

other people's business to any extent, but the small sale in side lines gave them just enough business to justify their keeping the shop open. If the Minister would report progress those two suggested amendments could be placed on the notice paper.

Hon. J. E. DODD: There was no objection to reporting progress provided there would be some effort made to put the Bill through in time.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 15th December, 1911.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—CHINESE FURNITURE AT ROTTNEET ISLAND.

Mr UNDERWOOD (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: Has any Chinese furniture been sent to the Government Hostel at Rottneet?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Unfortunately furniture of Chinese manufacture has been sent to the hostel and cottages at Rottneet Island. I discovered it after the furniture landed

there. I have issued instructions that it shall be immediately returned. The officer responsible has been suspended.

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Cost of boilers.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What was the total cost per boiler of the 10 Class O boilers recently imported by the Railway Department? 2, Has the department any record of the cost of similar boilers constructed locally, if so, what is it? 3, Is it the intention of the Government to continue the further importation of such work? 4, If so, why?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, £679. 2, £720. 3, Yes. 4, Insufficient shop accommodation and machinery at Midland Junction. The department is doing its utmost with the facilities at present at its disposal and will continue to do so, so long as the local cost compares favourably with that of the imported article.

Tickets for Long distance Trains.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, In view of the nature of the reply given to a question relating to an instruction issued by the Railway Department, will the Minister cause inquiries to be made as to whether Mr. Bolton tendered the money for a ticket to Coolgardie at 9.20 a.m. on Wednesday, 6th inst., and was refused a ticket, being told that he must obtain the ticket between 3.30 and 3.55 p.m. or take out a single ticket to Perth? 2, Did the said passenger ask to see the station-master, who also refused to supply the ticket, owing to an instruction issued to him (the station-master)?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes, money was tendered and ticket refused on the grounds that the passenger would have to break the journey within the suburban area, which is contrary to regulations. 2, Yes, and the regulations were pointed out to Mr. Bolton. No instructions have been issued other than the printed regulations.

QUESTION—EMPLOYMENT OF EX-PUBLIC SERVANTS.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier : 1, Is it true that instructions were issued by the late Minister for Lands to the effect that no civil servant who went on the land in connection with the civil service settlement should be re-employed by the Government ? 2, Is the Government aware that owing to the drought in the district in which these deserving men were settled, many of them have had to leave their holdings to look for employment, through no fault of their own ? 3, As it may be an advantage to the departments to be able to obtain the services of experienced and capable men, when temporary employment is available, will the Government remove the unjust restriction imposed by the late Government, in order to permit any applications these ex-civil servants may make to be considered on their merits ? 4, If not, why not ?

The PREMIER replied : 1, Yes. 2, The Government are aware of some instances. 3, This has already been done. 4, Answered by No. 3.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Norseman-Esperance Reports.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : In connection with the printed matter I have had distributed dealing with railways to be introduced, I would like to explain that the advisory board's report on the Norseman-Esperance railway unfortunately does not include the minority report, which to some members will be of the utmost importance. It seems unfair to distribute one part of the report and not the other, but as a matter of fact the minority report is already included in the papers on the Table of the House.

Mr. Frank Wilson : Why not have it copied ?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I would require to get 80 copies taken off, and I think it would scarcely be possible to do it in the time. In any case members will find the minority report on the Table.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1911-12.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 13th December, on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and the Annual Estimates ; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £2,760 :

Mr. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) : When last I had the honour of submitting the Estimates to Parliament and delivering the Budget Speech I was proud to be able to announce that the State of Western Australia had fairly entered upon a period of prosperity. I submitted Estimates on that occasion showing that the deficit, which had been the incubus of all administrators for six or seven years, would at last be extinguished, and I am still proud to say that on the 30th June last when the financial year closed, not only was that deficit extinguished but a small surplus of £13,000 had taken its place. The Premier has been good enough at last to admit the existence of this surplus. During the electioneering campaign he took some exception to it, but I believe that with some reluctance he admits at last it is in fact and in deed a surplus on last year's transactions. In his earlier denials he was consistently and persistently egged on by his colleague and lieutenant, the Minister for Works. I find the Minister for Works on more than one occasion has pledged the Premier to prove that this surplus was really not as it should be ; I need not use a stronger term than that, although I might use the word "faked." I hear rumours that during the last few months special efforts have been made in the different departments to discover where this surplus came from, and how it possibly could be a true surplus. Efforts have been made to find accounts that ought to have been paid at the end of the last financial year, but which had been deliberately held back in order that a surplus might be shown instead of a deficit.

The Premier : How do you know that ; have you still free access to the departments ?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Yes, of course.

The Premier: Then it is more than I had as leader of the Opposition.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I never refused you access to the departments, and I trust you are not going to refuse it to me.

The Premier: You issued instructions that we had to get permission before we could go through the departments.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Nothing of the sort. The Premier is absolutely wrong, as he always is when he makes these charges and statements, and I will prove it to be wrong before I sit down. I want to point out to hon. members that any insinuation of this description is not only a reflection on the Treasurer for the time being, but is a reflection also upon the officers of the departments, because there can be no faking of figures so far as the finances of the State are concerned, unless the officers of the departments are parties to it. There are so many departments to furnish returns, and so many accountants responsible for making up these figures; and then again there is the whole staff of the Treasury to be regarded, so any charge of this description includes the whole of those responsible officers. It is an insult to my late colleague, Mr. Gregory, who was in charge of the Treasury during my absence, to insinuate that his surplus was not a true and correct one. I am sorry that the Premier in delivering his Budget Speech could not deal with the Estimates in an absolutely straightforward manner without trying to shirk his responsibilities and place them on other shoulders. Ever since he assumed office he has been trying to impress on the public of Western Australia that the finances of the State were in an unsound position and, therefore, that the Labour Government, of which he is the head, were not responsible for the financial position this year, to use his own words as reported. I want to know who is responsible? If the Premier and Treasurer of the State is not responsible after having been in office two months and over, who is to be re-

sponsible for this year's finances? Does he want to put the blame on my shoulders? Certainly I decline to accept the blame of his financial methods and procedure. He is a past master in the art of crying stinking fish, and he cannot even float this little loan of half a million at 4 per cent. without making as much noise about it as a young hen makes when laying her first egg. I have not heard such talk of a flotation before as we have had on this occasion. Again we find his friend and colleague, the Minister for Works, on many occasions when speaking lately declaring that they had done a marvellous deed in putting this loan on the market, and the Premier declared himself with very much unction that they are going to get the money. I should hope they are going to get the money. If Western Australia cannot borrow money at 4 per cent. at par, it is a very poor lookout for the public works that are projected, for the railways that are to be built at the rate of 200 miles per annum, to say nothing of the works in connection with our harbours and rivers and other big undertakings. The people of the State heard very much less of the millions floated during my Government's term of office on much better terms, than they have heard of this first loan floated by the present Treasurer. He must be very thankful to the Minister for Works, who stated that the finances were unsound, and in the following words pledged the Premier to say when he delivered his first Budget how and where they were unsound. The Minister for Works remarked—

It had been said, what was absolutely untrue, that the Labour party were taking over the finances of the State in a sound position. As a matter of fact the finances were in a bad position, and when the Premier (Mr. Scaddan) delivered his first Budget Speech the whole truth would be told.

Now we have had the Premier's first Budget Speech, and the mountain has laboured and brought forth a mouse, for we find, so far as his figures are concerned, that when I handed over the affairs of the Treasury to my successor, the finances were perfectly sound. Then

we have the Premier himself in the Budget deliverance, endeavouring to shirk his responsibility, because he used these words:—"And practically it only remained for him at such a late stage to analyse the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure as he found them upon taking office and as now presented." I think that is misleading to the members of this House, and it is misleading to the country, because I can assure this Committee that the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure had not been received from the Treasury when I left the department, and I had not seen them. The departmental estimates were being made up, but they had not come to the Treasury, at any rate not all of them.

The Premier: Ah!

Mr. FRANK WILSON: What does the Premier mean by "ah."

The Premier: At first you said they had not been received, and then you say, "not all of them."

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The Treasury Estimates were in the Treasury certainly. I am telling the Premier that there were no Estimates in the Treasury when I left office.

The Premier: I say there were.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The Premier wishes the Committee to infer that he was not responsible for the Estimates, because they were based on estimates which he found when he took office.

The Premier: I found some of them printed when I took office.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The draft prints would be in all departments.

The Premier: But you say they were not there.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: And they were not there. I had issued instructions for the Estimates to be made up as quickly as possible, but so far as I was concerned they were not there. The Treasury Estimates were there, but the departmental estimates had not then come in, although the Premier wishes it to be inferred that he is not responsible for the Estimates. Strange to say, later on he forgot this attitude, and referring to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure said they were in course of preparation when he took office, just

what I said, and that they had since received careful revision at the hands of himself and his colleagues. So we may expect that, notwithstanding that he wishes to shirk his responsibility for the Estimates, he must accept the responsibility, inasmuch as he carefully revised them before submitting them to the Committee. Now, in analysing the financial position, the Premier has made two very distinct charges against the Administration of which I was head, because he tried to show the Committee, and to the satisfaction of the people of Western Australia, that the deficit which appeared in the public accounts on the 30th September last was a wrong one; in other words, it was made up wrongly—certain payments had been made by way of advance accounts which had not been debited, and which ought to have been debited.

The Premier: Who said that?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The Premier.

The Premier: Well, quote me.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Here are his words—

He found that there was an accumulated deficit in the Consolidated Revenue Fund of £28,994, that was after deducting £65,930, which had been advanced to the department, and which was returnable to the Treasury at the end of the year, although so far as the cash was concerned, this extra money was disbursed. He went on to say that the deficit when he took office was £94,000. He claimed that was the position, that is his first charge. Then he further proceeded—

The accumulated deficit of £28,994, as shown on September 30th, did not really indicate the true position, as he considered that the amounts which had been subsequently paid by way of increases in salaries and wages, made retrospective to July 1st, would be a fair charge against the first quarter of the year, the Government having had to redeem the promise made to the civil servants by the late Government in regard to those increases. Had the late Government kept their promises and paid those increases the deficit would have been considerably

greater when the last financial year closed than it had been.

The Premier: That is quite correct.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: It is not correct; it is absolutely incorrect. That is where the Premier is wrong. Why does he not bring proof when he makes accusations? The Premier has made two distinct charges. The first is, that the £66,000 which had been advanced to departments ought to have been charged to the September month, and was not charged, and that he had to face a deficit of £94,000 instead of less than £30,000; and the second is that if we had paid the increase to civil servants which we had promised, the deficit would have been considerably increased. I presume he means that the surplus would have been wiped out and a deficit put in its place. I do not know exactly what the Premier is driving at there. I know of no promise which was not carried out, and there was no promise which would have made a deficit at the end of the last financial year.

The Premier: I am not referring to the last financial year; I am referring to the balance on the 30th September in the first quarter of the present financial year.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Here are the Premier's own words: "Had the late Government kept their promises and paid those increases, the deficit would have been considerably less when the last financial year closed than it had been."

The Premier: I never said that.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is reported to have said it.

The Premier: That is wrong anyway.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I am very pleased to hear it.

The Premier: I was not referring to the surplus at the 30th June, but to the position at the 30th September.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The Premier's words referred to the 30th June. I am happy to have his disowner, and that is the end of it.

The Premier: You are trying to misrepresent me.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: No; I am quoting the words published in the Press. I have no need to misrepresent the Premier. He misrepresents himself on every occasion he speaks, and drifts and drifts every time he opens his mouth. Let us inquire into this charge regarding this advance of £66,000. I do not suppose the Premier has taken the trouble to inquire from his responsible officers what the advance means.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Will the Premier let me go through?

The Premier: Well, do not misrepresent me.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I am not misrepresenting the Premier. At any rate I am quoting him as reported in the Press.

The Premier: It suits your book to do so.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: It does not suit my book. I am quoting the words which the Premier is reported to have used. I am glad to have his denial. I accept his denial and will say no more about it. Let us deal with the greater issue. This £66,000 is the amount shown in the public accounts as having been advanced from the different departments for the purposes of those departments by way of paying accounts. These advances are made to every department in order to facilitate the payments to public creditors. Take the Works Department, of which I have been head on two occasions. In that department we had an advance from the Treasury of £12,000. That advance is used by the accountant to pay the just debts of the department, and portion of it is again advanced by him to different sub-departments of the Works Department throughout the State. But every payment from the advance account is debited against the appropriations, and that advanced amount is recouped daily by the Treasury, so that it is always kept up to its limit. Now the money has not been disbursed as the Premier said, and it ought not to have been a charge against the transactions for September. The position is just this: that instead of the Treasurer having £66,000

more to his credit in the different banks of the State, it is lying to the credit of the numerous departmental officers who are handling the finances. I am safe in saying that at least £3,000 of the Public Works advance at any rate—and I have taken that as an illustration—would be in the hands of the different officers of that department throughout the country, and that the unrecouped portion of the advance would be fully covered by those sums of money which were in the hands of the different departmental officers in the sub-departments. The system of advances is one that has been in operation ever since we have had responsible Government. It is also adopted in every other State of the Commonwealth, and I want hon. members to believe that it has no effect on the deficit at the end of any particular month or any time during the month. It is simply this: I may have a friend or an agent in whose hands I place a sum of money, say £500, so that he may utilise that £500 to pay accounts in my behalf. He has to pay £50 out of it, and he comes to me next day to draw another £50, making it good again. Surely I can claim that I have got £500 cash, although it does not lie at my own credit in the bank, but at the credit of my agent. That is exactly the position in regard to the advances. If the Treasurer's contention is correct, he ought to include in his Estimates the Treasurer's advance, as shown in those Estimates. In those Estimates an item of £250,000 is shown by way of Treasurer's advance to enable him to meet any unforeseen liabilities that are not provided for in the Estimates, and if his contention is correct that advances of that sort must be made a debit immediately they pass out of his hands, he ought to include that £250,000, and show the expected deficit for the year as £350,000 instead of £104,402, as it is shown. It would be just as reasonable for me to accuse the Treasurer of having faked these Estimates on that account, as for him to accuse me of having shown a wrong balance on the 30th September last. The system of accounts is not of my creation, although I presided over the

Treasury for a good many years, and the Treasurer will find that he cannot alter it. The system is sound. We will pass to the next accusation, which is that of not having made retrospective the promised payments so as to include them in the September expenditure. I cannot tell exactly what promises the Premier referred to, but I can take the railway system as an illustration. All advances to wages men are paid immediately they are authorised, that is the next ensuing pay day. The advances to the salaried staff are, and always have been, subject to the Estimates being passed by Parliament, and a footnote in the Commissioner's classification clearly sets this out and states that these advances will be payable after Parliament has passed and sanctioned the Estimates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Does that apply to all departments?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I should say so, as far as the salaried officers are concerned, not the day men. The salaried staff increases approved by the late Administration in connection with the railways amounted to £10,952. A fourth of this amount would really apply to the first quarter of the present year, but they are not yet paid and they have not been included by the Treasurer in his October and November accounts. He said I should have included these in my September balance.

The Premier: I did not.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The Treasurer has not done so.

The Treasurer: It is a misrepresentation.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I am showing the way the Premier has misrepresented.

The Premier: Why do you not quote me?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I have quoted the hon. member. Let me point out that in August last we approved of all employees below 8s. being brought up to that minimum. The payments were made from the next ensuing pay day on the 3rd September. Drivers were fixed up in September, and they were paid from the 1st October. The

minimum of cleaners was raised sixpence ; that is, their wages were raised to 8s. 6d. in the fifth year ; the firemen's minimum was increased to 9s., and that of the drivers to 12s., and in the higher classes also there were increases, and the whole of these advances took effect as soon as the arrangement was come to and authorised by me ; that is, on the next following pay day. Of the £40,000 increases authorised by my Administration and granted to the railway employees, £30,000 was paid from the following pay period, leaving only £10,000 increases to the salaried staff to the Estimates as passed by Parliament, and as has always been the custom. I say "always" advisedly, because last year I remember we found that the Estimates could not be passed until the New Year, and I authorised the staff advances to be paid prior to the Christmas holidays in order that the employees might have the benefit of them for the Christmas season. The promise made in September, and I presume that is what the Premier referred to when he said that certain promises had been left to him to be carried out did not account for the deficit. The promise we made in September was to increase the wages of the temporary employees from 10s. to 11s. a day as from the 1st July.

The Premier : In what part of September ?

Mr. FRANK WILSON : About the middle of September.

The Premier : You would not like me to tell you that it was three days before the elections.

Mr. FRANK WILSON : I do not mind. I do not care even whether the Premier tells me it was on the day of the election. I do what is just and right whether there is an election pending or not. These payments were made in the ensuing month of October and if this is the item the Premier was referring to—and evidently it is—it cannot amount to many hundreds of pounds. He has no right to make a statement of this sort unless he brings facts and figures to prove it as bearing on the subject. A few hundreds of pounds given to

the employees affect the deficit, and placing him in a precarious position !

The Premier : No one said that.

Mr. FRANK WILSON : The hon. member did say that.

The Premier : I did not.

Mr. FRANK WILSON : I have quoted his words.

The Premier : I did not say I was in a precarious position.

Mr. FRANK WILSON : Then the hon. member goes further and points out that the Government—and now I am treating with something that he made reference to in connection with the present Estimates—that the Government were providing for the increases, which we had promised under the reclassification, to be made retrospective as from the 1st July, and that he was making provision for any further advances that might be granted, and will have to be granted undoubtedly, according to his own actions ; but he is making provision under the Treasurer's Advance Account for this. If hon. members will turn to page 38 they will find what this account is, "Advance to Treasurer." Last year it set down £150,000. I think that is an error, the amount should have been £200,000 ; this year it is £250,000. It is utilised not for making provision of a known liability but to make provision for some thing that may crop up during the financial year of which the Treasurer has no cognisance at the time. In large type has been inserted the words, "Also to cover any increases to salaries which may be granted as the outcome of the reclassification of the public service now proceeding, which will afterwards be submitted for Parliamentary appropriation." This will come in the Excess Bill in the next financial year. I maintain it is not a proper vote to make a provision of this sort under. If we can make provision in the Treasurer's Advance Account which is not part and parcel of the actual Estimates, then you might possibly put a million of money into that item, and you might cut down your Estimates to any amount you wished and charge all against the Treasurer's advance,

leaving to good luck to enable you to find funds as you go along.

The Premier: Is the amount that will be required known?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: You have made some provision in this Treasurer's advance.

The Premier: You said it was wrong to do it.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: It should be in the body of the Estimates, and should show the deficit properly. The Government have raised the minimum on the railways to 9s., and a settlement with all the different employees above those lately raised to that minimum has yet to be made. It stands to reason that those who are employed in the higher grades expect an increase equivalent to the minimum, which the Treasurer rushed in and gave the moment he took office. We had raised the minimum to 8s. and the Premier raised it to 9s. What is the result? The porter who was getting 8s. a day, and had his two suits of uniform per annum, and who collects considerable tips during the year from passengers, has been jumped up to 9s. while the shunter in the yard, who is doing more responsible work and risking his life, and who is getting 9s., is allowed to remain on that same level. Naturally the shunter will not put up with it, and naturally the Premier will bring trouble upon himself at once. The shunter is going to demand a proper increase, and so it will go on right throughout the service. To give 1s. a day increase all round on the railways alone means £87,000, in addition to the £40,000 already granted, and let me assure the Premier that I had all this information before I left office. It is information that I called for and received, and it is easy to realise that if you have made a start by increasing the lower grade, right on without consideration you will bind your hands to the increases that the others will demand; in fact, all the others in the higher grades will demand increases, and the Premier will have the thick end of £87,000 to face in connection with the Railway Department alone; and not only that, his was an ill-advised

action in rushing in over the head of the Commissioner and tying the hands of the Commissioner.

The Premier: Did you grant any increases to those in higher grades?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Yes; I said so just now. I fixed up an agreement, and the Premier's action will make them demand another agreement.

The Premier: The same people?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Yes, of course. They are not going to be satisfied with 6d. when you give to the others 1s. 6d. a day.

The Premier: Some of your old tactics; playing one off against the other.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I have never played one off against the other. The Premier is putting himself body and soul in the hands of the union. Then we have, of course, all the other departments to look to. There are the education increases so glibly promised by the Premier on the hustings during the recent campaign, and the reclassification increases to come on when the reclassification is available. I would like to know when that will be. It seems that one part of it is available now.

The Premier: You seem to know all about the departments.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Well, I have been there so much longer than the hon. member that I ought to know something about it. All these increases are to be charged to the Treasurer's Advance Account, an account so far as these Estimates are concerned, never intended for such a purpose. The Estimates then are misleading to this extent; and the Treasurer must admit that, because there must be an estimated expenditure of anything from £50,000 to £100,000. The Premier has divided £100,000 for the purpose, which is not shown. If it were shown the deficit he estimates at the end of June next, instead of being £104,000 would be from £200,000 to £204,000. I want also to point out that these Estimates, especially on the revenue side, contain this item of £40,000 interest on transferred property. This is an accumulation for some time: it

is not all due to the present financial year, and I congratulate the Premier upon having been lucky enough to get this windfall. I may express the hope that he will stick to his guns and see that the Commonwealth pay $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on the money instead of 3 per cent. It is unjust to Western Australia to expect us to pay $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and 4 per cent. for our money, while the Commonwealth take advantage of our transferred properties and pay only 3 per cent. on the estimated values. With regard to the Estimates as placed before the Committee I am not, at the present moment at any rate, concerned with the details. I do wish, however, to point out that the Government, with an estimated increase of revenue of £186,000, including this £40,000 windfall, and excluding any provision for the advances which must be made to the different employees right through the various departments, contemplate an increased expenditure of no less than £420,000. Not the slightest effort, as far as I can judge, has been made to adjust these figures. The Premier is trusting to Providence that the money may be found somewhere or somehow, and he is throwing the blame, as far as he can, upon his predecessors. The position is serious; it requires very serious attention at the hands of members especially, and of any public minded citizens in the State. It neither redounds to the credit of the Premier, nor to that of his colleagues.

Mr. Green: He has not been in for ten minutes.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: He has been in for two months. If the hon. member only knew what he was talking about he would know that every year the Estimates are made up in a much shorter time than these were. Months cannot be given to the task, for, after all, the estimate is only for one year; and even if it took six months to make up it would not excuse the position which I am pointing out. I would like to make a few remarks in regard to this loan flotation. We have to-day a loan floated, or it ought to be, and certainly will be floated, of £500,000 at 4 per cent.

at par, and the Premier seems to be jubilant about it, and thinks he is going to make a great hit. The Minister for Works, the Premier's henchman, who is so fond of pledging the Premier to do wonders, in speaking the other day on the question of current politics is reported to have said:—

The Government had just met and overcome the difficulty by doing something extraordinary in the minds of some people; that was by floating a loan on the Australian money market. Why, we have been borrowing money on the Australian markets for years past. I do not know why that should be considered extraordinary in the minds of the people.

The Minister for Works: I said some people; and some people, you know, are extraordinary.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Then the Minister for Works went on to say—"The Government would overcome its present difficulties, difficulties left by the late Government to be overcome." Always the late Government. He does not specify them, but goes about the country talking about unsound finance and the difficulties left to them. What do these difficulties amount to? To some £200 advances to be paid to temporary employees. This loan carries with it brokerage, banker's commission, exchange, accrued interest, advertising, and printing, etcetera, and, as I said the other night, it will cost at the latest date of maturity anything from £4 1s. to £4 2s. per cent.

The Premier: No.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Well, what will it cost? You must add the charges to the 4 per cent. Now we have been able to get our money cheaper than that, and, moreover, it is a reversal of the policy we adopted of refusing to borrow 4 per cent. money. The object of the redemption loan we placed on the London market early this year—and it was successfully floated, over-subscribed—

The Premier: It was underwritten.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Of course, what else would you have?

The Premier: Is it as much as brokerage?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: No; it is one-half per cent.

The Premier: And what does the underwriting amount to?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: It amounts to $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. It is as I say, the Premier knows nothing about his loan. He says it will not cost him £4 1s. But it must cost him over £4. I say it will cost from £4 1s. to £4 2s. per cent., just the same as other 4 per cent. money borrowed in the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Works: He said it would not cost £4 2s.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: What will it cost then? Will the Premier give us his figures? Why did we float this redemption loan last year? Merely in order that we might get all our loans on somewhat the same basis at 3 per cent. or $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and in order to get cheaper money, and make a saving in the interest payable of several thousand pounds, and a total redemption of £18,000. To show that the Premier has no grasp of this financial transaction, and what it means to the State, let me quote a few figures in regard to the previous loans raised during the past five years, or from 1905 to 1910. During that period we floated a total sum of £6,837,000. The cost of this money to the State, when repaid at maturity, allowing for all the underwriting, all the brokerages, all the discounts, all the advertising expenses, and everything else, was for 1905, £3 17s. 7d.; for 1907, £3 16s. 7d.; for 1908, £3 15s. 11d.; for 1909, £3 16s. 5d.; for 1909 again, being a second loan, £3 16s. 7d. All this as compared with £4 1s., which is the least this loan is going to cost.

The Premier: Where did you raise that money?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: In London.

The Premier: Why did you not raise more when you were getting it so cheap?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I raised all we required. The full amount of these loans added together, including the sum of £65,000 for renewals was £6,837,000 and the actual net proceeds apart from interest was £6,478,673, while the interest

for the life time of the loan, which extends from 30 years to 40 and 46 years—the interest payable for the period of the loan amounts to £8,805,100. It seems alarming that we should pay £8,805,100 for the use of £6,837,000, but the total cost of the loan in interest and initial expenses which the Premier has referred to, up to date of maturity would have been £9,163,427. The cost of this money had we raised it at 4 per cent., without any expenses, such as the Premier has to meet, would have been £10,044,400 or, had we adopted the policy which the Premier says he has been forced to adopt, of raising money locally at 4 per cent. at par, it would have cost the State £880,973 more in interest.

The Premier: No.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I say, yes.

The Premier: The Government Actuary does not say so, and he knows as well as you.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The Premier has twitted me with having left him no money to go on with. I pointed out the position on the Address-in-Reply, and said that there was ample money to go on with. I pointed out the position before I left office, and I unhesitatingly say there was no need to rush on the local market to float a small expensive loan like this. I further say that arrangements had been partially concluded, and could have been concluded by the Treasurer with his bankers in London to secure accommodation by way of an overdraft at the bank rate of interest pending the flotation of a loan in March next at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The Premier: What is the bank rate?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I believe it is 4 per cent.; but you propose to pay 4 per cent. now. It would have been better to pay 4 per cent. accommodation for two months than to pay 4 per cent. for 20 years.

The Minister for Lands: It was not a question of two months; it would be more like seven months.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: It would be not more than three months. The Treasurer says there is plenty of money to carry on until the end of this year, and

in March at the latest he could have put a loan on the London market. He can borrow as much money as he likes in London.

The Premier: There is no money now.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Has the Premier had to go to the banks for an overdraft? At one time in Sir John Forrest's time the Treasurer had to go to the local banks for an overdraft to pay wages. At any rate it is bad to borrow money locally at high rates. It makes money tighter for the private borrowers; it takes the money from the financial institutions which, in the ordinary course of events, would be invested in industrial, commercial, and agricultural ventures. In other words, institutions lending money to the Government of the State will not have that money to lend to private customers, to settlers on the land, and to those who are trading and carrying on the commerce of the country, indeed, those who are responsible for making the country prosperous. The more money we can bring into the country, especially a new country like Western Australia, the better it is for the people; and certainly it cannot be a good scheme to pay anything from 3s. 6d. to 5s. per cent. more for money than is necessary. As a matter of fact, the Premier has blundered; he evidently has not consulted his responsible advisers; evidently he has been content to take some outside advice, and I think before he goes any further he ought to sack that financial adviser, and, without offence, I might say he ought to muzzle that active follower, the Minister for Works, who is always making statements and leaving the Premier to substantiate them. I am thankful to think that at the end of the next financial year the Premier will not have even the flimsy pretext of blaming anyone but himself. I join sincerely with him in his high hopes for the progress of the State of Western Australia and the welfare of its people; and may I express the devout wish that the many, many promises he has made—promises that he has included and incorporated in his Budget Speech—may all be duly redeemed.

The PREMIER (in reply): If no other hon. member wishes to speak I should like to reply to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. I was struck somewhat with the different tone of the leader of the Opposition to day as compared with the occasion when he, as Treasurer of the State, with a deficit at the back of him of over £300,000, complained of the members of the then Opposition drawing attention to the unsatisfactory state of our finances. "Why," he said, "should members tell the people of the world that our finances are unsound." Yet to-day he utters the most pessimistic notes I have ever heard in this Chamber. It appears to me that the hon. member is not so desirous of considering the interests of the country so far as its finances are concerned as he is of attempting to belittle those in charge of affairs for the time being. If it was a good lesson for the hon. member to preach to those in Opposition when he was Treasurer, it would be better in keeping with his position as leader of the Opposition, and as immediate ex-Treasurer, to set an example by saying that, if the position is as indicated on the Estimates, he would render assistance in an endeavour to make it better and not utter such pessimistic notes. It is true the finances are sound.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Perfectly sound; but you are making them unsound.

The PREMIER: I have heard so much about the soundness of the finances that I am beginning to fear they are such. "The 'sound' is the noise the hon. member makes, or that created by the emptiness of the Treasury chest. The hon. member knows full well it is many years since the Treasury chest has been as near being so empty. The hon. member might have told the House that just prior to leaving the Treasury he cabled to the Agent General asking whether it was possible to float a loan on the London market.

Mr. Frank Wilson: No. I cabled as to whether it was advisable, whether the time was opportune.

The PREMIER: What did the hon. member mean by cabling if he did not intend to do it?

Mr. Frank Wilson: Only if the time was opportune.

The PREMIER: The hon. member cabled to the Agent General in London after the result of the election was known—not prior to it, let hon. members note—and before leaving the Treasury he asked if it was advisable to place a loan on the London market; and the reply given to him—not to me—was that it would be absolutely undesirable to attempt to float a loan in London at that time. Yet we are told by some of the hon. member's colleagues who ought to know better, that the fact that we are floating a loan locally means that London refuses to make a loan to a Labour Government. The London money-lender is not so much concerned whether the people in charge of the Treasury are Labour or Liberal; he is more concerned with the way in which the people in charge of the Treasury are going to deal with the money from time to time, and when he discovers that we are going to pledge the taxpayers to redeem at due date and spend the money on works that are reproductive, and on those alone, he will be more ready to lend money to us than to those branded "Liberal." The leader of the Opposition has done nothing this afternoon except endeavour to misrepresent the position and my statements. I said at the outset of my remarks yesterday that it was only fair to explain to the House and the country the position of the finances as I found them on the 30th September, after the expiration of one quarter of the year. I will tell the House and country something else, that the condition of affairs I detailed existed in the Treasury notwithstanding the gigantic efforts of my predecessor to cause the departments not to spend any more than was absolutely essential in September, and to get in every penny of revenue available, because the ex-Treasurer, the present leader of the Opposition, desired if possible to balance the finances at the end of September, three days before the election was held.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Why should I not?

The PREMIER: The hon. member was not concerned so much about the finances except as they would affect the election, and I am here now to say that a circular was issued to departments at the request of the ex-Treasurer, and accepted by them as meaning that where they could avoid spending money in September and carry it over to October they should do so.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Not at all.

The PREMIER: The circular was accepted as such by the departments, and, what is more, they did it; and that is why I would have been justified in saying a little more than I did. I could have said that money was held over and paid in October that should have been fairly charged in September.

Mr. Heitmann: Yet he says you cast a reflection on the officers.

The PREMIER: I am not casting any reflection on the officers; it is on the files.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Why do you not produce your figures?

The PREMIER: My reference when introducing the Budget was not to that point that was so uppermost in the hon. member's mind, but knowing he had done it, he could not avoid the opportunity of making reference to it as it had been preying on his mind ever since. I made no reference to it. My reference to fair charges against the first quarter of the financial year that had expired, and which we had to meet in our term, was to the increases granted by our predecessors to take effect from the 1st July. I made no reference to any money held over in departments from September to October, but the guilty conscience of the hon. member could not prevent him from exposing it, and as a result he makes a confession this afternoon, although of course I have to fill in the details to make it clear.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Give the details; what is the amount?

The PREMIER: I do not know; it would be difficult to discover it. Let me tell the hon. member what I did refer to. The hon. member gave increases to one

section of the railway employees, and let me repeat that I think he and his Government at that time did it for the purpose of playing off one section of railway employees against another.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Not at all.

The PREMIER: I am led to that belief, because at the very time the loco. men were appealing for an increase of wages owing to the increased cost of living, as they claimed, the traffic men were also making a similar claim; but the hon. member told the traffic men through the Commissioner that he would have to consider the matter, and would require a fortnight or thereabouts to give a reply, whereas before that fortnight expired he gave a reply to the other branch of the service by giving an increase of 6d. a day to the men getting 7s. 6d., and an increase of 1s. 6d. to the men receiving 13d. a day. Of course, the cost of living to the man receiving 13s. a day would be higher than that for the man receiving 7s. a day! But that was his way of doing things, and that was one of the charges we had to meet in the remaining portion of the year that were not shown in the deficit on the 30th September. Here is another tale. Cabinet decided that temporary officers in the public service who were recommended by their permanent heads should receive the maximum of 11s. I believe that was decided in September. Of course, it could have no bearing on the elections, because there was a bit of an agitation in the service, but the fact remains that it was decided in September, and it passed through Executive Council and by Executive Council was made to take effect from the 1st October. The hon. member was pursuing a very aggressive campaign at the time, and two or three days before the elections took place he spoke at Donnybrook. He wired to the Public Service Commissioner that he understood the increase given to temporary employees was only to take effect from the 1st October, and he asked could it not take effect from the 1st July.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Will you read my wire?

The PREMIER: I did read the wire; I have not it here. I am giving the effect

of it. The hon. member said that if there was no very strong objection to it he would like it to take effect from that date, and added, "Please wire me through the railways because I want to make an announcement at Donnybrook when speaking publicly, if it is possible; if it is not possible wire through ordinary sources." The hon. member spoke at Donnybrook just prior to the election, and announced what had been done for the public service, and that the advances recently granted to temporary employees was to take effect from the 1st July. It was not paid in the first quarter of the year, with the result we have had to find the money.

Mr. Frank Wilson: To bring them into keeping with the promise that had been made that the reclassification should date from the 1st July.

The PREMIER: The hon. member signed the Executive Council minute. Does the ex-Premier tell the House that he endorses Executive Council minutes without knowing their contents.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I have not told the House anything of the sort.

The PREMIER: You said you were not consulted. The hon. member knows that particular Executive Council Minute first of all was endorsed by himself, and eventually was sent on for Executive Council consideration.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Exactly.

The PREMIER: And that minute said definitely and distinctly the first of October.

Mr. Frank Wilson: That was altered.

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not consider it necessary to alter it until the eve of the general election.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Yes; to bring it into keeping with the reclassification.

The PREMIER: The alteration did not take effect until the election was over, and a fresh Executive minute had to be put through the Executive Council.

Mr. Frank Wilson: How much is it?

The PREMIER: I do not know, but it does not matter how much it is. We have had to find the money, which is a fair charge on the first quarter of the year.

Mr. Frank Wilson: But how much is it?

The PREMIER: I do not know the amount.

Mr. Frank Wilson: What are you making such a fuss about them?

The PREMIER: The hon. member recognised what was going to happen, and he wanted to make it as difficult a job as possible for us. The reclassification of the service was proceeding, and the hon. gentleman on behalf of his Government gave a promise that any increases granted to the public service should take effect from the 1st July. That reclassification has not yet been announced in any division, and when it is announced and when the increases take effect we shall require to find the money. The amount due for the first quarter of the year was a fair charge to add to the deficit as we found it on the 30th September.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Then why did you not add it in October?

The PREMIER: If the hon. gentleman is fair I think he will admit that my announcement as to the position on the 30th September was perfectly fair.

Mr. Frank Wilson: It is misleading.

The PREMIER: It is absolutely useless for me to make a statement. Let me assure the hon. member that I have never corrected *Hansard* on my speech on this matter, and I have here my speech, and I see that I directly use the words September 30th and not July 30th.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Let me correct the hon. member or make an explanation. I read from the *West Australian* of yesterday morning as reported. Does the Premier say he has been misreported in the *West Australian*?

The PREMIER: If I had not time to correct the *Hansard* report I had not time to read the *West Australian*, and I am not going to say the *West Australian* reported me as read by the hon. member. I will read again what *Hansard* has, and which I repeat I did not correct. It says—

It must be remembered that the accumulated deficit of £28,994 as shown on the 30th September, does not really indicate the true position, as I consider that the amounts which have subse-

quently been paid by way of increase in salaries and wages, made retrospective to 1st July, would be a fair charge against the first quarter of the year. It is difficult to say what that means, but it is well to understand that our predecessors made promises to the civil service that increases which would be provided, and which had been provided, would be made retrospective to 1st July, but at the close of the first quarter on 30th September, when they left office, they had not paid any of these increases, and it has fallen to the lot of the present Government to find that money. Therefore, the deficit at the end of September should be materially increased by the amount we had to find in order to keep the promises made by our predecessors.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Materially "increased."

The PREMIER: We do not know what the increases will be, but let me point out I did not at any time criticise the action of the Treasurer as to the £66,000. I merely mentioned the figures to show the true position. In some States of the Commonwealth they add it on each month to show the deficit, and at the end of the year it is repaid by the departments and the true position is discovered.

Mr. Frank Wilson: That would be an incorrect position.

The PREMIER: Not as far as the Treasury chest is concerned. I repeat, as a matter of fact £90,000 odd short in the Treasury in September, £66,000 advances made to the different departments recouped on the 30th June.

Mr. Frank Wilson: But you led us to believe that was not so.

The PREMIER: Let me come to the other question, to the advance to the Treasurer. The hon. member says the object of providing an advance to the Treasurer of £250,000 on the Estimates, which does not affect the total, is to enable Parliament to give authority to the Treasurer to use up to that amount in excess of that provided on the Estimates for unknown expenditure.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Will the Treasurer tell me what amount is to be paid by the

Treasurer to meet the increases in future by the reclassification board?

The PREMIER: I had discussed with the Under Treasurer and the Solicitor General another method which would show the true position on the Estimates, by dropping the advances altogether, and eventually we may carry it out. I am assured by the Public Service Commissioner, who was also consulted, that it is impossible for him to say what the amount will be, and if any particular amount was shown on the Estimates it would surely be misunderstood and open to criticism. He also said it was an unknown quantity, the proper method was to make provision through the advance to the Treasurer.

Mr. Frank Wilson: How much have you put up for it?

The PREMIER: Not any amount. We could have done it by another method, showing £1 on the Estimates and then brought in an Excess Bill next year, but we did not desire to do that, with the result that we followed the method put into force by our predecessors, by having a sum on which to draw above the amount authorised by Parliament, and bringing in an Excess Bill next session. Let me point out we have provided on the Estimates the increases granted to the railway men, the wages and salaried men. Any increases given are provided on the Estimates. It is only to the salaried men in the public service who are being reclassified, that any increases have to be paid from the advance to the Treasurer, and what the amount will be I have no idea, and I am not justified in showing any amount that may not be correct. As far as the hon. member is concerned, he would not mind if it was not correct, but I want it as correct as possible.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Do I understand the railway men are not to get any increases at all?

The PREMIER: They are getting their increases.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Any more increases?

The PREMIER: I am not in the confidence of the Commissioner, but the Minister for Railways will be able to deal with

these questions when we get to the Railway Estimates.

Mr. Frank Wilson: How soon will the increases be paid?

The PREMIER: The increases given by the head of the Government are paid at the present time.

Mr. Frank Wilson: So they were in my time.

The PREMIER: It was not paid during the time the hon. member was there. We paid it.

Mr. Frank Wilson: They were paid in the next pay after the increase was granted.

The PREMIER: When was it granted?

Mr. Frank Wilson: I gave the dates.

The PREMIER: Just before the election.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Some were after the election, I think in August one lot was paid. It was approved in August and paid on the 3rd September; that is before the election.

The PREMIER: I notice that the reference in the *West Australian* is absolutely correct with regard to the position on the 30th September. It says—

It has also to be remembered that the accumulated deficit of £28,994, as shown on September 30th, did not really indicate the true position, as he considered that the amounts which had subsequently been paid by way of increases in salaries and wages, made retrospective to July 1st, would be a fair charge against the first quarter of the year.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Read on.

The PREMIER: That is the point. It goes on to say—

the Government having had to redeem the promise made the civil servants by the late Government in regard to those increases.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Read further on. The PREMIER: It says—

Had the late Government kept its promise and paid those increases, the deficit would have been considerably greater when the last financial year closed than it had been.

That is absolutely incorrect. The hon. member only read the latter portion. I think I have disposed of the pessimistic

criticism by the hon. member opposite. Let me deal with the question of the loan at present on the local market. I am not here to compare the costs of the raising of that loan with the costs of previous loans, but the condition of the Loan Funds in the Treasury were not satisfactory if we were to continue the works without a break. I looked around to find a market to obtain money at a reasonable price, and I am still quite satisfied that the statement made by the leader of the Opposition is not correct. This loan will be no more expensive than some of the loans raised on London by our predecessors. We will inquire into it at a later stage however. I have already had opinions expressed on the matter from the Government Actuary as to the conditions under which the raising of this loan compare with the conditions of the loans raised in London; that is $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in London and 4 per cent. here. Where the money is paid it is the same cost to the State.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I am sure that is not so.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may be a better actuary; he may have missed his vocation. I think that for the last loan in London you got £92 net, and we shall get £100 here to spend.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I quoted the figures about the whole lot.

The Minister for Lands: You quoted the wrong figures anyhow.

The PREMIER: For the last loan the Government received £92 19s. 9d. per cent.; that appears from the table of the public accounts.

Mr. Frank Wilson: What did it cost the State?

The PREMIER: The position is the same. I am assured by the Government Actuary that the position is the same, but the whole matter will receive proper attention.

Mr. Frank Wilson: What did it cost the State?

The PREMIER: Never mind what it cost the State, it does not matter.

Mr. Frank Wilson: It does matter.

The PREMIER: It does not matter, the position is the same, I am assured by the Government Actuary. At any rate

the whole matter will receive proper consideration and a comparison will be made when this loan is completed. The whole cost will be charged up against it, and the Government Actuary will have the opportunity to give an opinion, and I am confident that, taking over the finances as we did, we have done an excellent deed for Western Australia in providing that money in order to keep our works going. The leader of the Opposition criticised us severely for raising this money locally and taking it away from other channels. Did my hon. friend worry about that when he had plenty of money in the Treasury chest, and yet when the Commonwealth offered him £600,000—

Mr. Frank Wilson: I wanted it.

The PREMIER: He wanted it so much that he immediately transmitted it to London, and it laid there earning 1 per cent. when we were paying 3 per cent. to the Commonwealth for it.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: I say that it was laying in London for a number of months; whilst we were paying the Commonwealth $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. it was only earning there 1 per cent. That is what the hon. member calls good finance.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort; it was on fixed deposit at 3 per cent.

The PREMIER: It is absolutely correct, and at the moment when he obtained this money from the Commonwealth the Treasurer did not require it. He did not see then that it was not desirable to take money locally, and that he would be diverting it from other channels. But it is wrong now when another Government raise the money locally which he probably was unable to find. Let me assure the hon. member a person has to go away from home to hear what people think of him, and very often he can find out more than he wants to know at home. The late Treasurer, at any rate, was not desirous of seeing what the people of Australia thought of his policy, yet we within a month give the people an opportunity of considering our policy, and I can assure the Committee again that I anticipate this loan will be a magnificent

success. I have no more to say, but I again repeat that these Estimates were in course of preparation when the Government assumed office. The Treasurer instructed the departments on the 12th June, 1911, to prepare their Estimates, which were to be supplied by 15th July following. The file further shows that on the 5th October the Estimates for the Lands Department, the Education Department, and the Treasury were being printed, so that it is obvious that the Estimates were in course of preparation.

Mr. Frank Wilson: In the first draft.

The PREMIER: I said that they were in course of preparation, and I have just shown that some of them had been printed; and yet the leader of the Opposition says that I made a wrong statement. I made a correct statement when I said that the Estimates were in course of preparation. Let me say in conclusion that whatever may be the feeling of the hon. gentleman opposite at the people having considered it time that he should leave the Treasury, he ought to be a good enough citizen to assist us in facing the position as we find it.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I am only pointing out your errors.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows the difficulty he had in the first quarter of the present financial year and the strenuous efforts he made to balance the ledger prior to the election, and failed. If that was so, he knows the position is not improved much to-day. I again say to the members of the Committee that with the short time at our disposal it was impossible for us to readjust the methods of finance. We have to accept the position as we find it for this financial year, but we shall apply ourselves closely to this question in recess, and, I believe, with some satisfactory results. But in the meantime, as I said previously, we have full belief in the recuperative powers of this State, and its possibilities and probabilities. If that were not so we would not undertake the works we are putting in hand to-day, although it will involve us in showing a deficit. We might have faked the finances and shown a surplus by neglecting some

of the industries, but we believe that the country can recover itself and that this money which we are spending will be repaid tenfold. We have the greatest confidence in the future of the State, and the statement that we are going to carry on a progressive public works policy is borne out in these Estimates from the first page to the last.

General debate concluded; Votes and items discussed as follows.

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £2,760—agreed to.

Votes—*Executive Council*, £50; *Legislative Council*, £854; *Legislative Assembly*, £2,442; *Joint Houses of Parliament*, £7,020—agreed to.

Vote—*Premier's Office*, £1,090:

Item, Secretary to Premier, £500:

Mr. TAYLOR: This item showed an increase of £100; perhaps the Premier would explain the reason.

The PREMIER: As the head of the department he was responsible for the recommendation that the secretary should receive an increase of £100 per annum.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Fifty pounds, is it not? He got £50 before.

The PREMIER: That arrangement has been altered. Mr. Kessell was not a permanent officer in the service; his services might be dispensed with at a moment's notice, and he had no accruing benefits like other civil servants. That being the case, there was no comparison between the amounts paid to under secretaries of departments and the amount paid to the Premier's secretary. Moreover, the under secretaries were classified by the Public Service Commissioner, who was responsible for the salaries, but the Premier's secretary did not come under the public service, and it must be remembered members might have as to the individual—and there was a certain feeling against him—the Secretary to the Premier was worth £500. He performed as much work in the same time as any other man in the public service, and it must be remembered that the Premier's office was the medium through which passed correspondence with the Commonwealth, the London office, the

Home Government, and the Governor, and the correspondence was of so confidential a nature that unless there was in the office a man who could be trusted it would be a serious thing for the State. Past Premiers had applauded Mr. Kessell's work, but had not had the backbone to put their words into effect before leaving office. He felt that as an employer he should pay the man he employed the salary which he was worth. There were never two days in the Premier's office when the work was of a similar nature. No under secretary in the service was receiving less than £550, and the gentleman who was secretary to the Premier prior to Mr. Kessell occupying the position received £600, and had received it ever since.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The increase was one of which he certainly approved. The position was a most responsible one, and the gentleman who occupied it should certainly be paid the same rate as the lowest paid under secretary. Whether Mr. Kessell was the man for the position or not was not to be discussed, for that was a personal appointment which rested with the Premier for the time being. He had found Mr. Kessell a most painstaking officer, and always available, and it must be remembered that the numerous demands upon the Premier were a continuous strain on the secretary. The least they could do was to pay a man in that responsible and confidential position a salary of £500. In addition to that, Mr. Kessell received £50 out of the London Agency Vote; that brought him up to the level of the lowest paid under secretary, and he was well worth it.

Mr. GREEN moved—

That the item be reduced by £100.

While he was thoroughly aware that the Secretary of the Premier was a busy man, and that the whole of his time was practically taken up, and that he was a specially trained officer, it had to be remembered that there were hundreds of clerks in the service who were just as conscientious, and who were just as capable, but who were not getting half the salary of this officer.

Mr. Frank Wilson: They have not the same responsibility.

Mr. GREEN: There were secretaries in other departments who had just as responsible duties to perform.

The Premier: Absolute nonsense.

Mr. GREEN: It could be imagined that the ex-Premier would regard all his subordinate officers as the important men of the State, just as he regarded himself as the important man of the State. In the Mines Department there was a secretary who was not getting more than about £210, and who was just as busy as the secretary to the Premier, and who had just as good a grasp of his duties.

The Premier: There is no comparison.

Mr. GREEN: It did not even matter what title an officer held so long as he was doing responsible work. He could claim to have a knowledge of the public service, having spent 16 years in it, and he knew that the tendency was that the man who was under the eye of the head of his department was more likely to get an increase than the man out back, and who did not come into contact with his superiors. There were typists and stenographers, girls, many of them, who were working for less than £3 a week, and dozens of clerks who were getting from £130 to £180 a year, and who really were the people who did most of the work. He would not be a party to agreeing to the increase to the secretary of the Premier of £2 a week. In consideration also of the depleted state of the exchequer it was inadvisable to grant that increase.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was to be regretted that the Premier had indicated that there was personal feeling against the officer in question.

Mr. Green: That is not so.

Mr. TAYLOR: Mr. Kessell, the officer in question, had been known to him for years, and his services had always been spoken of highly by those under whom he had been employed. He (Mr. Taylor) however, had always persistently opposed the establishment of a Premier's department. So far back as 11 years ago he had recognised that there was no necessity for it, and when the present principal Under-Secretary, Mr. North, was removed from the position of Under Secretary to the Premier it was understood that the de-

partment would not be built up again. That was done in Mr. Leake's time, and when Sir Walter James became Premier, Mr. Kessell was sent to him from the Railway Department as a shorthand writer, and Mr. Kessell was the only officer the Premier had. Ever since then, however, the Premier's department had been growing steadily. Now it had reached the dimensions which had existed in 1901. The Premier always held another portfolio, and he could always avail himself of the services of the officers connected with that other department. The Premier pointed out that Mr. Kessell had done his work well, and it was satisfactory to know that the Premier was satisfied, but the increase was a very large one to give in one year. If the item were carried there would be no doubt about the fact that Mr. Kessell would require other officers around him, otherwise he would consider that he was not worth the salary he was receiving. It was idle talk to say that if any hon. member were in that position that he would not do exactly the same thing in order to justify the importance of the post. It would be interesting to know how many subordinates the secretary of the Premier had under him at the present time. A salary of £450 should be regarded as a decent wage. In point of responsibility the position was not to be compared with that of an under secretary.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I would sooner be an under secretary than secretary to the Premier.

Mr. TAYLOR: The responsibility was not the same. This officer was private secretary to one Minister as against being secretary to, perhaps, a large spending department. It was idle for the Premier to put forward the plea that the duties of the secretary to the Premier were of equal importance with those performed by an under secretary of a department. If hon. members would look into the question they would realise that his (Mr. Taylor's) statement was nearer to being correct than was the statement made by the Premier.

Mr. DOOLEY: The amendment was deserving of support. It was time we were increasing from the bottom of the

ladder instead of showing preference to those higher up.

The Premier: We give increases at the bottom of the ladder we control, but the bottom of another ladder is under the classification of the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. DOOLEY: There was nothing he had to say against the occupant of the position under discussion, but there were many others who were giving services of far greater value for much less remuneration.

Mr. S. STUBBS: A point being overlooked by hon. members was that the occupant of this office ran the risk of being turned away by each succeeding Premier, in which case he would not be entitled to any compensation whatever. Those referred to by Mr. Dooley as performing better work for less money could not be thus dispensed with at a moment's notice.

Mr. Dooley: Yes, they can.

Mr. S. STUBBS: At all events, it was something to be taken into account, that if some day a Premier came along and determined that the office was not required its occupant would have to go on the shortest possible notice.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The amendment ought to appeal to hon. members. He had found the occupant of the office very obliging, and apparently conscientious in the performance of his duties; but he (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) had ever opposed the raising of salaries in the higher grades while officers in a lower grade were inadequately paid. Until the temporary hands received the increases promised them prior to the last general elections he would oppose any increase whatever to highly paid officials in the public service. The Premier himself had been responsible for the impression which led Mr. S. Stubbs to declare that the occupant of this post could be dispensed with on very brief notice. As a matter of fact while it was not a permanent office yet the present occupant was a permanent official and could not be so easily dispensed with. That would be seen on reference to page 15 of the Public Service list. Although receiving £400 a year as

secretary to the Premier, that officer had a permanent position carrying a salary of £220. This permanent position, of course, was just now filled by another officer; but if the secretary to the Premier were to be removed from his present position it would be open to him to resume his old position at £220.

Mr. Frank Wilson: What a fool he would be.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That might be so, but the fact remained that he was a permanent officer of the service, and although his present position might be abolished, he himself would remain in the service. The present salary the officer was receiving was sufficient for anyone in the service. The position occupied could not be held to be as responsible as the positions of under-secretaries of departments with many officers under them.

Mr. TURVEY: No doubt the Premier's secretary was deserving of all the kind references made, but the Government were not justified in giving the increase in view of the present state of the finances, and in view of the fact that many Government servants had received no increase for a considerable number of years.

Mr. McDOWALL: If the lowest paid sections of the service would be unfairly dealt with in consequence of increases of this kind, he would not support this increase, but the Government were doing all they possibly could do to treat everyone fairly. A salary was always a question of degree. It was absurd to say the position of secretary to the Premier was not a responsible one. There was a general complaint that we were unable to keep the really good men in the public service, because they left the service on account of the niggardly treatment meted out to them. When we had good men doing good work the salaries should be commensurate. The salary paid to Mr. Kessell was little enough. It was merely the salary paid to the lowest paid under secretary, and considering there were no pension attached to it, it was little enough for a man in a temporary position to receive to make provision for old age.

Mr. DWYER: No doubt Mr. Kessell was an excellent secretary, and an ex-

cellent clerk, but the position was scarcely worth £550, including the allowance from the London Agency Vote, and the work Mr. Kessell did was not commensurate with the salary. No organising capacity or ability was needed to control the office, whereas there were men throughout the service with large numbers of subordinates under them who were not receiving £500. The fact of having many subordinates under an officer was *prima facie* evidence that the officer was doing good work.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It might be a guarantee of inefficiency.

Mr. DWYER: If officers were too numerous the fault lay with the Minister through not exercising proper authority. It was claimed that Mr. Kessell would not enjoy a pension based on the salary he received as secretary to the Premier, but the probability was that whenever he retired from the service the pension would be fixed according to what he received at the time of retiring, and not according to his public service classification. Members of the Labour party were departing from their policy of increasing the wages of the lower paid State servants, when they sought to increase the salary of an officer already well paid at £400; and even then, speaking from an experience of 10 years in the public service, the officer was receiving the very maximum he was entitled to and was being liberally treated.

Mr. MALE: One was surprised that there should be any opposition to the increase to Mr. Kessell. Anyone who had come into contact with that officer and knew the work which he undertook, and the position he occupied in the Premier's office was aware that he fully deserved the increase. The position he occupied was one of great importance, he was not an ordinary secretary to the Premier but a confidential secretary, and information came within his knowledge that unless he were adequately paid, if he were an unscrupulous man, might leak out. The position is quite worth the salary proposed.

Mr. THOMAS: We were unable to give increases to many deserving public

servants, yet the Premier selected the man nearest to himself to grant a favour. The other civil servants were at the mercy of the public service board, but this officer was selected for special favour and his case brought before Parliament with the strong recommendation of the Premier behind it. Members had talked of the growing requirements of the Premier's office, and that was one of the reasons why he intended to vote against the increase. There would soon be a second Premier if things went on as they were going, because the secretary to the Premier was beginning to assume much of the importance that belonged to the Premier himself, and soon it would be that when the Premier spoke he would simply have to re-echo the desires of his secretary. If the work was increasing so much in the Premier's office it was time we had another Minister, so as to take some of the work from the Premier, and not make the Premier's secretary such a highly important person. Largely, his reason for voting in support of the amendment was that we could not give the same rate of increase to others who were equally deserving—men on the poverty line.

MR. TROY: It was only because he held the strongest possible opinions on this matter that he spoke. With other members he held the opinion that this officer was not entitled to the increase. If we compared the work that had to be performed by this officer with the work done by other officers it would be found his responsibility was not so great as that of others. There were wardens in the State who performed the work of a Supreme Court judge and they drew little more than the salary which was put down to this officer. The Deputy Manager of the Agricultural Bank only received £420, and the responsibility of this officer was far greater than that of the secretary to the Premier. The manager of the Savings Bank, who was responsible for some four millions of money, received only £500 a year. The Government were not acting wisely in giving this officer this increase while denying it to others.

The secretary for the greatest trading concern in Western Australia, the railways, received a salary of £550, and if the increase were given to Mr. Kessell he would receive a similar salary. The Crown Solicitor and the Crown Prosecutor each received £550 a year, and last, but not least, the Under Secretary for Public Works, a department which was responsible for the expenditure of the whole of our revenue and loan moneys on works, received the salary of £550. Without any personal feeling against Mr. Kessell, who he believed was a valuable officer, his work and responsibility did not entitle him to the same salary as the other officers whose responsibility was greater. Because Mr. Kessell came under the direct observation of the Premier more consideration was extended to him than to other officers who did not come under the personal observation of the Premier or Ministers, but who did equally important work. He felt strongly because he did not think it was fair, reasonable, or just. He knew Mr. Kessell could make himself invaluable to the office, but at the same time there were hundreds of officers filling positions equally as important as that filled by Mr. Kessell. So strongly did he feel on the matter that he would vote for the amendment.

THE PREMIER: After hearing members speak so eloquently against the increase he was satisfied he had hit the mark exactly. He took the full responsibility of having recommended the increase, and, so long as he held an office under the Crown where he was called upon to express an opinion, and he thought an officer deserved an increase, he was going to recommend Parliament to pay a salary commensurate with the work performed. Let him tell the Speaker, when he referred to the secretary for railways that there was no such position. The secretary for railways was secretary to the Commissioner, and in the Railway Department every branch had a highly paid official, and there was a secretary to every highly paid officer. The secretary to the Commissioner was no more than a clerk

through whom the files were transmitted. The member for Perth had shown personal bias.

Mr. Dwyer rose to order.

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier must not accuse a member of personal bias.

The PREMIER: Then he would say that the member showed bad taste.

Mr. Dwyer: Was the Premier in order in saying that he had shown bad taste?

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier was in order.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had shown bad taste in trying to ridicule the officer in the manner which he had done. He (the Premier) still held the opinion that this officer was not being overpaid when he received the minimum amount paid to any under secretary in any other department. In some departments there were under secretaries who had no more responsibility than some clerks. Where there was a big department there were sub-departments. In the Works Department would anyone claim that the under-secretary was responsible for everything that transpired in the department? He was merely the channel through which the files moved from the sub-departments to the Minister. There was no under secretary who carried more responsibility from a Government standpoint than the secretary to the Premier. Nothing of importance transpired in the various departments that did not come into the Premier's office, and if the secretary was not a gentleman who could be trusted the Government might at times be landed in a very difficult position. The gentleman in that office should receive a salary commensurate with his responsibilities. Unfortunately a lot of feeling had been introduced into the debate which showed that it was not the position which was being considered but the gentleman who occupied it.

Mr. CARPENTER: It was to be hoped that before the vote was taken the Premier would modify his last statement. He intended to vote for the amendment, although he had known Mr. Kessell for twenty years and had always held him in high esteem. The accusation of personal bias should not have been made by the

Premier. If a mistake had been made it was in making the amount of the increase rather large. If £50 had been put down as an increase there would not have been much objection, but when an officer's salary was increased by 25 per cent. the proportion of the advance seemed rather large.

Mr. DWYER: A reference to the public service list proved definitely and distinctly that there was no personal bias against Mr. Kessell on the part of members who were supporting the amendment. As one who had long experience of the public service he could say that if Mr. Kessell received £500 a year he would be paid more, proportionately, than many other officers in the service. The accountant in the Treasury received only £450 and his duties were higher than Mr. Kessell's.

Mr. Frank Wilson: There is no comparison.

Mr. DWYER: The Stores Manager received £450, the Government Printer £530, and the clerk in charge of the Education Department £300, whilst the proposed salary of Mr. Kessell would place him higher than the majority of the stipendiary magistrates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of them work only an hour a day.

Mr. DWYER: But their work was of tremendous importance in settling the civil rights between party and party and in assessing the liability for crime. He had nothing against Mr. Kessell personally, but he did not believe the position was worth £500. In the present position of the finances and when so many civil servants were underpaid it was not right to give this officer an increase of £100.

Mr. THOMAS: To some remarks which he had made when speaking at an earlier stage the Premier seemed to have taken great exception. There was no intention of reflecting on the Premier, and if it appeared that he had done so he desired to express his regret.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was regrettable that so much feeling had been exhibited by the Premier and it was untrue to say that members were showing any bias so

far as the individual officer was concerned.

Mr. Heitmann: There is a feeling against him; I have heard of it.

Mr. TAYLOR: Mr. Kessell had always appeared to be a most obliging officer and there was no objection to him personally, but there was an objection to this department growing again to the size it was 10 years ago; and if a highly paid officer were placed in that department he would be bound to get a staff around him to justify his existence. In some cases the stipendiary magistrates of the State received smaller salaries than it was proposed to give this officer. There was no occasion for warmth in dealing with this matter, and the only bitterness in this discussion had been engendered by the Premier. It was to be hoped that was not going to be the attitude of Ministers in defending their estimates, because if it was they would have a hopeless chance of getting through their work before Christmas. If this was the way members were going to be treated, they might as well declare the Premier a dictator and say that no member dare open his mouth against the leader of the Government. The Premier when sitting in Opposition used to describe the supporters of the then Government as dumb driven cattle, afraid to open their mouths, and now when he had men who were prepared to defend him when he was right in his policy, he must expect them, when they thought there was an injustice being done, to raise their voices, and he must allow them that right as representatives of a liberty-loving people. If the Premier thought the constituencies could be represented by members on their stomachs in Parliament he was making a mistake.

The Premier: You have got your voice again; you were pretty silent during the elections.

Mr. TAYLOR: Dirt!

The Premier: But you missed the bus.

Mr. TAYLOR: More dirt! If the Premier was going to lead his party by that kind of dirt he would find himself mistaken; nothing had been said to justify that remark. Members had only to note

the attitude of the Premier in regard to a perfectly jocular remark on the part of the member for Bunbury.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Is the hon. member jocular now?

Mr. TAYLOR: No; but the Premier would soon expect a rifle to pot a member every time he rose to speak.

Mr. McDOWALL: According to the Public Service List the first magistrate received £700, with £50 allowance; the next £700; the next £600; the next £700, with £81 allowance; the next £560; the next £680, with a district allowance of £104; the next £600, with a district allowance of £104; the next £520, and so on. When these comparisons were made they would be found to be perfectly fair and legitimate. The actual salary that was being paid to the manager of the bank was a different thing from the salary being paid to the secretary to the Premier. The secretary occupied a responsible position, different situations cropped up every day, intelligence and initiative were necessary, and it was advisable on occasions to be able to do certain things, but the head of a department had practically nothing but routine work to do from morning till night, and then he had many assistants. Under the circumstances the comparisons which had been made were irrelevant. It was his intention to support the increase, because if we desired to have good officers we should pay them decently.

Mr. TAYLOR: The quotations he had made were taken from page 64 of the Estimates, where it would be found that the salaries of the magistrates were set down as he had read them. He had not looked at the Public Service Commissioner's Report because members had not been dealing with that, but the Estimates.

Amendment (to reduce the item by £100) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	18

Majority against .. 2

AYES.

Mr. Carpenter
Mr. Dooley
Mr. Dwyer
Mr. Foley
Mr. Gill
Mr. Green
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Lander
Mr. Lewis

Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Troy
Mr. Turvey
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heitmann
(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Allen
Mr. Angwin
Mr. Bath
Mr. Collier
Mr. Harper
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. McDowall
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger

Mr. Moore
Mr. Mullany
Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Male
(Teller).

PAIR.—For the amendment: Mr. E. B. Johnston.
Against: Mr. A. E. Plesse.

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. GREEN moved a further amendment—

That the item be reduced by £50.

The PREMIER: An assurance would be given to the hon. member that when the Committee reached the item of £50, which was provided for the work that this officer did for the Agent General, he would move that it be deleted.

Mr. GREEN: By permission he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—*Treasurer*, £8,795; *Audit*, £8,354; *Compassionate allowances*, £1,721—agreed to.

Vote—*Government Savings Bank*, £18,178:

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In order to prove consistency he desired once again to call attention to the first item, that of the salary of the manager of the bank, £500. He had previously pointed out that this officer was controlling a very great amount of money, and seeing that increases were flying around, even unto the secretary to the Premier—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not refer to votes which had been passed.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was not a reference which he was making, it was a

mere allusion. He had spoken repeatedly on this item, and if there was a possible chance of increasing the officer's salary the Government should do so. The manager of the bank was more entitled to an increase than many of those who had received increases. In many of the succeeding votes increases were provided, and this officer should not have been overlooked. Many officers received considerably more than the manager of the Savings Bank and did not have half the responsibility. It was to be hoped the Government would take into consideration the advisability of increasing the amount.

The PREMIER: The position of the manager of the Savings Bank was a classified one in the service, and it had to be remembered at the present time that there was a reclassification being conducted by a special board.

Mr. Lander: How long has that been going on?

The PREMIER: For some months now. Any increases which would be recommended would be made retrospective as from the 1st July.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Whilst believing that any person holding a responsible position as manager of the Savings Bank should receive a salary commensurate with that position, he could not help noticing in the list that junior officers were receiving as little as £60 a year, while the office cleaner and night watchman was in receipt of 8s. a day. We should first show our generosity among the lower ranks.

The PREMIER: The officers of this department were all classified under the Public Service Commissioner's scheme and were moved up systematically. Those at £60 a year were probably boys just out of school. If we were going to decide what salaries should be paid to every member of the public service we would require to abolish the Public Service Act.

Mr. MITCHELL: It was to be hoped that if under the re-classification the manager of the Bank was not properly provided for, the Treasurer would see that justice was done to this officer. Had the Premier yet received the re-classification, or any part of it?

The PREMIER: No part of the re-classification had yet been received, although he believed the clerical division was finished. The Government were desirous that the several divisions should be announced together.

Mr. Mitchell: Will we get that before the session closes?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: All through this vote it was seen that clerks were paid at a lower salary than was paid in the London Office. In his opinion, a Savings Bank clerk should be paid a fair salary just the same as any other clerk. The whole of the Savings Bank list of wages was below the average of the other departments.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Government Stores*, £9,924—agreed to.

Vote—*Indenting Office*, £3,098:

Item. Income Tax (British), £14:

Mr. MALE: Would the Premier explain this item?

The PREMIER: It was for the purpose of paying the British income tax on the salary of an officer in London.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Mr. Salter, who was the officer in question, had to pay West Australian income tax, while we paid his British income tax.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Literary and Scientific Grants*, £14,050.

Item, University Extension Lecturers—grant to Kalgoorlie Mechanics Institute, £25:

Mr. DOOLEY: Immediately following upon this there was a similar grant to the Perth Literary Institute. If these grants could be made to Perth and Kalgoorlie, why could they not be made to Geraldton, where a lecturer had recently been secured at some expense?

The PREMIER: This was the usual grant for the securing of university lecturers from the other States. He had no knowledge of any lecturer at Geraldton, but if at Geraldton they were encouraging lecturers, and made application for a similar grant, that application would be considered.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Lithographic*, £7,085—agreed to.

Vote—*London Agency*, £4,622:

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The office of Agent General ought to be abolished. For five years he had held that opinion. The Commonwealth had now appointed a High Commissioner, and all that was required by an individual State as a representative in London was a business man to transact whatever business the State Government required. When it came to attending banquets and making after-dinner speeches there was the Federal High Commissioner to fall back upon. He would like to have from the Premier an indication of the intentions of the Government with regard to the post of Agent General.

Item—*Extra Clerical Assistance*, £70:

Mr. DOOLEY: This was the item including the £50 voted to the Premier's secretary. It was understood the Premier was going to delete the £50.

The Premier: Move to reduce it.

Mr. DOOLEY moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £50.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Reducing this item by £50 would leave £20. What clerical assistance would that provide?

The PREMIER: In reference to the London Agency generally, the Agent General was appointed for a definite term, but prior to the expiration of the present Agent's General's term possibly the whole of the Australian Agencies would be under one roof and there might be joint effort in regard to representation in London. Until such took place the Government could not take any steps.

Mr. Frank Wilson: You will not do away with our representation?

The PREMIER: No. The Government would need to consider what attitude they would adopt. The £20 that would be left in this item if the amendment were carried was provided to meet any sudden rush of work in the London Agency. Last year £31 was spent in this direction.

Amendment put and passed.

Vote (as reduced to £4,572)—put and passed.

Vote—*Printing*, £33,158—agreed to.

Note—Public Service Commissioner, £1,105.

MR. DOOLEY: Did the Government intend to continue the office of Public Service Commissioner when the term of the present holder of the position expired in a few months? It was a matter causing dissatisfaction right throughout the service, and in the interests of the country and a contented and competent staff of public servants it was a matter that should be taken into serious consideration. The system of having an independent Commissioner had proved an absolute failure. Though it was hailed with a good deal of satisfaction at the time it was started, the result had shown that it really had the effect of driving good men out of the service.

MR. FRANK WILSON: How many have gone away?

MR. DOOLEY: A fair number. People claimed the very essence of the ability of our departments was leaving the service. Mr. Triggs, the Comptroller of Accounts in the Railway Department was one very capable man whom the Commonwealth had rushed at a considerably enhanced salary. That was one case that could be mentioned on the spur of the moment to justify what was claimed. The position of temporary employees under the present arrangement was also a matter for serious consideration. Temporary employees were not given more than common labourers asked for. But the dissatisfaction against the Public Service Commissioner mainly arose from the fact that the Commissioner had power to inflict a penalty or to decide a man's position in the service, and if a man with a grievance in this respect wished to appeal he found himself again confronted by Mr. Jull, and perhaps treated in a very flippant way. Our experience of the present system showed we could not hope for any success from its continuance. It would be better to divide the departments and make the different heads of the department responsible to the Ministers for carrying out the administration of their department, and we could have a proper court of appeal as was adopted in the Railway Department.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member did not seriously expect a pronouncement in regard to what action the Government were likely to take towards the future employment of the present Public Service Commissioner.

MR. DOOLEY: Parliament would not meet again until after the time when the position must be re-affirmed.

THE PREMIER: That was true, but the hon. member must trust the Government to deal with such matters. That was absolutely essential, otherwise Parliament would have to remain in session the whole time. This subject had not been dealt with by the Government, and it was unfair to expect a pronouncement without its having been given consideration. The hon. member knew the circumstances, that Mr. Jull had been offered re-appointment for a period of seven years, and had been granted long service leave. The Government had not yet decided whether they were morally bound to accept the position as arrived at.

MR. UNDERWOOD: Several members were of opinion that the present Commissioner was not suitable. They had no desire to rush things, but wished to say in advance that they would be sadly disappointed if the present Commissioner was re-appointed. As the House would soon be disbanded for six months, it would not be out of place for members to ask the Ministry to bear in mind, when taking this matter into consideration, that they did not expect the present Commissioner to be re-appointed.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Having in opposition frequently taken up the cudgels on behalf of the Public Service Commissioner, nothing had led him to change his opinion. Did members think it possible for any Government to appoint a gentleman to fill the position of Public Service Commissioner who could absolutely suit every person in the community and every member in the House, and not arouse criticism or prompt those who came under his control to criticise or find complaint against his actions?

MR. DOOLEY: That is beyond the power of any man. But it is the system that is wrong.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would be impossible for any Minister to fulfil the duties he would be saddled with if the departments were split up under separate control as the member for Geraldton suggested.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Whatever opinion might be held with regard to the qualification of one gentleman or another for the position, there was no one who would deny that it was essential that the questions of regulating the control of the public service and the question of promotion—the conditions generally governing the public service—must be in the hands of the Commissioner, and we were not likely to retrace our steps. This fact should be impressed upon members that we might make a change every year without ever being able to appoint an officer to that position who would satisfy everyone, and who would be above criticism.

Mr. HARPER: The remarks of the Minister for Lands met with his support. It was an onerous task to fill the position of Public Service Commissioner, and it would be impossible to give satisfaction even to a small percentage of those who were concerned. He knew what the position was, and would not have it even for a good deal more than the Commissioner was receiving. It would be an easy enough matter for the Commissioner (and he would make himself very popular if he consented) to increase the salaries of the various officers, but the Commissioner had to be largely guided by the financial position of the State, and he was largely controlled by the amount of money at his disposal. Everyone knew that at the present time the people were bearing a heavy burden because they were only a handful, and the State was very large, and the resources had not been developed to the extent which everyone hoped for in the near future.

Mr. DOOLEY: It was not his idea that the Minister should control and supervise every individual member of his staff. What he desired to convey was that the Minister controlling the department should be the head of that de-

partment, and administer the working of the staff through his under secretary, which would be an eminently practical idea. Then, of course, there might be constituted an appeal board which could deal with all troubles which might arise in that particular department. That appeal board would be familiar with the matters which would be brought under their notice, and they would not have great difficulty in dealing with them. He had nothing to say against the Commissioner except that it was beyond his human power, or the human power of anyone, to get a thorough grasp of all the different matters which came under his notice, and to make himself completely familiar with everything. Mr. Jull had not had a professional training, and he was called upon to deal with men of high professional qualifications. The Commissioner was the final arbiter in all matters, some of which were of a very intricate and highly technical character. So that, while there was that position in existence, it was impossible to expect one man to administer correctly the various branches of the service. If each department were controlled by a competent under secretary, who would make himself properly acquainted with every individual in the service, which was always done in connection with private employment, there would be no difficulty in seeing that justice was done, and then if an appeal board were appointed, there would be no doubt whatever about justice being meted out. Then the Commissioner's duties would be lighter than they were at present, and greater satisfaction would be given to the staff, and the outcome would be to create a feeling of enthusiasm and contentment among the officers of the service. When officers knew that special services put forward by them were to be recognised, there would be a proper spirit created in the service, and the State would get full value for the money expended with a minimum amount of work to the official head.

Mr. TURVEY: To his mind the fault did not altogether lie with the Commissioner, who was there to administer the Act. There had always been discontent in the service, and when Mr. Jull took

charge, it was stated that the service was seething with discontent. Mr. Jull had an arduous task to carry out in having to deal with such a number of public servants. It was well to remember that in dealing with them he had frequently to deal with appointments that were proposed. Members representing particular electorates often had occasion to call on permanent heads in regard to appointments, and they were told that the matters had been passed on to the Public Service Commissioner. Frequently individual grievances existed, and it was not possible to get redress from the particular department, and members on making investigations were calmly told that the matter had been passed on to the Commissioner, who had to deal with the grievances. There was great discontent at the present time among the temporary employees, and that matter it was to be hoped would be remedied in the near future. Those employees who had been for a number of years on the temporary list should be given the opportunity to retain their positions as permanent employees, provided, of course, that they had proved themselves men of merit. It was noticed that the number of temporary employees was steadily increasing year after year, and that had given great concern. The public service should be given a proper appeal board. If one read the sixth annual report of the Public Service Commissioner, it would be found that the Commissioner had dealt with the service in a most capable manner, so far as the existing Act would permit him. The remedy lay in the amendment of the Act, by which the existing anomalies might be removed. If in the Public Service Commissioner we had an officer who gave general satisfaction to the service, that would be the worst recommendation that officer could possibly have. To members who believed that the Commissioner was responsible for alleged grievances, he would say let us have something specific, and if these specific cases were brought forward and proved, he would be the first to say that the Commissioner should be sent about his business, but until that was done

it was not fair to cast all the blame upon Mr. Jull.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: After the speech of the Minister for Lands it was clear that the disgraceful reappointment of Mr. Jull by the late Ministry would be ratified by the present Ministry.

The Minister for Lands: I did not say it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, but it was easy to read between the lines. He was sorry that this decision should have been arrived at. Mr. Turvey had said that when Mr. Jull was appointed seven years ago the service was seething with discontent. It was common knowledge that the service still seethed with discontent, and that the Public Service Commissioner had proved to be absolutely incompetent. All that Mr. Jull had done in that time had been to increase the seething of the discontent; that being so it was time we tried somebody else.

Mr. TAYLOR: The first Labour Government had passed the Bill which led to the appointment of Mr. Jull in the teeth of bitter opposition. Unfortunately, immediately after the appointment of Mr. Jull, those who had so strongly opposed that appointment took over the reins of office, and without any personal feeling he could say that in his opinion for the first three or four years the Public Service Commissioner had not received from the then Government that sympathy which was necessary for him to make a success of the position. Had Mr. Jull come from some other country he would have been in a much better position to administer the Act, because he would have had so much more sympathy from the Government. Had there not been a change of Government, had those who opposed his appointment not suddenly come into power, Mr. Jull would have had reasonable sympathy extended to him in his task. Mr. Jull had always proved himself to be a highly capable officer, and it was questionable whether any other man in the position could have done better work than Mr. Jull had done.

Mr. MITCHELL: It would have been utterly impossible for Mr. Jull to carry

out his work satisfactorily, as he had done, had he not had the assistance of the under secretaries, whose duty it was to protect those under them and to see that the Public Service Commissioner was made aware of the value of every man in the respective departments. It would be a great pity to revert to Ministerial control. To begin with, Ministers had not the necessary time to give to the detail of staff appointments. Moreover, under the system of Ministerial control the officers near to Ministers were apt to receive unduly favourable treatment. Under a Public Service Commissioner it was very different. It might at least be claimed for Mr. Jull that he had great common sense and a wide experience of the departments in all their ramifications. It had been said that the Public Service Commissioner had at times made appointments which had not proved satisfactory. Be that as it might, it was evident that Mr. Jull had on the whole been highly successful, and probably no other man in his position would have been able to claim so large a percentage of thoroughly successful appointments made. In appointing Mr. Jull the first Labour Government had selected wisely. It was, of course, impossible for Mr. Jull to give satisfaction all round, but if Ministers would but allow him Mr. Jull would be very pleased indeed to increase salaries, and it was the necessity for such increases rather than any shortcomings in Mr. Jull himself which was the sore point with the service. It was fashionable to blame the Public Service Commissioner for all that happened, but Mr. Jull was not always to blame; for, after all, he had but to recommend, and his recommendations were not invariably endorsed by Ministers. During the past three or four years the members of the late Cabinet had learned to appreciate Mr. Jull at his true worth.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suppose he did everything you wanted.

Mr. Dwyer: And you gave him his reward by reappointing him.

Mr. MITCHELL: Why should he not be reappointed for long and faithful ser-

vices? I have had six years' experience of Mr. Jull and found him very helpful.

Mr. Heitmann: Did he appoint those three experts of yours?

Mr. MITCHELL: Yes.

Mr. Dwyer: Who recommended them?

Mr. MITCHELL: Mr. Jull had recommended them.

Mr. Dwyer: Who appointed them?

Mr. MITCHELL: The then Minister for Lands had appointed them, and the appointments were to Mr. Jull's credit. During the six years to which he had referred, the departments, through Mr. Jull's good offices, had got rid of a number of underserving officials. The Commissioner had many unpleasant duties to perform, and he had performed them fearlessly. In the inquiries which frequently took place he had displayed great ability and he had done justice both to the officers and to the country. If he had earned unpopularity it was because he had done justice to those who had employed him, and because he had not had the money at his disposal to recommend larger salaries in the service. So far as his re-appointment was concerned, the late Government desired that the reclassification should be carried out, and they considered that it would be unfair to ask Mr. Jull to start the classification unless he was to be given an opportunity to complete it; and when he asked whether the Government had confidence in him and intended to re-appoint him they unhesitatingly replied in the affirmative.

The Premier: How could you give him nine months' leave of absence from April if he could not complete his classification?

Mr. MITCHELL: He would complete his classification before he obtained his leave. He was entitled to 12 months leave.

Mr. Swan: He is entitled to permanent leave, and that is what he should get.

Mr. MITCHELL: The late Government had been justified in re-appointing Mr. Jull, for there was no other man in the community who would fill the position as well. They considered he had done his work well, and they took the responsibility of re-appointing him. It was to be hoped that that re-appointment would be

confirmed. During six years' experience of Mr. Jull he had found him a most capable gentleman, and members should remember that he was not in the House to speak for himself, and that many who condemned him knew little of the service except what they heard from discontented men. The discontent in the service was due to the smallness of the salaries received by many men at a time when the cost of living was high.

Mr. Dwyer: The classification has a lot to do with it.

Mr. MITCHELL: The real trouble was that the public servants wanted more money. However a reclassification was being made, but even after it was completed there would still be discontent. His sympathies were with the married men who received small salaries, but the Treasurer had to make both ends meet, and except by very rigid economy he could not increase the salaries very much. The Public Service Commissioner deserved well at the hands of the Government and of Parliament, and it was to be hoped that he would occupy the position for many years, for if a change were made the service would soon wish him back.

Mr. SWAN: It was to be hoped that the member for Pilbarra had misjudged the intentions of the Ministry in regard to the appointment of Mr. Jull, because the sooner that gentleman was got rid of the better it would be for the service and for the country. If he had not been re-appointed, an appointment would be made before Parliament met again and members should take the opportunity of indicating their opinion. The majority of the members believed that the sooner Mr. Jull was out of the service the better service the State would have. The member for Northam had stated that Mr. Jull had got rid of many undesirable servants, but that member, together with Mr. Jull, had got rid of some of the State's most capable officers and left in the service some of the biggest wasters ever inflicted on a community. The public service would be all the better if some of the under secretaries as well as Mr. Jull could be got rid of, and that was what he as a supporter of

the Government expected them to do. Was the Public Service Commissioner responsible for assisting the present member for Northam in his beautifully thought-out scheme for settling civil servants on the land?

Mr. Mitchell: He had nothing to do with it.

Mr. SWAN: Then there was one charge removed from Mr. Jull, because this was the worst proposal ever worked out in any community. It had resulted in giving the State a lot of indifferent settlers and depriving the service of some very capable officers. Good men who had been kept back from promotion by incompetents in the departments had gone on the land and many of them had made a failure.

Mr. Taylor: Some of them are doing well.

Mr. SWAN: Very few of them were doing well.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has been a dry season, you know.

Mr. Mitchell: The member for North Perth knows nothing about it.

Mr. SWAN: When the member for Northam had spoken the last word had been said. He knew something about the incompetence of the Public Service Commissioner, and the incompetence of the late Minister for Lands at any rate. During Mr. Jull's reign we had built up the most discontented public service in the Commonwealth. Whatever that gentleman might know about the clerical staff he knew nothing about the professional staff who formed a large and important portion of the public service. If a motion were made to reduce the item by a nominal amount members could indicate to the Government their desire that Mr. Jull should not be re-appointed if it was possible to avoid it.

Mr. DWYER: The member for Northam had referred to the number of civil servants in the Perth electorate, but there were just as many in the Northam electorate, in West Perth, East Perth, and Claremont, and in many other constituencies represented by both Government and Opposition members. The public service was a good service, and an efficient one, and we had only ourselves to blame

if it was not a loyal one. That it was seething with discontent was not altogether because salaries were not increased, but because of the classification fixed by the present Commissioner, who had neither the trust nor the confidence of the service. Mr. Jull was practically a Czar, notwithstanding the liberty that rested on Ministers. The only thing that would justify a man being a Czar would be his possessing the trust and the confidence of the service.

The Minister for Works: He could easily purchase that.

Mr. DWYER: Unless a man's personality and heart qualified him to merit the confidence of others, all the bribes he could hold out would not gain him that trust and confidence which, for instance, we repose in our judges. Mr. Jull would not consciously deal unjustly with any man or any body of men, but the public service would not be so discontented unless there were contributory causes in the person of the Commissioner. There were always personal grievances in any service, but grievances were not general throughout a service unless there was some fundamental reason. The Public Service List was the strongest indictment that could be brought against Mr. Jull, because it showed there were 824 officers on the temporary staff as against only 1,329 on the permanent staff. The relative proportion was the strongest condemnation of Mr. Jull's administration.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is always drawing attention to it.

Mr. DWYER: Why was it the Commissioner complained about it? Because apparently he was incompetent to indicate a remedy. He had been in office sufficiently long to suggest one, and showed little acquaintance with the Act in claiming it did not allow him to get a remedy. The sixth annual report of the Commissioner, the sixth milestone in his career as Commissioner, every milestone only serving to accentuate the discontent, contained a list of grievances to which the Civil Service Journal, just to hand, had replied seriatim. Members, in dealing with the Commissioner's report,

should consider the Civil Service Association's reply at the same time. The past Ministry, in the throes of their death agonies, with the shadow of death hanging over them, and with their graves being dug, and without hope of resurrection, had re-appointed Mr. Jull in order that their successors might carry him and the grievances of the public servants on their backs. It was an action wholly unjustifiable, and wrongly conceived and carried out. It was to be hoped some means would be found of ascertaining the wishes of the service in reference to the re-appointment, or, if it was not found possible to cancel the whole seven years, of fixing some term whereby there would be some means of redressing the discontent and trouble under which the public servants existed. There was no need for the reappointment. Apparently Mr. Jull did not associate himself with the two new Commissioners, and left them to wander at their own free will through the service and place their recommendations before him, evidently considering he understood the needs and requirements of the service without personal investigation. These two gentlemen who undertook the re-classification of the clerical division were also doing the professional division, but it was an absurdity to classify professional men by men with no knowledge of the intricacies of the professional staffs' duties, status, and requirements. When engineers and surveyors had to be classified as well as other professional gentlemen the services of a professional should be obtained to carry out the duty.

The Minister for Works: What professional man would you get?

Mr. DWYER: In the case of engineers and surveyors the proper professional man would be a gentleman who possessed the dual qualifications of engineer and surveyor.

The Minister for Works: You may be surprised to know that Mr. Jull possesses those qualifications. It shows that you are talking of a thing you know nothing about.

Mr. DWYER: It would indeed surprise him to learn that and he challenged the

Minister to place Mr. Jull's qualifications on the table of the House.

The Minister for Works: Will you withdraw and apologise if I do?

Mr. DWYER: Certainly, both to the Minister and to Mr. Jull. It is to be hoped that the reappointment of Mr. Jull would not be carried out and that some means would be found to restore contentment to the service from which the Government expected loyalty.

Mr. SWAN: In order to get an expression of opinion from members which would give an indication to the Government how the Committee felt on the subject he moved an amendment—

That the vote be reduced by £5.

The CHAIRMAN: It was ruled some years ago that a vote could not be reduced by a nominal sum and it was his intention to adhere to that ruling.

Mr. SWAN: If it was necessary to move a substantial sum he would alter his amendment and make it read—

That the vote be reduced by £105.

His sole desire was to give an indication to the Government of the opinion of members on the subject. Mr. Jull had served the purpose of the late Government as a scapegoat very well, and the reason for that gentleman's permanent reappointment could well be understood. The late Government thought that if they managed to weather the gale at the elections Mr. Jull would continue to serve their purpose and if they were defeated, by having reappointed him, they would be protecting an old friend against the incoming Government.

Mr. HEITMANN: It seemed a pity that members had not been given an opportunity to discuss the merits or demerits of this particular officer or rather to discuss the question of the whole of the civil service and the Public Service Act. When the Act was introduced to Parliament the object was to prevent political and outside influence being brought to bear in connection with appointments to the service. It was well known that the party then in Opposition were bitterly opposed to the measure and as stated by the member for Mount Margaret the Bill was partly through the

House and the Commissioner actually appointed when the Government were turned out, and the then Opposition assumed office. The member for Northam indicated that two or three years after the Government took office the relations between that Government and Mr. Jull were not of the best.

Mr. Mitchell: I did not convey that idea. I said there was a better understanding in later years.

Mr. HEITMANN: That amounted to the same thing. Two or three years after Mr. Jull was appointed he fell foul of the Government on many occasions and if the information given him was correct, Mr. Jull was not allowed to administer the Act as it should have been administered. Whenever Mr. Jull came into conflict with the wishes of the Government, Mr. Jull was of course at fault, and after a couple of years of this kind of fighting he had to admit defeat. The complaint against Mr. Jull—if it was a complaint—was that he was not sufficiently strong to overcome the Government. It was well known that the last Government had no sympathy with the Public Service Act because they could not make appointments as they liked. Hundreds of appointments had been made to the temporary staff, many of which should have been made on the permanent staff. Mr. Jull had had very little to say in regard to these appointments and a number of cases were known where Mr. Jull's wishes had been flouted. A case in point was with regard to the inspectors of the Education Department who came under the Public Service Commissioner. The year before last applications were called for the position of inspector, and Mr. Jull decided to make a certain appointment, but rather than fall in with his view the Government withdrew the matter from him and instead of appointing an inspector they appointed what they called an advisory teacher, who was an inspector pure and simple. Several instances in the same direction could be quoted. One hon. member had indicated that it would be preferable to go back to the old system and allow the control of the department to be in the hands of the under secretaries. In

1904 when the Labour party were in office the finances were such that it was necessary to make some retrenchment and the then Government indicated that it had to be brought about. What was the result? Some of the under-secretaries, knowing that some of the men who were close to them had more ability than themselves, recommended that these men, who were the best in the service, should be retrenched. That, however, was not successful and the Government were prompted to bring in the Public Service Act. It would be a pity if the Public Service Act were now repealed because members and Ministers could get out of a lot of trouble by having it on the statute-book. Members of Parliament were forced to endeavour to obtain positions in the service for friends, or the friends of friends, and that kind of thing had been carried on by the last Government. Over 300 positions which should have been permanent were now filled by temporary men. It would be disastrous if we placed on the shoulders of the Ministers the whole of the control of the service; moreover, it would not be fair to them, nor would it be fair to the public. Another case might be quoted to show what could be done by having so many temporary men in the service and having so many officers out of the Commissioner's control. A short time ago a man was appointed Inspector of Health on the temporary staff and he was found to be unsuitable. It was suddenly discovered that his services were required at Bunbury and as it happened a Minister of the Crown wired to his colleague in charge of that department asking that the inspector, owing to illness in his family, might be given a week's holiday; the officer was granted that leave and he canvassed against a Labour candidate at Bunbury. A little later on the acting chief officer in the Health Department discovered one of this officer's reports and it led him to believe the man was not competent. The officer was at once dismissed. The officer received his notice at five minutes to 12 and at 12 o'clock sharp Mr. Connolly—then Colonial Secretary—rang up and said, "Why was this man dismissed; you must put him

back." The acting chief health officer was a man who could not be bluffed and said, "This man is not coming back to my department; you can put him somewhere else if you like." Generally speaking, after having listened to the criticisms of hon. members one would imagine that discontent existed in those departments controlled by the Commissioner. As a matter of fact, there was more discontent and more justification for discontent in the Education Department at the present time, which was not under Mr. Jull's control, than in any other branch of the service. Eighteen months ago it had only required four or five members of the Labour party to suggest to the men in the Railway Department to stop work, and the whole of the service would have been dislocated. Yet the Public Service Commissioner had nothing whatever to do with the Railway Department. He was not prepared to say that Mr. Jull had been an unqualified success, but had that officer received any sympathy from the Government he would have been even more of a success than he had been. No man in the world could give satisfaction to the whole service, and it was to be remembered that Mr. Jull was in his office to protect the taxpayers' money. There were many anomalies in the department, it was true, but they were due largely to the weaknesses in the system. It was well nigh impossible for any one man to grasp all the technicalities of the public service, but with a properly constituted appeal board many of the existing difficulties would be overcome.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The difficulties in connection with Ministerial control of the public service were almost insurmountable. It would be difficult enough even if we had a system somewhat on the lines of that of the Railway Department, and controlled by one individual, but in respect to the public service there were five or six Ministers controlling practically one body of servants split up into many sections. One Minister might have a particular regard for a particular officer, and might conscientiously raise his salary, but immediately this was done every other officer of the

same grade in other departments would at once become discontented. We had had Ministerial control, and found that political patronage created most of the difficulties, and it was because of this that the Public Service Act had been introduced. Mr. Dooley had declared that the Public Service Commissioner had no experience; but, as a matter of fact, Mr. Jull had been selected on account of his wide experience, both in the Railway Department and in the Public Works Department. As Under Secretary for Public Works Mr. Jull had large numbers of men, of all grades, under his supervision, and this had afforded him most valuable experience; moreover, Mr. Jull had been trained as a professional man previous to his taking a position in this State. The main point was that the discontent of to-day was among the officers outside the control of the Public Service Commissioner. The difficulty was not with those under the Public Service Commissioner, but with those who agitated to be allowed to come under the Public Service Act and the Commissioner. Of course, a number who were already under the Act were discontented, but he knew of his own experience that many of those were absolute drones, at least such instances had come under his notice.

Mr. Dooley: You find that sort of thing everywhere; they are in the minority.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was this minority of dissatisfied servants who were responsible for all the grumbling. He had spoken on this question from both sides of the House, and had always maintained the same attitude. The Public Service Commissioner, whoever he might be, could not hope to give satisfaction to all in the service. He (the Minister) was convinced that it would be impossible to improve upon Mr. Jull as Public Service Commissioner. On several occasions he had investigated grievances on the part of public servants, and had invariably found that the trouble centred round the appeal board, that the dissatisfaction was levelled against the Act. The first deficiency was the appeal board, and the next arose out of the fact that the classification was set down in the Act, which

prevented Mr. Jull going outside of it. It was impossible for Mr. Jull to do justice to his position while he was so trammelled. Then the Public Service Commissioner had no authority over the temporary hands. The Government were introducing a Bill to overcome the difficulties of the appeal board, the classification, and the temporary staff. When that was done, all that was possible and indeed all that the public servants desired, would have been done. He was confident that if a referendum of those under Mr. Jull were to be taken as to whether Mr. Jull should be retained, 85 or 90 per cent. of the voters would vote in favour of the retention of Mr. Jull, provided that the Act was amended as they had always desired.

Mr. Dooley: Would you be prepared to take that referendum?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: For his part, there was no objection to such a referendum. But it was wholly unfair to make an attack upon the Public Service Commissioner when that officer was grievously hampered by the limitations of the Act. With the amendment of the measure general satisfaction would be expressed by the public servants, and the seething discontent, of which so much was heard, and so little discovered, would be lost sight of for ever.

Mr. MONGER: The eulogy of the Public Service Commissioner by the Minister for Works was very contrary to the expression of opinion which had come from the Premier six weeks ago, and it was difficult to see how the Premier could reconcile his statement on that occasion with his refusal to make an announcement to the Committee in regard to the renewal of Mr. Jull's appointment. In the *West Australian* of 3rd November these headings appeared: "The Public Service. Position of Commissioner. Mr. M. E. Jull reappointed. Act of the late Government. Interview with the Premier. Appointment strongly denounced. Astounded at the news. Most monstrous thing ever heard of."

The Premier: So it was.

Mr. Green: It was the method of the appointment.

Mr. MONGER: There had been evidently some strong feeling in the mind of the Premier at that time, for on the following day there had appeared an interview in the same paper headed: "Public Service. Reappointment of Mr. Jull. Further statement by the Premier. No binding effect in law." Then the Premier in the course of his remarks had said—

I have further ascertained, however, that the matter has not been submitted to the Executive Council. In any event, the present position is that the Cabinet approval referred to has no binding effect in law until approved by the Governor in Executive Council.

The Premier: Hear, hear.

Mr. MONGER: It was hoped generally that the Premier would follow up that interview with a definite announcement as to the Government's intention in regard to Mr. Jull. In his first interview the Premier had stated "We will hear what Mr. Wilson will have to say when Parliament meets in the course of a few days." Mr. Wilson had given his explanation, but the feeling still existed in the minds of the public that the Premier would make an announcement at an early date, either confirming the interview in the *West Australian* or giving some explanation of his threat to repudiate the contract entered into by the previous Government.

The Premier: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. MONGER: The inference was there, for the Premier had said that the appointment had no binding effect in law. Surely the inference was that because it had no binding effect the Government were not going to ratify the agreement.

The Premier: Oh, no.

Mr. MONGER: It was a matter for satisfaction that the Premier in his calmer moments had come to the conclusion that it was not so iniquitous an arrangement to give Mr. Jull a further term of office.

The Premier: You draw a lot of inferences.

Mr. MONGER: The Premier had evidently come to the conclusion that Mr.

Jull was a competent officer, but he was not man enough to state in the interview referred to that he had made a mistake.

The Premier: No, I did not; I will repeat every word of it.

Mr. MONGER: Would the Premier repeat that it was the most monstrous thing ever heard of?

The Premier: Absolutely.

Mr. MONGER: And yet the Government were going to carry out what the Premier termed the most monstrous thing ever heard of.

The Premier: Who said so?

The Minister for Lands: It was the method of appointment.

Mr. MONGER: The Premier should make an announcement this evening. This was not the first sensational announcement he had made since becoming Premier, and if he had made a mistake in this matter it would be a warning to him in future not to rush in and condemn the actions of the previous Government and then, within a few weeks, practically have to eat his own words. People would come to the conclusion, if there was no announcement from the Premier this evening, or before the prorogation, that he had made a mistake, and that any future bluff and bluster on his part must be taken in the same way as his condemnation of Mr. Jull.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect; I never condemned Mr. Jull.

Mr. SWAN: The Minister for Works had, as usual, spread his guardian wings over Mr. Jull, and had dealt with the amendment as if it was the desire of members to upset the Public Service Act. That was not so. The amendment was aimed at the present Public Service Commissioner, who was a man incapable of satisfactorily carrying out his duties.

Mr. ALLEN: Although having received a good deal of support from the civil servants, not once during the whole of his campaign had he been asked on the public platform whether he was in favour of the removal of Mr. Jull. Surely, if there had been any desire on the part of civil servants that Mr. Jull should be removed that would have been one of the first questions put to candidates. There was

undoubtedly a good deal of discontent in the Public Service, but there was discontent in every branch of industry.

The Premier: There is even discontent among the land agents.

Mr. ALLEN: There was discontent also amongst Ministers and amongst Ministerial members who were trying to get another £100 a year added to their salaries. The position of Mr. Jull was a hard one to fill, and if he had made a mistake it had been in not calling in experts to assist him in his classification of the professional division.

The Premier: The Government should have done that for him.

Mr. ALLEN: Possibly when the amendments indicated by the Minister for Works were brought down a more contented service would be the result. A good deal of the discontent had been fomented by candidates seeking return to Parliament, and one candidate had circularised all civil servants and promised to urge an increase of 25 per cent. in their salaries. It was to be hoped the Government would do what they could to allay the discontent, and that in making any increases they would start at the bottom of the tree, and not at the top of the tree as had been done in the past, and an instance of which had been given this afternoon in the increase of £100 to the Premier's secretary. The amendment should not be carried, for it would be unfair to express an opinion that Mr. Jull should be removed without having the opinion of the service to that effect.

The PREMIER: It was not his intention to make any announcement in regard to the attitude which the Government would adopt in respect to the reappointment of Mr. Jull, on the appointment of a fresh Public Service Commissioner. The discussion had had a good effect for it had allowed members to bring forward matters that had been discussed pretty freely in public, but the vote on the question would not really express the opinion of the Committee, because the Government were there to stand by their Estimates, and they had not considered the question of Mr. Jull's reappointment or otherwise. In those circumstances, it could not be

expected that they would show their hands by agreeing to the reduction, which would be an admission that they were not going to reappoint that gentleman. The matter must be considered before an announcement could be made. He took this opportunity to repeat everything in the report in the *West Australian*. It was one of the most monstrous actions in the history of self-government, and not altogether on account of the reappointment of Mr. Jull. He had carefully avoided making any reference to whether Mr. Jull was a fit and proper person or not, or whether he should be reappointed; his objection had been to the action of the Government in practically secretly offering Mr. Jull the reappointment for a period of seven years on the eve of a general election, when the first term of office did not expire until after the elections were held.

Mr. Mitchell: The reappointment was months before the election.

The PREMIER: It was in June, about 10 months before the term of Mr. Jull's office expired. The worst feature of it was that not a word was said by the Government on the matter; it was not discussed during the general elections; furthermore, not a word was said about it even after the elections by anyone in the departments until the night of the election for a Legislative Council seat, which an ex-Minister was contesting. At nine o'clock that night the *West Australian* office telephoned to him (the Treasurer), and that was the first intimation he had that Mr. Jull had been offered the reappointment for seven years and had accepted the offer. It was a most monstrous action on the part of any Government. The reappointment of a person for seven years was a matter of public policy. If the late Government had been desirous of doing their duty to the public and were not afraid of their action being properly criticised, they would have, prior to the elections, announced to the public that they had offered the reappointment to Mr. Jull and that he had accepted it. As he (the Premier) had said in the interview in the Press, on inquiry he had found that the appointment had not been endorsed by the Executive Council; and until it was

so endorsed it was not an appointment. But he had made no reference to the advisability or otherwise of the reappointment, and had made no such reference since, and did not propose to make any now. Nevertheless his statement in the *West Australian* was fully warranted and justified, and he had no intention of retracting one word of it.

Mr. MITCHELL: The late Government had a perfect right to reappoint Mr. Jull, and there was no reason why the fact should be mentioned at the time. Some officers were appointed for life; Mr. Jull's appointment was limited and the Government in power at the time had the right to tell him he would be reappointed. The truth was that before the elections an appeal was made for the civil service vote, and they were informed by a circular that they could write their own cheques if they voted against the then Government; and the member for Swan, who had apparently suddenly wakened up, had made some promises to the civil servants and was endeavouring to justify them by being almost abusive in his desire to have the Public Service Commissioner's appointment cancelled. It was a pity the public service were approached by either party during an election. Was it to be a custom in the future to buy the civil service vote; were the civil servants to run the country; was the tail to wag the dog?

The Premier: Do they try to run the country?

Mr. MITCHELL: Yes; through the present Government. There was the illustration of the letter of congratulation to the Government from the Civil Service Association. It was pleasing to see the stand the Treasurer took up in reference to that association.

The Premier: What stand?

Mr. MITCHELL: In regard to the recognition of the civil service association.

The Premier: Yes; I gave them full recognition.

Mr. MITCHELL: How?

The Premier: They are the only channel for the communication of the grievances of civil servants.

Mr. MITCHELL: Cannot a civil servant approach the Premier now?

The Premier: He can approach through the Civil Service Association.

Mr. MITCHELL: That is a most extraordinary state of affairs. In your first letter you said you would not do it.

The Premier: No.

Mr. MITCHELL: The country was learning something now. It showed it was all the more necessary to have a Public Service Commissioner. One was staggered to find that the civil servants would have to join a union to get recognition. Every man in the service should have the right to approach his Minister, or to approach the Premier; but now, according to the Treasurer, the association was to be recognised as the only channel between the civil servants and the Government. Such a matter as this should not have been kept quiet. Surely it should have been announced long ago so that members might have a opportunity of expressing an opinion upon the point. The point was that the civil service vote was bid for before the election.

Mr. Lander: And we got it.

Mr. MITCHELL: Then they ought to be proud of some of their representatives. It was not right that the civil service vote was to go to the highest bidder. The service should be paid well; it contained first class men. The late Government had increased salaries by a great deal, and would have been perfectly willing to spend money on the service as the Premier was to do, but it was first necessary to get money before it could be spent. Civil servants could not be given unlimited salaries. The service was good and efficient; and although many men were underpaid, much of that would be rectified by the reclassification now proceeding. But, it was not right for any political party to offer themselves to the service for their votes. When the public understood what was being done, as they would by the magnificent energy displayed to-night by the member for North Perth, it would probably re-act on the public service. How was it the member for North Perth took such a sudden interest in the Public Service Commissioner? It was because of promises the hon. member had given during the election, and it was due to him to

justify his position. The country would not stand this kind of thing. The civil servants should be fairly treated, but they were not to run the State, even if they did return some members who sat with the Premier. The reduction proposed by the amendment should not be made. For the second time during the Estimates the Opposition would come to the rescue of the Government.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	20

Majority against ... 14

AYES.

Mr. Dooley	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Green	Mr. Swan
Mr. Lander	(Teller).
Mr. Lewis	

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. A. E. Piesse
Mr. Angwin	Mr. A. N. Piesse
Mr. Bath	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Walker
Mr. McDowall	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Monger	(Teller).
Mr. Moore	

Amendment thus negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Votes — *Refunds*, £3,000; *Taxation*, £14,405—agreed to.

Vote—*Miscellaneous services*, £79,164:

Item. Steamer and railway fares, postage, stationery etc., and secretary to Premier's expenses to London in connection with coronation of His Majesty King George V., £400:

Mr. HEITMANN: Would the Premier give some information about this item?

The PREMIER: The amount of £400 was to clear up the money expended under the vote provided by Parliament last session for the purpose of paying the expenses of the then Premier and his secretary when they attended the coronation as representatives of the State. The amount of £400 was really in excess.

Mr. HEITMANN: What about the £1,500 we voted? The total expenses would come to just under £2,000.

Mr. Lander: Does it mean that the Premier's visit to England cost £2,000?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was certainly thought that when the House voted £1,500 that amount would be sufficient. He supposed now that members would have to put up with the excess, but he was sure that the photograph which members had seen of the ex-Premier in court dress would compensate the taxpayers of the State for the extra expenses.

Mr. Lander: It is shameful the manner in which this money has been wasted.

Mr. GREEN: In the event of a State servant in a lower position, and after all the Premier was a State servant, spending £431 of the country's money more than he was entitled to do, what would his position be?

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By Mr. Speaker: 1, Report of the Auditor General; 2, Report of the Goldfields Water Supply Administration.

BILL—COLLIE RATES VALIDATION.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

BILL—POLICE BENEFIT FUND.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. MITCHELL (Northam): The Minister for Works in introducing this Bill made the position very clear. He said, however, that there was not much

in it. I think it is an important Bill. I know that the Minister means that the value set upon the land is to be the value set upon it by the owner, and not necessarily set upon it by the land tax assessor. Values are often reduced by the Taxation Department. It is true that under the Commonwealth Land Tax Act land may be resumed at the values set upon it by the owner, not for public purposes but at the will of the Minister. This Bill merely provides that land may be taken for public services and at the value set upon it by the owner. It is hard to argue against that, but we have to remember when it comes to the question of paying rates, the question of selling is not in the minds of the people who are paying taxes. Naturally they desire to get their values in at the lowest possible amount. When it comes to a matter of fixing the value of land resumed, I think it would be unfair and unnecessary to endeavour to take the powers this Act seeks to give to the Minister. There can be no fairer way than the method at present adopted. If the Minister is unable to come to an agreement with the owner as to the price, the matter is simply referred to arbitration and is thus settled.

The Minister for Works: The lawyers get the difference of opinion.

Mr. MITCHELL: There is nothing much to spend on lawyers. You go before a judge and get your decision without delay. This Bill provides, and rightly so, that this system shall not come into operation until after the end of this year, so that the values will be recorded with the next land tax assessment notice. At the same time I would point out that in a country like this values may increase considerably in the space of 12 months, and is it fair that the country should have the benefit of the increased values that might accrue. The Minister did not furnish any argument against the present method of assessing the value of land resumed. I mean he does not object to arbitration so far as I know. He does not object to a decision arrived at by that means, but he asks the House, and without reason, to give him the power to use the land tax assessments in force. If this means to compel the owners to in-

crease the returns made to the Land Tax Commissioner I do not think it is fair. The Bill is a most important one, and may have very far-reaching effects. The system of resumption with the valuation taxed under arbitration is fair and proper, and very little can be said against it. I hope the Minister will reconsider the matter and agree to withdraw the Bill. There really can be no objection on the part of the Government to pay a valuation set upon land by a properly constituted board. I have no more to say in connection with the matter except that it seems to me an unnecessary measure, and that it is possible the Minister introduced the Bill without giving the question all the consideration it deserves.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): Although this is a very short measure, yet I think when hon. members examine it they will see that it has very far-reaching effects. As pointed out by the Minister the whole procedure of determining taxation under the Public Works Act of 1902 will be altered. Although the Minister has given some instances showing very wide differences between the value of the assessment as shown on the land tax return and the amount of compensation claimed by owners of the particular land, I think very little information has been given to the Minister as to the excess paid by the Government in the past over and above the value of land resumed.

The Minister for Works: How do you arrive at the real value?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The method of arriving at the value is set down in Section 63 of the Act, and I think every reasonable and proper provision is made under that section for the determining of compensation where land has been acquired by the Crown for public purposes. In the first place I understand provision is made for the appointment of assessors in the event of the owner and the Government being unable to agree in the first instance; then, if the assessors disagree, we have a court of arbitration to provide for.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There will be no necessity for that if we pay the owner's value with 10 per cent. added.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: But if the measure is adopted it is manifestly unfair; because in the first instance when determining on the resumptions of land or what will probably be called the vested interests of the people concerned—which some hon. members opposite have no desire to protect—when these resumptions are made the owners of the land in the first instance do not go to the department concerned, but that department resumes the land, very often against the wishes of the owner. In that case it is only right to expect that the owner will receive full value for the land so resumed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Why should he not be taxed on the full value?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Because there you are dealing with the unimproved value. It will be unfair to deal with these cases upon the unimproved value as set out in the land tax returns, for the reason that no notice is given and, particularly in regard to country land, there has been considerable difficulty in arriving at the unimproved value. In some instances the unimproved value has been placed upon the land by the local authorities, and in the past the Taxation Department has been prepared to accept those values. As pointed out by Mr. Mitchell, instances have occurred in which the Taxation Department valuations were greater or less than the values put upon the land by the roads boards, and in such cases if the roads board valuation has been accepted by the department it may be below the real value of the land, in which event it would not be just to accept such basis for resumption.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The people have to value their own land for taxation purposes.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: In some cases where re-valuation has taken place the Taxation Department has valued land at less than the value the owner placed upon it. To apply the provisions of the Act to such cases would be to acquire the land at less than the owner valued it at. But provision is made in the Bill for discrimination between land taken in the ordinary way and land taken

under special Acts. Lands taken in the ordinary way are assessed according to the value of such land on the 1st January last preceding the date when it was taken, and there is a proviso in the Bill that no compensation shall be paid on land taken before the end of this year. That is all right; but I would like to ask is it fair that any land taken for public works purposes under special Acts should be valued as on the 1st of January preceding the first day of the session of Parliament in which that special Act was passed? During the past two or three years we have put through a number of Acts for the construction of agricultural railways, some of which have not yet been completed. Under the provisions of the Bill the department will have the right to take all the land they require for these works, and the value will be assessed as on the 1st day of January preceding the passing of the respective Acts. I think that is hardly fair; it is discriminating as between the value of the land taken under the special Acts and the resumptions taken in the ordinary way. We had ample provision under the existing Act, and I cannot for the life of me see the necessity for making these amendments. I am with the Government in their endeavour to see that the country does not have to pay more than the true value of the land resumed, but at the same time I feel sure the Minister does not wish to take any undue advantage of a land owner.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): How can he take undue advantage if he pays on the owner's value?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I would like to point out that in assessing unimproved value you may be taking the value at twelve months prior to the date of resumption.

The Minister for Works: Not necessarily twelve months.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: But the power is there. In the meantime probably the land has changed hands. Would it then be right for the department to assess the value of the land as at say, six months

prior to the present owner having acquired it?

Mr. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Some of them will take good care that it does change hands.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Nevertheless, that phase of the question ought to be considered. While at one with the Government in seeing that no more than the actual value of the land should be paid, I think that in some instances, even in connection with the railway resumptions in Perth, scant justice has been done to the owners, nothing at all having been paid by way of compensation for machinery forming part of any factory or any fixture or fitting in connection with that factory. All that the department is called upon to pay is the unimproved value of the land, plus the cost of any improvements in the way of buildings. No allowance, I understand, is made for the disturbance of any business or trade carried on on the land. Now, can it be argued that it is fair to disturb a business of any individual and not make some compensation for it?

The Minister for Lands: The original provision in the Bill of 10 per cent. above the unimproved value is for disturbance.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That is not a very great consideration.

The Minister for Works: Ten per cent. on the land, plus buildings.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Therefore I think there is no necessity for this amending Bill. After all, the people concerned, especially in the case of the Perth resumptions, did not come to the Government and ask them to resume the land. The Government acquires the land for their own purposes, and should be prepared to pay full value for it. In other instances, also, where resumptions are made of this kind, the Government should be prepared to pay full value.

The Minister for Lands: You do not consider that they should pay ten times the value?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: No, but we have no instances before the House that ten times the value has been paid. That is only the owner's price put on the land. People may have made their homes on

this land, and it may be everything that they have to lose. In some instances they would put on an excessive price, but the Minister has his remedy under the Act. If the parties do not come to terms, ample provision is made, in the existing Act, to settle these disputes. The difference that this amending Bill will make to the existing Act, I take it, is that, whereas, in the past, these awards have been determined by the departmental officers and the persons concerned, any point in dispute being referred to arbitration, in this case, a one-sided provision is made to take the land at the valuation of the owner plus not more than 10 per cent. on the unimproved value. Provision is made that—

The amount of such assessment shall not exceed by more than ten per centum the amount stated by or on behalf of the claimant to be the unimproved value of such land in the last return preceding the date when the land was taken, made with respect thereto for the purpose of land tax under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, but may if the court so decides, be less than the amount stated in such return. It seems to me that there is no chance of the owner receiving more, but he may receive less; I think that is hardly fair.

Mr. Mitchell: I think that is right.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I think provision should have been made that if the Court decided that the owner had undervalued his land he should receive the fair value; therefore, I hope the Bill will not be passed; if it is passed, I hope the Minister will take notice of my objection in connection with the subclause which discriminates between the land taken in the ordinary way and the land taken under the special Act.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): I think this Bill is putting into force another principle of the labour party's platform, "honesty in politics." It is a small Bill, and members do not require a dictionary to understand it. It is a democratic and honest Bill. It gives the owner of the land the opportunity of being honest, and of being treated with British fair play. The Act says to the man, "You value the

land, and we will take it and give you 10 per cent. above your value." Could there be anything fairer than that? There is no doubt that this Bill touches members opposite in a place where they feel it. It says, in one clause, that the amount paid may be less than the amount stated in the taxation returns; that is a wise proposition to put in. Say, for instance, some members on the opposition side had land, and knew that a railway was going by in a couple of years, what would those honourable gentlemen do? They would go to the Taxation Department and put a £10,000 value on a block of land that they really valued at £1,000; that is why this provision is put in. This is only a short Bill, and there is no need for much to be said about it. It no doubt cuts our friends opposite very keenly. The method of bringing down this Bill is like the way the present Government keep their files—application received; application granted—instead of building up huge files, as the previous Government did. This measure will do the same as was done in New Zealand, and in other parts, and I would like to see another measure brought down next session, so that we can deal with all lands and bump, in the same way, some of those who hold large estates along our existing railways, and by keeping them unutilised are cheating the railway of business. It gives me pleasure to support this honest little Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): The hon. member for Katanning was right when he said that I desired to be fair, but there seems to be a difference of opinion between him and myself as to which way I shall extend my fairness. Must I be fair to the State, or to the owners of a given piece of land?

Mr. A. E. Piesse: To both parties.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not feel that, under the present Act, I can be fair to the State, and I have quoted many instances to show where fairness has not been extended to the State, and where gross unfairness has been evidenced. The very reason that I desire to be fair influenced me in bringing forward this Bill. It is an undoubted fact, and hon. members on the opposite side know it, that in con-

nection with the recent resumptions a gross injustice was done to this State. The public have been robbed—it is a hard word to say, but it is absolutely true—the public were robbed by people who got information beforehand in regard to these resumptions; they bought land at a lower price, and, under the Act, got more from the State than they were justly entitled to. If we are going to do justice to the State we cannot put the claims of the individuals before the claims of the community generally.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Did you take them to arbitration?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If we take these cases to arbitration, the men who get all the results are the assessors and the lawyers who appeal. There is no reward to the individual, or the State, so far as the decisions of the courts are concerned. After all, why should we be forced into Court? When men get their lands the title shows that the Government have the right to resume for public works and other purposes.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: That is most unfair in many cases.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It may be so, but when the land is given to the man he gets it under those conditions, and he knows well that at any time the State can step in and take it for these purposes; consequently it is known to the individual that the land is likely to be resumed for these purposes. This Bill only applies to the resumption of land for the purposes mentioned in the title, and surely we should be able to get it resumed at the value which the owner himself places on it. The hon. gentleman has stated that I have given no illustrations of where injustice has been done to the State. The other evening I quoted a return of where the decision of the Court had given a price over the value sworn to by the owner when sending in his land tax return.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: I complained that you did not give the amounts of the settlements.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not wish to mention any names, although hon. members may see them, but I will give some of the claims settled by the depart-

ment at prices above the taxation return for the land, owing to the hopelessness of getting the Court to pay much attention to the taxation return under the existing conditions. I do not know why it is, but the Court will not pay any regard to the values submitted in the land tax returns. Here is one, in Perth—taxation value £830, amount claimed £1,720, amount of settlement, voluntarily, in behalf of the State by the Land Resumption office, controlled, of course, by the Minister for Works, £1,653; just 100 per cent. over the value. Here is another one—taxation return £150, claim £1,400, and settlement £478; another, taxation return £1,000, claim £4,086, amount paid £3,954, 300 per cent. over the taxation value.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Are those all without improvements?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Without improvements; this is for the land, pure and simple. It is not necessary to weary the House, but I could give hundreds of instances, and I have not been able to find one case where the State has got justice, and it is because of that, we want to bring in some system such as applies in the other States, and in the Commonwealth itself, whereby the State will be protected against injustices of this description. There is just one point that the hon. member made in regard to the difference between the resumption under Special Act and the ordinary resumption, where it is stated that the value shall be taken on the return sent in under the Land and Income Tax Act in the month of January preceding the resumption. The hon. member must bear in mind that before a Bill is introduced into Parliament it is, in 99 cases out of 100, mentioned in the Governor's speech, with the result that the owner of the land gets information as to a proposed work, usually about the middle of the year; and if we did not say that we would take his value in the preceding January we would have him increasing his value, because he has information that the railway is going through, and that his land, from the very expenditure of public money, will become more valuable. In order to protect the State against that,

the clause is put in. The previous clause is put in to overcome the difficulties we experienced in connection with the recent resumptions. No doubt there was a leakage there. There is no doubt men bought up the land knowing full well the Government would very shortly afterwards resume it.

Mr. Lander: The block on the corner of Forrest-street and Stirling-street is one.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no need to mention names but instances could be given where people purchased to reap a profit of 200 and 300 per cent. They bought the land because they knew the Government would resume it, and it is time we did something to protect the State from this sort of thing. Members have a responsibility to the country. Our responsibility is not always to individuals. Surely we have to take into consideration the public purse; and if we want to do that, we need to pass a Bill of this description, not to do any injustice but simply to say to any man, "We will take your valuation sworn to and give you 10 per cent. on that, and we will take the land not for any purpose but for that purpose which your title shows we have the right to take it for, that is for public purposes."

Mr. A. E. Piesse: You need to give them fair notice.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They get that under this Bill. They know from their titles under what conditions the land can be resumed, and they know we have the power to resume. What further notice do they need? The member for East Perth was correct when he said that it was a little Bill and an honest Bill—honest to the State. I appeal to hon members to pass it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 63:

Mr. MITCHELL moved an amendment—

That in the proposed Subsection 2, line 8, the word "unimproved" be struck out and "improved" inserted in lieu.

The Bill was really a taxation measure. The Minister did not say the price paid under arbitration was too high.

The Minister for Works: Undoubtedly I do; it is absolute robbery.

Mr. MITCHELL: That contingency was fully provided against under the Act. Arbitration settled the correct value. We must remember that in resuming land very often we destroyed people's income, as it was not always possible to get another investment at the moment. In the public interest land had to be surrendered, but it was only a fair thing that the amendment should be passed, so that the Minister would pay 10 per cent. on the improved value of the land. New Zealand gave 20 per cent. on the value of the land, which could be taken to include improvements such as fencing and clearing.

Mr. LANDER: The Bill was only to apply to the unimproved value of the land. If there was a building on the land resumed, or if there was a business on it, the owner would still have full right to claim for the improvements. We had had enough of arbitration and enough of Government valuations. It would be interesting to know the values on some of the taxation returns submitted by many friends of the late Government.

Mr. MITCHELL: Land could not be taken without the improvements, and a Bill that did not provide that the buildings were to be paid for was not a perfect measure. Ten per cent. additional should be paid on the value of the holding and not on the land itself.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Application of Act:

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Could provision be made in some way—perhaps through the Taxation Department—to notify owners of land of the contents of the Bill; because in country districts some cases of hardship might be effected in regard to the returns supplied to the Taxation Department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no objection to making the Bill known. It was almost a certainty that the Commissioner of Taxation would

make the facts known through the notices sent out from the department.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: A good deal of ignorance existed in country districts with regard to the provision of new Acts. Tasmania adopted the practice of publishing each Act as a supplement to the *Government Gazette*. The Government might take such a suggestion into consideration.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The people in the country had nothing to fear with regard to a Bill such as this. Did the hon. member want it known that the people must be honest?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The hon. member might be reminded of what had already been said with regard to unimproved values. There was a good deal of difference of opinion about the unimproved value, and it was known that a lot of the unimproved lands had no unimproved value. Take the poison lands; they were practically worthless, and it could not be said that they had an unimproved value. What unimproved value would the Minister put on some of these poison lands, which were worth to-day 5s. or 6s. an acre in their unimproved condition?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There would be no difficulty in connection with future valuations if this provision were included in the measure, and not only that measure but the taxation measure itself. If we were to provide in the taxation measure that the unimproved value was that placed upon it by the owner, with the essential safeguard to protect the interests of those we were representing in this House, and if they undervalued it deliberately to avoid taxation, the State could be protected by taking the land at their value, plus a reasonable percentage for disturbance. We could then give a fair deal to the people we represented and to the owner himself, and avoid a great deal of the expense now involved in the collection of taxes. In the interests of all who desired to be honest, that would be the best provision to place in the taxation measure, and it was desirable that it should be included in the present measure.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The suggestion made by him had been thrown out, so that it might be generally adopted with regard to new measures passed. All new measures ought to be published as a supplement to the *Government Gazette*; that would be a great convenience to the people in the back blocks.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

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

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) in moving the second reading said: Hon. members will notice that this Bill is a very short alteration of the Public Service Act, and provides for four amendments. I want to make it clear that it was not introduced for the purpose of making all the amendments to that Act which we consider are desirable, but for the purpose of getting over some difficulties which it is essential should be overcome during the present session. Members are aware that at the present time there is a reclassification of the service proceeding, and the result will probably be announced before the close of the financial year. We desire to make certain amendments to the Act to comply with the requirements of that reclassification. In the first place, we claim that it is not right for a public servant who has been reclassified to be required to appeal from that reclassification to the person who made it; that is, an appeal from the Commissioner to the Commissioner again. For the purpose of getting over that difficulty hon. members will see that we are adding a proviso to Section 51, which refers to the formation of an appeal board. The amendment reads—

Provided that whenever an appeal is from a proposal of the Commissioner, or the Commissioner acting in conjunc-

tion with assistant commissioners, relating to any classification or reclassification affecting an office, the chairman of the appeal board shall be the president for the time being of the Arbitration Court constituted under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1902, in place of the Commissioner.

This is following, to some extent, the precedent of the Commonwealth who in a Bill now before their Parliament propose to allow the members of the service to form themselves into what are called groups for the purpose of appealing to the Arbitration Court. The question of extending this system by the formation of groups is one that will receive the consideration of the Government. While it is proposed to give to the service the same benefits as are enjoyed by those outside the service, that is, the right to appeal to the Arbitration Court in connection with matters affecting their welfare in the service from the standpoint both of the conditions of labour and salary, it is not proposed to refer to the board, whose chairman will be the president of the Arbitration Court, appeals against punishment inflicted for misbehaviour, as we consider that it would be outside the scope of the president of the Arbitration Court to deal with them, and would tend to belittle his office. It is rather a difficult matter to discover a method which will be satisfactory, to submit appeals from the decision of the Commissioner on such matters brought under his notice from time to time by the permanent head for misconduct on the part of a public servant. It has to be remembered that now the duty devolves upon the permanent head to draw attention to the fact that through some laxity, or action on the part of an officer in his department, it has been necessary to adopt the course of suspending that officer, or of taking other steps; if the offence be serious enough to come under the Public Service Act the matter is transmitted to the Commissioner for inquiry. An inquiry is then held to decide whether the permanent head was justified in following the course adopted, and if so, the Commissioner will uphold the decision and punish or dismiss

the officer, and there the matter will end. Of course it is just a matter as to when the right of appeal for punishments in the public service is going to cease. If we opened the door to appeals from decisions on all matters of this kind where, perhaps, the punishment amounted to the loss of a week's salary, or it may be only a fine of 5s., we would have a difficulty in getting a board which would be able to comply with all the requirements in that direction, and I do not think it would be desirable that the president of the Arbitration Court should be called upon to hear appeals from such decisions. In my opinion, it would cause a considerable amount of heartburning inside and outside of the service. The appeals which will take place will not be merely appeals to the Commissioner but to the Commissioner sitting with two others, one representing the branch of the service affected and the other appointed by the Government. I think under such circumstances we should not be called upon to appeal from the decision of the Commissioner who, perhaps, may have decided the issue between the reclassification board and the officer in the first instance, because on that board the service would have a representative and the other member will be appointed by the Government, while there would also be the Public Service Commissioner; and it might have been a case of the Public Service Commissioner standing between the two persons and deciding the issue; and then you are going to appeal to the Commissioner again. We have always held that that is not a democratic method, and to get away from it we are providing an amendment of the constitution of the board.

Mr. Mitchell: How will the board be constituted?

The PREMIER: The president of the arbitration court takes the place of the Commissioner, while the others remain as at present. It does not affect the constitution of the court, except so far as the chairman is concerned. This is really a tentative measure for the purpose of getting over the reclassification which is taking place at present. We propose also to repeal the second schedule in the Act.

Section 20 of the Act provides that in the professional division and the general divisions, except in the case of officers paid at a specified rate by virtue of any Act, the officers shall be paid salaries and wages in accordance with such fixed amounts or scales as may be prescribed. There is no grade or scale so far as the professional and general divisions are concerned, but in the Act we have a schedule which applies only to the clerical division, and it has tied the hands of the classifying board very considerably. They waited upon me and asked that we should repeal this schedule in order to allow them to classify without having to continually appeal to the schedule, which frequently upsets their plans in connection with classification. They can see no reason why the clerical division should have a hard and fast scale set out in the Act, with which they have to comply, while in connection with the professional and general divisions the scale is in accordance with that prescribed by the classification board. At present £450 per annum is the highest salary it is possible to pay in the clerical division, besides which the schedule has been found to fit in badly with the requirements of a classification. The schedule ought to be prepared to fit in with the classification, not the other way about, and therefore it is proposed to repeal the schedule and allow the Commissioner to devise one to meet the requirements of the case, as is done in the case of the professional and general divisions. There is no good reason whatever why a cast iron schedule should be provided for the clerical division any more than for the professional and general divisions, and in practice the fact of one being provided which is unsuitable has caused no end of complications. With one exception the other amendments are consequential upon these. The amendment of Section 27 is consequential owing to the repeal of the second schedule, and the consequent disappearance of Class G. The amendment will provide, by omitting certain words, that all vacancies in the clerical division will, so far as practicable, be made through the primary entrance examination. It is not always practicable, and it has led to the growth

of a large class of temporary officers. We have scores of them working side by side with the permanent officers, who are really senior to them, and the permanent officers are receiving less wages than the temporary hands. This is due to the fact that we have a certain scale for temporary hands, which has to be paid, while we have a classification fixed under the Act for permanent hands, and so frequently they have temporary hands working alongside of them at a higher scale. I propose in Committee to make a slight amendment to the clause by adding other words. Hon. members will notice that we are omitting the words "Class G" in Subsection 4, and adding to the subsection the words "in receipt of £110 a year or under." Until they reach that payment the permanent head, in accordance with the present provision of the Act, must during the month of May in each year furnish a report to the Commissioner on the conduct, diligence, and general efficiency of each officer. I propose in Committee to strike out these words, "during the month of May in each year"; that will mean that before an officer can receive an increase the permanent head must make a report as to his conduct, diligence, and general efficiency. The other is an amendment to Section 36 of the principal Act, inserting after the word "department" in line one the words "after a report from the Commissioner," and by omitting the words "permanent head" in line 4 and inserting "Commissioner." This is for the purpose of getting over the difficulty in regard to temporary employment. To-day the position is that a requisition is sent forward by a permanent head to the Minister, asking for permission to make a temporary appointment. It is impossible for any Minister to satisfy himself of the necessity for that temporary appointment, and it has nothing to do with the Public Service Commissioner, who cannot even justifiably submit a report to the Minister to allow that Minister to arrive at a decision as to whether or not he ought to approve of the temporary appointment. It has grown to such an extent that the

service is getting right back to Ministerial control. The Minister may decide that an appointment ought to be made, and the temporary officer is employed. That causes dissatisfaction. We propose to put the temporary staff under the Commissioner. Hon. members may view this amendment altogether outside any feeling in regard to the present Commissioner. It is not a matter of personnel, but of the position. The occupant of the position ought to be charged with reporting on the requirements of the service, and charged with the duty of assisting the Minister when temporary hands are required. We propose that when a requisition is submitted for the employment of a temporary hand it shall be sent on to the Public Service Commissioner for report. Then, if the Minister approves, the Commissioner shall, from a list he keeps of candidates, select a person to fill the position. On almost every occasion the Commissioner consults with the permanent head as to the selection of the officer, and in that respect there has been dissatisfaction given to persons who contend that they have submitted their names to the Commissioner and yet been overlooked when a vacancy occurs. I am assured by the Commissioner that it has sometimes been due to the fact that he was not even consulted as to the making of the appointment. We have arrived at such a position that when a permanent officer is appointed he immediately imagines that it is due to the importance of his office that he should have one or more assistants at his elbow, and he puts in a requisition for the appointment of a temporary clerk to assist him. That is not conducive to economy in the departments, nor doing justice to the permanent head of the service generally, or the Minister representing the taxpayers. These are the principal amendments, and I am sure no hon. member will take exception to them. It is merely a tentative measure to overcome the existing difficulties. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. MITCHELL (Northam):—I am bound to say that the Minister in introducing the Bill fairly told us exactly what it is proposed to do, and pointed to the disadvantages of the scheme. It is quite true that the people of the back country, and particularly those near the Coolgardie pipe track, are anxious to be supplied with permanent water. The cost of the water under the present system is 8s. per thousand gallons to the consumer, and the method of getting it is to agree with the Minister to pay an amount equal to 8s. per thousand gallons on his undertaking to lay down a pipe, while the Minister agrees to lay down a pipe when he has a sufficient number of applications to guarantee the interest and sinking fund on the expenditure. For this the Minister proposes to substitute a rating scheme. I do not altogether approve of that, especially seeing that the cost of water will be practically the same as it is now. I would like to point out that this rating scheme may work very unevenly. The Bill includes pastoral leases, and all classes of country, and all come under the acreage tax proposed. Obviously the supply of water is not so valuable to a man on 1,000 acres of sand plain as to one on 1,000 acres of good land.

The Minister for Works: It is the other way about.

Mr. MITCHELL: No. It would not be nearly so valuable to the men with sand plain as to the man who has good country. In Committee we can enlarge upon the question, but the Minister ought to recognise that it is a fairly heavy tax, and can only be paid by good land. The tax will, in fact, be greater than the rent of the land. It will be pretty hard for the Minister to convince the House that this tax for water can be regarded as unimportant. The Minister has not taken into consideration the money already expended

on water supply by owners of the land. Now, in some cases, of course, and I have not in mind the far off country, but in some of the inner land a great deal of money has been spent in providing wells and making dams and by other means making a water supply for the home. Notwithstanding that the water is supplied in sufficient quantities by these means, the owner will be compelled, if the Minister so decides, to contribute to the goldfields scheme extension. I know that the Minister intends to go on with the system of holding up supplies in the back country wherever opportunity offers on the big rock outcrops, and I suppose that notwithstanding that some of these rocks will be in areas supplied by the pipes he will use them wherever possible.

The Minister for Lands: I think it is a good idea.

Mr. MITCHELL: Certainly. In addition I hope that the making of dams and the putting down of wells will still be proceeded with. For the past two years we have been engaged in conserving water in the back country from Geraldton in the north to Albany in the south, and Mr. Castilla, the engineer, with a fairly big staff has been employed on that work practically altogether for the past two years.

Mr. Dooley: Where did you conserve water in the Geraldton area?

Mr. MITCHELL: In the Yuna area and about Northampton we have done a good deal in water conservation. Unfortunately the season was a very dry one and there were dams that did not fill, but I hope that during the summer we shall have thunderstorms and that these reservoirs will hold up large supplies. It must be remembered that it is only a very small part of the whole country which will come within the operations of the Goldfields Water Supply Department, because reticulation is not possible beyond a very few miles. I think the Minister said in introducing the Bill that the average length of pipe put down lately was something about eight miles; it is possible to gravitate the water beyond that, but only in a

very few cases. I notice that the Minister states that in the inner lands the price will remain as at present, 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons. This, of course, will be a satisfaction to the people who have already arranged supplies from the main, but I am surprised to hear from the Minister that he has the right to set aside the agreement entered into for supplies under the old system. I doubt if he has that power.

The Minister for Lands: It is set out in the agreement.

Mr. MITCHELL: Is it set out that the Minister has power to apply the rating system?

The Minister for Lands: To alter the system.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Minister for Works said there was power to apply the rating system.

The Minister for Lands: The power would apply to the rating system.

Mr. MITCHELL: It was not thought that he would cancel an arrangement which they could fulfill with a view to substituting the rating system.

The Minister for Lands: It gives them power to increase the price any time they choose.

Mr. MITCHELL: The idea would be, of course, to protect the department in case of trouble with the scheme, but the provision in the agreement was not made with the idea of allowing the Minister to substitute an altogether different system. It would be rough on those who have agreed to take a certain amount of water under the old system to be obliged to come under the new scheme and pay twice as much. The Minister has also provided that there shall be a domestic charge of £5 for each home, a sort of registration charge, and he argues that the charge should be a fixed one of £5, because all homes are more or less the same size, and that no matter whether a man has 1,000 acres or 160 acres the water consumed by the homestead would be about the same. That is not correct. A man with 200 acres would not use as much water as one with a big establishment and 2,000 acres. I hope this charge will be deleted altogether. Under

the Minister's scheme, with a fourpenny rate the tax will be £21 13s. per annum, and he told us that for that sum he would supply 54,000 gallons of water. Whilst, of course, this scheme will be attractive to those in new districts who have spent no money in providing water supplies and are now without water, it will not be so favourably received by those who have made some provision in this direction. Under this scheme 54,000 gallons will probably keep the team going and supply the household, but there will be nothing left for sheep, because the Minister must remember that once a standpipe and trough are rigged they will be used all the year round. It is sometimes said that this is only a stand-by and will be only used in the summer; but on some farms there are no provisions for holding up water, and so this scheme would be drawn on all the year round, and if a man keeps 200 sheep they will take another 54,000 gallons in the course of a year.

The Minister for Works: They do not drive sheep into the tanks or troughs during the winter.

Mr. MITCHELL: I am talking of farms where they have no tanks.

The Minister for Works: Do you say that there is any part of Western Australia where there is no water on the land in winter?

Mr. MITCHELL: The Minister knows well that in the back country there is very little surface water indeed, even in the winter time. Of course, if a man has dams or wells he gets a supply in the winter, but I am speaking of the man who has not made these provisions, and by the time he has watered 200 sheep and his team he would pay £40 a year at least.

The Minister for Works: How do you account for the fact that they only use 46,000 gallons now?

Mr. MITCHELL: You are supplying people more or less established, and I am talking of people who have made no conservation provisions at all. As the Minister has said it is all a question of the price per thousand gallons, and he pointed out that the price would be 8s. per thousand anywhere up to 8 miles.

The Minister for Works: The distance we can take the water out is governed by the price at which we can sell it. One of the thirteen schemes goes out 30 miles, but the average distance we can go is about eight miles.

Mr. MITCHELL: I had a map prepared once and I was surprised to find how short a distance the water would gravitate from the scheme. Of course the cost per thousand gallons governs the situation, and it is just a question whether the people can pay 8s. per thousand gallons for stock.

The Minister for Works: They are paying 10s. per thousand now.

Mr. MITCHELL: I know that if you charged 8s. per thousand in Perth for domestic requirements there would be an outcry. In Adelaide the charge for town purposes is 6d. per thousand and here I believe it is 1s. 6d. In the back country the farmers may be willing to pay 8s. now, but as soon as they can make their own provisions they will do so. The Minister very rightly told us that 8s. in Western Australia becomes 2s. under the Beetaloo scheme in South Australia. That means that instead of getting 54,000 gallons for £21 as the farmer here will, the Beetaloo farmer would get 216,000 gallons.

The Minister for Works: But he cannot use it and does not use it.

Mr. MITCHELL: He could use his surplus water and do something with it.

The Minister for Works: The fact remains that he does not and cannot.

Mr. MITCHELL: I do not know that he does not. At any rate 216,000 gallons there is a very different proposition from 54,000 gallons here. Then again, the Minister says that the tax falls with equal justice on an acre of sand plain as on an acre of good land. If the Minister will consider the question he will find that that is not the case, because a man who has to pay £21 for water for 1,000 acres of sand plain will discover that he is paying far more than his land justifies.

The Minister for Works: It is the same water; we are selling a commodity. We do not reduce the price of sugar because a man is poor.

Mr. MITCHELL: The Minister proposes to lay parallel pipes every three miles apart.

The Minister for Works: That is the comprehensive scheme.

Mr. MITCHELL: It will be an enormous cost. I should think it would be impossible to lay them in parallel lines, but that is a matter for the engineers and the people concerned. I understand that if land is within 10 chains of the main, it is to be taxed, and may be taxed for a mile and a half back; but if the land is 12 chains from the main the Minister cannot make the tax apply. In many cases there will be a road parallel to and 20 chains from the main. I know of several cases. In that case the only land to be taxed, if it be owned separately from that across the road, will be the strip running between the road and the main; and notwithstanding a large frontage to the road adjoining, many farms across the road will be outside the possibility of taxation. Of course the Minister can explain why this limitation has been set up, but it seems to me that he will have to provide some means for bringing under the tax the whole of the land within the mile and a half radius. I know the Minister realises that it would work a hardship to compel people who are unable to afford it to make connections, and I would suggest that while he is about it he should complete the scheme and provide all necessary connections and storage tanks, as well as the main.

The Minister for Works: The Bill provides for that.

Mr. MITCHELL: To make the scheme of the fullest possible use, it would be well for the Minister to agree to provide the connections and spread the payments over a term of years, 10 years if possible.

The Minister for Works: The Bill provides for that also.

Mr. MITCHELL: But not in regard to storage tanks. It says the Minister may defer payments.

The Minister for Works: That is the object of the clause.

Mr. MITCHELL: I think it should be over a fairly long term.

The Minister for Works: It is left to the discretion of the Minister. I quite agree with you on that.

Mr. MITCHELL: The payment should be very easy and people should not be compelled to pay in three or four years. This is a very heavy tax. If the people pay 4d. per acre and, in addition, the cost of the connections, probably for a mile, costing them perhaps £100, and provide storage tanks also, by the time the water is brought into use it will be a fairly expensive affair. I know the Minister's only desire is to help these people, but I point out the danger of undertaking to secure water under the Minister's scheme, though I know the people are safeguarded by the fact that two-thirds of the owners must first petition, and that two-thirds of the owners must represent the area to be served, so that therefore it rests with the people themselves as to whether they care to be taxed. One provision I think has escaped the notice of the Minister, and that is, that where the land is leased and the landlord does not put up the storage tanks required, the tenant may provide them and deduct the charge from his rent, so long as it does not exceed one year's rent. I would point out that the Minister has made no provision for any payment by the tenant for the use of the storage tank. The tenant may have a 20 years lease. I suppose very few blocks are leased, but still it is possible, and we have to guard against possibilities. A man may have a 20 years lease at £120 per annum, and it is possible the storage tanks may cost that amount. So we ought to provide that the owner could get a reasonable rate of interest on this expenditure for the balance of the term of the lease. I do not know what the cost of these tanks will be. It might be that not more than a 5,000-gallons tank would be required; it would all depend on the requirements of the farmer; but by this legislation we are legislating for a large expenditure, and it would be advisable for the Minister to look into this provision and see if it is possible for the owner to be recompensed for the use of his money for the balance of the lease.

The Minister for Works: It could not be more than £5.

Mr. MITCHELL: No one can tell that. A man might have to put in a fairly big storage tank. It would be wise for the Minister to look into the matter and make the law much safer. The Minister has referred to the Goomalling water scheme. He did not make it quite clear as to whether he intends to credit the people who pay this tax of 4d. on either side of the scheme with the collections at the Goomalling end, that is the town rates. Obviously if he sells a fair quantity of water at Goomalling, as he must do, it will very materially reduce the annual charge upon the people along the track. I think the scheme should take credit for the town supply, and that the farmers using the water should have that advantage.

The Minister for Works: That is the system; we take the whole of the main, the whole of the capital, and strike a rate in consideration of the revenue and to cover interest, sinking fund, and working expenses.

Mr. MITCHELL: You propose to collect the 10 per cent. for sinking fund and supervision?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. MITCHELL: The old system, I believe, will be found to work out better than the proposal of the Minister. The selector gives an undertaking to take water at a certain rate for 10 years, and at the end of that time the cost of water would be considerably reduced. Under the Minister's scheme the tax will go on for as long as the water can be supplied. Ten years is supposed to be the life of the pipes, but I hope some means will be found to prolong it. The Minister is basing his charge upon the 10 years' life of a pipe, but if that life can be extended the water should be made cheaper. I would make the water as cheap as possible. I believe the farmers will find the tax a burdensome one, when we consider the advantage water will be. The Minister has decided that the supply of water shall not be taken under any other sys-

tem, and the farmer must accept that rating system or go without water.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): I have listened with considerable amusement to the speakers who seemed to be so anxious to keep down the expense so far as agricultural land is concerned.

Mr. Mitchell: The expense of water.

Mr. McDOWALL: After all, it is in connection with the land. And we find the gentleman who has just sat down pleading that this charge should be eliminated. We also find him pleading that there should be no charge for storage tanks and matters of that kind, or rather the hon. member said that the payments should be made extremely easy. The Minister has so much sympathy for these people that he actually tells us that he does not propose to charge any administration expenses against this scheme for supplying farmers with water.

The Minister for Works: For the first year.

Mr. McDOWALL: I am not going to object to any of these things. I have not had the opportunity since the Bill was introduced to give it much consideration, but I desire at this stage to say that I view with considerable apprehension this constant whittling away of what should be the goldfields water supply. I do not object at all to the agricultural areas being supplied in this way, provided it is not at the expense of the goldfields, and neither do I mind the farmers getting water at less than cost price.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

Mr. McDOWALL: The Minister interjects that they are not getting it at less than cost price. I venture to say the Minister does not yet know how the work will pan out.

The Minister for Works: I do know.

Mr. McDOWALL: You imagine you know, but until you try the matter you cannot say for certain. I have been connected with propositions of this description before, and I can quite understand that it is impossible to estimate with absolute accuracy anything of the kind. I

think the Minister told us he expected a revenue of £2,700 and an expenditure of £2,600.

The Minister for Works: No, it will be the other way round, for the first year at least.

Mr. McDOWALL: Well, even there the Minister shows a loss of £100, and a loss of £100 simply on estimate; and that, too, without charging anything for the capital or for administration. And it must be further borne in mind that this water has to be pumped before it gets to these places to be supplied. I am not going to contend that this is a big matter. Getting back to what I was about to argue a few minutes ago, I do not mind the farmers getting water at less than cost price if this scheme is going to be made a national undertaking; but I emphatically object to the people on the goldfields not getting their water in the same manner, and to the continued circumstances that no assistance is being granted to low-grade mines at Kalgoorlie.

The Minister for Works: Are you in favour of bringing the same conditions into operation on the goldfields?

Mr. McDOWALL: The Minister knows that that could not be done. First and foremost a mine takes thousands and thousands of gallons of water in a concentrated area. With a farm it is an entirely different matter, and there can be no comparison whatever between the two schemes. I want to say emphatically I think it is time this Goldfields Water Supply Scheme management took into consideration the giving of some assistance to low grade mines. It is a month or more since the Minister visited the fields, and so far as I know nothing has been done during that period. I have no intention of prolonging the discussion. I simply want to know from the Minister if he is satisfied that he has the water to spare, and, if this turns out a payable proposition will he do something for the goldfields. We look askance upon anything that is going to give the people of Perth or of the agricultural districts an advantage in regard to the water supply, because we know we have to pump water

out of our mines and throw it away for the reason that the Minister will not allow us to use it except under impossible conditions. I do not desire to discuss this matter at any length, but I would be wanting in my duty if I did not call attention to anything that interferes with the Goldfields Water Scheme, and to the crying needs of the goldfields, and of the low grade shows particularly, for a cheaper water supply.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 18th December, 1911.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS, LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Mr. FRANK WILSON (without notice) asked the Attorney General: In reference to the announcement which appeared in the Press on the 16th December, does the Attorney General think that he is justified in striking all names off the Legislative Council roll of electors who have not signed claim cards since 1907? If so, what is his object in thus dis-franchising bona fide electors?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: The object of striking out all names is to prepare for the Legislative Council elections and to get new rolls completed. All the old rolls will be wiped out, but every one upon those rolls will receive notices and cards.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Away in the back country?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It does not matter where they are so long as their addresses can be obtained. We shall utilise existing rolls, and every post office and public building will be availed of for publishing proclamations to notify the people. Every possible means of letting the people know that they have to take steps themselves to get on the roll will be employed.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Why depart from the usual custom of taking a census?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Because the census has always been unsatisfactory. This step has been taken on the advice of the Chief Electoral Officer, and the proposal is really his. It has been endorsed by me and approved by Cabinet, and he is of opinion that we shall get a fuller, safer, and more complete roll than if it were dealt with by the census system.

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY, PERTH.

Mr. LANDER asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has the water from the new bore at Leederville been analysed? 2, What is the report of the analysis? 3, Is it the intention of the Minister to provide a larger reservoir for the water supply around Perth?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Analysis as follows:—(Figures represent parts per 100,000.) Ammonia, free, .036; ammonia, albuminoid, .006; organic matter (oxygen absorbed in four hours), .15; nitrogen as nitrates, .0065; chlorine, 32.4; chlorine sodium chloride, 53.46; sodium carbonate, 6.31; hardness (degrees) temporary, 3.5; hardness (degrees) permanent, nil; the figures are similar to analyses of other water obtained in that locality. 3, Yes; plans are well in hand for a ten-million