

two others who come here when they can make it convenient. If the system of payment of members has had the effect of making such a reduction in the number of members belonging to one class, it must have done some good. As I have pointed out previously in my place in this House, we want men from every rank in life to frame our legislation. It is the aggregation of the wisdom of the State that we wish to have here, so that we can make wise legislation, and I think as regards the duties of this Chamber, the legislation we have turned out as unlearned men is quite as effective in its character and quite as easy to understand as that prepared by such able and learned men as those whose names I have before me, and who were here before we had payment of members. I see no reason to go back, and I am quite satisfied as regards the agricultural districts and the goldfields that no member would ever be returned to this or the other Chamber who pledged himself to the abolition of the system of payment of members. I repeat, I have no intention to vote either for the motion or the amendment. I do not see my way to propose a farther amendment, but I simply wish to block the proposition and amendment before the House.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East): Having recently been before the electors I feel it is right I should give expression to my views on the matter. I do not wish to deal with it at any great length, but simply to state that it is my intention to support the amendment. I realise that all the arguments are on the other side. Everything goes towards the fact that payment of members is essentially right in principle; but there is just a fear in the minds of some of us—and I think a great many—that payment of members is not going to pan out to the best interests of the country in the future. I for one shall vote against payment of members partly to protest against the great cost of government. We see that the cost of government is something over a quarter of a million sterling for the Commonwealth of Australia, and that is merely for governing a mere handful of people. It seems to me it would be a very safe thing to economise in this direction. No doubt payment of members has a tendency to bring about what

we would term professional politicians; and it is not in the best interests of the country that we should encourage that. It is my intention to support the amendment.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (South): I think in view of the overwhelming evidence before the House regarding this question, the mover of the motion and the mover of the amendment may not go to a division, and I only rise to give expression to my opinion that at the present time the country is distinctly in favour of payment of members, and that anyone who went to the goldfields for election would have to favour that principle or else he would not, I think, be elected.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put and negatived.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at twelve minutes past 6 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 1st December, 1904.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Return showing clearing contracts let by the Lands

Department at Hamel and Nangeenan, moved for by Mr. Hopkins.

QUESTION—VICTORIA PARK TRAMWAY PROJECT.

MR. H. GREGORY (for Mr. Gordon) asked the Minister for Works, without notice: Is it true that some difficulty has arisen in connection with the Provisional Order for the construction of a tramway to Victoria Park, which may delay the introduction of the necessary Bill?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: This morning we received notice that some difficulty had arisen between the Perth Tramway Company and the Victoria Park Municipal Council. It appears that in drawing up the Provisional Order the Victoria Park Council negotiated with the Government without consulting the tramway company. After the Provisional Order was passed by the Government, and printed, it was submitted to the tramway company, who pointed out that they could not accept it. Unless the matter is dealt with immediately it will be impossible for the Government to introduce a Bill this session.

PUBLIC HEALTH BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

LEAVE TO TRAVEL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Taylor) moved:

That leave be given to the select committee to which the Public Health Bill has been referred, to sit at Kalgoorlie.

The committee considered that by visiting Kalgoorlie they could obtain valuable evidence.

THE SPEAKER: There would be some difficulty in supplying a shorthand writer, if one was needed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Only one would be necessary. He could leave to-morrow evening, and return possibly on Monday morning or not later than Tuesday morning, in time for the sitting of the House on Tuesday afternoon. A *Hansard* reporter should if possible be provided.

THE SPEAKER: The *Hansard* staff would be fully engaged from now till the next meeting of the House, the work being now very heavy. Perhaps the Minister could make some other arrangement.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: An effort would be made to overcome the difficulty.

Question put and passed.

BILL, THIRD READING.

TRUCK ACT AMENDMENT, read a third time and returned to the Legislative Council with amendments.

LICENSING ACT SUSPENSION BILL.

SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish): This measure, as members will observe, is comparatively short but of considerable importance. It proposes that the issue of certain classes of licenses shall be suspended provisionally in order to prevent the creation of new vested interests until Parliament has had an opportunity of dealing with the main question of consolidating and amending the existing law. The Bill is brought forward in response to a demand made from all quarters to the present Government, and I believe to the late Government. It is recognised that in a large number of districts there is what may be called an undue liberality in the granting by some of the licensing benches of the licenses referred to in this Bill. These are very often granted without giving adequate consideration to the wishes of the residents. It may at once be admitted that the machinery of our existing Licensing Act is somewhat defective in provisions for ascertaining the wishes of the majority of the residents. There is no provision whatever to enable any official poll to be taken. The only means of ascertaining how the people of any licensing district regard a license that may be applied for is the exercise by those opposed to the license of their power to petition the bench. But that power is rather difficult to wield. It needs first of all the devotion by a few persons of considerable time to the work of obtaining signatures to a petition; and it likewise exposes people to the necessity of casting open votes—a practice to which large numbers naturally object, especially as anyone perusing the petition can see the names of petitioners; and this is liable to cause business troubles between the petitioners and persons who have a different opinion

of the merits of the application. I think members will therefore admit that if we are to recognise at all the will of the residents regarding the granting of licenses, the present machinery for ascertaining their will is very imperfect. Moreover, another difficulty arises from the fact that in the Licensing Act itself there is no definite indication of what persons are entitled to express an opinion; no indication of the radius within which a ratepayer should live in order to entitle him to express an opinion.

MR. MORAN: In that matter the bench has a discretion.

THE PREMIER: The bench has that discretion; in some instances a discretion very wisely exercised, but in other instances not used with wisdom. As I said at the outset, licenses have been freely granted in a large number of districts. Complaints have been made in various parts of the State. I think most members will agree with me that licenses should not be granted for the primary purpose of enabling persons to make money by trafficking in them, or for the sake of the class that usually holds them, but that a license should be granted for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the people living within the radius to be served by the license. The only way of discovering accurately how that purpose can be served is by some efficient method of arriving at the wishes of the residents. In another Bill before the House, provision is suggested in regard to this matter. In the meantime it is desired, if possible, to check the lavish issue of licenses in districts where they are not required; but in order to fully protect any new districts that may grow up, and in order to protect any rights that may have been created by the issuing of provisional certificates, this Bill distinctly provides that its provisions shall not prevent the granting of a license for premises in respect of which a provisional certificate shall have been granted before the commencement of this Act—a very necessary provision of course, to safeguard a right which is virtually created by the bench; and that in regard to new districts, the Government may, from time to time, suspend the operation of the Bill in any place where no licensed premises are situated within a radius of five miles. If a new township is created,

and if population centres in some district where there is at present practically little settlement and where no licensed premises exist, we do not desire by virtue of the provisions of this Bill to force persons settling in the locality to form, against their will, a prohibition settlement; and the Government are authorised to suspend the provisions of the Act for the purpose of enabling them to meet the convenience of the residents if they desire a hotel. I think there can be no danger of this Bill, if passed, operating unfairly or, as it may be regarded by some residents, to the disadvantage of a community. In justifying the farther suspension of the issue of new licenses, I may point out that in Western Australia the privileges granted by licenses are very strong indeed. Once a person has obtained a license of the description dealt with in this Bill there is no question whatever that an absolute right to the renewal of the license is granted, on moderately good conduct on the part of the licensee being established. Our Act is specific.

MR. MORAN: You would not expect a man to invest money on a year's tenure.

THE PREMIER: Our Act is stronger than any other Act I have perused on the rights of licensees. It really definitely requires that the bench "shall" grant a renewal on condition of good conduct or on failure to commit any very grave offence by the licensee being established. I do not intend to justify or condemn that provision, but wish to emphasise it to show that the right created by new licenses is a very tangible one indeed, and to show that there is a strong case in favour of the suspension of the creation of new rights until Parliament has had an opportunity of dealing thoroughly with the whole question. The effect of the suspension will be that if Parliament agrees to the provisions proposed in the new Bill, it is recommended in that Bill that there shall be power to give notice to the licensees in order to terminate their rights in respect to renewals within a given period, which is fixed in the Bill at 10 years. In the meantime, any license granted after the passing of that Bill will not carry that same right of renewal or any right of renewal, should a local option poll determine that the license is not required

within the district which it is supposed to serve. I hope this measure for the suspension of the granting of these licenses will find acceptance with the House. If members are prepared to do so, I should like to see it carried through the second reading stage this afternoon. It is a measure of only one clause.

MR. BURGESS: But it embraces a good deal.

MR. MORAN: You might abrogate the whole Constitution with one clause.

THE PREMIER: I shall be very happy to afford the fullest opportunity of discussing the measure in Committee, but I should like to see some preliminary discussion on it this afternoon, instead of having the debate adjourned immediately I resume my seat. I wish to point out that the only licenses to which the Bill relates are the publicans' general licenses, hotel licenses, wayside house licenses, and wine and beer licenses. It does not cover gallon licenses, wine and spirit licenses, billiard licenses, and other forms of license which come under the principal Act. I beg to move the second reading of this Bill.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Greenough): I do not rise with the idea of taking exception to this Bill, but rather to give it, so far as I am personally concerned, my most cordial support. My only regret is that it is not possible, during the present session, to carry through the larger and more ambitious Bill which has already been read a first time in this House; but I recognise it is impossible, within the limits of this session, to deal with a comprehensive measure of licensing reform. I hope, therefore, recognising the contentious nature of a full measure, that next session the Government will take the very earliest opportunity of bringing the Bill before us, so that at least another session will not go by without this very important step of social reform being dealt with. It seems to me that this small Bill is a very necessary one, seeing that we contemplate at a future date dealing with the whole question of licensing and making some very decided reforms in it. That being our intention so far as we can look into the future, it seems a wise thing that so far as possible we should at this stage prevent the creation of any more vested interests under the licensing system than

we can avoid. It seems to me that this small measure is framed very carefully to prevent any unnecessary hardship or interference with rights that have accrued. For instance, as the Premier has pointed out, there is no interference contemplated in the case where provisional certificates have been granted; and in the same way in districts where it may be necessary to give licenses before the larger Bill becomes law, provision is made by which the Governor-in-Council can meet the difficulty. I hope, therefore, and I do not doubt it knowing the sympathies of the Premier in the matter, that this power will be very sparingly used, and that licenses will not be granted in such districts unless there be a very pronounced and justifiable public demand for it. I do not think the Bill is one upon which it is necessary to say very much, but I have pleasure in supporting it, I do not say in every detail but in its general scope, because in this matter of licensing reform I have had the pleasure for some years past of having been associated with the Premier outside this House.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): The late Premier, Mr. James, recognised about 12 months ago that the time had arrived when some steps should be taken to stop the indiscriminate granting of licenses; and he issued a circular some time last year to the various licensing benches throughout the State, urging upon them the necessity of not granting licenses so freely as they had been doing in the past. It is a great pity this Bill was not introduced years ago. I have listened with great care to the remarks of the Premier on the subject, and I think he, like many others, has laid undue stress upon the importance of passing legislation with regard to the creation of new licenses. There is another aspect of this licensing question that requires really more consideration almost than the question of the creation of new licenses, and that is the management of houses that are at present licensed. I have often contended for many years past that the system at present seems to be that some amount of care is taken as to whether licenses should be granted to persons or not. We have various licensing benches appointed throughout the State to consider whether licenses should be granted for certain premises; but once

that step has been taken there is nothing more to be done. In most cases it seems to be no one's duty to see that the person who receives that license carries out the conditions under which it was granted to him.

THE SPEAKER: I would like to draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that the title of the Bill will hardly permit a general discussion upon the whole scope of the management of licenses. The specific object of this Bill is to suspend the granting of certain licenses. I do not think it would be wise to open up the general subject.

MR. FOULKES: The same thing occurred to me when the Premier was speaking in the same direction, and I thought as you had allowed him considerable latitude, perhaps the same latitude might be extended to me. However, I shall have an opportunity when the licensing Bill comes on of speaking on the same subject. Perhaps I may be allowed to state at present that I hope the vast question which I am not allowed to speak on at the length I should like to have done, will receive consideration at the hands of the Premier, that is the question of the management and control of these houses when they are licensed.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): I regret that this measure does not go so far as it might have done in the matter of the suspension of certain licenses. The particular class of license to which I take very strong exception is the questionable class of license known as the gallon license. Perhaps there is no class of license in connection with the liquor traffic that has been more abused than this particular form. I feel safe in saying that at all events 50 per cent. of the liquor sold in stores under the gallon license system is sold in contravention of the very license itself. The common practice, I am given to understand by those who utilise this particular means of supplying themselves with these luxuries, is instead of getting a gallon at one time, to obtain a single bottle or two as the case may be, or any quantity less than a gallon, in the ordinary way, and it is not entered up as liquor supplied, but as some ordinary commodity. It may be supplied, as the member for North Perth suggests, as pickles. Certainly some

pickles, I believe, are preserved in spirit instead of vinegar.

POINT OF ORDER.

MR. FOULKES: I rise to a point of order. I was not permitted to speak on various subjects connected with this question, but I notice the member for Forrest is allowed to do so. I was going to ask whether I shall be permitted at a later stage on the second reading of this Bill to speak generally on the subject in the same manner as the member for Forrest.

THE SPEAKER: I understood the hon. member was referring to the suspension of certain licenses. That is quite within the scope of this Bill. Does the hon. member propose to criticise my ruling on the matter? Because, if he does, there is a constitutional method of doing it. The course he is taking at the present time is quite disorderly. If, I say, he wishes to question the ruling of the Speaker, there is a method laid down for doing it, and in no other way should it be done.

MR. FOULKES: I am quite aware of that. The last remark I heard the member for Forrest use when he was speaking was on the question of pickles.

THE SPEAKER: I have already given my ruling on the question. I cannot permit any discussion. The hon. member will please resume his seat.

MR. FOULKES: Very well, sir.

RESUMED.

MR. A. J. WILSON: When I was improperly interrupted by the member for Claremont, I was only pointing out there was some necessity for reform in regard to suspending the granting of this particular form of license known as the gallon license; and I hope the Premier, who is responsible for the introduction of this Bill, will have no objection, when we go into Committee, to accept the suggestion I have thrown out for the purpose of making this measure apply to these licenses. I am thoroughly satisfied that there are already too many licenses of this particular form issued in and around the metropolitan area, and we should do well and act wisely if we were to restrict and suspend the granting of any farther gallon licenses.

MR. H. GREGORY (Menzies): I feel inclined to oppose the passage of this Bill. We are asked to pass a Bill which shall suspend the granting of licenses for the future except in such districts as the Government desire and prescribe. The reason given for doing this is that there is a new Bill placed on the Notice Paper which we are not going to be asked to deal with this session; at least I understand it is not probable that we may be able to deal with a large Bill like that, and I for one hope we shall not be asked to deal this session with a Bill so comprehensive as one for the consolidation of our licensing laws. I would like to ask members, what is going to be the position supposing this consolidating Bill does not become law this session, and does not become law next session? It would be a remarkably good thing for those who happen to possess licenses at the present time to know that no licenses are going to be granted until we can pass a licensing Act which will satisfy members of Parliament. [Interjection by Mr. Bolton]. The Premier has told us there has been a large number of licenses granted lately; that in several places an inordinate number has been granted by the licensing benches. Where has that occurred? It has not come to my knowledge. The Premier is a teetotaler, and probably if one license is granted he naturally assumes that an inordinate number has been granted. One may be one too many.

THE PREMIER: I am in a minority in the Cabinet, though.

MR. GREGORY: They are fairly well represented, I think. I have not heard of any great number of licenses being granted of late. I know some time ago some licenses were granted which the Government of the day did not think should have been granted. We regretted we had not power to refuse to grant the licenses. I would have liked the Premier to bring down a Bill giving the Governor-in-Council power to refuse to issue licenses.

MR. DIAMOND: Hear, hear.

MR. MORAN: Half the benches would recommend it. That would be a rather invidious position for the Government.

MR. GREGORY: It would be a wise power to give the Executive. It would

not often be utilised, but occasions might arise.

THE PREMIER: I think it would be very dangerous.

MR. GREGORY: Which is the more dangerous, giving the Government power to act, or preventing the issue of any general licenses?

DR. ELLIS: It would be useful on the eve of a general election.

MR. GREGORY: The hon. member will have to look after the general election more than I shall, next time.

DR. ELLIS: Why? Are you not going to stand?

MR. GREGORY: If we had time to deal with the licensing laws in a comprehensive way I would be only too pleased to be able to go into this question; but I have no hope of passing a consolidating licensing Bill this year, and I feel quite satisfied the Premier has not, and it is quite possible we may not be able to pass it next session. Only a few days ago I heard a Minister talking about the necessity of expediency. It may be expedient not to put this Bill forward next year. [Interjection.] If it is a good Bill and going to be popular, then there will be a desire to pass it. But when I find a Minister trusting so much to public opinion, I think the power behind the throne may be such that the Bill will not be put forward next session. However, we shall still have this little Bill to prevent the issue of any new licenses in the future. [Interjection by Mr. Bolton.] It is not always so easy to repeal Bills. I should have much preferred that the Government had asked that they should have power to refuse a license if they thought fit, that is that the power should lie with the Executive Council. We reserve that power with regard to the issue of a Crown-grant land license and with regard to a mining title.

MR. MORAN: There is no competition in land.

MR. GREGORY: Certainly not. I realise the necessity of having a good licensing Bill, because it seems such an absurdity that a person should be able to apply for a license, obtain a provisional certificate probably for 2s. 6d., and perhaps get £5,000 or £10,000 next day for his license. We want to consider these things, and see whether the State is going to obtain any benefit from them.

I do not like this measure, and would, I say, much prefer the Governor-in-Council to have power to refuse a license in the same way as power is vested in him in regard to all other titles. Although we call the certificate a license, the Premier himself, in his remarks with regard to our present Act, says that when a license is granted there is almost an absolute title, almost a right, to insist upon its being granted again. Therefore in dealing with a matter of this sort, if after a license has been recommended by a licensing bench there is sufficient justification, the Governor-in-Council should have power to refuse to issue the license. I feel inclined to oppose the Bill.

On motion by MR. RASON, debate adjourned.

TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Resumed from the previous day.

MR. BATH in the Chair; the MINISTER FOR JUSTICE in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Registration to purchaser on sale in default of payment of rates:

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It had been said that the clause was a dangerous innovation. This provision was found almost word for word in the Queensland Local Authorities Act of 1902, and if members looked at Section 248 of that Act they would find a provision similar to this clause. In the New Zealand Rating Act of 1894 there were sections dealing with a similar power to that contained in this clause. In the Victorian Local Act of 1900 very similar power was given to take possession in cases where rates had not been paid. In the South Australian Local Governing Act there was a similar clause. It was pointed out that a very great danger existed in allowing dual certificates of title to one piece of land, and the point at first seemed a strong one. The member for Guildford said the duplicate was conclusive evidence of the possession of the property. He (the Minister) had submitted the matter to the Crown Solicitor, and in reply that officer said a duplicate certificate alone was no security: the register was the conclusive evidence of title. It was also pointed out by the member for Guildford that the present

Land Transfer Act provided that in the event of a duplicate certificate of title being lost, by calling on the registrar and making a declaration that the duplicate was lost the owner could get a new one.

MR. RASON: After advertising for months.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It had to be advertised, but that was not a very uncommon occurrence. In Perth and other places there were many instances of duplicates of titles existing. In the event of a man wishing to borrow money on property that he had a duplicate certificate for, he tendered that certificate, and every man who proposed to lend money on that certificate went to the Land Titles Office and examined the register to see if there was any caveat or execution on the land; also to see if the first duplicate certificate was in existence, a second certificate having been issued because of the loss of the first one. We were running no danger in passing the clause, as it simply gave similar power to that contained in corresponding Acts of the other States. The proposal of the member for Katanning, that the registrar should not have discretionary power to demand that before the issue of a duplicate certificate the matter should be advertised, had been opposed by the Government; but if an amendment had been submitted by which the registrar should not be given any power at all to insist on advertising, he (the Minister) would have favoured it. Queensland was the only country that gave the Registrar of Titles any power under any circumstances to demand that advertisements be inserted before ground was sold for the non-payment of rates. Precaution was taken to see that everyone concerned was notified. The Roads Act declared that these matters should be advertised in the newspapers usually circulating in the district three times, and that there should be an advertisement inserted in the *Government Gazette*. A petition had to be presented to a Judge of the Supreme Court, who had to satisfy himself that every possible notice had been given to everyone who had anything to do with the property. The Judge had power to order other precautions so that no undue advantage was taken. There was not the slightest danger that anyone lending money on property would be

taken advantage of; but people themselves should take precautions. If a man lent money on a building which was not insured, the security was gone. If a man lent money on a mining lease and the rent of the lease was not paid, the Government could forfeit the lease for the non-payment of rent; or if the mining lease was not being worked according to the conditions, the lease could be forfeited also. Mortgagees knew all these things. Nothing had been said to prove that better precautions should be taken. It was not possible for municipalities to do the work intended of them unless all those who held property paid a fair share of rates, and unless people could buy land with a free title it would be impossible for municipalities to enforce their rights.

MR. RASON had not any serious opposition to the clause. It was true he had made use of the words "conclusive evidence" in regard to the production of the duplicate certificate, but he was merely using the words contained in the parent Act. It was possible to issue a certificate for land sold for non-payment of rates, but if the original certificate was not called in or provision made to amend the clause, the original owner would only have to produce his certificate in any court, and that would be conclusive evidence. If the Minister wished to make it easy for a certificate to be issued to a purchaser of land sold for the non-payment of rates, he must take some steps to amend the clause making provision that the matter should be subject to the approval of the registrar, or insert some words that would protect the Government. Unless that were done, serious difficulties would arise in the future. He was just as anxious as anyone else that the different municipalities should be able to recover their rates, but he wanted the owner or anyone else interested in land to receive ample notice before sale. The land would be always there. The corporation could if necessary lodge a caveat preventing any dealings with the property, of which they could practically take possession; and therefore they should give ample notice of sale, for which notice the Municipalities Act did not adequately provide. To make the Bill retrospective was dangerous. The

one case mentioned by the Premier might be otherwise met.

MR. FOULKES: The preceding speaker was perhaps to be excused for opposing this clause, owing to its faulty advocacy by the Minister for Justice, who had a practice of reading out statements prepared for him by the Crown Law Department, which statements were listened to with respect. But unfortunately the Minister elaborated these statements, and some of the elaborations seriously diminished their value. If the Minister would stick to the *role* of messenger from the Crown Law Department to the House, there would not be so much risk of his arguments being misunderstood. All admitted that there was some danger in duplicating certificates of title; but that danger was not so great as some might think, because the production of a certificate did not prove the holder to be the actual owner of the property on the day when he showed the certificate. The certificate was only a copy of the original document in the Lands Titles office, which original was a record of all transactions affecting the property—mortgages, executions, and discharges of mortgage. So, when various local authorities sold land, the registrar would record such sale on the original document. If the original owner afterwards sought to deal with the property by way of mortgage, sale, or transfer, he would be liable to a heavy penalty which no one in this State had so far incurred, though such crimes were not unknown in the Eastern States, quite apart from duplicated certificates of title. An analogous case to that contemplated in the clause occurred when a creditor issued execution against land. The writ was recorded in the Land Titles Office; and even if the original debtor still held the certificate and was unwilling to give it up, the registrar, after due advertising, would cause a fresh certificate to issue. The original owner was well protected. He knew his property was liable to rating. Ample time was given him for payment. In the Coolgardie Water Supply Bill he (Mr. Foulkes) had secured the reduction of this time from two years to one year. Rate notices were issued periodically, month by month; and the names of defaulting ratepayers were gazetted. On recomittal he would move that the

words "and for such purpose shall if necessary make such order and publish such advertisements as are provided in the case of dealings with land when the certificate of title is lost or not produced," be struck out, and "without requiring the production of the duplicate certificate of title" be inserted in lieu. The Premier stated that the retrospective portion of the clause was inserted to meet one case. What was that case?

THE MINISTER: Full information would be given on recommitment.

MR. HARDWICK: There was a certain danger in issuing dual certificates of title. The land remained as the corporation's security, and the only charges against it would be for rates and fencing. A municipality would be in a better position if it had power to charge a high rate of interest on rates in arrear. An injustice was done when one ratepayer paid every year and another let the rates accumulate. But this clause was dangerous; for a landowner might take his certificate of title to another State, and raise money on it. To deprive the lender of his security by issuing a title to another person would be unfair. Surely not even the Queensland Act gave such latitude.

HON. W. C. ANGWIN: The last speaker ought to know that if rates remained unpaid for 18 months, and an action were not brought in the Supreme Court for their recovery, then if the owner sold the land to another person, such person would not be liable for the rates, because he was not in possession of the land when the rates were struck—the only defence allowed in a court of law. The Bill was necessary in the interests of all local governing bodies.

MR. CARSON would move on recommitment that the words "before or," in the last line but one of the clause, be struck out. To make the clause retrospective was objectionable. An absent mortgagee might not be aware of the advertisement of sale for non-payment of rates; and thus he would lose his security.

THE MINISTER: It would be better to give notice of all amendments of this kind, and he would take care to provide facilities for dealing with them on recommitment. Referring to remarks as to ensuring that justice should be done to all persons interested in a property, he

might inform members that the powers in the Bill were similar to those in force in the Eastern States, more expressly in New Zealand; and by having these powers, the local bodies were enabled to see that every owner of property paid his fair share of rates. When application was made to a Judge in court for an order to sell, members might rely on it that the Judge would take care to satisfy himself before ordering the sale.

MR. NANSON hoped the Minister would in the meantime consult the Crown Law Department, to see if some provision could be made by which the mortgagee of a property affected in this way should receive sufficient notice to protect his interest in the property before it was sold for arrears of rates. It should be practicable to provide that notice must be given to the mortgagee as well as to the owner, and this could be done in all cases where the mortgage was registered.

THE MINISTER: The point was a good one. The mortgagee who registered his mortgage should always get notice; but he (the Minister) was afraid that to give effect to the suggestion would require an amendment of the Roads Act, the Municipal Institutions Act, and some other Acts in which provision for sale was made. It might be made a condition of transfer that all parties interested should receive notice.

MR. HARDWICK: The member for East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) was wrong in his statement just now. The rates were a charge against the land, and if not paid by the seller the rates must be paid by the purchaser.

HON. W. C. ANGWIN: What he had said on the point was exactly in accordance with the provision in the existing Act.

Clause as amended put and passed.

Schedule, Preamble, Title,—aged to.

Bill reported with amendments.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from the 15th November, the Minister for Justice (Hon. R. Hastie) having moved the second reading.

MR. F. GILL (Balkatta): I did not intend speaking on the Bill, as I do not

profess to be a legal practitioner, and have no particular knowledge of that profession. I am satisfied that a measure of this kind is necessary. Generally speaking, I confess the Bill does not go as far as I would like to see it. We have been told in this debate that the legal profession is hedged about by a wall, in fact hedged about very much as the Russians are in Port Arthur at the present time. I am convinced there is room for a Bill of this sort, but the question is, how far is it advisable to go? We have been told in the discussion that no matter what provisions are made in the Bill, the legal fraternity will find means of getting round them. In regard to allowing law clerks the right of becoming practitioners, it is said in the first place there are at present too many legal practitioners in existence. Such may be the case, but I confess that a few more would not do a great amount of injury. I have not had a great deal of experience in regard to legal practitioners, having kept away from them for the reason that the first loss is the best. My idea is that if the profession is overcrowded, those who are in it appear to have a very good time when they do happen to get a bird to pluck; and such being the case it is possible that a few more entering the profession will cause more competition, and may reduce the cost of justice to the people. With regard to the statement made by the leader of the Opposition, that clerks in the offices of practitioners will have an opportunity, provided the measure becomes law, of working up a connection so that when their time expires they will be in a position to enter into competition with their principals, this is a possibility that occurs in every trade and profession, but it does not often come to pass. A blacksmith who may be an efficient tradesman, working for an employer, gets a good name for himself, and intends to start in business in opposition to the man who is now employing him. Such a thing does not often eventuate; it is a possibility, and that is all we can say of it. It is hardly worth discussing. One remark made by the member for Claremont—and being one of the profession, the member should know something about it, and I believe the statement was made in all honesty; still it would take a good deal of persuasion to make the

general public believe it—was that the legal profession did not wish to prevent persons from becoming lawyers or solicitors. If the legal profession desired that the profession should be thrown open to all persons, then why not remove the present restrictions that exist? There are a great many restrictions, we are told, and until they are removed I have not a great deal of faith in the professions of the legal gentlemen that they have no desire to prevent anyone from entering their ranks. The Bill is a step in the right direction. The only thing in connection with it is that it should be extended on the lines stated by the member for Coolgardie, who I think quoted the Queensland Act. I think that member showed that the Queensland Act is far more liberal than this amending Bill. I do not profess to be an authority on it. I willingly leave that matter in the hands of members of the legal fraternity, scarce though they be in this House; still we have a number of gentlemen aspiring to become members of that profession. These members will be only too pleased to take up the debate much more ably than I can.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. R. Hastie): We have had a very interesting debate on the motion and amendment, and the opinions of members seem to be pretty varied. It has been suggested to me by various members that instead of the House deciding this important question, we might well remit it to a select committee, and in that case the second reading would require to be formally carried, and then the Bill could be referred to a select committee. If that be done we shall be able to get the measure at least considered. The select committee could report to the House at once. I assured those members who have made representations to me that I thought this would be the best way to act; therefore I hope the House will formally negative the amendment to read the Bill a second time this day six months, carry the second reading formally, and then appoint a select committee to report to the House.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): I rise to oppose the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. I was surprised to think that anyone in this enlightened age would be prepared to admit that the Legal

Practitioners Act, as it stands at present, is all that is to be desired?

MR. RASON: Who said so?

MR. A. J. WILSON: If the member did not do so, his actions spoke much louder than his words.

MR. RASON: Did you say it is all that is desired?

MR. A. J. WILSON: I have made no such admission.

MR. RASON: Your actions speak louder than words.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I submit the hon. member's remark is not appropriate. I am not opposing the amending legislation, but the amendment. That is the only question we can deal with at this stage of the debate. I only want to give some of the reasons why this measure should receive the consideration of this House. I cordially agree with the expressed desire of the Minister for Justice to refer the whole question to a select committee, in order that such a body may be able to go into the multitude of questions that are necessary in connection with this particular statute. The time has not been available, in all probability, for the Minister to go into them. One reads language such as this in the existing Act:—

No person other than a practitioner shall directly or indirectly perform or carry out or be engaged in any work in connection with the administration of law, or draw or prepare any deed, instrument, or writing relating to or in any manner dealing with or affecting real or personal estate or any interest therein or any proceedings at law, civil or criminal, or in equity: provided that nothing herein contained shall be construed to affect public officers acting in discharge of their official duty, or the paid or article'd clerks of practitioners, or any person drawing or preparing any transfer under "The Transfer of Land Act, 1893."

There are certain penalties which are prescribed for any breaches of this section, and we know—the leader of the Opposition knows—there are a variety of little details that would come within the scope of the operation of this section, which are performed every day in the week in every business office of the city, and which, were people compelled to place the insignificant details of drafting in the hands of legal practitioners, would involve many legal firms in this city in a tremendous amount of legal costs which are entirely unnecessary and

unwarrantable in the circumstances. This is one question among many others that certainly should engage the attention of a select committee. We have to bear in mind that the legislation in this particular connection has been handed down from the oldest and most retrogressive periods of our history. We find when the legislation was first introduced into this State, the old English Act in regard to this matter was incorporated almost *in toto*. It was so done because the leading legislators who, I presume, occupied seats in the legislature of the country, were perfectly satisfied with that condition of things. I venture to think they had every reason to be proud and were satisfied with the position of affairs that obtained at that particular time. Under these circumstances it is only reasonable to assume that a House in which the legal practitioners were such a predominant or powerful element would have no difficulty in carrying legislation of this nature. The time has arrived, even if we are taking a step in advance of some other States in this matter, when an amount of liberality in regard to this statute should be initiated in this State and likewise in every other State. The time certainly has arrived when an extension of the privileges that are at the present time enjoyed by the restricted few should be made. We find very serious difficulties, and in most cases almost insurmountable difficulties, are placed in the way of people who have the most excellent qualifications to follow this profession, from becoming legal practitioners. We find, first of all, before any one is allowed to pass the preliminary examination, the person must be in possession of a sum of twelve guineas. We find after having passed the preliminary examination a person is compelled to take out articles for a period of five years, for which, in most cases, he is compelled to pay a considerable premium. Then we find the person is debarred during the currency of the articles of clerkship, extending over a period of five years, from engaging in any other remunerative employment. So much is that the case that after having gone through the course and passed the final examination, the person is compelled to sign a certificate that he has not, during the currency of the articles, been engaged in any other

way than as a *bona fide* articulated clerk, and has not received any remuneration or emolument during that particular clerkship. In these circumstances, it is manifest, even in view of the very arduous examinations which are prescribed and the other obstacles insurmountable to many except people who have the necessary means, that a person must rusticate for a period of five years in a lawyer's office to qualify for the legal profession. With all due respect to many of the learned gentlemen who practise in our courts, I venture to think that some of them did nothing but rusticate in those offices for five years. Legal practitioners need not fear competition which they might be brought into contact with if there were a liberalisation of the terms on which people would be allowed to practise in the courts. Apart from that, another important matter we ought to consider in this connection is the question of the right of any person who may sue or be sued, and who may be suitor in an action, to appear to conduct that action.

MR. BURGESS: He can do that now.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I do not know if he can or if he cannot; but I have the assurance of the one learned luminary in this Chamber that he cannot possibly do it at present. I have only to remind hon. members that when the Local Courts Bill was under discussion I drew attention to this particular phase of the question, in the case of a party making an application in person for a writ of mandamus in any matter before the Local Court; and we were assured that it would be absolutely and entirely impossible for the person to make that application in person to a Judge in the Supreme Court, and that such application could only be made by a duly qualified legal practitioner. I think this is a departure which might, with considerable advantage and justice to litigants, be introduced in regard to this Legal Practitioners Bill; and the provision in the Act which prevents and precludes parties to an issue from appearing in person, certainly ought to be eliminated. We should give that right which ought to be the common right of every Britisher to conduct his own case if he desires to do so, and to be the person who should arbitrate whether he should engage counsel or not. In many cases we know it is quite incompetent from

financial considerations for people to engage the necessary legal assistance to conduct their cases; and we know that many injustices have been perpetrated on people in this State, simply because of their inability to put down the necessary hard cash to enable them to obtain the services of legal practitioners. These are disabilities among others which can be brought before the House by a select committee, which would adequately assist the House in deciding whether some farther amendment should be made to the Legal Practitioners Act as it stands at present.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Greenough): In common with most members who have spoken in regard to this Bill, I regret that the Government have not seen their way to go a good deal farther than they have done. It seems an anomaly that in a new country like this, instead of abolishing some of the restrictions that make the entry to the legal profession difficult, we find it is a less easy matter to enter into that profession in Western Australia than in the old country. I know of an instance myself at present in which a gentleman wishing to enter the legal profession has actually gone to England to get admitted to the bar, because it is a much easier matter to be admitted as a member of the bar in England. This gentleman when admitted intends to come and practise in Western Australia. This is an anomalous condition of things; and without labouring the point, I think anyone who can look on this matter without being self-interested as a member of the legal profession must admit that, as far as the public are concerned, the one necessity is that persons who practise law shall have the necessary knowledge, and that if there is an examination test it is sufficient safeguard against persons practising without sufficient knowledge; as much safeguard as we hope to get. We know that with the present restrictions blunders are made from time to time by persons who have been admitted to the bar; and with all the long process to be served, the term of articles and a preliminary examination in regard to matters that have nothing to do with practical legal work, we are all aware that, notwithstanding these safeguards, persons do get admitted to the legal profession who are not very

sued to the work they have to perform. The suggestion that this question should be relegated to a select committee is perhaps in some ways a good one, because it will enable the House to be put in possession of precise information as to what is done in other parts of the world. We have had in the course of this debate from the member for Coolgardie and the member for Hannans more particularly some interesting information on this subject; and no doubt that will be amplified by the select committee, if appointed. I hope that the committee, if appointed, in the course of its labours will draw special attention to the practice in the United States of America, where I believe the sole requirement to be a legal practitioner is that a person shall pass certain examinations. It cannot be said that the practice in the United States has done anything to lower the legal profession. I suppose the jurists of the United States are second to none. They are admitted by English practitioners to be fully equal to the great English lawyers. I do not think in a matter of this kind we need hesitate in following the example of the great republic of the West, which in this matter has decreed, as in other matters in that country, that there shall be the most perfect equality of opportunity for everybody, whether he be rich or whether he be poor.

MR. P. J. LYNCH (Mount Leonora): Although the Bill before the House is not of a very liberal or progressive character, there is ample ground for hope that it will be of that nature before it passes through this Chamber and the other one. The method of introducing this Bill every member will feel justified in asserting to be one to be closely adhered to in introducing any measure of legislation. It was not introduced in the dogmatic spirit which is sometimes very noticeable in introducing Government measures; but it was introduced in a way that called for suggestions from every member of the House to make the Bill as perfect a measure as possible. If it passes in its present form (though I think there is not the slightest hope of it) the Bill will certainly only open the path of promotion to four or five articled clerks in Perth and Fremantle. It is not a desirable state of affairs that a Bill should be used simply to remove the barricade from before four

or five men. This measure should go farther and should provide that every man, no matter whether he has adhered to the strict rule of dry routine or not, so long as he is a capable interpreter of the law as it stands, should go forward and get a certificate. I was rather pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Greenough, who expressed the desire that it should be the aim of the Legislature to at least place no classical barriers before any man of industry and genius who wants to get as far forward in the paths of knowledge as possible. When we turn to the methods adopted in the Eastern States, and particularly in New South Wales, we find that men who are a positive adornment to the profession have not been obliged to adhere to the dry routine. We find that Mr. Reid, the present Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, served all that is required to be served under the Legal Practitioners Act in that State when he was clerk in the Government Printing Office in Sydney. It cannot be gainsaid that Mr. Reid is at the present time an ornament to the profession. We do not want to go back to even that method of procedure by which Mr. Reid mounted to the top of his profession; but it is certainly not desirable that we should spend time in simply making it easy for these five or six articled clerks who are in Perth to gain admission to the bar. We should also take into consideration the number of other equally competent persons who are not articled clerks, but who are perhaps in minor positions in several of the large law offices here; and we should enable them to pass at least the necessary examination that is the sole test of competency. In New Zealand they have abolished articles altogether, and the sole test of any applicant who wishes to enter the legal profession is that he shall have an adequate knowledge of the law that he will be called upon by clients later on to interpret. It was mentioned during this debate that medicine and law should be placed on precisely the same level. I hardly think so. Any citizen employed in that very praiseworthy calling of attending to the ills of human kind should be called upon, as far as human device goes, to possess the highest degree of knowledge.

MR. BOLTON: Who made that statement?

MR. LYNCH: It was made on the cross-benches opposite. I think that profession is one in which there is no room for 'prentice hands. As far as the legal profession is concerned, I think it should be our motto and policy that the man of merit should move forward whenever occasion arises. If we turn also to the procedure in Queensland, we find that some of the leading stars of the profession there were not obliged to spend five years at articles without a salary, as is the law here. Sir Walter Rutledge was referred to by the member for Coolgardie. The hon. member could also have referred to Mr. Justice Real, who is now a member of the Supreme Court of that State. It is on record that Mr. Justice Real carried his carpentering tools morning after morning in Ipswich when he was studying for the law. If there be no greater liberalisation of the law in this regard in this State, it will be utterly impossible for a man possessed of brilliant parts to mount to the top of the profession as Mr. Justice Real has done in Queensland. Now that we have the opportunity in this measure, seeing that the Minister will accept suggestions from every part of the House, we should make the Bill such a one that it will put no impassable barrier before any youth of genius and application who chooses to study the law.

MR. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet): I agree with the remarks made on this side of the House, and with the very liberal sentiments expressed by the member for Greenough. I think that the Government might well go farther and liberalise this measure. To me it seems to be somewhat conservative, although it is an improvement on the previous Act. I think we can surely follow the example set by other Australian States. The other members who have spoken have already given the examples of Queensland, New South Wales, and New Zealand. We find that no bar is placed to the progress of people desiring to study for the law in those States, and I see no reason why a similar state of affairs should not exist in Western Australia. Like some members who have spoken, I would like to see people admitted to the bar by virtue of their

having passed certain examinations. It does not matter how long it takes them to pass such examinations. If they can pass them in a year, they should be entitled to practise as legal practitioners. That is the way in which this measure should be liberalised, and I hope that when the select committee take the matter in hand they will bring down a liberal measure which will receive the support of the majority of this House.

MR. H. BROWN (Perth): I think that the gentlemen who will be affected by this Bill would themselves strongly object to throwing open the profession to any person, as suggested on the Government benches. I am surprised at those who are practically such close unionists. They themselves practically object to anyone entering their ranks unless such person has served his apprenticeship.

MR. A. J. WILSON: That is not true.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw that.

MR. WILSON: I beg to withdraw.

MR. H. BROWN: They go still farther than that: they object even to apprentices beyond a certain number to a certain number of workmen. I must support this as it stands. I am afraid that if we throw the profession open as suggested by the Government, the Bill will be thrown out altogether, and I reiterate that the gentlemen themselves who would be affected by this Bill are, I am sure, against the sentiments expressed by the members of the Government to throw the profession open to everyone who can pass an examination. An apprenticeship is desirable, and if we get cheap law, it is going to be bad, and the more lawyers we get the greater the litigation we shall have. The only thing which should be decided is, who are managing clerks? I think that could be safely left to the Judges of the court, because we know pretty well the gentlemen who will be affected by the passing of this Bill. They are known to the Judges, and the reputation they would get from their employers would ensure their being designated by their proper title as managing clerks. There may be in an office a practitioner himself and one clerk, and I should think that it would then be for the Judges to decide whether that person had a sufficient knowledge of the law and whether he came under the

designation of managing clerk. It would be a bad thing to pass laws in Western Australia on a par with those appertaining to the bar in New Zealand.

MR. NANSON: Have you read the career of the United States in the last half century?

MR. H. BROWN: No; I have not had time. I believe at the present time New Zealand practitioners are absolutely prohibited from practising in any of the Australian States, owing to the low qualification of their examination and the fact that no articles are required to be served there. I would ask the members of the Government to, instead of jeopardising this Bill, assist the worthy gentlemen who would be affected by it. I ask them to seriously consider it and not to have farther amendments to practically throw the profession open to anyone who can cut in and pass the final examination; because, as I said before, the very gentlemen who will be affected by this Bill do not wish the profession thrown open as suggested by members of the Government.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): In regard to this question I may say that the member for Perth does not seem to be able to differentiate between the question of articling a man for the law, and the question of passing those necessary examinations which will qualify him for the law. A man is not, by the course of procedure laid down by the Practitioners Act as it stands, and by the alleged long course of training one is supposed to undergo, more fitted for practising in a law court than is a man, say, in New South Wales, Queensland, or in the United States of America, as the hon. member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) has pointed out, who by the necessary examinations has to display his qualifications to be admitted as a practitioner. Those who are charged with the duty of prescribing those examinations take care to see that they are of a character to bring out and display the competence of the man undergoing them before he is admitted to the bar, and we must recognise that these men are legal practitioners and are just as desirous of maintaining the status of the profession as is the member for Perth himself. Therefore, in prescribing these examinations they take care to see that they are of such a type that a man by passing them gives strong proof of his competence

and his qualifications. The point is this, that whereas in this State the profession is hedged round with restrictions which practically make a close corporation for a few—

MR. H. BROWN: Like your unions.

MR. BATH: I will come to that matter in a moment. In other States and other countries if a man gives sufficient evidence by the brilliancy of his knowledge and perseverance that he can pass that examination in a fewer number of years, he is permitted to do so. I have in my mind numerous cases relating to New South Wales, where men by their application and intellectual qualifications have been enabled to pass those examinations, have been admitted to the bar, and have proved by their subsequent career that they were qualified.

MR. RASON: Special Acts were brought in to pass those men.

MR. BATH: I have in my mind three men whom I know very well who by their perseverance and against the greatest obstacles have been able to pass their examinations, and since doing so they have been practising their profession and have absolutely proved their competence by the manner in which they have conducted cases that have been entrusted to them. In regard to New Zealand the member for Perth says he has been led to believe that the standard of legal practitioners in that State is low; but the fact is that the standard of legal practitioners in New Zealand, even after the system of articling has been done away with, is quite equal, and I will go so far as to say superior, to that which at present exists in Western Australia with its absurd restrictions. The member for Perth does not seem to be able to discuss any question, whether it be the question of legal practitioners or the canals in Mars, without touching on unionists and their exclusiveness. As far as his remarks are concerned there is not one tittle of correctness in his observations about the exclusiveness of unions. The hon. member reminds me on every occasion when he gets up and speaks of trade unionism and the Labour party of those automatic dolls which one can buy sometimes, and which are more expensive than the common articles. If you press them in the stomach they say "papa" and "mama." The hon. member, whenever any conceiv-

able subject is introduced, tells us something about trade union exclusiveness and the awful Labour party. His remarks should be a little relevant to the question in hand, and he should reserve those charges against trade unions and the Labour party for occasions when possibly an opportunity for them arises.

Amendment put and negatived.

THE SPEAKER: That carries the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

MR. RASON understood that the Minister in charge of the Bill was prepared to refer the measure to a select committee. He now moved that the Bill be referred to a select committee.

Question passed.

A committee appointed, comprising Mr. Bath, Mr. Foulkes, Mr. Quinlan, Mr. A. J. Wilson, with Mr. Rason as mover; to report this day fortnight.

NAVIGATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Taylor): In moving that the Bill be now read a second time, I may point out that there is no new Legislation in the measure, which is a portion of the existing navigation law of New South Wales; therefore it will be seen that there is no need for a lengthy speech. We have taken the Bill from the New South Wales Act in its entirety, with the omission of Part 5; we have also made omissions in 3 and 4 of Part 7, also omissions in Part 8, of the New South Wales Act of 1901. That Act consists of 172 sections. This Bill, which is a portion of that Act, consists of 106 clauses. The reason we have not gone farther with reference to the measure, and the reason why we have not repealed existing legislation on this matter, is that the Bill is intended only to tide over what may be called a short period, perhaps 12 months.

MR. RASON: What existing legislation is there on the subject in this State?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The existing legislation is to be found in an Act passed in 1861, which absorbed all legislation then existing on the subject. There have been amending Acts since that date. I may point out that a Bill repealing the existing legislation was passed by the Legislature of this State

in 1896, but it did not become law, the royal assent not being given. Since that time there has been no attempt at bringing our navigation laws into line with the navigation laws of the Eastern States. As I have said, this Bill is required to enable the chief harbour master and boards of marine inquiry to lawfully exercise powers which at present are exercised on questionable authority. As the Bill is intended to serve a temporary purpose only, when the Commonwealth Parliament deals with the question this measure will of course be superseded. It follows on the lines of the legislation of the Eastern States, as I have explained, except for the substitution of the chief harbour master for the superintendent of the department of navigation. It has been considered that the chief harbour master should take the place in this State of the superintendent as provided for in the Act of New South Wales. The proposed legislation is absolutely necessary, and it has been pressed for by the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce and the shipping associations of that port. Perhaps it will be wise for me to read a resolution passed by the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, at a meeting held on the 5th of February, in these words:—

This Chamber is of opinion that properly constituted marine boards similarly empowered to those of the Eastern States should be immediately formed, to safeguard the interests of the mercantile shipping owners and underwriters' associations.

The resolution was forwarded to the Minister; and this action having been taken, the matter of a marine board was gone into, and we found that the oldest States in the Commonwealth, New South Wales and South Australia, had abolished their marine boards in favour of a navigation department; the Act to govern the same being assented to by the former State in 1901, and by South Australia in 1902. The South Australian Act provided for the abolition of the marine board, and transferred the powers of that board to a superintendent acting under the control of the Commissioner; while the New South Wales Act provided for a department governed by a superintendent, under the control of the Minister.

MR. RASON: What are the principles of this Bill?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I will point them out. I will deal with those portions of the Bill which provide for navigation matters that are to come under the control of the navigation department, on which there are no laws or regulations in existence. I have pointed out that this is only a temporary measure. Knowing that navigation will be taken over by the Commonwealth Parliament, I have been in communication with the Commonwealth authorities on the subject. When the necessity was pressed for legislation in this direction by the associations I have mentioned, I sought to find out if the Federal Government would be likely to deal with the question of navigation this session, and I was informed that they would not; consequently I thought we should adopt legislation on the lines of the navigation laws of the Eastern States, and particularly the State has by far the largest shipping trade of any State in Australasia. Hon. members will see, therefore, that it is not necessary for me to elaborate on the measure, because it is on the lines of legislation now in existence in a sister State, and is brought down by the Government to deal with matters for which at present no provision exists. I would like to say that the Bill does not propose in any way to interfere with existing laws of navigation, but only makes farther provisions by which these matters can be successfully dealt with pending the passing of a Commonwealth Navigation Bill. We have in this State no Act under which we can frame regulations for safeguarding the interests of the mercantile community and underwriters' associations, or anyone else. If this Bill is passed, it will enable us to deal with the following subjects. Part II. deals with the chief harbour-master and other officers, assessors, and general provisions. Part III. provides for a court of marine inquiry. Part IV. relates to surveys and certificates, duties of surveyors and owners, also certain offences. Part V. provides for examination and certificates of masters, mates, and engineers, also certificated officers on ships, examinations and certificates of marine surveyors, and general provisions. Part VI. makes provisions as to unseaworthy ships, life-saving appliances, deck and load lines, and general matters. Part VII. has

miscellaneous provisions and legal procedure. The subjects which are the main features of the Bill are the court of marine inquiry, which will take the place of the ordinary inquiry held into cases of shipwreck under the existing ordinance and under two amending Acts which have never given satisfaction. It also deals with the survey of seagoing vessels, whether coastal or foreign, with or without passengers; and the granting of seagoing certificates. There are no Acts in existence dealing with these important matters of navigation. As to Part V., dealing with examinations and the granting of certificates to masters, mates, and engineers of foreign-going as well as coastal vessels, I would like to say that existing Acts provide only for granting masters' and mates' coasting certificates, and there is no provision for granting engineers' certificates of any description. So also in regard to examinations and granting certificates to marine surveyors, there is no provision in existing Acts for these certificates. Hon. members will see that it is necessary for the Bill to pass through its stages this season and become law. I feel confident that when hon. members realise there is no new legislation contemplated by this Bill, they will not look upon the measure with apprehension as many persons are inclined to do in regard to new legislation. We have in this measure copied legislation which has been in existence for three years in a sister State where there is far and away more shipping trade done. I feel confident that the Bill will commend itself to members. It will tide over perhaps the short space of time which it will be necessary to do. I have no desire to speak at any length on the second reading. I have much pleasure in moving the motion.

On motion by Mr. RASON, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES. IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from the 29th November;
Mr. BATH in the Chair.

COLONIAL TREASURER'S DEPARTMENT
(Hon. H. Daglish).

Photo-lithographic, £5,099:

MR. RASON: Last year provision was made for compensation for retrenched

officers in this department. This year it was either not anticipated that any officers would be retrenched, or if they were no compensation was to be given. Perhaps provision was made in some other way.

THE TREASURER: There was a re-organisation of this department which necessitated the retrenchment of a number of officers. That retrenchment had been carried out, and so far as he had been able to ascertain, the department was now reduced as low as it was possible to reduce it without interfering with the due performance of the work required of it. He did not anticipate it would be possible to diminish the number of officers employed; therefore no provision was made for compensation. If retrenchment became necessary, due provision would have to be made.

MR. GREGORY: There was work done by this department the special value of which depended on its being speedily published. He referred to geological maps and so forth. These publications were delayed an inordinate length of time. He knew from experience, dealing with geological maps, that their value was lost in a few years; therefore they should be published as quickly as possible. A geological survey with data cost a large amount of money to prepare, and to be of any value it should be speedily put into print; especially should maps which were sent to this department by the Mines Department be produced more speedily than in years past.

MR. RASON: The officer in charge of the photo-lithographic branch, a first-rate and up-to-date officer, was handicapped in one respect. An immense number of stones had to be kept on hand month after month unused, and stones used for lithographic work were very expensive. Some thousands of pounds worth of stones were laid aside because heads of departments would not say whether they were likely to require any farther maps or plans from them in the immediate future. It would be well if this department was worked as a business concern, and that the stones were held over for a fixed time.

THE TREASURER was glad to receive the information in regard to the delay which occasionally took place as to the publication of maps and the undue

retention of maps on stones. He had received no official complaints up to the present, but he would look into the points and endeavour to see if the work could be facilitated. He would endeavour to ascertain the reason if possible and remove it. He would go carefully into the point raised by the leader of the Opposition, because he recognised if there was delay of that description it was delay that cost the State money. Departments should be required to expedite work by letting this department know their final orders as to maps and plans.

Vote put and passed.

Post Office Savings Bank, £14,440:

MR. FOULKES called attention to the small salaries paid to officers of this department. The chief officer received £400 a year. There were 29 clerks—although these officers held positions which in other institutions were called accountants and tellers—receiving salaries from £210 down to £80; the second officer receiving £210, the next £200, one at £195, and the salaries went down to £80 a year. At the Boulder branch a manager received £230 and a clerk £130; at Coolgardie the manager received £260; at Fremantle the manager received £200 and a clerk £160. There was an item lower down of £500 by which provision was made for defalcations. He did not anticipate that there would be any.

THE TREASURER: This was to cover past defalcations.

MR. FOULKES: It was not fair to pay such small salaries to men who had to carry out important duties. The fact that the defalcations amounted to £500 showed that if we expected officers to be honest, we had an equal duty to see that they were adequately paid. We noticed remarks in the newspapers in which Judges had spoken very strongly indeed of the injustice done to cashiers and other officers who had to deal with financial transactions and who were paid in a niggardly fashion. Some of these Judges said that it was practically placing a premium on dishonesty to put undue temptation before men if they were not properly paid. Some of the salaries were exceedingly low.

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

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. FOULKES drew attention to the fact that the work of officers in the Savings Bank had increased last year as shown by the provision for nine additional clerks on these Estimates. There was every anticipation that the work would continue to increase, and he hoped the Premier would make arrangements to give increases in salaries. Apart from the personal benefit to the clerks, there was the question of the public service. We were anxious that our public servants should be honest, and it was a bad policy to pay small salaries to people who had to deal with finances. Should the amount of £400 for extra clerical assistance not be spent on extra clerks, it might be divided among the present staff as bonuses for overtime and good services rendered.

MR. NEEDHAM: The clerk receiving £200 a year received no increase on promotion. Some salaries were not proportionate to the amount of work and responsibility on certain officers. The manager of the Fremantle agency only received £200, the amount he would receive if he were a clerk in the head office, though at one time recommended for an increase of £50. This officer handled £25,000 monthly. A man in such a position of trust should be recompensed accordingly, so as to be beyond temptation. More work was entailed on the managers of branches than on clerks in the head office, and the Treasurer should make provision on the Supplementary Estimates for increases to these deserving officers.

MR. RASON hoped the Treasurer would be able to give information as to when the new premises for the Savings Bank were likely to be completed. The old Assembly buildings had been set aside for the use of the bank a long time since. The Treasurer would be convinced on a visit to the Savings Bank that these officers worked under conditions which were absolutely disgraceful. When he (Mr. Rason) went to inspect the present building, he was simply horrified at the conditions surrounding the clerks; and with considerable difficulty he had managed to secure the allotment of the old Assembly buildings for the use of the bank. We had taken

a great deal of trouble to insist on factory owners providing a considerable amount of air space; and we should take the same trouble in regard to State offices, in which men were employed though not in manual labour. There was also the side of the public accommodation to be considered. It was not unusual for police protection to be called in to the Savings Bank to control the crowd; but there were few mistakes and very few defalcations in the past, which spoke volumes to the credit of the office and to the credit of the customers. In Savings Bank transactions, every customer had to produce his passbook; and a statement of his account was plainly made out for anyone to see. On occasions among the crowd at the Savings Bank anyone could see exactly the amount standing to the credit of half-a-dozen individuals. If the new offices were pushed on with this state of things would no longer exist. The old Assembly chamber would make an admirable banking chamber. There would be no risk of any very large crowd being brought there; not such a crowd as existed in the present building. Surely it was possible to hasten on the completion of those offices. Summer was at hand, and it was extremely probable that at any moment the staff of the Perth Savings Bank might be laid up altogether. He believed the health authorities had drawn attention to the state of affairs before. If not a Government institution but a private bank, the present conditions would not be allowed a day longer. He did not wish to pose as an alarmist, which was very far from his character, but he wished to impress upon the Government the absolute necessity of pushing on with this work both for the safety of the officers and the convenience of the general public.

THE TREASURER quite agreed with the condemnation by the hon. member of the existing building. He was not in a position to state when the new building would be available, but the work was being pushed on, and would be pushed on as quickly as possible.

MR. GREGORY: That was not the case a month ago.

THE TREASURER: Possibly the hon. member was not aware that in the selection of the building the Savings Bank was now in he (the Treasurer) had

no voice. Therefore, primarily he could not accept the responsibility of the unfitness of the building at present occupied.

MR. RASON : The conditions had altered since then.

THE TREASURER : Not to such an extent as the hon. member would imply. The increase in the number of depositors and the amount deposited would readily indicate the extent to which the conditions had altered. The work of making an alteration in the old Assembly premises was at a standstill when the present Government took office, owing to the fact that the original contract was not possible of fulfilment. It necessitated certain alterations to the roof of the building. The roof was not sufficiently sound to bear those alterations. The contract had to be very considerably varied and plans altered, and this necessarily involved delay and correspondence, and claims for compensation, which likewise had to be settled. The work was now proceeding rapidly, and he hoped that after a very short time it would be possible that the Savings Bank business would be transferred to the new premises. As to the question of payment of officers, he agreed with the remarks of members that it was desirable that those officers should be liberally remunerated; but at the same time it had been impossible for him to go into the question of the inadequacy or otherwise of their remuneration. He thought members would readily admit that fact. The work was very important, and he must say it was very honestly and zealously performed by the officers. The defalcations alluded to were cases in which no State officer was concerned. Two of them represented defalcations by officers of the Commonwealth, and the third—there had been only three—represented forgery by some person unknown in connection with the department or public service. Therefore members would see that the salaries paid to our own officers in the Savings Bank had no connection whatever with the defalcations to which allusion had been made. He was anxious to see these officers adequately remunerated. A great deal of overtime was necessarily worked by these officers, for which they received a very small remuneration. He hoped before the next Estimates were introduced the whole question would

have been satisfactorily investigated, with the result that a proposition acceptable to all members could be submitted to the House.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES thanked the Premier for his reply, but regretted to find that it was rather indefinite, because the hon. gentleman stated that he hoped that by the time the next Estimates were framed it would be found possible to have these officers remunerated to a more liberal extent. He would have liked a reply to the effect that the Treasurer himself would take steps to see that they were more adequately remunerated. His reply might be taken to mean that when the Commissioner had investigated these claims the Commissioner would recommend an increase. But the Commissioner by next June or July would not have had time or opportunity to investigate this case for himself, and one would have liked a more definite statement from the Treasurer that failing the Commissioner's inquiring into the Post Office Savings Bank and the subject of remuneration, he himself would take the responsibility of increasing the salaries. The hon. gentleman took care to free himself from any responsibility, and one did not think that would give much satisfaction to those officers. The Treasurer regretted that hitherto he found it impossible to investigate the matter. One could quite understand the hon. gentleman had not had time to go into the question of the adequacy of remuneration. But he was sorry the Treasurer made that statement, because it was not encouraging to civil servants to find that the head of the department admitted in Parliament that he had found it impossible to go into the question.

MR. SCADDAN : Why did not the other side do it before?

MR. FOULKES was only dealing with the facts as he found them. Last year there were 18 clerks and this year it was proposed that there should be 29. That alone was proof to his mind that the work must have increased enormously. He must ask the Treasurer to give a more definite statement.

MR. H. BROWN agreed with the member for Fremantle and the member for Claremont. We found in the Savings Bank tellers, through whose hands passed a million per annum, receiving remunera-

tion of about £190 to £200 each. That appeared to him to be inadequate for the work they were to perform. Moreover, there were ledger-keepers he believed working at £140 a year, and members would admit that was practically not a living wage. Even the accountant and chief clerk were not described, but he thought they were the lowest paid men in the service for the appointments they held. In fact in some departments of the public service the salaries for such work as was performed by these men ranged from £275 up to £500. As to increases in this department he believed the Civil Service Commission in nearly every case suggested large increases to these particular clerks, the increases being, he thought, in two cases up to nearly £100 a year. Members had twitted the old Government with not increasing the amount, but he believed the reason was that the commission was sitting and those resolutions were going to be adopted. The Government might easily, out of that extra clerical assistance vote of £400, give these clerks a bonus if unable to increase their salaries now. He urged upon the Treasurer, especially in view of the defalcations which had taken place, that to keep the officers honest we should give them good wages. It was regrettable to find men—the majority of whom were married—receiving salaries of £140 or £180 or so a year.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The member for Perth had repeated expressions which had fallen from others, that if we were to keep these men honest they ought to be paid good wages, or wages in proportion to their duties. If we were going to talk like that, it was a reflection upon the men themselves. He (Hon. F. H. Piesse) had had a lot to do with men in every capacity. He was one of the first to fairly recompense men for their labour. Where a man did good work he should be recompensed, but to say that we should pay him to keep him honest was going beyond the mark. In many cases some of the greatest defalcations had been perpetrated by men who had received the highest salaries paid in the world. On the other hand, he had known defalcations made by those who were receiving low salaries. After all, it was not a question what recompense we made these men, as to their honesty. Unless they had sufficient to live upon no doubt

their lot was not a happy one. Yet after all we were living in an extravagant age, and more money was required apparently to enable men to live respectably, as one might term it, than was the case some years ago. There were now more inducements to spend money; hence we had to pay more for services probably not so valuable as we used to obtain. Out of the thousands of men in the public service, few were contented. Most of them expected increases whether they deserved them or not, and would ask for them everlastingly. On the whole, the officers were well paid. Many were paid more than the advocates of increases paid their own employees, though that did not justify those advocates in paying less than a fair wage. But no sooner did a man enter the service than he immediately became a nuisance to everybody, especially to his Minister, by asking for assistance to obtain an increase. On the other hand, many public servants were underpaid, and in many cases good service was not recognised. We had passed a Public Service Bill; and if we were fortunate enough to secure a good Public Service Commissioner, there would not be so much injustice in the arrangement of offices and the payment of officers; but that all anomalies would disappear was impossible. He strongly protested against the statement that we should pay men to keep them honest. That was a reflection on the men themselves. Pay them well for the services rendered; but a paltry increase of £10 or £20 on a salary of £200 would not make the recipient honest; and if it would, we had a very poor service.

MR. W. NELSON: Honesty was a good policy for no other reason than that in the long run it paid. True, many men with high salaries were dishonest and many with low salaries honest; but broadly speaking, inadequate remuneration of persons in positions of trust and responsibility was apt to engender dishonesty. Honesty was good because it paid. If it did not pay it would be bad. Carefully collected statistics showed that the average thief earned only 15s. per week.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was out of order.

MR. NELSON: At any rate, in connection with our public departments the

fact that officers who handled money were improperly paid was no evidence that they would be dishonest; but it was evidence that they were exposed to great temptation, and we should be surer of their remaining honest if we paid them well and thus removed them from temptation.

MR. GREGORY: It was generally understood that the preceding speaker was a little peculiar, so his remarks need not be taken too seriously. On such Estimates the Minister should explain the various changes, and thus save discussion. These Estimates showed an increase of some £4,000 or £5,000. For district postmasters £3,500 was set down. Why had this to be paid? Why were the increases necessary? The officers of this department had not been paid as well as those of other departments, considering the responsibilities of Savings Bank clerks. Many clerks in other departments received more than £200 a year; whereas the manager of the Fremantle Savings Bank, through which £25,000 or £30,000 passed every month, received £200. True, this was a new department; for prior to Federation it was a branch of the Post Office. In a few years, either the officers of other departments would be reduced to the Savings Bank level, or the Savings Bank officers raised to the average level. The Premier somewhat indignantly rebuked the leader of the Opposition for a supposed charge that the Premier was responsible for the present quarters of the Perth Savings Bank. The late Government were compelled in a hurry to lease the present quarters; though it was recognised that these were not large enough. That Government arranged that the old Legislative Assembly should be converted into a savings bank. About a month ago he (Mr. Gregory) visited that building and found it in the hands of a couple of workmen. Possibly the Minister for Works could explain the delay in preparing it to receive the bank staff. The present quarters of the Perth Savings Bank were insanitary and overcrowded, while the old Assembly room was eminently suited for a banking chamber. The convenience of the public and the health of the clerks must weigh with the Minister for Works.

DR. ELLIS: It was amusing to note the sudden anxiety of the Opposition for increasing officers' salaries. The Opposition said there had been an enormous increase in the work of the bank, and extraordinary developments since the present Government took office. It was pleasing to learn that the steady fall in Savings Bank returns for the last two years was arrested. The deposits had increased by 5 per cent. since the advent of the present Government, and the number of depositors by 6 per cent. Salaries remained practically unaltered. Why did not the Opposition raise the salaries and improve the conditions last year, when they told the House that there was money to throw about all over the country? Now, when there was no money, they raised a cry for increases. Those hon. members now in Opposition did not feel responsible, and though they were not willing to increase the salaries of members of Parliament, thought this an excellent opportunity for advocating the increase of everybody else's salary.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): The leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rason) and the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory) were in error as to the destination of the old Assembly buildings. Early in July the late Government decided to hand over those buildings to the Lands Department, and did not determine to turn them into a Savings Bank. The plans were got out for alterations to the building to accommodate a portion of the Lands Department. The work was to be put in hand immediately, but after the first rush it was found that the plans could not be carried out. It had been decided to cut the roof, but if that had been done the building would have collapsed. The contractor was notified that he was not to go on with his contract, and the Government decided to turn the building into a Savings Bank chamber. When he (the Minister) took the position of Minister for Works, he personally visited the building, and saw that the plans as first drawn could not have been carried out, and that if they had been carried out the building would have collapsed. A difficulty faced the Government. The contractor wanted compensation for delay and for the alteration in the plans. That took some time.

However, the difficulty was overcome, and now the contractor was going on, and inside eight weeks the alterations would be completed and the building handed over to the Savings Bank. There would have been no delay if the mistake had not been originally made in connection with the alterations.

Mr. MORAN: The officials of the Savings Bank were certainly the most underpaid officers in the public service to-day. They were working under the worst conditions, and for the longest hours. Last session the then Treasurer, Mr. Gardiner, made a distinct promise that these officers should this session be dealt with on a more generous basis. One was afraid that the manager of the department had not done justice to the men under him. His zeal for economy had caused him to work his officers unduly. The officers were paid on an average £15, £20, and £30 lower than officers in any other branch of the service. At present there were eight officers drawing £130 per annum and one £120. Of these nine officers, six were married men with families. This should not obtain in connection with the Savings Bank, which was one of the most prosperous of our institutions. Last year he drew the attention of the Committee to this matter, and in speaking of the head of the office said that the manager worked his officers too hard, and was over-zealous in connection with the department. Although the vote last year was £9,626, only £8,888 was used. Economy of this kind was not commendable. The men were the most ill-paid in the service, although their duties were most responsible. He hoped the department would go on growing. The time had come when we might incorporate the various banking institutions into a State Bank. It was desirable that some other accommodation should be obtained at the earliest possible moment. Last year he had pointed out that a great deal of sick leave had to be granted in this institution. He had visited the Savings Bank premises at one time, and they looked like a beehive; there was hardly standing room. He expected the Government to inquire into the matter, and he hoped the present Government would make inquiries. One expected that a Labour Government would look to the welfare of the junior officers

of this department, for £120 and £130 was not sufficient for men who were working, not eight hours but 12 hours on many occasions. There were other branches of the service in Western Australia well paid—the more fashionable branches of the service, relics of the old days, when certain branches carried social advantages; a lot of distinction and salary as well. He hoped that whoever was appointed Public Service Commissioner would have promptly brought under his notice the condition of these officers. If it were possible to move for an increase of salary, he would do so. He deemed it to be the duty of the Government to reconsider this matter, and if Supplementary Estimates were being brought forward justice should be done to these men. It was recognised by the late Treasurer that something should be done; although he did not carry out his promise, probably if he had remained in office he would have carried it out. This was a just heritage for the Treasurer to take on his shoulders.

Mr. RASON: The member for Coolgardie thought it his duty to be the champion of the Government. The hon. member imagined, first of all, the cause and the necessity for defence, and then he imagined himself capable of affording that defence. There had never been an attack on the Government.

Mr. A. J. WILSON: There was not likely to be either.

Dr. ELLIS: It was the attack that failed.

Mr. RASON: Members of the Government could defend themselves without the assistance of the member for Coolgardie. There was no necessity for warmth on the subject. He (Mr. Rason) had not said there had been any delay. He asked if the Premier could give some idea when the building would be completed, and he (Mr. Rason) gave his testimony as to the unfitness of the present accommodation. The member for West Perth had joined in that, and said of his knowledge that the present buildings were wholly unsuitable. That was admitted by everyone who had seen the buildings. The only object in rising was to impress on the Government the desirability of completing the new building at the earliest possible moment. Two members on the Opposition side had suggested

that some members of the staff were underpaid, and two members on the other side had done the same thing, yet the member for Coolgardie said the Opposition had raised this question. If that were so, there was some credit due to the Opposition. Accusations of this kind were best left unmade. It was possible for either side to call attention to items on the Estimates without being accused of party feeling and having sinister motives in calling attention to those items. When the Opposition made up their minds to attack the Government it would not be on petty-fogging items; but when an attack was made he hoped the Government would have a better champion to defend them than the member for Coolgardie, or success was assured to the Opposition from the outset. Let him (Mr. Rason) remind the Minister for Works that when the hitches in regard to the building occurred, as they undoubtedly did occur, not only members of the Government but the Minister himself was engaged in electioneering pursuits rather than paying great attention to what was going on in the alteration of the plans. It was true it was first intended to give the building to the Lands Department, but when he (Mr. Rason) saw the absolutely disgraceful surroundings of the present Savings Bank, he was able to convince his colleagues of the greater necessities of the Savings Bank than the necessities of the Lands Department, and the alterations were consequently made.

MR. FOULKES: The member for Guildford attached undue importance to the remarks of the member for Coolgardie. What concerned him (Mr. Foulkes) far more was that the member for West Perth had stated that it was the duty of the Government to reconsider the matter. That was quite sufficient for his (Mr. Foulkes's) purpose. He had the assurance of the new Premier of the Government that it was the duty of the Government to consider this matter. The other Premier (the member for Subiaco) had said that it was impossible to go into the question of the salaries; but he (Mr. Foulkes) was quite satisfied now after the remarks of the member for West Perth, that the matter would be properly attended to.

MR. MORAN: It was to be hoped under the new order of things there would not be so much obstruction on the part of the member for Claremont.

THE TREASURER could not let this matter pass, for he learned that he was to be attacked with a no-confidence motion from his own corner. He was pleased he had the information, only he felt a great deal of dread. At the same time, he had the prophesy of the member for Claremont, and that member's prophesies were invariably realised.

MR. MORAN: Even if his hopes were sometimes shattered.

THE TREASURER: The member for Menzies asked a question in regard to the increase of the staff, and also in regard to the provision of £3,500 for the salaries of district postmasters. In reply, he had to mention first of all that the staff was increased owing to the fact that previously it was insufficient, and a number of persons were temporarily employed, and were paid from a temporary vote instead of from the salary vote. These men were not engaged permanently, and therefore there was an increase on the amount provided for the salaries of clerks. Still, there was a considerable reduction in the vote for extra clerical assistance. This vote must invariably remain on the Estimates of a department carrying on Bank work, for if an officer went away on leave it was necessary, in most cases, that someone should be appointed temporarily to take up his duties. That of course created a temporary vacancy which had to be paid of out of the vote for extra clerical assistance. In regard to the question of overwork, that had been referred to by the member for West Perth—

MR. MORAN: The underpay was very serious, too.

THE TREASURER: In regard to that, the work had been considerably simplified by the provision of adding machines, which were obtained some months ago on the recommendation of the manager and with the approval of the member for Guildford. This had simplified the work to a considerable extent, and had enormously lightened the duties of a large number of officers. With regard to the provision for the salaries of district postmasters, arrangements had been made to pay six per cent. on deposits and pay-

ments to the Federal Government. In the past, although provision was made on the Estimates, a very small payment had been made for this service. Seeing we paid the Commonwealth Government for officers of its own selection, the payment should carry with it a liability on the part of the Commonwealth Government for the honesty of the servants selected to carry on the Savings Bank work; and acting on that opinion, when he had found defalcations on the part of Commonwealth officers, he had represented to the Commonwealth authorities that these defalcations should be made good to the State. The State having no choice in the selection of the officers entrusted with these duties should not suffer for any breach of honesty on the part of Commonwealth officers. The Commonwealth department was justly liable for the manner in which its duties were discharged by officers of its own selection.

MR. RASON : It would still be debited to the State.

THE TREASURER : The matter might not be important now; but in years to come, when the system of dealing with the Commonwealth revenue became different, the question might assume importance. It was wise to rigorously safeguard State interests in view of possible changes at some later date in the financial system of the Commonwealth in relation to the States.

MR. MORAN : The Savings Bank officers were receiving lower salaries than officers in similar positions in other States. Mr. Gardiner when Treasurer admitted that some officers were underpaid, and had asked that recommendations should be made in regard to officers deserving increases; while Mr. Rason, when Treasurer, had called for a comparison between salaries paid to officers in the Savings Bank and salaries paid in other branches of the service, with a view to looking into the matter and seeing whether he could not authorise increases. The accountant in the New South Wales Savings Bank received £500 a year, the chief clerk £350, and some of the senior officers from £400 down to £320. There was great disparity between the salaries of officers in the Savings Bank, compared with salaries of officers in corresponding positions in other departments. The

Treasurer should inform the House whether he was satisfied that, because adding machines had been introduced, the officers were adequately paid. The introduction of these machines should not interfere with paying a living wage. Where mechanical appliances were introduced to make work easier, it was a general rule to do with less men and to remove men to other institutions where they could be better paid. If the work had been so much reduced in the Savings Bank, though he was not quite prepared to accept the statement, we should reduce the staff as a legitimate consequence on the introduction of the machinery, and pay those remaining well and decently. That was the ordinary course of civilisation and development all over the world. We should also reduce the overtime in the Savings Bank. It would be just to recognise this overtime and to give a bonus to the officers. Treasurer after Treasurer gave promises, but nothing was done.

MR. A. J. WILSON : Would it not be possible to initiate some system whereby the present cumbersome method of withdrawing money could be overcome, so that any person desiring to withdraw money could simply write out an order on the manager, and so that the necessity for personally attending at the bank could be overcome. There was inconvenience in the present arrangement, and an alteration in the system might secure larger patronage for the institution.

THE TREASURER : The question raised by the hon. member would be gone into.

MR. MORAN : Treasurers had been going into the question for the last ten years.

THE TREASURER : A Bill to amend the Savings Bank Act had received a degree of attention from his predecessor (Mr. Rason), and also from himself. It was now in the hands of the Parliamentary Draftsman, and he hoped to pass it through Parliament this session.

Item — Boulder Branch, manager, £230 :

MR. A. J. WILSON : Why was this officer paid £30 less than the manager of the Coolgardie branch? Presumably the volume of business at Boulder was greater than at Coolgardie.

THE TREASURER: The explanation was simple. Boulder was a new office. The officer at Coolgardie had been some considerable time there, and was discharging other functions. There was reason to believe it would be possible to make a saving on this item by an amalgamation of offices, which saving would cover a large proportion of the financial year. Members could not expect an officer to reach the maximum salary at the start.

MR. SCADDAN: There was no comparison in the work of the two offices.

THE TREASURER: By an amalgamation of offices the amount voted for the Coolgardie manager would be for the greater part saved, though the saving might not appear to the credit of the Savings Bank.

Vote put and passed.

Printing, £34,030 :

THE TREASURER: The only large increase in this department was new machinery, type etc., shown as £1,300 as against £150 voted last year and £399 spent last year. The object of this large increase was to provide type and machinery which it was believed would enable the Government Printing Office to turn out work cheaper and more quickly than at present.

MR. GREGORY: What sort of machinery were they getting?

THE TREASURER: Mainly type to enable them simply to cope with the demands made upon the Printing Office.

MR. GREGORY: The Government were not getting monotypes or linotypes?

THE TREASURER: No; they could not do it.

MR. GREGORY: Oh yes; linotypes could be got for £250 or £300.

THE TREASURER: This large provision was for type. The want of sufficient type necessitated a great deal of work being done outside the Printing Office last year which otherwise would have been done inside. The Government Printing Office at present was more than paying its way. The revenue altogether from it last year was £37,042, including £1,161 outstanding and £1,002 provided for the printing of the *Government Gazette*. There was a profit of £2,699. Members would of course recognise that there were certain items not charged for in this which would be charged for if one were

drawing up a commercial balance-sheet, and he did not intend to try to give the Committee the impression that there was an actual substantial cash profit, from a commercial point of view.

MR. GREGORY: Was the hon. gentleman hopeful of the same this year? Because he (Mr. Gregory) could not find any printing charges on the Estimates.

THE TREASURER: Oh yes, there were printing charges. Each department had its own way of treating the matter. In some departments payments for printing were put in the item for "incidentals." The question of whether an actual debit was made against the department and a credit established to the Government Printing Office did not affect the question of the value of the work turned out, so long as the work was done and the money saved to the department. But when they compared the position with the state of affairs three or four years ago, the present position of the Printing Office was highly satisfactory, whilst at the same time he believed there was justification for an endeavour being made to put things on an even more efficient footing than at present. This was one of the subjects he made a note of when he first took office as one of the things to be gone into at the first opportunity, and again he regretted that opportunity had not yet arrived. Although the estimate of expenditure for last year was considerably below the estimate of expenditure for the current year, the actual expenditure was £700 more than the estimate for this year. Of course a considerable amount of the increase last year was due to the fact of a general election occurring during that period, and we were not anticipating that the same cause of expenditure would occur during the present term.

MR. A. J. WILSON: There was a very considerable amount down apparently every year for what was known as extra labour. He wished to refer to a matter on which we might, he thought, have some expression of opinion from the Treasurer. There was a time prior to a reference to the Arbitration Court when the hours of employees in this department were only 47, but by probably some surreptitious incident or practice a difficulty arose, and the award or recommen-

dation of the Arbitration Court was to the effect that these temporary or casual hands should be paid £3 a week, and that they should work the same hours as the permanent staff. At this particular time the permanent staff were only working 47 hours per week, which, he was given to understand, was the maximum number of hours worked in any of the departments in the whole of the Australian States. He understood in some instances the hours of the employees in the printing department were even less than the hours worked at the time he referred to. Then the Colonial Treasurer for some purpose or another was, one understood, able to secure an advance copy of the board's recommendation—a copy which these employees were not then able to secure, nor had they ever since secured it. The result was that owing to this advance report or recommendation of the Arbitration Court being placed in the hands of the then Colonial Treasurer —

MR. RASON: Who said it was?

MR. A. J. WILSON: The result of this paper being placed in the hands of the then Colonial Treasurer enabled that officer to get wind of what the court's recommendation would be, and although, as the court pointed out, he was not compelled to observe that recommendation, he immediately jumped up the hours of the permanent staff in his department to 48 hours a week. The court clearly intended that the hours of labour of the casual and temporary hands should be the same as those worked by the permanent staff, namely 47 hours, and that the wages they should receive should be £3 a week; yet the Colonial Treasurer was able to put up the hours of the permanent staff one per week, and to compel the whole of the temporary and casual staff to work 48 hours for £3.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Was it not a fair thing?

MR. A. J. WILSON was not discussing whether it was a fair thing or not; but the unfairness of taking an advantage of this sort did enter the discussion. Serious and gross injustice was done to the great bulk of the workers in the Government Printing Office by the action taken. As to whether 48 hours a week was fair or not we ought to be guided to a large extent by the hours which prevailed

in offices in similar departments in the Eastern States, and a comparison with those departments would, he thought, conclusively establish the fact that there was no Government printing office in any of the other States of Australia where the employees were compelled to work such long hours as in this State. There would never have been any increase in the hours of labour in that department had it not been for the indiscretion of the person responsible for conveying the information to the Colonial Treasurer. What that person was authorised to supply was only the rate of wages which had been determined, and which was sought, he understood, by the Colonial Treasurer to enable him to compile the Estimates for that particular department. The employees in the Government Printing Office should be placed on the same footing in the matter of hours as those in similar departments in other portions of Australia.

MR. HORAN: The amount of £34,000 for this department was certainly very high, although he could not blame the present Government, the previous Government, or any other Government of recent times; because it appeared that these extras had been growing up for many years. Many copies of publications were printed here and never read. The *Government Gazette* was seldom opened in any portion of the back country. He had been in receipt of about two or three copies in Kalgoorlie in different institutions with which he was connected, and it was never read. That publication was too liberally distributed. The *Agricultural Gazette* was another publication. It was an admirable one to those who took an interest in it. It was sent to members of this House, and he was prepared to say that not one out of every 20 opened it. [Several members indicated dissent.] He would be especially anxious for the Treasurer to inquire and see if these things were justifiable or not. He was satisfied the hon. gentleman would find the printing of such a number not warranted. The annual report of the Agricultural Bank might be incorporated with the report of the Lands Department. The report of the Aborigines Department, costing £22 5s. 9d. for printing, was presumably of some value; but was that expenditure warranted? The Lands Department report consisted largely of

photographs. These publications were all right in themselves; but they cost too much.

MR. NELSON: Some economies could surely be effected in printing. Instead of paying so many compositors, it would be better for the workmen themselves if more type-setting machines were introduced. Though he had a son a compositor, he held that hand-setting was a thing of the past. It was regrettable to see so many experienced compositors idle; but some of them might be employed at the machines, as they would probably make the best operators. Surely no one, except on compulsion, read the *Government Gazette*. The *Gazette* could be made to fill more useful and more popular functions in addition to those it now performed. In New Zealand and other countries Government publications were made exceedingly interesting; and our own *Year Book* contained many useful and interesting articles. Why not popularise the *Gazette*, not by making it a newspaper, but by including in its pages many of the *Year Book* articles?

MR. GREGORY: Combine it with *Hansard*.

MR. NELSON: The *Hansard* reports were too long. Except on special occasions, it was unnecessary that every word uttered by members should be printed. As a rule, the quality of the speeches did not justify the enormous expenditure. Our school manuals were, he believed, printed in Melbourne. Why not print them here, where material of a character more suitable to this State could be collected?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Some reference was made to the *Agricultural Journal*. It had done much good in disseminating practical knowledge through the agricultural districts.

MR. NANSON: What about our Federal printing for the Post Office, the Defence Department, and the Federal Electoral Department? Was it done locally, and if not, could we arrange to have it done locally?

THE TREASURER: As to Federal printing, inquiry would be made; and if it were not done here, he would endeavour to secure it. Apparently the question of printing Federal rolls had not been definitely determined. Some months ago he had made strong recommendations as to

printing to a former Federal Government. One objection raised was the relative prices for printing in the Eastern States and in this State; and from inquiries it appeared that the work was done there at a non-paying price, or that the more modern machinery in the Eastern printing offices made it impossible for our office to compete. As to Federal rolls, he was informed that in most of the Eastern States the population was so comparatively settled, and there were so few changes from year to year in most electorates, that the old type could be used for the new rolls, especially where one election followed another within a few months. For instance, it was anticipated a few weeks ago that another Federal election would follow the election held at the close of last year. On the other hand, our Federal rolls were subject to so many changes that if the type of the old rolls were available it would be comparatively useless for printing the new. It was the discrepancy between the prices in this and in the other States that first directed his attention to the desirableness of inquiring into our printing office and comparing its methods with those of the East. This, however, was a difficult department to investigate; for if we asked local printers to make inquiry, we should at once submit the printing office to the inspection of possible trade rivals; while it was difficult for anyone not a printer to make a personal inquiry with any probability of success. Some satisfactory conclusion might be arrived at by comparing our printing office with those of the Eastern States, to ascertain the differences in methods and results. This he would endeavour to do during recess, if still Treasurer. The question of the cost of printing came up session after session on these Estimates, and he was quite prepared to consider in detail any suggestions offered; but what could be the advantage in popularising the *Government Gazette* by inserting, say, parliamentary jokes in its pages? The *Gazette* was an important means of conveying official information; and it provided a channel through which private persons could give certain public notices. Apparently the only method of making it pay better was to restrict its circulation. However, the cost of setting was the main cost; and although the *Gazette*

might not in one sense pay, yet as the official organ of the Government it conveyed much information which must otherwise be published through private channels. Anyone looking for land would turn to the *Gazette* for the latest information as to lands available.

MR. BURGESS: It ought to be sent to every man who paid land rent.

THE TREASURER: So it would be if he subscribed to it. Apparently the hon. member meant it should be sent to those who owed rent, and not to those who paid. The member's object might not be attained, because if the *Gazette* was sent to the people they might treat it as the member for Yilgarn treated the *Agricultural Journal* and never open it. The question of printing the school paper was one that could hardly be undertaken at the present time without a good deal of added expense. The school paper issued was really obtained from the Victorian Educational Department, by arrangement with them, with certain West Australian items added. He could not see that any great advantage would be gained to the State by printing a school paper locally. It would cause a considerable increase in cost if we got out a school paper ourselves, not only in regard to the printing, but in regard to supplying the matter. Recently he saw the Inspector General of Schools and suggested that he might give the school paper a more local application, dealing more particularly, and frequently at length, with Western Australian subjects, particularly in regard to matters of geography, thereby giving the paper a more local interest than at present, and making it more useful from a West Australian point to our school children. An effort was now being made in that direction. The question of restricting the issue and size of *Hansard* and the circulation of it was one altogether in the hands of the House. Members who desired to alter the present practice could if they desired bring a proposition before Parliament so that the House could deal with the subject. It was quite possible that benefit might follow from the abolition of *Hansard*, for he noticed very often that publication was used for very unchristian purposes, and it seemed to him therefore to have a very baneful effect on a number of members when one member wished to bring

forward something against a brother member, and to quote arguments and to make statements which in many instances would be better left unpublished. The matter was entirely in the hands of the House, and if members wished to bring forward any proposition on the subject, it was within their power to do so.

MR. GREGORY: It was to be hoped that the Premier would during the year look carefully into the Printing Office, for a considerable reduction in the cost of this department could be made. He knew from the way Mr. Gardiner worked in connection with the Printing Office last year that there would have been a considerable saving had not it been for the general elections and the cost of printing the rolls. It was not, he thought, intended this year to revise those rolls, therefore there would be a very substantial reduction in the cost. He impressed on the Premier the necessity of getting machinery in connection with the Printing Office. Better work would be done at considerably less cost to the State. We had heard a good deal to-night as to the cost of publications. He had before him the Statistical Register dated 1902, and it was only laid on the table the other day. The Statistical Office should be prevented from printing this dead matter. There had been considerable difficulty in the past in this respect, and the matter required looking into very carefully. There were statistics in the Statistical Register showing the crushings on the gold mines for the year 1902. These statistics were prepared monthly, and members had the result of the crushings now for the latter part of 1904. In regard to the supposed profit arising out of the work of the Government Printing Office, members should know that the Government Printer himself fixed the prices for the production of the article; and if he failed to show a small profit he would be a very bad business man indeed. If the prices were compared with outside prices, we would find there was a considerable increase in cost. On one or two occasions he (Mr. Gregory) required some work to be done quickly, and not being able to get it done in the Government Printing Office, quotations were obtained from outside, and these quotations were fully 15 or 20 per cent. less than the price quoted by the

Government Printing Office. The office required to be brought more up to date with the latest and best machines—monotypes or linotypes. In the production of *Hansard* monotypes should be used. One man could do as much work with a monotype as four men could do setting by hand, and the cost of such machines was between £200 and £300. The cost would soon be saved. The same thing could be said in connection with linotypes. It would be well if a small sum was spent in the purchase of these machines, if it were only to teach some of the men how to use them, and then the machines could be installed fully in the department.

THE TREASURER: It was only fair to the Printing Office to point out in regard to fixing the prices that very often work cost more when done at the Government Printing Office than it would appear likely to cost if an estimate were given from outside, for the reason that a greater number of rough drafts of departmental documents and drafts of Bills were sent from the office having been printed, and material alterations were then made in them; in some cases the documents had to be re-set.

MR. GREGORY said he was referring to the printing of Bills.

THE TREASURER: A preliminary report might be submitted by an individual to Parliament; it might be sent to the printer first of all in the shape of a draft. A proof was submitted, and so many alterations were made as to cause a considerable amount of re-setting. That would not be apparent to anyone taking up the document in a finished state. In the drafting of new Bills material alterations were made after the document was put into print, and the Bill showed no idea of the cost in making those alterations. In some departments there was a tendency to do a lot of unnecessary revision after the first proof had been obtained, instead of doing the work before the copy was sent to the Printing Office at all.

Item—Extra labour, £9,500 :

MR. KEYSER: One-third of the total vote of this department was absorbed by extra labour, which he took it meant temporary employment. There was no business man in any private undertaking

in any part of the State who would think of absorbing one-third of his capital in employing temporary hands, and these temporary hands received higher wages than the ordinary permanent hands. Would it not be better instead of employing temporary hands to the extent of £9,500 to employ more permanent hands? This appeared to be an extraordinary amount to be spent on temporary employees.

MR. NANSON: Before the Treasurer increased the permanent list it would be well to decide what policy he intended to adopt as to labour-saving machinery.

THE TREASURER: The extra labour had been provided under that head for a considerable number of years past. There were really what were known as three different divisions of employees in the Printing Office; there were those known as members of the staff on a fixed salary, really the senior officers of the department; then there were those who belonged to what was known as the provisional and temporary staff, who were in an intermediate stage between the extra labour hands and the fixed staff; then came a large number of men employed under the extra labour vote. This vote was a varying one. A large number of men had been in the Government Printing Office for a number of years, and had always remained under this item. They were paid by the day instead of by the month or the year, and were paid for the actual hours worked. In regard to the question why so much extra labour was employed he was not able to give a definite answer. At the same time he did not intend to make any alteration in the number on the extra labour item as compared with the other two items, because it would be much more satisfactory for this question to be dealt with by the Public Service Commissioner when appointed. He would far sooner the Commissioner should undertake work of that description. Provision was made in the Public Service Bill, should it pass, that the Public Service Commissioner should, after examining a department, make recommendations as to the persons who he thought were likely to be permanently employed, and on his certificate the officials would be transferred to the permanent staff. It would be possible for him to deal with the question of the

extra machinery that could with advantage be used in the office at a comparatively early date. He would make the fullest inquiries into the matter to see to what extent it would simplify and cheapen the work of the Printing Office.

MR. KEYSER: To some extent the Treasurer's remarks were fairly satisfactory, but the Treasurer seemed to regard it as certain that the Public Service Bill would be passed by another place. It seemed that almost half of last year's vote had been expended in employing temporary hands. A man who had been five or seven years in the service should be looked upon as permanent, or there was no such security regarding his employment. Paying for temporary labour meant paying 25 per cent. higher wages than would be paid to permanent men.

MR. A. J. WILSON: That was not so, as had already been pointed out by him.

MR. KEYSER: But in some instances the hon. member's statements to-night were most inaccurate.

THE TREASURER: It might astonish the member for Albany that on this point the member for Forrest was correct. The member for Albany was wrong in asserting that half of last year's vote had been expended in temporary labour.

MR. KEYSER: The remark was not confined to wages only.

THE TREASURER: If the Public Service Bill did pass, this question of temporary labour would be dealt with by the Commissioner. There should be no unnecessary amount of extra labour, but it would be highly injudicious without thorough inquiry to transfer all temporary hands to the permanent staff. As a matter of fact, the employment of extra labour was a trifle cheaper to the department. The pay was precisely the same, but permanent hands enjoyed the privileges of holidays which temporary hands did not enjoy.

MR. BOLTON: Was that not unfair?

THE TREASURER: It was not his place to express opinions, but facts. This matter would be dealt with at the earliest possible moment after the appointment of a Public Service Commissioner.

MR. N. J. MOORE: In the defence forces, corps and regiments had certain funds, and printing outside the head office was done in the various localities. The cost of the *Government Gazette*

was provided for under Miscellaneous Services. He did not know whether the labour was included under this item of extra labour.

THE TREASURER: Yes.

MR. MOORE: It would be rather expensive to adopt the suggestion of the member for York in distributing the *Government Gazette*.

Vote put and passed.

Refunds, £2,000 :

MR. HENSHAW: This vote required explanation.

THE TREASURER: These were refunds made by various departments on account of miscellaneous causes.

Vote put and passed.

Miscellaneous Services, £127,573 :

MR. GREGORY: There was now considerable trouble in getting telegraphic facilities in outlying districts, and efforts were made to get telephonic services instead; but the Federal Government claimed that such services would not pay the cost of upkeep. Would the State contribute to the upkeep? The State in the long run had to pay the cost. A request for telephonic communication between Menzies and Mount Ida, about 60 miles, had been refused. The Federal Government also objected to extending the telegraph service to Black Range because of the small population. That reason should not hold good now that the population at Black Range had increased. A request was also refused for a telephone service to Burtville where there were about 400 people. The extension would have only been 17 miles, but the telephonic service was refused because the Federal Government said the line would not pay interest of the cost of working. These people out back who were making the country were those we should help; and he would be pleased if the Treasurer would say whether he would be willing to give assistance in trying to get facilities given to some of these people. They would pay the cost of the control of these services, and the only cost to the Government would be the construction of the lines and their upkeep. The Fresh Air Fund was a particularly good fund, and the people on the goldfields had thrown their heart into the movement, the object

of which was to give poor families on the goldfields an opportunity of going to the coast and improving their health. He (Mr. Gregory) would be glad if the Treasurer would cut down some of the other votes in order to increase the vote for this fund. What other votes should be cut down he would not say. He supposed there would be objection from the member for Mount Magnet to the item of £50 for Southern Cross which the Government had paid without authority. In regard to the Fresh Air Fund, if the Treasurer overran the constable in regard to increasing the sum provided, goldfields members would not object to it when the Estimates were brought down next year.

MR. CONNOR could not allow this vote to pass without drawing attention to the unfair absence of any expenditure of the public funds for that part of the country from Geraldton northwards. It was rather a serious question. He did not blame this Government particularly, for the same applied to the last Government. That part of this State should not be allowed to perish and starve in the manner it was. He would take the opportunity under every head of impressing the point on members that justice was not being done in the expenditure of public funds in the North of this country. The consideration which the North deserved was not given to it. It was well known that we had a fine country which could be developed. We had the pastoral industry, the pearling industry, and the mining industry in the North. Take for instance Pilbarra. We could not see on this list of items one that applied to that place. The Government should in future pay more attention to the requirements of the North.

MR. TROY was pleased the member for Menzies drew attention to the necessity for the Government doing something towards bringing about the construction of telephone lines in localities in this State which had not been favoured in that respect. In regard to Black Range he had found that great difficulty existed in persuading the Federal Government to construct a line from Magnet to that locality. He was at present in communication with the Federal Government with a view of seeing whether that line could not be constructed. If it could not be constructed by the Federal Government,

he intended to bring the matter before this House and to ask the Government to do something in connection with it. If the Federal Government would not do it, it was the duty of this Government to effect the object in view.

MR. GREGORY: The Government of this State could not.

MR. TROY thought the West Australian Government could do so. This place was going ahead in population, and it was daily increasing, and consideration should therefore be shown to it. As to the Fresh Air League some institutions had had substantial assistance, while others had not been so well favoured.

MR. GREGORY: All got £ for £.

MR. TROY: His electorate was anxious to have more substantial benefit than it received in this instance. As to £50 to Southern Cross, he wanted to know if the money had been spent, and, if so, what it had been paid for.

MR. CONNOR also had been in communication with the Federal Government in regard to telephonic communication in the North of this country. That was required very materially. Floods arose in the Fitzroy and Ord rivers. After communicating with Sir John Forrest, he got an answer which read thus: "We understand that that country is fairly well fenced; that you have sheep fences. We have no objection to your using the wire."

THE TREASURER had the warmest sympathy with those settlers, whether miners or pastoralists, in distant localities who desired telegraphic connection. At the same time it was impossible for him to lay down any general rule and say the Government would be prepared to follow out that rule. Members would recognise that if it were proved that the Federal Government could not be moved to pay the cost of the connection and establish the service without a guarantee of the payment of the annual cost, it would be necessary for this Government, before deciding anything, to deal with any case placed before it entirely on its merits. The necessity of the service and the estimated annual loss likely to be incurred must be governing factors. If members represented cases to the Government, the Government would be anxious to give fair consideration to each application on its merits. If he laid down any general

rule it would lead to endless applications, and might lead to anticipations of such a nature that the persons who held them must be disappointed. As to the Fresh Air League, Parliament when passing the vote authorised a payment of a £ for £ subsidy. The estimated amount was put on the Estimates, but he would not feel himself strictly limited to that amount. If he under-estimated the sum he would feel perfectly justified in exceeding the sum on the ground that the specific intention of Parliament was that a £ should be paid for every £ raised. Last year the amount paid exceeded the estimate by £159. The member for Mt. Magnet complained that his district had not shared sufficiently in the advantages of this vote; but that was entirely the fault of the residents in that district, for if they received only £109, that was because they had only contributed that themselves.

MR. N. J. MOORE was glad to hear what the Premier said in respect to the Fresh Air League. If members had seen the advantages which the children derived from a fortnight at the seaside they would appreciate the system.

MR. SCADDAN: Did the hon. member say anything about the advantages which Bunbury derived?

MR. MOORE: The first time the Goldfields children went to Bunbury the Bunbury residents contributed practically £50 or £60 to assist them.

MR. SCADDAN knew that.

MR. MOORE did not think it showed very good grace to insinuate that seaside towns were making anything out of the movement. The residents of those towns were only too delighted to do what they could to educate and amuse those children.

Item—Fresh Air League, £ for £, Subsidy Eastern Goldfields, £1,000 :

MR. KEYSER: Last year 472 children were sent down from the Eastern Goldfields, most of them going to Albany, where there was a local committee which took them in hand and treated them splendidly, and the children improved wonderfully. He had a communication last week from the officials of the goldfields stating that there might be a difficulty in getting funds this year. If the goldfields failed to raise, say, £500 or

£1,000, supposing they raised only £250, would the Premier be prepared to give them the £1,000? It was well for the Government to encourage goldfields people to contribute to the league; but if these could not now subscribe so generously as in the past years, why should the Government on that account refrain from giving any subsidy?

MR. GREGORY: Better not press such a request; because if the Treasurer acceded, the flow of contributions might quickly cease. The Treasurer might provide greater facilities at the watering places, and assist by other methods; but so far, the goldfields had not apparently asked for any alteration in the system of a pound for pound subsidy.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): As a goldfields member who took an active interest in the Fresh Air League, he knew that the goldfields would be satisfied with a continuance of the present subsidy. If more than £1,000 were privately subscribed, the Government would increase its subsidy accordingly. The operations of the league would this year be slightly extended. Last year the children were drawn from the Kalgoorlie district. This year they would be brought even from Mt. Malcolm. Recently the secretary stated that the first contingent sent to Albany would include about 20 from Mt. Malcolm and about 10 from Kanowna, with an increased number from Kalgoorlie and Boulder. An increase was anticipated in subscriptions as well as expenses. The Government gave not only a subsidy but special excursion rates; and the Railway Department raised the maximum age from 12 to 14 or 15. To take the children from Kalgoorlie to Albany cost £1 per head. The first contingent, he understood, would leave Albany on the 19th inst., and would be accommodated at the Quarantine Station.

Item—Free passes over Midland Railway, £530 :

MR. CONNOR: Why this expenditure to pass members of Parliament over the line? Better let the Treasurer pay the first-class passenger fares of any members who desired this privilege. Parliament had been very good to the company in allowing it to hold property of which by

law it could have been deprived; and in recognition of this the company might well grant members free passes. This subsidy should not be paid, or, if paid, it should be reduced.

THE TREASURER: This was the regular annual payment for passing members over the line. He would inquire as to the probable cost of passenger fares; but paying them would be inconvenient, and the yearly expenditure difficult to estimate. How could the Treasurer, at the beginning of a year, ascertain how many members were likely to use the line, and how many journeys they would make? He would endeavour to estimate the cost of monthly tickets during the parliamentary session; but the estimate could hardly be definite. The necessity for applications to the Treasurer for tickets would deter northern members from visiting their constituents.

Item—Kalgoorlie, Special Fire Brigade Grant, £200:

MR. A. J. WILSON: After the recent speech of the member for Brown Hill (Mr. Bath), this special grant seemed unnecessary, in view of the exorbitant insurance rates, and of the fact that the brigade existed largely to protect insurance companies.

THE TREASURER: These grants were customary, and this was the first to the Kalgoorlie brigade. The municipality applied for £1,200, showing what it had expended on fire appliances. Until Parliament made it compulsory for insurance companies to contribute to the brigades, as it was now compulsory in Perth, the companies could not be compelled to contribute. The Government might fairly be expected to grant something to fire brigades, from which the country derived an advantage. In the circumstances, the item was moderate.

MR. H. BROWN: The Premier was incorrect in stating that legislation was needed. All municipalities should be brought under the provisions of the Fire Brigades Act; and then the Treasurer would not be troubled for special grants during the year. Late last session a slight amendment of the Act was promised. The Act provided that the Government should contribute one-ninth, the municipalities four-ninths, and the insurance companies doing business in the town the remaining four-ninths, to the

cost of the brigade. In Victoria and other States the Government contributed one-third, the fire companies one-third, and the municipalities one-third. If the Act were amended to make the companies' and the municipalities' contributions one-third each, instead of four-ninths, the Treasurer would know exactly what the State must contribute yearly to the brigades, and it would then be compulsory for insurance companies to contribute. The plan worked well in Perth, where the brigade, though expensive, had done much to protect the city and the companies. Country brigades would be less expensive. Let all brigades take advantage of existing legislation.

Item — Subsidy to Municipalities, £68,000:

MR. RASON: Was the distribution of the subsidy to be made on the same lines as last year?

THE TREASURER: There would be no change in the method of distribution unless there was a change in the form of taxation, which he did not think practicable during the next municipal year.

Item—1st, 2nd, and 3rd South African Contingents, £100:

MR. HENSHAW: What was the meaning of this item?

THE TREASURER: It covered the past.

MR. HENSHAW: There were papers on the table which disclosed that the records in connection with the expenditure of the various South African Contingents were in a most chaotic condition. Believing it was quite possible for several thousands of pounds to be saved by getting the matter adjusted, the recommendation of the Under Treasurer should be accepted. This matter had been gone into by the Audit Department. Large sums of money had been paid to the various officers, and no record of them was kept. Various accounts had been overdrawn to a considerable extent, and it was possible if the papers were perused that the Government could collect a good deal of the money. He had looked through the papers and they disclosed the fact that to obtain a proper adjustment of the accounts it would be necessary for an officer of this State to go to the old country, and with the

concurrence of the Imperial authorities peruse the vouchers, accounts, and other papers in connection with the Contingents, and by so doing it was possible to get a sensible adjustment. There was no obstacle in the way of having this accomplished. If application were made to the Imperial authorities, consent to the course indicated could be obtained. The matter had been in dispute for years.

THE TREASURER: Before deciding to send an officer to England he had made up his mind to see if some adjustment of the accounts could not be made here; for the despatch of an officer to England would be on what might be termed a speculative mission. There had been a particular officer engaged on these accounts so far without any satisfactory results. It was true that the suggestion was made that this officer should be sent to England for the purpose of making an inspection, if permitted, of the accounts of the War Office relating to the Contingents. The matter came before the member for Guildford when in office. He (the Treasurer) had gone through the file, and had requested that a statement should be prepared as far as it could be made from the accounts and vouchers available in Western Australia, but up to the present he had not been able to get that statement. As the office discharging this work had suggested that the officer should be relieved of it, he (the Treasurer) proposed to relieve him of the task, and to give to another officer who had volunteered to undertake the effort of preparing a statement an opportunity of doing so. If the second officer failed to achieve any tangible success, then some other method would have to be considered; but he intended exhausting the possibility of getting something approaching an adjustment of the accounts in Western Australia before he considered for a moment the desirability or otherwise of sending an officer, at the expense of the State, to England for the purpose of trying what could be done.

MR. RASON: The member for Collie took a rather optimistic view of the position. Speaking with some experience of the situation, the matter was by no means so easy as the member for Collie thought. It was true that on the file

he had referred to there was a recommendation from himself (Mr. Rason) as to the course that seemed to him should be pursued; but the position was that, either we had to admit to the Imperial authorities that the accounts of Western Australia in regard to the Contingents were in a deplorable state, or else it must be decided whether it would be possible on some future occasion to unravel the tangled mass into which they had got. Whatever course was decided upon it would be by no means as easy as the member for Collie seemed to imagine. It could not be done by a mere perusal of the papers, for he could assure the member that he had perused the papers a great many times, and no doubt the present Treasurer had done so also, and if by that course we could have saved the State only a few pounds we would have done so.

Item—Belmont Roads Board, grant for the purchase of recreation ground, £500:

MR. CONNOR: This seemed a large amount. Was there any population in the neighbourhood?

THE TREASURER: It was not possible to give the hon. member particulars of the population of Belmont. This amount represented half the cost of purchasing the recreation reserve at Belmont. The Belmont Roads Board district was one of those in which no Government land was reserved for recreation purposes, and the Belmont Roads Boards had the opportunity of purchasing a recreation reserve for £1,000. The price fixed on was, according to the report of the land resumption officer, considerably under the actual value of the land offered. The late Government were applied to to provide half the cost of this recreation reserve, and they agreed to do so. Not only was a promise given, but an order in Council was passed authorising the purchase of the reserve, but it was not purchased. When he (the Treasurer) took office he found amongst the papers dealing with the subject the authorisation of the item. It was better where recreation grounds on Government reserves were not provided that while land was cheap provision should be made for their purchase, rather than leave the public unserved until the population was thicker and land more difficult to secure. As the

Government granted without charge recreation reserves where land was retained, it was reasonable that the Government should contribute a portion of the cost to purchase a recreation reserve where land was not retained from sale. The late Government committed themselves to the vote: at the same time he did not intend to imply that he was against the principle.

MR. RASON: It was quite true this was a legacy from the late Government. It was not so much the purchase of a recreation ground purely for Belmont, for this ground had a river frontage, and there were very few recreation reserves on the river between Fremantle and Midland Junction. This reserve was not only for the people who lived in the district, but was available for the use of the inhabitants of Perth and Fremantle; and unlike other grants that had been made it was not the whole sum required for the purchase, the local people having supplied half the cost and the Government finding the other half.

MR. SCADDAN: There were unnumbered items on the Estimates showing where money had been expended last year without the authority of the House.

POINT OF ORDER.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Were members at liberty to discuss these items?

THE CHAIRMAN: It was not usual to discuss items not on this year's Estimates.

DR. ELLIS: We ought to be able to discuss items of expenditure which had not been before Parliament.

THE TREASURER: If the Chairman ruled it was possible to discuss unnumbered items, he should at the same time rule that it was not possible to discuss numbered items, because of the rate of progress being made in dealing with this year's Estimates.

THE CHAIRMAN: There was no specific Standing Order in regard to last year's items on the Estimates, and he could only act on the custom of the past. These items were not discussed in the past; therefore he ruled that it was advisable to follow the course adopted on previous occasions, which practice by being acquiesced in by members became as it were an established custom.

RESUMED.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Why was there an expenditure of £25 in connection with the Perth Ice Company frauds?

THE TREASURER: This sum wiped off a liability that was a remnant from previous years. It represented the final payment in connection with an old-standing affair which had been disposed of before he (the Treasurer) entered Parliament.

MR. TROY: What did the item "Railways and Customs £100" refer to?

THE TREASURER: This was another remnant. It was an unpaid item on account of an old inquiry.

DR. ELLIS: Did the sum of £1,500 represent the total cost of the Ventilation and Sanitation of Mines Commission?

THE TREASURER: The precise information could not be given.

MR. KEYSER: The Treasurer ought to be complimented on his perfect indefiniteness.

THE TREASURER: Did the hon. member imply that it ought to be possible to anticipate the precise cost of a Royal Commission? If so, the contention was absurd. It was impossible even for the Commission itself to say how much it would cost. The Commission's work was not completed.

Item—Fire Brigades Board and Fire Brigades, Contribution and Subsidy, £1,500:

MR. NEEDHAM: Did the Treasurer intend to follow the usual system of giving pound for pound? If so, there was danger; because fire brigades had a manner of inflating their incomes by subscriptions, concerts, and such like.

MR. H. BROWN: Did the Treasurer contemplate altering the present Fire Brigades Act to bring up the Government's contribution to a third? If pound for pound could be given to fire brigades outside Perth, the Perth board should at least get a third. The Government were sheltering themselves behind the Fire Brigades Board by leaving a large proportion of the Government buildings absolutely uninsured, which was a great risk. The Treasury buildings were absolutely uninsured. The Government thereby made a great saving at the expense of the Perth citizens, and should

contribute a greater share to the upkeep of the Perth fire brigade.

THE TREASURER knew of only one instance where the receipts of a fire brigade had been unduly inflated, and he did not think the case would be brought under notice by the member for Fremantle. He (the Treasurer) had considered a method of distribution based on population, with a minimum and a maximum, but at present had not drawn up any definite scheme. He had not gone into the question of increasing the Government subsidy to the Fire Brigades Board, but was perfectly willing to give it attention. In other States the Government paid a larger proportion of the cost of the upkeep of brigades, and while he did not think that fact should be taken into consideration, he would endeavour to go into the question and see to what extent the fire brigades could be put on a better footing, at all events in populous centres. We must necessarily in a large number of districts have the municipal or volunteer system where population was small, but he thought there were a number of places to which we might extend the operation of the Fire Brigades Act. We might extend it in the metropolitan area and some of the larger towns on the goldfields. He would endeavour to go into the whole question.

Item—*Government Gazette*, cost of production, £2,300 :

MR. HENSHAW: Was this cost in addition to the expense set forth under the head of printing?

THE TREASURER: No. The object of this item was to show the actual cost of production of the *Gazette*, but of course a similar vote in regard to compositors, machinery, stationery and so on provided in the Government Printing Office paid the expenses of the *Gazette*. We had a revenue with regard to receipts from sales of the *Government Gazette*.

MR. GREGORY: This was the total cost of production?

THE TREASURER: It was also provided for in the Government Printing Office estimate.

MR. GREGORY had been always opposed to items of this nature appearing on the Estimates. It was due to the late Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Gardiner, insist-

ing upon these items appearing on the Estimates, and that each department should be charged with its own printing. He thought all that would be required by Parliament would be a publication of a return showing what had been the cost in every one of the departments in connection with their printing. We should not be swelling our Estimates as we did now. As to this item of £2,300, it was merely a charge against our revenue. We did not receive this money, but it had to be charged against the Treasury by the Government Printing Office, and it appeared as a receipt.

DR. ELLIS strongly supported the observations of the member for Menzies. These returns ought to be published separately, so that we should see exactly what we were doing.

Item—Gwalia Hotel, maintenance, including salary and wages of manager etc., £5,000 :

MR. QUINLAN: Was it intended by the present Government to be vendors of liquor, etcetera? From his knowledge of this kind of business, he thought the sooner the Government saw the advisability of disposing of this hotel to the highest bidder the better it would be for the State. He was utterly opposed to this system. Although it had been stated that the Government made a profit in one direction and a loss in another, he ventured to say that while the Government had control of this institution they would find themselves on the debit side. This was a monopoly in the district, and it ought to be a first-class paying concern. If it were left to private enterprise, the Government would not only receive revenue from it in the shape of license fees, but also a fair price for the freehold.

MR. LAYMAN understood a balance-sheet was presented showing a credit balance of something like £580, but he had not the slightest hesitation in saying it was a fictitious balance, inasmuch as there had been no allowance made for depreciation in the value of furniture and effects and no allowance made for the interest on capital or for sinking fund. The interest would be about £200, and the other items he had mentioned would turn that credit balance into a debit. This property could be leased for at least

£12 a week, and £1,000 ingoing. He felt inclined to move that the item be struck out, with a view to getting the Government to lease the property and make it a source of revenue instead of a source of expenditure to the State.

MR. LYNCH did not suppose it was necessary to go into the defence of State-owned hotels. The hotel in question was on an entirely wrong design to suit the requirements. For the sale of liquor the hotel was up to date, and met requirements; but the residential portion was utterly unsuited to the locality. If erected in a more humble fashion, the hotel would have been the best of our State enterprises. If good meals for working people were provided, instead of a lavish service for a few travellers, the profit would perhaps be £1,500. There was a profit of about that sum on the bar trade, which profit was swallowed up by the loss on board and lodging. This enterprise was not a fair test of the advantage of State hotels.

THE TREASURER: A full defence of the Gwalia hotel would now be out of place. The fact that the item was for a full year indicated the intention of the Government as to the establishment. Though he had not seen the hotel or sampled its liquors, all reports from visitors to Gwalia were highly commendatory of the hotel and of the liquors supplied. Good judges of liquor told him that the best liquors obtainable could be purchased there, and that the stock was of a far higher standard than was usually found in a goldfields town, though it might be assumed that the absence of competition was a great inducement to vend cheap liquors. His Excellency the Governor, after visiting the hotel, expressed his pleasure at the accommodation, though this must not be taken as an indication of approval of State hotels. From staunch teetotallers and staunch drinkers alike favourable opinions had been received. True, the Government might get a substantial sum by letting the property on lease; but the primary business of a State hotel should not be to make a large profit. With a less elaborate building and inferior food and accommodation, a much larger profit could have been realised. Though the balance-sheet did not fully provide for depreciation and

sinking fund, during the first 13 months the receipts exceeded the expenditure by £588.

MR. GREGORY: There was a heavy loss for the first three months.

THE TREASURER: True. And throughout the year there was a comparatively heavy loss on the boarding and catering department, not usually a paying department in any hotel business; but the profits on the sales of liquor were lower than they would have been had not the liquors been of the highest quality. So far, it could not be alleged that the hotel had failed. He hoped before many months passed to visit the premises, and to satisfy himself of the quality of the liquors by examining the labels on the bottles. If members were anxious to see how a State hotel could face competition, he would not be unfavourable to recommending Parliament to provide an opportunity. Not till then could a reliable opinion be formed of such a venture. He was confident that the Committee would pass this item.

MR. GREGORY hoped it would be long before the Premier visited the Gwalia hotel and attempted to judge the liquors by a mere examination of the labels. This was not the proper time to discuss State hotels. These could be discussed on the Licensing Bill. Personally he considered the State should not engage in such businesses, but should endeavour to insure the purity of liquors sold in private hotels. The liquors should be tested and the bottles branded by the Government. The member for the district (Mr. Lynch) said the hotel was not a fair test. Undoubtedly it was, because of its situation among a large number of workmen, and because of the absence of competition. It had done particularly good work in that district. All the reports to hand showed that it had benefited the workers. Private enterprise could make a profit where State enterprise would make a loss. The instructions issued to the manager were that he must strictly comply with the Licensing Act. At 11 o'clock the bar was closed; no drunken man was ever served; no credit whatever was given; and so far as we could judge from information obtained from the workmen who believed in it, the hotel had done good for the people. As to leasing the place on the terms mentioned by the member

for Toodyay, at £12 a week, he did not know that we could get that price now, but before the advent of the Labour party we could have got a large sum for the property.

MR. CONNOR: How much?

MR. GREGORY: Statements had been made that the Government could have got £8,000.

MR. CONNOR: The sum of £8,000 could have been obtained for the license alone.

MR. GREGORY: A good deal had been said in regard to the profit made on the sale of drinks, and the loss made in regard to the household; but the staff was kept there, and no charge was made against the household accounts for the staff. If a debit had been made against the moneys received from the sale of drinks for the keep of the staff, the profit on the drinks would have been reduced and the loss on the household account would have been reduced also. The member for Leonora might have told the Committee why the loss had occurred. Travellers going to that district would not stay at the hotel, for if they did they would receive no orders at Leonora. There was no necessity for having such a large establishment, but the matter was left mostly to the Warden, who made the recommendations which were carried out. If he (Mr. Gregory) had desired to make a profit he would have made little accommodation for travellers, and the State hotel would have been a good paying concern. The desire of Mr. James was to have a hotel which would teach hotel-keepers what should be given to the people, and to show the class of accommodation and treatment that should be meted out to travellers on the goldfields. No hotel could vie with the State hotel in the manner of serving the public. The manager had carried out his duties in a most exemplary manner. Those who had been in the district and stayed at the hotel, including Bishop Riley, the Governor, the late Premier, members of the Press and others, spoke highly of the manner in which the manager conducted the hotel. It was an object lesson so far as hotels were concerned. When the Licensing Bill was under consideration the question of the establishing of State hotels could be discussed, for the Government, in the Licensing Bill, asked to be given certain powers so that they would

be able to open State hotels in various parts of the country. If private enterprise were asked to take over this property, the Government could get a very large sum indeed for it.

MR. C. H. LAYMAN: If the State hotel at Gwalia was an example of the State management of the liquor traffic, the sooner the State dropped the matter the better. It was one of the fads of the late Premier, and it had been tried and found to be a total failure. He moved—

That the item be struck out.

MR. NANSON: There was not much chance of the item being struck out, therefore it was not necessary to deal with the amendment. He suggested to the Treasurer that in the interests of this new movement for the State ownership and control of the liquor traffic, in which he (Mr. Nanson) was a firm believer, there should be a very close investigation as to the management and success of the experiment. We should recognise that a great deal depended on whether the hotel proved to be a success or not. He was not one of those who agreed with the member for Nelson when he said that the hotel had been tried and found to be a total failure. There could be no question, if it were found to be a failure, and it had from a financial point of view only been a mitigated success so far, a certain amount of harm would be done to the cause which a number of members had very much at heart in Western Australia. In dealing with the State ownership and control of the liquor traffic we were demanding of the experiment which we were making something that had been demanded by no other country that had made a similar experiment. In the case of this hotel there was a fairly good profit in regard to the sale of liquor; but in the disposal of that profit, instead of handing it over for public purposes as was done in other countries, a few casual travellers were given board and lodging at less than cost price. That was never contemplated by advocates of the scheme. It was not done in Scandinavia nor in England, where the scheme was in operation on a limited scale and answered very well. There was no necessity for the State to provide beds and meals; but there was very great necessity why the sale of liquor

should be placed in the hands of the State. He would like to see a separation between the boarding-house business and the sale of liquor. We really wanted State or municipal clubs for the sale of liquor, and this would lead to an improvement in the moral and physical condition of the people using these places, while there would be a large profit available for public purposes. It was not necessary to make a strong appeal to the Premier to look closely into the question, and into the matters brought before the Committee, because the Treasurer believed quite as strongly in the importance of the experiment as he (Mr. Nanson) did, and was loth to see harm done to the cause. Possibly there was faulty administration of the hotel. At any rate, he (Mr. Nanson) was not satisfied that the profit was what it should be.

Mr. H. BROWN was totally opposed to this item appearing on the Estimates, and was surprised to see the Government continuing the hotel. He was informed that a bottle of whisky was retailed at the hotel at a profit, roughly, of 200 per cent.; yet only £500 profit was made on the hotel for the year, which showed it was an absolute failure. No interest was charged to the capital account. The Treasurer would not like it to go forth that teetotalers were being fed at the hotel at the expense of the consumers of drink. It was never intended that any State should go in for this liquor traffic. No balance-sheet or report was laid before members who were asked to pass this item. We were told the hotel was well managed, and that the manager was the best man in the State we could possibly get; but the management must be wrong when such a small profit was shown. We should at all events get a profit of 200 per cent., considering the place was rent-free.

THE TREASURER agreed with the view expressed by the member for Greenough that in these State hotels it would be much better if we did not attempt to cater for the accommodation of lodgers. At the same time that was where the leakage occurred. He (the Treasurer) was not desirous of providing accommodation for other persons at the expense of the drinkers. An audit officer who recently visited the hotel had made valuable suggestions, and those, with

others elicited during this discussion, would be fully considered.

MR. TROY: The member for Perth, notwithstanding his opposition to State hotels, sat behind the gentlemen who had inaugurated the system. It was a good system and a profit was shown, though the hotel was carried out on a magnificent scale. He hoped this matter would be fully discussed when the Licensing Bill came on, and that the Government would enlarge the system.

Amendment (to strike out) put and negatived.

Item—Steam Contract Service between Geraldton and Fremantle, £5,000:

MR. CONNOR: How many years would this item appear on the Estimates?

THE TREASURER: Three years.

MR. CONNOR: It was a misfortune. The contract should never have been entered into. In his opinion it was in the nature of a job.

MR. GREGORY: What?

MR. CONNOR: It was originally in the nature of a political job.

MR. GREGORY: The hon. member did not use the word "political," but said it was in the nature of a job, and he (Mr. Gregory) asked the hon. member to withdraw the expression.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not refer in that way to a vote of the House.

MR. CONNOR would be sorry to attribute any personal motive to any member of the House.

THE CHAIRMAN: The matter had been the subject of a vote of the House, and it was against the Standing Orders to refer in an improper way to any vote of the House. The hon. member must withdraw.

MR. CONNOR withdrew the expression. It was unfortunate that the item had to appear in the Estimates. He had always taken the stand he was now taking on this vote, showing his objection to it. When it was originally arranged that this item should appear on the Estimates there were very many rumours afloat as to why it appeared there.

MR. GREGORY: Why did not the hon. member say something?

MR. CONNOR: If the hon. member would look through *Hansard*, he would

see that what he (Mr. Connor) had said was quite as strong as anything he had said to-night, and if it were possible this item could be struck off the Estimates, he would certainly move that it should be struck off. He believed an arrangement had been entered into and that the contract had been added to since by some person who had the authority, and concessions given to the people who had this contract which were not in the original contract. One thing was the supply of coal at contract schedule rates to this company, which was not in the contract. The price of the coal it were receiving for 17s. was 30s. There were several other items in this matter that he wanted to bring forward. What he wished to know in connection with this was how many more times we should have Estimates brought down with this left on them. Had the contract expired with this amount; if not, for how many years would it last?

MR. GREGORY asked the Treasurer to say whether he disapproved of this service.

THE TREASURER: The contract was made for three years. He could not say distinctly the date at which it would expire. Having satisfied himself it was a three-years contract and that it had not expired, he had no alternative but to put the item on the Estimates. He had never gone through the file dealing with the subject, therefore it would be impossible for him to refer to the remarks of the hon. member.

MR. GREGORY: This item was in reference to a contract entered into between the Government and Messrs. James Bell and Co., with respect to special contract services between here and Geraldton. He would have liked the Treasurer to have made some statement to-night, after hearing the remarks by one of the late Independent party whether he approved of the remarks made by that hon. member on this occasion when the hon. member referred to this work as having been in the nature of a job.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member withdrew the expression.

MR. GREGORY: There was an inference afterwards thrown out in the House. He (Mr. Gregory) had personal knowledge of this matter, and he would have liked the hon. member to have made

some statement to the House. He objected to these innuendoes being thrown about the place. The House should know what objections the hon. member had to this contract. We were justified in having a full explanation in regard to this matter, and if the Treasurer would consent, he (Mr. Gregory) would move that progress be reported so that we could discuss the question. If there was anything wrong in connection with this contract, the sooner it was ventilated in the House the better. He thought this was a service for which the people of the Murchison Goldfields thanked them. There were other reasons why this contract was entered into which possibly it might not be wise to discuss, in reference to the probable purchase of certain properties.

DR. ELLIS: What was the date of the contract?

MR. GREGORY: It lasted about 14 or 15 months; perhaps it had another 18 or 20 months to run. It was done with the object of giving Geraldton the trade which belonged to Geraldton, with a view to having decentralisation. He therefore hoped the Committee would now agree to report progress. He moved that progress be reported.

Motion (progress) put and negatived.

THE TREASURER: In regard to this matter he would very gladly have consented to report progress on it, had there been any necessity connected with the item. The item required no excuse, and he thought the member for Menzies would see it was unreasonable to ask him to delay the passage of these Estimates solely in consequence of a remark which the hon. member had already had an opportunity of replying to. If the hon. member liked to ask any question of him (the Treasurer) in connection with this matter, he would have an opportunity of doing so in the ordinary course; or if anyone wished to make a personal explanation dealing with any statement made to-night, or any other night, on a particular question, the forms of the House were available to enable him to bring up the matter in the shape of a motion if he desired to secure a discussion, and he (the Treasurer) would be happy to do anything he could to facilitate an opportunity for any discussion there might be necessity for. He there-

fore thought we might as well finish with the Treasurer's estimates, at all events.

MR. GREGORY had no desire to harass the Government at all. He wished to assist them as far as possible in regard to getting these things through. What he protested against were innuendoes, not made against himself, but against a late colleague of his, and when those innuendoes were made he liked to see them threshed out. He wanted the debate regarding this item adjourned until the next sitting of the House, when possibly the hon. member would not be in such a hurry to run away and catch his train, and would give the House all the information he possessed. We on our (Opposition) side of the House were only too pleased to allow these matters to be ventilated. He protested against an innuendo of this sort being thrown out without any special charge being made. The contract was a good one, and he would be only too pleased to defend it; but if the Treasurer desired there should not be any farther discussion about the matter, he was prepared to let it drop.

THE TREASURER wished distinctly to state that he did not desire to prevent discussion on this matter in any way. What he desired to prevent was discussion on this item on the Estimates, which could not be in any way affected by any amount of discussion that might take place. If discussion were desirable, as it could not affect either the item or the amount of the item there was no advantage in delaying the item till the discussion was over. Pass the item, and the hon. member would be given every facility for achieving his object.

MR. TROY: Representing part of the Murchison, he knew that this contract was entered into by desire of the Murchison people, who had for years been crying out for the service. The contract gave lively satisfaction to the people of the district.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

PRIVILEGE—"HANSARD" REPORTS, TABLES OF FIGURES.

DR. ELLIS (Coolgardie): In a speech which I delivered yesterday, I possibly did not refer with sufficient clearness to a

series of schedules of figures, so as to have these schedules inserted as schedules in *Hansard*. I was informed by older members that these figures would be printed *in extenso* if quoted as I quoted them. Some arrangement should be made so that they may appear in *Hansard*, because they reflect on certain publications in the State, and my figures should appear in order. I do not wish to weary the House by quoting figures for half-an-hour; and therefore I ask that these figures be inserted.

THE SPEAKER: I may explain in this connection that a few days ago an arrangement was made whereby members are allowed to receive, on the day following the delivery of a speech, a type-written copy of the *Hansard* report of that speech, which they can correct. But members are not permitted to add anything to a speech, or to strike out anything they have said. I have given instructions that no material alteration of any kind is to be permitted; and I have reason to know that such instructions were wisely given. But in this case I recognise that there is some justification for the plea of the hon. member; though I did not care, when the Chief *Hansard* Reporter saw me about it, to make a precedent by instructing any material alteration to be permitted in a speech delivered in the House. So I informed the hon. member that the best thing he could do was to bring the matter before the House; and that, if I found there was no objection, I would issue instructions for his returns to be inserted in the *Hansard* report. I understand that the returns were largely referred to in the hon. member's speech; and I am confirmed in the opinion by reference to the Chairman of Committees, who occupied the Chair during part of the time in which the hon. member spoke. However, I do not desire that anything shall be done to make it easy for a member to interfere with or materially alter reports of his speeches. That is why I preferred that this matter should be brought before the House. If there is no objection on the part of members to have these returns published *in extenso* in *Hansard*, I shall not offer any objection.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): I may briefly state that I occupied the Chair as Deputy Speaker during Mr.

Speaker's temporary absence; and I can vouch for the fact that the hon. member (Dr. Ellis) did deal with a considerable volume of figures, and did refer extensively to tabulated statements which he had before him. Of course it is impossible for me to say to what extent he quoted them; but I know that while I was in the Chair his speech was largely made up of quotations from those schedules.

THE PREMIER: I move that the House do now adjourn.

THE SPEAKER: Before putting the question, I may say that I gather from this reference to the matter of privilege that there will be no objection to the hon. member's returns being inserted in *Hansard*; and I shall therefore give the necessary instruction.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 20 minutes to 12 o'clock, until the next Tuesday afternoon.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 6th December, 1904.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The Explosives Act 1895—New Regulation 12 in Part II., Carriage of Explosives.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR, HOPPER BARGES.

HON. M. L. MOSS asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What was the number of hopper barges purchased by the Government for the purposes of the Fremantle Harbour Works, and the cost thereof? 2, Have any of these barges been sold, and what price was realised? 3, Is it the intention of the Government to sell the remaining barges? 4, Are the barges fit for any, and if so what, public purposes? 5, Is the Government satisfied that the barges are not deteriorating in value? 6, What is the weekly cost of watching and maintaining the barges?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, (a) Eight, being 4 of 400 tons capacity and 4 of 200 tons capacity. (b) £25,536. 2, One 400-ton barge, sold to Adelaide Towing Co. for £1,350. 3, Yes; if opportunity offers. 4, The barges could be used for the conveyance of dredged material to sea as heretofore, though they do not give results as economical as by the dredges conveying the materials in their own hoppers. 5, The barges are deteriorating in value, but not more than is usual under similar circumstances. 6, £3 per week for watching; no fixed sum can be stated for maintenance.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the **HON. C. SOMMERS**, leave of absence for 14 days was granted to the **HON. W. OATS**, on the ground of urgent private business.

MOTION—KOOKYNIE LOCKOUT PROSECUTION, TO DISAPPROVE.

Debate resumed from the 30th November, on the motion of the **HON. M. L. MOSS** "That in the opinion of this House the action of the Government in retaining a legal practitioner residing in Perth to prosecute in the recent lockout case at Kookynie was not warranted in the circumstances."

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (**HON. J. M. DREW**): The duty devolves upon me to defend the Government in connection with what is practically a motion of censure tabled in this House by Mr. Moss, whose complaint seems to be that the Government employed Mr. Ewing to conduct a prosecution against