

ADJOURNMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the House do now adjourn.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It was very important to certain members who were interested in the Redistribution of Seats Bill, but who would be unable to be present to-morrow owing to the last of the agricultural shows, that the House should be adjourned until Tuesday next.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: The Colonial Secretary might act on the advice of Dr. Hackett. The weather was not conducive to members coming here and making speeches.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY was ready at all times to attend at the House.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Synod of the Church of England was now being held, and he, being the registrar of the diocese, had to be in attendance.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In that case he would withdraw the motion and move that the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question (as altered) put and passed.

The House adjourned at five minutes to 6 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly, Wednesday, 18th November, 1903.

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THE DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

NOTICE—MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE.

REMARKS ON PROCEDURE.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley): I beg to give notice that on Tuesday, 24th November, I will move:

That the Government has by its faulty administration forfeited the confidence of this House and the country.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): I hope the hon. member will not think I am discourteous when I propose to go on with the business of the country; because I think that is far more important than delaying it, pending a lengthy and wordy debate that will do no good to the country and which should not be utilised for the delay of the country's work. I make this statement, but I would not like the hon. member to think I am discourteous to him personally.

MR. PIGOTT: If the orders of the House permit of that procedure, I have no objection to its being taken; but in order that we may get some matters settled, and in order that the country may have a chance of seeing into the past administration of this Government, I have tabled this motion and intend to move it. I trust by the time a vote is taken it will be proved without any doubt whatever that I was perfectly justified in moving it. With regard to the question of going on with the ordinary business, I see no objection to it at all.

KATANNING ELECTRIC LIGHTING AND POWER BILL (PRIVATE).

MR. FOULKES brought up the report of the select committee on this private Bill.

Report received.

KALGOORLIE TRAMWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER FOR WORKS, and read a first time.

METROPOLITAN WATER AND SEWERAGE BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER FOR WORKS, and read a first time.

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, and read a first time.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER FOR LANDS. and read a first time.

UNIVERSITY ENDOWMENT BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Power to appoint trustees:

MR. MORAN: Did the Premier think it wise to limit the number of members to five?

THE PREMIER believed in making the boards who dealt with property as small in numbers as possible. Three or five members would take an interest in the matter, but the members of a large board attended irregularly. A greater effectiveness was obtained by placing control in the hands of a small number of men who felt that they ought to attend meetings and that their voices were weighty at those meetings.

MR. MORAN: There was something in the argument, but it was not applied to other institutions. There was no suggestion that the number of members of Parliament should be reduced to the quorum. With a small board there was no chance of getting more extended opinion. With an increased board there was a possibility of members attending. This would give more extended representation, in a board in which Parliament would have confidence. Better have a board of seven. If it were "five or seven," people would insist on the maximum.

MR. HASTIE: As this was not a metropolitan board but one representing the whole State, it should consist of seven members, so that not only interests but localities might be represented.

MR. DAGLISH: Some number, five or seven, should be definitely fixed, and the trustees compelled to attend to their duties. There was no provision for vacating the seat of a trustee who failed to attend. He had known trustees who consistently refused either to do their duty or to relinquish their trust. A body so small that the quorum must consist of two would be dangerous in any circumstances; for if the endowment appreciated materially in value, enormous power would then be given to two persons. He approved of a board of seven.

MR. MORAN moved as an amendment:

That the words "any number of," in line 1, be struck out, and "seven" inserted in lieu; and that the words "not being less than three nor more than five," in line 2, be struck out.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 3—Trustees to be a body corporate:

MR. HASTIE: Power should be given to dismiss neglectful trustees.

MR. MORAN: Was such power ever taken in similar Bills?

THE PREMIER: By regulation it was generally provided that trustees absent from a certain number of meetings vacated their seats. It was desirable to have as far as possible a fixed board; and wide representation could not be secured if regular attendance was compulsory. The amount of work to be done would not be large, being mainly confined to collecting rents and secretarial duties. A very few meetings per annum would suffice.

MR. DAGLISH: If the meetings were few, attendance should be compulsory.

THE PREMIER: A quorum of four should be ample. Personally he thought little of the regulation that a man should vacate a seat if absent from a certain number of meetings without leave of his colleagues; for such leave was invariably given. The Bill provided for supplying a trustee's place on his death, resignation, or absence from the State.

MR. HASTIE: Empower the Governor to appoint trustees from time to time.

THE PREMIER: No. That would make the board a political body. The trustees would have no voice in settling the future operation of the university; but would merely hold and develop whatever funds and real estate might be donated to the trust by private persons or by the Government.

MR. DAGLISH: The Premier might solve the difficulty by providing that the Governor should have power to remove any trustee on the recommendation of five out of seven trustees. There was no likelihood of five trustees being influenced by improper motives. He (Mr. Daglish) had known trustees who refused even to sign necessary documents, or to take any responsibility connected with the trust,

thus causing deadlocks. The Bill should give power to deal with such men, who might seriously interfere with the work of the trust. Such cases had arisen in friendly societies.

THE PREMIER: Exceptional cases.

MR. DAGLISH: No matter how exceptional if they arose.

THE PREMIER: Not so. We could not legislate for exceptional cases. This must be an independent board.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Endowment:

MR. MORAN: Was it not desirable to submit these endowments to Parliament? Less important matters were submitted to Parliament.

MR. DAGLISH: The establishment of the university only was subject to Parliament.

THE PREMIER: Hundreds and thousands of acres were given away to public bodies and semi-public bodies, and there could be no objection in giving the same power in relation to a university that trustees of friendly societies and semi-public bodies enjoyed. All the money raised and received by the trustees would come back to the State, as a university would relieve future burdens in the shape of education.

MR. DAGLISH: Had the Government considered the question of what endowment it was proposed to confer straight away on the trustees? He was satisfied to give the Government power to make the largest possible endowment for this work if a guarantee were given that when the university was established it should not be a close institution.

THE PREMIER: Could not future Parliaments be trusted?

MR. DAGLISH: In other States close institutions were established, and the tendency of university councils was in that direction. It was the duty of members to provide that the university should be for the benefit of the public, and not only for the benefit of those who wanted a university. This could only be done by taking pains to give to the students working during the day an opportunity of attending university lectures at night time. It was not sufficient to have university lectures given during the day. Some years ago he (Mr. Daglish) was anxious to attend university lectures in Melbourne, and he got up a strong

agitation with the object of inducing the Melbourne University Council to provide evening lectures; but the reply was that the council would accept the fees, though evening lectures could not be given. Lectures were delivered when the larger proportion of students were not able to attend. We should endeavour to popularise any university established, and the proper time to begin was in making the conditions as to endowments. Parliament was now dealing with the endowment, therefore we should make conditions as to how the proceeds of the endowment were to be expended.

THE PREMIER: Until Parliament passed legislation to establish a State University, how could we provide how the proceeds of the endowment should be used? It would be impossible to say that a future university should hold night lectures. If once we began expressing our opinions, then all members might express their ideas of what the university should do. How could we bind the trustees down as to how the university should be run? That would rest with a future Parliament which was called on to establish a university. None of us wished to see in Western Australia a university run on the lines of the existing English universities or those in the Eastern States. It was to be hoped we should not have a university of the class referred to by the hon. member, but how could provision be made in connection with a future university when we had not established or founded that university? We should not anticipate the future: if so all members would desire to give their own particular ideas of what a university should be.

MR. STONE: Endowments to friendly societies were only building sites; any endowment to a university should be submitted to Parliament for approval.

THE PREMIER: In answer to the question put by the member for Subiaco, the Government had not considered the area of land which should be granted as an endowment to the university, but it was thought a substantial area should be given of land which was lately part of the Perth Commonage. There were claims in connection with the land, and until a Bill was passed it was premature to consider what would be done with that land. The member for Subiaco had his

municipal eye on it, the Leederville Council wanted some of it, and it would be necessary to see what should be done in relation to all of the claims. He might say that he looked with greater sympathy on the university than on the municipalities concerned.

MR. MORAN: The Government on the eve of a general election should hold their hand and not make a large endowment of this kind. He would like to see the matter discussed at the general election, and whatever Government came back with the full confidence of the country should make the endowment. He did not say this offensively, but in a matter of this importance, the alienation of a large piece of land, it was fit and proper to leave it until the next session and until the Government had received a fresh mandate from the people. The Minister for Lands had to consider a great many small grants of land, but this was a matter occurring only once. There was no hurry to make an endowment yet. Personally he would prefer to see a clause inserted giving Parliament the power of review.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Powers of Trustees:

MR. MORAN: Were these the usual powers in cases of this kind?

THE PREMIER: The powers of control and management were given by the clause.

MR. MORAN: How did this provision compare with other endowments in Australia; had the Premier looked at other Acts?

THE PREMIER: This Bill was founded on Acts in force in other places. University councils had the power to deal with endowments; but speaking from memory, in nearly every place in the Eastern States and in New Zealand endowments were given before the university was established; subsequently the endowments passed to the councils, who had the ordinary rights of dealing with property. The clause gave the trustees the control and management of the real and personal property vested in or acquired by them and the trustees had power to set out roads, streets, and open spaces, and to erect and maintain buildings upon, and otherwise improve any land or other property in their discretion. The clause gave general power. Then by

Clause 7 there was power to lease for 21 years. If the trustees desired to exceed that term they could grant a building lease for 99 years, but in each case the consent of the Governor had to be obtained.

MR. MORAN: The clause was very definite. It stated "in the absolute discretion of the trustees." That power was not given to other boards.

THE PREMIER: We were giving to the trustees property which we knew would be developed and improved.

MR. MORAN: The powers were very far-reaching, and could not afterwards be altered.

THE PREMIER: How could that be avoided?

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—Power to lease with the approval of the Governor, to transfer, exchange, or mortgage lands:

MR. DAGLISH: Too large a power was contained in the last few words of the clause, the power to transfer, exchange, or mortgage lands. That should be done by a separate Bill if the necessity arose, so that Parliament might give consent.

THE PREMIER: There should be power given to transfer.

MR. DAGLISH: The granting of a lease was not transferring. This was a power to alienate from an endowment any land the trustees chose to alienate by transfer or exchange, so long as they got the approval of the Governor, and very often that meant the approval of the Minister.

THE PREMIER: Strike out the word "transfer."

MR. DAGLISH: If the transfer or exchange was desirable, Parliament could pass a Bill through the three readings in ten minutes in order to effect that transfer; there would be no difficulty about it. We ought not to give a body of trustees the power to alienate land set apart for this purpose, even with the approval of the Governor. The Premier would recognise there was no great hardship in striking out these words. He moved as an amendment,

That the words "transfer, exchange, or," in line 4, be struck out."

THE PREMIER: The word "transfer" ought not to be in, but "exchange" should remain. A case might crop up where it

would be advantageous to effect an exchange.

MR. FOULKES: It might be necessary for the trustees to sell portions of land. A man might leave a bit of land worth perhaps £100, and an individual might be willing to make a very good offer for it if he could have it straight away, but if it were necessary to come to Parliament a person might have to wait six months. Many a testator gave power to sell, mortgage, and exchange land. If we could not trust these trustees to look after the endowments of the university, he did not see the good of appointing them. They could not part with these lands except with the approval of the Governor. The clause should remain as it stood.

THE PREMIER said he would have a new clause inserted giving the trustees free action in regard to land left by other persons.

MR. STONE: The word "mortgage" should also be struck out of the clause. A mortgage was no good without power of sale.

THE PREMIER: If the mortgage was no good without power of sale, the trustees could not raise it.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Exemption of trust property from taxation:

MR. DAGLISH: One did not know why an endowment of this sort, benefited by municipal improvements, should not contribute to the cost of those improvements.

MR. MORAN: The university would increase the value of land 50 per cent.

MR. DAGLISH: The argument which applied to Government land did not apply to a university endowment. The justification for the Government escaping was that the Government gave a subsidy which took the place of taxation they otherwise would pay.

THE PREMIER: This clause was not urged by him because Crown lands were exempt from rating, but because the State proposed to make a large endowment for a State purpose, and we asked local bodies not to impose taxation upon it. Whilst the land remained in the name of the Crown it could not be taxed, and why should it be taxed because the

Crown handed it over to a body created for the purposes of management? We provided that "the benefit of such exemption shall not extend to any other person who may be the owners of any estate or interest in such property, whether as purchaser, lessee, or otherwise."

MR. HASTIE: Supposing the trustees went in for renting; would they then pay?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. DAGLISH: As soon as they leased property, the municipality would have the first claim on a tenant. The tenant at once became responsible for arrears.

THE PREMIER: If the arrears were so heavy that no tenant would pay them the trustees could not let property, or if they did the rent for some years would have to accumulate to pay off the local taxation.

MR. DAGLISH: It was a great shame that the Perth Commonage had not been taxed all along.

THE PREMIER: The authorities should not be able to tax land which was handed over to the trustees, but nevertheless substantially remained Crown land.

MR. HASTIE: Most of this land, he took it, would not be connected with municipalities but roads boards; and roads boards were not entitled to as much consideration as municipalities. Some of the property would be of very little use until the roads were made, and these roads should be made at the expense of residents about the place. Last year or the year before we were anxious to let roads boards levy some taxation. It would be unfair if they were asked to contribute not only to the benefit of their own property but to the great benefit of property of the university. Should it not be said that rates should not be levied unless there were some services rendered or some particular benefit to that property?

THE PREMIER: Supposing there were 200 acres of land taken from the Commonage, the local municipality would say "You have 200 acres," and they would place upon it the selling price; so the amount of taxation would be terrific.

MR. DAGLISH: The municipality had already spent about £300 adjacent to this land.

THE PREMIER: When there were local ratepayers and the property was improved, that property would become ratable.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—Meetings:

MR. MORAN moved that the word "two" be struck out and "four" inserted in lieu.

MR. HASTIE: One of the considerations in making the members seven was that people from different parts of the State might be appointed. If a quorum of four were insisted upon business might be suspended for months.

MR. MORAN: To begin with, these meetings would only be held about twice a year, and to commence the work four members ought to be present.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 11—Officers:

MR. MORAN: Would this refer to the officers of the university.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. MORAN: It would only refer to a secretary or a rent collector?

THE PREMIER: Yes, or to a surveyor.

MR. MORAN: The board would have power to appoint their own officers?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—Remuneration of trustees:

MR. DAGLISH: What percentage would the trustees receive?

THE PREMIER: On such a large property we should not allow a percentage. Members should receive fees for each sitting, and we might pay the expenses of a man who lived out of Perth.

MR. MORAN: That would be sufficient.

THE PREMIER: By paying a small fee members would attend more regularly and do better work. Those who advocated payment of members should not refuse to pay the trustees.

MR. MORAN: A small fee would have little effect on the trustees, who would act on the board purely as a labour of love and as enthusiasts in doing good to the cause of higher education. We could afford to pay very little at the beginning, but there would be many hard days before the institution ere it reached a satisfactory position. We could only give a small honorarium, but the class of men we expected to have on the board would not be attracted by fees.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13—agreed to.

Preamble:

MR. JACOBY: Would it not be wise to include in the schedule a description of the land? The Government had taken up the position that in all cases of this description land should not be given without the consent of Parliament.

THE PREMIER: That question was discussed on Clause 2. It might be necessary to have a new clause so that the trustees could do what was necessary with land with which they were endowed.

MR. JACOBY: Did Clause 9 take away entirely from the municipalities and local authorities the power to tax the endowed lands for the upkeep of roads?

THE PREMIER: There was no exemption when the land was occupied by individuals. The exemption only lasted while the trustees were in possession of the land.

MR. JACOBY: Would they not be taxed for the front of their buildings?

THE PREMIER: This Bill did not deal with the university.

MR. MORAN: The Premier should explain his proposed new clause. One could not say straight away whether the powers of this board differed from the powers held by any other board holding land in fee.

THE PREMIER: Somebody might want to give the board 100 acres. Why should we tie the hands of the trustees?

MR. MORAN: Because the board had no extraneous powers. The trustees were still servants of the State.

THE PREMIER: The board should have power to deal with lands given by private individuals. The system of leasing might not apply to non-suburban lands.

MR. MORAN: Could the board not come to Parliament for a fresh mandate?

THE PREMIER: The greater freedom given to the board the better it would be. It was necessary to make it clear that the trustees should carry out any trusts imposed upon them by the donors of land. The new clause would be moved on recommitment.

Preamble put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

PRISONS BILL.

ASSEMBLY'S AMENDMENTS.

The Council having disagreed to certain of the Assembly's amendments, the reasons for same were considered in Committee; MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair.

No. 1.—Clause 19, line 1, between “any” and “justice” insert “member of the Legislature or”:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the Bill was previously before the Committee members thought it desirable that it should be expressly laid down that members of Parliament should have the right to enter and examine any prison at any time. The Legislative Council had agreed to the other amendments, some of them being very important, but this amendment was not of great importance and not worth while insisting upon, because members had every access to prisons whenever they desired it. The majority of members of Parliament were justices of the peace, and had a right to go into prisons at any time.

MR. TAYLOR: A very small number of members of this House were justices.

THE MINISTER: Whether justices or not, members had no difficulty.

MR. TAYLOR: Orders had to be obtained from the Colonial Secretary.

THE MINISTER: There was no delay in doing so. It was most desirable that this Bill should be added to the legislation of the State, because it was a very necessary measure. If we insisted upon this amendment the Bill might not come back from another place. Was it worth while to insist on the privilege being inserted in the Bill and risk losing the Bill?

MR. STONE: Members in another place desired the privilege.

THE MINISTER: How could that be, when another place rejected the amendment? He moved:

That the amendment be not insisted on.

MR. TAYLOR regretted that the Minister was so anxious to agree with another place.

THE MINISTER: The desire was not to risk the Bill.

MR. TAYLOR: It was unfortunate that legislation which originated in this, the people's, House was invariably altered to suit the Upper Chamber. If the amendment was not insisted on,

members of Parliament, like private persons, could not without orders from the Colonial Secretary visit prisons, and a member would have no advantage over a private person save more easy access to the Colonial Secretary. This would not apply to most members of another place, for they were justices, and could visit prisons *ex officio*. To test the feeling of the country as to another place, he (Mr. Taylor) would sacrifice any Bill, so that the people might know what a stumbling block another place was, and might take steps to remove it. Let this House assert its independence, and the rights conferred on it by the people. These rights every Parliamentary candidate pledged himself to maintain, and when elected meekly accepted every amendment made by the Council. Look at this thin House, an evidence of the apathy and neglect of those sent here to do the country's business, some of whom, while objecting to payment of members, drew their salaries and did practically nothing in return.

THE PREMIER: This Bill was a consolidating measure, introduced not so much with a view to new legislation as to bring up to date existing statutes, some of them very antiquated. From such a Bill controversial matters should as far possible be eliminated, for it would then have a better chance of passing. This proposal was novel and contentious; and the Council disagreed with it while agreeing to our other amendments.

MR. TAYLOR: But surely for the sake of disagreeing the Council would not throw out the Bill?

THE PREMIER: Another place could take up the position he took on the Administration Bill—that the House introducing novel legislation in a consolidating measure ought not to press its views to such an extent as to sacrifice the Bill, but should give way. Though personally he agreed with the Assembly's amendment, he would not for its sake lose the Bill. He would do his utmost to facilitate the visiting of prisons by hon. members.

MR. TAYLOR: A member not well acquainted with prison regulations might wish to pay a surprise visit. If the prison authorities anticipated a visit, the place was brought up to date and set in order. As members made laws for the conduct of

prisons, they should have a right to see how the laws worked and see the prison in its everyday array. The member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) told him that last week he had visited the Fremantle prison and found to his astonishment that a "first timer" was given three months' separate confinement which a second or third timer did not undergo. It was an absurdity and a hardship that a first timer should be more harshly treated than an old offender. None knew whether the regulations the Minister had before him were those enforced in the prison. If permitted, some members would be energetic enough to pay surprise visits in the interests of prisoners, whose treatment should be not punitive but reformatory. With this object the law should be amended next session; for a member ought to be able without permission to visit any institution controlled by the Government. As Parliament held the purse-strings, no person should be more eligible than a member of Parliament to visit all Government institutions. He protested against our tacitly adopting on every occasion suggestions from another place.

MR. STONE: A member should have a right to visit prisons, to ascertain how they were conducted. The mayor of any municipality, being *ex officio* a justice, could do so.

Question passed, and the Assembly's amendment not insisted on.

No. 2 (consequential)—not insisted on.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

[Sitting suspended for 10 minutes.]

EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSEMBLY'S AMENDMENTS.

The Assembly having made four amendments, and the Council having disagreed to three, the same were now farther considered in Committee.

No. 1—Clause 5, strike out the word "ten" (ten o'clock closing), and insert "nine" in lieu:

THE PREMIER: The Council were not prepared to accept the Assembly's amendment that shops should be closed at nine o'clock instead of ten on Saturday nights, and he himself disagreed with

that amendment. He would like the question discussed by those in conflict with himself, and it was for them to consider whether it was advisable for us to insist upon the closing hour being nine or to retain the hour of ten. He understood that since the matter was decided in the House, meetings had been held of shop employees, who did not express themselves very strongly in favour of nine o'clock.

MR. JOHNSON: They wanted nine o'clock, but did not know how to get it.

THE PREMIER moved—

That the amendment be not insisted upon.

MR. HASTIE: It was to be regretted the mover of the amendment was not present. Had he been, he would have considered this question from other points of view than that put forward by the Premier. The amendment was carried unanimously, or at any rate without a division. When we were debating the question at that time we did not specially consider any shop assistants who might meet to discuss the subject. It was stated by the Speaker and various other members that a large portion of the shop employees had to work until late on Saturday nights. It was also stated that nine o'clock closing existed in different parts of Australia, and that in no case had any great inconvenience taken place either to the shopkeepers, shop assistants, or the public. Last year also we declared in favour of nine o'clock. The amendment having been passed without a division, the matter ought to have been treated with much more consideration by gentlemen in another place than it had been. It would be as easy for people to make their purchases a little before nine o'clock as a little before ten. When early closing had been inaugurated no inconvenience was experienced after the first week or two. If shop assistants did not take an active part in trying to get the Saturday closing hour altered, they had not taken an active part in endeavouring to get the hour of ten retained. He would vote against the motion of the Premier, and hoped the Committee would adhere to its previous decision.

MR. TAYLOR: The clause had already been passed on two occasions by this House. It sought to protect the women

and children who worked in shops. The Premier should not have supported the action taken by the Legislative Council.

THE PREMIER had opposed the clause in this House.

MR. JACOBY: The clause was rejected in the Legislative Council on the motion of the Colonial Secretary.

MR. PIGOTT: The Committee should stand by the clause as it was sent to the Council.

MR. HOLMES: The hon. member wanted to wreck the Bill.

MR. PIGOTT: There was no desire to wreck the Bill. The House decided last session to give a trial to closing shops at nine o'clock, and we debated the question a few weeks ago with the same result. Simply because the Bill came back from the Council with an alteration made without any debate whatever at the request of the Government, why should the Premier ask us to uphold the action of the Council? Members should say they were not going to accept that sort of thing. No matter how strongly a man might believe in having two Houses, the action of the Upper House on this occasion was one that would go a long way towards making even sensible men who believed in two Chambers think that the time had arrived when the Upper Chamber should be done away with. Simply because the Government did not approve of the action taken in this Chamber they moved towards their own ends in the Upper House. Rather than give in on this matter he would sooner see the Bill sacrificed. The member for East Fremantle knew he (Mr. Pigott) was not desirous of having the Bill thrown out. He frankly admitted he did not believe in the principle of this kind of legislation, but, as it was agreed to by a majority of the people in the Commonwealth, he would not go against it. To carry out the principle to its proper conclusion there was no reason why, at some future date, shops should not be closed at an earlier hour. Closing at nine o'clock would do a great amount of good to one particular class, and would not affect in any bad way any other class of the community. A large deputation representing all parts of the metropolitan area, both workers and owners, pointed out that the closing of

the shops would be good for everybody concerned. For that reason he opposed the Premier's motion. It was unfair that the matter should be brought before us in the way the Premier had brought it forward. The Premier was doing his best to throw out a clause passed on two occasions by the House. Why did the Premier not stick to the opinion of the House? The clause should be retained as it was when it left the House.

MR. STONE regretted the action taken by the Upper House. The hour of closing shops should be nine o'clock. Nobody had been more hostile to the principle of interfering with shopkeepers than himself, but after a practical experience of the Act he would not like to revert to the old system. He believed shops should be closed at six o'clock.

MR. HOLMES: In spite of the eloquent speech of the member for West Kimberley, and even after the assurance of the hon. member that he was in earnest in the matter, a shop assistant would be inclined to look for the nigger in the fence. If we compared the action of the hon. member on this Bill with his actions in other legislation of this kind, the comparison was not very favourable. The public did not want shops closed at nine o'clock, and a meeting of shop assistants had decided to remain neutral.

MR. STONE: Or else get the sack.

MR. HOLMES: If the business people of Geraldton treated their assistants in that way, the business people of Perth and Fremantle did not. The Bill would not affect his (Mr. Holmes's) business, because butchers' shops could remain open till 11 o'clock, and his firm did not take advantage of the additional hour. The member for Kanowna said the House was unanimous on the point. The hon. member was wrong. It was never intended to allow the clause to pass without a division. A number of members were waiting for a division, but through a slip the opportunity was lost. They desired to take the opportunity now. He (Mr. Holmes) agreed with the member for West Kimberley on the question of the limitation of hours being the solution of the difficulty, but closing shops at nine o'clock would not limit hours. Assistants could be made to work any number of hours, even if the shops closed at nine. The member for West Kimberley was

simply looking for trouble, because he had not had the opportunity of pressing his motion of no-confidence, and was taking advantage of every opportunity given to him. If we did not accept the suggestion of the Upper House, there was a chance of losing the Bill altogether, and the member for West Kimberley would attain the end he had in view.

MR. FIGOTT: The bulk of employees in shops were women and young girls who were employed late on Saturday night. In 99 cases out of 100 they did not get home before midnight.

MR. HIGHAM: That statement was exaggerated.

MR. FIGOTT: If shops were closed at ten o'clock, at what time would the assistants get out of the shops?

MR. PURKISS: Immediately.

MR. HIGHAM: Within ten minutes.

MR. FIGOTT had seen assistants coming out an hour afterwards. Those who lived in the suburbs and missed trains often had to wait three-quarters of an hour. The poorer classes might suffer, but no others would suffer. Yet no complaints had been heard from the poorer classes as to the inconvenience of closing shops at nine o'clock on Saturday night. The shopkeepers would sell their goods just the same whether their shops closed at nine or ten o'clock on Saturday night, because people must buy the goods on that day or some other day. He would prefer to see all kinds of shops closed not later than nine o'clock on Saturday night, and hotels also. It was not reasonable to keep shop assistants working not only till the closing hour but long afterwards.

MR. TAYLOR: After hearing the testimony of the member for Greenough (Mr. Stone), who said that when the early closing system was introduced he, as a storekeeper, opposed it strenuously, but having tried it and experienced its benefits he would not dream of going back to the old system, that testimony should be decisive for this House, being the evidence of a practical storekeeper who understood the question. The opposition to the nine o'clock closing was very small, and in the circumstances he would support the clause for closing at nine o'clock on Saturdays.

MR. HIGHAM: Members should consider what would be the effect of

insisting on this amendment and opposing the wish of the Council in regard to it; for if the Bill were lost, the shop assistants would be in a worse position than before. The shopkeepers had objected strenuously and in large numbers to the proposed closing at nine o'clock, because the business done on Saturday nights was with the working class, who would be put to great inconvenience by not being able to do their shopping up to ten o'clock. A considerable portion of the trade of the working class was done on the credit system; the traders relied on getting their weekly payment on Saturday night, and if they did not get it then that money would be diverted to other uses. The amendment should not be insisted on.

THE PREMIER: The only point we had to consider was the position in which we found ourselves. If we insisted on our amendment the Bill would go back to the Council, and the Council would have to agree to nine o'clock closing on Saturday or the Bill would be dropped. [MR. HASTIE and MR. TAYLOR: The Council would agree to it.] He had no hesitation in saying the Council would not. Was it advisable to sacrifice the remainder of the Bill for the purpose of obtaining this amendment? We provided for the Wednesday half-holiday for hairdressers, which was not provided for under the present Act; and also for hours of closing to apply to classes of shops which at present could keep open all night. We also farther restricted the hours of labour during which women or young girls could be employed, reducing the greatest number of hours in any day from 12 to 10½, and the total number of hours of labour in a week from 53 to 52. We also provided for the limitation of the hours of labour of a certain class not dealt with by existing legislation.

MR. TAYLOR: The present position was forced on us by the Government.

THE PREMIER: The Government had not done in the Upper House what they had done here. He had good reason for believing that a very substantial majority in the Council was opposed to this amendment.

MR. STONE: For over 40 years he had been connected with Geraldton, and he did not know anybody who had gone

from storekeeping to farming in that district; so the member for Fremantle was under a mistake. Before the early closing came into operation some stores kept open till eleven or twelve o'clock at night. If the people had to get supplies before nine o'clock they would do so. As to Fremantle, it would be an injustice to insist on shops being kept open till ten. His experience of many people there was that on Saturdays they were too drunk as a rule to do their shopping.

MR. PURKISS: The Council on two occasions stood firm for ten o'clock. Under these circumstances there was not the slightest chance of the Upper Chamber climbing down and going back to nine o'clock.

MR. TAYLOR: The Assembly agreed almost unanimously that nine o'clock should be the closing hour. The Premier knew that, and did not divide the Committee; but the representative of the Government in another place moved that the Assembly's amendment should not be agreed to; and now we had the Premier holding out as a threat—[The PREMIER: There was no desire to hold out a threat, for he wanted the Bill]—that if we did not accept the Bill without the amendment, we must lose the measure. He (Mr. Taylor) had no desire to lose the Bill, but the Government having been defeated here, were not justified in going to another place and lobbying there—[The PREMIER: Who lobbied?]—to oppose the legislation of this Chamber, with the object of the Bill coming back to us and our being told that if we insisted on the amendment we should lose the Bill. That was the position forced upon us by the Government. The Upper House would not insist upon the amendment if the Government had not taken up the attitude they did take up. There was no desire to lose the Bill, but it was better to lose Bills than to accept amendments which wrecked democratic measures. Amendments came down from another place which practically nullified the liberality of measures. The Arbitration Bill was practically killed by the amendments of another place to which this House submitted in tame silence. We must expect opposition from the Upper Chamber when we went in for democratic measures, but the House should reject amendments which wrecked Bills, for the

country would then insist on wrecking the other place.

MR. FERGUSON: The clause passed by the Assembly was a good one. While having no sympathy with the sentiments just laid down by the member for Mt. Margaret, he would oppose the motion of the Premier. The Government were trying to get us not to insist on the clause because we might lose the Bill. He (Mr. Ferguson) would vote to insist on the clause, and would run the risk of losing the Bill.

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

Ayes	13
Noes	11

Majority for 2

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burgess	Mr. Atkins
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Holman
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Phillips
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Pigott
Mr. Holmes	Mr. Stone
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Taylor
Mr. James	Mr. Telverton
Mr. Purkiss	Mr. Jacoby (Teller).
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Higham (Teller).	

Question thus passed, and the Assembly's amendment not insisted on.

No. 3 (consequential)—Add the following new clause:—Sections 4, 5, and 9, and Schedule 2 of the principal Act are amended by substituting the word "nine" for the word "ten" whenever appearing in the said sections and schedules.

On motion by the PREMIER, the Assembly's consequential amendment not insisted on.

No. 4—Add the following new Clause:—“The principal Act and this Act shall apply to the several Municipalities and Road Boards Districts following:—The Municipalities of Midland Junction, Guildford, Victoria Park, Perth, North Perth, South Perth, Subiaco, Leederville, Claremont, Fremantle, East Fremantle, and North Fremantle, and the Road Board Districts of Cottesloe, Peppermint Grove, Buckland Hill, Claremont, Bayswater, Belmont, Perth, and Fremantle. Each such Municipality and Road Board District shall be deemed a district for the purposes of the said Act.”

THE PREMIER: The ratepayers of suburban districts should vote for the

application of the Act to the whole of the metropolitan area. He (the Premier) supported the application of the Act to the whole of the metropolitan area when it was decided to close the shops at nine o'clock, but now that matter was dealt with he did not care one way or the other. In the first Act the metropolitan area was defined, but in the second Act the application of it was made to depend upon local option.

MR. DAGLISH: No metropolitan area was ever defined.

THE PREMIER: To the best of his recollection the first Act was applied all round the metropolitan area. Under the amending Act we simply dealt with districts which desired by local option to have the Act applied. He did not wish to identify himself with the matter one way or the other. Perhaps another member would move in the matter.

MR. DAGLISH moved—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

The principle of local option was held to be good in many instances, and it should apply to all districts. The proposals with regard to restricting hours did not sufficiently cover shops run by foreigners, but in his district there were only two shops run by foreigners, so that the district would not profit by being exempted from the Act as regarded the foreign element.

MR. STONE: It would be very unjust to the city if the Act were not made to apply to the whole of the metropolitan area. If the city shops had to close earlier than the suburban shops, the suburban shopkeepers would have an undue and undesirable advantage over the city shopkeepers.

MR. TAYLOR: The Act should apply to the whole of the metropolitan area. No exception should be made of Subiaco.

MR. DAGLISH: It was desired to make the Act apply to Subiaco, if the people desired it.

MR. TAYLOR: The member for Subiaco last session, on a catch vote, was able to exempt Subiaco from the operation of the Act; and by the merest fluke the hon. member had arrived in the Chamber during the previous debate to oppose this clause going through Committee. Subiaco should be placed on the

same footing as any other metropolitan suburb.

MR. HOLMES: It was not fair that a shopkeeper on one side of a boundary street should be able to keep open late, while a shopkeeper on the other side of the boundary street (being within Perth) must close early. All shopkeepers should be treated alike who shared in the same trade, and this applied to Subiaco and other suburbs.

MR. HASTIE: The only reason given by the Council for disagreeing with the new clause was that it would be wise to proclaim the different districts through the Governor-in-Council. He agreed that it would be better to have vexed questions of this kind settled in that way. There should not be special privileges for shopkeepers in Subiaco as compared with shopkeepers in Perth or other suburbs. Early closing did not hurt any district so far as it had been tried; and if early closing were applied to Subiaco the same as to Perth no harm would be done. There was a risk that the other House might throw out the Bill if we insisted on this clause being retained; but the risk was not great, and we should try it.

MR. HIGHAM: It had been decided as a compromise that early closing should apply to the whole of the metropolitan area, the suburban shopkeepers being thus brought under the same law as the Perth or Fremantle shopkeepers. The Premier now favoured local option in regard to early closing; but where the competition among shopkeepers would be unfair as between certain suburbs and the city, a question like that could not well be settled by local option.

MR. DAGLISH: There was some misunderstanding as to the argument that his amendment would cause unfair competition between suburban shops and city shops. The true position was that the suburban shopkeepers were only trying to retain their own trade; therefore they were not trying to take any part of the trade that properly belonged to Perth, but to retain that which belonged to their particular suburb. City shopkeepers on the other hand were constantly striving to attract suburban trade from the suburban shops; and this showed the necessity for local option, so that people in each suburb might deter-

mine for themselves whether they wanted early closing or not. He was in favour of local option on all questions, and he objected to centralisation in shopkeeping as in other things. The principle of local option had prevailed on the early closing question ever since this kind of legislation was introduced in the State, and he was only pleading for the continuance of that which had existed all along. The interests of a shopkeeper and his one assistant in a suburb were identical; so there was no trouble to be expected in that direction, and that was the usual position of a suburban shopkeeper where assistants were employed at all. Previously he had tried to bring carters under the early-closing legislation, but this House then decided strongly against his proposal; yet that should be one of the beneficent effects of early closing. The whole principle was wrong. The principle which any man who wanted to help the assistants would advocate was that of a limited week for shop assistants, and if a shopkeeper chose to keep open at his own risk and serve by his own labour, the community was not in any way injured thereby.

Question negatived, and the Assembly's amendment insisted on.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

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

LANDS DEPARTMENT (Hon. J. M. Hopkins).

Vote—*Lands and Surveys*, £108,420 16s. 8d.; general discussion continued :

MR. JACOBY joined with the Minister in congratulating the country on the very marked progress made recently in connection with land settlement. There was nothing to express but general satisfaction that at last the suitability of our land for agricultural settlement had become recognised throughout Australia; and he hoped that, through the endeavours which he believed the Government proposed to make, we would be able to advertise these lands and make them

known in other parts of the world. He had intended to make a few remarks on the general administration of the department, but as that matter had already been largely threshed out and would again be dealt with in the course of a day or two, he did not think it necessary to go over ground which would be very adequately prospected then; but he trusted that the efforts made by the Minister in the matter of advertising in the Eastern States would be continued, because the hon. gentleman must be fully satisfied that the money spent in that direction up to the present had been amply justified, and that a considerable increase of that amount would meet with good results. He believed that at the present time a large number of people belonging to the farming community were leaving Australia to go to South Africa. That was a great pity, especially in view of the fact that this State could offer far greater facilities to those people than South Africa. Although we devoted a tremendous amount of attention to the development of our cereal growing country, he hardly thought sufficient attention had been given in the direction of exploiting what was really the greatest asset in our land, and what he thought in time would become the most important, the vine and fruit industry. At present we were advertising for applications throughout the world, he believed, for a gentleman to take charge of our Agricultural Department. He hoped that when the time came to consider those applications, whoever made the appointment would take into consideration the vast possibilities we had in connection with the fruit growing of this State, and see that we got a man not only capable of helping along the ordinary agricultural pursuits, but also of assisting to keep in good lines, as far as the Government could do, the development of our fruit industry. He doubted if any man could be obtained at present as a director of agriculture who could teach the leading farmers of this State anything new in their own business. The usual business principles which governed ordinary agriculture were fairly well known, and did not present any great difficulty; but fruit growing bristled with problems in every direction, and any man who had to take up the study and become fully competent

to take charge of a department to develop fruit growing must necessarily go through all the forms in connection with ordinary farming. The first thing was that he must be a good practical farmer, and in addition to that he had to take up several branches of scientific study to permit him to direct horticultural instruction. One wished to impress this upon the Minister, because he was half afraid that too much attention would be given to a purely agricultural man, who might be inclined to neglect the fruit growing department. It might be urged that we already had in connection with our Agricultural Department a man sufficiently capable in that direction, and therefore there was no need to import a man who had special knowledge of fruit growing; but he thought there was pressing need for more attention to be given to these matters, and in a large number of directions the work of the department might be of a more practical nature in relation to horticulture than had been the practice in the past. Our position as regarded soil, climate, and more particularly our situation on the continent would give us the opportunity of having the first and biggest sale in that great oversea market which was now waiting for the fruit-growers of Australia, and which had been so largely availed of by the Tasmanian people. It would, in his opinion, be difficult to over-estimate the amount of ground at present available in this State capable of growing fruit suitable for export, and we might safely say there was room in the old country and the Continent for millions of cases of fruit from Australia, big markets waiting for 20 or 30 times more fruit than was being sent away at present. Our position was nearer the markets than was that of the other States; our fruit would be the last parcel of fruit to go into the steamer and the first to come out; and we should have several days' less transit than those in any other part of Australia. These things would give us absolutely the cream of the market and allow us to get the very best prices. During the last season Australian shippers had an opportunity of trying portions of the Continent as far as the fruit trade was concerned, and it was very satisfactory to notice that an opening was being made, particularly in Germany, where

we were informed there was a possibility for a very large trade to be done. There was a tremendous amount of work necessary to help along the fruit growers in this State, and one of the most important items for assisting that industry, which had been adopted in every place where fruit growing had been taken up by the Government and considered an important natural product, was the establishment of an experimental orchard. We had, he believed, a suitable place—though he was not able to express a personal opinion about it as he had never visited it—in the Whitby estate, purchased by the Government recently for a lunatic asylum, and which would now have to be abandoned for that purpose. If we had the opportunity of establishing an experimental orchard, we should be in a position to help not only those people already engaged in fruit growing, but to afford enormous assistance to new men who, if we gave sufficient encouragement, would come still more rapidly than at present to start fruit growing here. He trusted some progress had been made in view of the fact that a resolution was carried in the Assembly some time ago in favour of the establishment of this orchard.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS was glad to hear the suggestion of the hon. member, and was glad to see the hon. member directing his attention to the department. It was a pleasant change.

MR. JACOBY: The Minister was responsible for the trend of the discussion. If any one product was going to help the State to show up largely as an exporter it was fruit. The Minister would be astounded at the quantity of fruit tree planting that had been going on, and it would not be long before we entered the list as fruit exporters. Experiments had been successfully made for years past in exporting small quantities of fruit carried as ordinary cargo. One shipment reached Frankfort-on-Maine, in the middle of Germany, in excellent condition, and the market price was more than one shilling each for the apples. This showed that the fruit grown in the State was suitable for export, and that it would stand the voyage to Europe. There was nothing to prevent our sharing in the trade that now practically kept Tasmania going, and we would be in a better position with regard to prices.

MR. MORAN : There was a good market in Western Australia.

MR. JACOBY : It would not be long before that trade was overcome. In connection with the wine industry, unless the matter was grappled with earnestly the position of wine growers in this State was likely to become serious at an early date. There was a difficulty in organising the growers into a compact body in order to meet the competition likely to come upon them; but a good deal had been done, and if the Government announced that they were in favour of guaranteeing the capital on central cellars they would be likely to get offers. It was understood the Government favoured such a scheme, which was the best way to meet the competition of the other States. The Minister would probably be approached before long in regard to the matter. One would like to know what steps were being taken with the object of securing the parasite of the fruit fly from South America. It would be best to send Mr. Compere to that continent to get the parasite. The fruit-growers owed a great debt of gratitude to that gentleman for the work he had done. The cost of that officer's journeys to the Eastern States bore very favourable comparison to the cost of the trips of the ornamental officers of the State to Melbourne, which generally took place just about Cup time. One took note of the fact that one officer of the State could do these trips at so little cost. It was the intention of the Minister to look into the question of clearing land for new settlers. Was anything to be done in that direction? On some of the estates the Government contemplated purchasing in heavily timbered country, more or less suitable for fruit growing, a satisfactory scheme could be evolved at no great expense. Ringing was not entirely satisfactory, because in a few years the suckers and seeds brought along another growth. In the Coolgardie Water Area Reserve this had taken place, and the vandalism that had been done by destroying a large amount of good timber had been of no advantage. In Canada much was done in the matter of clearing land by the State at no cost to the State ultimately, because the whole of the cost was paid by the settler. The scheme worked satisfactorily there by settling small men who

went in for intense cultivation in timbered country. No doubt while such a large demand for the lands of this State continued the time was not opportune for entering into any scheme, but a scheme would have to be taken in hand at an early date. In spite of the faults of the Minister, the Lands Department did not suffer from the infusion of a little new blood. In some directions the present Minister for Lands had done considerable good. It was a pity that he was so often away flirting with constituencies, and neglecting matters in the department such as the rabbit question. However, while members were ready and eager to condemn the Minister for anything he did wrong, agricultural members were in a position to appreciate his good work, and they could congratulate him on turning from an unflinching opponent of the agricultural industry to an unflinching defender of it. At the present time a considerable number of people from the goldfields were settling on the lands. They were the best men we could possibly get and the finest stamp of settlers. He hoped everything would be done to encourage them.

MR. MORAN at this stage protested against the extraordinary course of proceeding with the Estimates when a no-confidence motion was hanging over the heads of the Government. The Notice Paper was full of legislation which could be reconsidered before coming law, but once the Estimates were passed they were passed for good. He emphatically protested against a single item being passed whilst a motion of no-confidence was pending. There was no precedent for it. The granting of money was the spending of it.

THE PREMIER : An Appropriation Bill had first to be passed.

MR. MORAN : We should report progress on the Estimates, and go on with the other business on the Notice Paper until a decision one way or the other had been arrived at on the motion of no-confidence.

MR. THOMAS : Would the Minister for Lands officially lay on the table the papers we had heard so much about? Last Thursday he (Mr. Thomas) protested against the action of the Government in the dismissal of a man whom he considered to have been unwarrantably

dismissed, and he then asked that the papers should be laid on the table. He understood the Minister had promised to lay them on the table. It was not enough to ask him to go through a bundle of papers, though he had since spent half a day on them. The papers ought to have been available to every member, and for that purpose should have been laid on the table officially as public documents. In asking him to undertake this inquiry as a private member, did the Minister really recognise his responsibility? The onus of making the inquiry should not be thrown on any private member; for if every other member in the House were to give as much time to these papers as he had given, half a day each, a fortnight would be required to enable members to inform themselves sufficiently to give a right vote on the question. He asked the Premier now whether an inquiry would be granted or not. The member for West Perth had given notice of a motion for inquiry in regard to the Stock Department; the member for Mt. Magnet had made serious charges in regard to the dismissal of the late Chief Inspector of Stock; he (Mr. Thomas) had made serious and precise charges against the administration of the Rabbit Department, particularly in regard to the dismissal of Inspector White. Would not the Government consent to have a select committee for inquiring into these matters? The Minister had taken the papers away for five days, and on returning he handed to him (Mr. Thomas) a bundle, saying "You can look through them." Was that the way to meet direct charges made against the department? Would the Premier now consent to the appointment of a select committee?

THE PREMIER: The answer to that question was very simple. The Government were here to run the country, and did not propose to have it run by select committees. He indorsed the actions of the Minister for Lands; and after the notice given by the leader of the Opposition this afternoon, if it was found that the House had lost confidence in the present Government, the leader of the Opposition would have his opportunity to come over to these benches and take charge of affairs.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member (Mr. Thomas) had

asked for any one of the files of the department, that file would have been willingly placed at his disposal, or any number of files that he wanted.

MR. THOMAS: The papers should be laid on the table, to be at the public disposal.

THE MINISTER: If the hon. member would formulate a list of the papers he desired, they would be laid on the table to-morrow.

MR. THOMAS said he wanted the lot.

THE MINISTER: That was a frivolous request. He (the Minister) could not undertake to cart into the House all the papers of all the departments that were under his direction. The hon. member might have all the papers he wanted if he would specify them. As to having kept papers five days, he (the Minister) was running a large department, working under heavy pressure, doing 50 per cent. more work than had been done before in the history of the State; and with that pressure there arose countless important questions and important problems on which he was called to give decisions and rulings, and he did not pretend to be able to work more than 16 to 18 hours a day, as he had been doing from the time he undertook this office. At length he found that it made no difference; that no matter what efforts a Minister might make, he got precious little credit for them. A few words spoken by the member for the Swan in connection with these estimates were the first words of encouragement he had received from the Opposition side of the House; still he believed the opinion of the country was that he as Minister for Lands had endeavoured to do his duty. As for the papers, all papers that were asked for would be laid on the table to-morrow.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members who desire papers should give notice in proper order of the papers they required.

THE MINISTER: After the hon. member (Mr. Thomas) had made certain statements or charges, he (the Minister) handed a *précis* of those statements to the Director of Agriculture and asked him to go through the files. An inquiry such as that asked for would apply not to Inspector White only but to the whole Rabbit Department, and that inquiry would occupy a fortnight at least. He suggested that any criticisms which

members had to offer should be at least fair. As to many of the statements made, he did not think it worth while to answer them at this stage. As to the inquiry which he had held into charges made against the Stock Department, if members of this House had reason to be dissatisfied with the verdicts arrived at, they would, when the papers were laid on the table, have taken the action which some of them were taking now. They left that question and went to the Rabbit Department; from that they went to something else, and kept shifting their ground.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.
At 7:30, Chair resumed.

THE CHAIRMAN: In this discussion he had given a great deal of latitude, which was quite unusual. In regard to a general discussion on any portion of the Estimates, the custom of Parliament was that members should endeavour to speak entirely generally, and not on any specific item, and if possible should speak only once. It had always been looked upon as a second-reading debate, and members were not strictly in order in fixing on certain items which would come up for individual discussion farther on, when items were dealt with. In Committee he could not rule a member out of order who spoke a second time; but he wished to call attention to the fact that the ordinary custom of Parliament had established a rule, which in his opinion it was wise to observe generally in relation to all the discussions.

MR. THOMAS: Presumably the remarks of the Chairman pointedly referred to the discussion on rabbits, which had occupied considerable attention; but last Thursday the question was asked whether the subject of rabbits should be threshed out in the main upon the general debate, or whether we should wait until the other items had been passed and we came to the rabbit vote. It was thought by members of the Committee, including the Government, that in view of the declared feeling of the Committee—it was the Minister for Lands who took the matter in hand at the time—it would be better that the rabbit business should be threshed out upon the general question of rabbits, but that the

consideration of details as regarded salaries or anything which would naturally come up on items in the rabbit vote should be deferred till then. So far as he was concerned, the part he had taken had been entirely at the request of the Committee and of the Government, in the first instance, that this matter should be threshed out once and for all in the general discussion. Personally, he would as soon have waited until we came to the item of rabbits. While agreeing with the Chairman's ruling, he hoped that if necessity arose on any question, every member would be able to exercise the privilege of speaking more than once.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members were appealed to to conduct the debate in a more speedy manner.

MR. THOMAS still desired to speak to the general question.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member had sat down, and had already spoken to it half a dozen times.

MR. THOMAS: Was he out of order in speaking to the general question again?

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member did not choose to conform to the ordinary customs of Parliament, there was no power to rule him out of order; but his better judgment was appealed to.

MR. THOMAS: It was said that if papers were desired to be laid on the table, there was a method of getting them. But at this late stage of the session Government business took precedence, and if he gave notice of motion that certain papers be laid on the table, it would rest entirely with the Ministry whether the motion came up for discussion or not. Seeing that on Thursday last the question of rabbits was likely to take a prominent part in the debate, he wrote a note to the Minister for Lands saying the question would come up and that he would be glad if the Minister would bring the papers to the House. The Minister did so, and probably he would in any case have brought them down for his own satisfaction. One understood during the debate that the papers would be publicly laid on the table.

MR. ATKINS: The question of draining the South-Western District was a very important matter, and the Minister for Lands should devote attention and

money on land partially drained or not drained at all, to get it properly drained, so as to show people who wanted land that they could take it up in that district, and others who already occupied land that they could utilise it better than now. He considered that the owners of land should assist in the cost of the work. A lot of country between Jarrahdale and Bunbury badly wanted proper draining. It was a big asset of the State now lying partly dormant because of insufficient drainage. By being properly drained it would be suitable for close settlement and dairying.

MR. WALLACE: The Minister for Lands emphasised the fact that in his opinion members who took action with regard to the Stock Department and the Rabbit Department were not prompted by a desire to deal with the question generally, but merely took action for the purpose of attacking the Minister, who particularly referred to a file laid on the table at his (Mr. Wallace's) request, and said that because no action was afterwards taken, members merely asked for papers for the sake of asking for them. If the Minister would look for a moment at a memo. he (Mr. Wallace) had in his book, the Minister would see that he (Mr. Wallace) had been through the files, and probably if the Minister wanted any information about the files he could obtain it from him. However, it was a big matter for a layman to go through these files, and it almost required a lawyer to make a brief out of them; but he (Mr. Wallace) had made out a brief for himself. He had not given notice of motion, because by the time he got his notes out the Premier announced that Government business would take precedence for the remainder of the session, and because it was the custom to keep motions on the Notice Paper so far down that they could not be reached. He therefore took the opportunity, as others did, in the general debate of referring to many matters in connection with the Lands Department. Credit was given where he thought it was due to the Minister, and he said that when we came to the item of the Stock Department he would have more to say on the matter. When we came to that item he would deal with it and that only, if the Minister would let him alone, for he

did not desire to occupy the time of the House with other matters. The Minister's reference to members should not have been so general, and although it referred to him (Mr. Wallace), his action during the debate should not have called down the Minister's wrath. He dealt with the matter in which he was strongly interested, and had occasion to remark on actions of the Minister which had since been found out to be errors. Apparently he touched on the Minister's toes.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Credit was given to the hon. member for the time he devoted to the files.

MR. WALLACE: The Minister's memory would be refreshed as to the contents of these files when we came to the item of the Stock Department. There was no intention of harassing the Minister; he only sought justice for those to whom he considered the Minister had been unjust.

MR. CONNOR on the previous night in remarks on the inquiry into the Stock Department he stated that if he had known it was to be such a hole-and-corner inquiry he would not have given evidence, and that he had remarked at the time that there should have been a reporter there and that the Press should have been admitted. The Minister at that inquiry remarked, "Would it not be better if the evidence given by the witnesses here should be signed by them?" He (Mr. Connor) said he thought it would. The Minister said "Will you sign?" He (Mr. Connor) said "Yes; I will sign." The Minister now flatly denied that what he (Mr. Connor) said was true, and claimed that the evidence was signed by everyone who gave evidence before him. He (Mr. Connor) had taken the trouble of going through the files during the day, and discovered that the type-written copies of the evidence were signed, but that in the case of the Minister's manuscript notes the first witness had not signed, while the second witness signed on the first page only, evidently done days after he (Mr. Connor) signed. No witness signed that evidence before he (Mr. Connor) signed his, though two witnesses preceded him. The Minister denied that statement last night, but let him examine the file now. The evidence of Mr. Morton Craig was not signed,

nor the evidence of Mr. Weir, when he (Mr. Connor) signed; and there would have been no evidence signed had not he objected. Did the Premier intend to flout all constitutional practice by proceeding with the Estimates when a no-confidence motion was tabled? In the past the Premier was highly respected for his chivalrous instincts and for not shirking responsibility on matters involving honour and high principle; but he would shirk such responsibility now if he did not report progress and let the country decide by its representatives whether it had confidence in the Government. For this there was ample constitutional precedent, and no precedent for the course proposed by the Premier. He had not only led the House but led members who did not believe in his principles, and who knew that the administration was rotten. On the no-confidence motion the finances of the country would be dealt with; and it was indecent for Parliament to do any other business until that motion was decided. The young and rather green member for Hannans (Mr. Bath) last night lectured the Opposition for bringing before the Committee "things of no moment," such as the disorganisation of the Stock and Rabbit Departments, and the dismissal of public servants, some of whom had been in the State nearly 30 years, by a Minister whose arrival was comparatively recent, and who, though in some respects estimable, had no justification for his action. The boy politician (Mr. Bath) should have some political decency, and not lecture people who knew better than he. [MR. BATH: Query?] The Minister for Lands told us to-night how hard he worked. Members knew that; but objected not so much to the work he did as to the work he should have left undone. Personally and out of friendship he (Mr. Connor) had advised the Minister not to conduct the inquiry into the Stock Department. The Minister might have thought the advice gratuitous, but surely now regretted not having taken it. He (Mr. Connor) appealed to the Premier. It was but fair, on a direct motion of no-confidence, that the Premier should move that progress be reported.

THE PREMIER: A new Government, if appointed, must get on with the Estimates.

MR. MORAN: Certainly the no-confidence motion ought to have been tabled for to-morrow.

MR. CONNOR: There was plenty of other work without rushing through the Estimates.

THE PREMIER: This was not rushing. We might get on with the items, and make some progress. We could not finish the Estimates prior to Tuesday. Our duty was to proceed as far as possible with the work of the country.

MR. JACOBY: The Opposition were attacking the administration of the Government.

THE PREMIER: This or the new Government must have the Estimates passed. The bulk of the Estimates were for the ordinary work of the departments; and the attack would be upon the administration. The new Government, if appointed, would still want the money to enable administration to be carried on; and whether the motion succeeded or failed, the Estimates must pass.

MR. THOMAS: Could the Premier quote a precedent for his action?

THE PREMIER: There was no obligation to quote a precedent. In a State like this, with a small House of 50 members, we ought to follow a common-sense course—push on as far as we could with the country's business; and that we could do without prejudicing the position of the new Government. Members' objections to this course would be reasonable if it were proposed to pass an Appropriation Bill before Tuesday, and thus take the Estimates out of the hands of members; but there was no such intention; consequently the objections had no weight.

MR. CONNOR: Would the Premier, if in Opposition, agree to go on with the Estimates in these circumstances?

THE PREMIER: Yes. When in Opposition he had never taken a party view.

MR. JACOBY: The course proposed by the Government was most awkward. In discussing some of these items in the Estimates we should have to touch on matters which must be again discussed on the no-confidence motion.

THE PREMIER: Then discuss them generally on that motion.

MR. JACOBY: No. We were logically bound, before passing any item, to state our objections to it. The Premier asked

members to pass items to which they objected, and to discuss them afterwards. Instead of saving time this would duplicate the debate.

THE PREMIER: There would be no duplication if members were anxious to get on with business.

MR. JACOBY: When a no-confidence motion was tabled the custom was to adjourn the House—a custom sanctioned by long usage, based on good grounds. In spite of such a motion being tabled, the Government asked Opposition members to express confidence by giving Ministers control of money.

THE PREMIER: No. The Appropriation Act would do that.

MR. JACOBY: The constitutional practice had been adopted after long trial, and could not safely be departed from. If the object of the Premier was to push forward work, how could that be done by duplicating the debate, for that was what would be the result of going on to-night?

MR. MORAN: It was always understood that the general discussion took place on the first item in the estimates of a department, members discussing the administration of that department. He had yet to learn that members could not speak as often as they liked on the various departments.

THE CHAIRMAN: The ordinary custom was not to allow a general discussion on each department, but it had been mutually agreed between the Premier and the leader of the Opposition that there should be a general discussion on this occasion.

MR. MORAN said he was prepared to discuss the item "Minister for Lands."

THE PREMIER: There was no vote for the Minister.

MR. MORAN: In regard to the notice of motion of no-confidence, it was rather injudicious to give the notice so far ahead, because no doubt the leader of the Opposition was ready with his speech, and knew on what grounds he intended to attack the Government. That attack should be made on Thursday; then after the speech of the leader of the Opposition, the Government would be entitled to an adjournment. Could not the leader of the Opposition bring on the discussion of his motion to-morrow? It was rather extraordinary to go on with the estimates which gave the Government the expendi-

ture of money at a time when the Opposition were waiting in leash to be let loose; for were not the Opposition a well organised band and well led? If it were intended to go on with the general discussion he would have a few words to say about the Stock Department and the Minister for Lands, in reply to remarks made by the Minister the other evening.

MR. PIGOTT: When tabling the motion to-night, he particularly fixed the date for Tuesday next, thinking it would be better for all parties. He concluded that a few days should elapse between the time of tabling the motion and the discussion taking place. From the debate that had already taken place on the Estimates he considered it de-volved on him to table a motion, and he did so on the first opportunity. It could be easily understood there might be some farther information which he required that it would be almost impossible to get by to-morrow. He understood that it was the usual practice when a motion of no-confidence was tabled that the leader of the House would adjourn the House; but the Premier had thought fit to vary from the ordinary procedure. When the Premier suggested that we should proceed with the ordinary business, he (Mr. Pigott) appealed not directly to the Premier, but he put it in this way, that if it were the ordinary procedure and not in contravention of the Standing Orders he had no objection to work being proceeded with. The Deputy Speaker did not give any information on the point, and he (Mr. Pigott) concluded that the Deputy Speaker was of opinion the procedure was not out of the ordinary course. That was the position as far as he was concerned, and it remained for the Premier to go on with the Estimates or not.

THE PREMIER: Let us try to do some work.

MR. PIGOTT did not refuse to proceed with the Estimates, because it would not make much difference one way or another except that the farther we proceeded with the Estimates the more justification would be shown for having tabled the motion.

MR. THOMAS: It was his desire to enter a protest against going on with the items of the Lands Department for the reason that a direct motion of censure

had been tabled, which stated that owing to negligent administration the present Government had forfeited the confidence of the House and the country. Nothing could be more definite than a motion of that kind, and we had no right to go on with discussion of the various items before that motion was brought on in the House. He (Mr. Thomas) might have occasion to bring charges against individual Ministers in connection with the administration of their departments. The Premier said these charges could be made generally, but if general charges were made the Premier would ask for specific instances. He (Mr. Thomas) did not want to make charges on the items as they came forward, but he entered his protest, after a no-confidence motion had been tabled, against the Premier's asking members to go on with the Estimates.

THE PREMIER: On the motion of want-of-confidence he would be the only Minister who would speak after the leader of the Opposition had made his charges.

MR. THOMAS: The Premier was laying down the law as to how members should conduct their campaign. Members on both sides of the House would conduct the campaign in the way they thought fit when occasion arose. It was improper to go on with the discussion of the Estimates now. When a motion of this sort was tabled in the House, on October 29, 1901, this was what took place:—

Hon. F. H. Piessé (Williams): I beg to give notice that on Thursday, 31st October, I will move "That the Government does not command the confidence of this House."

The Premier (Hon. G. Leake): I have much pleasure in moving "That the House do now adjourn."

The Speaker: To what day? Better move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn to some date.

Hon. F. H. Piessé: I have given notice for Thursday; but if the Premier wishes for a later date, I am in the hands of the hon. gentleman.

The Premier: No business can be taken until this is disposed of.

The Speaker: Of course, I know that.

The Premier: I move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Thursday next.

Question put and passed.

That was the record of the last occasion when a motion of this sort was tabled in

the House. The motion was tabled for two days ahead, the same as on the present occasion, and the then Premier recognised what was the usual Parliamentary practice in regard to motions of this kind, and moved that the House adjourn.

THE PREMIER: The fact that the House was not adjourned now would furnish members with another argument against the Government.

MR. THOMAS: It was most improper for the Premier to ask members to go on with the Estimates when a direct motion of censure against the Government was pending, and was to come on at not too distant a date. Members should not be asked to consider financial matters on which the Government were to be attacked, for the motion said that action was taken in consequence of the lack of administration by the Premier and Ministers.

MR. BUTCHER: It had been his intention to discuss these Estimates generally, but since the leader of the Opposition had seen fit to table a motion of want-of-confidence it would be unreasonable to expect members to discuss the question.

THE PREMIER: The discussion was not as to whether progress should be reported. We were dealing with the Lands Estimates.

MR. MORAN: Move to report progress.

THE PREMIER: On a point of order, the subject before the House was not as to whether the debate should be adjourned or whether progress should be reported, but the general discussion on the Lands Department.

MR. BUTCHER: This question had been discussed generally by every member who had yet spoken, but now the Premier wished to take exception to members speaking generally. He (Mr. Butcher) was as much in order as other members who had spoken.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member said that he intended to discuss the Estimates generally, but that now he could not do so.

MR. BUTCHER: It was very unusual for the Premier to insist on members going on with the Estimates when a no-confidence motion was tabled. If the course taken was not unconstitutional, it was unusual, therefore he declined to discuss the matter farther.

MR. STONE: It was to be regretted that trouble had arisen over the dismissal of the inspector, for this officer was very energetic and useful. There had been a little haste on both sides, but sufficient information had not been given by the Minister about the inspector.

THE CHAIRMAN: What inspector did the member refer to?

MR. STONE: Inspector White.

THE CHAIRMAN: That could be discussed under the Rabbit Department estimate. The Committee were dealing with the vote for Lands and Surveys.

MR. MORAN: Was the general discussion over?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Hon. members must confine themselves to the vote for Lands and Surveys.

Item—Under Secretary for Lands, £650:

MR. PIGOTT: The vote last year was £600. There was apparently an increase, and he wished to know whether, if so, there would be a consequential amendment of the Estimates. Until the motion to which he referred just now was disposed of, he absolutely refused to speak on any other item in connection with this matter. As to this item, however, he would like to know whether the increase was actual or apparent.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This officer had been in the service 30 years, and had drawn a salary of £600 a year. The Government had recommended an increase of £50. The Under Secretary for Lands in New South Wales drew a salary of £1,000 per annum; in Queensland, £700; in South Australia, £550; and in Victoria, £900. It was unnecessary for him to make any special appeal to members or even to point out any of the special qualifications of the gentleman who filled the position of Under Secretary for Lands. Whatever umbrage some members might feel against the Minister for Lands or any members of the Government, or the Government as a whole, all he asked was that they would not let it be visited on the officers of the department. [MEMBER: The officer was an excellent man.] In view of the admissions made by members there was nothing farther he wished to add. He believed the increase met with the views of members.

MR. MORAN: The Government refused a select committee or any inquiry in connection with these matters, and what was aimed at was going to be accomplished in this way. He noticed that members of the direct Opposition benches, and perhaps they were right, had decided, having entered their protest, to discuss no more items. The result would be that the items would be sneaked through, and we should not be able to go back after the vote regarding the want-of-confidence motion had been dealt with. As to Mr. Clifton, he did not think the salary too much.

Item—Chief Clerk, £400:

MR. WALLACE: Seeing that this clerk had been about 24 years in the service, being he thought in the Lands Department the whole time, and that he was called upon to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Mr. Glyde, it seemed to him, even in view of the fact that he had been opposing increases to the higher officers, hard that this officer should receive £25 less than his predecessor.

THE PREMIER: The present occupant of the position was promoted from another position. The salary of £400 a year was fixed as an all-round salary for chief clerks. When the classification came on, that would have to be dealt with. The system applied to this officer the same as to others.

Land Selection Branch:

MR. PIGOTT: Some nine or ten months ago applications for land in the South-Western District were, he had been given to understand, made to the Minister for Lands, and the applications were accepted. These people regarded this as a sufficient title to induce them to put in a number of months' work on the land, and to spend a good deal of money. Some eight months after this occurrence they received notice from the Minister that a mistake had occurred, and that the title could not be granted. He did not know whether his information was correct, but he simply wished the Minister to enlighten him on the point.

THE MINISTER: Could the hon. member tell him the person's name?

MR. PIGOTT: No. He understood there was a law case pending on the matter.

THE MINISTER: There was one case, probably that to which the hon. member

referred. At the time the Coolgardie Water Scheme was first thought of a large area of country on the Moore River was reserved as a water catchment. That reserve continued to exist, and a report was handed to him showing that this reserve was highly suitable for the growth of oranges and lemons, and if subdivided judiciously there was no country in the State which would show better results. He thought the matter was brought under his notice originally by the Director of Agriculture. Immediately that report was received by him he (the Minister) ordered that an officer of the department should be sent to make an inspection and classify that country. That was done by, he believed speaking from memory, Mr. Lewis. A man named Bandy applied for one or two homestead farms, and Mr. Liddington, who he understood was manager of a brewery in Perth, also had a holding in the locality, and desired to increase it. There was some error in the Lands Department, due to the pressure of work and the system of plans at one time in vogue having been cancelled and a new system of reserves adopted. He was speaking from memory, and if the hon. member had told him he wished the information, one would have been only too pleased to bring the file. The reserve was cut into two by these plans, and by some error in the department an officer accepted the applications of the Bandy family and they were approved whilst the country was still portion of the reserve. These applications and transfers were in consequence *ultra vires*.

MR. PIGOTT: Had these people worked the land?

THE MINISTER: These people did some work on the land. He said that when this strip of country was being dealt with, which he hoped would take place before long, the claims of these people would be taken into consideration. At the same time he ordered that an officer of the department should again inspect the land with a view to ascertain what improvements, if any, had been effected by these people.

MR. PIGOTT: How long had these people been on the land?

THE MINISTER: That he could not tell. A statement was made that they had done some ringbarking.

MR. MORAN had spoken to the Minister about the matter months ago, and introduced the man to him.

THE MINISTER: Yes; the hon. member introduced Mr. Liddington. He (the Minister) felt strongly on the question, and was fortified in the action he took by the hon. member's remarks. He insisted that the approvals should be absolutely cancelled. The land was a reserve, and the application should never have been granted. The applicants' claims would receive due consideration.

MR. JACOBY: What was the use of our discussing these things if we had to go over them again? The amount paid to the Under Secretary for Lands was not excessive. The Minister had first of all to see that there was efficient administration before he started increasing salaries. Unquestionably the Lands Department was disorganised, as was shown by the instance mentioned by the leader of the Opposition where an application was made for a reserve and granted.

THE MINISTER: And cancelled immediately.

MR. JACOBY: The responsibility must lie on the head of the department. If we increased salaries we took up a peculiar position. First of all we should demand efficiency. Applications had been received, and people had been allowed to come in afterwards and apply for the same land. A case had come under his notice during the day. A man applied for ground, was told he was certain to get it, and started to work on it. Then the man found that the same ground had been applied for previously by another man who would have a better claim. While these things existed we should ask the officers for efficient administration, and then we might increase their salaries.

Item—Chief Land Agent, £740:

MR. WALLACE: This agent was identical with the agent who, according to the evidence of the select committee on the Land Act Amendment Bill, had misled the Salvation Army into taking up land.

MR. BURGESS: Mr. Ranford still said the same thing.

MR. WALLACE: This was the highest position outside the head office. Surely

it was questionable whether this man's services merited an increase. His salary was said to include £150 for forage and travelling allowances. One understood he did not draw more than was actually expended of this allowance, but roughly the officer's salary amounted to £590. However, before the agent should get an increase an inquiry should be made as to whether he was dealing fairly with people settling on the land. In the case of the Salvation Army settlement the sheep had decreased from 3,000 to 500, and the Minister for Lands and the responsible officers smiled and expressed surprise at these people being recommended to take up this land as first-class land. One desired that settlers should be protected against the incapacity of an officer, because settlers were not acquainted with the soil and sought the advice of people capable of giving it. If we had an officer in a responsible position not able to give sound and reliable information, we were doing a great injustice to the people coming here, and in view of the energetic action of the Minister in inducing settlement, consideration should be given to the question as to whether this officer should be allowed to retain his position in the face of this case of the Salvation Army where he gave unfair and ruinous advice to would-be settlers.

MR. BURGESS: The officer thoroughly believed in what he said.

MR. WALLACE: It was given in evidence that the member for Northam, the Surveyor General, and the Manager of the Agricultural Bank, disagreed with the officer's classification. That being the case, it was high time there was an inquiry.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was hard to express any opinion off-hand on the merits of the case. Mr. Ranford was a man whose reputation was known throughout the agricultural districts of the State.

MR. WALLACE: What about the reputation of these other gentlemen?

THE MINISTER desired to tell the House the reasons actuating him in recommending to Cabinet this appointment at a salary which was approved by the committee of Under Secretaries. Mr. Ranford was originally a surveyor in the department and was afterwards an inspector of plans, and subsequently was in

charge of the Katanning office, and was an officer who had done more for land settlement within the limits of the State than all the other officers of the Lands Department put together, which was saying a good deal.

MR. STONE: This was a charge of misrepresentation.

MR. BURGESS: The officer believed in his opinion still.

THE MINISTER: One might attack an individual instance of a recommendation said to have been made by an officer of the department who had been 19 years in the service; but was it reasonable to expect the Minister to stand up in his place in the House and answer the charge without notice? It was not to be expected. The point was simply raised as to whether the officer was to have this increase.

MR. WALLACE: An inquiry was asked for only.

THE MINISTER: Instructions were given to have the papers put on the table. He would be only too happy to make inquiries. At Katanning he saw in Mr. Ranford's house half a dozen selectors camped in the dining room. Where would we find a land officer doing this? Mr. Ranford told these people not to go to the hotel, but to stretch out their rugs and stay in his house. Probably a very large portion of his salary was spent in entertaining people looking for land. One never heard any selector state a reason for being disappointed with the land shown to him by Mr. Ranford. No man was more popular with the residents of any locality than Mr. Ranford was with the people he had settled on the land, and one never heard a single complaint against the officer. People were sent to him daily, and they had nothing but gratification to express for anything he did for them. Mr. Ranford did not limit his work to his office hours, but had frequently worked 16 hours a day, and his office was a credit to the country. Every land office should be on similar lines. Mr. Ranford was therefore asked to break up his home in Katanning and to travel around and reorganise the office work in each district, to check books and plans and to see that the plans were kept up to date. Could we expect him to do that without a small increase in salary? Members would indorse the increase. He (the Minister)

would be only too pleased to inquire into the matter of the Salvation Army.

MR. TAYLOR: Had the select committee examined Mr. Ranford, it would have thrown a different complexion on the ability of that agent. However, the evidence undoubtedly went to prove that Mr. Ranford misled the Army. The then Minister for Lands (Hon. G. Throssell) said that he did not believe Mr. Ranford had done anything wrong, but that he was an enthusiast and had misled the Army. If this officer was an enthusiast, his enthusiasm would blind his judgment.

THE MINISTER: The officer did not classify.

MR. WALLACE: The officer was only a land guide.

MR. TAYLOR: If the officer was a land boomster and could persuade strangers to settle on land where they must starve, was he worth his salary?

THE MINISTER: Was that statement fair, unless there was a case in point?

MR. TAYLOR: There was the case of the Salvation Army. The majority of the select committee were practically afraid to bring Mr. Ranford before them. Possibly that was one reason for the undue haste to pass the private Land Act Amendment Bill. The member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) and he (Mr. Taylor) tried when on the select committee to get Mr. Ranford examined; but in vain. Mr. Ranford was probably identical with the gentleman who some years ago visited the goldfields with a four-in-hand and a divining rod, trying to locate water.

THE MINISTER: And he found it.

MR. TAYLOR: No. Martin Walsh found it. If Mr. Ranford was paid to sell second-class land at a first-class price he was doubtless a valuable officer; but if his duty was to straightforwardly point out to the best of his ability the qualities of the land, the country did not need an officer whose enthusiasm blinded his judgment. Was not Mr. Ranford the officer who went through the Murchison district with a magic lantern and a cart-load of cabbages? What were his duties? Was he a land guide, a land agent, a surveyor, or a land classifier?

MR. BURGESS: Look at what he had done along the Great Southern line.

MR. TAYLOR: The farmers did that. If the hon. member wished to attack anyone for running down the agricultural possibilities of the State, attack the Minister for Lands, who was chairman of the select committee which a few years ago recommended subsidising steamers to import food from abroad because this country could not produce it.

THE MINISTER: That report was very creditable to the State.

MR. TAYLOR: It was one of the best reports ever submitted to Parliament. The Hon. G. Throssell and other witnesses before the recent select committee said that Mr. Ranford had classified the Salvation Army's land; and this was believed until the last witness examined (the Surveyor General), who said the land had been classified by Mr. Thomson.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not discuss the select committee's report.

MR. TAYLOR: The name of the officer must be mentioned; for the items in the Estimates were jumbled up and not numbered, thus affording another proof of the bungling fashion in which the Estimates had been prepared.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Ranford had been in charge of the Katanning office. As stated a few minutes ago, this was the one land office which was a credit to the country; it had settled a large number of persons on the soil; and much of the settlement was undoubtedly due to Mr. Ranford's hard work, goodness of heart, and the kindness and consideration which he showed to people who were practically strangers in a strange land. A glance at the map on the wall would show the settlement along the Great Southern railway; and a considerable portion of that area came under Mr. Ranford's influence. For an increase of £20 a year he was asked to break up his home and undertake the reorganisation of all other land offices in the State, inspecting them to see that they were up to date, and examining their books, not by way of audit but to satisfy himself that they were being methodically and thoroughly kept, and that the selecting public were being provided with proper facilities. In addition, he had new offices to open, as it was intended to establish small land offices in numerous districts where there was a prospect of doing

business. Mr. Ranford, though of course a licensed surveyor, was not a land classifier.

MR. JACOBY: Who were the classifiers?

The MINISTER: Twelve inspectors in the Land Selection Branch.

Item—Surveyor General, £700:

MR. HOLMAN: Had this officer's duties been so largely extended as to warrant an increase of £100?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: In Victoria the Surveyor General received £700 a year, in South Australia £900, in New South Wales £800, and in Queensland the Chief Surveyor received £450, there being no Surveyor General. Mr. Johnston had been in the service for some 20 years, drawing a salary of £600 a year as the head of a very large professional department; and in view of the salaries paid to the Engineer-in-Chief, to the other professional heads of departments in this State, and to the surveyors general elsewhere, the increase was very reasonable. Mr. Johnston might have incurred some hostility because of the arrears of survey; but was it reasonable to conclude that the Surveyor General was responsible for not doing work for which Parliament did not provide funds? Those who knew how Mr. Johnston discharged his duties would doubtless admit that he was entitled to this increase.

Item—Margaret and Yallingup Caves, Grant to Board £1,000:

MR. JACOBY: What had been done with regard to these caves? A similar amount was voted last year.

THE MINISTER: This vote was to pay salaries of rangers and caretakers controlling the caves. Money would be spent in improving the entrances and the general works within the caves and the reserves surrounding them. The matter had been discussed by the Secretary for Lands and the Caves Board, who were of opinion that a smaller amount would not meet the requirements. He (the Minister) drew some attention to this matter last year, and he had done so again before the item appeared on the Estimates.

MR. JACOBY: Had the Minister any figures showing the number of visitors to these caves?

THE MINISTER: There was a return, but he had not the figures at his fingers' ends; he would supply them to the hon. member. Up to this year the caves were in their infancy; but arrangements had been made for extensively advertising the caves, so that people need not travel East for their holidays, but could take an opportunity of going to these caves where there was a good climate, and spend their holiday expenses within the State.

MR. HASTIE: Was any provision made for the Wanneroo Caves, and was this £1,000 to be an annual vote? Last year a sum of £1,000 was voted and £1,200 spent.

THE MINISTER: If the income from the caves was as good as anticipated there would be no occasion to repeat the vote. In New South Wales a splendid revenue was derived from people visiting the caves there. So far as the Yanchep Caves were concerned there was a vote on the Estimates for opening the road, and as soon as an approach to the caves was provided, the question of developing the caves on similar lines to the other caves would be taken into consideration.

Item—Surveys generally, £22,000:

MR. THOMAS: A sum of £14,400 was expended last year on this work. How long was it anticipated before the permanent survey to Esperance would be completed, and what proportion of this vote was to be devoted to that work?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was a railway matter, and did not come within the scope of the Lands Department.

MR. BURGESS: There was an increase of £9,000 on the Survey vote. Was the money to be expended on new surveys?

THE MINISTER: There were special items to cover new surveys. This item was for the ordinary surveys of the State. He had an elaborate return which he referred to in his opening remarks. If the hon. member wished to see the return it would be placed at his disposal. It showed the work which had been done in connection with this vote.

MR. BURGESS: Had any money been expended on the survey of pastoral country so as to afford information in regard to pastoral lands? He had gone to the Lands Office and asked for

information with regard to certain leasehold lands, but could not obtain that information, as it was not available. The people of the country were crying out in regard to the meat supplies, and he hoped the Minister would have surveys made of pastoral land, so that people could take it up and supply stock for the country generally. Good stock routes were required so that the country could be settled. If £10,000 more were spent on this work to give information about pastoral country, good would be done. He would go farther than the energetic Minister had gone and supply information in regard to all the lands of the State, and not only the agricultural lands. If it was desired to settle people on the land, there must be surveys of main routes made so as to enable people to find the land. The Minister should not only push agricultural settlement, but pastoral settlement, so that stock could be raised and brought down to fatten in the South.

MR. STONE: Last year £13,000 was voted for surveys generally; this year £22,000 was asked for, which was very liberal. The total spent last year was £66,964 10s., and it was proposed to spend this year £108,420 16s. 8d., which he thought showed a very reasonable increase. The form of these Estimates was unsatisfactory, there being no guide for a member to pick up items. He regretted the undue haste with which the Chairman passed on to other matters, seeing the complicated way in which the Estimates were laid before members. He did not know why the Chairman acted thus, unless it was due to the possible glory of some future greatness hanging over him.

THE PREMIER: We were dealing with surveys generally. He agreed with the member for York (Mr. Burges) that we could usefully spend a great deal more money than was provided on these Estimates. We wanted an adequate system of surveys, and should have to apply for a large sum for years to come to enable us to make up the arrears of the past. But we could not carry out surveys east, west, north, and south at once. If the hon. member could increase the vote and the Committee would agree, he (the Premier) would be inclined to support him; but the increase here made

was a substantial one, and a sufficient indication of the Government's appreciation of the need of carrying on surveys in the various parts of the State.

MR. THOMAS: Could the Minister give the House any general information as to the progress of stock routes in the district of Eucla, because a lot of money had been spent in boring holes in that direction?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Minister for Works controlled the vote in connection with the stock routes, but he might tell the hon. member that this route had received particular attention at the Minister's hands.

Item—Examination and Survey of route for rabbit-proof fence, £1,500:

MR. THOMAS: Tremendous confusion was caused owing to the items not being numbered, and it being exceedingly difficult to know when one was passing items. Rabbits were advancing at a terrific rate, and they now existed in Queensland in the 18th parallel. If they were in Queensland in the 18th parallel, they might be in the centre of the Northern Territory of South Australia. The matter had been brought seriously to his attention; and he would suggest that if wire netting was not available here a cable should be sent to any part of the world where there was some available, so that proceedings could be taken at once. Now there was still time, and we knew that rabbits were not in the stock country, the Kimberleys East and West, a start should be made to run the fence, say, somewhere about the 18th parallel, bring it a little south of Broome, and run a line from there to the South Australian border up to the north along the boundary between the two countries. A wire rabbit-proof fence would not pay where we were dealing with the number of acres to the sheep instead of the number of sheep to the acre, but it was desirable to preserve the stock country.

THE PREMIER: The Government were alive to the need of taking prompt steps to check the rabbit invasion, and he hoped that at the next sitting they would be able to make a statement to the House.

MR. THOMAS: This afternoon he received information which made the matter more serious than it seemed three

days ago when he was speaking about it.

THE PREMIER: The wisest course was to be well in advance of the rabbits. He proposed to ask that progress be reported at the end of this item, because when we dealt with agriculture we indirectly approached the question of rabbits and stock, to which he understood more direct reference would be made on Tuesday next.

Item—Reward for discovery of road from Derby through Leopold Ranges to Hann River, £300 :

MR. PIGOTT: Why was this put on the Estimates ?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The question arose through a deputation which came from Kimberley, if he remembered aright. He had received several deputations, and the idea was to find a dray route through the ranges on to the new country. The matter was discussed, and ultimately it was determined that a reward should be offered with the object of inducing any settler of that part to discover practically a dray route through the Leopold Ranges which would give access to West Kimberley and the rich pastoral land supposed to exist on the other side of the ranges. That had been advertised in the Press and the *Government Gazette*, and whatever kind of advertising there was in Kimberley had been resorted to. We had had communications from one or two that they were able to find such a route, but so far as his knowledge went no direct application had yet been made for the money.

MR. PIGOTT: What he understood was that it was simply an ordinary stock route; but the Minister said a route over which a dray could go.

THE MINISTER: Yes. They had to take a dray out and bring it back again.

MR. PIGOTT: Cattle had, he was sure, been taken over a route, and he was inclined to think drays could go.

MR. MORAN: A dray had been taken out.

MR. PIGOTT: Though he might alienate some of his supporters, he considered it his duty to bring this matter before the Committee in order that it might be gone into. Apparently this money had not been paid, and a wrong

had been done. The State had gone to great expense in having country surveyed. It had been offered to anyone who would take it at an exceedingly cheap rate, and he heartily agreed that we should throw open the land; especially should we offer inducements to people to take up land in that part of the world. He was inclined to think that the bulk of the land had been already taken up. Instead of offering a reward to anyone to find a road, we might wait until people complained that they could not get to the country. He had not heard of any complaints as yet. The money should be given to the local board to spend on the improvement of the road when it was found. So doing would have a more beneficial effect on the district. The country had been gone over many times and was known, and he was inclined to think wagons had already gone over a road to it. It would be as well to devote the money to the improvement of the road rather than give it to one person.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The conditions were very stringent.

MR. CONNOR: The Minister should tell us something about surveys in Kimberley.

THE MINISTER: That item was passed, but the information would be given.

MR. CONNOR: The Minister had better give the information.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member should not threaten.

MR. CONNOR would threaten that if his question was not answered it would be heard of again. The Premier should not try to bluff the House, for members had a right to ask for information. Members in outside districts should be consulted with reference to works to be done in their districts. As a matter of fact, East Kimberley was being run by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes), who told the Minister what was to be done in the district. An instance in point was the dip outside Wyndham. He (Mr. Connor) knew more about the country than the member for East Fremantle, but was not consulted on the matter, as the member for East Fremantle went to the Minister and told him what to do.

THE MINISTER: The member for East Fremantle was accompanied by th

partner of the member for East Kimberley.

MR. CONNOR: Nothing would have been said about the matter had it not been for the remark of his distinguished and hasty friend, the Premier. The Premier's attitude was not fair, and private members had a right to resent it. On a question of vital importance to a member's district the member should be consulted.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member was consulted on matters.

MR. CONNOR: But not with regard to this question.

THE MINISTER: There was a resolution of the House with regard to this matter.

MR. CONNOR: All these negotiations took place later on.

THE MINISTER: The statement was unfair.

MR. CONNOR: It was true, nevertheless, and truth was sometimes nasty. The member for East Fremantle, who had just come into the House, had fixed up where the dip was to be built at Wyndham.

THE MINISTER: The statement was not fair.

MR. CONNOR: It should not have occurred.

MR. HOLMES: The matter could be explained in a few words.

MR. CONNOR did not want the explanation of the hon. member.

MR. HOLMES: The hon. member should not say behind another member's back what he would not say to his face.

MR. CONNOR would not resort to the tactics for which the hon. member was notorious. He hoped he would never be accused of resorting to them except by somebody who was as irresponsible for statements of that sort as the member for East Fremantle. Hon. members should take to heart the question of interference in other members' constituencies by people who knew nothing about the districts.

MR. HOLMES: The member for East Kimberley had said that any suggestion he made to the Minister for Lands for anything to be done in East Kimberley was good enough to prevent anything being done.

MR. CONNOR: That was very nearly true.

THE MINISTER said he did not think so.

MR. HOLMES: The member for East Fremantle made no secret of the fact that the Minister in power would do nothing for him. He (Mr. Holmes) was interested in East Kimberley and knew its possibilities. It was his duty as a member of Parliament to interest himself in what was going on in East Kimberley as in any other part of the State. He was interested in East Kimberley in connection with the tick question. If there were anything to which the member for East Kimberley could take exception, it was in his (Mr. Holmes's) action in successfully moving that the tick restrictions should be removed. The hon. member did not object to this action, but urged him (Mr. Holmes) to it and undertook to assist him.

MR. CONNOR: Had he urged the hon. member to have a dip constructed at Wyndham?

MR. HOLMES: No.

MR. CONNOR: That was correct.

MR. HOLMES: The hon. member assisted in every way to have a motion carried that provision should be made for dipping cattle at Wyndham. He (Mr. Holmes) naturally took the next step to see that provision was made for the dip. Having ascertained from Messrs. Connor, Doherty, & Durack, Ltd., that the last boat for the year for Wyndham was leaving within a few days, he wired to the Minister for Lands: "Steamer Hocking sails for Wyndham on Monday. If material for cattle dip is to be of any use it must be sent by this vessel, as it is last boat for Wyndham this year." The Minister replied that arrangements would be made. Had it not been for this interference on his part the material for the dip would not have been sent up until next year.

THE PREMIER: That was the hon. member's grievance.

MR. HOLMES: Yes; and the hon. member knew it. The dip would not have been ready for the next season. Because he had sufficient foresight to see that the material would be arranged for—and the member for East Kimberley had not—he was charged with jumping the hon. member's claim. If the hon. member neglected the requirements of East Kimberley, he (Mr. Holmes), as an elector of East Kimberley, had a perfect

right to step in and see that things were done.

MR. CONNOR: The member for East Kimberley admitted that he interfered with business which practically was not his concern, and talked about the dip.

THE CHAIRMAN could not see what this had to do with surveys.

MR. CONNOR: Surely an explanation could be made. If not, he would take the feeling of the House, as he simply desired to say that in a case like this, with the practical knowledge he possessed, he might have been consulted in the matter. The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes) mentioned the location of the dip, which was wrong to start with, being 12 miles out, so that cattle dipped in it would, two days afterwards, have as many ticks as they had before dipping. The hon. member had come to the House with a gentleman from Kimberley, and had two or three interviews on this matter with the Minister. Every private member should resent the Minister's action.

THE MINISTER: On these matters he consulted the Chief Inspector of Stock, who had visited this locality. On all occasions he (the Minister) was glad of the assistance of hon. members, more particularly on matters concerning distant localities. The hon. member knew that he had always been anxious to discuss this subject with members interested, and had done so with the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) and others. The other day he (the Minister) was introduced to Mr. Durack in the Assembly Refreshment-room, and there was a desultory conversation. The item "Surveys in Kimberley" was provided to carry out some topographical surveys to obtain farther information as to the physical features of the country, and to locate the tick boundary between East and West Kimberley. The hon. member (Mr. Connor) would doubtless appreciate this provision.

Item—Opening tracks to agricultural lands, £1,000:

MR. STONE asked for information.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: In this large State patches of good country were repeatedly brought under notice by departmental officers, and often by out-

siders interested in land settlement. This new item was provided to give intending selectors a blazed track with the mileage marked, thus providing a tie-line by which they could locate their lands. Even a road for a pack-horse would do much to open up such portions of the State; and he had in mind half-a-dozen places where good country had been classified, but was lying idle for want of communication, which there was no local governing body to provide.

MR. JACOBY supported the item.

MR. BURGESS: The hon. member would not get any of the money. He had had too much already.

MR. JACOBY said he did not want a penny of it. When opening purchased estates the Government should provide communication by road. The sale of these often realised large sums, yet settlers thereon had no means of getting produce to market. When such areas were distant from a railway, money should be provided for completing a main road. The item would provide blazed tracks or bridle-paths; but we might soon be forced to provide roads immediately such areas were opened. In some cases roads would be better than agricultural railways.

MR. HOLMAN: There was no item for the departmental lecturer, Mr. Wilbur, who had done good work, being well spoken of both on the Murchison and on the Eastern Goldfields. He was paid £12 10s. per month, with 10s. a day for expenses and 6s. a day for an assistant.

THE MINISTER: The lecturer, being blind, had to be provided with an attendant. When on the fields Mr. Wilbur's allowance was increased.

MR. HOLMAN: But the extra expenses considerably reduced the salary. Prior to Mr. Wilbur's appointment Mr. Ranford did exactly the same work, and not at all better, at a salary of £700 a year and expenses, though Mr. Wilbur's net income was but £1 a week.

THE MINISTER: Mr. Wilbur received £150 a year as a retaining fee.

MR. HOLMAN: On the fields he received £3 a week; and deducting his expenses when on the Murchison, he would not have £1 to himself. He had to pay some 21s. a day for the two men with him. It was not right to take

advantage of a blind man by making him work for £1 a week.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member was rather uncharitable.

THE PREMIER: And very unjust.

THE MINISTER: Mr. Wilbur's retaining fee amounted to practically £150 a year. Owing to his blindness the Government paid his assistant and his assistant's expenses. He (the Minister) believed that the fees and expenses were fixed by mutual agreement, and that Mr. Wilbur was well satisfied. In such places as Kalgoorlie good accommodation was obtainable for less than £2 a week; and except in outlying localities Mr. Wilbur seldom visited a town and returned on the same day. In large towns he delivered more than one lecture, so as to accommodate school children and miners working in different shifts.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Wilbur was a very good lecturer, and deserved every encouragement.

MR. FOULKES: Doubtless the Minister had every desire to treat Mr. Wilbur fairly. The lectures were a great success; but the remuneration was not too liberal, lecturers being as a rule paid much higher salaries than this. His lectures had induced many to settle on the land, and the retaining fee should be increased to £200 per annum. Years ago £500 a year was paid by this State to a lecturer in England.

MR. DAGLISH: Except the Minister, none knew more than he of this appointment; and as one who advocated the appointment he was pleased at the treatment accorded to Mr. Wilbur by the present Minister for Lands—treatment in marked contrast to that received from the Minister's predecessor. But £150 a year was not a living wage for a lecturer. After hearing two or three lectures by Mr. Wilbur, he (Mr. Daglish) believed that gentleman was well worthy of the position. Two hundred pounds was the minimum that should be paid to him. In spite of the disadvantages that Mr. Wilbur laboured under, having to take an attendant with him, if the officer received £200 the State would be getting ample value. The Government should do something to induce the agriculturists in the Eastern States to come over here. At present we were drawing far too largely from the town workers of the

Eastern States, and far too few agriculturists. He strongly urged that Mr. Wilbur should be sent to the Eastern States to induce some of the people who were at present leaving for South Africa to come to Western Australia. A great number of people at present were leaving New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia for South Africa, and we might induce them to take the shorter journey, which would not only confer a benefit on our State, but would entitle us to the gratitude of the Eastern States for keeping the people within federal dominions. He hoped the services of this lecturer would be utilised outside as well as inside the State.

MR. HOLMAN: The attendant who travelled with Mr. Wilbur received £100 a year, making £250 a year for the two officers. It was absolutely necessary for two men to go on a lecture tour, one to manipulate the lantern, and the other to describe the pictures shown. It was hardly fair to state that the attendant had to accompany Mr. Wilbur, as it was necessary for two men to properly give the lecture. If the Minister found out that Mr. Wilbur was not properly paid, and that often he came away from a trip to the country with very little after paying his expenses, would Mr. Wilbur be given an increase? No one required Mr. Wilbur to go through the State doing good work and getting no benefit.

Vote put and passed.

Agriculture, £21,193 10s.:

On motion by the **PREMIER**, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 20 minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.
