

alter the word "sixteen" to "seventeen." That will bring it into harmony with the other clause. I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1 of proposed Section 189 the word "sixteen" be struck out and "seventeen" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: May I draw the attention of the Colonial Secretary to Subclause 3 of the proposed new section. It may be necessary now, in consequence of the amendment which has been carried, to raise the age in this case from 17 to 18 years. The clause, hon. members will see, refers to assaults on girls by a guardian, teacher, or schoolmaster.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It now rests with the Committee to say whether, having raised the age of consent to 17 years, they should increase the age in the case of a girl interfered with by a guardian, teacher, or schoolmaster from 17, as provided in the clause, to 18 years. If this amendment is not made, the first clause which has been amended becomes meaningless.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In view of the alteration which has been made in the direction of raising the age from 16 to 17 years, it will be necessary, I think, to increase the age in the clause referred to by Mr. Kirwan. I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 3 of proposed Section 189 the word "seventeen" be struck out and "eighteen" inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am opposed to the amendment. Mr. Nicholson a little while ago sprang something on the Committee, and out of generosity hon. members raised the age from 16 to 17. Now he wants to go still further, but I can see no valid reason for increasing the age to 18 in the clause in question. Personally I do not think the clause is necessary. It may be said that a guardian, teacher, or schoolmaster may have more influence over a girl than an outsider, but in my opinion that is hypothetical.

Hon. J. E. DODD: There seems to be more reason for increasing the age in this clause than in the other. Certainly a teacher, guardian, or employer has a greater hold over a girl than the ordinary individual. I am one of those who will go a long way towards supporting many of the proposals placed before us by the societies which have sent petitions here to-day. Those women are giving intelligent thought to many of these problems, and so far as I can I want to try to consider them fairly. But in all the matters we are taking on a mighty big risk. There are many girls who at the age of 16 know as much as a man of 21. In many cases they are women at 16, 17, or 18, and by passing an amendment like this we are putting a big lever in the hands of unscrupulous girls or the unscrupulous parents of girls.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	..	13

Majority against 5

AYES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. E. Dodd	(Teller.)
Hon. J. Duffell	

NOES.

Hon. H. Briggs	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. J. Saunders
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. R. J. Lynn	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Subject to better advice from you, Sir, I propose to allow the question to be carried "That the clause as amended stand part of the Bill." I then propose to move that consideration of the report be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next. By that time I can have the matter looked up, and ascertain what consequential amendments to this and other clauses will be necessary in order to put the Bill in order, in accordance with the decision to raise the age to 17.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 9—agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Bill again reported with further amendments.

House adjourned at 6.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 6th November, 1918.

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

[For "Question on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

BILL—FORESTS.

Report of Committee adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1918-19.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 29th October; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Colonial Secretary's Department, Hon. H. P. Colebatch, Minister—Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister) in charge of the votes.

Vote—Colonial Secretary, £498,163:
Item, Accountant, £432.

Mr. HOLMAN: This officer is holding other positions and receiving additional remuneration. Replies given to questions in the House recently stated that he was absent from his office only a very few days. I know that those replies were absolutely incorrect, and I think we should have only correct information given to the House. This item was dealt with last year on the score of the officer managing State hotels, and I think it should be dealt with again on this occasion. The Colonial Secretary's office is probably the worst administered of all. Anyone will see that who reads in the file on the Table the minutes from the Colonial Treasurer in connection with the department. We have another example in the printing of these Estimates. They had to be sent back, and the second edition is not much better than the first. Within the last two years there has been an increase of about 40 per cent. in the number of clerks in this department. We should have some explanation of that, and should be given the full facts. I have no desire to criticise here an officer who has not the right of reply. Even the responsible Minister himself is not here. There has been some most unsatisfactory work in this department, and apparently the Colonial Treasurer had difficulty in securing from it the information required to place before hon. members. We should have from the Honorary Minister in charge of these Estimates full details of the work of the department. The member for North-East Fremantle, the other evening, said that a saving had been effected by the appointment of this officer on the Fire Brigades Board. For two years, when as a member of that board I was fighting for the volunteer movement, the vote of this officer settled the question. There were nine members of the board, and four of us were for the volunteer movement, but this officer recorded his vote and beat us every time. They gave him £100 and he had a trip to the East. He was appointed manager of the State hotels, notwithstanding that he has quite sufficient to do in his own office. Another officer altogether ought to be selected to manage the State hotels. A good salary could well be earned in that position. We ought to have the assurance of the Government that the unanimous wish of the Committee expressed by a vote last year regarding the management of State hotels will be carried into effect. The manager should receive a salary of £500, and devote the whole of his time to the office. It appears that while this officer on whom I am commenting manages the State hotels, two other officers are doing his work in the Colonial Secretary's office.

Mr. SMITH: How many offices is this officer holding? Last year we learnt that he held three or four at fairly large salaries; and it was a marvel to me how he could perform all those duties. The opinion was then expressed that he should be confined to his principal office. Owing to the manner in which the Estimates have been drafted, it is impossible to gather exactly how matters stand relatively to this officer. He was manager of

the State hotels, a member of the Fire Brigades Board, a returning officer, and an accountant—a kind of Poobah. Any additional work that is going should be given to returned soldiers. What is the total of the various salaries drawn by this officer?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: As regards the first proposition of the member for Murchison, the increase of £12 per annum merely brings the officer up to his ordinary salary, and there is really no actual increase. Last year this Committee decided that the £72 he was paid as manager of State hotels should not continue to be paid.

Mr. Holman: But in reply to the questions we have learnt that it has been paid, notwithstanding.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: It has not been paid. The Government did not take the vote of the Committee as an instruction that the officer should not continue to act as manager of State hotels.

Hon. P. Collier: I can show it to you in "Hansard."

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: In that case, I will see that it is carried out.

Hon. P. Collier: That is what you promised last year. What is the use of this Committee passing resolutions if the Government disregard them?

Mr. Holman: The item was £360 last year, and from this year's Estimates it appears that extra money was being paid.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The officer has been paid according to his last year's classification of £472. Since the amount of salary as manager of State hotels was disallowed here, he has not drawn it.

Mr. Holman: On last year's Estimates the item was £360.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: It was £432.

Mr. Holman: He received £50 in addition.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The Fire Brigades Board is an outside body. The question is one of policy whether the Government should allow any officer to hold such a position. This appointment carries £50 a year, which is paid, not by the Government, but by outside boards. If Campbell does not draw the amount, someone else will draw it. I have had some experience of the Fire Brigades Board lately, and find that someone is urgently required to at least keep the board within their Act. And in this connection I have yet another board in my mind. As to the increase in the number of clerks, from 17 to 21—

Mr. Holman: And there was an increase of two last year.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Yes. Two clerks have been taken from the Medical Department's records. The records have been combined. Two clerks were paid last year from the unattached vote, but they have since been appointed permanently. There are now no more clerks than were shown previously. There is no actual increase in the number of clerks.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Honorary Minister's explanation is not at all satisfactory, especially having regard to what occurred when this item was passed last year.

Let me say, as I said last year, that I have nothing at all against this officer of a personal nature. So far as I know, he is an excellent officer in his public service position; and the Government of which I was a member were responsible for his appointment on the Fire Brigades Board. I do not take exception to his continuing to occupy that position. But I do take strong exception to responsible officers of the Public Service holding innumerable positions, with the result that they cannot possibly render effective service in any one of them. That is bad business for the country, and ought not to be permitted. Last year this officer was acting manager of State hotels, for which work an amount of £75 was set down. I moved that the amount be struck out, and stated that my object was to secure a competent and efficient manager for our State hotels, whose revenue of £29,000 per annum entitled them to the entire services of a thoroughly capable manager. The Committee accepted my view, and struck out the item but the Government have entirely ignored the vote of the Committee, and the officer has retained the position ever since.

The Minister for Works: Without drawing the salary.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That does not matter.

Mr. Holman: But he has drawn the salary.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know whether he has or not. I moved, not on the question of salary at all, but on the principle that an officer holding such a position as chief accountant in the Colonial Secretary's Department could not at the same time efficiently act as manager of State hotels. The position was utterly ridiculous, and the Committee agreed that it was ridiculous. Yet the Government have during the past 12 months entirely ignored the Committee's decision. This officer's time must be taken up fully with the accounts of the Colonial Secretary's Department if he attends to them; and there is no department which more than the State hotels lends itself to leakages. I need not indicate why there is greater risk of leakage in the State hotels; hon. members will understand why. But the managership of the State hotels seems to be tacked on as a mere adjunct, a less important post which can well be filled by an officer here in the capital city who may make a trip of inspection around the State hotels once in a while. When we had only one State hotel, there was a profit of £4,000 or £5,000 per year. Now that we have nine or ten State hotels, the profit has almost vanished, being a comparatively infinitesimal amount of one or two hundred pounds. But, in view of the Government's attitude on this matter, what can be expected? As one who has always been a strong adherent of the principle of State hotels, I want to see the business capably and efficiently managed. I do not wish the principle to be turned down because of incompetent control. If the State hotels cannot afford a salary of £500 for their manager, the Government had better sell up the hotels and get out of the business altogether. Apart from this officer's connection with the State hotels, it is apparent that he is receiving an increase. Unless that inference is incorrect, the information supplied in these Es-

timates is incorrect, because the Estimates say that the officer drew £420 last year and they set down for him £432 this year.

The Minister for Works: The matter is quite plain.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is by no means plain to me. No doubt the Minister for Works will assist the Honorary Minister to make it plain. I know it is a difficult task piloting Estimates through this House, and although I have never been in charge of the Colonial Secretary's Estimates, I appreciate the fact that they are perhaps the most difficult of all the Estimates to get through the Chamber because of the great variety of subjects with which they deal. Anyhow I am going to help the Minister so far as I can, but I am justified in raising a protest with regard to this item. I take it this officer drew the salary he was entitled to draw as accountant in the Colonial Secretary's department. What was his classified salary?

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Last year he drew £426. This year he draws £432.

Hon. P. COLLIER: My copy of the Estimates says £420. The resolution of the Committee last year had nothing to do with his position as accountant. It only affected his position as acting manager of the State hotels. When the House struck out the amount provided as extra remuneration for managing the State hotels it was natural that the officer would draw his full classified salary as accountant.

The Minister for Works: He drew £360 as accountant.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, if the Minister for Works knows all about it he had better explain it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is the position as it appears to me: the Committee decided that he should not draw the £72 any longer. He had already drawn £60 of that sum over a period of 12 months and plus the £360, which was his salary, we get a total of £420 for the financial year.

Mr. HOLMAN: That is a very nice explanation indeed.

The Minister for Works: I have given facts.

Mr. HOLMAN: They are not facts. The Minister for Works should speak about matters that he knows something of. There must be something radically wrong if what the Minister said is correct. The Estimates show that the accountant received £420 last year. The Premier's reply to a question I asked a few days ago said that the officer received £42 as allowance from another vote in connection with the State hotels. Will the Treasurer explain where he got that money from? In addition to the £420 the officer got £42 from another vote and in addition £20 odd for travelling expenses.

The Minister for Works: You have beaten me.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am taking the reply the Premier gave in answer to my question on the 29th October. I knew the Minister for Works was wrong. He should speak of something that he knows a little about. What beats me is that on last year's Estimates, the vote set down was £360. In addition to that it was stated that the officer was going to be

paid £72 as acting manager of the State hotels, making his salary £432. What do we find has been done? Last year the officer received £420 from the Colonial Secretary's Department as accountant and in addition, from some other vote, he was paid £42 as allowance, and had we not entered a protest against this under-hand system of paying, he would have received more. But the fact remains he did receive £42 in addition to the £420. Let us know what we are doing, and let us have the amount in one vote.

The Colonial Treasurer: We cannot do that.

Mr. HOLMAN: Hon. members are entitled to know what is being done. I do not object to paying a man a good salary if he is worth it, but I do object to greasing the fat pig and paying an officer various sums of money by subterfuge, and an officer, too, who can go gallivanting around the country and get others to perform his work while he is away. The fact that the Treasurer refused to pay money to the Fire Brigades Board shows that there was something wrong, and it was only when it came to the final request for the payment of the men's wages, that he gave way. Was that not so?

The Colonial Treasurer: Yes.

Mr. HOLMAN: That kind of thing will have to be stopped.

Mr. Hardwick: He was doing accountancy work at the State hotels.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, but he was not doing his work at the office during that time, and for doing the accountancy work at the hotels he received an allowance while somebody else had to do the work in Perth. What I cannot understand is that on last year's Estimates the vote was set down as £360.

The Premier: No, £420.

Mr. HOLMAN: It is £360 on the copy of the Estimates I have.

Hon. P. Collier: And on mine.

Mr. Green: And on mine.

The Premier: The amount of £420 is as it was passed by the House.

Mr. Smith: It is £420 in my Estimates.

Mr. HOLMAN: And he was paid £420?

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Because that was his usual salary.

Mr. HOLMAN: In addition to that £420 he received an allowance of £42 and £20 expenses, bringing the total up to £480. It is not too much to ask that we should be furnished with a detailed return showing the expenditure in connection with the State hotels. The Premier in answering my question said that this officer was absent from his office for one day. It would be illuminating to get a return from the Fire Brigades Board of the amount this officer has drawn for expenses at 21s. a day since he has been on the board. In order to enter a protest against this system of presenting the Estimates, I intend to move in the direction of reducing the vote by £12.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Make it £1.

Mr. HOLMAN: Very well. I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £1.

When this subject was being debated last year, at the end of the debate the member for Han-

nans (Mr. Munsie) said, "Let him stick to his accountancy" and the impression left then was that the officer was going to be removed from the position of acting manager of the State hotels. It was stated then that the work was important enough to have a good officer and that he would more than save his own salary. There was a long discussion about it.

Hon. P. Collier: The Colonial Treasurer agreed with my contention that he ought not to be manager of the State hotels.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not think this system is right. It is not fair, and does not give us an opportunity of judging exactly what an officer is receiving. If he is worth £600 let us give it to him in a straightforward manner.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: There is some misunderstanding in regard to the amount this officer has been drawing.

Hon. P. Collier: In 1915 he drew £432.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: This was his ordinary salary. Last year he got £72 from another vote, and that was struck off his ordinary salary. That is where the difference comes in. What he is being paid to-day was what he was being paid in 1914-15. For seven months of the year he had been acting under the impression that he was drawing the money for the year, and he did draw it for several months until it was cut off. The salary of £432 is a poor salary for that position.

Hon. P. Collier: We do not question that.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: There is no increase in this salary. In regard to State hotels, I agree, in toto, with what the leader of the Opposition has said, that a man who is an accountant cannot devote sufficient time to managing State hotels. I asked the member for Murchison to make his reduction £1. If the Committee carries this reduction it means that the Government must appoint a manager of the State hotels.

Mr. Teesdale: At £600 a year.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: That may be left to the Government. On these grounds I am prepared to accept the decision of the Committee.

Mr. TEESDALE: If this man is doing the work well at present it would be a great mistake to force the Government to appoint a special manager for the State hotels. Furthermore, there is very little complaint so far as this officer is concerned. I hope the Committee will not be used to further the personal ends of any hon. member. I heard the member for Murchison last year speak on this same vote, and I cannot help thinking that there is more than an anxiety on behalf of the public in regard to this discussion. Apparently the hon. member and the officer concerned have come into conflict in connection with some matter.

Mr. Holman: That is incorrect.

Mr. TEESDALE: I understand that Mr. Campbell did not seek this position, and that it was practically forced upon him. The result of the last reduction is that this officer is now carrying out these duties without any payment.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the fault of the Government in not carrying out the wishes of

the Committee and making a special appointment.

Mr. TEESDALE: Extra work has now been put on to this officer, without his receiving any payment for it, and I am not going to be a party to assisting in that being done for the future. I trust we will not allow any personal motives to influence us in this question. This officer has received nothing for the management of the State hotels. In connection with the fire brigades board, he has devoted one day per month at the rate of £50 a year. He has practically filled positions which carry an aggregate salary of £1,104, of which he has received £432.

Hon. P. Collier: You can lose £1,100 a month in a hotel.

Mr. TEESDALE: There have been fair profits made under the management of this officer.

Hon. P. Collier: They are not shown in the Estimates.

Mr. TEESDALE: I understand they amount to £3,000. I hope hon. members will not create a similar position to that which occurred in regard to an official who was dealt with some few days ago.

Mr. ANGELO: I must support the amendment. Civil servants do not make good business men. They have to spend most of their time in a certain groove. Even if we could have the services of this officer for nothing in the State hotels department, I think it would be bad business to employ him. We should have an expert to manage these hotels if we are going to continue them, although I am opposed to the principle altogether. An effort should be made to get back the profits which were being made before this ridiculous arrangement was put into effect.

Mr. PICKERING: I support the amendment on the ground that last year the Honorary Minister advocated that an expert should be put in to manage the State hotels. This, however, has not been done. It is essential that the State hotels should be efficiently managed. I do not believe in the present principle.

Mr. GREEN: The amendment has my support. If there is any man in the service who should have his operations restricted to one position it is Mr. Campbell. My knowledge of him, as president of the fire brigades board, shows me that he is totally unfitted for that position. The position was previously occupied by the member for Murchison, and during his occupancy of it he gave satisfaction alike to the board and the employees. By some change in the wheel of fortune, the hon. member was displaced and Mr. Campbell put there instead. During that time the union of permanent firemen had been trying to get redress in regard to the amounts that were paid to them, in contrast to what was being paid in the other States.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing the fire brigades board at present.

Mr. GREEN: Am I not in order in discussing a man who holds the position of

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee is the reduction of this item by £1. It has nothing to do with the fire brigades board.

Mr. GREEN: In the circumstances I will reserve my remarks to the time when we are dealing with the fire brigades board.

Mr. HOLMAN: Certain motives have been imputed to me. Knowing the source from which these imputations emanated, I did not take very much notice of them, but to show what the position really is I will quote some minutes from a file dealing with this officer, both in his position as accountant in the Colonial Secretary's Department and also in connection with his work on the fire brigades board. The auditor's report which appears on this file states—

I have to report having examined the accounts of moneys received and paid to the Fire Brigades Board for the year ended 31st December, 1917, as provided for by Section 51 of the Fire Brigades Act of 1917. A consolidating Act came into force last year and the Estimates for the year are framed under the provisions of this Act. But the approval of the Estimates had not been obtained in accordance with Section 40, particularly as to Subsections (a) and (c) and the expenditure of the Estimates has been, therefore, illegal. In this connection I should mention that the secretary to the board wrote to the Under Secretary of the Colonial Secretary's Department giving full particulars of the Estimates and asking for the approval of the Governor in accordance with the section and received a letter in reply stating that this had been done. But I find on investigation that the blame for the neglect rests with the Colonial Secretary's department.

The comments of the Minister are very illuminating.

The Minister for Works: Who is the auditor, the Auditor General?

Mr. HOLMAN: No, the auditor of the department, and it is borne out by the Auditor General himself.

The CHAIRMAN: Would it not be better to deal with this matter under the Fire Brigades Board?

Mr. HOLMAN: I am dealing with this officer. Here is a minute written by the Colonial Secretary to the Colonial Treasurer and I will read it to give an idea how the business is carried on—

Report and letters below have just reached me. It is astounding to me to find on the one hand positive assertion and on the other complete denial regarding questions of fact. The truth in these cases should be easily ascertainable and the offender should be dealt with severely. I suggest that the Auditor General be asked to personally investigate.—H.P.C.

That is the signature of the Colonial Secretary. The Colonial Treasurer then wrote to the Auditor General as follows:—

My colleague suggests that you should look into this matter personally. In particular, I have been struck with the fact

that apparently little notice is taken of your comments, and it seems to me that if better results are to be obtained it will be necessary, where carelessness or other faults are revealed in reports, that the officers shall be suspended pending satisfactory explanations. I don't want the Auditor General's Department to be treated either as a joke or as condemnation to be merely pigeon-holed. Let us try a suspension or two and see how it will act.

Here is another statement about this officer. The whole of this work has been placed in this officer's hands, and I know it.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: It is the Colonial Treasurer's work. It has nothing to do with the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. HOLMAN: This is the auditor's report in connection with the fire brigades. It says—

An amount of £3,830 has been entirely omitted from the statement. Moreover, the cash and bank balance at the beginning of the period and the bank balance at the close of the period are not shown.

Perhaps a reply will be received that this statement is not correct, but here is the Auditor General's decision—"I agree with the inspector."

Mr. Teesdale: These are charges of incompetency that you are bringing now.

Mr. HOLMAN: The accountant had all these matters before him. The Honorary Minister knows the position of secretary to the Fire Brigades Board has nothing to do with it. These matters go through the finance committee and he is chairman of that committee. I was pleased to be relieved of the duties. While I was there I fixed up a satisfactory agreement for the whole of the volunteer firemen of the State. I fostered the volunteer system and this officer was objecting to my action all the time.

Mr. Teesdale: It is said you attended half the meetings during five years.

Mr. HOLMAN: That is incorrect. The two years' salary which I received from the Fire Brigades Board I expended in buying a shield which I presented to the Fire Brigades for competition.

Mr. Teesdale: That must have been conscience money.

Mr. HOLMAN: These men have not received the treatment which they should have received. As far as conscience is concerned, I should like to know what the hon. member has to say. He is a mere mouthing tool who dares not speak for himself but is a mouthing servile tool whose actions are discredited throughout the State to-day and he carries them out for base political purposes.

The Minister for Works: I object to the hon. member talking like that.

Mr. HOLMAN: I have no purpose to serve in bringing this matter forward. It is said that this officer was absent for one day, but I assert that he was absent day after day, and if a return is called for it will show the number of days he was absent from his office, when he was paid a guinea a day for acting on the Fire Brigades Board.

Mr. Smith: What expenses did he receive when inspecting hotels?

Hon. P. Collier: He would get 16s. or 18s. a day for that.

Mr. HOLMAN: He would get more than that. It is stated that he was absent from his office one day but I can show that he was absent many days. He was absent for seventeen working days inspecting seven hotels. It is stated also that he received £22 16s. 6d. as well as £40 allowance. In all he received £62 6s. 6d. for inspecting seven hotels.

The Minister for Works: Railway fares and travelling expenses.

Mr. HOLMAN: There were no railway fares. It is an allowance which he received.

Hon. P. Collier: He would not pay for his board at the State hotels.

Mr. HOLMAN: No. He would not pay anything at these hotels for drinks or for board.

Mr. Smith: You ought to know for certain before making such remarks.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not think he would pay anything at State hotels when he goes there. I am satisfied the sooner we put this officer in his proper place and keep him there the better. As far as being absent on one day is concerned, I know that at times he has been absent day after day from his office. The Premier has only to ask for a return from the Fire Brigades Board as to how many guineas this officer received and he will soon find out how many days the officer was absent from his office. I am one of the oldest fire brigades men in the State and I can assure members that the volunteer firemen will get my assistance and support.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I agree with the member for Roebourne that this House should not be made a channel through which personal attacks should be made on anyone, much less public servants. As far as I know, no member is actuated by personal consideration in regard to this officer, and I repeat I have no concern about this officer at all in any capacity except so far as he occupies the position of acting manager of State hotels. I object to him there, not that I allege that he is incapable, or that I make any charge against him, but because in my opinion it is utterly impossible for any officer to do justice to both positions. If the Committee reduce the vote by £1, I understand the Minister will take it as an instruction that this officer shall no longer occupy the position as manager of State hotels. I will accept the Minister's assurance, but I would like to point out that a similar assurance was given last year by another Minister when an item of £72, payment for that position, was under consideration, and was struck out. A similar promise was then made that the position ought not to be held longer by the accountant of the Colonial Secretary's department, and now, after the lapse of 12 months, the same condition of things exists. The fact that this officer occupies this position proves that the control of State hotels for the first time is under the control of the Colonial Secretary, and if for no other reason than that, the officer should be removed from the position and we should remove the control of State hotels from the Colonial Secretary's

department altogether, and place it under another Minister. The department is already loaded with so many sub-departments that the Minister has practically become a rubber stamp. This condition of things has been allowed to continue during the last 12 months in regard to this officer. I shall accept the assurance of the Minister that the Government will give effect to the vote of the Committee.

Mr. Teesdale: What profit has been made by the State hotels through the management of this official?

The PREMIER: I am not aware that any distinct understanding was given that this officer should not continue to do this work. But the £72 was taken off the Estimates on the understanding that he would not receive any payment.

Hon. P. Collier: No. If the Minister makes that statement I shall be forced to read "Hansard."

The PREMIER: He was not to receive any payment for attending to his duties as manager of State hotels.

Hon. P. Collier: It was not a question of denying him his salary; it was the principle of his doing the work which was under consideration.

The PREMIER: That might have been stated by some hon. members.

Hon. P. Collier: It was, and it was accepted by the Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. HOLMAN: Those were the words I used when moving my motion: "In view of the expressed opinion of the Committee that the accountant should stick to his accountancy I move 'That the item be reduced.'"

The PREMIER: The Public Service Commissioner was requested to go through the departments and make inquiries with a view to recommending economies. He recommended that the position of manager of the State hotels should be abolished and that the work should be done by the Colonial Secretary's department. He recommended that for performing the work of manager of State hotels this officer should receive £72 per annum in addition to his salary as accountant. I think the salary paid to the previous manager was £500.

Hon. P. Collier: And you removed him in the prime of life, and are now paying him a pension of £4 per week in order that this officer might get £72 per annum. That is the kind of economy effected.

The PREMIER: I do not know what the late manager is getting by way of pension. Even if he is receiving £4 per week, that would amount to about £200 which, together with the £72 paid to the accountant, makes £272; so there would still be a saving of over £200 per annum.

Hon. P. Collier: Marvellous!

The PREMIER: That is the position. The Public Service Commissioner, after exhaustive inquiries, recommended the Government to adopt this new arrangement. I am informed that the work of managing the State hotels has been better carried out under the

accountant and that, moreover, there has been more profit than when the previous manager had control. In the circumstances I do not think the change was detrimental to the public service. If the Committee decides that the position should not be held by the accountant or by any other officer of the public service, it is for the Committee to decide. If we revert to the old system, I suppose we shall have to provide a salary of £300 or £400 per annum, perhaps more. The old manager received £500. We are endeavouring to effect economies. Economy has been effected by this recent arrangement and I think it is in the interests of the country that the arrangement should be allowed to continue. However, if the Committee considers the work can be better carried out by someone specially appointed, it is for the Committee to say.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am informed by the Honorary Minister that the profit made under this official's management last year amounted to £2,500, and that for the year previous to his taking over the management it was £1,200. In the circumstances, and seeing that it is so necessary to effect economies and do the best we can financially, I think the present arrangement should be allowed to continue.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The profit made last year by the State hotels as against the profit made in the preceding year proves no thing at all. There may have been in the one year a very considerable expenditure on stock or on repairs, additions and improvements, whereas there may have been no similar expenditure in the succeeding year. I have known £1,200 to be spent in a few weeks at the Dwellingup State hotel. The only comparison of any value would be to compare like with like, the stock purchased during the one year with that purchased last year, the expenditure on repairs and improvements in the one year as against a similar expenditure in the other year. Unless we can see all these details the comparison is of no value. I was prepared to accept the promise of the Honorary Minister in regard to this position until the Premier spoke. We have had from the head of the Government the statement that he considers the arrangements of the past year entirely satisfactory that it resulted in economical management, that it meant an increased profit, and that it ought to continue. Apparently it means that the existing condition of things is to endure notwithstanding the vote of the Committee. But while the leader of the Government says he believes the present arrangement to be entirely satisfactory, the Honorary Minister in charge of the Estimates says, "I agree with the attitude expressed by hon. members; I agree that this officer ought not to be in control of the State hotels, and if the Committee carries the motion it shall be given effect to."

Hon. R. H. Underwood: The accountant cannot manage the hotels.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the position The Premier says he can.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier expressed his own personal opinion that this arrangement for the control of the State hotels has been entirely satisfactory, has resulted in increased profit and ought to be continued. Where are we? Am I to accept the assurance of the Honorary Minister in charge of the Estimates, or the decision of the Premier?

The Premier: There is no decision. It is for the Committee to decide.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then the Government have no opinion on the matter?

The Premier: They have.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Government say they have no opinion on the subject, but are prepared to accept any opinion coming from the Committee. No wonder the affairs of the State are drifting! One Minister says the present conditions are not satisfactory, and the Premier says they are entirely satisfactory. Then, following that up, we have the assurance from the Premier that the Government have no opinion on the subject, but will take the decision of the Committee. The Government ought to accept responsibility. If they have no opinion in respect to the control of State hotels, what is to be expected of them in regard to the control of huge departments? We have had too many exhibitions of this want of policy on the part of the Government.

Mr. HARDWICK: I am astonished at the energy of some members in regard to this question. One hon. member suggested that some friction existed between the member for Murchison and this particular officer under discussion. I think it is well known to almost every member that there has been, and perhaps still is, some such friction. I think the leader of the Opposition should help the Government in this, and not seek to increase expenditure when we are out for economies. Invariably it will be found that there is an excellent manager in charge of each State hotel. The hotel business is managed on percentages. If a manager should prove dishonest, his dishonesty is reflected in his percentages, which are the only safeguard the department can have. The leader of the Opposition suggests that we should make a new appointment at £500 or £600 a year. What would be the use of it? The hotel managers are being watched, on the one hand by the people they cater for, while on the other hand the percentages are relied upon to show whether the business is being conducted in a proper manner. The Committee would be very unwise to believe that by appointing a manager as suggested, they are going to improve the position.

Mr. NAIRN: The leader of the Opposition is somewhat ingenious in his method of attack, but also unfair. He chose as the basis of this attack on the Government the fact that a profit had been made on the State hotels. A question was asked whether the undertaking had shown a larger profit this year than last year, and the reply was that this year the profit had increased considerably. The leader of the Opposition then, without any attempt at proof, sought to destroy the value of that statement.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not.

Mr. NAIRN: The profit shown here is the result of an audited balance sheet, not of monthly statements. The balance sheet takes into account all the things to which the leader of the Opposition attaches no importance. The hon. gentleman would be right if he had confined the application of his remarks to monthly statements, which are, in effect, merely cash statements. But it is unfair to the manager, when he shows a largely increased profit, to condemn him and say that a change must be made. No doubt there is something in favour of appointing a man whose sole duty it would be to attend to the State hotels; but such an appointment should not be made on the lines suggested by the leader of the Opposition. More especially in view of the position disclosed by the balance sheet, would we be justified in committing the State hotels to a further expenditure of £500 or £600 per annum? As regards some of these hotels, any one of them might show the whole profit without its being extravagantly large; but some of them make losses. The Caves House, for instance, is likely always to show a loss. Unless we have the separate balance sheets of the individual establishments before us, we cannot fairly judge the position. If the Honorary Minister will inform us of the result of each hotel's trading, we shall know exactly where we are.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This discussion, if it has served no other purpose, has brought to light new leaders of the Government. The member for Swan, having a conscience and knowing the responsibility he owes to the country for the present Government, can always be depended upon to do a bit of very special pleading on behalf of his creation, especially when the case against the Government is strongest. If the hon. member is in possession of information regarding the profits of the State hotels, the Committee should have that definite information from the Minister. Are the Committee to be given information in a surreptitious fashion? The member for Roebourne is first prompted with some official information contained in a paper which he reads without understanding it, and then, later, the member for Swan is supplied with more information behind the backs of the Committee.

Mr. Nairn: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Committee are entitled to the fullest information from the Minister in charge, who should not pass around information surreptitiously as if he were ashamed to give it himself, not hand it to this member or that member behind him to be given out to the Committee. That is the way the business of this Chamber is being conducted. I shall not be surprised if, after I sit down, some other member will prove to have been supplied with further documents while I am on my feet. I shall not be surprised if some other member springs up from another corner of the Chamber with some further information for the Committee as soon as I have finished. I adhere to every word I have said on the subject of the State hotels, notwithstanding the special pleading of the member for Swan as to the £1,300 profit. I base my criticism not upon any monthly statement at all, but upon the annual profits. I said that

that mere statement as to profits proved nothing unless we had the fullest information. I did not condemn the statement as to profits.

Mr. Nairn: Would not the fullest information be contained in the balance sheet?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, not necessarily.

Mr. Nairn: You do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Do I not? I know a little more about this business than the member for Swan knows. If the whole of the expenditure, including expenditure for stock, for improvements and additions to hotels, and for all the other items I enumerated, is included in the balance sheet on which this profit of £1,300 is shown, let us have it. Let us be assured that the comparison of this year with last year is a comparison of like with like. Let us be sure that there has been an equal amount of expenditure in both years on what the Colonial Treasurer would call unforeseen items. In the absence of such information, my argument was perfectly legitimate and honest and fair, and the member for Swan has no right to say I indulged in unfair criticism. I challenge the hon. member now to get the information from his Minister, or to request the Minister himself to give full particulars to the Committee.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: We are not supposed to be discussing State hotels now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The fact is, however, that we are discussing them. We have been discussing them, and we are going to continue to discuss them. I want this matter definitely cleared up. My point is that I wish to compare those items I have enumerated. Before I admit the value of the increased profit, I want to know whether last year's expenditure upon such items was equal to the previous year's expenditure upon them.

Mr. Nairn: But you assumed that the profits were not fair.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. I said that was possible. I raised the point justifiably and legitimately, because I know how things of that kind are sometimes conducted. There may be, on the merits, an absolute improvement on previous years. On the other hand, a fair comparison may show that the position is worse, and even much worse, than in previous years. Now let me deal with the other leader of the Government who has sprung up. The whip has for the moment assumed the leadership; a new Daniel has come to judgment. The member for East Perth talks about percentages. It is quite true that hotels are run upon percentages. Can a man who is supposed to have his time taken up with the duties of chief accountant of an important department like the Colonial Secretary's, have the time to devote to a close, analytical examination of the percentages of all these hotels week by week? These percentages must be taken frequently and speedily in order to keep a check on the staff. The thorough discharge of that duty in the control of eight or nine hotels cannot be done except by a man devoting the whole of his time and energy to that particular work. The member for East Perth referred to appointments in connection with State hotels, and said that sometimes 50 or 60

applications were received for a vacancy. Undoubtedly the Government do get good men. That reminds me that in this very Chamber listened to a whole night's debate centring around a severe, venomous, entirely political criticism of the Scaddan Government for the appointment of a particular man to the management of a State hotel, it being alleged that he was appointed merely because he happened to be a political supporter of ours. It was contended that that was a shocking case of spoils to the victors.

Mr. Hardwick: Was that man asked to resign?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member would do well not to be personal.

Mr. O'Loughlin: That man had the best record of all the managers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not going to enter into that manager's merits. It was alleged that the Scaddan Government, of which I was member, appointed a manager because he had cast a vote in the ballot box for Labour. Now during the existence of the present Government a brother of a Minister has been appointed manager of a State hotel—a brother of Mr. Baxter, the Honorary Minister.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Why should not he be appointed?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not saying that he should not be. But I cannot help calling to mind the abuse which was heaped upon the Scaddan Government in the same connection and in view of that abuse I am justified in calling attention to the fact that if that case was one of spoils to the victors, then spoils to the victors is rampant to-day. I know the man to whom I have alluded; I believe he is a man of excellent character and a good man in every way; but I understand that he has never previously been in an hotel as manager or controller. However, he is a brother of one of the present Ministers.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to draw the attention of members to the fact that the Committee is discussing an amendment to reduce the salary of the accountant of the Colonial Secretary's Department, and the debate has grown into a discussion of the management of State hotels. I understand the object of the amendment is to protest against one officer holding two positions. Therefore some reference to State hotels is necessary. But it is quite obvious that a comparison of the balance sheets of State hotels which has been made outside the limits of the present amendment and I therefore ask members to confine themselves to arguments showing the differences in positions are incompatible and to refrain from criticism of the conduct of the officer concerned in any other capacity than that of accountant. Any member who goes outside that limit I shall rule out of order.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no wish to transgress your ruling, although your concluding words contain something in the nature of a threat. We have been discussing the item for the past hour or two, and I do not know whether it is because you anticipate we might

still take a wider range that has prompted you to give the decision which you have given, or whether, having had an opportunity of mature consideration during the dinner adjournment, that you have considered it necessary to tighten up the discussion. For my part I do not desire to transgress your ruling, except that I should like always as a matter of principle to have the scope of the discussion defined at the outset of the debate and not at the finish, more particularly after there has been an adjournment. However, I have finished, and I do not propose to say more on this subject. I have explained my opinion fully, freely, and I hope not unfairly.

Mr. Smith: Possibly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope not unfairly. I have expressed my opinion fully on the State hotel management by this officer, but when we adjourned I made the remark that I regretted that a brother of a Minister had been appointed to the position of manager of a State hotel. In doing so I stated that the gentleman appointed had had no previous experience of hotel management. I am informed that I have been mistaken. I had in mind another brother. I want to say that when I made the remark the Honorary Minister asked the question, "Why should he not?" I should like to answer that question by asking it also, "Why should he not?" I make no complaint and no charge. I have always endeavoured to refrain from personalities or charges of that kind. I have always felt, if I may transgress for a moment, that the fact that a person may be a brother, a father, an uncle, an aunt, or a sister of a member of Parliament or a Minister of the Crown should not in itself bar a person from occupying a position inside the service if he is fit for it. I only brought it forward in regard to the criticism of the Government of which I was a member. I am content to let the matter rest.

Mr. LAMBERT: I support the amendment, for the reason that the time is opportune for a clear review of the position of State hotels. I made a similar statement on the last Estimates, and I repeat it. Certainly we are not getting the return from the State hotels that we should be getting. The conduct of some of the hotels is certainly far from desirable.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the amendment before the Chair, that is, that the item "Accountant in the Colonial Secretary's Department" be reduced by £1. We are only dealing with the Colonial Secretary's Department, and not with the Estimates of the State hotels. I ask members to believe me that I desire to give them every opportunity, every possible latitude, but I cannot conduct the business by allowing a discussion to take place on an item of the Colonial Secretary's Department which has nothing to do with State hotels.

Mr. HOLMAN: This question revolves round State hotels. This officer, the accountant in the Colonial Secretary's Department, holds a dual office. There was a unanimous vote last year that the officer could not control the two departments, the accounts branch of the Colonial Secretary's office and the State hotels. The vote to-night is to say

whether the Committee agree to the officer holding those positions. It is impossible to carry on the debate without discussing the two positions. When we criticise this officer we must criticise him as accountant and holding the other position. By holding the position of manager of State hotels he has to have more assistance in his office. It would be better to go on with the debate than have this discussion over again when we reach the vote "State hotels." If we confine our remarks to the officer's position as accountant, we shall have to repeat the arguments presently. I do not desire to dissent from your ruling, but we should have an opportunity of discussing the two positions.

The CHAIRMAN: I thought I made it perfectly clear to the Committee that there is an amendment before the Chair to reduce the item of accountant by £1. The Committee is discussing the Colonial Secretary's Department, and I must ask members to confine their remarks to the item accountant, Colonial Secretary's Department.

Mr. HOLMAN: I gave as my reason for moving the amendment not that I desire that the accountant's salary be reduced, but to protest against this officer being taken away from his office to do other work.

Hon. T. WALKER: With all due deference to your ruling, it was distinctly stated by the Minister in charge of the items that he would take the amendment to mean, if carried, that the officer under discussion should relinquish his management of State hotels, and the whole discussion has ranged round that very point, whether the accountant should be permitted to hold the dual positions of accountant, also manager of State hotels. The whole debate now is on that very point. One cannot avoid, therefore, introducing State hotels and State hotel management, because this officer is the manager of the State hotels. It is unfortunate that we should have to discuss it under the Colonial Secretary's Department, but the misfortune is created by the fact that the officer holds the dual positions. It is inevitable, if the Committee are to be correctly informed as to what he is doing, that we should discuss the two positions.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Kanowna has made my position perfectly clear. What I said in stopping the member for Coolgardie from going into the whole position of the management of State hotels, was that we have an item on the Estimates dealing with State hotels, and it was to prevent a discussion for two or three hours under the item accountant and then to have another discussion later on. How could a Chairman prevent a discussion taking place when we come to State hotels? It was to prevent a repetition of present arguments that I desired to keep as far as possible, within the four corners of the item accountant, Colonial Secretary's Department.

Hon. T. Walker: Accountant and manager of State hotels.

Mr. LAMBERT: Last year I spoke in connection with this matter, and I thought then and I still think there is something radically wrong with the management of the State

hotels. A really good example may be given by quoting the fact that to-day we have a whole community in one district held up by reason of the fact that a State hotel is supplying liquor to 200 or 300 people, and that those people are so drunk that they are not able to work. I refer to the district of Gwalia, where the Sons of Gwalia mine has had to shut down on that account. It is a pity that some alteration has not been made. Of course the officer holding the position is anxious to do his best, but his duties in the Colonial Secretary's Department will not permit of that management or scrutiny which is essential in the proper conduct of these hotels. If they are not better conducted and if they do not answer the purpose for which they were established, the sooner a change is made, the better. The Honorary Minister will admit that the amount of capital involved should call for better control.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Your ruling, Mr. Chairman, was correct. There will be ample opportunity on the State hotels vote to discuss the details in regard to management. So far as the accountant himself is concerned, it is admitted that there is no cause for complaint. The officer is not overpaid, and if an hon. member were doing business with him he would find that the officer was courteous and that the business would be well done. So far as his association with the Fire Brigades Board is concerned, that can be discussed on the Treasurer's Estimates, and before that time arrives I will take the opportunity of reading the file and seeing what the Auditor General has to say. The leader of the Opposition said that I was passing stuff back-handed to members. All I did was to hand the Estimates of the State trading concerns to the member for Roebourne and those Estimates are on the Table of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you not pass him the balance sheet of the State hotels?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: No, I have not got it here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It should have been on the Table.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: That point also can be raised in its proper place. The question now is whether we want a man to manage these hotels and do no other work, or whether the accountant is still to look after them. I think we can take a vote on that without further discussion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to know whether the Government intend to take any notice of the vote which was carried in connection with this matter last session. With regard to the officer, I have no doubt he gives every satisfaction, and it is regrettable that his position should be attacked because other work has been forced on him by the Government.

Mr. Foley: Some of these officers build a fence of necessity around themselves.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In this case the State hotels were under the control of another department before they were handed over to the accountant in the Colonial Secretary's Department, but seeing that Parliament decided

last session that a man should be appointed to give his whole time to the management of the hotels, the Government should have carried out the wishes of members. The Government having failed to do so, the blame must rest with them. When we look through the Colonial Secretary's Estimates and see the number of sub-departments there, we must come to the conclusion that the accountant has quite enough work to do without attending to the State hotels. If there are to be economies, it should be the accountant's duty to point out where they can be made, but if we overload the officer with work, we cannot expect him to do that. I do not think there is any necessity for the amendment, because Parliament has already decided what should be done.

Mr. HOLMAN: This officer is so overworked that apparently he is responsible for the fact that his Estimates had to be printed twice.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He would not be to blame for that.

Mr. HOLMAN: It is a part of this officer's duty to attend to the State hotels. On the 29th October, I asked several questions of the Premier with regard to this officer, and one of them was as to the number of days he was absent from his own duty, and the reply was one working day and also 17 days when he was inspecting hotels, which was part of his duty. In that case, I contend we can discuss his work as accountant for the State hotels. The Treasurer is in his seat now and I would like to know from him whether it was this officer's fault that the Estimates had to be printed twice. Would the accountant in the Colonial Secretary's office be responsible for the Estimates?

The Colonial Treasurer: The Under Secretary is responsible.

Mr. HOLMAN: Was this officer acting Under Secretary at that time?

The Colonial Treasurer: No.

Mr. HOLMAN: That point is cleared up. The Under Secretary may be responsible for the Estimates, but does not the accountant manipulate the figures? That would come through the hands of the accountant. The debate we previously had in regard to this officer was exclusively devoted to his connection with the State hotels, and I claim that we are justified in stressing the point again this year.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	..	20

Majority against .. 2

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Jones
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Collier	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Davies	Mr. Rocks
Mr. Duff	Mr. Troy
Mr. Foley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Green	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Holman	Mr. O'Loughlin

(Teller.)

NOMS.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Maley
Mr. Brown	Mr. Money
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Pitkington
Mr. George	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. HOLMAN: Owing to the fact that there are so many additional officers in this department this year, it will be necessary to go down the Estimates item by item. I wish to protest against the manner in which the work is being carried on in this department; a policy of drift overshadows it all. Last year the votes in this department were exceeded by over £5,000. I object to this method of doing business. The accountant is to a great extent responsible for the condition of affairs in the department, because it is his duty to point out the weaknesses. Of course, he cannot do this if he is absent from his office, looking after the State hotels. If he is paid as accountant he should do the work of the accountant, he should be required to carry out the duties attached to the position; instead of which, we have temporary assistance afforded for the carrying out of his work while he goes about the country visiting the State hotels. He attends also to other outside duties, all of which take him out of his proper sphere. The expenditure in each of the sub-departments under the Colonial Secretary has been increased year by year. I protest against those increases. The Government should take a keener interest in the work of the department. When the Under Secretary is away his duties devolve upon the accountant, whose own duties are in turn handed over to temporary officers. In these circumstances it is not surprising that this officer should be so frequently away from his desk. It may be that the accountant is a very capable officer and would satisfactorily discharge his duties if he had not so much outside work to attend to. We should be informed how many officers in the department are directly under the control of the accountant. I enter my protest against the present method of carrying on business in the Colonial Secretary's Department. Apparently some of the officers in the department are able to take the Colonial Secretary by the wool and lead him wherever they desire. The accountant was away in the Eastern States for quite a lengthy period a couple of years ago. During that time he received anything from £150 to £200 from the Fire Brigades Board alone. He was again absent from his office for a similar period of time this year. If he is responsible for the supervision and control of State hotels and the Tourist Branch, it is impossible for him to give satisfaction in both places. There is more than enough for him to do properly in the Tourist Department alone. Because of the many positions he occupies he must come in for criticism in connection with them.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: You are questioning him now as an accountant.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am quoting from the Civil Service List.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: I am quoting from the Estimates.

Mr. HOLMAN: It is set down in that list that he is responsible for State hotels and the Tourist Department. It is impossible for him to carry out his duties as accountant, and supervise these other services as well. He should be compelled to keep in his office and do the work of that office. Although last year it was set down on the Estimates that this officer was to receive £360, the Estimates now show that he received £420. For the sake of this officer we should see that too many duties are not thrust upon him. I plead with the Honorary Minister to make some announcement that will tend to soften the fears of the Committee that this officer will be overworked.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: He will not be overworked.

Mr. HOLMAN: In view of that assurance, and knowing the officer myself, I think we can let the matter rest there. Between the Honorary Minister and the Colonial Secretary I believe this officer will receive that protection which he now needs. I hope the Government will carry out the promise of the Honorary Minister that this officer will not be given too much to do, and will be allowed to stay in his own office. He has to look after the accountancy work of 20 branches. Had he been at his post in his office he would have been able to supervise the expenditure and save the State a considerable sum of money. Owing to his repeated absence the drift has set in and he has been unable to control his work. We are here afforded an example of the methods by which the work is slumped over in this department. It will be my endeavour to effect reforms as soon as the opportunity occurs.

Mr. GREEN: I endorse the remarks of the member for Murchison. I regret that the attempt to reduce this item failed, especially after the good case which had been made out by the hon. member. We cannot stress too much the fact that this officer holds several positions, and that it is impossible to find him in his place.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: That is incorrect; he is a very good officer.

Mr. GREEN: I do not say he is not a busy man, or that he has neglected his duties. My charge is that he has too many jobs.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Give me an instance in which he has neglected his work.

Mr. GREEN: He is not found in his office on occasions. This officer is not capable of carrying out several jobs at once. He goes into the country on many occasions for weeks at a time. How, therefore, can he fulfil the duties of accountant?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: An accountant who has to examine in many districts should be well paid.

Mr. GREEN: If he has to go to Bunbury in connection with fire brigade accounts, how can he look after his work in the department? The duties he should be relegated to are those connected with the accountancy position he holds.

Item, Clerks, £4,067.

Mr. HOLMAN: Why has there been this large increase? The business done by the country to-day is not to be compared with what has been done in the past, and yet we are employing a larger number of clerks. We are drifting to the bad to the extent of £100,000 a month. Much of this is due to these increases.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: What increases?

Mr. HOLMAN: This increase from 17 to 21 clerks, for instance.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: I told you what this is due to.

Mr. HOLMAN: Last year we had an increase of £5,000 over and above the Estimates in connection with clerks. This slipshod method of doing business is characteristic of the department. Where is the necessity for these extra clerks? Last year there was an increase in the accountancy branch of from eight clerks to ten. I daresay that the failure to separate the clerks this year is designed to cloak over the increase. Why are there 21 clerks this year as against 17 last year and 15 the previous year?

Hon. R. H. Underwood: I have told you three or four times.

Mr. HOLMAN: If that is so, the Honorary Minister's explanation is far from clear. Why the increase of six clerks over the year 1916-17? In view of the condition of the finances, and in order to test the feeling of the Committee, I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £700.

If we continue on present lines, the burden of State and Federal taxation will be more than the people of Western Australia can bear, especially having regard to the large increases in the prices of commodities. Last year the expenditure on these two items was £7,150; this year it is to be about £7,700; and there are increases in other items also. Let us be assured that the public money is not being frittered away and squandered. At present the Premier is in sole control of the Estimates, and no doubt he takes them in his usual lackadaisical manner; doubtless there is in the Government offices the same absolutely incompetent and careless conduct of public business as there is in this Chamber. As to extra clerical assistance, it is difficult to draw a reliable comparison, because the items shown last year are also lumped this year.

Mr. JONES: Will the Honorary Minister state exactly where the increase in the number of clerks has taken place? If the increase has been rendered necessary in order to permit the accountant to manage the State hotels, it is economy of a most peculiar character.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I have explained once or twice that two of these clerks come from the Medical Department, the record branches of the two departments having been amalgamated. There is also provision made for officers on leave, and for temporary officers filling the places of permanent officers who have gone to the front.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Honorary Minister's explanation is not even correct. In the Health

Department there are increases right through.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: There is increased work in that department.

Mr. HOLMAN: Of course. But what makes the increase in the work?

Hon. R. H. Underwood: New legislation; for instance, that dealing with venereal disease.

Mr. HOLMAN: And that increased work is shown in the accounts branch?

Hon. R. H. Underwood: No.

Mr. HOLMAN: We should have an explanation of the increased expenditure in the Medical Department. Last year we were told that the increase of two clerks in the accounts branch was due to increase of work. But the fact is that the accountant is allowed to gallop around the country while these additional clerks do the work which he ought to be doing. The Honorary Minister states that men are kept in the department to fill the places of permanent officers who are at the front.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: No. I said that provision is made for such permanent officers in case they should return, in the hope that they may return, this year.

Mr. HOLMAN: If the Honorary Minister had any knowledge of the department, he would be able to explain where the increased work comes in. However, I draw attention to the state of the Committee.

[Bells rung; a quorum formed.]

Mr. HOLMAN: I am pleased to know there is a quorum, but no Minister is present to take charge of these Estimates. In such circumstances they must take a little longer than under ordinary conditions. I do not intend to be choked off by the fact that there is an incapable Minister in charge of the department, or in charge of the Estimates here. The policy of the Government right through has been and is to allow understrappers to conduct the business of the State, or else to let the business go hang and drift on without control or supervision; and that is the reason why the country is accumulating such a deficit. If we had in control of State affairs the keen men of business acumen of whom we hear so much, things would be in a different condition altogether. The Honorary Minister by his explanation has, either wittingly or unwittingly, absolutely misled the Committee. Indeed, the Honorary Minister merely repeats like a parrot what has been written down for him, possibly by the very officer who is being criticised.

The Minister for Works: The Honorary Minister cannot possibly know all the details of the Estimates.

Mr. HOLMAN: A Minister in charge of Estimates should be compelled to digest them, so as to be able to inform the Committee what they are and what they mean. When a Bill is submitted they bring along an understrapper to help them explain the provisions of it. The time has arrived when Ministers should be compelled to study their measures more than they do.

The Minister for Works: You would have to relieve them of a lot of administrative duties.

Mr. HOLMAN: Parliament has become a farce and a disgrace and no work is being done.

The Minister for Works: Each member should control himself and set a good example.

Mr. HOLMAN: And the Minister for Works should be the first to act on the advice he gives.

The Minister for Works: I admit that.

Mr. HOLMAN: Every member is entitled to have supplied to him all the information possible regarding the expenditure of public moneys. If Ministers cannot do that, we might as well pass the Estimates en bloc. I have no desire to prevent business being done; I want to assist Ministers by pointing out defects. But when an hon. member asks for information the Minister in charge of the Estimates walks out of the Chamber. It would be a simpler matter if 50 copies were made of the information which is given him in typed form and this could be distributed amongst members. That would save a lot of trouble. The absence of administration has been responsible for the increase in the number of clerks in this department, and the reason why I move the amendment is that we must take a stand somewhere. No private employer would countenance such a thing.

The Minister for Works: Neither does the Government.

Mr. HOLMAN: If the Minister for Works were in charge of this department I would have every respect for him as an administrator. I would like to see him there for a month.

The Colonial Treasurer: We have reduced the number of clerks there by 12.

Mr. HOLMAN: When was that done? If the Treasurer explains the matter I will take his word.

The Colonial Treasurer: The Public Service Commissioner and the Under Treasurer have just concluded their work in that department.

Mr. HOLMAN: Then it has just been done.

The Colonial Treasurer: Yes. It was finished last Tuesday.

Mr. HOLMAN: That shows what a little common sense can do in the way of curbing the debate here. Why could not I get that information before? With the assurance given by the Treasurer that there is to be a reduction of clerks here, I shall be quite satisfied. But when we see increases year after year, we are justified in protesting. Now I hope to have the assistance of the Treasurer in carrying the amendment I have moved because it will be bound to help him.

Hon. P. Collier: Having received the explanation, you will not go on with the amendment.

Mr. HOLMAN: If we carry the amendment it will help the Treasurer.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item, Extra Clerical Assistance, etc., £4,067.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Will the Minister explain what amount has been set down for extra clerical assistance and also for messengers?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I have not the exact information in regard to that point, but I can tell the hon. member that there is an extra messenger this year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He comes under the messenger's exchange.

Mr. Holman: I have already said it would be better to have all the information typed and distributed amongst members.

Item, Clerks, temporary labour, etc., £1,647.

Mr. PICKERING: I want an explanation as to whether there is an amount under this heading to provide for a portion of the salary of the Chief Protector of Aborigines. If members refer to last year's Estimates, they will see that there is an asterisk at the foot of the page which says, "Also Secretary of Immigration."

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The items in this vote should never have been combined when the Estimates were drafted. As a matter of fact the messengers' exchange has nothing to do with immigration. The Chief Protector of Aborigines is Secretary for Immigration, but he gets no pay for the latter position. There is an officer of immigration (Mr. Crawcour) who is at present secretary of the Patriotic Fund, and he is paid out of the immigration vote. Mr. Long is the correspondence and records clerk in the immigration office and his time is fully occupied in the Aborigines and Fisheries Department. If I have anything to do with these Estimates next year, I will see that they are prepared differently. With regard to immigration, there is still a little work being done; we are advancing something on fares and taking nominations, but it is impossible to get passages from the other end.

Mr. BROWN: I should like some further information in regard to immigration. What is the immediate policy to be? It seems to me the sum of £1,647, provided for immigration and other matters, would not pay for a decent advertisement for the State. In view of the material alteration in the affairs of the world during the past few weeks I think it is time we had a Ministerial statement as to what is to be done in respect of immigration. It is of no use sitting down and wasting time for another 12 months when we know that, of all the Australian States, we most urgently require population.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The policy of the Government is to get as many immigrants as possible; on the other hand, the policy of the Government is not to waste money. As a matter of fact, the Agent General desires to open an immigration office in London, but we realise that there are no immigrants to be had at the present time. When the war is over, it will take at least a year to repatriate our own men. Ministers are enthusiastic in regard to immigration, but it is not worth while spending money on it just now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is on the Loan Estimates that we should be discussing this. The Minister says the Agent General is anxious to open an office in London. Is it not a fact that the Agent General has advised the Government that there is no chance of getting British immigrants for many a long day, and has he not also advised that the best place in which to get immigrants in the future will be America?

Hon. R. H. Underwood: The Agent General has made no recommendation in regard to America, although he may possibly have expressed an opinion on the matter.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is not the item on which we should be debating the policy of immigration. The Honorary Minister says it is the policy of the Government to secure as many immigrants as possible. I believe that, within the next year or two, the Government will be able to get practically an unlimited number of immigrants. But is it the policy of the Government to introduce immigrants into Western Australia regardless of the facilities for absorbing them? There is in the "British Australasian" a standing advertisement to the effect that the Government of Western Australia have made arrangements for the introduction of 25,000 immigrants in the first year, and a greater number each succeeding year. When the question was discussed in the House recently the Premier denied the accuracy of certain statements to a similar effect which had been ascribed to the Agent General, and said that there was no justification for the advertisement. Has anything been done by the Government to set the Agent General right and take out the advertisement? It would be a false and cruel policy to hold out to the people of Great Britain inducements to come to this State in unlimited numbers, and then have to admit that we were unable to place them.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: I have just said that we will look after our own men first.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the advertisement sets forth the anxiety of the Government of Western Australia to secure 25,000 immigrants per annum. It is not right that such an advertisement should appear when we know that the statements made in it are untrue. The Government have not taken any steps to provide for the absorption of 25,000 immigrants per annum.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: We do not intend to.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, has the position been explained at Home and, if so, what has been done to set the Agent General right in this matter?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The Agent General has been written to again and again, and the position explained to him. We realise that we must repatriate our own men before we deal with immigrants. It is also realised that we cannot get immigrants at present. The Agent General is well aware of the position. From time to time we hear doleful tales about the financial position of the State. This State is so far developed as to be able to carry almost double its present population. Until we get a large increase in population we must continue to meet with financial troubles. Our

only recovery will be by a large increase in population. I am sanguine that when we move again this State will be able to absorb 25,000 immigrants per annum. When the demobilisation is effected and all our men are back again, this State is going to be the premier State of Australia, and those leaving here to-day for the East will be coming back again and bringing others with them. I say this because, undoubtedly, we have the greatest possibilities for development. Also we have no war industries and so, unlike the other States, we will not feel the loss of those war industries when the war is over. The Government are not going to spend money uselessly in getting immigrants before we can place them.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Observatory, £1,660:

Mr. MALEY: It has been stated over and over again that even though a motion to amend the Estimates be carried, no notice is taken of it, and the item is allowed to continue in its original form. On motion by Hon. Frank Wilson the Observatory vote was struck out in 1916, yet the vote still appears on the Estimates.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was saved last year.

Mr. MALEY: After it had been ineffectually cut out in the preceding year. I listened with admiration to the eloquent address by which the member for Kanowna saved this vote last year, notwithstanding which I think that the Government Astronomer would be better employed dealing with scientific problems on earth than in cataloguing the stars.

I move—

That the vote be struck out.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	25

Majority for	15
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AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Broun	Mr. Maley
Mr. Cheeson	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Foley	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Green	(Teller.)
Mr. Hickmott	

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Money
Mr. Brown	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Collier	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Davies	Mr. Rocke
Mr. Draper	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Duff	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Gardner	Mr. Troy
Mr. George	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Jones	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller.)

Vote thus passed.

Vote—Public Gardens, £1,591:

Mr. BROWN: Why are all these gardeners not put under one heading, so that we may know what they are costing the State? We

find gardeners appearing in various places in the Estimates, the total expenditure on them being £4,250. I trust that next year the Estimates will be submitted in a clearer form than they are to-day.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I do not know that we could do much better than this. The head gardener is the man who is in charge of the men. The wages that are paid are in connection with the seven or eight gardens in and around the city of Perth.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Contingencies, £6,585:

Item, Head office and branches, £4,490.

Mr. HOLMAN: This item last year was shown as £5,700, whereas the expenditure was £9,430. Why is this? In 1913-14 the total expenditure under this heading was only some £1,800, but last year the cost was nearly £10,000. There must be something wrong about this, because the incidental items set down here are practically the same as were shown last year.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The explanation of the increase last year is that there were many outstanding accounts at outstations which had not been allotted to their proper votes. These outstanding accounts were then allotted in the proper manner, and the amounts credited where they belonged. There were also changes in various branches last year. This year the printing is put in another part of the Estimates, whereas previously the printing for the Colonial Secretary's Department appeared under this heading, the amount involved being about £1,500. The expenditure for this year is likely to be about the same as that for last year, with the exception of the outstanding accounts to which I have referred. I assure the hon. member that the greatest possible care has been exercised. The officer's very position compels him to use the utmost care in scrutinising all expenditure. As I pointed out in introducing these Estimates, they are £5,000 less than last year's.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Colonial Secretary's Department was just as important four or five years ago as it is to-day, and probably it was then better organised and better managed. The expenditure to-day is more than double what it was four or five years ago. Why the increase?

Hon. R. H. Underwood: There is not an increase.

Mr. HOLMAN: There is an increase from £13,000 to £27,000.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Last year's expenditure was £1,000 less than the previous year's expenditure.

Mr. HOLMAN: The expenditure jumped last year, and we should know the reason. There must be laxity in administration. It is time Ministers met in Cabinet and delegated the best business head among them—possibly the Colonial Treasurer or else the Minister for Works—to examine into the question of expenditure. I trust the Honorary Minister will get from the accountant, and furnish to this Committee, a detailed explanation of the large increase in the expenditure. The presentation of these Estimates is very unsatisfactory.

For example, "Public Gardens" appears twice.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I contend that the expenditure on these Estimates is less by £5,000 than last year's. It is all very well for the hon. member to pick out an item here and there, but beyond any shadow of doubt the total estimate is £5,000 less than last year.

Mr. Holman: Not the expenditure, but merely the estimate, is lower.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The expenditure has not yet been incurred.

Mr. Holman: I want an assurance that increased expenditure will not be incurred.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: It is useless for the hon. member to say that the expenditure is not less. It is less.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Honorary Minister would do well to keep cool, and speak fair, and not try to mislead the Committee. Last year's vote was £29,822, and last year's expenditure was £32,297, or about £3,000 more than the vote. Although this estimate is shown as £5,000 less than last year's expenditure, what guarantee have we that the vote will not be exceeded in the same way as last year's was. Let the Committee stress their determination not to allow exceeding to go on year after year.

Item, Immigration, advances for passages of immigrants from other States, etc., £90.

Mr. PICKERING: Having regard to the assurance already given by the Honorary Minister regarding immigration, I desire from him a further assurance that he will review immigration literature before it is broadcasted in other States and at Home. It is well known to all who have come in contact with immigrants that many people were brought out under false promises, that they were misled by unreliable literature.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That has not occurred for many years.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not accuse any particular Government in this connection.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is not the hon. member out of order? This item refers to immigrants from the Eastern States, not immigrants from the Old Country.

The CHAIRMAN: What is your point, Mr. Pickering?

Mr. PICKERING: I want a further assurance from the Honorary Minister in connection with the matter of immigration.

Item, State Labour Bureau, rail fares, £1,500.

Mr. SMITH: This item apparently represents an amount provided for railway fares to be advanced to men proceeding to the country to obtain work—a very desirable form of assistance. I understand that the men are expected to refund the amounts of such fares.

Mr. Holman: Over 80 per cent. is repaid.

Mr. SMITH: How much was advanced altogether, and how much was refunded altogether, last year? Last year we voted £1,450, which was exceeded by nearly £400; and the year before we passed an amount of £1,500, which was exceeded by nearly £1,000. Cannot the department make a closer estimate?

Are deficiencies in refunds written off each year, or are efforts made to enforce payment? I have known cases of men who have had their fares advanced and have obtained fairly good billets, but have not repaid, and never will attempt to repay of their own accord, the amounts of their railway fares.

Mr. LAMBERT: My experience is that if one applies for the advance of a railway fare to a man, one has to guarantee that the amount will be repaid. In certain cases I have myself had to pay the amount.

The Minister for Mines: I have guaranteed very many men, and very few of them have turned me down.

Mr. LAMBERT: That may be so, but I have occasionally had the misfortune to be planted. Since members are frequently called upon to give personal guarantees to the State Labour Bureau in this connection, they should be informed exactly how the business is worked.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: In reply to the member for North Perth the percentage of repayments is 80 to 81.

Mr. Smith: What becomes of the money?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The refund is paid into revenue. In regard to the position generally, the department endeavours to collect money wherever possible. The practice of the department is to provide a railway fare if they are satisfied that this person is likely to pay back the money and he has employment to go to. Cases have happened where men have had no work to go to, but they represent that if they can get to a place they are sure they can obtain work. It is unfair for members of Parliament to guarantee these fares. I have often asked the Secretary for Railways to guarantee a man a fare and he has done so at his own risk, but I will never ask him to do so for a man who I do not think will pay.

Mr. LAMBERT: My experience is that the department requires a guarantee and unless a personal guarantee is given they will not grant a fare.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: As far as the collection is concerned, if a man does not refund, the police are communicated with, they obtain the man's address, a letter is written asking for repayment and in one or two cases summonses have been issued. A lot of money is collected through the police.

Mr. WILCOCK: It is a matter of little difficulty to get a fare advanced at the Central Labour Bureau but it is impossible to get advances at branch labour bureaus. Wherever there is a branch of a State Labour Bureau the same procedure should be adopted as at the head office. I should like an assurance that this procedure will be adopted in the future at outside offices.

Mr. ANGELO: The Minister has pointed out that the refunds amount to 80 per cent. I take it, therefore, that the expenditure in this connection would be something like £200 when the refunds are credited to revenue. The estimate for the coming year would also be about £200. If that is the case, it is most satisfactory. However, it is a misleading way of placing the items on the Estimates.

The Minister for Mines: The estimated revenue is shown at the foot of the Estimates.

[Mr. Foley took the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am surprised to hear that the officials of the Labour Bureau compel members to put up a guarantee. For years it was a rule not to accept members as guarantors because it is difficult for members to refuse. It has been the practice for many years that no member of Parliament should be accepted as guarantor, and that rule was made when the present Speaker was Colonial Secretary. In many instances a man gives an order on his employer, but if a member will guarantee no order is likely to be given on an employer.

Mr. LAMBERT: I hope the Minister will take a note of the suggestion and see that Kalgoorlie and other places where there are branch labour bureaus are brought into line with the central bureau. It is hardly fair to saddle members of Parliament with guarantees, especially if a man has employment to go to.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I will bring the matter under the notice of the Colonial Secretary and ask him to speak to the secretary of the Labour Bureau on the matter. I will not say that what members ask will be granted because there are certain safeguards that have to be looked into.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Aborigines, £4,960:

Mr. PICKERING: I should like an explanation on this vote. The Chief Protector of Aborigines in 1916-17 was receiving £312 a year. He was granted an increase of £120 which brought his salary up to £432. This year the officer is receiving £552. Why is there an increase on last year's vote? There is a net increase on this year's vote of £1,200. I see no justification for the increase.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: This officer has been classified. When Mr. Neville took over in 1912 the position was classified and it was ruled by the Public Service Commissioner that he was entitled to the minimum of his class. There were two years' back pay, which made the increase last year. He is now on his correct classified salary.

Mr. PICKERING: This officer received the appointment in view of the great saving that was to be effected. Now we find that the officer is to get an increase of £112 a year.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: This was a classification made by the court. Parliament has practically nothing to do with the matter.

Mr. PICKERING: Was the increase retrospective?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Yes, neither the House nor the Minister has anything to do with the matter. Of course, Parliament can amend the Public Service Act.

Mr. GREEN: Last year the Minister said the officer had been increased and the minimum was fixed at £412. Yet he was paid as Chief Protector, £432. The amount placed on the Estimates for 1917-18 was £552.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: If I said £412, it was a mistake; £312 was the amount as secretary for Immigration. When the officer was appointed Chief Protector of Aborigines he was placed on the classification for that office. The minimum was £432 and the maximum £552.

Mr. SMITH: This year the secretary and clerks are mixed up together, and although there is an increase of from £660 to £828, we are not informed how much the secretary is getting.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The secretary's salary has been increased by £24. The late secretary was degraded and put into another place and a new secretary was appointed. That officer came from the Water Supply Department, his salary at that time being £336. There is a clerk there now who was paid last year from "temporary labour, etc."

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Fisheries, £5,657:

Hon. W. C. ANGIN: Will the Minister explain whether the offices of secretary of Aborigines and Fisheries were combined?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The amount appearing on the Estimates as the secretary's salary should not be shown there. As a matter of fact half of it should be on the Aborigines Vote.

Mr. Pickering: Is he getting any extra pay?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: No.

Item—Repairs and overhauling, s.s. "Torrens," £1,000.

Mr. ROCKE: It seems to me that this is a large sum of money to spend on a boat which is only of a few tons register and is very old. It is an unwise expenditure unless, of course, the Government have a guarantee from the company to whom she is chartered that the expenditure will be recouped.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The cost will be about £950. The ship was lying at Shark Bay. The Government gave up the fishing business and the ship was computed to be worth £600, but we could not get £200 for her. We made her seaworthy and put in a new boiler and leased her with the right of purchase to the company now controlling her—a company which is fairly solid financially, and at the end of the year that company has the right of purchasing the vessel for £1,600. If they do not purchase her, I feel confident we will get even more than that from other sources. There is also a handy trade that can be done by that vessel between the northern ports.

Mr. Green: What is her tonnage?

Mr. Rocke: About 40 or 50 tons.

Hon. P. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): More like 200 tons.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The company are paying $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on the £1,600.

Hon. P. Collier: Who made the arrangement?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Mr. Aldridge, with the consent of the Treasurer and myself. I feel confident it was a good business transaction.

Mr. ROCKE: The Minister has not told us whether the Government have a guarantee that they will be able to recoup themselves. If the boat were put up for sale it would not fetch more than £500.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: My opinion is we could sell the ship to-day for £2,000.

Mr. ROCKE: It was originally used for towing dredges on the Torrens, and for some years afterwards was towing barges up the Swan river, and no vessel of 200 tons has ever been up the Swan river.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Gaols, £20,135:

Item, Superintendent Fremantle Prison, £456.

Mr. JONES: I do not pretend to understand these Estimates, and if the Government had laid themselves out to puzzle me they could not have succeeded better. I am anxious to assist the Government wherever I can in the way of effecting economies and consequently I intend to move in the direction of deleting the first item, namely the Superintendent of Fremantle Prison, £456. I am satisfied we have an excellent man in the present Comptroller General, and under that officer the chief warden could perform the work required in Fremantle gaol. The average number of prisoners in the Fremantle gaol during the past 12 months has been 175. That includes Rottneest. At the present time the number is much below that; I do not think it exceeds 120. It would be easy for the Government to abolish the post of superintendent. If the Government expect by the introduction of sedition Acts and other inflammatory measures to fill the gaol, they will not support the amendment, but taking into account the sympathetic treatment prisoners are receiving, and the way in which the Attorney General is endeavouring to follow in the paths of his predecessor, I do not anticipate the number of prisoners at Fremantle will increase in the future. On the contrary with reformatory prisons throughout the State, I believe that the numbers in the gaol will be considerably reduced. The gaol itself is not suited for any prisoner who needs human treatment. At the present time I believe the gaol is overrun with vermin. That is only to be expected in a building of its age. But there is more of the human spirit in the gaols of Western Australia than in the gaols of any other State of the Commonwealth. At the present time the superintendent is merely providing men with the opportunity of trying dangerous experiments. This is a matter about which one cannot speak in public, because to go into details in regard to the numerous escapes from Fremantle gaol, would be perhaps to give information to the so-called criminal public, and that is not desirable. During the regime of the present superintendent, seven or eight actual escapes have taken place and a great many more have been attempted. One can bet long odds on the fact that there are men inside that prison who, if they get a chance will try to escape, and the chance will be presented by the experiments of the present superintendent. Take one matter alone, the guards or sentries who are posted inside the gaol.

Many experiments have been tried in connection with the guards. The present superintendent has confessed his inefficiency, in that he has informed the whole State that he would not be surprised any morning to find that all the prisoners had escaped. A little time ago two prisoners, Feldman and O'Halloran, attempted to escape. They obtained the revolver from the guard on night duty and, having shut the warder in a cell, they proceeded downstairs to obtain a reserve key which the superintendent, evidently thinking of the convenience of escaping prisoners, had directed should be placed in a glass-fronted box. Fortunately the chief warder had turned a deaf ear to the instructions of the superintendent and neglected to place the key in the box, and, consequently, Feldman and O'Halloran did not find the key. Some of these days the prediction of the superintendent relating to a general escape will be fulfilled, and it will be owing largely to the dangerous experiments to which the superintendent appears to be wedded. We do not want an experimental superintendent in control of the gaol. I move—

That the item be struck out.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I ask the Committee not to agree to the amendment. The superintendent has been considered a good and capable officer for many years past, and it is only recently that we have heard any adverse criticism in regard to him. It is true there have been some escapes, and that some experimental work has been done. Experimental work in prisons is very necessary, for only by that means can we secure improvements. In regard to the escapes, it must be remembered that the premises are obsolete and that we have not the money with which to build a new gaol. Moreover, with a view to economy the staff has been cut down, I fear below actual requirements. Recently three additional warders have been put on, one for each shift of eight hours.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item, Clerks, storekeeper, surgeon, chaplains, etc., £11,479.

Mr. ROCKE: According to this item, there are 11 officers fewer than last year, notwithstanding which an increase of £572 is shown. If this increase represented increments in salaries, every officer would have received an increase of at least £30 per annum. Of course we know that this is not the position. I should like an explanation of the increase.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The increase is largely due to a number of temporary officers having been put on, in addition to which there are the additional three warders I have referred to. There are eight temporary warders. Last year there were 61 officers, whereas this year there are 54.

Mr. Rocke: I do not think the explanation clears up the discrepancy.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: There are eight temporary warders and three more warders than there were last year. Some who were on the permanent staff last year have gone, and temporary officers have taken their place.

Mr. JONES: Why have so many of the temporary officers gone? I think if the Honorary Minister would tell us what he knows he would

say that they have gone as a result of the experiments of the Superintendent.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I am not in the habit of giving untruthful information.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Harbour and Light, £19,639:

Mr. ROCKE: Is there anything here which should be chargeable to the Bunbury Harbour Board for work they should be doing? The board attend to the pilotage, while the Railway Department attends to the handling of cargo. The harbour has been used by less than one ship per week for the first six months of this year. In my opinion the department of Harbour and Light is quite capable of undertaking the work carried out by the Bunbury Harbour Board, and there is no justification for the existence of the board.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: There is nothing charged to the Bunbury Harbour Board here. Before the Board could be abolished there would have to be passed an Act of Parliament. I would not be inclined to re-appoint that board, as I consider that the work can be done equally as well by the department. Unless the board is appointed, however, the dues cannot be collected. The harbours, rivers and jetties all are mixed up so far as their control is concerned. We have the Fremantle Harbour Board on their own, and the Bunbury Harbour Board on their own, whereas Busselton, Geraldton, Albany, Port Hedland and Ravensthorpe are run by the Railway Department. The rest of the jetties of Western Australia are run by the Harbour and Light Department, with the exception that we have recently handed over to the Public Works Department the Wyndham jetty. We should have one system controlling all harbours, jetties, wharves, and rivers of the State. I have been getting information from the Eastern States on this point, but the only satisfactory State is South Australia. So far as the Fremantle and Bunbury boards are concerned, they are a law unto themselves, and neither Parliament nor the Government can control them. The only thing we can do is, at the expiration of three years, to appoint new members to the boards.

Mr. Rocke: Is it correct to say that the Harbour and Light Department control the harbours of the North-West, with the exception of Wyndham?

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Yes.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Inspection of Liquor, £600:

Mr. BROWN: There are many hotels in Western Australia, and it is impossible for one excise officer to supervise them all. In some of these hotels the liquor sold is unfit for human consumption. Instead of the Government reducing the number of excise officers to attend to this work, they should have increased them. Why has the reduction been made?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: This work has been taken over to a great extent by the Government health inspectors, who are now inspectors of liquor as well as health inspectors. It is contended that we are getting better inspection for less expenditure by this means. I think the whole thing should be handed over to the Health Department, for this after all is a food question.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The point is, are these health inspectors qualified to act as liquor inspectors? Instead of reducing the number of inspectors of liquor it should be increased. Particularly has there been need for stricter supervision and a greater amount of inspection of

liquor during the past year or two, when the quality of liquor has of necessity been of a reduced standard. Some of the would-be reformers might devote their attention to this point. Instead of howling in the wilderness about prohibition and other impossible things, they should bring their influence and organisation to bear upon seeing that a better standard of liquor is supplied to the general public. In that way they would achieve better results than they have in the past. The inspection of liquor in Western Australia has been a farce. There is one hotel in the back country at which two men have committed suicide, owing to the effect of the vile drink dispensed there. Inspection of liquor does not exist in the outlying parts of the State. As regards inspection in Kalgoorlie, so soon as the inspector has boarded the goldfields express in Perth, the fact is known in Kalgoorlie. After spending four or five days in Kalgoorlie, the inspector departs, and it is known that he will not return for another six months.

Mr. Broun: Private persons should be permitted to take samples of liquor.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Increased expenditure on liquor inspection would mean decreased expenditure under the Lunacy Vote.

Mr. Smith: Where does the bad liquor come from?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Since the war, old, discarded stocks have been dug up and put into consumption.

Mr. Broun: Do the inspectors travel all over the country?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, the Government health inspectors.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Inspection of liquor by health inspectors would mean more effective inspection in the metropolitan area and in Kalgoorlie. But I could name dozens of centres, especially on the goldfields, where inspection of liquor does not take place more than once a year. The thing is a perfect farce. In the interests of the general public, this work should be tightened up. There is not a hotel-keeper in the State who cares a snap of the fingers for liquor inspectors. In the country hotels they will supply any brand of whisky one asks for; they will supply brands which have not been procurable for years; the stuff is manufactured "while you wait."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is a good move on the part of the Government to appoint the health inspectors as inspectors of liquor. Under this arrangement the country districts will receive more attention than previously.

Mr. Broun: But are there not numerous small centres which are not under the Health Act?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not except in the back blocks, and those centres were never visited by the two liquor inspectors. Imagine one of the two liquor inspectors visiting Halls Creek! Liquor inspection by health inspectors will mean cheaper work and more effective work. The health inspectors have to pass examinations and obtain certificates of competency. Moreover, with the larger number of inspectors it will be possible to change the inspector's district from time to time; and if an unknown man is sent along for the purpose it will not be known that liquor inspection is about to take place. And there is not the least doubt that the health inspectors will prosecute when they discover bad liquor. When the Health Act is again amended, local health inspectors, if qualified, should be given power to inspect liquor. The local health inspectors are all qualified men,

who have passed examinations, except a few, who held positions as health inspectors when the Act was passed, and who were taken in without examination. This is important in that we will have not only better supervision but we shall also be able to effect a considerable saving in salaries.

Mr. DUFF: I have had an opportunity of seeing the new inspectors at work and can speak in terms of praise of their activity. I was sorry to hear the remarks of the leader of the Opposition who stated that it was almost impossible to go into a bar in Perth or in any town in the State without coming across bad liquor.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I say it is all bad.

Mr. DUFF: The liquor trade is being well looked after. I watched one of the inspectors at his work at Westonia the last time I was there. He went behind the bar to the surprise of the publican and took samples in as complete a manner as any inspector had ever done before. We have able and sober inspectors, and they do their work fearlessly, and I am sure the trade will be looked after as it has never been looked after before.

Mr. PICKERING: I support the member for Beverley, more especially after hearing the remarks of the member for Claremont. When one who is interested in the trade gives the inspectors such a testimonial as he gave them, one must look on the testimonial with suspicion.

The Colonial Treasurer: Why? Cannot the member be honest in his opinion?

Mr. PICKERING: I will withdraw the reflection if it is considered that I have cast one. What I meant to say was that when we find that the inspections which are made are approved by the trade there is cause for an examination of the position.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Who approved of it?

Mr. DUFF: The trade never approved of it.

Mr. PICKERING: I take it that the contest at Claremont was won more or less on this question. I support the member for Beverley, because we have had evidence that in the past the men did their work satisfactorily, and moreover this is not the primary work of the health inspector. In view of the increased prices of spirits and the reduced quantity, it is imperative that we should have stricter supervision.

Mr. BROUN: Whilst I admit it is a good move to appoint health inspectors to carry out the duties of excise officers, we cannot get away from the fact that there are centres where these officers will not visit. The health inspectors will go into the towns which are under the Health Act and carry out their duties there. Places like Corrigin and Bruce Rock, where there are State Hotels, will not be visited by the officers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Every part of the State comes under the Health Act.

Mr. BROUN: If that is the case, I am satisfied with the explanation given by the Honorary Minister.

Mr. NAIRN: I do not wish to say that the appointment of the various health inspectors is not a good move; I think it is, because we shall have more frequent inspections, but I would not like a feeling of security to be created, because as the member for Claremont has pointed out, all that a health inspector might be expected to do would be to discover the alcoholic strength of liquor. The use of a hydrometer in no way indicates the quality of liquor which is being tested: it only tests the alcoholic strength, and that is as far as the health inspector may be expected to go. I hope the department will not consider that by the

appointment of these inspectors they have completed their work, because they have not. Inspections should begin at the Customs house, and the warehouses. Very little inspection of liquor ever takes place at a warehouse. Probably there is not much occasion for inspection there, but all the same, there are occasions where inspections would be justified, and we might be able to trace the defects there at the source before distribution. With the appointment of more inspectors and the use of the laboratory some good results might accrue. We know that the law does not permit the sale of spirit below 25 per cent. under proof. One conscientious man might be selling spirit 26 per cent. under proof and is almost certain to be prosecuted. Yet that spirit may be of the highest quality, and the other man selling a much inferior article, and keeping it within the alcoholic strength, goes scot free. So that inspection without a laboratory is useless. We must not trust too much to the value of the health inspectors beyond the fact that they will make more frequent inspections. They will take samples more frequently, and if they submit those to the laboratory there is every reason to believe that good results will follow. I have for long held the opinion that it should be permissible to sell alcohol at any strength, provided it is marked on the bottle. I agree with the leader of the Opposition that there is room for a great deal of improvement in the system of inspection.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you not think it would be advisable to reduce the strength all round?

Mr. NAIRN: I think so, but at present there is the legal barrier, providing for a certain alcoholic strength.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Lunacy and Inebriates, £30,276—agreed to.

Vote—Medical and Public Health, £14,800:

Item, Public Hospitals—Fremantle, Maintenance, £5,000.

Mr. ROCKE: Incidents occasionally occur which make one wonder whether this money is being used for the benefit of the poor and afflicted. One, James McGowan, was received at the Fremantle Hospital for treatment of injuries sustained in a railway accident. After a most casual examination, the man was turned out as suffering from nothing more than a bruised leg. He was refused admission to the hospital, notwithstanding his appeal for a more thorough examination. He has since died as a result of internal injuries which the cursory examination to which he was subjected failed to reveal. In reply to questions which I asked in the house, it was stated that the extent of his injuries was a bruised leg, and that consequently he was not a fit subject to be detained in the hospital. Three times have I asked for a report on the case, three times has that report been promised, and three times have those promises failed to be fulfilled. If the hall-mark of toil is to be a bar to admission to our public hospitals it is time inquiries were made. I hope the Minister will explain this matter.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is not a hospital in the State better managed than is the Fremantle Public Hospital. My only regret is that the Government 18 months ago should have seen fit to cut down the vote. Since then the institution has had to rely largely on the people of Fremantle for assistance. Of course, those in charge of our hospitals are not infallible, and mistakes sometimes occur. For several years I was a member of the board of management of the Fremantle

Public Hospital, and I have never known of a patient being turned away who should have been admitted and for whom a bed was available. Of course, a patient cannot be admitted if there be no bed available for him.

Mr. ROCKE: This man was refused admittance on the ground that he had no injuries beyond a bruised leg.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There may have been no bed available. On the other hand, a mistake may have been made. I am sorry the hon. member should have occasion to lodge his complaint, because the Fremantle hospital is one of the best-managed hospitals in the State.

Mr. ROCKE: I have made no reflection on the management. But I want to know something more about the turning away of this man who has since died as the result of his untreated injuries. I first asked for a report in, I think, April of this year. That report is not yet forthcoming.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: After long experience I find these hospitals are fairly well run. It would be an extraordinary institution if no complaint at all could be made against it. I am afraid it is not possible for me to obtain the report the hon. member refers to.

Mr. ROCKE: The Minister for Works, when acting leader of the House, promised the report, and the Premier, on his return from the Eastern States, also promised that it should be furnished.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: If such a report is obtainable I shall have it laid on the Table within the next few days.

Item, Assisted hospitals, grant in aid of maintenance, buildings, additions, etc., £9,000.

Mr. HARRISON: I want to know if there is an amount here for the long awaited hospital at Merredin. We fully expected that the hospital would have been ready to receive patients ere this. That is a centre which is served by various railways.

Hon. P. Collier: This will come under the heading of new hospitals.

Mr. HARRISON: Then there is the question of nurses' quarters at Westonia. Does that come under this item? If so, may I ask the Honorary Minister when the matter will be finalised?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: This is a matter which comes under the Public Works Department. I am sorry I have not the information for the hon. member.

The Colonial Treasurer: There is a sum of £400 set down for maintenance.

Item, General Hospitals, £2,650.

Mr. SMITH: How much money is spent annually in the eradication of mosquitoes? I see there is also an item in this connection on another page of the Estimates.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I think that it is usual to set apart £100 a year for this purpose. In my opinion the money is wasted. It is chiefly used in connection with putting oil on the stagnant pools about the Causeway.

Item, Wooroloo Sanatorium, £14,000.

Mr. SMITH: I understand that this institution is launching out in stud cattle breeding, and the breeding of pigs. If that is so, the Committee should be informed on the point. If, as has been stated, the cows are only of inferior quality, it is a waste of money to have a pedigreed bull. It is also undesirable that pigs should be bred at an institution of this kind.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The institution must have milk. At the time the herd was started

it was impossible to get good cows, but an effort is being made to build up the herd. The cows which are there are good milkers.

Hon. P. Collier: Is the produce from the herd for the use of the institution, or is it sold?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: It would be quite easy to sell the bull calves if the quality of the cows was better, which I trust will shortly be the case. The farm at which the cows and pigs are kept is fully two miles from the institution, and is run on first class lines. We are only doing what we did last year in this respect, and are spending something like £300 in an endeavour to improve the herd.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Homes, £20,683:

Item, Contingencies, £15,500.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I desire the Honorary Minister's assurance that as the result of the inquiry by a Royal Commission some two years ago improvements have been effected in the management and conduct of the Old Men's Home. A long series of recommendations was made by the Royal Commissioner, the late Mr. Jull, one being that, as the master had failed, a medical man should be placed in charge of the institution. The Government of the day did not take that view, and I do not wish to say anything further regarding the master's work. I do not know, as a fact, whether or not he has improved. I recognise that in an institution of this kind, where numbers of people are gathered together, there is bound to be cause for at any rate a limited number of complaints, and that no such institution can be run to the perfect satisfaction of everybody concerned. One recommendation by Mr. Jull to which the Government ought to have given, but have not given, effect, is the appointment of a visiting committee, such as obtains in connection with practically every institution of this nature—lunatic asylums, gaols, and hospitals. At present any complaint by inmates of the Old Men's Home has to be made to the persons who are practically the complainants' controllers. Inmates should be afforded the opportunity of submitting complaints to an independent body, such as the proposed visiting committee. There would be no cost to the country, and satisfaction would be given to a number of inmates.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I do not administer the Old Men's Home, and therefore cannot undertake to say that a visiting committee will be appointed. I agree, however, that such a committee does good. It has undoubtedly given considerable satisfaction in connection with the Old Women's Home, and this without occasioning the Health Department any trouble. I feel pretty confident the Colonial Secretary will offer no objection to the appointment of such a committee for the Old Men's Home. The leader of the Opposition has my entire sympathy in this matter. As regards the home generally, we are pushed for room, and lack some necessary facilities. Another good big ward is needed, and a better system of bathing and washing. Since the report of the Royal Commissioner, the number of attendants has been increased. We cannot possibly allow a little cost to stand in the way when such a question arises. Mr. Milner is now head of the institution.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am aware that Mr. Milner is now in control of the Old Men's Home, but I trust the Honorary Minister will take a note that this officer should visit the institution

frequently. I am advised—whether correctly or not, I do not know—that he visits it only once a quarter. Having regard to the condition of things existing—according to the Royal Commissioner's report, a shocking condition, and a disgrace to Western Australia—and having regard, further, to the fact that the master then is the master now, there is quite evident great need for frequent visits by Mr. Milner. As to the visiting committee, I hope the Honorary Minister when arguing the matter with the Colonial Secretary will find himself in his most stubborn mood, for in reply to a question here I was informed a little time ago that in view of the altered management and in view of the reforms which had been effected a visiting committee was not considered necessary.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Health Section, £24,454:

Item—Allowance to Commissioner (including arrears, £48), £216.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What is the explanation of this allowance?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: It is an allowance at the rate of £168 per annum made to the Commissioner while acting as Principal Medical Officer and also as Bacteriologist and Pathologist.

Hon. P. Collier: It is in addition to his salary?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Yes. The former Bacteriologist and Pathologist received £600 per annum. This allowance is really an overtime payment, and is thoroughly warranted.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I own at once that the Commissioner of Public Health is an excellent officer, and during the past year or two has been a hard-worked one. But the principle of allowances on the ground that the recipient is doing extra work outside his official hours is a bad principle. Overtime work and night work cannot go on indefinitely. This covers two years allowance. It is an instance of how schemes for amalgamation never work out according to anticipations. When the Principal Medical Officer retired it was shown how several hundreds of pounds were to be saved, but it is only a matter of two or three years when increases place the succeeding officer in the same position financially as the retired official. The understanding was that there was to be a saving of £200 a year, but there will be no saving if Dr. Atkinson is to draw the salary that Dr. Shearman was receiving. These allowances are always given to the higher paid officials; by no circumstances whatever do we see allowances for extra work given to officers receiving £200 a year. All these allowances come the way of officers highly placed, and drawing big salaries. I could find many officers drawing low salaries who should be receiving allowances for extra work.

Mr. Teesdale: Is this one year's allowance?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: It is one year's allowance, bringing the salary up to £1,020. If a man is working overtime he generally gets time and a quarter or time and a half. There is no shadow of doubt that Dr. Atkinson is working overtime.

Hon. P. Collier: He is not the only one.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: No, but others are getting overtime.

Hon. P. Collier: No.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: When the Scaddan Government were in power and Dr. Hope resigned, Dr. Atkinson filled the position, and it was decided to have a Principal Medical Officer controlling all hospitals and a Commissioner of Public Health,

but we could not get suitable men, therefore we let the old system go.

Hon. P. Collier: Dr. Atkinson started at £850.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I think it was £800. There are engineers receiving £1,200 and £1,500 a year. We require doctors high up in the profession. At present any doctor could leave the service and earn in private practice three times the money he is receiving.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Have inspectors been appointed under the new Act? There is necessity for taking action.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The work of inspectors is being done by the police. We have appointed some inspectors. The Act requires amending but it is doing some good. The question of introducing an amending Bill is under consideration, but we want to close before Christmas, and although we would like to bring in one or two amending Bills it will not be possible. There are amendments to the Shops and Factories Act, Early Closing Act, and other Acts required, but I do not think time will permit of them being brought forward.

Hon. P. Collier: The Shops and Factories Bill is coming forward?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: That Bill is to be brought in if there is time.

Vote put and passed.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.40 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 7th November, 1918.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

SELECT COMMITTEE STATE CHILDREN AMENDMENT BILL.

Extension of Time.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [3.0]: I move—

That the time for bringing up the report of the select committee be extended to Wednesday, 13th November.

The examination of witnesses and the deliberations of the committee have extended a good deal further than we thought would be the case when we first undertook our task. I trust, however, that when the report is presented—and it will undoubtedly be ready for

presentation next Wednesday—it will prove that the committee have not wasted any time, and that they have worked fairly strenuously. Question put and passed.

BILL—FRUIT CASES.

Second Reading.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister) [3.5] in moving the second reading said: There is no standard size for fruit cases in this State, and consequently cases of all sizes and dimensions are sent forth, and a person ordering a case of fruit has no guarantee that the quantity of fruit packed in that case is the quantity that he ordered. This is most inadvisable. Last summer, when tomatoes were being sold in cases, it was found that those cases were two inches shorter and one inch narrower than the usual size of cases. This variation in the size of cases is unfair to the purchaser, and also to the honest packer, who uses larger sized cases. The standard imperial bushel case is one which has a capacity of 2,223 cubic inches. When the Western Australian growers send fruit to the Eastern States they have to conform with the Case Acts in force in those States, and it has happened in the past that on account of our cases not being of standard measurements the fruit has had to be repacked in other cases on arrival in the East. Consequently there has been extra cost to the growers of this State.

Hon. J. Duffell: Has that actually taken place owing to the size of the case?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): It has. The fruitgrowers of Western Australia are alive to the advantages of a Case Act, and they passed resolutions at their last three conferences requesting the Government to take action in the matter. The Bill provides for the standards for fruit cases to be prescribed by regulation, and it is the intention that these standards shall conform with the Eastern States' regulations, and shall comprise one bushel, half bushel, and quarter bushel sizes only, with the exception of an over-sized tropical case for bananas, pine-apples, etc., and trays, punnets, etc., for soft and small fruits. I would draw hon. members' attention to the typewritten list which has been supplied with the Bill, showing the dimensions of the cases. This list of measurements will be a guide to hon. members. Clause 1 provides that the date on which the Bill will come into operation shall be postponed until a reasonable period has elapsed to allow of present stocks being used up. This will take more than 12 months, and the 1st July, 1920, is considered a suitable date on which the measure shall come into force.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Well, why worry about it now?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): If we leave it until next session we will still have to give ample notice, and the date for bringing the Bill into force will have to be further extended. The distant period is necessary, so as to give ample time to the people holding stocks to get rid of those stocks. Clause 3 refers to the fruit to be sold in standard cases, and reads, "Except as hereinafter