first and then ask the Committee to pass it.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:20 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 16th December, 1903.

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

PRAYERS.