

forfeiture for non-payment of rent. In the case of a well improved property forfeiture was altogether wrong. When the Minister recommitted the Bill on the schedule it would be well to amend this part of it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Under the existing Act we had a provision which was not repealed in this measure, in regard to the waiving of forfeiture. That provision would apply equally under this schedule. The administration of these matters was tempered with great mercy to the holders. At the same time it was necessary that we should have a provision like this, or some might be disposed to take advantage of the consideration extended to them. Under the circumstances it would not be advisable to eliminate the forfeiture provision.

Schedule put and passed.

Third and Fourth Schedules—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 15th November, 1912.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT — REPORT ON CROP PROSPECTS.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): With your permission, Sir, I should like to read a report from the

managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank as to a trip he recently made through the Eastern agricultural areas.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the House is willing to hear the report, I have no objection.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The report is as follows:—

I have the honour to report having made a tour of inspection lasting eight days through the wheat areas, and feel sure that more frequent periodical visits would be beneficial both to the management and the numerous clients who are dealing with the Agricultural Bank. We started from Perth on Thursday early, with a very capable driver in a motor provided by the Government, and took the Toodyay road for preference as I wished to see the young crops on the rich Avon valley and compare them with the crops on the first and second class land right through to Mount Marshall. Taking the season as a whole, as applied to the country 40 miles north and east of the Avon, it has been very suitable for wheat-growing (only with one exception in August); the rain fell in sufficient quantities to permit of no check that would be hurtful to the maturity of the crops. When such a propitious season strikes the Avon valley proper the crops are always good, and this is no exception as we saw many that would cut two tons of hay to the acre or strip anything between 20 and 30 bushels. A good farmer in a good season will always come out on top, but I am sorry to say that there are many who have magnificent land who are not good farmers and will not reap two tons or strip 25 bushels per acre. Therefore, the average will be much lower than it should be in this magnificent wheat area. We arrived at Dowerin at 4 p.m. and left next morning early for the west side of Cowcowing Lake, going north as far as Badgerin Rock, thence eastward on the Mount Marshall road for several miles and on down south on the east of the lakes to Hall's. From Dowerin to Badgerin Rock the crops are better than those on the east of

the lake, but the latter have improved considerably. A very opportune fall of rain of 80 points occurred just when it was most needed; consequently the farmers are now very satisfied with their harvest prospects, and expect to strip from seven to ten bushels, but on the west side they expect to do better. We then motored back and on to a spot about six miles north of Mount Marshall, the farmers being quite satisfied up to this point with their season's prospects. Some crops in this district are expected to yield 14 bushels, but the majority will be about 10. On this far back country the best crops were on the tall tamma scrub lands which retain the moisture much longer than the richer and heavier forest country. On Saturday we continued our journey to Kununoppin and saw very fair crops, which should average four bags. The crops to the south of the Dowerin-Merredin railway are better than those on the north and this fact one is not likely to forget, as crop prospects are freely discussed, and the northerners concede the palm to the southerners this season. On Sunday we tripped further east and north to Mangowine and saw fair crops as far out as that point, all being much benefited by the rain which fell on the previous Saturday week and which appeared to be heavier as we went east. From Mangowine we journeyed to Merredin and saw few crops that would not reach ten bushels. On Monday we motored west, going some distance north from Nangeenan to see some civil servants' crops, which we found in most cases to be very fair; some were very good. Most of the Nangeenan crops are satisfactory, the better being on the lighter mallee and tamma soils. The Baandee crops appear to have suffered from a shortage of rain, particularly so on the stiff morrell lands; thence on down to Kellerberrin the crops improve and are very fine in many large paddocks. The Doodlakine and Kellerberrin farmers are very jubilant at their harvest prospects which are justified, as we saw there many

fields which ought to strip five bags and in some cases more. Between Kellerberrin and Tammin the crops were not so even, yet no one could be considered as yielding less than nine bushels. From Tammin right through to Korrelocking we saw many very fair fields of wheat, and on this special settlement area the farmers should garner crops sufficiently good to help them through without any more spoon-feeding, if they can only persuade themselves that they are not millionaires. Unfortunately, we were not able to continue our journey any further on the motor through an accident to one of the wheels. Consequently we returned by train going east to Merredin where we expected to catch the express from Kalgoorlie, but alas, we were doomed to disappointment and had to cool our heels there until 2.15 p.m. Why it took eight hours to reach Merredin from Korrelocking is best known to those in charge of the train. Considering the difficulties that had to be overcome, following such a wretched season as was experienced last year, I am more than pleased at the prospects for this year, and I would not be surprised if the average all over the districts travelled through did not reach somewhere near 11 bushels. Strange to say, I did not encounter one pessimistic or dissatisfied farmer, and each and all were optimistic as to their future prospects and were quite prepared to go on, feeling sure of their ultimate success on the lands they have selected. Many spoke of kindly help they had received from the Government and hoped that in some measure, if not fully, they would be able to meet their obligations for rents to the Lands Department and interest to the bank. The latter, no doubt, will be their first consideration, as we cannot permit of the piling up of interest from year to year. Judging from the experience of last year and this season's outlook, one must come to the conclusion that selectors would be well advised if they held and seeded a fair proportion of second-class country each year, and by doing this, they would

avoid disasters, should we ever have a repetition of the 1911 rainfall. Most of this season's fallowing has been done, I am pleased to say, with the only implement that should be used in the wheat areas, to wit, the plough, and even now there is room for improvement, and a greater depth of soil should be tilled than is at present the case. Moisture cannot be conserved if the land is not ploughed to a reasonable depth. On the litho. herewith I have marked in red where we travelled by motor. The blue lines denote the train journey. Therefore you will see that my report covers a fair area, and should reasonably apply to all crops inside the red lines north of the goldfields railway.

QUESTION—REPORTED LOAN FLOTATION.

Incorrect Press Paragraph.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier (without notice): Did the Premier notice in the "stop press" column of the *Daily News* last night a paragraph with regard to the flotation of a loan by Mr. James Gardiner, and if so, will he state whether the paragraph is correct and whether he is prepared to take the House into his confidence?

The PREMIER replied: I am pleased that the hon. member has given me an opportunity to absolutely deny the statement appearing in the "stop press" column of last evening's paper. There is not the slightest foundation for it. In fact, if anybody had taken the trouble to inquire at the Treasury, he would have found that Parliament has not given authority to raise a loan of a million and a half pounds.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We do not know what you will do.

The PREMIER: I can assure the hon. member that I do not intend to raise money without the approval of Parliament. The statement is absolutely incorrect and was apparently picked up in the street from somebody interested in damaging the credit of the State. When

the *Daily News*, which no doubt the proprietor thinks is a respectable paper, lends itself to that sort of thing, the time has arrived when we should taboo a journal that indulges in such practice.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am glad to have the Premier's denial, and I say at once that it is a most reprehensible thing if the newspaper proprietors published that information without it being authentic. They should have made full inquiries, because such a statement is calculated to damage the credit of the State.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR LANDS Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clause 20 and the Second Schedule.

Mr. McDowall in the Chair, the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 20—Exemption from land tax:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved an amendment—

That the words "assessment for taxation under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907," be struck out, and the words "taxation under any Act for the imposition of a land tax" be inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. Mitchell: This will not affect the roads boards and municipalities?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Amendment put and passed, the clause as amended agreed to.

Second Schedule:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS moved an amendment—

That the words on page 15 "without compensation of any part of the said

land upon which any buildings may have been erected or which may be enclosed and in use as gardens or otherwise for the more convenient occupation of such buildings" be struck out, and the words "of any part of the said land upon which any expenditure or improvements may have been made without compensation for the value thereof at the date of the resumption" inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The case mentioned by the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) related to the cutting off of a fence and leaving the paddock open.

The Minister for Lands: That would come under the heading of improvements.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It need not necessarily be on the land which was resumed.

The Minister for Lands: The matter of resumption would have to be dealt with under the Public Works Act.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The desire was to make it imperative to pay for improvements effected by the lessee or landholder.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The amendment appeared to meet his desire. He wanted the principle laid down that improvements such as clearing or fencing taken by resumption should be paid for. It had been the custom in the past not to pay for such improvements. The case cited by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) was one that could be dealt with as explained by the Minister under the Public Works Act.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: On the previous day he had asked the Minister to consider the concluding paragraph which made it imperative to forfeit improvements if the rent was unpaid.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The schedules were copied to a large extent from the existing Land Act, and the last proviso was part of the schedule dealing with conditional purchase or grazing leases. Under the Act there was power to waive forfeiture and that power was frequently exercised, and consideration was extended to those who, through adverse circumstances, might not be able to

pay. At the same time unless there was salutary provision, we would have people other than those so situated taking advantage of the department and not paying their rent. Power must be held in reserve to secure payment where they were in a position to pay.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The position was entirely changed. Under the Act rents were paid for 20 years only, but under this measure rents would continue for all time. The Minister wanted a power which no landlord possessed. The rent would be a small matter, and the Minister would be an ordinary landlord dealing with an ordinary tenant, but he was not satisfied with the ordinary power of a landlord, as he asked not only for the power to forfeit, but for the power to decide whether compensation should be paid. It was easy to believe that trouble might arise to every lessee sooner or later. The provision for forfeiture of improvements was dreadfully drastic and it was not necessary that the Minister should have so much more power than an ordinary landlord.

Mr. Hudson: Would an ordinary landlord have to pay compensation for re-entry?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That would depend entirely on the provisions of the agreement, but no landlord would cancel the improvements of a lease without giving the lessee an opportunity to pay up. The Minister, however, realised that he would be in power for only a short period, and the measure if passed would be in force for many years, and under the control of many Ministers. He was taking unnecessary power which in years to come might work great hardships.

The Minister for Lands: It is in all these schedules dealing with residential leases, special leases, conditional purchase, and grazing leases.

Schedule as amended agreed to.

[The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Holman) took the Chair.]

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—GOVERNMENT TRAMWAYS.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1912-13.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 12th November on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and the Annual Estimates; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Vote—His Excellency the Governor, £2,746:

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): Considerable discussion has already taken place on the Budget speech, and it is safe to say that members now desire to hear the Premier in reply. However, the position disclosed by the speech is of such a nature that I, as an agricultural representative, deem it my duty to say a few words and enter my protest against certain proposals foreshadowed in the speech. No one will deny that the state of affairs disclosed therein is one that merits the severest criticism, and even members on the Government side could not restrain from a little direct and strong criticism in that regard. I wish to be fair. I do not desire to unnecessarily criticise the actions of the Government, because I am convinced there is an honest desire on the part of Ministers to administer the affairs of the country to the best of their ability. Although difficulties uncontrollable may have arisen, there are those which, to a certain extent, were controllable. One of the causes of unrest and the present unsatisfactory state of affairs is largely due to discontented labour. They say curses, like chickens, come home to roost. It pretty well applies in this case; because for many years past members of the Labour party have lost no opportunity to stir up the baser sentiments of the people or to appeal to their discontented feelings, with the result that when they came into power these people fully expected that their repre-

sentatives would secure for them fat positions and comfort in their present state of living. That was too much to expect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Do you not think they should have comforts?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: Comforts they already enjoy, but one might almost say "a luxurious state of living more than they should expect."

Mr. Lander: What; at 9s. a day? I would like to put you on that.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: It is a good wage. I have worked for less. I am quite certain the hon. member would not exist on it; in fact, he would not earn it; I would not give it to him, not as a farm hand; because I am a fair judge of character and a judge of a man's worth, taking it from a mannaul-labour point of view. It is very clear that the deficit, which is certainly not as large as it might be, or as it will be, as the Premier tells us, in the very near future, is largely due to the uncalled for increases in wages. If we take the increase in the Railway Department, it is, to say the least of it, poor management; because it is a well known fact that there will be a shortage in the earnings of that department in the coming 12 months; yet notwithstanding that fact, a hundred thousand pounds odd was added to the wage list of that particular department. It was only natural, to my mind, that the Midland workers should strike when porters, who were receiving 8s. a day, were raised to 9s. It is always recognised, I take it, that porters are the probationers of the service, and when their salaries were raised to 9s. a day, in my opinion it was utterly unwarranted. We are told by the Commissioner of Railways in his latest report that, notwithstanding this increase, the service was not increased and the discipline was bad. From my own knowledge I can endorse that remark.

The Premier: Did the Commissioner say that discipline was bad?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: He said, at any rate, that no increase of service was rendered by the officers.

The Premier: That is not to say the discipline was bad.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The Commissioner may not have said it in this report, but it is generally admitted that such is the case. I believe Ministers could tell us that the discipline is not as it should be in that particular branch of the service.

The Premier: I am not aware of it.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: To take one instance out of many: A lady had occasion to seek the assistance of four porters in succession. In the first case she was referred to another porter, who said it was not his duty to see the baggage across to the island platform; and so on, she was passed to the last porter, who said he would attend to it before the train left, with the result that she had to carry her baggage across herself. Let any Minister stand by and watch a train on arrival, and he will notice that the porters, if there are any in attendance, almost without exception, I may say, attend first to the men with packages, from whom they expect some—well, tip. If I had my way in the matter I should make it instant dismissal for the man who received tips; because I do think, especially in this instance, it is certainly not due to them, seeing they already receive 9s. a day, which is above the ordinary and is ample, I might say more than ample if economy is used, for the services rendered.

Mr. Dooley: The heads of departments always encourage that sort of thing.

Mr. Lewis: So as to keep the wages down.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: It only needs someone to stand there to quickly prove that what I say is true, that discipline is not the best and that the services are nothing to what they should be. I would suggest that the Melbourne system be introduced. In Melbourne they have hired or contract porters, and whenever a passenger needs the assistance of these men he pays for it. I believe it would be in the best interests of the State if such a system were introduced here. I feel sure, with all due regard to the hon. members who are filling the important positions of Ministers, that if they had

the free hand that they themselves would have liked in the conduct of the administration of the State's affairs, if they had been untrammelled—I do not wish to say unkind things about caucus or the Trades Hall—we would have had a different state of affairs to-day, different from that which has been disclosed in the Budget. I am here to criticise Ministers, and my desire is to see successful administration, no matter who occupies the Treasury bench. What we want to see is the State prosper because if it prospers so shall we. People throughout the country are concerned about the future, and we must admit that it is difficult to see daylight through the present position. We are told by the Premier that he expects that the good harvest will help him over the stile. At the same time it is his intention to increase the land tax, and the landholders will have to bear the burden. The Premier admits that the landholder is practically the mainstay of the country, and at the same time, he intends to impose a further tax upon him. As an agriculturist, and as one who represents an agricultural district, I strongly protest against such a proposal. Let us look at mining as compared with agriculture. One hon. member remarked last night that mining was neglected, and did not receive anything like the same attention as agriculture. I feel sure there is very little truth in that remark, because the State has treated the mining industry very well. Take the State batteries. Last year there was a loss on them of £35,000. We do not mind the loss of a few thousand pounds, but when it comes to such a sum I question whether it is in the best interests of the country that such a big loss should be continued.

The Premier: How about the loss on the rabbit-proof fence?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: That affects all.

Mr. Lander: The squatters.

The Premier: It does not affect the goldfields residents. It assists agriculture as the State batteries assist the mining industry.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The cost of the rabbit-proof fence is a mere fleabite com-

pared with the cost of the water scheme, for instance.

Mr. Munsie: Does that supply only the goldfields?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: At any rate it is difficult to understand why there should be such a big loss as £35,000 on the State batteries, and we are expected to pay 6s. a thousand gallons for water, and at the same time pay a tax of something like 4d. per acre. That is a big burden on the farmers. There is a pathetic letter in this morning's paper from the farmers of Bur-racoppin who point out the need for further assistance in the shape of water supply.

The Minister for Mines: Let me point out that the State batteries have not lost as much in the year as it has cost the State for the haulage of superphosphates, which came to £12,000.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: That loss, however, is more than compensated by the increased haulage from the harvest. You do not get any such haulage from gold.

The Premier: Is it no good?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: That loss of £35,000 could well be expended in connection with water supplies.

The Minister for Mines: The £35,000 you speak of covers a loss over 15 years.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: Then what is the yearly loss?

The Minister for Mines: It was about £8,000 last year.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I take it that it is the desire of the present Ministry to do all they can for the country and that being the case, I maintain the best avenue in which they can employ their energies is to encourage settlement on the land, and open up the country with railways, and further than that, let us have immigration as rapidly as the country can absorb it. I feel sure that my fears are not groundless when I say that the Government have not given that encouragement to immigration that is necessary. There are restrictions imposed, and I take it that so long as this Government remain in power the restrictions will remain. I sincerely hope that the Government will see fit to admit artisans to all parts of the country. There is a great demand for builders and

some of the builders' labourers are asking as much as £1 a day.

Mr. Dooley: You do not appreciate the unemployed difficulty.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: That is one of the sins of the present Government.

The Premier: Is it any worse than it was this time last year?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: Decidedly.

Mr. Munsie: Not the unemployed, the Press.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: If we judge by the deputations which waited on the different Ministers the difficulty is certainly acute.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Minister for Works cannot see any light in the darkness.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I do not know that I have anything further to say. I shall have an opportunity of discussing the items when they are brought on, and I shall then give further expression to my views in regard to the different departments.

Mr. McDONALD (Gascoyne): I cannot pretend to be able like former speakers, to discuss thoroughly from a financial point of view the figures of the Budget. I cannot, however, but recognise that when our present Premier first assumed the reins of office, or rather when he brought down his first Budget, there was a deficit, and he promised that when closing the financial year of 1911-12 he would reduce that Budget by so much, mentioning at the time the actual amount of the accumulated deficit at the end of the financial year which closed in June last. That he was not quite accurate in his prediction of the figures, unfortunately we all know, but taking into account the various circumstances which weigh in connection with the carrying on of the business of the country, not the slightest doubt can remain in the mind of any reasonable, fair-thinking or just man, that the Premier proved to be the right man in the right place, and the result of his efforts under the circumstances were nothing less than marvellous. That, I maintain, and as I said before, a similar opinion must be main-

tained by anyone who has a reasonable sense of justice. Various speakers on either side of the House have criticised the Budget and the Government generally. Speaking as one of the North-West members I have nothing but praise for the action of the Government so far as that particular portion of the State is concerned. I have no wish to be misunderstood in this matter. I want to speak, not only for the constituency I have the honour to represent, but every other portion of the North-West which might be said to extend from the Murchison River to Cambridge Gulf and I include, as hon. members will observe, the Kimberley country. Only this morning I received from an authoritative source in my own constituency, to be personal, and possibly parochial, a meed of praise for the work done by the Government in one particular direction. In the purchase of the State steamers alone the Premier by that statesmanlike action, did more to benefit that part of the country than had been done by any previous Administration since autonomy was first granted to Western Australia. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) pointed out in his speech that extravagances were everywhere. That was not quite the expression that he used; what he said was "extravagance everywhere, economy nil." The last two words might be put in inverted commas because they came from him verbatim, and I think it was the member for Geraldton who interjected, "Where would you have these economies start?" The member for Kimberley did not reply that the Government should start in the constituency he represented and that out of the £50,000 promised to the neighbouring constituencies during the coming 12 months let £12,000 or £13,000 be taken out of those. It is the old story of any stick being good enough to beat the dog with. It is a fair cry to say, "You are extravagant, you are uneconomical, but at the same time confine your economies to some other constituency and leave mine alone." We have heard also from the member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) about discontented labour. That there is

industrial unrest nobody will deny; that there is discontent practically in every portion of the State—

Mr. Dooley: Throughout the world.

Mr. McDONALD: No one will deny. And we want Labour to be discontented. We preach the discontent of Labour. We, as Government supporters, representing Labour in this House say, "We are glad of your discontent, we ask your discontent; but, show us your needs, and we will do as much as man may do to come to your assistance." But this discontent is being nursed, not by Labour men, not by true union men, but by those who for various reasons, some political, some personal, are opposed to us. Altogether in every instance is this unrest fomented by our opponents. Let me give an instance: There is at present some work being carried out on the tramlines. Two men were speaking together. One said, "We are getting nine bob a day." The other replied, "Yes, pretty tough work, isn't it?" "Well," said the first, "what about asking for ten bob." "Yes," was the reply, "we will ask for ten bob. Let us go and ask for it now." "No, not now," was the rejoinder, "it is no use going to the tramway company, but in three months time or so the Government will be taking over; let us ask for it then." They knew that a Government, sympathising with their aims and hoping that, as soon as it might be fairly managed, the conditions under which they laboured would be improved, they knew the Government would come to their assistance. But these others, these malcontents, knew also should they have the lever of a Labour Government behind them they might compel the Government to give them concessions which they had no possible hope of receiving under private enterprise. That is the form of discontented Labour which exists at present. That there have been other causes, apart from Government reasons, actuating those who are fomenting labour troubles in Perth to-day, cannot be doubted. The member for Toodyay referred also to the loss of £30,000 on the State batteries during the previous year. By itself considered, that £30,000 loss seems very large: but

the State batteries in Western Australia have done an enormous amount of work towards the establishment of the agricultural industry in the State, and during the next two years, I am informed on good authority, the amount of benefit derived by agriculture from that system will be greatly increased. We have been told on two or three occasions during the debate that the mineral yield since first gold was found in any appreciable quantity in Western Australia, that was in Kimberley in 1886, to the present day—I want to include in the figures I am about to give, the results of mining in the early days at Northampton—the mineral yield has amounted to £103,850,487. Where was the agricultural industry in Western Australia before 1892, when, on that date in September, Arthur Bayley came into Southern Cross and reported the discovery of Coolgardie? What was the amount of agriculture in the State then? The figures are not available just now, but I know they are remarkably small. The amount of land taken up was, perhaps, very large, but in 1894 or 1895, I am speaking from memory, at an inquiry held, evidence was given that although a man might hold a thousand acres or more, the land under cultivation on the average selection would not amount to more than 40 or 50 acres; and that, too, in portions of Western Australia where now we find thriving agricultural settlements. The loss on the State batteries, great though it may appear, is as nothing at all compared with the results achieved by those batteries. Amongst the older finds in Western Australia, the Murchison goldfield has ever been prominent. Mount Magnet was one of the earliest discoveries on that field, yet, notwithstanding the settlement which spread out in every direction from Mount Magnet, notwithstanding the many people who passed backwards and forwards from the Murchison side to the Coolgardie side, notwithstanding the proximity of Black Range, Sandstone, and Youanmi—that country which has since produced a very large quantity of gold—all of this country, although it had been prospected, although men were through

there from 1897, it was all lying idle until the State batteries went there. It was not until the advent of the State batteries in the district that the properties became of any account. Meekatharra, too, as you Mr. Holman, know from personal experience, was practically a dead letter until—it may have been at your own instigation—the State batteries were established in that district. Now, although it may seem a complaint, I hope Ministers will not deem me to be complaining, for I know they are guiltless in the matter, but I desire to refer to the Public Service, to the unpopular appointments that have been and, most likely, will be made. I desire merely to make a passing reference, and I say without fear of contradiction that there is a leakage of information from the departments. That leakage should be sought out and stopped, and the party or parties responsible for it, either by using means which should not be allowed for the purpose of securing information or, on the other hand, by furnishing that information—the parties on both sides should receive some severe punishment. It has been said during the debate that although a certain journal published in Perth can supply departmental information in the course of a few days, it sometimes takes a member of Parliament weeks to get it. Furthermore, in respect to Government transactions which have taken place since the opening of this session, it has been well known to many on this side that information was conveyed to those who were not friends of the Government, thereby forcing the hands of the Government to complete certain purchases before their time. With reference to State enterprises, the purchases of the ferries and of the trams have been dealt with by many others; and really I am not much concerned with those transactions, except as regards the benefit which I anticipate the State will derive therefrom. But the purchase of State steamers, as I said in the beginning, has done more for the welfare of Western Australia, and for the North-Western portion in particular, than all the combined actions, in respect to the northern districts, of any previous Administration, or Administrations. It has

proved not only profitable to the State as shippers, but also to the owners and to the small pastoralists in the North, in addition to which it has brought cheaper meat within the range of the people of Perth and Fremantle. There are many who maintain that because the supply is not large the purchase of the steamers has not achieved the desired effect; but I contend that anything at all which might increase the supply must of necessity lessen the price of the commodity. The State steamers have done that already, and when the next season comes, with the advent of Government agents in the North and North-West purchasing stock, the supply will be greatly increased, and instead of the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. C. Angwin) having only one butcher's shop to look after, he will require shops in practically every suburb of the metropolis. And I can guarantee him success. The only other thing I wish to deal with just now, and the only thing I have to complain about, is the treatment meted out to the aborigines in the North and North-Western portion of the State. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Gardiner) in his telling speech mentioned various cases which should not be allowed in a Christian country. I desire now to tell the story of a gin being tied up for twenty-four hours to a stake, during which time she gave birth to a child. That in a Christian country! I desire also to tell a story heard this morning. The incident happened in the constituency of the member for Roebourne two months ago. The story is of a native who was tied up to a door while a State official flogged him with a stock-whip in the presence of the manager of the station and his overseer. These things and many more are known, and will be made use of at the proper time. But, as was pointed out by the member for Roebourne, these happenings are of daily occurrence in the North, and the management is not in good hands while it is allowed to remain with the present department, and the sooner some change is made the better it will be for the aborigines and for the Government. In conjunction with other members of the North-West I propose to prepare a scheme which will be

outlined at the proper time, when the department is being discussed on the Estimates. I want to say that the Government who remove this black smirch from the fair face of Western Australia will indeed have reason to be proud of their achievement in this regard, if of nothing else.

Mr. GILL (Leederville): I wish to say a few words before the general discussion closes. In the first place I desire to compliment the Government on having, during the past twelve months, endeavoured successfully, I think I may claim, to have carried into effect many of the pledges they gave to the electors previous to the general election which resulted in the rout of the party in office at that time, and the placing of the present Government on the Treasury bench. At that time many promises were made of things that would be done in the event of the then Opposition being returned to power, and it was very evident that the people were satisfied to trust them to carry their promises into effect; consequently, they returned a sufficient number of followers of the then leader of the Opposition (Mr. Scaddan) to give him an opportunity of carrying out the promises that had been made. Since that time we have had an opportunity of seeing what the Government are able to do, and I claim that they have succeeded to a very great extent in carrying out many of the planks of their platform as they gave the electors to understand they were prepared to do. In regard to the Estimates, it is only natural that we should have some criticism. It is only to be expected that the Opposition will criticise the actions of the Government. No one expected anything else, and we would have been disappointed if they had not done so. But the question arises in one's mind as to whether their criticism has been founded on good, solid ground. The criticism which the Opposition attached the greatest importance to, and to which the country will pay the most attention, was that in connection with the finances. I am not going to attempt financial criticism this afternoon, but I wish to say in passing that even after looking through the speech of the leader of the Opposition, I have not been able to discover any firmly founded criti-

cism of the finances. The hon. member certainly did lay great stress on the deficit that is staring us in the face, and which we would all like to see extinguished, but those who have faith in Western Australia and believe that it is as good as it was represented to be by those who were on the Treasury bench in years gone by, by those on the Treasury bench to-day, and also by people not on the Treasury bench and never likely to get there, are confident that Western Australia is sufficiently strong and resourceful to enable us in the near future to recuperate so far as to wipe out the deficit. The Treasurer, in making his financial statement gave sound and solid reasons for the deficiency that exists to-day. It was not necessary for him to have given that statement in order that hon. members might understand the position. We all realise the disadvantages that the Government have laboured under since they have been on the Treasury benches. We have only to look back to the condition of affairs last season, a condition which everyone of us regretted very sincerely. It was a new experience for us, and one which we hope we will not have to go through again for many years to come. This in itself, even if there were no other causes, was sufficient to account for the finances not being balanced as we should like to see them, but my objection to the criticism levelled against the Government is mainly that, although these facts stare us in the face and although good and solid reasons have been given for the shortage that exists to-day, the Treasurer is criticised and told plainly to his face that he does not understand the finances, and consequently that, to a great extent, is the reason for the deficiency. It seems as if there is an objection to the Treasurer coming before us and giving plain, straightforward facts to the House and the country generally. I have not the slightest doubt that if the Treasurer had so desired he could have manipulated the figures so that the deficit would have appeared less than it is to-day. We have had experience of that in the past. We have not to go very far back to find methods of that kind adopted so as to present a more favourable balance-sheet

than otherwise would have been possible. We can carry our memories back to the time when Mr. Rason went on the hustings and said that although a deficit existed at that time he was prepared to take over the reins of Government and present at the end of the financial year a clean sheet, without it being necessary for him to impose any fresh taxation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He did not say that at all. You are absolutely wrong.

Mr. GILL: I have the newspaper cutting at home, and Mr. Rason said it would not be necessary to increase taxation.

The Premier: He went to the country on no increase of taxation and no retrenchment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. Frank Wilson: He said he would not impose increased taxation that year.

Mr. GILL: That is not his statement. However we will have an opportunity of producing the cutting during the discussion on the Estimates.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, produce it and be accurate.

Mr. GILL: I have doubts of convincing the hon. gentleman even then, but I am satisfied as to the accuracy of my quotation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Your quotation is wrong.

The Premier: Not a bit of it.

Mr. GILL: Although Mr. Rason made the statement at that time that no taxation would be necessary, yet his Government immediately introduced new taxation proposals, and from that time onwards up to the delivery of the present Budget we have had the experience in connection with the financial statements presented to the House that not too much reliance could be placed on the figures put before us. In the statement before us at the present time, however, the Treasurer has undoubtedly brought down an unvarnished tale. Nobody has pointed out in any respect where he could possibly have hidden anything. Nothing has been adduced to show that he has overestimated the revenue or underestimated the expenditure, with the object of misleading the Committee and the country, and, consequently, I can only come to the conclusion that hon. members on

both sides are satisfied that the Colonial Treasurer has presented a straightforward account of the finances of the State as they are to-day.

Mr. Nanson: Nobody, except the members on your side, accepts his estimate. All the Press are against them too, even the *West Australian*.

The Premier: Who is the *West Australian*? What man writes it?

Mr. GILL: Surely the hon. member does not expect us to be influenced by the Press of Western Australia to-day. We have two papers issued in Perth daily, and nobody by any stretch of imagination can say that they are supporters of the present Government, but it is easily possible for any member on this side to say they are our deadly opponents, and bring ample proof of the statement. I admit there is one paper that does not come out and openly fight us. The policy it adopts is undoubtedly a cunning one, and very liable to mislead a casual reader of the paper because of the fact that it does not openly oppose and fight us; but there are sins of omission as well as sins of commission, and in that respect I say that paper is as strong an opponent of the Government of to-day as is the other paper, and its opposition is far more effective. Therefore, I cannot see how the hon. member can expect us to be influenced by any Press criticism of the financial doings of the Government. There is one department whose work I appreciate as much as any other, and that is the Works Department.

Mr. Monger called attention to the state of the House; bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. GILL: We have had a good deal of criticism in regard to the railway construction policy of the Works Department, and doubts have been expressed as to the expedition shown in regard to such construction, owing, I believe, to a reply given by the Minister to a deputation in which he made some mention of the policy of the department being the construction of 200 miles of railway per annum. While that may be the policy of the department, I understand, and, judging from the results, I think I

am justified in looking upon that as being the minimum which the Public Works Department are carrying out. We have a good number of railways, and on the figures given some little time ago by the Minister for Works more than 200 miles of railway are being constructed annually. But when the Minister gave the figures it was, of course, stated that some of the railways handed over to the Working Railways had been constructed prior to the present Ministry taking office. That was the case, I believe, in some instances. However, if we are to judge by the report of the Commissioner of Railways for last year, the Public Works Department handed over considerably more than 200 miles of railway, and at the present rate of construction they will exceed even last year's record. The Commissioner of Railways, in his annual report, mentions the different railways in course of construction and anticipates that at the end of June, 1913, which will give a clear year to the present Minister for Works, there will be 350 additional miles of railway handed over to the Working Railways. If the Minister for Works succeeds in constructing an additional 350 miles, I am sure he will be deserving of the congratulations of this House and of the people of the country generally. I am with those members who are advocating the early construction of most of the railways, the Bills for which were passed prior to the last general election, and let me say that some were passed not with the intention of early construction. However, I hope the Minister will not take that question into consideration. It is evident that he has not given it much consideration, but that he is determined to see that these railways are built, and that the people who have gone into the back country far from railway facilities—some of them too far out—shall at an early date have the means of getting their produce to market. It is only fair that any Minister controlling the Public Works Department should do his very utmost to see that the whole of these people are brought within easy means of getting their produce to market. In several in-

stances there has been a good deal of agitation in some of the far out districts, and there are good grounds for it. Land 60 and 70 miles from any railway communication was sold to people, and unfortunately they have been to an extent misled by the plans submitted showing a proposed railway route. The member for York (Mr. Monger) has a grievance in that respect, but while that is so, many other members have grievances in connection with the method which was adopted during the time that the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) was Minister for Lands. It is unfortunate that that method was adopted because it undoubtedly misled a great number of people in Western Australia in taking up land. It was undoubtedly an inducement to people to go into these areas far away from railway communication. However, it is evident that the present Government are determined that all these people who have gone so far back, and have put up with so many difficulties, and incurred such great expense, shall be brought within easy means of railway communication in the near future. If we can go on building 350 miles of railway per annum the time is not far distant when the whole of these people will have railways, if not at their own doors, within reasonable distance. When that time comes there will be other lines to go on with, and I am certain the present Government will attend to the other matters which will crop up. There are one or two other matters to which I wish to refer, and one is the criticism indulged in by the leader of the Opposition in replying to the Premier in connection with the debate which took place in the Federal Parliament on the question of jarrah *versus* karri sleepers. The leader of the Opposition undoubtedly used some fairly strong language and made some very strong statements in connection with the Premier's remarks concerning Mr. Hedges. The statement was made in this Chamber by the Premier that Mr. Hedges, although he contradicted the statement in the Federal House, was to a large extent interested in the jarrah company owing to the fact that he had taken up 5,000 acres of the jarrah country in the

south-western portion of this State. In reply to that assertion the leader of the Opposition said Mr. Hedges had not taken up that country for himself but had taken it up for a company. I think the debate in the Federal Parliament and the questions which have since been asked in connection with the question of jarrah and karri sleepers is the most deplorable experience Western Australia had had from the Federal standpoint since federation became an accomplished fact. I believe that debate, and the questions which followed that debate, have done far more to injure the reputation of jarrah than any opposition from people in any other country could possibly do, coming as it has done, from our own representatives in the Federal Parliament. However, that is a matter with which the people of this State will have an opportunity of dealing at a later date and it is to be hoped that they will then not forget to do their duty. I was alluding to the statement of the leader of the Opposition that Mr. Hedges was not interested in this matter owing to the fact that, although he had taken up 5,000 acres of jarrah country, it was taken up for the West Australian Firewood Company. That is correct as far as it goes, and if we were to accept it, it would appear that there was nothing in the statement made by the Premier, but on looking up the share list of the West Australian Firewood Company we find that Mr. Hedges owns nineteen-twentieths of the shares, and it looks as if it is a Mr. Hedges concern from beginning to end. I believe it is the true position that Mr. Hedges owns nineteen-twentieths of the shares; consequently although Mr. Hedges did not take up this country absolutely for himself, it was as nearly as possible for himself at any rate. That is the position; consequently there was good ground for the statement, and although Mr. Hedges contradicted the assertion that he was interested in any jarrah country, the fact remains that he is interested in the 5,000 acres of jarrah country which he took up for the company. That being the case, one naturally does not wonder why he is fighting the karri so

much. However, I do not wish to deal with that matter beyond simply alluding to this particular aspect of it, as I thought it only right, after getting such information, that I should make it known. As a result of the debate, I am afraid our jarrah has been injured somewhat in the eyes of some of the countries which have had so much confidence in that timber and with whom we have done a great amount of business in years past. Possibly it will take a little explaining away to some who otherwise would like to open up fresh business with us. However, I hope that the action of the Government in taking on the cutting of karri sleepers will be the means of establishing practically a new industry for Western Australia, and one that will return us a great amount of revenue and provide a great amount of employment for the people of this State, and also that it will prove to be an industry which will advertise the State as it most undoubtedly will do if these sleepers are the success we all anticipate they will be. I am perfectly convinced that the tests made with regard to the powellising of these sleepers are sufficient to warrant any Government in laying down a railway with sleepers of karri timber, and once we get a test made by some other Government, the industry will prove a big one and one which will be of great advantage to Western Australia. There is just one other matter on which I want to say a word or two. It is not a big matter: it is one of those small matters which we have before us at different times and one of the matters that some of the members of the Opposition attach a great deal of importance to, and seem to magnify until it looks large in their eyes. It is that great question of motor cars. I wish to say that the Government, in my opinion, have done right during the time they have been in office by making the motor cars available for the highly paid officials in the Government service. These officials are undoubtedly using the motor cars frequently, but by doing so they are saving a good deal of time, and time is money in the case of a person who is very highly paid for his services. If we look at the use to which the motor cars were put previous to the advent of the

present Government we find a big contrast. It was common talk during the regime of the previous Administration that the cars were available to the wives of Ministers at any time of the day and on any day of the week.

Mr. Lander: And their children.

Mr. GILL: Probably their children also. One can go to the big shops and he will be told that it was a common occurrence for the wives of Ministers to order certain things and order them to be put in their motor cars which were outside—motor cars purchased with the people's money and driven by Government officials. That being the case, I am surprised at the criticism indulged in and the sneers thrown across the Chamber at the present Government in regard to the motor cars. Undoubtedly they are very useful vehicles if put to their proper use. I am pleased that the Government are putting them to their proper use and I hope they will continue to do so, and thus save money instead of having highly paid officials spending hours in travelling by train or some other vehicle when they might do a particular journey in a few minutes by using one of the motor cars purchased at the public expense. I am sure it will be a saving to the people if the cars are used for that purpose. There are a few other matters which I would like to touch on, but—

Mr. Heitmann: What about the unemployed? They say they never had unemployed.

Mr. GILL: I have heard of them for a number of years. At the present time the member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) is an authority on the subject. He made a statement that there is a large number of unemployed at the present time.

Mr. Dooley: And afterwards said there was not.

Mr. GILL: I would like him to explain how he got his information and where he got his information and on what authority he made the statement.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: You can see it daily in the papers.

Mr. Dooley: The Labour Bureau are the best authorities, they say there are not many.

Mr. GILL: At present I admit, there are a few men out of work. I do not care what Government are in office, there will always be a few unemployed. At the present time there is not a tenth of the unemployed that there were four years ago, or even two years ago.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: Why not say "six years ago"?

Mr. GILL: I was not mixed with the matter then, so I cannot.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: We are talking about 12 months ago.

Mr. GILL: The leader of the Opposition made a statement about the unemployed, that if it had happened when they were in office the whole of the Labour party would be down there rushing them and leading the unemployed in their demonstrations.

Mr. Wisdom: That statement was made by Mr. Watts at the unemployed meeting.

The Premier: Were you there?

Mr. Wisdom: No, I read it in the newspaper.

Mr. GILL: The newspaper again! With regard to the unemployed, some four years ago there was undoubtedly a great number of unemployed right throughout Western Australia. I go back four years because I suppose it was more acute then than it has been since. At that time there were few great works in hand, there were few railways building, and the sewerage works had only just commenced.

Mr. Lander: Mr. Chairman, I call attention to the state of the House.

The CHAIRMAN: I am satisfied that there is a quorum within the precincts of the House. It is only a few minutes since that was ascertained.

Mr. GILL: At that time there were few buildings going on and a large number of tradesmen in connection with the building trade were leaving us. Seeing there was such a large number out of work, I interested myself to see if anything could be done to assist them. So I went down and there were one or two other Labour members. Certainly the

unemployed were not rushed by the whole of the Labour party; the whole of the Labour party did not see the wisdom of doing so; they were satisfied to leave one or two to do their best to see if anything could be done; and those who took a prominent part gave Ministers credit for doing their best to assist the unemployed. I suppose I was as prominent as any member, perhaps more so at that time, but I did not see the necessity, neither did I adopt the method, of parading the streets. Perhaps, had I done so, the member for Toodyay would know more about it than he does.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: I would know more about you.

Mr. GILL: That would be to the hon. member's advantage. I gave Ministers credit for honestly trying to do their best in the interests of the whole of the people of the State, and I think it is only a fair thing that, now those gentlemen are on the other side of the House, they should at least give the present Ministers credit.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: They do.

Mr. GILL: I have my doubts about it. I think I heard some gentleman say to-day that it was at the door of the Government that the unemployed are on the streets to-day.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: Yes, I said that.

Mr. GILL: That being so, I fail to see how they are giving the Government credit for doing their best in the interests of the State. At that time I did not see the necessity for processions about the streets. I fail to see what good effect they have. The impression on my mind is that they are a kind of bludgeoning, and bludgeoning warfare in regard to the unemployed does not seem to me to be any advantage. There are a few out of work to-day, we all admit, but we must also admit that the Government are employing more of them to-day than ever previously. What more can the Opposition want; what more can they expect? If the Government were to employ all these men and start works for the sake of giving them employment it would please the Opposition. They would have something to go out and fight about; they

would go to the country and tell the people that the Government were squandering public funds for the purpose of giving men work, irrespective of whether the works were required or not. That would mean nothing more than relief works, but I am satisfied that there is no need for relief works in Western Australia to-day. I believe what is chiefly the cause of the unemployed difficulty to-day in and about the city is the fact that the harvest is later than usual. I am convinced that in the course of another month it will be difficult to get the work required throughout the country done. If not, I shall be very much disappointed. I believe on good grounds that our harvest will absorb every available man in Western Australia within the next month. If the harvest is going to reach anything near anticipations it must do so. Consequently, where is the great unemployed difficulty? If the unemployed are all occupied within a month, the unemployed question is not very acute and the difficulty is not very great. Naturally we all regret seeing anyone out of work. None of the wages class to-day are sufficiently wealthy, especially owing to the high rents, to be able to remain out of work any length of time without suffering some privation. Consequently I am hoping that the whole of them will be absorbed, and I believe that will be the case within the next month. I congratulate the Premier on having brought down an honest statement of the finances of Western Australia. It is always advisable to have that so that the people may know exactly the position. When the people know the true position, if it is necessary to have increased taxation or to raise more revenue, they are a poor old people if they are not prepared to pay their way. I believe that the people of Western Australia, having had presented to them the true position of our finances and having been shown clearly that it is necessary to increase the taxation or raise more revenue by any other means to meet the expenditure, are honest enough to consent to it.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans): I would not have had anything to say on the general discussion of the Estimates had it not [119]

been for the speech delivered by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper). I listened with a great deal of amusement to a lot of the remarks of the hon. member. One would think that he was practically the only man or the only member of this Chamber who knew anything about mining; but after hearing his remarks, I have come to the conclusion that there are many others who, at all events in my humble opinion, know considerably more about it than the hon. member. Not only from his remarks, but from the remarks generally of members opposite, one would be led to think that the only industry in Western Australia is the agricultural industry. In my opinion the mining industry is still the greatest industry in the State. While I say that, I applaud the action of the Government for giving assistance to the farmers during the dry season; and after having made one or two trips in the South-West and Great Southern districts, I can realise and appreciate the efforts put up by those men who have gone out in the outback districts to settle and try to make homes for themselves. It was the duty of the Government to give them every assistance they possibly could during the time of stress, but I want to urge that when there is the prospect of these men getting some return this year, and in future years, the Government should look to other industries that have done so much for Western Australia. I am a little disappointed at the amount given towards the mining development vote on this occasion. I really believe that some greater effort should have been made by some means to give a little further assistance to the mining industry, and during the course of my remarks I wish to put forward some suggestion, that would go a considerable way towards encouraging mining in Western Australia, and would cost very, very little. When the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) was emphasising the point that he was also sorry that a greater amount of money had not been placed on the Estimates for the mining development vote, the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) interjected, and asked where the money was to come from. I am of the

opinion that we are asking for only what we have a perfect right to ask for as a mining community, and that is, a greater percentage of the money collected from the goldfields in the shape of the dividend tax than has been apportioned to us all told. If the mining industry in some of the outback districts is languishing, we still have a considerable number of mining propositions that are in a position to pay substantial dividends for some considerable time to come, and if I thought it necessary, in the interests of trying to discover further mines or payable propositions. I would go so far as to increase the impost on those mines that are paying such splendid dividends now. Another matter that would assist the goldmining industry to a great extent, and would cost us nothing, is a method of giving assistance that may appear to some hon. members to be a rather peculiar method. I refer to some legislation that will in some way prevent the number of aliens that are being employed at the present time in the industry. Why I say that will give an impetus to the industry generally is this: Take Leonora, Kookynie, or Laverton, or any of those outback towns that were once prosperous and employed a considerable number of men. Unfortunately in the majority of the cases, the most of the employees were foreigners. I want to emphasise this point that in no instance in those centres where the percentage has been largely of the foreign element has any prospecting of any description been done, whereas, if a greater number of Britishers were employed they would to a considerable extent assist in the development of the mining industry.

Mr. Heitmann: Where foreigners are employed no prospecting at all is done.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is what I have just stated. Not only do the foreigners not encourage prospecting by paying into shows or backing people to prospect, but I want to emphasise this phase that though the foreigners receive the same remuneration as the Britishers, they do not support the commercial communities to the same extent as the British people do. In many instances we find that the

commercial community in a small town are prepared, when things are bright or brisk, to assist the prospectors, but where we find that the greater percentage of miners employed consists of foreigners, that kind of thing is lacking. They do not assist the prospector in any shape or form, and not only that, there is a marked difference in their method of living and in the amount of money which they spend with the business community. This being limited, assists to prevent the business people from giving that help to the prospector which they otherwise would do; therefore I say the foreigners are a menace to our country.

Mr. Wisdom: Are they not unionists?

Mr. MUNSIE: Unfortunately a considerable number of them are not, but I will say, in reply to the interjection, that I am pleased to be a member of a union and a representative of unionists who on every occasion endeavour to persuade these people to join the unions, because the union is a means whereby we can teach them to work and live under proper conditions. While dealing with the foreign question, I would like to emphasise another phase, and it is that I hope something will be done in the near future that will go a long way towards preventing so many of them getting into the mines, namely, prohibiting the employment of foreigners on the wood lines. I could produce, if necessary, figures to show that foreigners are continually coming into Western Australia and making direct for Kurrawang and the other wood lines.

Mr. Foley: If they do not go to Gwalia.

Mr. McDowall took the Chair.

Mr. MUNSIE: A big majority of them come out to the wood lines.

Mr. Turvey: Do they come out under contract?

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not prepared to say that. I have no proof but the whole of the evidence points to them doing so. They stay at the wood lines and work for a period of three or four months. The employers there have British bush bosses, but these new arrivals are tutored by their own countrymen until they get

a sufficient smattering of the English language which will allow them to get employment on a mine.

Mr. Foley: That does not qualify them under the Act.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am quite aware of that fact. I have listened, not once, but half a dozen or more times to foreigners having the test applied to them by an underground manager before being given employment, and in most cases the questions were those which had been put on previous occasions, and on which they needed but little tutoring to enable them to give satisfactory answers. In some instances, however, the underground managers were just so far as the language test was concerned. I know of one instance where an underground manager, who could also speak their language fluently, would never allow them to work underground unless they spoke English well. Unfortunately, however, all underground managers are not as strict as that man was. I hope the present Government will as soon as possible introduce legislation that will limit the number of foreigners working on the mines, and not only on the mines, but in some of the other industries. In regard to the wood lines, I had some figures that I wanted to quote. Unfortunately, however, I cannot lay my hands on them but I will take the opportunity of presenting them at a later stage. These figures would have shown that over 90 per cent. of those who are engaged in cutting wood are foreigners, and I am sorry to say that the employer who is the principal offender is a representative or a supposed representative of a portion of this State in the Federal Parliament, I refer to Mr. Hedges. Of the three wood lines, Kurrawang pans out by far the worst so far as the employment of foreigners is concerned. Not only have they there the total number of cutters who are foreigners, but almost all the loaders are foreigners, and in two or three instances the bush bosses are foreigners. There is a phase of the mining industry that I would like to refer to and to emphasise on this occasion, and I hope that the Minister will give the matter serious consideration.

Some little time ago—I forget the locality, but I believe it was in Southern Cross—the Minister for Mines made a statement that if he could get a guarantee that the State batteries would be run continuously, he believed the cost could be reduced by nearly 40 per cent., but the Minister went on to say, unfortunately he could not get that guarantee. I would like to urge this point. I have had some communication from the Prospectors' Association in two different parts of the State, and they inform me that it is their intention shortly to hold a conference of the Prospectors' and Leaseholders' Association of Western Australia and that they propose to discuss this phase of the question. I would strongly urge the adoption of a system something after this style, which the Minister might have investigated by his departmental heads, or I might go so far as to urge that the Minister might be guided to a certain extent by the resolutions or the advice of the leaseholders' and prospectors' conference. There might be set aside a particular area in some portion of the State where the leaseholders themselves say that they could, if the prices were reduced, keep a battery going continuously. I am firmly convinced, if the prices could be reduced by continuous process, say, 40 per cent., that in three or four places on the gold-fields at the present time where State batteries are in existence and where, if the prospectors were given three months' notice of the intention of the Government to declare these places as districts in which the scheme was to be given a trial—and I would urge that the Minister give them at least three months' notice because it would not be a fair trial with less than three months' notice—that on and after a given date a twelve months' trial could be given at the reduced rate to see whether their contention could be fulfilled. There are several places where batteries are kept going, and I believe if the charges were reduced in the way the Minister suggested, many of the batteries in these districts could be kept going continuously. Then of course I know the argument that the Minister might take up. He might say that if he

gives this concession to one part of the State there will be a hue and cry for it from everywhere. I realise that, but at the same time, I believe, seeing that this has been urged on several occasions, if the Minister gave due notice of his intention to declare some distinct area, and made it known that there was going to be a trial for twelve months, and that if it proved a failure he would revert to the old rates, I think the people concerned would be satisfied to give it that length of trial. I hope the Minister will in the near future think over this matter seriously. I know of places in this State where there is not a State battery at the present time and that if crushing facilities could be given at 40 per cent. less than the Government charge to-day, I am positive from my own experience that those districts could keep the battery going continuously, and I honestly believe, by giving those facilities and giving that scheme a trial in one particular locality, it will be a sufficient inducement for the prospectors in other districts to go out and test low-grade shows even where there is no State battery, so as to get sufficient evidence to place before the authorities to warrant the erection of a battery. There are one or two other matters that I desire to mention, and one in particular is that during the debate on the Estimates the member for Pingelly quoted certain figures as to what the mining industry had returned. He also went on to say that it was absolutely unfair to expect shareholders in mining companies to continue operations in any property when they did not see in front of them any reasonable chance of getting a return for their money. I would like to point out this phase of the case: In my opinion many of the shows throughout the back country in particular, and not only there but in close proximity to the Golden Mile to-day, many of the shows which have returned fair dividends in the past and, in my opinion, would return fair dividends again, are lying idle, mainly through the lack of knowledge or the incompetency of the men who manage them.

The Minister for Mines: And the hon. member's own property, the property he was in charge of, is one of the most glaring instances.

Mr. MUNSIE: I agree with the Minister for Mines. The hon. member has three distinct monuments of that description to his incompetency.

The Minister for Mines: He pulled down the best mine in Kanownna.

Mr. Underwood: What was it the *Sun* used to call him?

Mr. MUNSIE: As I do not read the *Sun* I do not know what he may have been called, but I do say that there have been these and many other instances in which absolute bad management has been the cause of mines being abandoned.

The Minister for Mines: I am informed that, instead of calling him Nat Harper, they called him Pat Sharper.

Mr. MUNSIE: Well, it was very appropriate. Another point is this: I trust the Minister for Mines will go a little farther in giving assistance to keep diamond drilling. While I know the department have assisted in this line to a greater extent than they did under any previous Government, I still say there is room to go a considerable distance further, and that the advance will be justifiable. I know the point is going to be raised that deep boring can only be done where a company or a syndicate is prepared to put in sufficient money to assist the Government in that direction, the reason being that if the Government went out to abandoned leases or to virgin country and did any diamond drilling, the question would arise as to who was to reap the profit. I honestly believe that if the department made it known that they were prepared to subsidise a little more than pound for pound, in many instances, as badly conditioned as many would like us to believe the mining industry is, in many instances syndicates could be got together to put in a certain amount of money if the Government would come to their assistance.

The Minister for Mines: A syndicate has just been formed at Southern Cross, and I am finding two-thirds. I will be

willing to do that much on any portion of the goldfields.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am very pleased indeed to hear it, and I congratulate the Minister on his action. We have had instances of companies who have spent a considerable amount of money in the State, and who were prepared to put 30s. into deep drilling for every pound of subsidy granted by the Government, but the proposal was refused by the Government. I am referring more particularly to the Queen Margaret mine at Bulong. Of course if the Government go out to bore there is the difficulty as to what will become of it; but if they went down in any of those old shows the Government might reasonably, on the advice of their expert officers, go in for diamond drilling, and if they were successful in locating payable dirt I believe the formation of companies, of local companies, would more than repay the Government. If they discovered, for instance, one mine that would produce the output of the Australia, the Perseverance, the Lake View, or any of those mines on the Golden Mile, if they could discover one which would employ the same number of men and pay the amount of wages any one of these mines have paid, the country would be more than compensated for the expense undertaken.

Mr. McDonald: Do you not think if the State found it the State should work it?

Mr. MUNSIE: I am in favour of State enterprise. I believe the State should, as far as possible, own and control almost everything, but I would draw the line at gold mining; for the reason that when we boil the thing down, in my opinion it is absolutely a useless industry.

The Minister for Mines: Then why encourage it?

Mr. MUNSIE: Some hon. members seem to think that is rather a strong expression to use, and in all seriousness I am prepared to admit that under existing circumstances, it is the best, the foremost industry in Western Australia, and the most necessary under our present conditions; but I hope the time is not far

distant when the need for goldmining will not be as great as it is to-day, and when that time comes, I maintain goldmining will be a useless industry. Moreover, to-day unfortunately it is killing many of the best of our citizens. In conclusion I would like to congratulate the Government on the attitude they have adopted in connection with the treatment of those suffering from miners' phthisis and tuberculosis. The Government endeavoured during the last session to set aside a certain area for the purposes of a sanatorium, but they were defeated in their object. With others I felt that they would not be burked in their efforts, and, sure enough, they have found another locality approved of by medical experts and, I am pleased to say, they are proceeding with the clearing, and making other preparations towards the building of that much-needed institution. I trust that at the earliest opportunity they will increase their efforts in this direction, and push on to their utmost ability the erection of that sanatorium, so that those men who, though working underground to-day should really be receiving treatment in a sanatorium, will be able to take refuge in that institution. I trust the Government will use every endeavour to complete the sanatorium as early as possible.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): It is not my intention to say much, but I must congratulate the Premier on having come forward in an honest manner and admitted there is going to be a shortage. He has not acted as past Premiers have done, like a rat poking its head from under a tarpaulin and scuttling back again, but he has come forward like an honest man and told us the position he expects to be in at the end of the year. If we glance over the past career of the present Government we must credit them with honest purpose. We cannot point to the Premier, as we can to other Premiers, and accuse him of dishonest actions. I have in my mind such transactions as that entered into with the ice company. That was many years ago. Concessions were given to

the ice company to allow them to take ice to the fields, but they defrauded the revenue by carrying goods packed in the ice. We cannot point to anything like that in connection with the present Government. Then we hear about spoils to the victors. In this regard, where could we find a more striking example than that of the Claremont Asylum contract, when the present Leader of the Opposition gave the contract to his son-in-law in order to assist him? Could anything be stronger than that? Then take the Narra Tarra estate? Is not that an example of spoils to the victors, when a Minister goes so far as to alter the law in order that he himself might participate in the subdivision of a repurchased estate and distribute it among his family, securing about £14,000 worth of property? Is that closer settlement? Is it possible for anyone else to take up Narra Tarra land? No, it is not. Then take, for instance, that case in which one block of land was sold to two men, and the money of the State stolen to recoup the one man, so that the chief of the detective department should not arrest him at Albany. Then again, stock has been received from the struggling settlers, and they have sold the stock and stolen the money, and members of this House have lent their own money to cover up these faults. When you get instances like this you can say that that is spoils to the victors, but when we get a Premier like the present Premier we must be proud of him. It has been my painful duty to listen to a number of disgraceful speeches. Only recently the leader of the Opposition, by imputation, contended that the Premier was incompetent. If we were to judge that hon. gentleman himself, when he was running a tinpot show at the Canning, the picture might be reversed. Did they say he was competent? No, they put the boot into him, and out he had to go. And there are hundreds of instances like that. These are the things to be hashed up. When they hash up little things against our Premier it is our duty to hash up these things, and let the public know what has been going on. Look at the

Merredin and Kununoppin railway. Was that not a job, to shift that line 20 miles? Of course it was. That line should have been carried through York-rakine, where the poor struggling settlers now eke out a pitiful existence. What was done? They put it over 20 miles away to suit their own friends. Then there was the Boyup Brook line. Was there any necessity to rush that line through as was done? Of course there was not? It was just spoils to the victors. I could go on relating for months things of this kind which have taken place in connection with past Governments. It is not the shortage of about £300,000 that is hurting our friends of the Opposition, but the fact that we are cutting into their best friends. Prior to October twelve months ago we told the people on the hustings that it was our intention to have a cut at the different monopolies existing in Western Australia, which one might practically call parasites. I refer to some of the monopolies which we have started to cut into. We have only been going twelve months and yet we are already cutting into the shipping monopoly, one of the greatest parasites existing in Australia, and I regret that when the Federal Parliament had a Royal Commission inquiring into shipping matters, they did not nationalise a portion of the shipping, so that we could have Government boats plying between the States, and also between Australia and the Old Country. If we look at the Commission's report we find that for £6,000,000 we could have a number of boats running between England and Australia, and also established an interstate service, and by that means we would have been able to deal with that particular parasite as it thoroughly deserves. Another combine which we have dealt with, and which had been a standing disgrace to Western Australia, is that in connection with the timber industry. We find a monopoly existing in this State not only in hard woods but also in soft woods, and we might go further, and mention bricks. When we know that they can cut timber and sell it cheaper in Melbourne than in this State, it is the duty of an honest

man like the Premier to step in and burst up this ring. That is not spoils to the victors. What have Mr. Hedges and Sir John Forrest done? Is it to their credit to stand up in the Federal Parliament and denounce West Australian timber when we have evidence from experts that that timber has been tested and is a success? Because private interests are at stake they have denounced West Australian timber. What have they done for the Transcontinental Railway; what did Sir John Forrest ever do for that line? They have denounced the timbers and practically tried to stop the railway. Sir John Forrest sold this State in connection with the railway in order to get a portfolio in the "Fusion" Government. Had he stood out, the Transcontinental Railway would have been an accomplished fact to-day, instead of just commencing and with him trying to prevent it. His action and that of Hedges in connection with the sleeper contracts and the Transcontinental Railway brand those two individuals as traitors to the welfare of Western Australia. I am very pleased also that the Premier has cut into the meat combine. There has been a lot of ridicule, and many statements have been made in reference to the class of meat the Government are supplying at the present time, but anyone who understands that industry knows that at this time of the year it is practically impossible to get prime meat. In fact, the districts from which the meat usually comes have experienced a very dry season, and in the Gascoyne district I do not think one would be far wrong in estimating the loss of cattle as representing the value of £100,000. When we have adversity of this description to contend with, we cannot expect to draw prime cattle from the districts from which they have always come in the past. Our opponents have twitted us that we cannot procure cattle, but they know that when the Premier was fortunate enough to get the boats here, the cattle season in the North-West was practically over, and unless one gets in early in the season it is practically impossible to procure cattle. Before

the cattle season opens the buyers visit the North-West and secure all the prime stock, and what was done last year? The buyers visited the North-West and cornered the cattle, but I do not think this year we will have the same opposition as we had last year. There is one thing I would like to urge in connection with the North-West cattle trade, and that is that the Minister for Lands should remove the restrictions in reference to tick cattle. There are a great number of cattle in the Kimberley country which could be marketed if they were properly dipped. Certain firms could be allowed to erect their own dips and the Government inspector could be sent up there previous to the cattle being put in the dips, in order to see that they had no tick on them. Then they could be put through the dips, and in this way we would be able to get considerably more cattle brought down than we have been able to get in the past. I do not see that there would be any risk in allowing cattle to come from those stations and be loaded at the port of Derby. There are other tick cattle taken to Derby, and in the event of any of them getting sick on the way, they are left on the side of the road. When they recover, they just wander back and carry the tick through the clean country. I hope the Minister will be able to see his way clear to remove the restrictions on tick cattle, provided they are properly dipped, because I am sure it would be a great advantage to the meat industry in the metropolitan area. Another appeal I would make to the Government is that they will be a little more liberal to the City of Perth, by assisting the council in different directions with revenue. The Premier has been pretty rough on the city council by taking away revenue both in East Perth and West Perth. Perhaps it would not hurt if he took away the whole of the council, but now that he has taken away so much of the municipal revenue I would like to see him extend his generosity by providing a crescent road from Beaufort street bridge to Mount Lawley. I think the Minister for Railways intends to erect two or three bridges between Perth and

East Perth, and by the side of the railway will be several corners of land. It would not cost much to purchase those areas and make this crescent road from Beaufort street to Mount Lawley. If the Premier would do that he would receive the thanks of the citizens of Perth. I desire to thank the Premier for his attitude in reference to baths. We have heard a lot said that the Government are to blame in this matter, but I say they are not to blame. If the city council selects a proper site I have no doubt that the Premier and his colleagues will provide the money for the establishment of baths. In East Perth there was a splendid site for baths on the banks of the river. I approached the Premier and the Minister for Works and they told me to put my request forward and it would be considered. I am very pleased to say the request was favourably considered and on the banks of the Swan River just at the back of Mount Lawley we have selected a site where baths have been erected for the residents and the children, and if anyone cares to visit the place he will find on a Sunday morning as many as 150 people bathing there. I am satisfied that had the city council, or the South Perth people, selected a proper site the Government would have found the money to not only erect baths but purchase the site if necessary. But what do we find? We find the city council in the same position in reference to the baths as they occupy in reference to the town hall. I know the Premier cannot put the baths on wheels, but to oblige the city council he will not only have to put the baths but also the town hall on wheels so that they can be run about from place to place. I would like to see the Premier stiffen his back in reference to the town hall site. I say with all due respect that it is his duty to take some action in reference to the civil servants who are working in those dungeons. I said before, but I had to withdraw it, that the Government were murdering their officers, but I do not wish to say that now. I do say, however, that the Premier is in duty bound to take the present town hall site away from the city

council and utilise it for building new Government offices, because it is a standing disgrace to members on this side of the House to ask civil servants to work in some of those black dungeons. They are practically as bad as the black hole of Calcutta that we have read about. We see some of those poor beggars going to office, anaemic looking and suffering from tuberculosis owing to the bad air they have to breathe in those old buildings, and if the Premier would only stiffen his back and resume the town hall site, I am sure he would receive the thanks of the ratepayers of Perth. We saw that a vote was taken in the city council the other day when, if all the councillors had been present, the decision would have gone in favour of the drill hall site which has been offered by the Premier, but on account of Councillor Tatham's absence, the mayor, by using his casting vote, was able to prevent that decision being arrived at. The consequence is that the question is in practically the same position as it was 16 or 17 years ago. I say that when a man occupying the position of Premier sees that the interests of the city of Perth are being tampered with, it is his duty to step forward and say that he intends to resume that site and compel the city council to take some other site. I would also like to see the Premier put a small amount on the Estimates to open up the roads in Perth. William-street has been opened up at the expense of the city council, and I would like to see the Government provide an amount to open up Stirling-street. With the different classes of traffic, it is hard to get the motor traffic through as we could get the horse traffic through in years gone by; therefore, I suggest to the Premier that he should put an amount on the Estimates for the opening up of streets. I know the Premier is a busy man, and therefore I will not blame him, but I should have liked to have seen him bring forward a Bill to deal with Greater Perth. If ever there was a time when such a measure should be brought forward it is now, when the Government have taken over the trams and the town hall site is to be fixed.

The Premier : A Bill providing for a referendum of the ratepayers in Greater Perth ?

Mr. LANDER : Yes. I would like to see that Bill brought forward at an early date. Another measure I would like to see introduced is an amendment of the Criminal Code or the Justices Act. I think the Premier should take a firm stand in reference to street betting. It is of no use speaking from behind a bush, and if we cannot put a stop to this betting let us act honestly and endeavour to control it. If we are too cowardly to prevent betting let us bring in a Bill to control and license it. It is a standing disgrace the way betting is going on at the present time and no action is taken. One thing I wish to congratulate the Premier on is the appointment of Mr. Connell as acting Commissioner of Police. It is a really popular appointment, and I hope that it will be confirmed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER (in reply) : It is something approaching a month since I had the very pleasing duty of presenting to this Committee the estimated expenditure and revenue for the current financial year. May I admit at the outset that I fully anticipated that the general discussion would be confined to at least half a dozen members of this Committee who have in the past taken a keen interest in the finances of the country, and that criticism would have been confined to our present and future position as shown by the Estimates. But for some reason that is not quite clear to myself, some members have taken the opportunity of making remarks which had little or no bearing on the financial position, and in truth had very little bearing on politics at all. But I suppose one cannot complain if members take this opportunity of bringing forward what they term grievances for the purpose of having them considered by the Administration of the day and rectified if possible, so that in replying to the criticisms levelled against the Estimates by the various members, I do not propose to deal with these matters of an administrative

character because we shall have an opportunity when the departmental Estimates are before the Committee of hearing from my colleagues who are in charge of the various departments of the work they have performed, and how they propose to proceed in the future. May I at the outset say that some of the statements which have been made by members, particularly those on the Opposition, have been made without an attempt on their part to find out the true facts in connection with particular matters before they levelled criticism against the Government. For the purpose of pointing this out more clearly may I refer to the member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) and also other members, particularly the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) and the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) who I admit at once I expected to be better informed, chiefly in connection with the present unemployed difficulty that is supposed to be of such an enormous extent in the metropolitan area and in other parts of the State. I asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. E. Dodd) who is controlling the Labour Bureau to give me some information showing the operations of the Bureau since July of this year as compared with the same period last year when we had a Liberal Administration whose candidates at that very time were travelling about the State—the head of the then Government among them—saying that everything was prosperous, that we were in the midst of most prosperous times, that there was no unemployed difficulty, that everyone was kept fully employed, and that generally speaking we were making great headway. Since that time we have introduced into the State a greater number of immigrants than ever previously in a similar term in the history of the State, and notwithstanding that fact the figures supplied by the Labour Bureau state that since the 1st July up to the present a greater number of men have been found employment and a smaller number have been registered at the bureau than in the same period of last year. I do not feel disposed to accuse the Opposition of having deliberately worked up this agitation.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: Are all the unemployed registered?

The PREMIER: Were they last July? The hon. member might ask the question whether the conditions have altered which would cause the unemployed to apply to the Labour Bureau for work last year and not this year or *vice versa*. They were more likely to apply this year than last year because when we had an unemployed difficulty previously we placed the men after they had applied to the Labour Bureau, and having made it practically part of our policy that they should all apply through the bureau, it is to be expected that there would be more applications in the period which has just expired than in the corresponding period of last year. The report of Mr. Hitchins, the clerk in charge of the Labour Bureau, reads *inter alia* as follows—

The new registrations of applicants for work at the Labour Bureau from the 1st July, 1912, to 14th November, 1912, totalled 3,274. The total for the same period of last year was 3,370, showing a decrease for the present year of 96, notwithstanding the fact that newly arrived immigrants are now being registered by the Labour Bureau which was not the case last year.

Let it be remembered that during the same period of last year the immigrants were being found employment through the Immigration Department and not through the Labour Bureau. Now we have caused all new arrivals seeking employment to register at the bureau when in search of employment, just as residents of the State have to do, and notwithstanding that fact, from the 1st July to the 14th November of this year, we have had 96 less registrations from persons seeking work than we had in the same period of last year. For the present month up to the 14th, the new registrations numbered 260 compared with 803 for the whole of November of last year. The engagements for the same portion of November, 1912, totalled 208, and for the whole of November last year 528. The report continues—

During the last four months there has been an increasing tendency to refuse farm and clearing work; the

wages for which range for lads and inexperienced hands from twenty to twenty-five shillings a week and for experienced men thirty shillings to forty shillings a week and keep. In July the number of vacancies for this class of work, not applied for was 34, in August 32, in September 79 and in October 112. From the above it will be seen that notwithstanding the unfavourable reports from the country police, the condition of the labour market will bear very favourable comparison with same period of last year.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: That is hardly a fair comparison. We had no harvest last year to speak of.

The PREMIER: Have we had a harvest this year between the 1st July and the 14th November? Is it not a fact that last year's harvest small as it was, was in operation before this period.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: You quoted November figures.

The PREMIER: Up to the 14th November last year harvesting had proceeded considerably in advance of what it has up to the present. Again, it is all in favour of last year as against this year. So much for the so-called unemployed agitation. Would it not have been better if the members of the Opposition had been candid enough to admit that the reason for the unemployed agitation was that when we came to their assistance in May last recognising the difficulties we passed through last season, we placed a greater number of men on the sewerage work, and having proceeded so far with the general scheme, we considered it desirable to catch up the house connections, and had to slacken some hands last month? In regard to these men who were slackened not three days had elapsed before they met and it was just at a moment that the leader of the Opposition was proposing to criticise the Budget speech that they decided to parade the streets of the City and bombard the Premier's office. I say it is rather a coincidence that such a thing happened just at the moment when the leader of the Opposition was about to criticise the Budget. It may be as well if I mention that these

men also threatened on the day they anticipated that I would be replying to these criticisms to march in procession and bombard Parliament House. That may, of course, be just a coincidence, but such has happened, and at the same time it may have some bearing on the agitation that has been continued by the members sitting in Opposition in this Chamber. One member of the Opposition who based three parts of his speech on the unemployed difficulty told me privately that he would like to see the session closed early. He said there was an unemployed difficulty to some extent, but he appreciated the fact and was not going to make much of it in order to draw public attention to it, and that gentleman on the next day stood up in the Chamber and based three parts of his speech on the unemployed difficulty. That may do for the purpose of argument against the Government, but is it a proper method of discussing these matters which are of such vital importance to the country at the present moment?

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about your own colleague, the Minister for Works?

The PREMIER: I do not remember a debate on the Budget since I have been in Parliament in which the case of the Opposition was so weak as has been shown by their arguments on the present occasion. The leader of the Opposition floundered a whole two hours and dealt more with personalities than he did with finance. The hon. member is so bitter against the party which for some time have sat on the Government side for having a monopoly of the Treasury bench that he cannot look across the Chamber and see Ministers without thinking of something of a personal nature and endeavouring to make out of it criticism against the Government. Almost the whole of his speech dealt with personalities of a nature that did not do him credit.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, no.

The PREMIER: When I was in his place he was frequently lecturing members of the Opposition that the finances were not a party matter, and that we

should as far as possible deal with them from the point of view of the interests of the State, and not as they affected any individual Minister or any private member. The hon. member has even been lecturing us since he has been leader of the Opposition as to how I ought to conduct the business of the House. Is it not remarkable that he should in the corridor call upon two or three members who sit on his side of the House, and take them to task because they were not desirous of entering into the discussion, his object being to compel me to reply at 11 o'clock at night so that the public would not read in the morning paper my reply to his criticism. So long as I am leader of the House I am going to decide how the business shall be conducted, and am going to do it without dictation from the ex-Premier who is now leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You took a long time to get your reply ready.

The PREMIER: Never mind. It may be late, but it is good all the same. I have never objected to criticism from my friends in the Opposition. As I stated by interjection when the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) was speaking, I appreciated the fact that the leader of the Opposition was opposed to the party on the Treasury bench, and I expected him to criticise our policy and attack us for our administration or lack of administration.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then what are you growling at?

The PREMIER: I am not growling, I am taking it kindly; but I expect hon. members on the Government side of the House, when discussing a question that will show to the House and the country the policy of the Government, to support the Government not only by votes but also by utterances, or leave the Government side of the House and sit in Opposition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are you going to gag your supporters?

The PREMIER: I am proposing to do nothing of the kind. But it is rather peculiar, and perhaps a coincidence, that when the member for Mount Margaret addressed himself to these Estimates,

every Opposition member in the precincts of the House filed into the Chamber and sat in his place and immediately began to applaud, apparently because the member for Mount Margaret had told one or two in the corridor that he was going to make an attack on the Government.

Mr. Allen: Do you know anyone he told?

The PREMIER: I do not anticipate he would tell the member for West Perth.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He did not tell me.

The PREMIER: I welcome criticism, but I want those opposed to the Government to come out openly in opposition and say so. The member for Mount Margaret has sat behind the Government since the last general election in October of last year, and I cannot call to mind a single instance where he has found anything in the Government worthy of praise. He has never risen in his place in the House to congratulate the Government on a single action during the whole of that period. Members of the Opposition can admit at times—I have heard it from their own lips—that we have done something worthy of praise; but it is remarkable that, while a member supporting the Government sits silent and refuses to give voice to his opinions when we have done something to our credit, he will store up to himself all sorts of criticisms from the daily Press against the Government, and when urged to give some evidence of the opposition against the Government outside, he will produce that class of argument we would expect from someone in Opposition. I do not look upon the member for Mount Margaret as a supporter of the Government. He may be a Labourite; I do not doubt his right to remain here and criticise the Government, and to criticise them on all questions, but, as head of the Government, I do expect loyalty from those sitting behind the Government at all times. We do not ask any man to torture his conscience, but what sort of torturing is it when the member for Mount Margaret will get up in his place and attack the Government and yet sit behind them? If the Government are not worthy of his

support, he ought to be sitting in Opposition and showing his true colours.

Hon. Frank Wilson interjected.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has a champion in the leader of the Opposition, his true leader. After all, the argument of the member for Mount Margaret was solely that, having been able to foresee we were passing through a dry period and that our revenue would to some extent fall off, or not increase to the same ratio as would be expected from the large amount of loan money expended, we should have been prepared to meet such an occasion, and the hon. member concluded his speech by saying that had we provided £50,000 on the Estimates for the encouragement of the mining industry, he would have been satisfied. If we had provided the £50,000, the deficit would have been £50,000 more, but it would have suited the member for Mount Margaret; he was only playing to his constituency. Where is the strength of his argument when he says on the one hand that we should cut down expenditure because we are passing through a trying period, and on the other hand that we should expend £50,000 more because it will suit the mining industry? That is all I have to say with regard to the hon. member, and having said it, it relieves my mind somewhat, and I hope it will be appreciated by the member for Mount Margaret. I have listened to statements made in various parts of the Chamber with considerable interest. I have discovered during the course of this debate that we have in our midst a gentleman who will go down to posterity as a great financier. I refer to the member for Claremont (Mr. Wisdom). He has given us some new canons of finance. He laid it down as an absolute ruling in finance that if a Treasurer has one deficit he has no right to come down with Estimates of revenue and expenditure showing another.

Mr. Wisdom: I did not say that.

The PREMIER: I took down the hon. member's words. He said, "If you have one deficit you have no right to come down showing a second one." Yet he is sitting behind one who, as Treasurer, only once in his whole history as Treasurer showed a

surplus. If the member for Claremont will look up the returns he will find that his leader came down to the House showing a deficit and that, while twice on paper he showed a surplus on the year's transactions, on both occasions he wound up with a deficit. Apparently the member for Claremont forgot to teach the leader of the Opposition some of his canons of finance. The hon. member pointed out that the proper method of arriving at Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the year was first of all to find out what the expenditure would be and then to get the revenue to meet it. That is a canon of finance I have not met with in any book on finance in the world, and I am going to put it down in my book for submission to the consideration of any great financiers I may some day meet. Is it not a fact that the very opposite is the proper method—first of all to decide on the revenue we are going to receive for the year, and then endeavour to make our expenditure meet it?

Mr. Wisdom: That is what I said.

The PREMIER: But I am not going to follow that to the extent of cutting my garment according to the cloth if it means disaster to the State. I told the leader of the Opposition when he made the assertion that we should cut our garment according to the cloth, when he was criticising the Government for having closed last year with a deficit, that to do that last year would have meant disaster to many of our settlers in agricultural districts and also to our workmen in different parts of the State; and I am going to continue the policy I have adopted when I have confidence in the State; and I have that confidence, whether I am here or opposite, that we can recover that position and recover it handsomely, the position in which the revenue and expenditure balance.

Hon. Frank Wilson: When are you going to do it?

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows. The method adopted by previous Governments was first of all to find out what revenue they were to receive and then to obtain from all departments, ex-

cept the Public Works Department, their anticipated expenditure for the year, and then, in order to make ends meet, to cut down the Works Estimates until the revenue and expenditure just about balanced. That is not the procedure we adopted this year. I had the estimated expenditure from the various departments, including the Works Department, before I made the adjustment.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We always did that.

The PREMIER: It was an easy thing to follow the practice of our predecessors and bring down Estimates of revenue and expenditure balancing, had I done what the hon. member apparently claims we should have done, that is, continued to refuse to pay the present subsidies to municipalities and roads boards. Is it not a fact that when the leader of the Opposition was Treasurer he attempted to meet the then trying difficulties, much the same as we are now experiencing, but not so keen, by refusing to give the same assistance to municipalities and roads boards? And the municipalities, be it said to their shame, accepted the position out of political favour to the then Government, so that to-day many of them find themselves in such a mess that I am backing most of the municipalities at the banks. That is the position. If I had not done this, I would have had to take control of their affairs. This position was created because the leader of the Opposition withdrew their subsidies.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nonsense.

The PREMIER: It is absolutely correct.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are providing only the same amount this year.

The PREMIER: Is it not a fact that last year prior to the general election for the first time in the history of the State a conference of municipalities and roads boards met in Perth and drew attention to the condition of their finances? And they asserted unanimously it was brought about by the action of the then Government in reducing their subsidies. The member for Claremont (Mr. Wisdom) and the leader of the Opposition referred to a reported statement of mine in

receiving a deputation from the unemployed. The hon. members have said that I said that Western Australia was too great for one Administration. The leader of the Opposition said that it was the first time in the history of the State that a Premier and Treasurer admitted he was not capable of carrying on the affairs of the Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Exactly.

The PREMIER: I never uttered any such words.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They were reported.

The PREMIER: I did not say I was not reported. I have been reported as saying many things, and so has the hon. member. I am going to show what I did say on that occasion, and hon. members will approve of the statement I made. What I endeavoured to convey to that deputation and what was not taken down in full by the reporter was—"Under existing conditions it was impossible for a State like Western Australia, with such a magnificent area and with a population of only something like 300,000 people, to be able to borrow sufficient money from those people who had money to invest to do all the work required from one end of the State to the other. We could borrow two million pounds and spend it with perfect ease in the South-West portion of the State, a portion as big as Victoria, and do justice to the State and justice to the people as well; but could we, with 300,000 people, go to the money lender and ask for two million pounds to spend in the South-West? Because if we did that we neglected the rest of the State. Under existing conditions we could not expect, with one Government controlling such a vast area, to make the progress that most of us would desire; but eventually when our population increased, as we hoped to see it do in the near future, we would then be able to obtain all the money required to develop the greatest State in the Commonwealth." Is that not a fair statement to make?

Hon. Frank Wilson: But you have closed down on immigration?

The PREMIER: We have closed down on immigration to this extent that we are

introducing a greater number of people to the State than has ever been done previously in its history. We are, however, closing down on the system of immigration introduced by our friends opposite.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition does not know anything about it. He handed over completely to the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Connolly, the dealing with the question of immigration. He allowed Mr. Connolly to communicate direct with the London Agency. When I pointed out previously that Mr. Connolly had sent a communication to the Agent General asking him to send out artisans, naming the number that could be absorbed, about the same time that the Government had been approached by the unemployed to start relief works, we can imagine how much the hon. member knew about it when he denied that any such thing occurred. Moreover, I had to send to the London Agency to get a copy of that letter, because it was not on the files. We stopped a gentleman like the proprietor of the Palace hotel nominating every month, or perhaps not so frequently, chefs and cooks for his hotel. We have stopped gentlemen in the House nominating grooms to come out here.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are you getting grooms? We cannot afford them over here.

The PREMIER: No, we are not getting grooms, but we are encouraging those who come out here to throw in their lot with us and bring out their wives and families.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You said you were shutting down on immigration.

The PREMIER: I said we had shut down on assisted immigration, the assisted immigration carried on by the previous Government. It is rather peculiar that we are supposed to be shutting down on immigration when we are introducing immigrants at a greater pace than the previous Government. The hon. member said we had shut down on railway construction, when we are constructing railways faster than the hon. member did, and he used this to the discredit of the Government and the State as well. The gallant member for Northam

(Hon. J. Mitchell) who is generally optimistic and who has never made a speech in any part of the State without mentioning millions of acres and millions of people and millions of pounds, is to-day perhaps the greatest pessimist known in Western Australia. There is no act performed by the Government which is not vile in his opinion, and which is not detrimental to our general welfare. He cannot even discuss the question of the Estimates without making a complaint against the admission of seed potatoes from the old country. The hon. member apparently is so annoyed at having been forced to leave his seat on the Treasury bench that Western Australia is likely to lose him altogether. I am not going to say whether that would be to the benefit of the hon. member or to the State. But it is really remarkable to hear some of the canons of finance from the hon. member, the much lauded gentleman who knows so much about financial affairs, and who declared that the Treasury should merely be a banking institution for the various departments, and that the Ministers ought to be able to spend what they chose. Just imagine the leader of the Opposition occupying the position of Treasurer allowing Ministers, without considering the effect on the general finances, to spend just what they chose. That might be a canon of finance known to hon. members opposite, but it certainly would not be practised by us. The hon. member said that he disagreed with our proposals to increase the revenue by means of further taxation and in the very next breath he said that he objected also to the railways being run so as to show a profit. He objects to our trading concerns, those concerns which are being operated in the interests of the people, and rendering the people considerable service receiving from the people just payment for services rendered. He says that they must be operated not to show a profit, and then he says that he declines to agree to our proposals to increase taxation. How would the hon. member then assist the leader of the Opposition to adjust the finances of the State? I have said and I repeat, that we should not overcharge the people who are using our railways, but that we should raise

revenue by taxation in a more equitable manner. We hope eventually to get the people to agree to a form of taxation which will fall upon those best able to contribute towards the cost of government, and in this way we hope to relieve the producers from exorbitant railway rates and other charges imposed by our friends opposite. Is it not a remarkable thing that while the hon. member for Northam complained that the railways should not be expected to show a profit, in one of the years of the administration of the present Opposition they showed their biggest profit?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Good management.

The PREMIER: Good management, yes, by putting extra charges on the settlers and on the new settlers particularly, and then the hon. member says he does not believe in the railways being run at a profit. What excuse will the hon. member give for that pernicious act of his in making an extra charge of 1s. a ton on all produce carried on new railways? It might be the method of our friends opposite of adjusting the finances by calling on those least able to bear the burden to do so.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You applauded that.

The PREMIER: I am now referring to the criticism of the member for Northam and I want to know why he believes that the railways should not earn a profit at the present time, while during the term his Government were in power they showed a big profit and his Government increased the charges? Is that the system of government the member for Northam would now urge us to adopt? Let me tell him that we do not propose to follow that course. Notwithstanding the losses we have experienced and the trying times we are passing through from a financial point of view, we abolished that special rate as from the 1st July last, and that abolition means that the sum of £20,000 will remain in the pockets of the settlers. The hon. member criticised me for having shown on the Estimates for the first time a sum of £2,000 to be earned in connection with the Government motor cars. It is difficult I admit for hon.

members opposite to reconcile themselves with their present position when only twelve months ago they had the free use of the motor cars for themselves, their wives and families and friends, and it is difficult for them in discussing this question to deal with it except from the personal point of view.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You had frequent use of them when you were in Opposition.

The PREMIER: I do not deny that, and I have extended the same courtesy to the leader of the Opposition, but that does not alter the position that when we are dealing with the finances there should be dragged in by the hair of the head personal matters such as these, connected with the use of the motor cars. Whereas the practice in the past was to have cars known as the Premier's car, and the Minister for Works' car, which were absolutely at the beck and call of Ministers and their families, we have now altered that condition of affairs and we provide the cars to enable our expert officers, our highly paid officials, whom we expect to advise us in connection with the administration of the departments, to move about the country and acquire knowledge first hand and without loss of time. The leader of the Opposition was elated to-night when the Minister for Lands read a report from the managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank on a recent trip that officer had through the agricultural districts. That officer covered more country in eight days and saw more in that time than he had ever been able to do in the past in three weeks, and this was due to the fact that we placed a motor car at his disposal.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We also allowed them the use of the cars.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the kind. These motor cars in the past were for the exclusive use of hon. members sitting on the Ministerial benches, now they are utilised to assist the highly paid officials of the Government in order to enable them to gain first hand knowledge to assist in the administration of the department, and we are rightly charging the departments for the use of these cars. If we did not do that one department might monopolise these cars. Under the system which we

have adopted we can keep a check on them and the payments made by the departments are properly credited to revenue and the expenditure is shown on the debit side. So much for the mare's nest discovered by the member for Northam. Another accusation of a rather interesting nature was that made by the leader of the Opposition and which was supported by his colleague, the member for Northam, and to some extent, by the member for Greenough, and it was that the advent of the present Government made money scarce and dear. Let me say that I had no knowledge of the fact that I was of such great importance in this world. To imagine that I was responsible for the terrible catastrophe that has happened in Europe, the war between the Balkan States and Turkey, and that I was responsible, too, for the bad harvest last year, for the failure to some extent of the harvest this year in the Eastern States, for the falling off of the wool clip in different parts of Australia—it was not until I was told all this that I imagined such a thing was possible. The hon. member opposite used this cry only for the purpose of belittling the Government. He does not appreciate the position. If he does, he ought to be ashamed of himself, because he is decrying the State and is doing it a great injury. I remember the leader of the Opposition when in power, backed by the Press of the State, urging that the then Opposition should at least always bear in mind, when discussing questions of finance, not to draw too much attention to any of the difficulties the State might be passing through, but rather follow the grand example of the Treasurer, to be optimistic and say nothing about the bad things. I have candidly to tell the House that unfortunately we are experiencing a difficulty in regard to our loan money. We know that the money market is tight everywhere. Is it not true, and hon. members opposite who have a full knowledge of business transactions are aware of the fact, that the banks are calling up some of their securities that they had lent money on without question to all and sundry, when we were enjoying good seasons. It is through the failure of the wool clip

and by virtue of the failure of our last season's harvest that they have not been able to obtain the same amount of capital to reinvest, and consequently they have had to call upon settlers and others to reduce their overdrafts to some extent. I suppose I am to be blamed for that as well. I think hon. members opposite might with credit point to our action in raising $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions of money in different parts of the world and bringing it to Western Australia and thus avoiding a tremendous disaster. I think they might have given us credit for that instead of abusing us. Had it not been for that money being brought here, many good settlers with splendid securities would have closed down and perhaps gone through the bankruptcy court. Then we are told, just for party purposes, and to belittle the Government, that we have been responsible for making money scarce and dear, and doing something which was injurious to the State. It will ever remain to the credit of the hon. gentleman when sitting in Opposition that he can see nothing good for the State because he is sitting in the cool shades of Opposition. The member for Northam criticised the Workers' Homes Act and the operations of the Government in connection with it during last year. One would imagine that that Act had been in operation for a number of years. Surely the memory of the member for Northam is not so short that he does not know that the Act was passed only last session and that the board was not formed until February, and that we did not commence to operate to any degree until July of this year. The result, of course, was that the expenditure was a little larger than the revenue, and it was shown in the proper form in the Estimates. Since July last, however, I claim that we have done good work and the figures will speak for themselves. As Treasurer, I had up to the 9th November, approved of 74 applications for new buildings, which meant an expenditure of £29,100; I approved of 42 applications for the purchase of existing buildings, which meant an expenditure of £15,790; I approved of 23 applications to make im-

provements to existing buildings, so as to make the homes fit to live in, and the expenditure in this connection amounted to £4,995, and I also approved of eight applications to lift existing mortgages where, in some cases, interest amounting to ten and twelve per cent. was being paid, while, under the Workers' Homes Act, the interest would amount to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This amounted to an expenditure of £1,960. In all there were 147 applications approved, involving an expenditure of £51,845 since the 1st July of this year. This is a record which, even in the initial stages of the operation of this Act, will take a long time to beat. Having disposed of the member for Northam may I now refer to the member for Greenough, who might be termed the right-hand supporter of the leader of the Opposition. That hon. member, too, made some reference to the dearness of money, although he explained that we were not wholly responsible for it. That hon. member however was careful to point out that we had to pay more for our money than a Liberal Government, and it was simply because we were a Labour Government that that was so. It is interesting to know that we arranged a loan of one million in London last year at $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. at par, and that the Liberal Government in Queensland was not able to raise their money at anything like par, but at 96. Will the hon. member say that it is due to the Labour Government that money is dear, and that we cannot obtain it on the terms we desire? If a Liberal Government in another State was not able to obtain a loan on favourable terms it might not have been expected that a Labour Government would have done better. Within the last few days I received a cable message from the Agent General stating, "Queensland issued through the Bank of England $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. loan at 96, compared with which our recent issue stands high." Then hon. members opposite have the audacity to say that because we are a Labour Government we cannot obtain money as cheaply as if a Liberal Government had been in power. I am repeatedly asserting and I assert again, that the man who

has money to invest does not consider the question of whether the Government are branded Labour, Liberal, Tory, Whig, or anything else; he considers it solely from the standpoint of a sound investment, and if as an investment it is sound, he is willing to lend his money. When dealing with the question of the dearness of the money market, perhaps our friends opposite had not read the statement made by Mr. W. T. Loton, the chairman of the directors of the West Australian Bank, who was once a member of another place. That gentleman cannot by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as one in sympathy with the ideals and objects of the Labour party; yet these are some of the statements which he made at the recent half-yearly meeting of the bank. He is reported to have said—

He did not propose to in any way attempt to forecast what would be the result either of trade or of the transactions of any financial institution during the next six months, but he ventured to think and to say that within the near future, in all probability, money would be somewhat more difficult to obtain, and the rate of interest was likely to be on the up grade.

In another part of his speech he pointed out that the season for 1910 had been a good one, and that there had been an abundant harvest, but that last year the reverse was the case, that the harvest was anything but good, was in fact to a certain extent poor, and that they had had the commencement of the signs of the drought in some of the North-West districts the results of which were not felt during last year to any great extent, but he was very sorry to say that the drought was still in existence in the North-West. Then Mr. Loton said that deposits bearing interest showed a considerable decrease, the specie and bullion being correspondingly affected. Now I want hon. members to pay attention to this, and to the reason for it as advanced by Mr. Loton. That gentleman is reported to have said—

This was accounted for mainly by the freer operation on the Savings Bank account and those funds had pro-

bably been utilised in connection with the Agricultural Bank in making advances to settlers on the land, which had enabled them to develop their holdings in their own interests and to the benefit of the State generally.

Yet we have been reproached by the leader of the Opposition for having advanced to settlers through the Agricultural Bank only £100,000 more than the late Government did in the previous year. However, we have heard how Mr. Loton accounts for the specie and bullion being affected, and Mr. Loton is a gentleman not concerned about politics, but merely about the bank of which he is chairman of directors. He said we had made such free use of the Savings Bank funds as to affect the specie and bullion.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You increased the limit to £2,000.

The PREMIER: Now let me point out that in the *Adelaide Chronicle* of 12th October, 1912, the following appeared, and this surely could not be viewed from the standpoint of the Labour party:—

Although the wheat crop is likely to be a good one, the late autumn has had an effect upon dairying and all grazing interests, which must be felt for some time to come, particularly as all farmers are more or less dependent on their flocks and herds. Owing to a variety of causes the money market is becoming increasingly stringent, and as there is no immediate prospect of relief most branches of agriculture are likely to be seriously affected. In addition to the demands for money during the harvesting season, a large number of farmers are carrying heavy burdens on account of land purchases. Prosperity and comparatively cheap money have, as usual, led to the indulgence of the ever-present desire for more land, and when mortgages have to be renewed in a time of financial tightness the situation is serious for the less cautious operators.

That refers to Victoria, and surely a Labour Administration in Western Australia can have no bearing on Victoria in matters of that kind. The member for

Greenough had something to say in criticism of the action of the Government in purchasing steamers for the purpose of carrying on the trade between the North-Western parts of the State and the metropolitan and Southern portions, but he carefully avoided making any statement that would lead one to believe that he was opposed to the policy. He did not object so much to the purchase of steamers as he did to the steamers being purchased. He said the purchase of the "Western Australia" was a bad bargain, and he kept harping on this for such a time that I began to think he must have a personal grudge against the Agent General, Sir Newton Moore. Because, after all, the purchase was made on the advice of Sir Newton Moore, and on that advice alone. We took the Agent General's advice, and let me say his advice was sound, and will prove profitable to the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did you not limit him to £40,000?

The PREMIER: Let me point out what the Agent General said in his annual report, this being the first report to be received from an Agent General—

Having thoroughly sounded the market and discovered that the "Mongolia" was the only boat available for purchase which would be likely to meet the requirements of the Government both with regard to passenger accommodation and general cargo and transport of cattle, I satisfied myself by a thorough examination of the "Mongolia" at Copenhagen that she was a fine steamer, and well adapted for the purposes of the Government.

Later he went on to say—

Its result will, however, be to provide the West Australian Government and the North-West trade with a coasting steamer of which, I am convinced, the State will have no reason to be ashamed.

The whole argument against this purchase, as directed at us by the member for Greenough, was against the action of the Government in accepting the advice of the Agent General. In other words his complaints were against our adviser in London, Sir Newton Moore, the hon. member's previous leader, the gentleman whom the hon. member was once content

to follow, but about whom he cannot now find a favourable word to say. However, I am satisfied the Agent General has given us sound advice in this connection. Now I want to get nearer home, to come to the leader of the Opposition and his criticism. After hearing his criticism, and reading some of the leading articles in the *West Australian*, his champion, I wondered how that journal had accepted the position when the hon. member, as Treasurer, had a deficit approaching £400,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No. £312,000 was the greatest.

The PREMIER: No, it reached £396,000 on one occasion. The hon. member does not remember these things too well now. He requires to refresh his memory by looking up the return furnished by me and which he will now find in *Hansard*. In August of 1909 the deficit had reached the tremendous figure of £396,086, when our friend, the leader of the Opposition, was Treasurer.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Take the end of any one year, do not take an intermediate month.

The PREMIER: Yes, take the end of the year when it suits our friends, but take any month you like if it will serve for criticism of the present Government. I looked up the *West Australian* to see how they approached this question, when, during good seasons, the Liberal Administration piled up this huge deficit, to see whether on that occasion they had reason to complain against the Administration and to suggest that they should be relieved of their responsibility. But I find that the *West Australian* made all sorts of apologies for the situation, and assisted the hon. member in every possible direction.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did they?

The PREMIER: Yes, they did, and for the purpose of pointing out how unfair the daily Press of the State can be, and that apparently they are no more concerned about the real welfare of the State than are our friends in Opposition, I am going to read some excerpts I have made from the *West Australian* of Tuesday, 2nd October, 1906.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You had better be careful.

The PREMIER: I am not afraid of the criticism of the Press. Whatever the Press may say I propose to carry out my duty fearlessly. On the 2nd October, 1906, when our friend came in fresh from some other portfolio, that of Minister for Works, and took over the Treasury, that journal said—

Except by the imposition of new taxation, and possibly by the readjustment of railway rates—

Our friend apparently had been priming them, and they wanted to give him a lead. The article runs—

possibly by the readjustment of railway rates, so as to encourage trade, the revenue is a department of the finances over which the Treasurer has little control.

To-day I am expected to have so much control over the revenue that I am blamed because the revenue is not increasing. The article continues—

It depends upon the general condition of prosperity and, so far as a large part is concerned, upon the caprice of the Commonwealth Government. It is in expenditure that the people of the State expect Mr. Wilson to exercise his financial abilities. A perusal of the details of the spendings contemplated will show that at least a beginning has been made with needed economies. The expenditure under special Acts is, of course, fixed by Acts of Parliament, and has to be met. This section claims £936,091 from the revenue of the current year, an increase of £39,905 upon that expended in 1905-6. But the Treasurer has used the pruning knife with some effect in the expenditure, as shown by the Estimates. One of the biggest economies is contemplated in the Mines Department, where an amount of £62,144 is to be saved upon the sum expended last year.

One of the biggest economies the great financier had shown was effected in the Mines Department by a reduction of the amount stated. But they pointed out that this saving was not so large as it appeared at first sight, because of the fact that the smelters had been sold, which obviated an

expenditure of £38,364. The article continues—

Other decreases which go to make up the amount of £62,144 by which the Mines Office expenditure is expected to decline, are the stoppage of the extension of State batteries (£15,000) and the cessation of expenditure on miscellaneous mining development, which totalled £6,641 last year.

That was his greatest feat: the selling of the State smelting works at Ravensthorpe, which were enabling a number of small prospectors to earn a living, the closing down on the extension of State batteries, which were assisting materially in opening up new goldfields, and the cessation of expenditure on miscellaneous mining developments.

Mr. Foley: And by having wire-fence explorers out.

The PREMIER: The article continues—

In the Colonial Treasurer's department £37,644 less than the outgoings of 1905-6 is to be spent this year, and this sum is reached partly by the reduction of the subsidy to municipalities on general rate by an amount of over £12,000, while the literary and scientific grants are to suffer to the extent of £3,432. The latter sum is made up by decreasing the annual grant to the Public Library by £1,000, and the annual grant to the Museum and Art Gallery by £1,000.

Unfortunately the trustees of these institutions are now frequently on my doorstep asking for assistance, and stating that without it they must get into financial difficulties, because the great financier reduced their subsidy. Then it is further pointed out as follows:—

The fact that the holding of a general election is unlikely during the present year accounts for a saving of £5,487 to the Attorney General's department, while the Minister for Works is to spend more on works deemed necessary, but the grant to roads boards is to be cut down by nearly £20,000.

This amount was deducted from the grants to local authorities, who are doing just as much in their way to assist the

State as are the central Government themselves. The article continues—

Assuming Mr. Wilson's figures are correct—

Of this they were not too certain.

he will end the present year with a small surplus on the actual transactions of £3,514.

Then they went on to say that this result, if accomplished, would show careful calculation and management. The writer continued—

It is evident that in the absence of new taxation there will be at the end of the year another deficit to add to that already accumulated.

In one paragraph it is said he will close the year with a surplus, and in the next that in the absence of new taxation another deficit will be added to that already accumulated. Then the article continues—

On the other hand the economies that have been promised by the Treasurer are, in the circumstances of the case, probably all that could be reasonably expected. Short of a "Black Wednesday" or an onslaught upon free education, which the people will never suffer, there is little else in the way of saving to suggest.

So much for the year 1906 when our friend opposite first of all took control of the Treasury. In 1907 after his first year's operations, the paper commenced a review of his Budget speech with the following paragraph—

The optimism which characterised Mr. Wilson's first Budget speech is not so apparent in his second.

And then it goes on to give about six inches of apology for the absence of that optimism, and it says—

The preparation of financial forecasts is a work which certainly requires a close acquaintance with all the conditions of the State and with the details of its revenue and expenditure that cannot be gained in a moment.

I have been in office only 12 months, and I am expected to be absolutely accurate. and I suppose I cannot complain of the paper's criticism. The article continues—

The Estimates which Mr. Wilson tabled yesterday showed the chastening influence of time and experience. They represent, it is quite evident, careful thought and calculation, and would seem to approximate pretty closely to the actual condition of the State.

The hon. member then anticipated a deficit of £77,522 on the year's operations. Again municipalities suffered to the extent of £43,183, and roads and bridges to the extent of £5,606. Mr. Wilson's estimate of the accumulated deficit at the end of the year was £286,251, and after having told the House that, he concluded by saying—

I claim to have shown that notwithstanding the shrinkage in the revenue and the increased deficit, the finances are in a sound and healthy condition and that Ministers have a firm grip on their departments and are studying economy wherever possible.

Then on November 25, 1908, when reviewing his Budget, the *West Australian* said—

Nevertheless, as exhibited in the statement put forward by Mr. Wilson yesterday, the Government of the State have not lost heart because a little temporary disturbance has occurred in the finances of the country. Indeed, the speech showed something of that combination of analysis and imagination which is very rare in financial experts.

The article then applauded the Treasurer for being in a position to anticipate a surplus of £2,526, but as a matter of fact he wound up the year with an actual deficit of £101,537. Then followed his summary dismissal. His then Premier was so elated with the hon. member's management of the finances during those three years he had been in the Treasury that he summarily dismissed him and took charge of the Treasury himself, and that action had the result of saving this State from financial disaster. I merely make these references to show the differences in the attitude of a Press imbued with the desire to assist their party rather than to assist the State. We so frequently read in the columns of the *West Australian* the need for politicians in par-

ticular to drop their party differences on questions of finance and give consideration to the interests of the State that one at times begins to wonder whether there is anything sincere in the newspapers as published to-day—when they can publish statements of that kind when deficits are gradually being piled up, and yet, knowing that the present Government have had to face difficulties never previously experienced in this State, they write all sorts of damaging articles without taking the trouble to base them on facts. They take the hon. gentleman's criticism against the Government without first of all ascertaining from responsible persons, those in charge of the Treasury, whether the statements have any foundation in fact, and they condemn the Government for damaging the interests of the State, and yet when it is all boiled down there is nothing in the statements or in the articles.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is a serious charge to make against them.

The PREMIER: I am going to prove it. Let me remind the hon. member that I sat in Opposition for two years, and one of his colleagues endeavoured to find some opportunity to appoint a Royal Commission in connection with charges I had made in order to make me climb down and apologise. But I have always been careful to make myself fully acquainted with the facts before making a statement which I could not fully prove. I am going to prove that the hon. gentleman, with all his prying proclivities, was not able to find out the actual facts before coming along with his indictment of the Government. Let me now get down to the main points in the hon. gentleman's attack. I have alluded to what he had to say as to the tightness of the money market, and how he imagines we are responsible for that condition of affairs. Then he said we had done something tantamount to hoodwinking and juggling with the finances in connection with the strengthening of Victoria Quay; he said we were robbing the people of the metropolitan area in connection with water supplies in the interests of people on the goldfields.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did not say that.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman did say that. Then he dealt with several personal matters. He stated that I said he was to wait on my doorstep when he required certain information in connection with the finances; he made reference to the use of a motor car to take home the first joint of beef I secured from the State meat stall.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did you not take it home in a motor car?

The PREMIER: I did. But I did not take the hon. member's daughter in a hired motor car round Cottesloe for a blow and charge it up to the State, which caused a query from the Auditor General as to whether the wives and daughters of Ministers are entitled to free transit about the country. Nor do we permit the use of Government cars for Ministers' wives to go shopping at the Bon Marche.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you not taken your wife out in the car?

The PREMIER: I have, but I have never permitted her to hire one and charge it up to the State. When the hon. gentleman talks about the use of motor cars let him look at his own free use of them, and let him try in future when dealing with matters affecting the welfare of the State to deal with them generally.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do not be so childish.

The PREMIER: Then the hon. member made some reference to my attack on Mr. Hedges, which I will deal with more fully later on, and he referred to the increased pay to the men in the railways as an iniquitous burden to place on the railway system. Giving a minimum wage of 9s. per day to those railway servants is, in the opinion of the leader of the Opposition, an iniquitous act! I am sure the employees on the railway system will be exceedingly pleased to learn that it is the opinion of my friend opposite that 9s. per day to men who are endeavouring to keep themselves, their wives and families in decency is too much. Then he made reference to the Treasurer's Advance Account, and what he termed my mutilation of it. I will deal with that matter first. The hon. member said that I suggested a dangerous expedient under the cloak of legality. Let me in turn

say that the hon. gentleman practised a dangerous expedient, not under the cloak of legality, but illegally in connection with the Treasurer's Advance. He never obtained an appropriation from Parliament for the expenditure of a single penny from the Treasurer's Advance, but in the first Estimates I introduced I asked for an appropriation, and duly received it, of £250,000. After going into the question, however, I came to the conclusion that this in itself was not sufficient, and I conferred with the Under Treasurer and the Auditor General. The hon. member suggested a method whereby we might be able to adjust this question of the Treasurer's Advance, and I want to say right here that, seeing the hon. gentleman was in the Treasury for four years without discovering that suggestion, and seeing that the course he advised had been approved just about six weeks before he made the suggestion, it appears very much as if he had received information from somebody in the department that this proposal had been adopted and then made the suggestion in this House in order to make it appear, and the people to believe, that he was responsible for this adjustment. On the suggestion of the Under Treasurer, which appears on the file under date 25th September, we are now going to provide in the Appropriation Act a schedule known as Schedule "F," and which will read as follows—

Advance to Treasurer. To be issued, if and when required from the Public Account, to enable the Treasurer to make advances to public officers or on account of other Governments, etcetera, or to pay expenses of an unforeseen nature in connection with services or works, which, if foreseen, would have been charged against Consolidated Revenue Fund or General Loan Fund; the disbursements under this appropriation pertaining to the said funds respectively to be transferred monthly to the respective votes and services, and to be shown as excesses thereon or as new items; and such expenditure to be subsequently submitted to Parliament for specific appropriation; the

whole amount to be adjusted not later than 30th June, 1914.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is what I suggested.

The PREMIER: It is what the hon. member suggested, and that fact bears out my statement that he apparently had been getting information from inside the department.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Mr. Chairman, allow me the privilege of denying that I ever discussed this question with any officer in the Treasury since I left the Treasury. I have never seen any of the Treasurer's officers or discussed the question with them.

The PREMIER: This was submitted for my approval—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do you not accept that denial?

The PREMIER: Oh, yes, I accept it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Thank you.

The PREMIER: I would not be so ungentlemanly as not to do so. This was submitted for my approval on the 27th September and was adopted on the 30th September, and then the hon. gentleman, when I interjected, in answer to his suggestion, that it was exactly what I proposed to do, said, "You are always following my suggestions." The hon. member said that I implied by my statement that the Wilson Government had improperly withheld trading concerns from the Estimates because in this year's Estimates I provided for an appropriation by Parliament to carry on the operations at the Boyup quarry and the Fremantle harbour works, and taking into account the amount received from various departments for the services performed by those trading concerns. Because I have done that the hon. member said I implied that the Wilson Government had wrongfully withheld information regarding the trading concerns. I asked him how he dealt with the trading concern, when he was Treasurer and he said, "We had none." I was not surprised at that answer, because I always have contended that although he was Treasurer he was never fully acquainted with the operations of the Government. The State batteries were in operation long before we came along. The railways had been oper-

ating for many years before we came into office. The Water Supply Department were carrying on operations long before we came along, the harbours were operating long before the present Government came into office, the aborigines station in the North-West was operating long before we came into office. The Government printing office, the Government abattoirs, and the cool storage works were all operating before the Government came into power, and to the number I might also add the Government sawmills.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I was referring to the Boya quarries.

The PREMIER: Yet the hon. member claims that his Government had no trading concerns. When we came into office we discovered that they had had a Trading Bill drafted ready to submit to Parliament about three years ago. It is rather interesting to know that the Wilson Government found it necessary to draft a Trading Bill to submit to Parliament when as he contends his Government had no trading concerns to which it could apply. The hon. member did not know what he was talking about.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do you know what was in that draft Bill?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You do not know.

The PREMIER: Yes, I do, and I might say that I hope to introduce a Trading Accounts Bill before the session closes and there will be a little more in it than there was in his draft Bill.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You do not know what was in it or even what it was for.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition endeavoured to belittle the Government because it is part of our policy to expend loan moneys on works of a reproductive nature, and he explained that that term should cover works which would produce sufficient interest and sinking fund during the life of the loan. Because we have not been able to do that during the last year, he hurled it against the Government as a serious charge, and he went on to say that we had expended something like £600,000 on works which could not be termed reproductive

and he said that expenditure was in the direction of land resumption, rails and fastenings, rolling stock, immigration, the Fremantle dock, sewerage, railway improvements and the construction of railways, the total loan expenditure being £2,500,000 odd. All this money has been expended, and the hon. member said some of these works were not reproductive. A few moments later, when speaking of the total Loan funds expended the hon. member said the Colonial Treasurer had forgotten that the whole of that money was spent on commitments left by his predecessors. Here, on the one hand he says we do not keep to our platform, and then on the other he says we had to find the money to meet his commitments. That might be good argument for the purpose of laying a charge against the Government, and causing some little agitation in the Labour ranks, but the hon. member might have been honest enough to say that we had to expend that money whether we desired to do so or not.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You did not have to spend it; you need not have spent money on roadmaking for instance.

The PREMIER: The money already spent on roadmaking would have been useless unless we had completed it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: And we are still continuing to do it and will do so until the policy of clearing roads in our new districts is completed. Otherwise it would be much the same as saying that we should not expend money to complete the rabbit-proof fence. Would it not be absurd to erect two thousand miles of rabbit-proof fence and leave one hundred miles incomplete, thus allowing the rabbits to come in and rendering the whole expenditure waste rather than take the balance required to complete the work from loan funds?

Hon. Frank Wilson: You will have to explain that at the next Labour conference.

The PREMIER: When we can expend this money out of the consolidated revenue funds, it will be done, but except in cases

of this kind the whole of the money expended from Loan funds will be on works of a reproductive nature. The leader of the Opposition said some of this money had been squandered, literally squandered.

Hon. Frank Wilson: So it has been.

The PREMIER: He pointed to the purchase of the steamships as so much money squandered. The people who are obtaining meat at from 1d. to 3d. a pound cheaper in many cases as a result of the purchase of these steamers will appreciate the expenditure of money in this direction. That money has not been squandered any more than the money expended in the construction of railways. The North-west of our State, unfortunately, cannot be connected with our railway system, it would be too costly altogether, and the only other method of assisting in the development of that portion of the State is by giving the people proper steamship facilities. We are of opinion that the people in the North-West were not getting justice from those who were operating the shipping and the meat rings. So far as the meat question is concerned, the hon. member said we had squandered money by opening a meat stall in the Perth markets. It will be of interest, if I tell the hon. member that the Treasury never spent a single penny in connection with the purchase and sale of the meat. The Treasury never paid a single penny.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You got it on credit then.

The PREMIER: We established a suspense account until the operations in connection with the first shipment were concluded, and we paid into that account something over £4,000, and then withdrew something like £4,000 from the account, leaving a balance of something like £470 which was paid from the suspense account into the Treasury, and the Treasury never spent a single penny. If that is squandering money, all I can say is that all of us would like to do it in our private life and business. If the hon. member cannot find better arguments than that, his case must be very weak indeed. Dealing with the attack I made on Mr. Hedges, the member for Leederville (Mr. Gill) pointed out that while Mr. Hedges prob-

ably acted on behalf of a company in which he has nineteen-twentieths of the shares, it could not be claimed that I was unkind when I said he took up this country in his own personal interest. The leader of the Opposition asked us to imagine five thousand acres of country providing the sleepers required for the Trans-Australian railway. I never said that such would be the case. At the same time I can say that Mr. Hedges has in that five thousand acres of country some of the best jarrah country in Western Australia, and without spending a single shilling he can easily sell that timber on his land at something like £2 or £3 an acre. In fact I am assured that he can get even more. There is five thousand acres of it, and he got the block, I think, at about £2 an acre.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I think you said 10s. an acre.

The PREMIER: That is right, it is 10s. an acre. And he could get £2 or £3 an acre for that timber and not have to spend a single shilling. Of course he could only get that so long as there is a demand for jarrah, and he was concerned about jarrah being used as against karri.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are making a scandalous statement. What price could he get per load?

The PREMIER: I said he would get £2 or £3 an acre royalty.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He could not get it; it is impossible.

The PREMIER: Of course, according to the hon. member it is impossible, but that is what any number of settlers in the South-West are doing at the present time.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What nonsense! Would he get 6s. or 7s. a load in the rough?

The PREMIER: The hon. member concluded by taking me to task for what he termed my mean spying proclivities. I would be somewhat ashamed of myself and rightly too—

Hon. Frank Wilson: You ought to be.

The PREMIER: I would be somewhat ashamed of myself if I got down to the same mean spying proclivities the hon. member indulged in to obtain material with which to attack the Government.

The hon. member said the reply given him when he asked for certain information, was an impudent one. He said it was to the effect that he must wait on my doorstep until such time as I was ready to supply the information. But what do we discover the position to be? The hon. member first of all applied to the accountant of the Treasury Department. He is not an officer who is ever approached by the public in matters of this kind.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Certainly he is.

The PREMIER: The hon. member would not permit that for a moment. The person in charge of the Treasury to supply this information of a public nature is the Under-Treasurer.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What nonsense!

The PREMIER: It would be interesting to know why the leader of the Opposition should go to the accountant when the proper source for obtaining the information, as the hon. member who was Treasurer for four years well knows, is the Under-Treasurer. The hon. member did not go to the Under-Treasurer. He was not satisfied with the mean spying proclivities which he asserts exist in others, he went to the Government Lithographer for the purpose of obtaining some particulars.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I told you what I did, I went to the Government Lithographer first.

The PREMIER: The hon. member went to the Government Lithographer to get information in connection with Government accounts which had nothing to do with that official. If the hon. member desired the information he could have obtained it in the same way as anyone else. But not content with this, he went along to the Auditor General.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I told the Premier and the House when I was speaking exactly what I did. I went to the Government Lithographer first and then to the accountant of the Treasury and the accountant referred me to the Under-Treasurer and the Under-Treasurer referred me to the Premier—the proper course to follow with regard to an item which is public property and which the

Premier then tried to hide, which he is trying to do now.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Premier gave way to the hon. member and I cannot allow him to make a long speech in explanation which should be made afterwards.

The PREMIER: I asked for an explanation why a reply was sent to the leader of the Opposition of such a nature as could be termed impudent. The Under-Treasurer wrote a minute as follows:—

I have read the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in regard to certain information that he had asked for from the Treasury accountant, not the Under-Treasurer; and I shall be glad if you will be good enough to have an independent inquiry made of what took place from the time Mr. Wilson asked the question to the time when he obtained his answer.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I never got the answer.

The Treasury accountant reported to me that he had been asked to supply the information and requested instructions. I immediately obtained *Hansard* for the purpose of seeing what you had said on the subject, and visited your office for the purpose of obtaining your instructions personally, but you were busy at the time, and I requested your secretary to bring the matter under your notice. The instructions I obtained were that it was a "land matter and that you would supply the information." I returned to my office and asked the Treasury accountant whether he had been requested to personally supply the information or whether it was intended that I should reply; and he informed me that he had been asked to supply it. I said "Very well then, you must furnish the reply," at the same time conveying to him the words above stated. I know nothing further of the matter; but at the same time the Under-Treasurer's name has been mentioned, and I therefore hope that you will have a report from the other officers concerned.

The secretary to the Premier wrote as follows:—

In response to your request I beg to add my few remarks with regard to the recent inquiries from the Hon. Frank Wilson. The first moment the matter was brought under my personal notice was when Mr. Eliot, Under-Treasurer, asked me for a copy of the *Hansard* containing the Budget speech. He then came to this office with that portion of the Budget, page 2540, beginning "an increase in salaries" down to "Lithographer £1,250." Mr. Eliot stated that Mr. Wilson was asking for an explanation of the figures and that as they were not supplied by the Treasury (and by the way, as they were shown on both sides of the ledger it was not a serious matter) he thought that the department concerned should furnish an explanation. I then entered your room with the *Hansard*. You spoke to Mr. Bath—

Immediately I got the request I rang for Mr. Bath.

and then requested me to inform Mr. Eliot that "Mr. Bath would supply you (the Premier) with the information and you would have it conveyed to the Hon. Frank Wilson." This is all I know about the matter until the remarks about "an impudent telephone message" and "sitting upon the Premier's doorstep" were mentioned by you to me. May I add, no message of any kind was sent from either of the rooms controlled by you as Premier in connection with this matter, and therefore it is essentially a Treasury matter and not a Premier's office one.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will you apologise then for the message you sent?

The Minister for Lands: Wait until the Premier has finished.

The PREMIER: Then I asked Mr. Randell, the Treasury accountant to give his view and he reported—

Yesterday morning Mr. Wilson rang me up and desired to know if the £1,250 due by the Lands Department to the Litho Department on 30th June, 1911, and not paid until the following financial year was for special services or

the ordinary department work. I told him I thought it was the latter, but I would have it looked up and he would be advised later. I looked up the point and informed the Under-Treasurer and asked for his instructions as to replying to Mr. Wilson. The Under-Treasurer instructed me not to supply the information until after he had seen you. After having seen you, the Under-Treasurer requested me to ring up Mr. Wilson and inform him "that any information he desired would be supplied by the Premier on applying to him." I rang Mr. Wilson up in the afternoon but he was not at his office. I then delivered the following message to the lady who answered the telephone: "In reference to the information required by Mr. Wilson *re* £1,250 due by the Lands to the Litho. Department, will you please inform Mr. Wilson that I referred the matter to the Under Treasurer, who referred it to the Premier, and I was instructed to advise him (Mr. Wilson) that any information he desired the Hon. the Premier would be pleased to supply it on his applying to him."

Mr. Moore: Red tape.

The PREMIER: Let me point out that if it is red tape the present leader of the Opposition is responsible for having introduced it. The definite instructions given by the ex-Colonial Treasurer, the present leader of the Opposition, to the officers of the various departments was that no information was to be supplied to the public, including members of Parliament, apart from what was already published and supplied, except by the consent of and through the Minister in charge of the department.

Hon. Frank Wilson: This is published.

The PREMIER: If it was published there was no need for details. I once applied to the Under Treasurer for details of the amount paid by way of subsidy and special grants to municipalities and roads boards, and I was told that I must apply to the Treasurer for information other than was given in the Public Accounts.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: The Under Treasurer tells me definitely that that was the instruction, and it is borne out by the fact that on that occasion I applied to the then Acting Treasurer; and the Minister for Mines has a minute now on the files in connection with the Mines and Railways Departments. Also the reply I received was, "I will look into the question and give you the details later"; and a week later at my private address I received the information I required. The hon. member can excuse himself as much as he likes, but the fact remains that the instructions were given that no details should be given to the public or to a member of Parliament beyond what was shown in the Public Accounts and published through the newspapers, unless by permission and through the Treasurer. Now the hon. member complains that I sent him a reply that he was to sit on my doorstep. But that is wrong. I did what he would have done. I rang up the Minister immediately concerned, and asked him to get the details, and he replied that he would get them and supply them.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What have you done with them?

The Minister for Lands: I handed them to you before you made your speech.

Hon. Frank Wilson: All it said was "self-explanatory."

The PREMIER: When I asked for information and was told I could secure it through the Minister I was glad enough to go to the Minister and get it, and I did not come to the House and accuse anyone of prying proclivities. The hon. member was not the one to do that. He had to come to the House and get some kudos out of it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is for me to go to the public officer for the information and get it.

The PREMIER: The officer is not always in the position to supply it. Did the hon. member go to Mr. Randell because his father was a good Liberal?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Rubbish! What next! They are all good Liberals.

The PREMIER: The hon. member would never dream of doing that! He knows his marks in the public service the same as most of us. When I wanted

information I looked to the Minister to obtain it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I will not go to the Minister.

The PREMIER: Then you will not get it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I will go to the public officer and I will get it.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member wants information that is not supplied to the rest of the public he will get it from the Minister or go without it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: If I cannot get it from the officers I will get it from this House. If I do not get it here I will get it through another place.

Mr. Lewis: So there!

The PREMIER: We will let it go at that.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I will see you far enough before I sit on your doorstep.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. Frank Wilson: Just like the member for Mount Margaret said the other night!

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask the hon. member to keep order.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I am quite willing if the others will do the same.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition said that, having renewed the appointment of Mr. Short as Commissioner of Railways, we apparently had dropped our policy of bringing the railways under ministerial control, but the hon. member will probably learn with some pleasure the fact that in offering that reappointment to Mr. Short we safeguarded the position by providing that if at any time the railways should be brought under ministerial control he would accept the position of General Manager and have no claim against the Government for loss of office. So we have safeguarded the position. If Parliament decides to bring the railways under ministerial control Mr. Short will become General Manager without any right of claim to compensation for loss of office. That would not have been done by our friends opposite. This brings me to the point referred to by the member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) who was very hard up for arguments on financial

matters and had to refer to certain porters being asked what platform a train started from and to certain luggage. It reminded me of the lady who went up to a porter and asked what time the next train went to Midland Junction, and the porter, who had a nasal growth, replied, "A quarter past four." A little afterwards, the lady came back again and asked what time the train left for Midland Junction. The porter said, "A quarter past four." She came back a third time and asked the same question. The porter replied, "A quarter past four: but I told you that before." The lady said, "Never mind; my little boy likes to hear you talk." That is the strength of the hon. member's criticism of the Government. I would like to make some further reference to the State steamship service. I have pointed out that the "Kwinana" and "Eucla" are operating successfully not only in the interests of the State, but also in the interests of many of our settlers who have previously been very hard pushed by the machinations of the meat ring; and we are just at present at our wits' end to know how to cope with all the bookings, and the manager of the steamship service has urged the Government to purchase a third steamer to put on the North-West coast. We are considering the desirability of asking Parliament for permission to do so.

Hon. Frank Wilson: At last you are asking Parliament!

The PREMIER: The manager of the State steamship service writes—

The s.s. "Kwinana" has so far been very successful. Every trip she has had as large a shipment of stock as she has been able to carry. The steamer has made four trips to the North-West and one to the Eastern States, and has now left Wyndham on the fifth trip northward. She makes another trip to Carnarvon for 9,000 sheep; thereafter she immediately proceeds to Bunbury to load about 2,500 loads of jarrah for Millars' Timber and Trading Company, Limited, freight, 30s. per load.

The member for Mount Margaret smiles. We were not foolish enough to fall into the error our friends opposite apparently

thought we would, and some of their friends representing the shipping companies, that after the meat trade with the North-West came to an end we would lay up our steamers at Fremantle until the next season commenced, but we are going to employ our steamers in the interests of all trades in the State, and we have decided, if necessary, to carry timber, and we do not worry whether we are earning 30s. a load from Millars' combine or anyone else, so long as it is legitimate trade in the interests of the State. The letter proceeds—

The matter of back-loading is being arranged.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the back-loading?

The PREMIER: It will probably be stock or coal. The letter proceeds—

On the return from New Zealand, the steamer can be deviated into Melbourne for 200 cows for the Agricultural Department, and 2,000 sheep from Port Lincoln for a settler at Nannup.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Store sheep for Holmes! She has to bring the balance of Holmes' yet.

The PREMIER: The letter goes on—
After the New Zealand trip I have booked a full cargo for the Eastern States—

I am not going to announce the nature of the cargo—

For next season the programme attached is sufficient guarantee of the entire success of the "Kwinana" for the next twelve months at least.

Thereafter another business of an interesting nature will commence.

S.s. "Western Australia."—I am perfectly satisfied with this steamer, and feel confident of her success on the North-West coast. For the first trip she has between 500 and 600 tons of general cargo, which is extremely good at this time of the year. Nearly every merchant in Perth and Fremantle has shipped by us . . . I have booked space to the value of £1,000 during the summer months, which is extremely unusual.

Mr. Allen: He is pulling your leg.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is judging by the ease with which people get his leg.

Mr. Allen: I know a little more about shipping than you are ever likely to know.

The PREMIER: I regret exceedingly one remark the leader of the Opposition made when replying to an interjection by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) that he had so little concern about the goldfields that he would not miss the member for Kalgoorlie and the Eastern Goldfields if he took them to the Eastern States. Judging by the action of our predecessors in cutting down considerably the vote for the encouragement of the mining industry, at last he has stated publicly what for a long time he has refrained from saying. The hon. gentleman criticised our actions in showing on the Estimates that we anticipated a loss in connection with the operation of our State batteries. As I have said previously, unless I could be assured by those in control of our various undertakings that we can show a profit, I was going to make Parliament acquainted on the Financial Statement with their true position. This is the first honest estimate of anticipated revenue and expenditure of State batteries ever presented to Parliament. I am not ashamed of the fact that we have a loss on the State battery system. It has done magnificent work in helping to open up new goldfields and keep others alive.

Mr. Harper: In closing them down.

Mr. Munsie: You did enough of that in the management of the mines you managed.

Mr. Harper: You shut up.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The PREMIER: The member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) said it was unwise that we should agree to lose £8,000 on the operations of the State battery system, but, as the Minister for Mines explained by interjection, the hon. member has no complaint to make against the general taxpayer losing £12,000 by the carriage of fertilisers on the railways.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: That is more than repaid.

The PREMIER: Does not the operation of the State batteries more than repay?

Mr. A. N. Piesse: It is your only hope to-day, a big harvest.

The PREMIER: I have been extremely surprised and regret exceedingly that our friends who, when they were on this side of the House, were so optimistic about the operations of our various trading concerns, particularly the State batteries, and the assistance rendered to agriculturists, now, when sitting in Opposition, should be such croakers, and should on every occasion decry the enterprises of the State. I admit that they do not altogether forget the goldfields. It was only during the last week or so we found some reference made in the papers in connection with statements made in London which were not to the credit of the present leader of the Opposition. I refer to this in order to show the hon. member not only that he did a great deal by way of cutting down votes on the Estimates to injure the gold-mining industry but that he did a great deal more injury by that noted boom speech he made at the Palace hotel in connection with the Bullfinch goldfield, which is being felt considerably by the industry at the present moment. It has done more harm than anything else in Western Australia so far as the industry is concerned.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing I said has done any harm to Western Australia.

The PREMIER: The chairman of the Murchison Associated, Mr. Bertie Wentworth Vernon, speaking at the ordinary general meeting of shareholders in London on the 3rd October last, said—

Now let me say a few words about the Bullfinch. There is not the slightest doubt that we have made a very serious loss there, and no one deplores that loss more sincerely than your directors, who like yourselves, are shareholders; in fact we are the principal shareholders, and the principal losses naturally fall upon us. I cannot really believe that any shareholder would consider us to blame for our action in the matter. The facts of the case were before them all, and I am sure that they

will be much too fair and too just and too generous to blame us for what has taken place. At the same time, as it is just possible that there might be some shareholders who might take a different view, I should like to be allowed to recall to your memory the circumstances under which we entered upon this undertaking. When the existence of rich ore bodies had been proved at the Bullfinch Proprietary mine, the Premier of West Australia referred to it in his speech at the opening of Parliament in October, 1910—it was at the opening of Parliament, not an after-dinner speech. He used the following words:—“Even Kalgoorlie and the Golden Mile sink into insignificance when one listens to the reports with regard to this property, which bids fair to eclipse anything discovered in the history of the State. So good, indeed, are the reports from trustworthy sources that they are almost beyond credence.” Well, this naturally attracted world-wide attention, and as several recognised mining authorities also made confirmatory statements, there was a great rush to secure leases, hundreds of which were taken up over a tract of country of about ten miles. Now then, to show you that it was not merely an after-dinner speech, and that the Government fully believed in those reports, I may say that the Government of West Australia were so convinced of the permanency of the goldfield that they expended a large sum in extending the railway a distance of 22 miles, and laying down a water pipe line all this distance. What the Premier of West Australia said was a direct invitation to the world to come to this new goldfield, and if any justification of our action in the matter were required it is contained in what I have read to you. Of course, we are very sorry for this loss, but it is no use crying over spilt milk.

Hon. Frank Wilson : What leases did they take up ?

The Minister for Mines : They took up shares in the Proprietary, I think.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I do not think so.

The PREMIER : Whatever shares they took up they suffered a tremendous loss by reason of the boom speech which was delivered by the present leader of the Opposition. I just want to explain again, because the hon. member repeated the statement, although I denied it, that in regard to the reappointment of Mr. Jull by our predecessors, I took no exception to it. I took exception to the manner in which the re-appointment was made and I challenge the leader of the Opposition to show me in any statement that I made where I referred to Mr. Jull's reappointment in other terms than the manner in which it was made. I said at the time that the appointment had been carefully kept in the background until after the Legislative Council elections had been concluded, and at those elections Mr. Gregory was a candidate. I never in any way reflected upon Mr. Jull.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Yes you did.

The PREMIER : I did not, and I did not object to his reappointment, and the hon. member can refresh his memory by looking up the statements which I made.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You said that it had not gone through Executive Council and that it was not too late to stop it.

The PREMIER : I said that while Mr. Jull had the reappointment in writing it had not been agreed to by Executive Council and thus it was not legally binding, although Mr. Jull would have had a claim against the Government. In any case it shows the calibre of our predecessors when they offer a man an appointment many months previously, and then do not confirm it. Why did they not confirm it ? Because they knew that if it was immediately approved by Executive Council the public would become aware of it and they did not want it made public on the eve of the Legislative Council election in which Mr. Gregory was a candidate. Then again the leader of the Opposition says that we have proposed to come to an agreement with the Commonwealth in connection with the transfer of the Savings Bank of the State to their control, and he regretted that we are doing that without the approval of Parliament. Does not

the hon. member know that we cannot bind anything in connection with the Savings Bank except with the approval of Parliament? There is a Savings Bank Act in force and nothing can be done without parliamentary sanction. I told the hon. member, by way of interjection, that we proposed to submit our terms for parliamentary approval before anything final was arrived at. Perhaps the two main points made by the leader of the Opposition were in connection with the water supplies and Suspense Account in connection with the Victoria Quay. Let me deal with the water supply first. The hon. member stated that the estimated expenditure shown on the Estimates was £76,000 in connection with the metropolitan supply, and the estimated revenue was £100,000, and that the balance, £24,000, was being improperly applied to Consolidated Revenue and used for the purposes of reducing the deficit. The facts of the case are that the estimated expenditure of £76,000 includes, as regards interest and sinking fund, only the amounts payable in respect of debentures issued under the Metropolitan Water Supply Act. In a number of instances we have in the past issued moneys to the Metropolitan Water Supply and accepted their debentures on behalf of the Savings Bank, and we have made a charge against the revenue to the Water Supply Department, the interest charges on those debentures to the Savings Bank.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is £46,000 the interest? Give us the figures.

The PREMIER: These debentures have provided funds for the construction of water supply works. The waterworks are financed out of debenture funds but the money for the sewerage and storm water drainage is provided from General Loan Funds. Interest and sinking fund charges, in respect of general Loan Funds are of course not shown in the Estimates under the headings of these several departments, but are included in the division for expenditure under Special Acts. The hon. member would know that. The amount expended from General Loan Fund on metropolitan sewerage and

storm water drainage on the 30th June last was £526,842.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Minister for Works said £350,000.

The PREMIER: The liability for this amount will be taken over by the metropolitan system under Section 126 of the Metropolitan Water Supply Act, 1909, in accordance with which section interest on the amount at four per cent. and a sinking fund contribution of one per cent. per annum, will be chargeable against the metropolitan undertakings. The sum so chargeable, in accordance with the Act, for the current year will thus amount to over £26,000 on the capital liability to be taken over as at the 30th June last. In addition there will be a further sum as capital charges of the same nature on the expenditure from General Loan Fund in the current year. The total amount of these charges will be about £23,000, as against a balance of only £24,000 estimated to be available from operations of the undertaking after providing for working expenses and capital charges on the special debentures. It will thus be quite clear that the metropolis is not, as suggested by the leader of the Opposition, being exploited through the water and sewerage charges for the purpose of making up deficits on other undertakings. The general revenue has to come to their assistance to the tune of about £4,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have no right to do it.

The PREMIER: How would the hon. member do it? If he cannot grasp the position I would advise him to read my statement in *Hansard* to-morrow.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the total amount of interest and sinking fund?

The PREMIER: The sum of £28,000 will be the interest charges for the year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And the £46,000?

The PREMIER: And £46,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It must be more than that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will know that we are showing a balance of £24,000 which he said we are improperly applying to the Consolidated Revenue, but we have to take from revenue £28,000 to meet the interest charges.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Your figures show £40,000 difference.

The PREMIER: An estimated expenditure of £76,000 is shown.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Including £46,000 for interest and sinking fund?

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition said that there was an estimated revenue of £100,000, and the balance of £24,000 was being applied in order to reduce the deficit. Let me repeat that the facts of the case are that the estimated expenditure of £76,000 includes, as regards interest and sinking fund, only the amounts payable in respect of debentures issued. The balance of the interest amounts to £28,000 and we have only £24,000 to meet these charges. so that we shall have to find £4,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What legal right had you to put this into the Estimates at all?

The PREMIER: The hon. member will find it if he looks it up. In connection with the Goldfields Water Supply, the leader of the Opposition inquired what had happened to it that it should be in such a poor state that the shortage was estimated at about £48,000 as against £27,000 for the year 1911-12. The shortage anticipated for this year is £43,000 and the reason for this should be well known to anyone having but the slightest acquaintance with the fortunes and prospects of this great undertaking.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Who wrote the statement out for you?

The PREMIER: I have it all here; let the hon. member take it kindly. There is much less excuse for the leader of the Opposition to plead ignorance of causes which must have been prominently under his notice during the recent period when he was directly controlling this work. It is well known that the bulk of the revenue is derived from the big Kalgoorlie mines and it is equally well known that those mines, taken as a whole, are not so prosperous as they have been. From causes which are beyond the control of any Government, the water revenue from this source is slowly decreasing. It has consequently been considered prudent not to allow in the cur-

rent year's Estimates for any increase of gross revenue from this undertaking, although the expansion of the system in the agricultural towns and districts will, for this year, it is estimated, make up for any decrease of goldfields revenue. The total expenses are estimated at a sum nearly £16,000 greater than in the year before? Of this amount nearly £5,000 is represented by increased payments for interest and sinking fund, due to additional construction, and about £11,000 is for working expenses. The anticipated increase in working expenses is not due to any addition to administrative costs, but is accounted for principally by the necessity for increased attention to the pipe main and to increasing pumping costs due to higher cost of fuel and other causes. There is in this increase nothing exceptional or unforeseen and it has been foreshadowed for years in the reports of the departmental officers. The leader of the Opposition's allegations as to the squeezing of the farmers on one hand, while with the other giving relief to the goldfields communities, by way of decreased charges are equally erroneous. There has been no reduction on the goldfields, with the exception that the Mines Department have arranged, with the object of keeping certain struggling mines in operation, to give a small measure of assistance by paying portion of the water bill out of the votes of the Mines Department. The amount involved is very small indeed and no portion of it is debited against the Goldfields Water Supply undertaking. As regards the allegation that the farmers are being squeezed in respect to water supply, the actual facts are quite opposed to this. Immediately on assuming office the present Government sanctioned extensions in the agricultural districts aggregating 110 miles of piping. Many of these extensions had for years been under negotiation between the settlers and the previous Government. The present Ministry summarily dropped all this bargaining and gave the farmers the water they so badly needed in time to relieve them during the past summer of much distress from want of water in the districts affected. Water was given

free from these extensions until the end of last year, and although the rating system approved by Parliament was then brought into force, the free standpipes were not closed down until the dry season had practically ceased. Let me say in connection with the hon. member's statement, that we are dealing with this in the same fashion as he dealt with the Estimates on one occasion when he admitted that he received certain revenue under the land tax which he did not submit to Parliament—which he had not submitted to Parliament, and had no authority to provide on his Estimates.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There was no Act for that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member admits there was no Act for it, yet he showed it on his Estimates. He knows full well that we have decided to amalgamate our water supplies, and that to operate them as an amalgamation we require an Act of Parliament. The Bill for that will be duly submitted, it is ready now.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You must repeal this first.

The PREMIER: Liberal Governments of the past have been responsible for the establishment of State hotels without authority, and we are now asking authority to carry on the State hotel at Gwalia, and to carry on the Caves House at Yallingup, because there is no authority for those establishments. In another case also they said it was necessary to have an Act of Parliament, but they did not bring it in. A Bill will be introduced in connection with this procedure, and in the meantime the usual accounts for the several undertakings are being kept strictly in accordance with the existing provisions. We show it in a certain form on our Estimates in accordance with our policy, but in the meantime we keep within the four corners of the Act by keeping the accounts separately, so that in the event of Parliament not agreeing to the proposition, we have done nothing illegal, and can easily return to the former position.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Parliament will not pass it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is not in a position now to say what Parliament will do.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have no right to take the citizens' money to swell your revenue; that is what you are doing, contrary to the law of the land.

Mr. Thomas: Who is making the speech?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The PREMIER: It is specially provided in the measure we propose to present to Parliament that in the books of the department the accounts of the several undertakings shall be kept strictly separate. Notwithstanding the amalgamation, we are going to follow a course which will show the exact proceedings all along the line. The country has no need to fear that we will do anything which cannot be investigated in the full light of day, or in any degree adopt those tactics which have been imputed to us by the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member knows well that he had drafted a Trading Accounts Bill in order that it would not be necessary to show the accounts in a form different from that in which we are showing them. But it will be essential to submit a profit and loss account showing how we are operating. The hon. member desires us to do this, but as soon as he finds we are doing it he has all sorts of objections to offer. The hon. member made a great deal out of the suspense account in connection with the strengthening of the Victoria quay, but he forgot to tell the House that the operation had been decided upon before the present Government came into office. Perhaps he could tell us the reasons why he concluded it would be better to do it by the system finally adopted rather than that suggested by the Engineer-in-Chief?

Hon. Frank Wilson: What was that?

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows full well, and he can take another opportunity of telling the House all about it. However, this had been decided upon before we came into office. While we agreed to the conditions then prevailing, we were not in any way responsible for the position, and even if we were responsible for having created

that suspense account, and not charging the Consolidated Revenue with the whole of the amount in that year, we would only have done what our predecessors did on several occasions.

Hon. Frank Wilson : No, we charged ours up against the Consolidated Revenue.

The PREMIER : Let me point out where our predecessors did it. The Harbour Trust discovered that owing to the inroads made by the teredo the wharves at Fremantle had become dangerous. They approached our predecessors and pointed out that if they had to do the strengthening of the quay they could not find the money in any one year, no less a sum than £100,000 being required at once. They asked the Government in the first instance to provide the money, and, in accordance with the Act governing the Fremantle harbour, to charge them with the amount, and allow them to pay it back by a certain sum each year until the account should be finally wiped out.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Don't speak so fast ; we cannot understand you.

The PREMIER : That was agreed to, and was fixed up before we came along. We agreed that it was the best that could be done, and each year the Harbour Trust is to pay us £20,000 until the whole amount has been wiped out. And although the money was expended last year and £34,000 carried forward, £20,000 of that is shown on the Estimates this year, and only £14,000 is left to be paid, and that is being paid, not by Consolidated Revenue, but by the Harbour Trust. That is exactly what our friends did illegally for the Fremantle municipality in a smaller way. They promised the Fremantle municipality when in difficulties, and when they badly desired to get Mr. Murphy elected, that they would lend the Fremantle Municipal Council £5,000, and make arrangements for recovery when the council could pay it. It was only by the sale of certain lands at Fremantle to the Commonwealth that the council managed to recoup the Treasury.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Stick to this.

The PREMIER : I am giving a similar instance. However, I will stick to this, as the hon. member suggests, and I will give an authority accepted by Parliament, namely, the report of the Auditor General.

Hon. Frank Wilson : What about this item here ?

The PREMIER : I have explained it. By an arrangement with the Harbour Trust it was agreed to extend it over several years.

Hon. Frank Wilson : But you took all the revenue to credit.

The PREMIER : Of course we took it to the Treasury. We spent the money from public account, and when the Trust pays it back we will put it to credit. The Harbour Trust owed us £34,000, and we are carrying over the balance owing to us by the Trust.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You cannot do that.

The PREMIER : The hon. member did it.

Hon. Frank Wilson : No, we debited up the amount we spent in that year.

The PREMIER : Practically the whole of this was expended before we came into office. Will the hon. member tell me that this money was expended while he was Treasurer, and that he knew nothing about the operation ?

Hon. Frank Wilson : It was not expended then ; it was expended in your time.

The PREMIER : Nonsense. I will tell the Committee that if they go to the file they will find that it was undertaken by arrangement by the departmental officers, and that the Treasurer knew nothing about it when this arrangement was fixed up.

Hon. Frank Wilson : We spent £9,446 and we charged it up to the expenditure of our year. You spent £34,000 and you did not charge it up at all, but put it to the Treasurer's Advance Account.

The PREMIER : Let me again point out that it is in the nature of an advance to the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Hon. Frank Wilson : But you cannot make such an advance.

The PREMIER : Then the hon. member should not have made that ad

vance to the Fremantle Municipal Council.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nonsense, that is a different thing. One is an expenditure on public works; you cannot get that back.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask hon. members to keep order. These interruptions are highly disorderly, and I am not going to allow them any longer.

The PREMIER: Let me read an extract from the report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust dated 30th June, 1912. This report was presented before the hon. member made his attack in this direction. It is as follows:—

A disturbing element in the final figures this year has been the heavy expenditure necessary in the renewal of Victoria quay owing to the ravages of teredo in the piles and other timber work under water. The amount expended on this work was £65,724 19s. 7d. (of which £636 17s. 8d. was expended direct from Trust's revenue), and in addition to this further expenditure of a similar nature will be incurred during the ensuing year, as the piles of the north quay are rapidly becoming eaten out, and probably the whole quay will require renewing in the immediate future. By an arrangement with the Colonial Treasurer a sum of £65,088 1s. 11d. was spent on this renewal work by the Public Works Department, from State funds, it being agreed that the annual cash surpluses from the Trust should be devoted towards reimbursing the Treasurer. Under this agreement, therefore, this year's cash surplus of £27,580 18s. 7d. has been so applied, and from the present outlook it would appear that the cash surpluses from the next three or four years will have to be similarly dealt with. In this connection a new liability will be noticed in the balance sheet, namely, "Colonial Treasurer's Advance Account" £37,507 3s. 4d., representing the balance due to the Treasurer at 30th June on account of this special renewal work. This liability will be gradually cleared from revenue, and in the meantime a corresponding asset will appear as "Victoria Quay and North

Quay Wharf Renewals Account."

There is the evidence that the arrangement was entered into between our predecessors and the Trust in order to allow this work to be done at once, to be done in one year as required. Let me admit for the purpose of argument that the creation of this suspense account was not in accordance with the terms of the Audit Act, and that the possibilities are that the Auditor General will make a report to Parliament, and that hon. members will be asked to consider whether or not our action was a wise one. It was the only possible method of allowing the Trust to strengthen the wharf promptly at a critical juncture. The money had to be found, the Trust could not find it, and rightly, the Government came to their assistance. As we are repaid this amount the Suspense Account will be credited with it. Our predecessors frequently established similar suspense accounts, and have not been very particular about clearing them off. Take the timber tramway in the Cue district. In respect to that the Auditor General wrote the following minute:—

As the Treasurer's approval for charging this expenditure was subject to the passing of the Trading Bill which did not become law, it will therefore be necessary for all expenditure in connection with the timber tramway now charged to Suspense Account to be debited to an appropriation.

Then we have this minute from the Under-Treasurer—

In the balance sheet on 31st March last the debit to the timber tramway (Cue district) Suspense Account was £11,836 1s. 4d. Will you please say whether I am to increase the deficit by that amount by debiting Consolidated Revenue Fund. This is a going concern, because on the other side of the balance sheet, under Trust Fund, the credit to Sinking Fund stands at £2,239.

The Under-Treasurer—It was intended that this should be an advance account, to be ultimately wiped out by the repayment of the tramway people. Please so treat it.—F. Wilson, Colonial Treasurer.

The Auditor General—For your information—L. S. Eliot, Under-Treasurer.

Therefore it was not an advance to a Harbour Trust operating in the interests of the State, but to a private company who were supplying firewood to the mines in the Cue district, yet it was legal for the hon. member to make an advance to the company and create a suspense account until they were able to repay the amount.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We had the rails and fastenings.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had the rails and fastenings, but he handed them over to the company on the understanding that if they were not worn out he would take them back. There may be a difference in the accounts, but the fact remains that the hon. member did not charge the amount up and add it to the deficit which he asked me to do last year in connection with this Victoria Quay account. In regard to the Franco-British Exhibition, the Auditor General's report shows that the expenditure to the 30th June, 1908, was £11,975 0s. 3d. Queries were raised by the audit on the first items charged and the Auditor General wrote to the Under-Treasurer—

As the Estimates do not disclose any provision for expenditure as above, kindly say how the matter is dealt with. Mr. Whitely for the Under-Treasurer wrote—

The amount is debited to a suspense account. See File No. 29847 herewith. And then the Auditor General wrote to the Under-Treasurer—

Are these or any of them final charges? If so, you are aware they must be charged to a vote of Parliament or Treasurer's advance, and in such case I would be glad to know the reason which exists for not giving effect to the law. Am I correct in assuming they will not be included as expenditure under revenue or loan in the currency of the present year.

The Under-Treasurer replied—

Treasury file herewith is my authority for passing these payments.

Then the correspondence goes on till the following minute reaches the Colonial Treasurer from the Under-Treasurer:—

As the Trading Accounts Bill has not passed Parliament, I think that the expenditure should be treated as an advance till the net cost of the Exhibition has been ascertained after the sale of the exhibits, and then a debit can be made against Consolidated Revenue Funds.

Mr. Wilson marked that "approved."

Hon. Frank Wilson: That was done.

The PREMIER: Yes, but the expenditure had been incurred in a certain year and had not been charged up and shown in the accounts.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But we had the money there.

The PREMIER: If the money was there, why did the Treasurer bring down after the account had been closed an appropriation for over £13,000? The Auditor General says—

This is a case where expenditure has been incurred without Parliamentary appropriation and without recourse to Treasury Advance as directed by law. I assume I cannot, under the circumstances, surcharge anyone; as, who is responsible?

The matter was referred to the Solicitor General who replied to the Auditor General, "I think your assumption correct." There the matter ended. But the fact remains that after this account was finally settled up Parliament had to approve of an expenditure of over £13,000, and yet the leader of the Opposition now asserts that he had the money there all the time. That money had been drawn from public accounts.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We had the bullion. There is some of it in the Museum to-day.

The PREMIER: The same thing occurred in connection with the Glasgow-Paris Exhibition and also in connection with the metropolitan sewerage. This latter account was opened in August 1908 and closed in June, 1912, and throughout that period there were debits against the account which were not charged to Consolidated Revenue or General Loan Fund.

In June, 1912, it was determined that the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage should pay it out of their revenue, and this seems to me somewhat similar to what is being done with regard to the strengthening of Victoria Quay as a final charge against the revenues of the Trust. There is evidence of the fact that this had been the practice previously, but the fact remains that the arrangement was entered into to suit the convenience of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and was the only possible fair method of allowing the strengthening of the quay to be done at once by making provision for the expenditure of a huge sum of money.

The Minister for Lands: And the arrangement was made by your predecessor.

The PREMIER: Yes. I do not desire to detain the House at any greater length except to make brief reference to matters referred to by one or two other members. Let us first deal with the question of water supply. The leader of the Opposition accused the Government of extravagance in the expenditure of moneys for the putting down of bores in agricultural districts to obtain water supplies, and he pointed out that quite a number of the bores had proved to be duffers. Let me assure the Committee that this money was not by any means thrown away. It was well spent and has had the result of providing permanent water supplies in districts previously given up by order of our predecessors. In connection with local authorities, the leader of the Opposition asserted that he could see no evidence of where the Government were giving further assistance to the local bodies. In 1910-11 the last year of office of our predecessors, they gave to the municipalities by way of subsidies £11,730, whereas in 1911-12 we gave to them £17,516, an increase of £5,783, and we are providing a sum of £18,000 on this year's Estimates. By way of subsidy to roads boards the late Government provided in 1910-11 £29,927, and last year we provided £36,998, an increase of £7,071, making a total increase in the subsidies to municipalities and roads boards of £12,854.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about the special grants.

The PREMIER: I will come to them. The total amount provided this year for municipalities is £18,000 and for roads boards by way of subsidy and special grants, £43,000, making a total of £61,000, an increase as compared with 1910-11 of £20,000. That is, we are providing the local authorities with £20,000 more this year than was provided in the last year of our predecessors' term of office. I think that is a complete answer to the statement of the leader of the Opposition that he could not find in the Estimates where we were providing any greater amount to assist the local authorities. The member for West Perth said that this Government had been returned to do something different from any previous Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have done it.

The PREMIER: We have done it, and I am going to recount for the information of the member for West Perth and the leader of the Opposition what we have done. We have provided a living wage for our railway employees, for the teachers in our schools, for the police, the warders in prisons and asylums, and the civil servants generally. We have supplied water by means of bores which had been stopped by our predecessors, and supplied the settlers with water on the deferred payment system because they were not in a position to find the ready money. We have provided steamers to ply on the North-West coast and have taken up the running of the mail service on the South-East and North-West coasts at a price £2,500 less than the lowest tender from the private companies. We have taken steps to reduce the cost of meat supplies and by our operations, although of themselves they are not very extensive, have caused others in the trade to reduce the price of meat in the metropolitan district to an extent which will mean a saving of £300 per day in the pockets of the wage-earners in the metropolitan area. We have also seen the desirability of utilising our magnificent karri timber. We are not nervous about

the effect this will have on the jarrah trade, because we are satisfied that jarrah has proved its worth and we can get all the market we require for it, but we are also opening up a new timber asset and are bringing additional revenue into the State by contracting to provide karri sleepers for the Transcontinental Railway. We have abolished the special rate introduced by our predecessors on district railways, which was an extra tax on later settlers as against those more fortunately situated in having been near a railway for many years. We have nationalised the Perth tramway system, and the ferries, and we hope that in the near future all ferries will be under the control of the State. We gave to the people of the metropolitan area an opportunity of deciding on which day they would enjoy their half-holiday. Our friends did everything they could to prevent the people getting the Saturday half-holiday, but we provided the machinery for taking the referendum and the people have now got their holiday. We have provided a pure milk supply, and the result has been the saving of the lives of many children, particularly in the children's hospital. Those of our friends who are so much concerned about the saving of child life will be exceedingly pleased to know that the member for West Perth did not even know that we had taken this step and saved many lives in his own electorate. The provision of that milk supply does not only mean that the hospitals are getting their milk at a cheaper rate than previously, but also that they are now getting a pure supply which has had the effect of saving a number of lives in the children's hospital. That has been admitted even by Liberals who are members of the children's hospital committee. We are slowly but gradually and surely introducing the eight hours' principle so far as it affects all Government employees. We have added to the staff of the railways by putting 20 additional men on 20 stations, thus enabling the men there to work eight hours where previously they were working twelve hours. We propose to add a further 14 men which will make a

total of 30 additional men appointed in order to give effect to this eight hours' principle. Those are some of the differences between the present Administration and our predecessors. The members of the Opposition, together with the Press, who are their keenest supporters, had the audacity to state after the last general elections that there would be little difference between the Liberal and the Labour Administrations, that there would be nothing to fear, and that the Government would be quietly carried on the same as before. But what has happened? To-day we are doing things very different from the previous Administration and the people are appreciating our efforts, although some of them are too blind and too prejudiced to admit it. Some members of the Liberal party are nervous about stating that we have at times done something in the interests of the State. I have heard of members of this Assembly being taken to task by Liberal supporters for not finding something to complain about in the Government. They were told not to give any praise to the Government, to leave that for Labour supporters to do, because in giving praise they would be damaging the cause of the Liberal party. If they could not find anything to say against the Government they were to say nothing.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Where did you hear that ?

The PREMIER : That was the policy of the leader of the Opposition who has spoken to his followers about not rising to criticise us on the Estimates. Those who are not blind to the interests of the State appreciate the fact that we have done magnificent work during our twelve months in office, and that we propose to do magnificent work during the next twelve months, as is shown by the Estimates we have submitted. The weakness of the case of the Opposition was shown in the fact that the most their leaders would do was to get down to small personal matters. He could not find sufficient things of importance in the Estimates to complain about, and had to descend to his usual tactics of bringing

in personal matters that had nothing to do with the Estimates. I think I have given a complete reply to the criticisms of the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Very weak, and you have been talking two and a half hours.

The PREMIER : I think my statement will convince any fair-minded man that the criticisms of the leader of the Opposition are not founded on fact, and are not an indictment against the Government, and instead of being to his credit have shown the weakness of his case. I hope the Committee will appreciate not only our efforts during the past year but our intentions for the future as shown in the Estimates for the current term.

General debate concluded; Votes and items discussed as follows:—

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor, £2,746 :*

Mr. TURVEY moved an amendment—

That the vote be reduced by £1,000.

The time was opportune for the people of Western Australia to prevent the constant increase in the upkeep of the office of Governor. He moved the amendment without the slightest disparagement to the present occupant. Notwithstanding that there was a proposed net decrease of £438 the cost of the maintenance of the gubernatorial position and contingencies had increased. The *Commonwealth Year Book* showed that in 1909-10 the cost of these positions in the various States was—New South Wales £6,672, Victoria £9,870, Queensland £8,896, South Australia £4,793, Western Australia £7,025, Tasmania £3,874, and for the Commonwealth £20,912, making a total for the Commonwealth of £69,264. Taking the 1910-11 figures, the cost of New South Wales was £14,056—

The CHAIRMAN : The question being dealt with was purely a matter of administration, and had nothing whatsoever to do with the appointment of the Governor, because to vote any alteration in the system would require an act of legislation which was not being dealt with. The only matter which could be touched on was the administration as shown in the figures.

Mr. TURVEY : It was his desire to point out the comparative cost in the various States outside of the question of salary which was covered by special Act. Per thousand of population the cost in 1910-11 was—New South Wales £8.55, Victoria £6.47, Queensland £12.98, South Australia £18.43, Western Australia £25.46, and Tasmania £18.13. In other words, it cost Western Australia per head of population six times as much as New South Wales in 1910 and four times as much as in Victoria in 1911. In Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania the private secretary's salary was not provided for under special Act as it was in Western Australia. For the present year the vote was £2,746 for upkeep, which was in addition to the salary of £4,000 for the Governor and £350 for the private secretary. The amount of £2,746 did not include such items as the cost to the Railway Department for His Excellency travelling in various parts of the State. For the year ended June last the cost of the gubernatorial position increased to £7,534, of which £1,015 was voted for salaries exclusive of £350 for the private secretary, and £1,125 15s. 9d. was spent; in other words the vote was exceeded by £110 15s. 9d. For the upkeep of Government House grounds the vote was £220, of which £199 17s. 3d. was spent. Incidental expenses were set down at £1,300, but £1,511 9s. 3d. was spent, or £211 9s. 3d. more than was authorised. For incidental expenses at Rottneest last year £120 was voted and £238 15s. 11d. was spent, or £118 15s. 11d. more than was authorised, so that in addition to the salaries of £4,000 and £350 a sum of £3,183 3s. 2d. of the taxpayers' money was used to maintain an institution which had outlived its utility if it ever had any.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was using his arguments against the appointment of Governors. He must confine his remarks to whether the vote should be reduced solely on the ground that the amount was too great and not as a basis for saying that the office should be abolished.

Mr. TURVEY : The ball room which cost £30,000 to erect—

Mr. Allen : No, £16,000.

Mr. Taylor: It has always been stated in this House as £30,000.

Mr. TURVEY: Like most of the items it was difficult to check the amounts, but there was no return for this expenditure, which the people were contributing to an institution which was merely a retreat for the so-called elite and aristocracy of the State. Whereas last year the salaries for the upkeep of Government House grounds amounted to £1,015, it was proposed to increase the total to £1,046, an increase of £30 on last year's vote. For incidental expenses Government House, the item was the same as for last year—£1,300. The items last year included a motor mowing machine, which cost the people £107 5s. The item for Rollnest incidental expenses last year was £120 and this year it was proposed to increase it to £150, so that the proposals for the present year showed an increase of £91, not including the mowing machine. What had we in return for all this expenditure. We had nice grounds for the privileged few and the Government House ballroom again for the privileged few.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The ballroom is used by more of the general public than the grounds.

Mr. TURVEY: That was news to him, and he would like to know how many of the general public had ever been invited to social functions there. Even so, he did not think it was the desire of the people that this should be continued. He regretted that the Chairman's ruling prevented him from referring to the position of State Governor and the need for some other mode of appointment. He was satisfied with having directed attention to the matter, and entered his protest against this imposition on the general taxpayers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The ruling prevented any discussion on the intention originally expressed by the hon. member in moving the amendment. It was better that the question the hon. member sought to discuss should be brought forward straightforwardly by a direct motion in the House, so that Parliament could pronounce on it. That would be preferable to the course which met with defeat at the last Premier's Conference. In order that this question might be de-

cided in the way laid down by the Imperial authority, no good object would be served by moving a reduction on the vote at this stage. Certain action should be taken in a direct manner, and following on the success of our efforts to secure the co-operation of the other States the adjustment of the Estimates could come and not precede it as sought to be done in this case.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Having supported a similar amendment once before, he supported this amendment. The ruling to-night was absolutely different to the one given on the previous occasion when the question of the appointment of the Governor was pretty fully discussed and the vote taken as an indication that Parliament desired a change in the method of appointment. Western Australia was not in a position to pay the enormous sum it was paying for the privilege of having a Governor. If members were true to their election pledges they would support the amendment, and the reduction of the vote would be an indication to the Imperial authorities that we desired a change. Twenty members of the House would have brought forward a motion dealing with this question had there been the slightest idea it could not be discussed on this vote. The ruling had certainly come as a very great surprise. Seeing the large majority of the members of the House who were returned pledged to reduce the vote by £6,000 or £7,000, and seeing it could not be done on this vote, it was the duty of the Government to introduce a Bill to amend the Act dealing with the Governor's salary. However, members should show they paid some attention to their election pledges and vote for the reduction of this vote as much as they possibly could.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): So far as election pledges went none referred to the upkeep of Government House. The hon. member would not desire that the grounds surrounding Government House should be allowed to go to ruin in order to carry out a pledge dealing with an entirely different subject. The Estimates before the Committee were

not dealing with the principle but with the upkeep of the grounds.

Mr. Turvey: And a lot of flummery.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): There was no flummery about these items. Parliament would not do anything which had a tendency to bring the grounds into a state of disuse.

Mr. Turvey: What is Item 1?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): That provided £250 for a staff.

Mr. Turvey: There is £4,350 provided.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): That was a matter the Chairman would not allow us to deal with.

Mr. DWYER moved—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. DWYER: The vote should be reduced for the sake of the principles enunciated by almost every member on the Government side of the House, that the allowance for the Governor should be reduced to as low a figure as possible consistent with the Constitution. The vote could be considerably reduced if we had a different system of appointing the Governor. This vote could be reduced now without in any way reflecting on the character, integrity or ability of the present Governor, whom we respected for his knowledge and for his tact in the conduct of his office, and for the ability with which he carried it out, and whom we admired for the manner in which he had always displayed great interest in the welfare of the community. Although we considered that the vote might very well be reduced, we could at the same time affirm without any inconsistency that the gentleman who held the office—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not affirm any principle under this vote. It was laid down that in Committee of Supply the administrative action of a department was open to debate, but the necessity for legislation on matters involving legislation could not be discussed. The principle the hon. member desired to have affirmed could not be brought up except by legislation and could not be debated in Committee of Supply.

Mr. DWYER: It would be possible to reduce the vote and still maintain every efficiency in connection with the gubernatorial establishment, the cost of which as disclosed in the vote, was entirely in excess of the real requirements. The surplus could very well be devoted to education purposes. The time had come when we ought to affirm that unnecessary officialdom and trappings might very well be abolished. Most of these items were devoted to the clothing of the office. Whilst we admitted that the office must constitutionally exist, and whilst we admitted the excellent, in fact the super-excellent manner in which the office had been administered by the present holder, we also had to admit that the time had come when we should show by our votes that we thought a different system ought to obtain.

Mr. DOOLEY: When he asked a question on this subject the other day he did so because he thought the time was opportune for dealing with the matter, seeing that the present holder of the position was to be transferred. Would the Minister now state whether he would facilitate the moving of a direct motion on this subject because the present was the time on which action ought to be taken. It was his intention to support the amendment.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Would he be permitted to read extracts from *Hansard* of 1908 on this question?

The CHAIRMAN: There was no desire to prevent the hon. member doing so, but if he was not dealing with the question of administration he would be stopped. What took place in 1908 had nothing to do with the debate to-night.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He merely wanted to say that the Honorary Minister had absolutely shirked, or attempted to shirk, the actual question that members were attempting to get at and he knew that he had shirked it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The Chairman ruled it out.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Honorary Minister and the Minister for Lands knew the desires of members who were supporting the amendment. They both

showed this by their speeches in 1908. The Minister for Works, too, would also know the object of the amendment as his speech in 1908 would show. Also the Premier according to his speech in 1908. The present was the same proposition to reduce the item. If the Government did not desire the vote reduced he hoped they would give the assurance that they would provide an opportunity for members to bring forward a motion on the subject.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: An undertaking would be given by him on behalf of the Government to give members a chance by direct motion to discuss the question as to the method of appointment. It was laid down distinctly in the despatches on this question how to go about the matter if it was desired to accomplish any change and if we were to carry out the wishes of hon. members we had to secure the accomplishment of those wishes in conformity with the method laid down.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The method referred to by the Minister for Lands was quoted in the answer given to a question the other day by the Premier. He totally disagreed with the proposal that we should wait until all Western Australia agreed on the matter. His opinion of that answer was that it was merely a reply of the Colonial Office's Under-Secretary's understripper. It was a reply similar to one we would get from our Mr. North on a Saturday morning when that gentleman had to go and play a tennis game in the afternoon.

The Minister for Lands: It was a reply from Lord Crewe.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Lord Crewe's understripper.

The Minister for Lands: It was the result of a personal interview the late Mr. Price of South Australia had with Lord Crewe.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: All he could say then was that the late Mr. Price's representations were not strong enough, and if they failed that was no reason why this Parliament should not make stronger representations.

Mr. DWYER: It might be pointed out that the member for Greenough in 1908

on the same vote complained about the salary of the Governor of the time and the salary of the staff, and advocated a reduction of it. On page 1138 of *Hansard* of that year the member for Greenough said—

The present was a particularly convenient time for dealing with the matter of His Excellency's salary, seeing that the tenure of office of the present occupier of the position would shortly expire. Some six years ago when a similar opportunity arose he (Mr. Nanson) had brought up this matter and urged that the salary of the Governor should be materially reduced.

The CHAIRMAN: This question had nothing to do with the salary of His Excellency the Governor, and he could not allow the hon. member to refer to the debates dealing with that question.

Mr. DWYER: Was the discussion on the question out of order in 1908?

The CHAIRMAN: It would be impossible for him to give a ruling on anything that took place in 1908. His ruling was that any action involving legislation could not be discussed in Committee of Supply. There was ample opportunity on the Address-in-Reply to deal with these matters, and opportunity also by direct motion.

Mr. DWYER: Under the ruling of the Chair he would be prevented from discussing the principle, and would have to remain silent and register a vote which the public might consider unintelligible.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It was clear that whoever held the office the expenditure would have to take place under any condition. He was in accord with the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) but he could not blind himself to the fact that the expenditure must take place.

Mr. McDOWALL: We could all realise that the money must be paid. To reduce the vote by £1,000 would be only a farce, because the money would be paid in any case. If the amendment were pressed to a division he would support it, but, seeing that the Minister for Lands had given an assurance that we would have an opportunity of discussing the whole question,

he thought the better plan would be to withdraw the whole amendment.

Mr. MONGER: For one he was not in favour of the abolition of State Governors.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not discuss that question.

Mr. MONGER: Well, he was not in favour of the amendment to reduce the vote.

Mr. TURVEY: The member for Coolgardie had said it would be a farce to reduce the item. Would the hon. member maintain the same attitude when, later on, we moved to reduce some other item?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not refer to any other item on the Estimates.

Mr. TURVEY: In moving to reduce this item he had been actuated by the belief that if we were going to reduce items at all we ought to begin at the top. He regretted the debate had now become so narrowly restricted. The Minister for Lands had been allowed to refer to an interview which the late Mr. Price had had with Lord Crewe.

The CHAIRMAN: A question had been asked of the Minister and, accordingly, the Minister was allowed to reply, but it would be useless to allow a long discussion when nothing could be accomplished by it. The question of the abolition of State Governors could not be dealt with on the Estimates, because it required legislation. It was just as well that hon. members should understand that in the consideration of the Estimates he intended to confine the discussion to its proper sphere.

Mr. TURVEY: Reference had been made to a reply given by the Premier to the member for Geraldton a few nights ago, and he (Mr. Turvey) had come prepared to-night to show that the Premier had quoted only a portion of that despatch. The Minister for Lands had referred to the same despatch, but he (Mr. Turvey) was prevented from giving the whole of it, which he had with him to-night. However, he would accept the ruling of the Chairman, and would take the first opportunity of going fully into the matter. Thus far he had expressed no

desire for the abolition of State Governors. His protest had been made on the score of the constant increase of expenditure in the upkeep of the position for the entertainment of aristocracy at the expense of the taxpayers. He had no intention of withdrawing the amendment.

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

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Ayes | 16 |
| Noes | 14 |

Majority for .. 2

AYES.

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| Mr. Carpenter | Mr. McDowall |
| Mr. Dooley | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Dwyer | Mr. Munzie |
| Mr. Foley | Mr. O'Loughlin |
| Mr. Gardiner | Mr. B. J. Stubbs |
| Mr. Gill | Mr. Turvey |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. A. A. Wilson |
| Mr. McDonald | Mr. Underwood |
| | (Teller). |

NOES.

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Mr. Allen | Mr. A. N. Plesse |
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Bath | Mr. Swan |
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Taylor |
| Mr. Layman | Mr. F. Wilson |
| Mr. Male | Mr. Wisdom |
| Mr. Monger | Mr. Heitmann |
| | (Teller). |

Amendment thus passed.

Mr. MONGER: How was this reduction to be distributed? Were certain sums to be taken from the particular items?

The Minister for Lands: That is a financial problem.

Mr. MONGER: Was the leader of the House desirous of every other item in the Estimates being treated in the same way, and would he and his party give the same unbiassed opinion as they had evidently given on this vote?

Vote (as reduced to £1,746)—put and passed.

Vote—Executive Council, £60—agreed to.

Vote—Legislative Council, £1,014:

Item. Select Committees, £200:

Mr. B. J. STUBBS moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £150.

The Legislative Council had developed a mania this session for appointing select committees, and the only apparent reason was that they desired by this means to either mutilate or defeat legislation which they had not the courage to do outright. During the year 1905-6 the vote for select committees was £50, and the expenditure nil; 1906-7, vote £50, expenditure £10; 1907-8, vote £25, expenditure £7; 1908-9, vote £20, expenditure £8; 1909-10, vote £10, expenditure £15; 1910-11, vote £10, expenditure nil; 1911-12, vote £10, expenditure £3. Now at the express request of those controlling the Legislative Council the Government had placed £200 down for select committees from that Chamber. There was only one reason for it and that was to try to deceive the people of the country when another place desired to defeat and mutilate legislation.

The CHAIRMAN : Order ! The hon. member was not in order in referring to another place in that way.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : Then he would withdraw the remark.

Mr. Monger : Allow me the same latitude.

The CHAIRMAN : Order !

Mr. B. J. STUBBS : The expenditure was absolutely unnecessary as had been proved by the amounts required in previous years.

Mr. FOLEY : The amendment would have his support. The electors intended that Parliament should do the necessary business of the country. If the State could not choose men of sufficient intelligence to do the work, it was not right that provision should have to be made for select committees. This session a select committee had been appointed on the same subject by each House, each committee had heard the same witnesses and dealt with the matter at the same time, and yet totally different verdicts were arrived at. Expenditure on select committees was an absolute waste of money. The amount was placed on the Estimates with the direct intention of defeating much of the legislation that Parliament wished to carry and which the people desired should be carried. He would like to see the item removed alto-

gether because so far select committees had been futile, irrespective of which House appointed them.

Mr. MONGER : As to the reasons advanced by the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) he was at a loss to understand them, and it seemed strange that the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) took such exception to select committees.

Mr. Foley : I took the same exception when the last committee was proposed.

Mr. MONGER : Last session he moved for a select committee to enquire into a certain matter. Early this session another place appointed a select committee to enquire into that matter and later on the member for Subiaco, whose attitude it was difficult to describe in nice polished language, secured the appointment of a select committee in that Chamber. Whether the hon. member was the mark of the Minister for Works, or whether he had acted on his own initiative, he did not know. Now, however, the same member had the blessed effrontery to stand up and say the expense must be done away with. Would he give a straight-out statement of his reasons for moving for a committee when another place had appointed a committee, and for his absolutely unfair and unreasonable report?

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was out of order in referring to any question regarding a particular select committee. The question was the reduction of the item for select committees.

Mr. MONGER : It was his belief that he was in order in referring to the attitude of the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was not in order in referring to what the member for Subiaco did in connection with a select committee.

The Minister for Mines : Accept the Chairman's ruling.

Mr. MONGER : That would be done when the proper time came.

The Minister for Mines : You do not do so very often.

Mr. MONGER : The hon. member might give reasonable grounds for his attitude when causing the appointment of what he believed had been the most expensive select committee. He would not mind

if the item was struck out and if members in future, confined their labours to the floor of the Chamber. So long as there was as chairman of a select committee a gentleman like the member for Subiaco we would not get reasonable and fair and honest—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MONGER: One could not help emphasising the statement that the report produced by the member for Subiaco—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MONGER: Was absolutely—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Treasurer should explain what this £200 was required for. The bulk of it would be required, in all probability, for the two select committees that sat together, the expense of the joint sittings being charged up against the Legislative Council. Although we were supposed to represent the intelligence of the people, nevertheless it was by our orders that these select committees were appointed. If we refrained from appointing select committees there would be no expenditure under this item. If the House appointed a select committee it must foot the Bill.

The Minister for Mines: Why so many select committees this session?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The item of £25 put down against the Legislative Assembly could not possibly cover the expenditure of the Assembly's share of the joint select committee on the Wickepin-Merredin railway.

Mr. MULLANY: Apparently the position was that the Assembly had no say in regard to whether the Council appointed select committees or not, but the money must be voted, though in 90 per cent. of the cases select committees were absolutely unnecessary and their work was of little value to the State. Members were sent to Parliament to transact the business of the State in the Chamber, the place where the business should be carried out.

The PREMIER: In regard to the Estimates of the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council and the Joint Houses the Treasurer had really no control, as they were in the hands of Parliament it-

self. The expenditure this year on this item was due particularly to the Wongan-Hills-Mullewa railway and Wickepin-Merredin railway select committees, which necessitated considerable expenditure, and the Assistant Clerk of the Legislative Council had arranged with the Under Treasurer to increase the Council item, which on the draft Estimates was £10, and to leave the Assembly item untouched. The cost of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway inquiry was £63 7s. 10d., and that of the Wickepin-Merredin railway inquiry £111 5s. 7d. Had the Legislative Assembly been charged with its share of the latter the Council item would be reduced to £150. That did not include printing which would add to the cost of these inquiries.

Mr. FOLEY: We were always led to believe that the other Chamber was a Chamber of review with men of solidarity and superior wisdom.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order.

Mr. FOLEY: After legislation left the Assembly the gentlemen in the council should be able to deal with it in a manner creditable to the country. It was rumoured throughout Perth that on one special select committee the chairman gave information to the man mostly concerned with the committee and who had made direct charges against the Premier; and before that committee gave its verdict, that man, being advised by the chairman, had apologised to the Premier. If that was the way select committees were carried out it was to be trusted there would be no more while the present Government were in power. He was referring to the Wongan Hills-Mullewa select committee, which did not do work worth the money paid.

Mr. MONGER: One could not hear a reflection cast on the chairman of this select committee without—

Mr. Heitmann: Lie down.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MONGER: When the hon. member could put him down he would do so. It was unfair that remarks like those of the member for Leonora should be given expression to.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Though in ordinary circumstances he would not feel disposed to interfere with votes put before the House by another Chamber, in view of the statement made by the leader of the Opposition that he was going to get the information he required in another place, if he could not get it in this Chamber, he would support the amendment. The leader of the Opposition supported the item because he was going to use select committees in another place when refused select committees by the Assembly. The hon. member exposed his motives.

The CHAIRMAN: The attitude of the leader of the Opposition in this Chamber had nothing to do with the appointment of select committees in another place.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The leader of the Opposition would lead members to think differently.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not take rulings from the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Since the leader of the Opposition said he was going to get select committees appointed in another place whenever he was denied information in the Assembly, and since one was told the leader of the Opposition was using the other Chamber for purposes of this kind, one must oppose the item before the committee.

Mr. McDOWALL: Seeing that £174 of this money had already been spent it was not much use crying over spilt milk. He did not think the Legislative Council would run riot with £25, which was the balance that remained. We should not cavil at a vote of this description, but if a principle had been involved it would have been another matter.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Legislative Council had the absolute right to appoint select committees when it was deemed desirable to do so, and the expenses of these committees had to be paid, therefore it was useless to attempt to reduce the amount.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—*Legislative Assembly*, £2,180; *Joint Houses of Parliament*, £8,956; *Premier's Office*, £1,172; *Treasury*, £9,536; *Audit*, £9,556—agreed to.

Vote — *Compassionate Allowances*, £2,253:

Item, C. Lee Steere, late Clerk Legislative Assembly at £30 per annum from 1st May, 1912.

Mr. HEITMANN: Would the Treasurer give an explanation of this item?

The PREMIER: This amount had been put on the Estimates because of a ruling given by the Auditor General that under certain circumstances it was not within the province of the Governor-in-Council to add a certain amount to a pension to be paid to a retiring public servant. When Mr. Lee Steere retired, in order to enable his pay to reach a certain amount, provision was made for £30 per annum to appear on the Estimates as a Compassionate allowance. This year it was £35 because £5 was due from the previous year.

Mr. HEITMANN: While appreciating the explanation it was a very bad practice indeed, generally speaking, to give public servants an advantage of so many years' additional service on their retirement. When this officer resigned the Government added two or three years to the period that he had actually served. The same thing was done in the case of Mr. Ord, who had received the benefit of nine or ten years which he did not serve. There should be some means of getting rid of an officer without making this addition. It was a bad principle. The officer had been well paid during all the years he had occupied the post, and should have been allowed only his proper pension according to the years of his service.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If ever Parliament had had a loyal servant who had suffered in health through constant application to his duties it was the late Clerk of Parliament, Mr. Lee Steere. Although, perhaps, invidious to make comparisons, he could not refrain from saying that there was no relation whatever between the value of the services rendered by Mr. Lee Steere and that of those rendered by Mr. Ord. Mr. Lee Steere had suffered in health through the sedentary occupation, and his medical adviser asserted that his life would be materially shortened if he remained much longer

in the position. Seeing that Mr. Lee Steere had given up his post only because he could not remain in it and live, it had been felt that full consideration should be given him, and that and nothing more was what he had got. At the time it was held to be doubtful whether he would be able to do anything at all in the future by way of earning a living for himself, and the £270 pension to which he was entitled was increased to £300. In regard to Mr. Ord, if any years had been added to his actual service it must have been done without due regard to the fact that that officer had no claim whatever upon the State for any such consideration. Although a very nice gentleman, Mr. Ord had for many years filled a sinecure, to make the best of it.

Mr. Underwood: Why did you not get rid of him?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Because it had not been desired to pay him a pension while it was possible to get even sufficient work out of him to represent the difference between his salary and his pension. The two cases could not be compared. In the one we had an officer who had broken down his health in the service of the State, and who consequently, was deserving of every consideration, while, so far as Mr. Ord was concerned, that gentleman was doing very well to be allowed to have a pension at all.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The pensions paid to civil servants were a bit too big. Outside the service a man could work till he broke down, when he could either go into the Old Men's Home or apply for the Commonwealth allowance of ten shillings a week. A man who had a constant job and an easy one at a good salary for a great number of years did not seem to him to be as deserving of a pension as the other man who had worked hard for little pay and got nothing in the end. In his opinion £270 was a sufficiently good pension, and did not require to be raised to £300. As for Mr. Lee Steere's health having broken down as the result of constant attention to duty, he was certain that no man's health could break down through the work attaching to that particular position. He did not know

of any easier position in all the State than that of Clerk of Parliament, unless it was that of Governor. If a member of Parliament with all his expenses could live on £300 a year, a man in retirement ought to be able to live on £270. The fact that he appreciated Mr. Lee Steere's ability and personality was the only reason why he did not move to reduce the item. As a custodian of the funds, he did not think the item was warranted.

The PREMIER: In order that there should be no misunderstanding in connection with the method of paying pensions to retired public servants, he might explain that it was after consultation with the leader of the Opposition, who prior to leaving office, had been dealing with the question of Mr. Lee Steere's pension, that the terms on which he retired had been arranged and this allowance of £30 was something extra given to an old Parliamentary servant in order to bring his pension up to £300. The other question brought up was the general system adopted for paying pensions to public servants. The member for Cue had taken exception to the addition of years to a man's service, but the Superannuation Act contained a provision that the Governor-in-Council might add any time up to ten years to the period of service of a public servant for the purpose of computing his pension after his office had been abolished. In some cases that had been done for the purpose of bringing the officer's age up to 60 years on his retirement. For instance, if an officer was retired at 54, six years had been added to his term of service to allow of his receiving a pension as if he had retired at 60. The present Government had endeavoured to place all civil servants on exactly the same basis and not to make fish of one and fowl of another. That had not been the policy in the past, and a number of claims had been put in based on the fact that others had received special consideration in the past. The present system for the retirement of public servants was obsolete and the Government Actuary was now obtaining data in order to enable the Government next session to provide a

new system whereby every public servant whether he was a wages man or salaried officer, would be able to get some pension on his retirement. The system would probably be on the basis of a contribution by the civil servants, supplemented by the State.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You will not confiscate existing rights.

The PREMIER: Parliament would have to decide that question; he would not make any promise. Except as regarded a few who were reaching the retiring age, the pension would be probably more liberal than at present, except that the recipient would be called upon to contribute some proportion. So far as Mr. Lee Steere's compassionate allowance was concerned, this was a small meed of consideration to an old and esteemed servant and was only costing the State £30 per annum.

Mr. MULLANY: Not being personally acquainted with Mr. Lee Steere he was not in a position to discuss the value of his services, but if he was in receipt of a pension of £270, and a compassionate allowance of £30 was being added, that gentleman was being treated liberally indeed. The public servants had no more right to a pension than any man outside the service who had worked all his life in the State.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order in referring to the principle of pensions. Pensions had nothing to do with compassionate allowances.

Mr. MULLANY: Any man who engaged in farming in the agricultural areas in prospecting on the goldfields, or engaged in business operations, and at the close of his life through no fault of his own, was placed in a position that he was unable to work and had no funds to fall back on, received only a weekly pension of 10s. from the Federal Government.

The CHAIRMAN: The discussion must be confined to item 7.

Mr. MULLANY: The member for Cue was to be congratulated on having brought forward this question, which could be debated at another stage. / /

Mr. FOLEY: Mr. Lee Steere was in receipt of a pension, which showed that the State had acted fairly to him. It

would be noticed that the relatives of wages men and others lost in the "Koom-bana" were to receive only £350. In granting compassionate allowances the first consideration should be to grant them to those to whom they would do the greatest amount of good. Instead of payments to civil servants who had received a fair return for their services to the State, he would prefer that money should be set aside for the relatives of working men who had nothing to look forward to at the end of their working days. Sufficient kindness had been shown by the State to this gentleman and he would sooner that the item had not appeared.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Government Motor Cars*, £2,000—agreed to.

Vote—*Government Savings Bank*,—£20,260:

Item, Manager, £528:

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There was a previous vote on which he would have liked to have spoken. There should be some pause between the different votes.

The CHAIRMAN: A pause was made between everyone. It could not be said that he had not allowed sufficient time for debate right through.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Chairman's idea of a pause and his varied. He was pleased to see that the Government had increased the manager's salary. That officer had not been treated as well as many in the public service who were doing less work. He was pleased that the manager had received a little rise and trusted that there would be further progress.

The PREMIER: Last year the vote provided on the Estimates was £500 and £528 had been expended. That was due to the reclassification being made retrospective from the 1st July, 1911, and in accordance with that promise, the same amount was provided this year. With the exception of one or two of the professional gentlemen in the public service no increments were being provided this year for public servants who were receiving more than £252, but all under £252 were getting their annual incre-

ments as promised, that was, a £12 rise on the previous year. Last year public servants had been paid the amounts according to their reclassification as from 1st July, and the extra amounts were shown, the increases for this year having been added. The two amounts represented the increase on the reclassification as compared with 1910-11. Members would, therefore, appreciate the difference in the pay to public servants.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—*Government Stores*, £11,684; *Indenting Office*, £4,768—agreed to.

Vote—*Literary and Scientific Grants*, £13,775:

Item—*University Extension Lectures*, Perth, £100:

Mr. DWYER: Would the Premier explain whether this amount had been expended? If it had not been expended he would draw attention to the fact that the Western Australian University staff would probably be appointed early in the year, and he presumed they would take on extension lectures which should be included as part of their duties. They were not likely to be over-burdened with work during the first couple of years, and considering that they would be paid large salaries, this was work which the new University staff might well undertake, and consequently it would mean a saving of £100 to the State.

The PREMIER: This amount had not yet been made available. In fact most of the amounts were not paid until they were finally sanctioned by Parliament. In very few instances were payments made until the Estimates had been finally passed. He would consider the point referred to, and unless there was some special reason to the contrary, our University might undertake these lectures and the £100 might be saved to the State.

Item—*Adelaide University—Local Examinations*, £100:

Mr. DWYER: The same remark applied in this case. The Treasurer might make enquiries regarding this item in the light of the fact that our own University would be established shortly.

The PREMIER: Yes, the same thing applied. The possibilities were that both

of these items would disappear from the Estimates after this year.

Item—*Public Library of Western Australia*, £3,500:

Mr. DWYER: A large building had recently been erected, and the grant was exactly the same as last year. It stood to reason that we could not supply stock and maintain a new building and provide additional facilities to the public without an increase in the amount.

Mr. Heitmann: The new building might facilitate matters.

Mr. DWYER: Further consideration might be given to the item. He could not move for an increase, but the Public Library of the principal city of the State was a place of recourse for citizens and outside people for books of reference. The Treasurer might take a broad view of the matter and consider whether, in future, he could not increase the item by at least £1,000.

The PREMIER: With the desirability of giving further assistance to the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery he agreed, but the Government would not be warranted in increasing the amounts to such institutions when confronted with a deficit on the annual accounts. He had pointed out to the representatives of the trustees who had approached him that nothing would please him more than to give these institutions sufficient money to carry on in a proper and up-to-date manner, but he had said it was the first duty of the Government to have regard to those who were producing and until they could be given all the facilities they required, he could not do other than was provided on the Estimates this year, and that the trustees must make ends meet with that amount. If they could not, they must close down. They must study economy, the same as every department had to do. If it meant that with every new building we must have an increased vote in order to have a better display, the State would very soon have to refuse. This institution could not complain. It must be understood there was no intention to increase the grant.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—*Lithographic*, £6,521; *London Agency*, £4,847; *Printing*, £39,740—
agreed to.

Progress reported.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message received notifying assent to the Supply Bill, £492,225.

House adjourned at 12.5 a.m. (*Saturday*).

BILL—SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

HIGH SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT BILL—SELECT COMMITTEE.

Consideration of Report.

Debate resumed from 14th November on motion by Hon. A. Sanderson for the adoption of the report of the select committee and the amendment of Hon. W. Kingsmill to add a new clause—(3.) That neither the Class "A" Reserve, situated in Harvest-terrace, nor any other lands should be vested in the governors of the High School without the definite approval of Parliament, and that a clause to this effect should be added to the present Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): I am not prepared to support the motion for the adoption of the report of the select committee, neither can I support the amendment moved by Mr. Kingsmill. The select committee were apparently under the impression that it is the duty of the Government to join with the High School governors in preparing some scheme for the future government and carrying on of the High School.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is the duty of the governors.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That seems to be what the report states. A majority of the members of the select committee have come to the conclusion that it is necessary that both the High School governors and the Government should confer with a view to preparing a scheme for the future carrying on of the High School. Well I can tell members clearly and definitely that the Government have no such intention and that they do not propose to join with the High School governors, or anyone else, in the preparation of any such scheme. The Bill as sub-

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m. and read prayers.

ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

Message received notifying assent to the Supply Bill. £492,225.

MOTION—ABORIGINES' RESERVES.

On motion by Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (North-East) resolved: That the motion relating to reserves for aborigines passed by this House on the 14th inst. be transmitted by Message to the Legislative Assembly for their concurrence.