

HON. G. RANDELL: If the Committee agreed to the insertion of the words "South-East," would that commit members to anything farther? He objected to Northam, Toodyay, and York being included in the province with Albany, Beverley, Katanning, and the Williams. There had been a province consisting of York, Northam, Beverley, Toodyay, and Swan for a great many years, and that province should be allowed to remain. This was not a Government alteration, but had been accepted by the Government in another place. It was to be hoped that members would consider the serious consequences which might result from the way in which votes had been given. He realised this was an important crisis in the history of the State. Members might not realise what was to follow from the effect of creating four goldfields provinces. He saw the probable ill-effect, although he might not realise the full result. Members should not allow any ulterior motives or any side issues to enter into this matter, such as a seat for one side or another. From the voting which had taken place he had arrived at a conclusion. It was to be regretted the Government were endeavouring to force on a division of provinces which would not be in the interests of the whole State. If members voted for the insertion of the words "South-East," would that commit them to accepting the seven electorates included within that province?

THE CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee was the proposal to strike out the word "Central," and to insert "South-East" in lieu. The amendment would affect nothing else.

HON. G. RANDELL: The Committee were agreeable that the province should be called the South-East Province. It was to be regretted that the Swan was taken out of its original province, which had brought on the difficulty members were in to-night. The decision of the House would be disastrous to the populous portion of the agricultural settlement, and it might be the stepping-stone to the dissolution of both Houses, and perhaps the destruction of the Legislative Council.

On motion by HON. J. W. HACKETT, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 7.45 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 24th November, 1903.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE DOCK SITE.

MR. FERGUSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, How many men are employed in boring operations in connection with the site of the Fremantle dry dock. 2, Whether the Government have secured the services of an engineer from outside this State to report as to the best site for the dry dock.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Boring operations are not in progress at present, pending farther consideration of sites other than those already dealt with. 2, The Government has been pressing this matter forward, and from recent advices it is expected that the services of Mr. Napier Bell, and of Mr. Keele from New South Wales, will be available directly after Christmas.

QUESTION—RAILWAY ENGINE SPARKS.

MR. BURGESS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether the Government intends taking any immediate steps to stop the firing of the country from sparks

from travelling engines on the railway lines through the dry and settled portions of the State. 2, If so, when. 3, Knowing the cause of these fires, does it intend to make any alteration to put a stop to the trouble and annoyance the settlers living along these lines are put to.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Instructions have been issued for the fettling gangs to be on the alert and to put out all fires, and to render every assistance in this direction. Extra men have been detailed to follow up the heavy goods trains on heavy grades, and resident engineers have been empowered to put on such extra men as may be necessary. No spark arrester has yet been proved a success. Every care is being taken, as the results of a fire are disastrous not only to the farmer but to the working railways.

QUESTIONS (2)—RABBITS INCURSION. PAPERS REQUIRED.

MR. THOMAS, without notice, asked the Minister for Lands: Whether he will lay on the table of the House the papers asked for in my letters to him regarding the rabbit question.

THE PREMIER replied: The hon. member, in conjunction with his colleague (Mr. Pigott), has made a charge against the Government. When the hon. members have proved their charge, I shall have great pleasure in placing on the table all papers in relation thereto. The Government do not think it right to encourage the idea of laying a charge first, and finding grounds for that charge afterwards.

MR. THOMAS: In farther reference to the question I have just asked—

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot make a speech.

MR. THOMAS: I wish to ask a farther question, which deals absolutely with the question I have just put to the Minister for Lands, and which the Premier has answered on his behalf. My next question is, whether it is a fact that both on the 12th and the 18th November a definite promise was made to this House by the Minister for Lands that the papers in question would be publicly and officially laid on the table of the House?

THE PREMIER: If that is a fact, the records of the House will show it. There

is no need to ask me to give information which is published in the records kept for the purpose.

MR. THOMAS: I asked the question of the Minister for Lands, and not of the Premier.

MR. BENZLEY'S INVESTIGATION.

MR. THOMAS farther asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What weekly remuneration did Mr. Benzley and his assistant receive whilst investigating on rabbits? 2, Where and when did these men have previous experience in rabbit trapping? 3, Where were the horses with which these men were supplied obtained, and on what terms?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, £13 10s. per week to Mr. Benzley. He paid assistant and other expenses. 2, Mr. Benzley had years of experience with rabbits in the Eastern States. 3, The horses were supplied by Mr. Benzley. He made his own terms and arrangements without consulting the department.

BOULDER TRAMWAYS BILL. SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. MORAN brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Bill.

Report received.

MR. MORAN, in moving the adoption of the report, recommended the leaders of the House, if they thought fit, to suspend the Standing Orders to allow the Bill to be passed. The work had been delayed for several years.

THE PREMIER: What about the Kalgoorlie Tramways Bill?

MR. MORAN: We had not considered that. The passing of this Boulder Tramways Bill was an urgent necessity. All parties were ready, and it was a wise thing to proceed with the work. The parties had already agreed to spend money, the summer was coming on, and the undertaking would provide work for a lot of unemployed. There was no dispute in connection with the matter, which was quite regular as these concessions went, and he would like the House to give these people power to start the work right away. He moved that the report be adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It was impossible to adopt the report at present.

The hon. member must give notice that it be taken into consideration on a future day.

MR. MORAN moved that the report be taken into consideration on the next day.

Question put and passed.

FREMANTLE TRAMWAYS BILL (PRIVATE).

SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. HIGHAM brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Fremantle and East Fremantle Tramways Bill (private).

Report received, and ordered to be printed.

WOODMAN'S POINT TO JANDAKOT RAILWAY.

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

RETURN—SALARIES OR INCREASES, FORM J.

On motion by MR. DAGLISH, ordered: That a return be laid upon the table showing—1, The names of all officers in the Public Service who have received salaries or increases of salary under the authority of Form J. since the 1st July last. 2, The amount of the salaries or increases in each case.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By THE PREMIER: Rebates in Wharfage Dues granted by the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

MOTION—WANT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley) moved:

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

He said: In moving this motion which stands in my name, I do so firstly because I think it is my duty to do it, and secondly because I consider that matters will be brought forward during the debate which are unknown to the public, and which should be made known to the general public of the State. All the questions I shall bring up deal solely with administration, and I may call the attention of members of this House to

what was said when the present Government took office, that being that they intended to devote all their energies to the careful and good administration of the different departments controlled by them. The first item I wish to speak about is with regard to the manner in which the present Government deemed fit to deal with old servants of the State, when a charge was brought against an old servant by a private firm. I refer in this instance to Mr. Morton Craig, who up till lately was our Chief Inspector of Stock. Mr. Morton Craig joined the services in this State before Responsible Government was introduced, in fact I believe I am correct when I say that he joined in 1872, something like 31 years ago. Mr. Morton Craig, as Chief Inspector of Stock, had occasion, in his official capacity, to cause a prosecution to be made against a private firm in this State. That prosecution was gone into by the Ministry, and the then Minister for Lands agreed that the prosecution should be proceeded with. A little later on one of the counts in that prosecution was farther considered by the Cabinet, as far as I can make out from the file, and on the advice of the Crown Solicitor it was decided that the prosecution should be laid against the firm's agents and not against the firm itself. I have no complaint whatever in relation to the action of the Government in that regard. Let me say, and it suffices for my purpose to say, that the prosecution took place and the Inspector of Stock, the head of the department, gained his case. As a result of that prosecution the firm which was affected took exception to some charges, some statements which had been made by Mr. Morton Craig against them, and they demanded—I do not say they were not right in demanding it—that the Government should cause some inquiry to be held into those charges so that the matter could be cleared up, in order that it could be proved whether the Chief Inspector of Stock was in the right or whether he was in the wrong. At first it was decided by the Minister for Lands that a tribunal should be appointed. I may say the then Minister for Lands suggested this scheme, that a tribunal should be appointed consisting of one gentleman nominated by the Chief Inspector of Stock, one nominated by the firm affected,

and one appointed by the Government. For some reasons—reasons which I do not understand—the personnel of this tribunal was altered, and we have the knowledge that, under the advice of the Premier himself, it was decided that Mr. A. S. Roe, our Chief Magistrate, should be appointed to inquire into this case, that he should be the sole arbiter; and I do not think that any one in the State, I do not think that either of the parties affected, I do not think that any member of this House would have objected to that inquiry being carried out by Mr. Roe. But I have a letter from Mr. Roe, bearing out that what I say is a fact. He writes to the Chief Inspector of Stock, saying:—

Having been instructed to inquire into certain disputes pending between yourself and Messrs. Forrest, Emanuel, & Co., I purpose commencing the inquiry immediately on my return from Northampton in about 10 or 14 days, and will inform you later on as soon as I can fix a definite time.

This matter was hung over; why, no one seems to understand. It has been said that Mr. Roe could not give sufficient time; it has been said that the matter was taken out of his hands because he was unable to give the necessary time to this inquiry; but from this letter in Mr. Roe's own handwriting I do not think, if the Government had wished Mr. Roe to carry out this inquiry, there would have been any difficulty about it whatever. It might have meant the postponement of the inquiry for a short time; but that surely was not sufficient for the Government to say "We will take this matter out of Mr. Roe's hands altogether, and we will appoint our Minister for Lands to inquire into it." I have again a letter written by the Minister for Lands, dated 2nd May of this year, in which he informs the Chief Inspector of Stock that certain charges had been brought against him by this firm, that an inquiry was to be held two days later, and that he himself was to be the arbiter. In reply to that communication a letter was written by Mr. Morton Craig, and I would like to read it out. It was addressed to the Minister for Lands and dated 3rd May, the day after the letter was written to Mr. Craig by the Minister for Lands. Mr. Craig says:—

With reference to the proposed inquiry in connection with charges made by the above-

mentioned firm [that is Forrest, Emanuel, & Co.], against me as Chief Inspector of Stock, and my charges against that firm, I was astonished at hearing yesterday afternoon from you that the inquiry was to take place to-morrow (Monday) at 11 a.m. The official notification from yourself I only received this evening on my return to town. I am informed that the letter in question reached my office yesterday (Saturday) after office hours. You will realise no doubt that at such short notice it is absolutely impossible for me to have my witnesses here by the time stated in your letter; and I would ask that the inquiry be adjourned for one week, as I have a number of witnesses to notify, some of them being resident on the goldfields. I always presumed that I would be given sufficient notice to enable me to bring forward the evidence which I can produce to justify all my actions in connection with Forrest, Emanuel, & Co.

That seemed fair and reasonable. Mr. Craig goes on to say:—

I notice from the letter received from you to-day that Forrest, Emanuel, & Co., are now bringing forward a new charge against myself, that in the recent prosecution against them for the removal of hay from the quarantine yards I was actuated by spite against them. This is an extraordinary charge to bring against me at the eleventh hour; and I would point out in connection with this matter that it has already been dealt with before a proper legal tribunal, and had Forrest, Emanuel, & Co., been able to satisfy the Fremantle bench that I was actuated by spite, the justices would certainly not have inflicted such a penalty as they did.

Now why should this new charge be brought up? Why could not the Attorney General, through his Minister, decide that the matter had been settled once and for all? I take it not only as an insult to Mr. Morton Craig, but as an insult to the Fremantle bench of magistrates as well. This matter had been fully gone into and a decision arrived at, and if Forrest, Emanuel, & Co. did not like that decision, they had a right to appeal. Now we had it brought up as another charge against Mr. Morton Craig; and the Government, instead of supporting one of their servants and also helping him to fight against these attacks, brought forward a new charge against Mr. Craig.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The inquiry did not find for Messrs. Forrest, Emanuel, & Co. on that point.

MR. PIGOTT: I am not talking of the result of the inquiry; I am talking of the

way in which this inquiry was brought about. Mr. Morton Craig goes on :—

I cannot conclude this letter without again urging the advisability, under the circumstances of the case, of the appointment of some person outside politics to conduct the inquiry. As you know, your colleague the Premier has already, in connection with the subject matter of the inquiry, practically condemned me; and it seems to me, therefore, that it would be more satisfactory, both for you and for myself, that some person outside politics should hold the inquiry.

I appeal to hon. members. Here is a letter written by a gentleman in the service of the State for over 30 years, against whom not one word has been ever said, who has to appeal in this manner to the Government in order that he might get a just and fair inquiry held into charges brought against him as Inspector of Stock and practically as a representative of the Government; and that man has to appeal to the Minister who had only been in office two or three months in this manner in order to try and get a fair inquiry into his case. Mr. Morton Craig goes on to say :—

I would also strongly urge that the evidence should be taken on oath, and farther that Mr. Bull, the shorthand expert of the Supreme Court, be engaged to take full notes of proceedings. If the department will not employ Mr. Bull I am prepared to do so myself.

And yet it was decided that no shorthand notes should be taken. Is that a fair way of trying a servant? If he had been in the service no more than six months I say it was not a fair way to treat him.

MR. MORAN: Were the witnesses sworn?

MR. PIGOTT: I do not think so. I would like to point out that there is a letter here, to go back just a little while, received by Mr. Morton Craig from the Minister saying that the inquiry was to be held, in which there is no mention made of the matter; but in a letter received from Dr. Jameson, the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Morton Craig was informed that no counsel would be allowed for either side, and that no professional legal man would be allowed to be present at the inquiry. That to my mind is hardly a fair way to treat any of our servants, and I cannot help thinking that, if this sort of thing is to be allowed to go on, we will never get good men in our service. A man will be frightened to

go into our service, because if he attempts to do his duty and by so doing may offend some private firm in the city he knows he will not be backed up by the Government and that his own Minister will go against him. Why was Mr. Morton Craig not allowed an opportunity of defending himself, and not allowed counsel in the case? Why was the matter not threshed out in open court, and why was the matter kept in secret inquiry? There is another phase of the question. I think from what I have said, without going any farther, the public of Western Australia when they have heard what I have said will be satisfied that Mr. Morton Craig did not get a fair inquiry. I do not care about the rights or wrongs of the case. Whether Mr. Morton Craig was in the right or wrong he had been a servant of this State for over 30 years, and when charges were brought against him by a private firm the Government thought fit that it was not good enough to allow him to have a fair inquiry. Now on the matter of counsel I have a letter. I may state that Mr. Morton Craig retained on his behalf to fight for him, so that every point in his favour might be brought out and so that he could make a proper defence, the services of Mr. Septimus Burt. Up to that time he had not been informed that counsel would not be allowed to appear. But I have a letter before me from Messrs. Stone & Burt dated 11th November last year, and I will read it. It is addressed to the Chief Inspector of Stock :—

Dear Sir,—Messrs. James and Darbyshire have approached me with a retaining fee for Mr. Burt on behalf of Forrest, Emanuel & Co., and as you expressed a desire to retain our Mr. Burt on your own behalf at your interview on Friday last, we should like you, if you still intend to retain him, to send the retainer at once, as we are holding Messrs. James and Darbyshire's retainer until we hear from you.—STONE & BURT.

Mr. Craig at once went to the office and paid the two guineas. Five days after this, on the 16th, Mr. Craig is notified that no counsel will be allowed to appear at the inquiry. What is the inference one is allowed to draw from this? Are we to say that it is a peculiar circumstance, or are we to say that this action was known to the Government, that Messrs. James & Darbyshire having failed

to obtain the services of Mr. Burt, and having heard that Mr. Burt's services had been retained by Mr. Morton Craig, they changed their opinion and said "We will not allow any counsel to appear?"

THE PREMIER: Will you say that?

MR. PIGOTT: I say, what is the inference to be drawn?

THE PREMIER: We are not dealing with the matter like that. Be honest in making your statements.

MR. PIGOTT: I want to be particularly honest, and I make my statement plainly. I cannot make it plainer. Mr. Craig was refused even a reporter; he was refused an inquiry which would have been a fair, impartial inquiry, and which I am certain the Minister for Lands would have preferred to have taken place rather than the inquiry which did take place. Mr. Craig was refused witnesses to go on oath, and it only came out that he was refused counsel after the solicitors for Forrest, Emanuel & Co. could not obtain the services of Mr. Burt because those services had been previously retained by Mr. Craig.

THE PREMIER: That inference does not impress the House.

MR. PIGOTT: I do not know the mind of the Premier, and there is nothing on the file to say that my version is not the correct version. It is for the Minister and the Premier to get up and deny that inference is the correct one. It is for the Premier to say it is incorrect, and if he does not do that I feel confident that every member of the House will convict him of the inference which I have drawn. I hope that when the matter is considered by members they will look at it in an impartial light, and will take into consideration the fact that Mr. Craig had been in the service of the country for over 30 years, that he had raised himself to the highest position he could in his department, for he was head in that department; and it was on account of having made certain charges against a firm, against which a prosecution was successful, that charges were brought by that firm against him, that this inquiry was held and he was practically dismissed. Before I touch on any other important question that comes to my mind, we have another case that ought to be gone into regarding the dismissal of

our servants—we have the case of Inspector White. We all know that rabbits have come here, and that the fence has been neglected; but when the Minister found this out, instead of making the fullest inquiry into the circumstances, he simply said, "Oh, I am going to get rid of all these men."

MR. ATKINS: Not the whole of them.

MR. PIGOTT: My friend is quite correct; he did not sack the lot, but he retained one man in the service, a brother-in-law of a previous Minister for Lands, a man who everyone thinks should have been dismissed.

THE PREMIER: Who is that?

MR. PIGOTT: When the other side of the question is brought up, we hear the Minister for Lands making excuses, "I did not know; I did not know." In his own words, he condemned himself; he did not know the circumstances, but he dismissed the men without an inquiry.

MR. MORAN: How was this man appointed?

MR. PIGOTT: I am not going into the appointment, but the way in which servants were dismissed. The Minister for Lands knows he said himself that this man sent in his resignation. Why not have waited a few days and received his resignation? He could have let that part of the business remain until he had made inquiries. When he heard rumours that the fence was not being properly constructed, when he heard rumours that rabbits were on the western side of the fence—and there is a letter dated 13th September saying that no rabbits were on this side of the fence—why did he not, as any ordinary man would have done, have said to himself "There is something wrong here; I must call on my chief man to see what he has to say." But he does not do that; he sacks him. These are two examples of the treatment meted out to civil servants; two examples, but how many more there are we cannot tell. It is not expected that members on this (Opposition) side should know all the details of the department, especially when we ask for papers, as I think was done eight or ten days ago, and receive a promise that we are going to get them, but for some reason or other excuses are made for the delay, daily and hourly, that the papers will be forwarded later on, yet they only come when this

debate comes forward. We have the hon. gentleman in charge of the House saying "I am not going to give our case away. You must make out your own case; we cannot allow you to go through the files of the department." I charge the Government with having criminally neglected their duty in regard to the rabbit question. There can be no doubt about the charge which I bring on this matter. The Government have not only been negligent, but I use a stronger word than that—the Government have been criminally negligent. Since I have been a member of the House the rabbit question has been brought up several times. In 1901 a motion was brought forward by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper). I am not going through the debates that occurred then, but I will read the speech of the Premier in reply, to show that he at any rate understood the necessity of paying every attention to the question of the rabbits.

MR. MORAN: What Premier is that?

MR. PIGOTT: I refer to Mr. Leake. Mr. Leake said in reply, or rather he spoke on the question towards the finish of the debate in these words:—

We have passed the stage of inquiry in this matter, and now we must act. We have a direction from a special commission appointed during the recess to inquire into and report on the rabbit question. It appears to be the opinion of hon. members that the recommendation of that commission should be followed; and as we have supplies, the Ministry takes it that they are now justified in expending a sum of £30,000 in fencing.

I may say in regard to that £30,000, I think I am correct that another £10,000 or £12,000 extra was spent. Mr. Leake went on to say:—

As I understand the member for Northam (Mr. Throssell), I believe it is the wish of the House that although the Ministry keep the report of the commission before them, they should not regard themselves as absolutely bound to follow that report in every minor detail, but are to take it only as a general guide. Inasmuch as the invasion of the rabbits is progressing day by day, it may of course be necessary to alter one's plans. If that is the view of hon. members, they may accept this assurance, that there will be no delay in starting the fence, and that should unforeseen difficulties arise, we shall alter our tactics accordingly and endeavour to meet by the best possible and most practical means all such difficulties. I understand that hon. members desire to give us a certain freedom of action, and desire also that we should take

the report of the commission as our guide. With that report in view, we shall set to work at once.

That was in July, 1901. I am not going to read the previous debates, but I have looked up all the debates that have occurred in the House. I simply wish to bring before members what has occurred during the life of this Parliament; and in 1901, two years and some months ago, there was a distinct mandate from the House, and accepted by the then Premier, that no money was to be spared in order that the fence should be erected, and that every possible step would be taken to get rid of this rabbit plague. What has happened? We find in the first 12 months that 12 miles of fencing are erected. That was putting all their energy into it. Tenders were called for the work, and tenders were put in; tenders were called for the delivery of wire netting within six weeks, and a tender was put in offering to deliver the wire for the first contract, and that tender was allowed to lie idle for six weeks. A letter was then written to the tenderer saying "We intend to call for fresh tenders." That is putting all their energy into getting the work done! These delays have gone on from start to finish. Later on an accident occurred, and no doubt the Minister will say that is not their fault; it is the act of God—a ship went down. The Government could have got any money they wished to put their hands on in the Treasury, and this would have received the approval not only of this generation but of all generations to come. The motion I have referred to was passed, and I say it took 12 months to erect 12 miles of fencing. Then the work progressed, and we have a report from the secretary of the department addressed to the Minister for Lands, and for which I hold him responsible, for he laid it on the table of the House, in which it is stated that everything is getting on well; No. 3 contract is nearly completed; no complaints have been made about bad fencing; and no rabbits are on this side of the fence. I refer to the report given to the House by the Minister himself, and that was the position which was laid before members and the public. The date is the 13th September of this year. What are the true facts of the case? The Minister

comes into the House, and when speaking on the Land estimates he tells members that contract No. 3 for 145 miles of fencing is practically useless.

THE MINISTER: I said it answered the purpose admirably.

MR. PIGOTT: No doubt it does.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Why not quote the words correctly?

MR. PIGOTT: I do not wish to go to *Hansard*. Members know what was said in reply to an interjection. I asked, "Can the Minister tell us about any other section of the fence?" and the Minister said he did not know. That is in *Hansard*. You will find one member who always stood up and voted against the erection of rabbit-proof fencing, and that member is the member for Boulder. He can look at *Hansard* if he likes; it is there, and not once but several times. On the motion I mentioned to-night, the member for Boulder got up—

THE PREMIER: Are you seriously suggesting that he deliberately delayed the erection of the fence?

MR. PIGOTT: I suggested that. He has not looked on the matter as a serious question at all. He has said to himself, "Parliament has said the fence is to be erected; we have the money all right; it can be erected. Go on with it, but take no trouble."

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The trouble is that he has taken too much trouble.

MR. PIGOTT: If he had taken too much, does he mean to tell me or the House that the fence would not have been up and in good condition—I do not say the whole length of it, but what has been erected? No; the fact of the matter is that the present Government did not recognise the seriousness of the rabbit invasion; and it is on account of the stand they took, it is owing to their neglect, that the rabbits are now within a few miles of Northam. I consider that no greater disaster could have ever befallen this State than we are confronted with at the present time. Anyone who has been in country where rabbits are plentiful knows how terrible a scourge they are to any district they infest. I have passed through some of the fairest country in Australia, and have again passed through it a few years afterwards when it was rabbit-infested; and not

only was there no grass in it, but all the scrub was eaten down, and what is worse, the timber was killed. But years ago the people of Western Australia did not seem to recognise that there was danger to be apprehended from the rabbits; though none can now deny, when the scourge is practically upon us, that it is very doubtful whether, instead of the State being able to progress in the grand and magnificent style in which it has progressed during the past few years, we shall not be struggling almost in our death agony in combating this fearful scourge. And the Minister for Lands takes no notice of this side of the question. He says: "I have found out that the fence is faulty. Look at me. Look at my administration. I have found out that portion of the fence was not being properly erected. But just think of this: I have not paid all the money due to the contractors!" He takes credit for that.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is £3,000 in hand.

MR. PIGOTT: He takes credit for retaining £3,000; and I agree that this is all the credit he deserves. He takes great credit for that; but in connection with the rabbit invasion the name of the James Ministry will never be forgotten. It will be handed down from generation to generation as the name of the Ministry who allowed the rabbit curse to enter Western Australia.

THE PREMIER: The "rough-on-rabbits Ministry."

MR. BURGESS: What about Sir John Forrest?

MR. PIGOTT: That is right. Put the blame on someone who has gone.

MEMBER: He is here now.

MR. PIGOTT: I will admit that Sir John Forrest was wrong; but if he was wrong when the rabbits were hundreds of miles away, how much more are the present Ministry to be condemned for their inaction when they knew that the rabbits were at our doors?

THE PREMIER: Does the hon. member know that months ago there was a suggestion about shifting the fence considerably west of its present position?

MR. PIGOTT: That is just the trouble. I have never been told anything about it. I see by the Press this morning that the Minister is about to put up another fence.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Why not say half-a-dozen ?

MR. PIGOTT: Probably he will ultimately run a fence from Fremantle to Perth.

THE PREMIER: The suggestion to move the fence farther west was made some time ago, and publicly mentioned in the Press. Both Inspector Wilson and Inspector White were consulted by the advisory board, every member being present; and both assured us that the proper course was to continue the existing fence; and they stated with confidence that they could deal with the rabbits to the west of the fence.

MR. PIGOTT: All I can say is that the Premier knows nothing whatever about rabbits.

THE PREMIER: I relied on Inspectors Wilson and White.

MR. PIGOTT: If the Government knew what to do in this case they would continue the present fence as far north as possible, and would not trouble one whit about the rabbits this side of the fence. Even if the Government put on 10,000 men between Northam and Buracoppin, the rabbits in that district will never be got rid of. But let me warn the Government that they must without any delay at all do their utmost to save the pastoral country.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: You mean, then, that your motion will not be carried ?

MR. PIGOTT: My motion I will leave to the House to deal with. But whatever Ministry are in power must protect the pastoral country; because though the rabbits will inflict fearful damage to the farming districts, and though to protect the farms by fencing will cost hundreds of thousands, I may say millions of money, there is no type of fence known in the world which will ever last in our northern country. Our northern country cannot be permanently fenced. We can fence it with all the rabbit-proof wire netting in the world, but the rabbits will not be kept out. Annually the floods come down, and the fence will be carried away. The rabbits are travelling northward every day. I am told they have already reached Nannine; and no effort is being made by the present Government to check them. I say, and I think every honest man will admit, that the Govern-

ment have in this matter been criminally negligent.

THE PREMIER: Honestly misguided.

MR. PIGOTT: I appeal to all sensible men in the community; and I am certain that when I appeal to them in the words I have used, they will agree with me that no matter what else has been done, no matter what good works may have been done by the present Ministry, their neglect of the rabbit invasion will never be forgiven. There is another matter I wish to bring up—the construction of a jetty in the far North, at Point Sampson. When the Estimates were being discussed last year I brought this matter before the House, and a fairly warm debate resulted, during which I think it was pretty well acknowledged that the then Minister for Works (Hon. C. E. Rason) did not know much about this jetty. At any rate, an expenditure of I think £12,000 was authorised. But we had a promise. We were then told that this work had been recommended by Commander Dawson, had been promised by Sir John Forrest, and that the present Government considered it their duty to carry it out. We have been told that not once but twice. The work was first considered by the Government in 1897; and I know that reports were made before that. But the first item of any importance which I find on the files is a recommendation by Commander Dawson that a jetty should be built, but not a jetty alone. He recommended that a breakwater should be built and a jetty inside of it; and he practically said, as plainly as any man could, that the jetty would be useless without the breakwater. And what was the cost to be? A survey was made, estimates given, and it was found that the work would cost £1,250,000. That is the work which the Government say they had recommended to them when they considered the question of building a jetty! Members who go through the files will find that when this estimate was prepared the Premier at once saw the necessity of doing something; for he would not spend that 1½ millions; he said the proposal was absurd. Other plans were then prepared, and a scheme was drawn up for a smaller breakwater with the jetty inside of it, to cost £204,000. In addition there was to be a tramline connecting this jetty with the

present tramway running to Roebourne, and a tramway running from the jetty into Cossack. Then on the 16th April, 1897, we have a memo. from Mr. Jull that the cost was too high; next we have a query from Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, and in reply to that query a letter from Mr. Palmer to the effect that the minimum work which could be done to be of any use must cost £204,000. Mr. Palmer recognised the truth that the jetty would not be safe in that position. That was in February, 1898; and then the matter is shelved, as everyone might have expected. It is brought up again on the 3rd August, 1900. In consequence of a letter received from Mr. Richardson, Sir John Forrest asked for a report as to whether a stock jetty could be built practically without a breakwater. And from that day to this, though we have specifications drawn up, there is no professional advice contradicting the advice previously given that the jetty would be useless without a breakwater.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You cannot have noticed the minute of the Engineer-in-Chief, dated November, 1900. That escaped you.

MR. PIGOTT: No; I have it and will refer to it. At all events this is the first we learn about the jetty being built without a breakwater. On the 3rd August, 1900, Sir John Forrest asked whether such a jetty could safely be built; and on the 7th August the reply was that this matter had been gone into three months ago, and dropped because it was too costly. We go back to the breakwater scheme. In November the people of Roebourne were hurrying on this project and worrying the then Premier about it; and to satisfy them he wired that he would put £12,000 on the Estimates.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: And that the work would soon be put in hand.

MR. PIGOTT: True. I know he placed the £12,000 on the Estimates; but he never from that day to this made any effort to get the work put in hand.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What about his direction to the Engineer-in-Chief?

MR. PIGOTT: That is no effort at all; and the Minister himself knows that.

THE MINISTER: I will show you that it is.

MR. PIGOTT: The Engineer-in-Chief asked Mr. Thompson to prepare a plan. Now we reach another phase of the question. On the 16th October, 1901, Mr. Thompson writes that the cost will be £17,000 for the jetty, and an extra £3,000 for a bridge over a creek, making a total of £20,000, though only £12,000 had been allocated, Sir John Forrest not having asked for more at the time. Then we have a fresh development. On the 6th November, 1901, when Mr. Kingmill was Minister for Works, he made a minute that this matter must stand over for the present. A no-confidence motion was moved about that time; the Minister decided that the matter must stand over; and I fail to find any minute from that hon. gentleman recommending that this work should be undertaken, though he knew the district well. The next minute we find of any importance is from the present Minister for Works, who had only been in office a few weeks. His minute is:—

Hicks recommends, and this had better be put in hand at once. He knows cost, about £20,000.

The date of that is the 11th February. The work is going to cost more than the Minister for Works told this House it would cost. On the 13th February Mr. Thompson was ordered to proceed with plans so as to call for tenders for the work. On the 17th February the Under Secretary writes to Dr. Hicks that the work will be put in hand at as early a date as possible. On the 5th March Sir Edward Wittenoom, who was going up for election in this district, was also pressing it. On the 7th March Mr. Black, acting Under Secretary for Works, in a minute to Mr. Rason says that though the ultimate cost is £20,000, only £1,000 has been voted for expenditure this financial year, and the total sum available under the loan authorisation is £11,699. He also says:—

A few days ago I gave you practically all the information in the above statement.—G. G. Black.

That clearly proves the Minister knew the true facts of the case. He knew what this jetty was going to cost. He writes to Sir Edward Wittenoom:—

The work to be done at Point Sampson: (1.) Jetty 1,800 feet long, 18 feet water at head, L.W.S.T. Sheep and cattle yards at

shore end and small shed at the head for cargo. (2.) Provision for water supply.

If members will look upon that file, they will find from the Government's own official report there is no fresh water within six miles. The Minister goes on to say :—

(3.) Construction to bridgeover Pope's Nose Creek. It is intended to proceed gradually, for although the total estimated cost is £20,000 only £1,000 has been voted this financial year.

On the 29th April Mr. Rason asks the department what reason there is for the delay in calling for tenders, and says that Dr. Hicks should be informed. Dr. Hicks is informed, and it was said that the tenders would be ready in a few days. On the 14th May last year Mr. Salter writes to the Acting Under Secretary for Public Works, pointing out to him that there is not sufficient money provided on the Estimates for this work. He said that if they were to provide cattle yards, etc., and complete the work, an additional £8,000 or £9,000 would be wanted. Then on the 14th May we have Mr. Black asking Mr. Rason whether, as the work will cost £20,000, are they still to call for tenders. Mr. Rason writes, "Approved. Call tenders." On the 24th June Mr. Rason points out to Cabinet and recommends acceptance of lowest tender, £16,967 19s. 5d. :—

There is some £11,600 set aside on Loan Estimates for this work, leaving say £6,000 to be hereafter provided. It would not be required during 1902-3.

The Cabinet approved of this, and Mr. Walter Kingsmill signed that. Tenders were called for on the 17th June, and accepted on the 9th July. If members will go through those files and judge them impartially, leaving all questions of party out of it, but regarding the question from a purely business standpoint, they will come to the conclusion that the true facts of the case are these. Some time ago Cossack was a thriving little place. There were numbers of steamers going there and carrying large cargoes. I have known steamers leave Fremantle direct for Cossack, and return direct from Cossack to Fremantle simply on account of the cargo. At that time it was thought advisable that as the goldfields in that district were likely to open out well, some scheme should be suggested and that a harbour should be built. I

have pointed out in this House before what the situation of this place is. It is on the northern coast of our State and open to the prevailing south-east monsoons. Notwithstanding anything that anybody else may say, I know from my own experience they blow a hurricane at that place even during the winter months, and it is impossible for any steamer there to do work. I have been on board steamers there waiting to have cargo delivered; the lighters have come out, and have had to lie off not for a few hours, but for days at a time. And yet we have this Government saying "We will put a jetty in that position without any breakwater." My firm opinion is that a jetty will never stand. I feel quite confident that in the first hurricane at that place—and there is hardly a hurricane which strikes the coast of Western Australia that does not strike that spot—the jetty will be swept away and there will be nothing of it seen. If any member will take the trouble to go through these files he will see there has been no professional recommendation whatever. The hon. gentleman says he has had a professional opinion, but in reply to a question I asked this session he said that no specific advice was asked for nor had any been taken. If members refer to No. 9 of *Hansard* they will see it was stated that specific advice was not asked for and not taken. It is the same with regard to the rabbit question. There is somebody else in the background.

THE PREMIER: Supposing there was no professional opinion in favour of it, what professional opinion have we had against it?

MR. PIGOTT: The original scheme was to cost a million and a quarter, and then it was cut down as far as it could be to two hundred and odd thousand pounds; and we have a minute from Mr. Palmer saying that this is the lowest that could be put down for the work to be of any use. No specific advice is required to show that the jetty by itself is not enough.

THE PREMIER: There are any number without breakwaters.

MR. PIGOTT: I know of two. One was built and washed away within a month after the Government took it over. The other is standing but is not used by

any steamers. No steamer has ever been alongside it.

THE PREMIER: You say every jetty should have a breakwater by it?

MR. PIGOTT: Yes. I say that the first time a hurricane visited that jetty to which I referred it was swept clean away. Now they have put another in the place of it, a small one to take lighters. I am talking about the drawbacks. I know the hon. gentleman was up there. The Premier knows as well as I do that it is an impossibility to build a jetty running out in the open ocean on that part of the coast, and to say that it will even in ordinary events have a life of more than a year or two. There is another point in this question. I say the jetty was built by the Government, without fully considering it. I challenge them to bring any evidence from these files to contradict my statement that there has been no proper inquiry made. There is a minute to the department telling them to hurry on the work, but there is no inquiry; and when I brought this matter up during the course of the Estimates last year, I stated I had heard that a contract had been let for something like £16,000. Members took the question up, and I was repeatedly asked by several of them to move to strike this vote off the Estimates. That was not by one member, but by two or three. I replied that the Ministry evidently knew their business better than I did. The hon. gentleman sitting in his chair denied what I had stated. Holding the high and honourable position of a Minister of the Crown, he got up and deliberately contradicted my assertion; yet he knew my statements were true.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What statements?

MR. PIGOTT: Regarding the cost of this jetty. Everyone knows that full reports are not taken of Committee discussions. I remember the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) standing up and saying, "Before I cast my vote in favour of this expenditure, I want to know something about it," and he asked certain questions. He said that we were pledged to an expenditure of £11,000 because the contract had been let. What was the amount of the contract? The member for the Murray, he said, had stated that the contract was for £16,000.

Would the Minister say exactly what had been done, whether the contract had been let and what the amount was? The Minister replied that the contract had been let for £12,000. I have no doubt the member for Kalgoorlie remembers this incident well enough. It was stated that the contract had been let for £12,000 for the construction of a jetty 1,800 feet long, with stockyards. Was that true? I challenge the hon. gentleman, when he replies, to tell me that I am not stating the truth.

MR. JOHNSON: Did you move to strike it out?

MR. PIGOTT: No. That is not the only time the matter was referred to. The subject was brought up again, and we have the words of the Minister that full inquiry should be made, and that if the work could not be done for the amount asked for it would not be carried out; yet he knew himself he was the Minister who recommended this tender of £16,967 to be accepted. He stood up in his place in this House and degraded himself and his position, the highest position a man can hold, that of a position of trust, a position in which he is placed by the people of this State. I say the hon. gentleman degraded that position and could not degrade it any farther; and that charge will lie with the Minister alone so far as I am concerned, or if his colleagues like to take it up on his behalf I will hold them as accessories. Why did he do it? Was there any necessity for it? I venture to say the Minister should be more careful. He might say to the House, "How is a Minister to carry figures in his head?" But he carried the figures relating to the length of the jetty in his head. It is not as if the Minister had not had the matter pointed out to him. We pointed out many times during the debate (the member for the Murray and myself) that the contract was several thousands above the estimate.

MR. TAYLOR: Did the Minister deliberately mislead the House?

MR. PIGOTT: If the Standing Orders permitted me I would say that the Minister lied to this House in order to get the Estimates through. In summing up I say in regard to this jetty that it will prove to be a failure, and that before it can be used this country will have to

spend another £20,000 or £30,000 on it, even if the Government run the risk of not putting a breakwater to it. If members will look through the files they will see for themselves what I have said. I am anxious to see the Loan Estimates. I have asked for them, but they are not to be brought down until the last moment. When all the business is done the Loan Estimates will be passed through.

MR. MORAN: What object would the Minister have to deceive the House over this vote? There must be a cause.

MR. PIGOTT: The hon. member can surely imagine a cause himself.

MR. MORAN: Let us have it.

MR. PIGOTT: If the hon. member wants it he can have it. When Mr. Kingsmill was Minister for Works the member for the district was sitting on this (the Opposition) side of the House, and Mr. Kingsmill's last minute was that this work must be put on one side. A new Ministry was formed. I have not got the exact date, but I know it was at that time; and the only reason I can give is that the Minister for Works foolishly allowed this work to go on. I do not say there is anything wrong with that; but he allowed it to go on because the member for the district was a supporter of his Government. I say it was foolish. Because the member for this district had crossed the floor of the House and started to support the Government, the Minister thought it good enough to allow the work to go on.

THE PREMIER: He displayed his common sense.

MR. PIGOTT: It is what the Premier has said many times in this House and out of it: "spoils to the victors." I am anxiously awaiting the Loan Estimates to see how my hon. friend the Treasurer is dealing with this matter. I do not believe for one minute that he will grant the expenditure of the money that is required.

THE TREASURER: I am not dealing with the Loan Estimates.

MR. PIGOTT: The Treasurer says he will not have anything to do with the Loan Estimates. I wonder if it is on this account.

THE TREASURER: I do not, as a matter of course.

MR. PIGOTT: There is another matter which I consider the Government have

failed in. When they took office they talked of administration, and said that they would classify the civil service. What have they done? We had a debate and a vote on that question in the House the other night, and all the information we could get from the Premier was that, as soon as the present Commission had done their work, he would appoint a new tribunal to go into the matter. Is he going to appoint another Royal Commission? What is he going to do?

THE PREMIER: You are hard to believe. When I tried to avoid appointing another inquiry board you objected; now you object to my appointing another inquiry.

MR. PIGOTT: If the Commission is to be condemned, as it was condemned by the Premier, surely it was time enough months ago, when the Premier had time to consider the matter, to disband the Commission instead of committing the country to the huge expenditure it was incurring. Why did the Premier allow the Commission to go on month after month when he knew in his own mind that he was not going to abide by the result? The civil service is discontented, and no wonder. It has been kept on going year after year during the last three or four years on a promise that everything would be done for it as soon as the classification was brought about, and that this would be brought about as soon as possible.

THE PREMIER: Civil servants never had so much done for them as during the last three or four years.

MR. PIGOTT: They never held a public meeting to complain, before this Government came into power. I am not going into the matter any farther. The Government have neglected their duty in regard to this classification. I know why the Premier and his colleagues did not bring about the classification. The reason is that they know, as well as every other man in the community, that no matter what classification is brought in the Government will probably have to suffer for it. They are frightened to accept the position.

MR. THOMAS: The Premier says he will not classify.

THE PREMIER: I said nothing of the sort. I said I would have a classification made.

MR. PIGOTT: There is also a matter with regard to the administration of the railways. We find the Government claim that, owing to their grand administration, the work of the railways has been carried on exceedingly cheaply, and that the ratio of working expenses to revenue has been reduced. They say in their return that the ratio has been reduced 2·25. How has that saving been effected, and how has that reduction been made? Not by administration at all. Before I have finished with this question I think I will prove that the ratio of working expenses in comparison with revenue has not decreased to the extent the Minister has stated, but that, as a matter of fact, it has increased.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I never made any statement at all.

MR. PIGOTT: We have been led to believe that the Government, through their administration of the railways, have worked them so much better than the railways have been worked previously as to bring about this reduction. What are the true facts? When we go into the question we find, according to the return of 1902, that the ratio of working expenses to gross earnings was 82·58, and that in 1903 it was 80·33, which shows a very fair reduction of 2·25 per cent. But what is the true state of affairs? How was this brought about? We are told in the Treasurer's Financial Statement that there was a saving of £47,601 in the railways, evidently because Providence gave us such great rains. When I tried to get farther information, though I did not go into the matter very carefully, I was informed that £33,000 was the estimated saving made on account of our having had very good rains, a saving in water used from the goldfields water scheme. If we apply that to the working expenses of the railways, as any business man would apply it if he wanted to find out the true state of affairs, to find out how the railways were worked, we find that instead of a saving of 2·2 per cent., the ratio is increased over and above last year's by 1·2 per cent. The figures are very simple. Any man can look at them and work them out. If the fact is untrue the Minister can deny it; but this is the result. There is nothing but deception from start to finish with regard to the returns. The rabbit returns are untrue,

and the railway returns are not what they purport to be. Now the Treasurer gave us a little sum with regard to the grand surplus which was made. He said that the surplus over expenditure was £239,353, made up of the following figures:—

Special Acts	£10,309
The Governor	385
Legislative Council	1,485
Legislative Assembly	1,127
Attorney General	4,601
Colonial Treasurer	6,018
Public Works	157,966
Railways	47,801
Lands	3,301
Mines	5,527
Treasury	1,033
Total	£239,353

The Treasurer says that, with the exception of £157,000 odd which is being kept for works not yet done, the rest can fairly be claimed by the Government as a saving in administration. In other words, the Treasurer leads the House and country to believe that the Government, by good administration, effected a saving of £81,000. Here we have Providence coming in to help us again.

THE PREMIER: Do not call it Providence.

MR. PIGOTT: I am using the Treasurer's words: "The blessed rain came down and saved us £33,000, and we won't recognise the power that sent it. We saved it for the country. It is our good administration." But the Treasurer forgot to mention also that there was an under-estimate on expenditure of £25,000 with regard to the Stores Department. The book-keeping entry to wipe off the value of stores was £60,000. When the Treasurer had gone through the department and written the stores down he thought it advisable to put it down as £35,000. Therefore we have a balance of £25,000, which gives us £58,000 out of the £81,000. Probably, if the balance were gone into, we would find something of the same kind. We have heard time after time that the Government are making huge savings in the administration. I say such is not the case. Members will notice that all the charges I have brought against the Government deal purely with administration. I have done so for a particular reason, that members can judge the case impartially, free from all party feeling,

and give a fair and just judgment. We are told by the Premier that he has got a new ideal Parliament in his head, to consist of two sides only, one to be the Government party and the other to be the Labour party; and whatever the position, if his idea should be carried out it would mean that as long as a member of this House could not swallow all the tenets of the Labour party, which represents a certain section of the community—we know the principles of that party, and know that the party will not take a man who will not agree with them to a certain extent—no member can stand up in this House without accepting all the tenets of the Labour party under the idea of the Premier, without being forced as the alternative to support the present Government. That speech created a false impression.

THE PREMIER: Why say it is false?

MR. PIGOTT: The speech made by the Premier at Bunbury must create a false impression. It is not a speech heard only by the few people who were present on the occasion, but it has been heard practically all over Western Australia; and what would be the position of members on this (Opposition) bench to-day if we had to sit on that (Ministerial) side of the House and support the present Government, that no matter what acts they do and no matter what their administration may be, we would have to keep our mouths shut and support the present Government, or else the Labour party must come into power. As I said before, the Government came in as a Government of good administration. I have put before the House, and I hope before the country, a few of the acts of administration for which the present Government are responsible. I have charged them with several things; I have charged them with retiring the head of the Stock Department, a servant who had been 30 years faithfully performing the duties of his office, and against whom not a word of suspicion had ever been heard until certain charges were made, and on which he was dismissed without a fair and reasonable chance of defending himself against the charges brought by a private firm in this city. I also say the Government have been hasty in regard to the dismissal of Inspector White;

and I am confident that if members will turn to the speech of the present Minister for Lands as reported in *Hansard*, made in reply to certain statements by the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), I think members will agree that the Minister was over-hasty in the action he took, and that in the dismissals of officers he did a wrong thing. I have charged the Government with failing to recognise the vast importance of the rabbit question; I have charged them with neglecting their duty to this House and to this country; and I say no matter what other faults could have been brought against them, if they had done their duty with regard to the great question of the invasion of rabbits, not one word of blame would have been raised against them. If they had done their duty with regard to the rabbit invasion, no one would ever blame them for any other matter that they might have done, because this is the greatest question that has had to be faced by any Parliament in Western Australia. The Government were trusted in this matter, and there is no doubt now that the trust has been misplaced in that regard. Another question was their failure to deal with the classification of the public service. What has been done, nobody knows; the public do not know, and this House does not know. Whether the service is to be classified or not remains at present in the mind of the Premier, and in his mind only. If I were to go on with all the acts of failure and of bad administration which might be charged against the present Government, I could go on for a week; but I think the country will be satisfied that I have shown as much this afternoon as any one man can be expected to do. I hope this House and the country will be satisfied that the motion I now move is perfectly and thoroughly justified. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. M. H. JACOBY: I second the motion.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): In moving the adjournment of the debate, I regret to have to inform the House that I shall not be able to carry out the intention I previously expressed, of being the only speaker from these benches.

[SEVERAL MEMBERS: We knew that.] I am quite willing even now, if the Opposition will let this matter drop for a week until I am again in good health, and will consent in the meantime to allow the other business to proceed, to accept that position loyally, and I hope with satisfaction to the House and with satisfaction to the country. Members are aware of the reason I am not able at present to carry out the intention I first expressed. I have not had time to look up the various matters referred to, and I now intend to leave them to be dealt with by the several Ministers concerned. So far as the Stock Department is concerned, however, charges have been made against me in regard to that; and as I am the only person responsible, and I accept the full responsibility, I propose to do tomorrow what I am unable to do to-day. I move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion passed, and the debate adjourned until the next day.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past four o'clock, until the next afternoon.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 25th November, 1903.

Question: Rabbit Fence, second line ..	PAGE 2246
Bills: Supreme Court Act Amendment, third reading ..	2246
Water Authorities, in Committee, reported ..	2246
Factories, second reading moved (adjourned) ..	2247
Boulder Tramways, first reading ..	2252

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—RABBIT FENCE, SECOND LINE.

HON. S. J. HAYNES (for Mr. Piesse) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, If, having in view the proved presence (and near approach to settlement) of rabbits, and the special facilities offered for their undisturbed and possible rapid breeding

in the immense area of unoccupied country intervening between the rabbit-proof fence and settled lands, the Government is considering the advisability of at once erecting a second fence skirting the settled and the easily accessible but now unsettled agricultural and pastoral lands of the State. 2. If not, what steps does the Government propose to take to protect same from the dreaded pest.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1. Yes. 2. Answered by No. 1.

SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

WATER AUTHORITIES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Resumed from the previous day.

Clauses 62 to 82—agreed to.

Clause 83—Rate book may be amended:

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, after "particulars" the following words were inserted: "Of any property which may have become rateable, or" also, the words "and otherwise amending the same," were added to the clause.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 84 to 90—agreed to.

Clause 91—Land subject to water rate:

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the word "may" was struck out, and "shall" inserted in lieu.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 92 to 105—agreed to.

Clause 106—Premises may be sold for arrears of rates, etc., remaining unpaid for twelve months:

The words "said court," in subclauses 6 and 7, were struck out and "the Judge" inserted in lieu.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 107 to 158—agreed to.

Clause 159—Powers of water authority may be exercised by Minister for Works: Clause struck out.

Schedules—agreed to.

New Clause—Penalty for diverting water:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the following be added as Clause 38:—

Any person who, without the authority of the Board, diverts water from any stream,