

Hon. J. F. Cullen: But the employer grades them.

Hon. J. E. DODD: They were graded by an industrial agreement fixed by the workers and the Commissioner of Railways meeting in conference. Then, again, a clergyman in connection with the engineers' dispute graded quite a number of men. Members seemed to think there was more behind the clause than there was.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Why did the Government oppose grading in the court the other day?

Hon. J. E. DODD: The Government had not opposed grading in connection with their employees on the railways, but they certainly opposed the grading of two employees doing the same kind of work when one man might be better than the other. It was monstrous to say that the court could go into a man's business and grade all the men who might be on one class of work. If members thought the paragraph lent itself to that he would be glad to look into the matter and see what could be done on recommittal. The other point raised by Sir Edward Wittenoom, that the court could regrade workers after an award was given, was impossible. The wording was the same as it was in all matters appertaining to an award. Clause 79 said that the award should be enforced and be a common rule to the industry in which it applied. It would not bear the construction Sir Edward Wittenoom placed on it.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	8

Majority for 8

AYES.

Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. R. D. McKenzie
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. A. G. Jenkins	Hon. T. H. Wilding
Hon. R. J. Lynn	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. C. McKenzie	Hon. D. G. Cawler

(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. F. Davis	Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. R. G. Ardagh

(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Although notice had been given by him to move to strike out paragraph (c), this was one of the things the managers of the Legislative Council last session had conceded, and the House had been agreeable to concede it by way of compromise with the Assembly, so now he did not feel disposed to move his amendment, particularly as a judge of the Supreme Court was to be president of the Arbitration Court.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 29th October, 1912.

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

QUESTION—NURSES FROM ENGLAND.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: 1, How many certificated nurses have been engaged in England by the W.A. Government during the past 12 months? 2, Under what conditions as to—(a) salaries; (b) term of engagement; (c) passage money out and home?

The PREMIER replied : 1, Ten. Two other nurses have also arrived, but not under agreement. These two have been absorbed into the hospitals' staff. 2, (a) Not less than £52 per annum. (As a matter of fact, they are receiving the usual salary of £60 per annum.) (b) Three years' service with Medical Department. (c) Passage paid from England. If a nurse does not remain for the full period of her agreement, then she must refund such proportion of the passage money as bears a ratio to the period of her service. A clause of the agreement provides for exemption from such a refund if service has to be discontinued owing to bodily infirmity. There is no stipulation regarding return fare to England.

QUESTION—HOMES FOR THE AGED.

Mr. GREEN asked the Premier : 1, What has been the average number of inmates of the Old Men's Home for the last 12 months ? 2, What has been the average cost per head for maintaining the inmates over the same period ? 3, What has been the average number of inmates of the Old Women's Home for the last 12 months ? 4, What has been the average cost per head for maintaining the inmates for that time ?

The PREMIER replied : 1, The average number was 385 for the year ended 30th June, 1912. 2, £25 11s. 7¼d. per annum. 3, The average number was 67 for the year ended 30th June, 1912. This home includes a training school for midwives. 4, £27 4s. 2¾d. per annum.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines : Reports and Returns in accordance with Sections 54 and 83 of "The Government Railways Act, 1904."

RETURN—CROPS AT ESPERANCE AND NORSEMAN.

On motion by Mr. MOORE (Irwin) ordered: That the latest reports of the police officers in charge at Esperance and

Norseman as to the condition of the crops in those districts, be laid upon the Table of the House.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering definition of "Worker," and the First and Fourth Schedules.

Mr. McDowall in the Chair, the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Interpretation:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At the request of the member for Menzies he had consented to the recommittal of the Bill for the purpose of amending the definition of "worker" with a view to including tributers. Some two years ago the Assembly had made provision to bring tributers under the Workers' Compensation Act. The matter was now in the hands of the member for Menzies.

Mr. MULLANY: The object of the amendment he proposed to move was to bring tributers under the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Can we not know what is before us?

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment would be put when the hon. member moved it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What are we considering?

The CHAIRMAN: The motion the hon. member would presently move.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are we considering a clause?

The CHAIRMAN: A copy of the amendment before him showed that the hon. member would move that tributers be deemed to be workers. The hon. member was quite in order in proceeding as he was doing.

Mr. MULLANY moved an amendment—

That in line 13 after "writing" the following be added:—"Provided also that tributers shall for the purpose of this Act be deemed to be workers in the employ of the other party to the tribute."

It was his belief that the amendment would receive general support. A practice had grown up, and was now extensively followed, of leaseholders letting tributes to tributers. Whilst these men did not come under the definition of "wages workers" they were workers in the truest sense of the word, and it was his desire that the provisions of the Bill should be extended to them. Under a regulation issued by the late Minister for Mines (Mr. Gregory) the various wardens on the goldfields now refused to register any tribute agreement unless the parties working in that tribute effected insurance under the Workers' Compensation Act. This had been a grave injustice to the tributers. He had paid a premium of £12 for a year's insurance for himself and three fellow workmen, but he believed they would have had no standing if an accident had occurred. The insurance companies, he thought, had always paid but it was his desire to remove any possibility of liability being repudiated. The amendment would inflict no injustice but would remove an anomaly.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Attorney General apparently was agreeable to the amendment.

The Attorney General: Yes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The measure had gone far enough. A tributer could not in any circumstances be deemed to be in the employ of another person. He was a master working on his own and for his own profit; he was paying a royalty on what he might recover through his operations. The Collie coal mines had been worked for years on tribute and surely the person who owned the mines and let them to a tributer should not have to insure him. The tributer had to insure the men working for him, but the tributer himself ought not to be covered. He was in the place of a master, the only difference being that he did not own the property but hired it under a percentage of the minerals or of the value of the minerals won. The amendment would be overloading the measure and overloading the industries, and we were in danger of legislating industries out of existence. Why should not a man take some portion of his own liability?

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: These men are going to take it.

Hon FRANK WILSON: No; we were legislating to transfer the responsibility to some other person.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The tributer never develops a mine without getting anything out of it, does he?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The sooner we reached the halcyon days when the State owned everything and everyone was a servant of the State, the better it would be for legislation. It would be all right for about five minutes and then there would be a revolution and worker and tributer would be worse off than before.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If there was to be a funeral the leader of the Opposition should be in mourning now because this legislation was already the law of the land. The first regulation under the Mines Regulation Act 1906 stated—

Manager's responsibility for workings of contractors and tributers. In every mine of which there is a registered manager, it shall be a condition of the agreement between him and every contractor and tributer employed in the mine that the said manager shall have supervision and control of all the work carried out by the said contractor or tributer and in respect of such work shall be deemed to be the manager appointed by such contractor or tributer in so far as he is the owner of such mine or part thereof.

That was the relationship which was sought to be recognised and not established by the amendment.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is a regulation to control the work.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In controlling the work the owner had the direction of the work and that direction made him, for the purposes of this measure, the employer. It could be fairly argued, even without the amendment, that a tributer was included in the definition, but to put it beyond dispute it was proposed to add this proviso and the Committee would not stultify themselves.

by doing so, because, when the leader of the Opposition was a member of the Government in 1910, the Tributers Act Amendment Bill was passed by this Chamber, though in consequence of delay in another place, it did not become law, and Clause 8 of that measure read—

Tributers shall, for the purposes of the Workers' Compensation Act, 1902, and the amendments thereof, be deemed to be workers in the employ of the other party to the tribute.

Therefore this was no innovation but only an adoption of what had been passed by regulation under the Mines Regulation Act, 1906, and in part passed in the Tributers Act Amendment Bill of 1910. The inclusion of the definition in this measure would make it clear, when dealing with the Workers' Compensation Act, that tributers were included.

MR. MULLANY : The Attorney General was correct in his reference to the tributer being directly under the control of the leaseholder or his manager. He was not so much concerned whether the tributer or the leaseholder paid the insurance, or took the responsibility, as he was concerned to make it clear that tributers as a class came under the provisions of this measure. There had been extreme doubt in the past. As the leader of the Opposition seemed to be so solicitous for the welfare of the leaseholder he would point out that the leaseholder could protect himself if he so desired when preparing the tribute agreement. The leader of the Opposition knew well that when a leaseholder and a body of tributers or one tributer were fixing up a tributing agreement all conditions were inserted and had to be signed by both parties. The agreement had to be registered in the warden's office or with the mining registrar so that the agreement should be fair to both parties. In the past it had been manifestly unfair to the tributer because he was forced to pay the insurance money under the Workers' Compensation Act before the leaseholder would let him a tribute at all, and it was always doubtful if the tributer could recover at all. When the leaseholder or the mineowner desired to

let a tribute that was fair evidence that the mineowner could not work the mine at a profit by employing wages men. If he could he would certainly employ those men. When a party of tributers were prepared to put their labour into a mine they should be able to get the same protection under the Workers' Compensation Act as the wages men received.

MR. HARPER : It was hardly necessary to pass this amendment because as the hon. member (Mr. Mullany) had said, an agreement could be prepared providing that the tributers should be insured.

The Attorney General : Usually all the tributers are insured.

MR. HARPER : Yes, the tributer ought to be the man responsible for insuring his men. He paid the wages and knew the number of men employed whereas the leaseholder did not know these particulars. In the past tributers had been insured and insurance companies had paid compensation. He did not think the companies would have paid the compensation unless they were legally bound to do so. There might be a lease let on tribute that would not be worth paying insurance money for. Leases might be valueless and tributers often took on speculative operations. In some cases a man might work almost for nothing and in other cases tributers could make substantial rises. He was in accord with the leader of the Opposition that we were getting too many Acts of Parliament in this State, all the industries were being harassed and made unprofitable. It ought to be the object of members to encourage not only the mining industry to continue, but in all other industries, but when Acts of Parliament cast obligations on industries it did them harm. The amendment was not necessary because the tributers were quite able to look after themselves. Very often in a mine on tribute there was a number of shareholders, therefore these shareholders should be responsible for their own actions. The leaseholder might be most impecunious. A tribute might be let on condition that the mine was only to be developed to a certain depth.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What is the object of letting tribute?

Mr. HARPER: Very often to keep the labour conditions going.

Mr. Mullany: And to avoid paying wages.

Mr. HARPER: That was not so. Generally when a mine was let on tribute that mine was at its tail end. Men often worked with greater spirit when working for themselves. A leaseholder could not get the same work out of his men, and would have to close down.

Mr. FOLEY: The Committee should adopt the amendment. Each and every member representing a mining district had not always only the worker in front of him but he had also the mining industry before him, and it was the intention of mining members to try and develop that industry as well as it was their intention to safeguard the interests of those working in the industry. That was one point which the hon. member (Mr. Harper) had forgotten. If the amendment was carried it would be conferring a boon on the men who in this State had been instrumental in keeping the mining industry going when many companies had not been able to work their mines successfully. If a mine was closed down it was generally said that was the last stage of that mine, but tributers often would take such a mine on hire and work it for profit. In many instances tributers were used by companies and employers to conform to the labour covenants because the employers always looked at a matter from the view-point of profit. If a tributers Bill was brought down, and he hoped that some day such a Bill would be before the House, he would move to insert a provision that tributers should not be allowed to fulfil the labour covenants in a mine. At present the tributers were fulfilling the covenants; the leaseholders paid them no money. All the money the tributers received was what they made, and frequently it was such a small amount that it was virtually of no use to them.

Mr. Wisdom: Then why do they keep on?

Mr. FOLEY: Because there was always a chance of benefiting themselves, and

if they benefited themselves they benefited the mining industry. There were some men who had been in the mining industry and to whom the mining industry had been a benefit, but as soon as they left the mining industry they cried stinking fish on every conceivable occasion. The mine owners were using tributers in the place of wages men because it was generally stated by the leaseholder that a certain amount of developmental work should be carried out. They also generally provided what part of a mine should be worked and under what conditions it should be worked. Therefore, the tributers were in a similar position to wages men. Companies or employers were using tributers to gain profit, to comply with the labour conditions and keep the mine going, always having the one main chance in front of them that the tributers might strike something, and as soon as they did so the leaseholders turned the tributers down and worked the mine themselves. Tributers were greatly responsible for keeping the mining industry going, therefore the amendment should be carried.

Mr. HEITMANN: There had been no objection from any member to the principle of compensation. Not even the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) would contend that compensation was a principle that might not with benefit be extended in this State. It might seem strange to members that we should desire to bring in a class of workmen who were looked upon as independent of employers, that was men who were their own employers. But there was the same relationship that existed between the employer and the employee existing between the mine owner and the tributer. The owner of the lease let the lease on tribute, or a portion of the mine in order that he might be able to comply with the labour conditions. If he did not have tributers employed, he would either have to employ other men on wages, or abandon or surrender the lease. There were hundreds of cases in Western Australia where companies had for the time being shut down, and when, after exemption had expired, if they had obtained exemption, in order that they might retain the ownership of that lease,

they had decided to employ tributers. There were cases where the whole of the leases had been let on tribute, and in such cases, it would be harder to bring about relationship between the owner of the lease and the tributer, but there was that connection between the two, and if it did not pay the lease owner to work the ground by those means, why did he not forfeit it? The holder of the lease gained a benefit from the labour of the men, not only winning money from the percentage which the tributers had to pay him, but also by reason of the fact that the tributers held the lease for him. Some time ago he (Mr. Heitmann) brought before the Minister the case of the Belle Vue mine at Sir Samuel. This mine had worked for a number of years, and had paid for a time, but later on it failed to be profitable to work, and it was let on tribute. In one year, from a dozen tributers, the company received as their percentage about £600, and the company actually did nothing. The tributers discovered a new reef.

Mr. Wisdom: Where did they discover it? It was discovered down below.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was on the surface. There undoubtedly existed a connection between the owner of the lease and the tributers, and there was a relationship corresponding to some extent to that of employer and employee, and it was the desire of all that when a man got injured he should receive some compensation. It was clear that the tributer was, to a certain extent, an employee of the owner of the lease, and in consequence he should receive compensation in case of injury.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Some hon. members opposite seemed to be greatly perturbed whenever a measure was brought forward for the protection of the workers. They seemed to imagine that some great hardships were going to be placed upon the capitalists and those who controlled the industries. But, if they thought for a moment, they would see that no possible disadvantage could be placed on those persons. If a burden was placed on a manufacturing industry, the person who controlled that industry simply passed it on.

Mr. Nanson: How does the exporter pass it on?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It was passed on to the consumer all the time.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Absolute rubbish.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Apart from that question altogether, it was generally recognised by anybody of advanced ideas, and it had been laid down as a principle of the Federal Arbitration Court that, if an industry could not pay wages and provide reasonable conditions, that industry had no right to exist, and no capitalist who invested money had a right to expect a profit at the expense of any worker. With regard to the amendment of the member for Menzies, it had been already pointed out that tributers were always compelled to insure under the Workers' Compensation Act, when they signed on. No one had denied that, but there was a doubt as to whether they could obtain compensation if they were injured, or if killed, whether their dependents could obtain compensation, and it was desired to carry the amendment so that there should be no doubt in the matter.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Let them insure?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: They were compelled to insure, but it did not follow that, if injured, they would receive compensation. It was desired to provide that there would be no doubt whatever that those men should have the right to claim compensation. How would it make any difference to the mining companies? Hon. members opposite were building up bogies that we were going to ruin all the industries, because it was desired to do justice to all classes of workers. The member for Beverley admitted that tributers often developed the properties of mine owners, and got little out of the transaction. The member for Beverley admitted that a tribute was never let unless the mine was not paying, and then the tributer was expected to do development work.

Mr. Wisdom: The tributer never does development work.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The good sense of the Chamber would assist in carrying the amendment, and give to these hardworking miners the right they were justly entitled to.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Under the clause it would be possible for the tributers and those owning a mine to enter into an agreement and the men could recover from the owner. The Attorney General might look at Clause 16.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: What are the words you rely on? The clause begins, "Subject to a scheme."

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Even under Clause 8, the scheme must at least provide for compensation. He merely raised the point for the Attorney General to answer, because the member for Subiaco had stated that the tributers could not arrange with the owners.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If there were any scheme other than that of general insurance, and it met with the approval of the registrar and was not less favourable to the worker than this measure, it could be adopted, but there was nothing in the world to prevent anybody from insuring his workmen. What the Bill did was to recognise the relationship fixed by the Mines Regulation Act that the owner of the mine was the manager, the employer, the director, and, fixing that relationship, the Bill put upon that owner the obligation of seeing to the insurance of tributers.

Mr. S. Stubbs: That means that all mines will have to be shut down, because a mine owner cannot afford to keep a manager to watch the tributers.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Wherever tributary agreements were made this was one of the terms of the agreement. It was usual for a tribute agreement to contain a stipulation that there should be insurance of the tributers, and that was also the custom in regard to the general miners. If that was being done, the Bill did not alter the custom. What was going on now would continue, but the Bill made it certain that if a case should come into court the relationship of the manager or owner to the tributers would be clear. He did not know that there had ever been a case raised wherein it had been disputed that the tributer stood in the relationship of a worker.

Mr. Green: Only one case.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There might be other cases, and this was only the precaution, so to speak, of taking life boats with one.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The property would be responsible under the Act now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes excepting that the point could be raised that the tributer had no such position as worker in relation to a mine. He might be looked upon as an independent person looking after his own interests only.

Amendment put and passed.

First schedule:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL moved an amendment—

That in paragraph 1, sub-paragraph (b), "four" be struck out and "six" inserted in lieu.

When the Bill was previously in Committee he had agreed that if there should be any alteration in the amounts mentioned in the Bill as compensation for death and total incapacity respectively, it would be in the direction of raising the amount of £400 for total incapacity to £600, the same amount as was allowed for death. It was inconsistent to allow £600 for death and only £400 for total incapacity to work, and in consulting all the Acts dealing with this matter he found that in each instance the same sum was fixed for total disablement as for death. Surely total inability to work further throughout life was deserving of the same compensation as death itself.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You argued the other way previously.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The argument had been that in the case of total incapacity the dependents would, at any rate, have the companionship of the survivor, but he did not think that was sufficient from the point of view of necessity. One had to live and maintain life and it would be more costly to a family to have the burden of keeping a person totally incapable of work than if they had been relieved of that responsibility by the death of the victim.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In subparagraph (a) the sum that might exceed £400 was provided for the worker who had been three years working for the one employer.

and, obviously, he deserved more consideration than the person who had been working for an employer only a fortnight before he became injured. No one objected to the higher amount in the case of the worker who had served a long length of time. The insurance premiums would already be heavy, and if the amount was increased from £400 to £600 in all cases of total incapacity it would result in a considerable increase in the premium. Already there was a considerable difficulty in providing employment for men, and anything which would tend to make employment more costly would increase that difficulty. The Attorney General had not assigned any good reason for the alteration.

Mr. GREEN: The reason which had induced him to suggest the amendment to the Attorney General was that a worker who was totally incapacitated was a greater drag on a family than if he was out of the world altogether. There was also the excellent precedent of the New Zealand Act, under which the amount for total incapacity was the same as that for death. The trend of legislation in other parts of the world was to give more for total incapacity than for death. The official document of the Labour Bureau of the United States, published in 1911, shows that the predominant feature of the labour legislation for that year was in the provision made for compensation; and to show the difference made in the amounts paid in the case of death and total disability, California paid £1,000 maximum for death and £5,000 maximum for total disability; Kansas paid £720 for death and £1,560 for total disability; New Jersey paid £600 for death and £800 for total disability; Ohio paid £680 for death and £2 8s. 4d. per week, or £125 13s. a year, as long as the totally disabled workman continued to live; while Washington paid £800 maximum in the case of death and £7 a month as long as the worker continued to exist. The United States was considered the home of the exploiter, but we could see from these figures that in that country they were actuated by the same instinct that had induced the Labour party to bring forward a Workers' Compensation Bill,

namely, pure humanitarianism. Countries not credited with being dominated by the Labour party recognised, as the Attorney General now recognised, that if there was to be any difference in compensation it should be in favour of the family left with the totally disabled breadwinner.

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

Fourth schedule:

On motions by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, the column headed "Description of disease" was amended by inserting the following lines—"Bromide poisoning or poisoning from the use of any other chemical and their *sequelae*," and "Any disease or bodily infirmity arising from inhaling impure or noxious gas"; and the column headed "Description of process" was amended by inserting the word "Mining" opposite the lines so added to the other column; and the schedule as amended was agreed to.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—NATIVE FLORA PROTECTION.

Received from the Legislative Council, and on motion by Hon. H. B. Lefroy read a first time.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in moving the second reading said: I do not propose to take up much of the time of the Chamber in re-submitting this Bill for the favourable consideration of members. It will be borne in mind that last year the Government presented this Bill, and that, while it passed this Chamber, it did not receive sufficient support in the Legislative Council for it to become law. Since then we have had twelve months more experience of administration, and the Government are convinced that it is in the best interests of this country that a public works committee should be appointed to

go into works, as outlined in the Bill, costing over £20,000, or special works that may be submitted for consideration. We are satisfied that the first duty of a Government is to give Parliament and the people as much control as it is possible to give over the public purse, and we are satisfied that under existing conditions Parliament does not get that opportunity of going into the various public works of the country it should have. As outlined last year, the Bill is framed on a measure that has been in existence for many years in New South Wales. In addition to New South Wales having a public works committee that deals with all public works, for many years Victoria has had a public works committee limited to the consideration of railway proposals. Then we find in South Australia during the last month or two they have adopted the Victorian method and have asked Parliament to authorise the appointment of a committee, similar to that in Victoria, for the purpose of considering railway proposals. During the last twelve months we have had experience of select committees being appointed to investigate public works, particularly railways, and I do not think any member will be prepared to assert that the results of these committees' investigations are altogether satisfactory from a parliamentary point of view. I suppose those who sit on the committees are in accordance with what they think desirable, but I think that if members generally took a keen interest in a public work itself, apart from the discussion being simply confined to a question of route, we would get a general discussion from members, and members would acquire more information than is contained in a select committee's report. In addition to select committees, we have had requests for Royal Commissions to be appointed to investigate other public works. I claim, apart from the experience we have had during the last twelve months, that select committees generally are unsatisfactory. They are generally brought into existence by a member who is either opposed to a work or in favour of it.

Mr. Heitmann: He is usually biased.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He is biased, I think. He either wants to oppose a work that has been passed by Parliament or is contemplated, or he wants to expedite some particular work that does not find favour in the eyes of the Government of the day. Consequently, if a select committee is appointed by the Chamber, those who are successful in getting the committee only look around to get evidence in support of the view they take in regard to that particular work, with the result that Parliament does not get what may be called evidence of value to the State generally, but simply gets evidence drawn from a narrow groove, and the width of that groove is confined by the amount of bias on the part of the member. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) shakes his head, but it is absolutely so. We know perfectly well that members go on a select committee for one particular purpose, and get evidence to support their view of the case. As I have said, I am personally opposed to select committees altogether. I do not think we get any good result from their reports.

Hon. J. Mitchell: This Bill would not do away with select committees.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But it would avoid the necessity for their appointment. I do not think Parliament would allow a select committee to investigate a work which had already been investigated by the Public Works Committee. It would be a ridiculous proposition.

Hon. J. Mitchell: A select committee might have to inquire into the method of carrying out the work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, no; that is purely a question for the Public Works Department. I have not had experience of Parliament dictating as to how public works shall be carried out. It is essentially a matter for experts and engineers. The questions likely to be investigated by a select committee will no doubt be investigated by the Public Works Committee, only in a broader way, having in view the actual effect any proposed public work will have, not only in the

district concerned, but throughout the State generally.

Mr. Male: The best work of the British Parliament is done by select committees.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not prepared to admit that. In any case we have to do better than even the British Parliament in the way of public works. For instance, the House of Commons has not got the control of the public purse which Australian Parliaments like to have. In the House of Commons members generally do not take that keen interest in political matters which they do in Australia. It is very seldom that there is a large proportion of members present in the House of Commons dealing with public works and financial matters. There are but a limited few who take an interest in these matters, whereas in Australia, fortunately, the percentage of attendances in the Chamber is much larger, comparatively speaking, and members take a keener interest in financial matters than do the members of the British Parliament. The object of the Bill is to give Parliament still greater opportunity of arriving at the pros and cons of each and every public work. We have to bear in mind that even though members may urge that select committees do good work, a select committee is restricted in its sittings to the time during which Parliament is in session, and consequently the available time is comparatively limited. For that reason it is almost impossible for a select committee to give to a public work the consideration and investigation necessary to works costing over £20,000. Hon. members may argue that even though select committees are unsatisfactory, we can still have a royal commission on these works if Parliament think they should receive further investigation than has been given by the Ministry of the day. But we have to bear in mind that with one or two exceptions royal commissions in Western Australia have not been of any great benefit to the State. We have had numerous instances of royal commissions whose reports have been as so much waste paper. In one or two cases royal commissions have done good work and saved a considerable amount of money; but still

we have to bear in mind that a royal commission is appointed for one particular work only, and therefore it has but comparatively little educational value for its members, whose attention is not transferred to another subject on a settlement of the one being arrived at. In other words, the members of one particular royal commission may not have seats on the next commission appointed to investigate a work of a similar character, and the result is that members do not get the same general education that the members of the Public Works Committee may be expected to get by sitting for the whole term of Parliament. No doubt it will be urged again that the result of investigations by the advisory boards has been such in Western Australia that a continuation of that system is desirable. Last session I dealt with this question, and I wish to repeat that in my opinion advisory boards' reports do not contain the amount of evidence which it is desirable Parliament should be in possession of before undertaking various railway propositions. The reports deal with investigations of experts, but their investigations are limited and, after all, it is desirable that we should have, not a committee composed of experts who report to Cabinet, but rather that the committee should be able to cross-examine those experts so that we can get an opportunity of hearing from them the details of the proposition, instead of getting merely a general outline, as we get to-day, in the reports of the advisory boards. We do not to-day get any evidence to show on what the report is based. All we get is the report without any detail as to the merits of the recommendations contained therein. Apart from all that, these advisory boards are composed of experts.

Mr. Male: The Minister could get all that information from the evidence.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is just the point. It is questionable whether the Minister should have all this information, whether this information should be restricted to the six members on the Ministerial bench, or whether the whole of it should not be made available to members of Parliament generally. It is one of the advantages of the Public

Works Committee that they report to Parliament.

Mr. Male : They have to take the responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : No, we still take the responsibility. It is merely giving Parliament full information. Members sitting on the committee closely scrutinise a proposition for the expenditure of public funds, subsequently report to Parliament and, apart from the actual report of the committee, each member of that committee from his place in Parliament can give to Parliament details as to how that report was arrived at. Under the system of the Public Works Committee we have members of Parliament responsible to Parliament, reporting to Parliament, instead of, as under the existing conditions, an advisory board responsible to Cabinet only.

Mr. E. B. Johnston : And you still get the benefit of the advice of experts.

Mr. Male : It would mean three or four new Ministers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Not necessarily so. This committee will have but limited powers, of course. Then it is to be borne in mind that the advisory boards are composed of experts, and we know from experience that the departmental work which these experts or highly paid officials should have been engaged upon, has suffered in consequence of their absence with the Advisory Board. Take Mr. Muir, of the Public Works Department: the department absolutely lost the services of that officer as chief engineer for surveys, and if that sort of thing were allowed to continue, there would be no other conclusion than that he was a surplus officer out on advisory board's work. If his services are valued his own particular branch suffers. I am only illustrating that one case, but it applies generally.

Mr. Male : You are carrying out these methods now. You have officers appointed on different boards. Take your irrigation scheme: you have appointed permanent officers there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : No, under the Irrigation Bill all we are to get is the advice of officers as to whether

an irrigation proposition should be carried out in a particular district.

Mr. Male : You have permanent officers on the Fremantle Harbour Trust and are losing their services in their proper sphere.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : That is so. The Engineer-in-Chief is chairman of the Harbour Trust; but his weekly meetings occupy only half a day, and at that time we know where he is and how long he will be away, whereas in the case of officers on the Advisory Board they are touring the country investigating railway propositions and are absent indefinitely. We do not want that. We can get the information from the settlers. The Advisory Board get it from the settlers to-day, and arrive at a conclusion, and submit that to Cabinet without giving the detailed information which they secured on the spot. This committee will get that information and will furnish it to Parliament. Then as to cost of construction and other technical matters, the expert officer will be examined close to his own office.

The Premier : The Advisory Board are merely asked to report as to how a work is to be done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The powers of the Advisory Board are limited. They have not general powers as the Public Works Committee will have. They are asked to report on a case and submit a recommendation as to a railway in a given locality. But we can get the Public Works Committee to go right into the question and consider whether it is in the best interests of the State that this railway should be built at all or whether other railway propositions should take precedence. To-day it is for the Government to say whether or not there shall be a railway in a given district, and whether it is of first importance. The Public Works Committee, however, will have the power to decide whether a project is of first importance or whether another railway should take precedence. In the past railways have been built in this State which should have been delayed, while other railways which have been neglected should have been ex-

pedited. The Government have taken the responsibility. Parliament has not had the detailed information it will in future have if the Bill be passed and, in consequence, Parliament has not been able to protect the State from the possibility of a district getting a railway long before its time. With the system of the Public Works Committee initiated we will have the advantage of cross-examining the experts. To get the best possible advice from an expert it is necessary to cross-examine him. It does not do to allow him to make a statement which may be based on a wrong conclusion. There is only one way to avoid that, namely to bring the expert before a committee and see exactly how he has arrived at his conclusions. The details can be conveyed to Parliament instead of, as under existing conditions, merely conveyed to Cabinet. Then, as the Premier has pointed out, the advisory boards are instructed by Cabinet and are responsible to Cabinet, whereas the Public Works Committee will be appointed by Parliament, and will be responsible to Parliament, which is a vast improvement on the system we have been following in years past.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Advisory Board's reports are made public.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but they are limited. You do not get the detail as to how the members of the board have arrived at their conclusions.

The Premier: The difficulty in the past has been the making of those reports public before they were confirmed by Parliament, and so misleading the settlers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Again, the expert does not give the basis on which he has built up his conclusion. The information he gets is not conveyed to Parliament. The Advisory Board merely advise so and so, and their report may be based on evidence on which Parliament would not arrive at the same conclusion; so we do not get the detailed evidence which we are justified in asking for if we want Parliament to have control of the public purse. It is not a question of the Ministry trying to avoid responsibility, but merely of asking Parliament to

take a responsibility which the people expect them to take, namely, that of controlling the public purse. No Government should be able to carry on a work without giving every information in respect to it. In the past Governments have given just sufficient information to justify a work, while members do not get the information, if any, which might be quoted in opposition to the work.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Before tea I was endeavouring to point out to the House the advantages of a public works committee as compared with an advisory board's report, inasmuch as a public works committee give detailed information that they collect and on which evidence they base their report. The member for Northam, by way of interjection, desired to convey to the Chamber that the whole of the conclusions of an advisory board would be submitted to Parliament, but that is not so. The Government of the day submit to Parliament those reports which are in accordance with the policy or desires of the Government but they do not present all the information that the advisory board submit to Cabinet, and this only emphasises the point I have already made that an advisory board is responsible to Cabinet and to the Government only, whereas a public works committee will be responsible to Parliament. I would also like to point out that with an advisory board's report, the worth of it is always gauged by the opinion of the individual member. If it suits the member for a particular district, then it is a good report. If it does not suit that member, it is a bad report, and we find that where an advisory board's report has been against the opinion held by a member for a particular constituency where the public work was to be constructed, that member has brought influence to bear on the Government to get the Government to alter their opinion in regard to that work. This is something which should be avoided, if possible, and I claim it can be avoided, and can only be avoided by means of a public works committee. The Advisory Board simply report to the Government.

A member can use his influence, and the only influence he requires is sufficient to get the Government to re-consider or to disagree with the report of the Advisory Board, but in connection with the public works committee that member would have to make his appeal to Parliament, and would have to convince Parliament that the conclusions of the committee were not sound. This must appeal to members as a direct means of protecting the public purse. We would get away from this political influence that has undoubtedly been brought to bear, not only in Western Australia, but in other parts of Australia, and it is because of this political influence that New South Wales has retained its public works committee Parliament after Parliament, Ministry after Ministry, year after year, and it is because they experienced the same difficulties in Victoria that they adopted a public works committee so far as railway construction is concerned, and because of the same thing and the desire to give Parliament a greater control of the public purse they are adopting the suggestion in South Australia. In Western Australia political influence has been at work. We want to see that Parliament decides these questions, and if a member wishes to disagree with the conclusions of a committee he should make his appeal to Parliament and not to a section of Parliament. When the Bill was before another place last session the main arguments directed against it were in regard to finance. One member to whom I have had occasion to refer as an extravagant member in regard to his conclusions, especially on financial matters, started off by saying the committee would cost £50,000. It is true that after he had been severely handled by members in another place he reduced his figures slightly, but there is no doubt that there was a general opinion expressed in that Chamber that the cost of this committee would be excessive. Attempts were made to draw a comparison between what would be expended in Western Australia and the actual expenditure in New South Wales. As the leader of the Chamber pointed out, we cannot draw a comparison between Western Australia and New South

Wales, inasmuch as the capital expenditure on public works in New South Wales is considerably larger than in Western Australia, and the investigations in regard to works in New South Wales will be considerably more than in Western Australia for some years to come. Another argument raised by members in another place was that while it had worked evidently satisfactorily in New South Wales, inasmuch as it had been retained there for a number of years, the fact that the other States had not adopted the method was an evidence that it was not generally favoured. That statement was made through want of knowledge, because at that very time Victoria had a public works committee. It is true the duties of that committee did not go to the extent of those in New South Wales, but it was a public works committee nevertheless which inquired into the expenditure of public funds on railways exactly as the committee did in New South Wales. Since then, South Australia has adopted the principle, and consequently we can now say that not only in New South Wales but in Victoria we have the practice of works being submitted to public works committees. South Australia has adopted the principle by introducing a Bill, and members in the Federal House are also urging the appointment of a public works committee.

Mr. Gill: New Zealand is doing the same.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Members in another place last session proceeded to point out that there had been no failures so far as public works in Western Australia were concerned, and stated that we could point with pride to the fact that without a public works committee none of our public funds had been expended that had not been a success. That statement is incorrect. I venture to assert that if we had had a public works committee in Western Australia that huge sum of money that was wasted at Fremantle in connection with the construction of a dock would not have been wasted. That money would have been saved because no public works committee would have endorsed that work. There is direct

evidence of the necessity for Parliament getting more information. If Parliament had had the full information in regard to that work, as Parliament would have under the investigations of a public works committee, that dock would not have been constructed. The dock was a political work. It was constructed under political influence, and consequently we want this country protected against a repetition of that sort of thing. There is direct evidence of the necessity for a public works committee. Then, we have the Bullfinch railway; that work was unduly rushed. It should have been investigated. We got only one side of the question; we did not even get the view of the Chamber of Mines.

Mr. Allen: You supported it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not. I opposed it as strenuously as I could. I spoke against it on the second reading, and I tried in Committee also to defeat the Bill. That, however, is apart from the question. Parliament passed that Bill on the evidence submitted. The evidence submitted did not contain the full facts of the case. After the Bill was passed the Chamber of Mines published a pamphlet opposing the construction of the line and saying it was totally unnecessary. Therefore we want a public works committee to get both sides of the question. If we had got both sides of the question we would never have had that wild cat railway on our hands to-day. Then take the Dowerin-Merredin line; that is undoubtedly constructed in the wrong place. The people are isolated and penalised. That line would not have been constructed as it has been if Parliament had had the full facts, and done what was necessary to protect those people who deserve consideration. If we had had a committee the whole of the evidence would have been placed before Parliament, but we got only one side, and as a consequence Parliament was misled into voting for that railway. If we had had a public works committee, no one would have been isolated, and the general railway policy would have been more in accordance with the desires of the people. I could go on and give other examples, but I do not desire to do so to-night. I want to draw

attention to the investigations in regard to the Wongan Hills-Mullewa and Wickepin-Merredin lines. There is an evidence of where Parliament passed two propositions—it is true they were passed under extraordinary circumstances, but, nevertheless, Parliament passed them—and after they were passed and endorsed by Parliament, select committees were appointed to investigate them. This investigation should have taken place first of all. After the harm had been done, that is if there has been any harm, the investigations were made. That is an evidence of where it is desirable that investigations should be made in regard to the construction of public works before they are endorsed by Parliament. I wish to refer for a moment or two to the Bill. The measure is practically the one that was introduced last session. There are one or two alterations; for instance, the Government propose that the chairman shall be a member of the Executive Council, and the chairman, being one of the six paid Ministers, will not receive any extra remuneration. The other four members of the committee are to be paid one guinea per sitting. Three of the members are to be elected by this Chamber, and one will be elected by the Legislative Council, the election to be on the proportional representation basis. In regard to the expenditure in connection with fees, the Bill proposes to limit the expenditure to a sum of £500 for every half-year, and this is based on a proposal to allow members £200 per annum for fees for investigating public works. For four members that will make £800 a year, but if there is a chairman appointed outside of the six Ministers in a temporary capacity, he is to receive extra remuneration. We propose to make the fees £500 per half-year, or £1,000 per annum, so there is a difference in regard to the Bill this session inasmuch as it lays down definitely the amount of public funds to be paid to members of the committee in regard to their work. The Bill last year gave power to the general committee to appoint sectional committees. This power has been deleted, as the Government are of opinion that the whole of these works should be investigated by the whole com-

mittee, and not by a section of the committee. I do not think I need take up any more time, but I just want to say that the Bill provides that the Government shall submit to the committee all works that are to cost £20,000 and over. Then it leaves it optional for works under that amount to be submitted to the committee for investigation. I consider that it is in the best interests of the State that the whole of our public works should be investigated by a public works committee. I believe it not because I have any desire, or that the Government have any desire, to escape responsibility, but we have a genuine desire to see that Parliament is in full possession of all details in regard to public works, so that Parliament may have a greater control over the public purse than under existing conditions. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Frank Wilson, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1912-13.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 17th October, on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and the Annual Estimates; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

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

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I approach the consideration of the Budget delivered by the Premier with a full sense of my responsibility to criticise what I deem to be wrong in that Budget and to point out the defects so far as the financial position of the State is concerned at the present time. I sympathise with the Premier inasmuch as he finds himself in a tight corner. I have known what it is to be hard up myself in a similar position, but I doubt whether any Treasurer has had to resort to the expedients that the Premier has had to resort to in order

to secure relief. I sympathise with him because I see even by this morning's Press that he is faced with an unemployed difficulty, and that he was urged to borrow money at any price in order that work may be found for those who believe in the "right to work" principles. I can hardly agree with him that he is warranted in borrowing money, no matter what the price may be, nor can I agree with him that this country is too large for any one Government to administer. I recognise the vast extent of Western Australia; we all do that. We know full well it has great possibilities and that it has vast resources, and we know also that the great desideratum is increased population. The country is certainly too big for the number of people who now occupy it, but it is not too big for an energetic, enterprising, careful and cautious Government. However, be that as it may, the House has to consider the Estimates which have been placed before it, and to consider wisely whether the proposals, so far as the financial position is concerned, are those which are sound and in the best interests of the country, and are calculated to advance the material welfare of the people of the State. I notice on perusing the Premier's speech that he was, as last year, full of excuses. On that occasion, it will be remembered, the Premier could not find language strong enough with which to saddle the occupants of the Opposition benches, his predecessors in office, with the terrible condition in which they had left the Treasury. He could not find language strong enough in which to pass on his troubles, no matter whether they were of his own making or otherwise, on to the shoulders of those who had gone before, and on that occasion, after discussing the Budget and the Estimates. I ventured to state that at any rate in the following year, which is this year, the Premier would not have the excuse that we were responsible for any shortcomings so far as the finances were concerned. Still I find he is at his old game, making excuses. For instance there is the excuse of the lateness of the delivery of the Budget speech. I might point out that not very long ago

the Premier made a public declaration in this House that the Treasurer ought to be in the position early in July to submit the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the current year just as easily as in October or November. The Premier was leader of the Opposition and was criticising me when he stated that the Treasurer ought to be in the position to bring in his Estimates early in July, notwithstanding the fact that the financial year closed only on the 30th June. It can be seen at once how deeply the hon. gentleman has fallen into the mire, how grievously he has failed. The House met at the end of June this year after a six months' recess and after a statement during the last Parliament that every endeavour would be made to adjust the finances and bring down the financial statement earlier than ever it was introduced before. The Premier excuses himself in these words, "Had he brought down his Estimates six weeks ago, as he fully intended to do, he would have put up a record extending over a period of seven years." If pigs had wings they would be able to fly. Had the Premier brought down his Estimates of course he would have put up a record, but he did not do so. He also went on to excuse his lateness, his procrastination, by saying that during the seven years that had passed, the Estimates had been introduced as late as December and also in November, and that he delayed bringing down his Budget in order that we might have the fullest details in regard to the trading concerns, principally those which the Government had initiated during the present session of Parliament and a month or two previously to the assembling of the House. And he, therefore, found it impossible, in company with other Treasurers, to deliver the Budget until late in October. It seems to me that the Premier has gone somewhat out of his way to make excuses with regard to the lateness of the delivery of the Budget on different occasions, and although I do not want to delay the Committee too long I find it is necessary in my own behalf, and in behalf of other Treasurers who have occupied the Treasury bench, as Liberals,

to give reasons why the Budgets were not delivered as promptly during their occupancy of the office as the Treasurer has pointed out. It seems to me that this year's delay was not so much on account of the trading concerns because, after all, if hon. members will look at the Estimates, they will find very little detail given with regard to the trading concerns. Instead of having a balance-sheet, instead of having details of the cost of working, we find only lump sums; an estimate that so much is to be expended in wages and incidentals, and that it is anticipated that we shall earn so much by the trading concerns, and that the profit will go to revenue. It seems to me that the Premier in delaying the delivery of his Budget was like Mr. Micawber of old, waiting for something to turn up; he got himself into a tangle financially and he was wondering which way he could turn in order to adjust the figures which had got him into a mess, and which he found it impossible eventually to adjust, hence the big deficit that he has been obliged to prophesy for the coming year. The Premier apologised for the deficit and said that others had forecasted deficits, and that he was, therefore, in no worse position than his predecessors. Let us see why the Estimates in former years were not presented before the months of December and November, as the Premier mentioned, within the last seven years. Let us compare the circumstances, and it is as well that we should have this matter settled and show that it is not good enough to say "some other fellow is worse than I am, and therefore I may be excused for the fault," especially if that other fellow is not at fault when the facts are inquired into. Take the year 1905, when Mr. Rason was Premier. Mr. Rason delivered his Budget on the 12th December, it is true, and probably that was the occasion the Premier referred to when the Budget was delivered in that month. but Mr. Rason only took office at the end of August, Parliament met on the 3rd October, it was dissolved two days later and the new Parliament only met on the 23rd November, and yet the budget was delivered

on the 12th December. In 1906, the first year in which I had the honour to occupy the position of Colonial Treasurer, I delivered my Budget speech on the 1st October, and that is almost a record. I have no excuse to give for that alleged late delivery except that we had a political crisis, which is now ancient history, owing to Mr. Rason's resignation. In the following year, 1907, I delivered the Budget on the 15th October but Parliament was prorogued, it will be remembered, for a fortnight owing to the rejection of the land tax proposals by the Upper House, and the new session of Parliament only began on the 8th October, so that within a week of the meeting of the new session, when we got our new legislation passed, the Budget was delivered. That was not a bad record. In 1908 I again delivered the Budget, that year on the 24th November. That probably is the other month the Premier referred to, but Parliament met to grant supplies only, for the general election and the new Parliament after the general elections only met on the 10th November, so that within 14 days of the meeting of Parliament the financial statement was placed before members. In 1909 Mr. Moore, who was Treasurer, delivered his budget on the 28th September, that is two days earlier than I did in 1906. In 1910 I delivered the Budget on the 18th October; on the 15th September the House adjourned until the 4th October when a no-confidence debate was started by my friends opposite which kept us fully occupied until the 12th October, and yet within six days I brought down the Budget to this House. Now does it not appear rather weak for the Premier to pose as one who is erring in good company, so far as this lateness of the Estimates is concerned? Would it not have been rather more to the point, and more honest—to use an expression which he is so fond of using in his deliveries—to have told the Committee at once that he found it was impossible to bring his Budget down in July when the financial year only ended on the 30th June, and when the accounts were only made up on the 10th July—that it was impossible to

bring the Budget down earlier than at any rate August or September at the very soonest. Then, again, we have also the excuse that the deficit is a thing that other Treasurers have been accustomed to face the Committee with, and after mentioning the dry season that we have passed through just recently, the deferred rents which he said amounted to about £60,000, he excuses the enormous deficit, which accumulated will amount to nearly £300,000 at the end of the financial year, because others, forsooth, have had deficits. He referred more particularly to the years 1907 and 1909. It is equally fair to consider the circumstances, so far as those deficits were concerned. I find on turning up the figures that a reasonable excuse could be found for the deficits in each case an excuse which is valid because the then Treasurer had no control over the finances so far as that portion of the deficit is concerned. I will briefly refer to them. In 1906 Mr. Rason estimated that for the year he would be short £85,000; he was actually short £73,000, but the Commonwealth estimated to return to him £932,000 and only returned £872,000, or £60,000 less. Now Mr. Rason had no control, any more than I had in subsequent years, over the amount returned by the Commonwealth. That amount was fixed according to the customs collections, and of course one had to depend entirely upon the Federal Treasurer for the estimate of the amount that the State would receive from the Commonwealth during the current year. So that members will see that Mr. Rason's deficit was nearly fully accounted for by the shortage in the payments from the Commonwealth. In 1907 I estimated a surplus on the year, quite true as the Premier pointed out, of £3,500. My actual shortage was £88,000, but the land tax which I had included in my estimate of revenue was not passed by another place, and the estimated amount, £60,000, which everyone can see on the printed Estimates, was not, of course, available for the Treasurer: hence the larger portion of that deficit. In 1908 I estimated a shortage of £77,000 for the year: my actual shortage was £2,300. The land and

income tax was not passed when the Budget was delivered, but I made it clear that I expected to get it passed, although I had not included it in the Estimates. Remembering my previous experience when I included an estimate of land tax and did not get the Bill passed, this year I made sure I would get the Bill passed before including the taxation in the Estimates, but I made it clear to the Committee that if I succeeded in passing my taxation proposals I expected to wipe out the deficit. I got the land and income tax passed, and I estimated to receive for the full year £81,000 less the cost of collection, and to balance my revenue and expenditure. I did get it, and I brought in a shortage of only £2,300 for the year. In 1909 I estimated a surplus of £2,500: the actual shortage was £101,000. Those figures seem rather alarming, but there again we were faced with peculiar circumstances. The Commonwealth estimated to return to me £697,000; I received only £618,000, a difference of £79,000, and certain taxes which were included in the Estimates, and are in print now, but were not levied, the Bills not being submitted, amounted to £17,000, so that that £96,000, over which I had no control whatever, made up, as members will see, nearly the whole of the shortage of £101,000. In 1910 Mr. Moore estimated a surplus of £60,000, and the actual surplus was £209,000. In 1911 I estimated a surplus of £104,000 and received £115,000. For 1912 Mr. Seaddan estimated a shortage of £117,000 and he ended with a shortage of £134,000. Now I want the Committee to see at once that when one begins to make comparisons he must carry them out to the extreme: when one depends on excuses to get him out of a position in which he has placed himself and when one uses comparisons to excuse shortcomings for which he is likely to be criticised he should be perfectly clear and state the circumstances, as well as the mere fact that such and such a thing occurred. I think I have made it clear, so far as the seven years the Premier referred to are concerned, both as regards the delivery of the Budgets and the estimated deficits, that it will take him many

years before he can equal, let alone excel, the estimating put up during that period. The Budget which we listened to very carefully would be highly amusing, if it was not so dramatically serious, if it was not so serious to the people of this country and had not such a dire effect upon the callings, the enterprises, and the energy of the small handful of people upon whom we depend to make this great territory of ours reproductive and prosperous. The oft-used expression of the Premier when delivering his oration the other night that he was not ashamed of his Budget, that he endeavoured to present an honest statement, that he was desirous of being honest with the Committee, that "I am quite honest in stating," and "I am going to be candid enough," etcetera—so much protestation I think is calculated to make people rather suspicious and to induce them to look more closely into the figures he has placed before us than otherwise we would be inclined to do. Why need there be so much protestation with regard to honesty? It goes without saying that a Treasurer is honest and candid: at any rate, he ought to be. He is honest so far as his abilities will permit him to be. He does what in his judgment he considers to be in the interests of the State, but his judgment may be out of gear altogether. The Estimates are a gigantic effort I admit—not a masterly effort, because that would be admitting ability—but a gigantic effort to hoodwink Parliament and the people with regard to the true position of the State. Last year's deficit was due, we are told to the bad season, to the bad harvest, to the deferment of rents due by our settlers, to water supplies, and to a few other small items such as the supply of seed wheat to farmers, and I can understand that the Premier was desirous of making the most he possibly could of those excuses. I know as a matter of fact that he had a considerable burden to bear on this account; but when he ventured last Parliament to say that "with an anticipated normal season next year and close attention to administration and an adjustment of the finances during the ensuing period, I fully

anticipate that we shall be able to make up the leeway—that is, wipe out the deficit—before the end of the next financial term,” the Premier was, I think, speaking with the knowledge that he could not possibly make up the leeway and that he must end his financial year with a deficit considerably more than he had estimated. He told us to wait till next year, and he would show us by administration and by adjustment that the finances could be put in order. I think there is just about as much likelihood of the newest and latest prediction of the Premier, the extinction of the deficit within 24 months, being fulfilled as there was of the prediction he indulged in last year being realised. The Premier also said, “We have to accept the position as we find it this financial year, but we shall apply ourselves closely to this question in recess and I believe with some satisfactory results.” Results! I look around for the results, and I fail to see any of a satisfactory character. I can see us gradually drifting deeper and deeper into the slough of financial despond and the country getting harder and harder up each day: I can see the unemployed demanding work from the Premier and his colleagues without getting any satisfaction, but I cannot see any satisfactory results from the Budget which has been placed before this Committee. Notwithstanding the bumper harvest for this year now assured, so the Premier tells us, notwithstanding that trade has increased during the last 12 months according to his figures, notwithstanding that the Premier has roped in all the problematical and imaginary profits that he can possibly conceive from his pet trading concerns, notwithstanding that his railways, although overloaded with an iniquitous expenditure which ought not to have been imposed upon them at the time, an expenditure which was incurred wholly for political purposes, will show a small increased profit of £10,000; notwithstanding that his State hotels are to return him £11,000, that his steamers are to bring in profits to the amount of £12,000, that even his butcher’s stalls are to be

drawn into the ring and made to produce £3,277 profit, notwithstanding that the ferries have to produce a profit of £1,900, that even the Boya quarry and the Fremantle workshops have also to make profits of £1,000 and £1,250 respectively, and even the State motor cars are calculated to give him £700; notwithstanding all these things, and the fact that the saw-mills have not been included, that he proposes to double his land tax, and to increase his income tax threefold in some instances by graduating it up to one shilling in the pound, and notwithstanding that he has in his estimates robbed £24,000 or £25,000 from the metropolitan water supply and has also mortgaged in advance the splendid harvest which we think we are assured, the best result we can get from his budget is a deficit of £156,000 from the year’s workings. “Close attention to administration” to use the hon. member’s words last year—where is it? —“Masterly adjustment of the finances!”—where is the masterly adjustment?—“The Premier is not ashamed.” Well, all I can say is that if he is not ashamed of this Budget, I am certainly ashamed if the Committee will accept it as it is presented. I should like to know why the Public Accounts have not accompanied the Estimates on this occasion. It is usual for these to be printed and distributed in the Chamber in order that hon. members may look for themselves and examine the details of the past year’s expenditure. It is impossible to criticise the Financial Statement properly without the fullest details, at any rate that detail which is usually embodied in these accounts. I rang up the Treasury to endeavour to find out, and the only reply I got was that they were sorry that they were not ready and they were afraid they were not printed.

The Premier: Do you not think you might have followed the instruction you gave and rung up the Treasurer and not the Treasury?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No. I am in the habit of ringing up the Under Treasurer, as the hon. member did, I suppose, when he occupied this position.

The Premier: Never!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I intend to get my information from the Treasury.

The Premier: I rang up once, and the instruction was that no information would be supplied except through the Treasurer.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I shall deal with that later. I have another matter to deal with in regard to the Treasurer, but let me say, before I pass, that I am not going to apply to the Treasurer; I shall apply to the public officers who are there to supply public information. I have the right, and every member of this community has the right, to ask any public officer for information on any public matter, and it is right for the officer in charge of the office, the permanent head, to say "No, I cannot give you that information," and to refer it to his chief if he chooses; and it is right for the chief to say to his permanent head "You can give that information," or "You must withhold it"; and that is where it begins and that is where it ends. Then if the individual wishes to go further, to the head of the department, the Minister himself, he is perfectly justified in doing so. That was the course always followed in my time.

The Premier: No.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is the course the hon. member will have to follow when he is not in office.

The Premier: I will see about that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I will take jolly good care about that. If the Premier thinks he is going to bluff or bounce me he is making a great mistake. I will just pass on, as I am at this point, as to the question of the information I asked yesterday. The Premier mentioned in connection with the Lands Department a matter of £1,250 expenditure over some lithographic plans which had not been paid until the following year. As a matter of fact, it was not paid until 1911-12 although the liability was incurred in 1910-11. I could not quite understand what this item was. I rang up the Lithographic Department and asked what was this £1,250. The Lithographic Depart-

ment said they did not know and told me that the Treasury kept their accounts. I said I had forgotten, but would ring up the Treasury. So I rang up the accountant at the Treasury and asked what was this £1,250, for I had a shrewd idea it was for plans. The accountant said "I will look into it, Mr. Wilson, and let you know in the course of half an hour." Late that evening—that is yesterday afternoon—I got a message sent to me that the accountant had referred the matter to the Under Treasurer, and the Under Treasurer had referred it to the Treasurer, and the Treasurer had said that Mr. Wilson could go to the Premier for the information if he desired. But I declined. I decline to go to the Premier for the information. These are public figures belonging to the public. It is stated that £1,250 had been expended, and any citizen or taxpayer has a right to go to the Under Treasurer or his accountant to ask what this means.

The Premier: That is what I used to think, and yet you refused it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I did nothing of the sort. The Premier knows he is not speaking the truth. If the Under Treasurer thought it was a matter of policy that the public ought not to have explained to them, his duty was to go to the Premier, and it was the Premier's duty not to send an impudent message back, but to tell the Under Treasurer "Yes, it is public property, you can give it to Mr. Wilson," or, "You cannot disclose it," and then it is for me to decide whether I go to the Premier to get the information or not; but it is not for me to be told to wait on the Premier's mat. cap in hand, to know what this £1,250 means in the Public Accounts of the year gone by. They are supposed to be public property and are supposed to be published so that every man and woman in the State may understand them. The Premier was courteous enough this afternoon to come to me, after having considered the matter and come to the conclusion no doubt that he had made a mistake when he commanded my attendance on his door step, and he was good enough to come to me with a statement and say "This is the information you are

asking for." I thank him for it, but what does it say? "Outstanding accounts for 1910-11 etcetera (£1,250) is self explanatory."

The Premier: So it is.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is the explanation. Can the Premier tell me what it is now? He does not know himself. This is the information that all the bother is about. This is the information I got. I am commanded to attend on the Premier's door-step to receive the information that the item is "self explanatory."

The Premier: That statement is not correct, that I demanded that you should wait on my door-step."

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier can give his own explanation.

The Premier: What officer gave you that impudent reply that you stated I gave?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was a telephone message that reached me through my office. It was transmitted to my house. I do not know who gave it to my office. But I am not complaining about the officer. I am complaining about the Premier.

The Premier: No such reply was sent to you. I gave immediate instructions that the information should be supplied to you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am much obliged to the Premier if that is so, but it is not the reply I got over the telephone. And where is the information in "self-explanatory"? What was the £1,250 spent for? Was it expended on maps and plans for the Lands Department, or was it for stationery? Who supplied this stationery? Did the printing office supply it, or the lithographic office? I presume it is the lithographic office, because the Premier said "lithographic" in his Budget speech.

The Premier: It is an explanation of the way in which it was given to the Committee.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have the letter. It is a letter to the Minister for Lands from the accountant to the Lands and Surveys Department, and says—"As verbally requested, I submit the following details in connection with the

Lands and Surveys expenditure as appearing in *Hansard* on page 2540 on the 17th October, 1912." That is the Premier's Budget Speech. He goes on to explain about the increase in salaries due to decentralisation, and then says "Increases in allowances, printing, etcetera; new item, Refunds of Revenue (£1,454), this item explains itself: Avondale Estate—new item (£2,234), represents the cost of farming the estate during 1911-12, (e) outstanding accounts for 1910-11, etcetera (£1,250) is self explanatory." This was the item I was inquiring after. He says it is "self-explanatory." There is the position. I leave the Premier to get out of it the best way he can. It is a marvellous thing we did not get the Public Accounts. They were not submitted to us as usual, and, as I was saying, it is impossible to criticise properly without the fullest detail. We ought to have these Public Accounts with the Estimates. They have always been presented with the Estimates. But I happened to get hold of the *Government Gazette* in which these accounts are published, and in looking through them I find, for instance, that there is an item of £34,000 put down under Consolidated Revenue of last year—true it is against the Treasurer's Advance item—in connection with the Fremantle wharves. Last year it will be remembered we voted £20,000 for renewing the wharves at Fremantle which had been eaten away by the teredo, but apparently from the Public Accounts £54,000 odd has been spent on this work; because there is this item, "Victoria Quay strengthening suspense, £34,469." I suppose it means "Suspense Account." It was spent during 1911-12.

The Premier: The £20,000 was to make up for your year.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This money was spent by the Premier during his year, and £34,469 he has carried to "advance account" under the appropriation "Advance to Treasurer." That £34,000 should have been charged up against the work under Consolidated Revenue, and it would have shown £34,000 excess on the deficit of last year. It would in fact have added to the deficit on the 30th June of last

year. It is a sample of the hoodwinking and juggling going on in connection with the finances of the State. Of course, I can understand the Premier will say, "It is charged to 'Treasurer's Advance Account,'" in the appropriation. He told us last year he would have an appropriation and he got it, but I will point out that this is not an advance to be recovered. It is actual expenditure of money. If we renew the wharves or any public work we spend money on it. The money is gone and does not come back to us like it would if there were something sold, and it must be charged to "Loan" or "Revenue" at the time it is expended.

The Premier : Or to "Suspense."

Hon. FRANK WILSON : No.

The Premier : That is what you did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

The Premier : I am finding some in this year's Estimates.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : That brings me to this "Treasurer's Advance Account." The Premier suggests a very dangerous expedient under the cloak of legality. He has hammered at that "Treasurer's Advance" and stewed it over to know how he can get charge of funds without Parliamentary authority. He declares he is going to have a Parliamentary appropriation, but he is not going to put it into the Estimates, and he can do what he likes with it. The old plan introduced nine or ten years ago was to excess votes or create new votes of urgency in excess and to put a sum on the Estimates by way of a vote by which Parliament said, "We know you must overdraw on certain accounts, but we limit you to a certain amount, £100,000 or £150,000, and you must come to us to legalise your action by excess Bills, when each item must be brought before Parliament and Parliament must confirm the expenditure." That is the attitude that any board of directors take up in managing a commercial concern. Certain payments have to go on, whether the board meets or not, and it is the usual thing for the board to subsequently confirm the payments which

have taken place since the previous meeting, and pass any extra payments that may be due. This was the position Parliament was put into many years ago by Mr. Gardiner, when he was Treasurer, and when he put this item on the Estimates, not that it should be a part and parcel of the Estimates, but that it should be a note saying that Parliament knew the Treasurer would have to overdraw his expenditure from Consolidated Revenue, that he was limited, and must then come to Parliament to have his action legalised by excess votes. Now the Premier is going to ask Parliament to give him a sum of, perhaps, £250,000, for which he need never account; anything may be charged to it, and need only appear in the balance sheet, and may never come before Parliament. I think Parliament will be very foolish indeed to adopt such a course. Parliament will think twice before it falls in with the suggestion of the Premier.

The Premier : He has not suggested it yet.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : He suggested it in his Budget speech, and suggested it last year, and did it. Then we will not pass such items as the Fremantle Wharves £34,469. and another item on the Loan Suspense Account, £77,078, which may be Government steamers, or a total of £111,547, standing out in the balance sheet as we find it to-day. I would suggest to Parliament that we have either a new Audit Act, putting this thing on a proper basis, or a Special Act creating advances, all expenditure to be included each month and finally brought before Parliament for approval. That is the only safe and proper course for handling this question of excess expenditure which is to be incurred by any Government, no matter what trend of politics they may affect.

The Premier : That is exactly what I propose to do.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : It was not. The Premier adopts my policy right along, one suggestion after another; and the unfortunate position is that my duty to the country demands that I should get up here and prompt the Premier to the

correct way out of the awkward position in which he has got himself. Now, turning to water supply and sewerage, I find on the Estimates that in order to get over in part this difficulty of the deficit with which he is faced, the Premier has provided in his revenue for £100,000 to come in from Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage. It is quite right and I think he will get it. On the other side he has debited the whole of the salaries and general expenses, £76,000, and he has taken to Consolidated Revenue the difference between these two items, namely, £24,000. The Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage is controlled by a special Act of Parliament. It provides that the profits, if any, are to be used for extensions and improvements, such as reduction in price. It has its own Act, which controls all its operations. It is not like the Goldfields Water Supply; it is self-contained; it concerns the local people and the local people only, who are getting the benefit of water supply and sewerage works which it controls. This has been followed closely up to date, and for the first time we now find it included in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. Seven years ago, when I had charge of the Public Works Department, I reduced the price of water to consumers from 2s. to 1s. 6d. per thousand gallons. Subsequently the meter charges were abolished, and so the profit was gradually absorbed for the benefit of those who were taxed and charged for the services rendered by this department. Now the profits are to be taken illegally to revenue to wipe out the deficit which the Premier finds he must have on his Consolidated Revenue Account. The people of Perth object to being specially taxed to make up this deficit on the State as a whole. The people of Fremantle and Claremont, who are all within the control of this Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Act, all object to having that extra money which they have contributed to this department utilised to reduce the deficit of the State. Already, as citizens, they contribute their share towards making good the deficit, including the deficit on the Goldfields

Water Supply, but now we are asking them to pay a rate and a price for the water and sewerage services which will produce a profit of £24,000, and the Treasurer is taking that illegally to reduce his deficit.

[*Mr. McDowall took the Chair.*]

The Premier: What about the interest on the money expended in sewerage works?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is all charged up.

The Premier: No it is not.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I suppose I will have to turn it up and show him. "Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Undertakings, expenditure 1911-12, including salaries and general expenses, £55,982; Operating expenses, exclusive of salaries and general expenses, £19,205; interest and sinking fund contributions, £46,680; total, £65,885." That is charged up. And on the other page there is "General, incidental, including travelling allowances, train fares, office cleaning, telephone rent, postages, stationery, advertising, and charges of a general nature not specially provided for, £10,885." So here we have a total of £77,885 charged up on the expenditure side of the Estimates although the Premier says it is not. And on the revenue side of the Estimates we have £100,000 shown as revenue, which he is going to collect. So far there is a profit between the two items which amounts to £24,000. I was pointing out that when we passed the Bill it was made very clear that not only was the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage to be kept absolutely distinct, but also that the different districts of the metropolitan area would be kept distinct. I introduced the Bill, and I said—

I now come to another defect that appeared to us to exist in the old Act. in the metropolitan area. That was a uniform rate provided for all districts in the metropolitan area. That was a rate on the full capital cost, and, of course, the full annual cost, regardless of whether those costs were incurred in one district of the area or another. This was thought to be extremely unfair and, I believe, the member for East

Fremantle himself took exception to it. More especially was it thought to be unfair with regard to the existing water supplies and works, the cost of which, as members know, varies very considerably. Take Perth, there the water rate is 1s. in the pound, whereas the rate at Claremont is 9d., and at Fremantle 6d. [Mr. George: Look at the difference in the quality of the water.] Certainly Fremantle and Claremont get nothing like the same article, and perhaps they have not such a good supply, but nevertheless the fact remains that such is the supply they will have for several years to come, and during those years and while a better supply is being provided, it would be, if adopted, manifestly unfair to make people there pay a portion of the charge say on the Perth supply. Therefore, it is concluded that to make a uniform charge such as is provided for in the 1904 Act would be unfair and would impose a severe hardship on the residents of Claremont and Fremantle. Until we have a source of water supply common to all the districts, we are not justified in imposing a uniform rate.

Even at that time I had to provide that the different districts would not be considered as one and have a uniform charge. Why? Because they might be contributing to the supplies of other districts. The cheaper districts, Claremont and Fremantle, would be contributing to the cost of supplying Perth; yet now they are all to be roped in to contribute to the deficit of the State, and the profit has to be brought in to Consolidated Revenue in order that the Premier may reduce his deficit to the moderate figure, as announced, of £166,000 on the year's workings.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You would start at a profit.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know; perhaps I could not live as cheaply as the hon. member and look as well and happy as he does. His is one of those wise interjections and retorts which bring so much credit on the Honorary Minister who represents the flourishing township of East Fremantle. Not only have we robbery of funds that belong to the

people of the metropolitan area, but we have the Goldfields Water Supply also roped in to try to swell things, and in this case it goes to swell a debit balance, the expenditure, I am sorry to say. And in this case the Premier is acting quite legally. But what I want to know is what has happened that the Goldfields Water Supply should be in such a poor state this year as compared with previous years? In 1910-11, after a lot of trouble and negotiations with the consumers on the goldfields, we were able to get the shortage down to £25,000; that is to say, the Consolidated Revenue had to pay £25,000, whereas in previous years the payment had been as much as £70,000, £80,000, and £90,000. This £25,000 was required to make good the deficit, to pay the balance of interest and sinking fund. Last year the amount jumped to £27,000, which is not a very great difference, but, this year, the Premier tells us, we are to have a deficit on the Goldfields Water Supply account of £48,000.

The Premier: Do you not know the reason why?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, I do not.

The Premier: It is not long since you left the Treasury.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is trying to throw dust. It is over 12 months since I left the Treasury; long enough for that hon. member to get matters into a muddle, quite long enough for him to bring down a Budget which the people are condemning from end to end of the land. This £48,000 we are to lose on the Goldfields Water Supply is made up of the increased working expenses £11,000, interest and sinking fund £4,800, decrease in goldfields revenue £5,000; and this, added to last year's deficit of £27,000, gives an estimated shortage of £48,000. Why is there a decrease on the goldfields? It is not in the consumption, I understand. It seems to me some reductions in price have been made up there. If that is a fact we have the reason why the revenue derived from the goldfields has decreased by £5,000. It hardly appears as if the amalgamation of the Water Supply Departments has been beneficial. It is true some half-year's water rate is promised to be remitted to

farmers who up to the present have not been called upon to pay. But this cannot account for the whole of the loss. If it does then it actually goes to show that the farmers are to be saddled with a financial burden which I am satisfied they will never carry. I believe these farmers are to be squeezed to the extent of 6s. per thousand gallons. They have to pay a tax of £5, and 4d. per acre on their land in order to make good the estimated expenditure, I presume, on services put in for them. Whilst they are squeezing the farmers—those whom the Minister for Works calls his friends—yet they are giving some relief to the goldfields by way of reduced prices. In these items alone we have £58,000 which is a clear indication of an attempt to hoodwink and bluff the public as far as these Estimates are concerned.

The Premier: You do not understand them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And the Premier does not either; that is the worst part of it. With regard to the Fremantle Trust for which this money is expended, it must be explained that the profits should be used to pay for such works, but not only are they taking the profits of the Fremantle Trust to the credit of Consolidated Revenue, but the cost of the work is to be charged to Treasurer's Advance and held in suspense. So we have the double injury, as double the amount is being juggled with.

The Premier: It is not correct. You know what you did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know I straightened out the finances of the State, something which the Premier will not do if he lives to be as old as Methuselah.

The Minister for Works: He did not adopt your methods.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, he is not capable; he does not understand them. We have another false statement made in which the Premier said—

I hold the opinion most strenuously that so long as we can operate trading concerns in the fashion they have been operated in the past without presenting any statement to Parliament, we remove from Parliament and from the

taxpayers the proper control of those concerns.

The Premier cannot make an announcement with regard to an alteration in the financial arrangements without casting mud at his predecessors. He implies that we improperly withheld these amounts from the estimates of consolidated revenue and expenditure, and now he is going to bring them in separately, both the Fremantle workshops and the Boya quarry. He takes credit for bringing these estimates in separately. He implies that they have been removed from the taxpayers' control previously. I want to point out in regard to these two concerns, that according to the Premier's own words, the Boya quarry has been worked to supply stone for the Fremantle dock construction, and the Fremantle workshops in connection with the Fremantle Harbour works. They have been used as adjuncts to a department and not as trading concerns. They have been used to supply other departments. The Premier said—

It would be as well if I explain here that in previous years the charge for operating our workshops in connection with the harbour at Fremantle, together with the Boya quarries in the hills, in connection with the construction of our dock, was not shown on the annual Estimates.

I started the Boya quarry. It was opened to supply stone for the dry dock which was being constructed. It is an adjunct to the dry dock expenditure and the workshops are similarly an adjunct to the Fremantle harbour works. The Premier might as well say his loco. shops are trading concerns. The loco. shops at Midland Junction are a hundred times as large as these and we are not told they are trading concerns to be considered separately. Trading concerns cater to provide for the public at profit or loss, as the case might be. Some of the Premier's pet trading concerns will prove to be losses, but that is beside the question at present. They cater to provide for the public at profit or loss. These works, however, cater for a department of the Government, and are only an adjunct to that department.

The Premier: Does not the Government Printing Office do likewise?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly.

The Premier: Then why show them on the Estimates separately?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know.

The Premier: Do not tell anybody.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They are just put there to show the expenditure of the department and the revenue is put at the bottom. The Boya quarry is not shown any differently now, and the Premier gives no more information than was given before. If we are going to treat these trading concerns properly, the Premier will not simply put an item on the estimates, wages and salaries and contingencies which any Premier can cut down to suit his own ideas, he will have to bring in a proper balance sheet showing the profit and loss on the operations. That is the only safe way to deal with trading concerns.

The Premier: Why did you not do it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I never had any trading concerns. All these things shown on the Estimates, such as railways, harbours and water supplies, sawmills, steamships, butchers' shops and new enterprises upon which we are embarking without any consideration, all make a direct charge on the public for services rendered, but for the first time the Fremantle workshops and the Boya quarry are to be considered trading concerns, and for the first time brought into competition with private enterprise. Let me turn to loan expenditure, and point out the boastful mood the Premier was in when he was dealing with these flotations last year and how joyfully and boastfully he announced he was making a success of them and denied that the loan he was raising in Australia during the six years we were in charge of the Treasury they would have cost £880,000 more in the lifetime of those loans. The Premier denied it, and when speaking I said it would cost anything from £4 ls. to £4 2s. per cent. referring to the 4 per cent. loan which the Premier was putting on the Melbourne market. The Premier replied, "No," and later on he said he had had a discussion with the Government Actuary and that I was wrong. On another occasion I repeated that it must cost anything between £4 ls. and £4 2s. per cent. Now the Premier boasts that he has raised £1,325,000 on the Australian market which has cost £4 ls. 6d. per cent. during the lifetime of the loan, the very figure I told him. In addition he has raised a million in London at $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. which will cost £3 18s. 11d. at maturity, and he says it is only 2s. 1d. more than our 1910 loan. Let members think what this 2s. 1d. means. I have pointed out on many occasions that 3d. per cent. on a big loan runs into a large sum, 6d. per cent. is an item for serious consideration, and we cannot gamble away 2s. or 2s. 1d. per cent. on a big loan without serious loss. On a 46 years' life loan this means £50,000 by way of interest over-paid as compared with other loans. The £1,325,000 which is costing the State 4s. 8d. per cent. more than the money we raised in London will cost the State about £140,000 more during the 46 years' life if it has been issued with 46 years currency, so that in these two items we have something like £190,000 which will have gone for ever paid to the money-lender. We can quite understand that the seven millions of money I borrowed during those six years would have cost the State £880,000 more had I borrowed it under the Premier's methods in Australia, rather than in London, which I did do. A fair portion of this money could have been saved. I know the Premier has had times to contend with, more especially at present, but that is no excuse for his panic attitude last year when he rushed madly on to the Australian market and accepted 4 per cent. money when he had no need to go there for it. There is no excuse for spoiling his home market

by paying a larger rate of interest in Australia than he need to have paid, which is costing the country this large sum of money more during the lifetime of the loan. I say without hesitation that the panic was started when the hon. gentleman took office in Western Australia, when he did not know how to go about raising money, and that panic has followed him until the present, and I would not be surprised if he has to pay $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to get the money which he requires to carry on the public works of this State.

The Premier: You will not be surprised, but pleased, I suppose.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, I should be very sorry.

The Premier: You have been praying for it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I should be sorry if the hon. gentleman blundered so grievously and landed the State into this position. The Premier has ignored his platform and the caucus pledges and the directions of the labour congress which sits periodically and lays down his course of action. He says the Labour party stand for the expenditure of loan money on works which will produce interest and sinking fund to redeem the loan at maturity. The Labour platform lays down that they are against borrowing except for reproductive works. The Premier put a construction on the term "reproductive works" that it meant to pay interest and sinking fund during the lifetime of the loan.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is in the platform.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then it has since been adopted and the Premier is evidently a great power behind the throne. Let us see what he has done with the loan money raised, £2,309,000 spent last year. A lot of it has been spent profitably in reproductive works, but I find on looking through his figures that he has spent £92,000 in the development of goldfields, not a penny of which is reproductive in the sense he intends it to be. He has spent £362,000 on the development of agriculture, not a penny of which will bring

direct revenue to him. He has spent £96,000 on immigration all of which has gone. Where is he going to pay the 3 or $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest with the addition of one-half per cent. sinking fund on that money? He spent £91,000 on public buildings and £23,000 on roads and bridges. The handsome total of £660,000 was spent last year out of loan moneys on works which are not reproductive according to the plank of his Labour platform. In addition to that he has spent £44,000 out of the Government Property Trust Account, which is all the result of loan moneys expended, or at least a great bulk of it. He has taken the £121,000 deficit of last year out of loan moneys also, and that is consolidated revenue, and it ought to be expended of course to pay salaries, and certainly ought not to be paid out of loan moneys. He has, therefore, gone back to the tune of £831,000 during his short twelve months of office, so far as loan moneys are concerned, a sum of money which has been spent contrary to the platform and contrary to the persistent attacks he made on us when we were in office. Of course we believe in the policy of spending loan moneys when we have not revenue, even for the development of agriculture. We believe too in putting up buildings out of loan money, extending the expenditure over a number of years, at any rate for the lifetime of the loan. But the Premier does not, and yet he boasts about having spent £800,000 during the past twelve months more than we expended, out of loan moneys. I have shown where that expenditure has been incurred. The Premier said that he almost felt inclined to blush because hon. members opposite so frequently from the public platform endeavoured to make the people of the State believe that the party to which he belonged would refuse to borrow money to carry on public works. But I almost feel inclined to blush at his great desire to get rid of the money. Let us see how he spent all this loan money. He has spent on land resumed by the Wilson Government £130,000; on rails and fastenings ordered by the Wilson Government £213,000, on rolling stock

ordered by the same Government £342,000; on immigration—in connection with which I said last year I thanked heaven we had made contracts for twelve months from which the Premier could not get away, and on account of which Mr. "Premier" McCallum was sending terrible wires to the Mother country telling the people not to come here—he spent £87,000. On the dock and harbour he spent £110,000, and I suppose he wants to saddle that on to the Wilson Government, on sewerage £87,000, on improvements to open railways, principally re-grading and relaying, £200,000, on new railways, which I need not enumerate, £308,000. All these works were authorised by the Wilson Government.

The Minister for Works: That is untrue.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Every one, barring the Darling Range railway, which the hon. member was responsible for, and the length of which was $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles and which cost £3,000; so that out of £2,309,000 which the Premier is so jubilant about, all the money he has spent has been spent on works which were handed down to him by myself and my colleagues, and he has not started a single work of his own. I go further and say that the present Government will not turn out a single railway this year which they can say they started on their own account.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You only promised them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No one denies that the Government can borrow money at a price, but this mad rush into State enterprises, knowing that he had a tight financial market to face, coupled with doubts as to land tenure owing to the unwise action of his Minister for Lands, and also with the doubts as to the future of mining leases, and the largely increased taxation which the Premier forecasted in the Budget, and together with the deficit which the Premier announced without a blush, all these things will tend to increase the price that the lender will ask for money. Of course the Premier must go on the market and I see he does not care a hang what the conditions are, he is going on the market when he wants

the money. He is not concerned as to what price he will have to pay, he is going to borrow when he needs the money, and at the present time he needs it very much indeed. The Premier referred with gratitude to the Commonwealth having only charged $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the value of transferred properties. That was only justice, and I am satisfied that we would have had a strong moral claim, and I believe myself a legal claim, against the Federal Government if they had refused to pay us $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the value of those transferred properties. I do not think there is any need to pass a vote of thanks to the Fisher Government for having done what was only a fair thing because I know some of the other States were trying to get $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.

The Premier: No, they were not; only one State.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Some of the other States were and they were justified in making that attempt, because the Federal Government were charging them $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. for money which they had loaned them. I come now to a matter which I do not wish to debate at any great length, but which I am sorry to think was referred to by the Premier in very scathing terms, I refer to the question of the karri sleepers. I am of opinion myself, as one who has been connected with the timber industry in this State for a number of years, that karri is an excellent timber, and I believe it can be preserved to give excellent results in the ground, where it heretofore proved a failure owing to dry rot and to its liability to attack by white ants. I believe as far as I can gather from the small tests made by the powellising process, which is a very valuable process, and which will prove successful to a very marked degree in preserving the karri timber in the ground, and indeed in preserving it so far as any class of work is concerned, that we should not as a State refuse to sell karri timber powellised, because in the early stages it proved unsatisfactory when put in the ground without any treatment whatever. But I recognise whilst I advocate and commend the action of the Government in endeavouring to get our Western Australian

timbers used in this great work of the Trans-Australian railway, whilst I commend them for endeavouring to get our timbers used in the other States, I must also grant equal liberty to others who think we are running an undue risk in pressing this timber for the purpose for which it is intended, namely the construction of the railway. And although I cannot agree with Mr. Hedges and Sir John Forrest in their anxiety in connection with this matter, and although I hold that it is a matter for the Federal Government to take the risk of, and not the State, you cannot be buyer and seller both, and the buyer must satisfy himself that what he is getting is the right article. I take the strongest exception to the Premier's attitude and his language in connection with the member for Fremantle in the House of Representatives, and the Premier's speech in regard to this matter. What do we find? The Premier is not content in defending his own State and his own State's product, he is not content to place before the country the details of the contract he has entered into, and saying from the information he has received from responsible officers that he believes he is selling a good thing, and at any rate that the buyers are satisfied, but he goes further and attacks Mr. Hedges, and implies improper motives for the attitude that gentleman took up, accompanied by no less a person in a minor degree than Sir John Forrest. Whatever may be thought about Mr. Hedges, I am satisfied even the Premier himself will not say that Sir John Forrest is unpatriotic or disloyal to this State.

The Premier: He was in this instance.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He is not. His judgment may be wrong with regard to the timber, but that has yet to be proved. Sir John Forrest is not disloyal and never was.

The Premier: He was in this case.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I cast the insinuation back in the teeth of the Premier. What did the Premier say about Mr. Hedges? He convicted himself of the meanest spying proclivities. He said that Mr. Hedges was careful and very anxious to tell the Federal Parliament and the

public that he was not interested in the jarrah trade, and by that means he attempted to make those to whom he was speaking believe that he was a disinterested party, and that he had no objection to karri being used, and that he was not concerned as to whether jarrah was used or not, and the Premier went on to say—"I want to say that I have busied myself during the last twenty-four hours in trying to discover whether there was any truth in the rumour that Mr. Hedges himself, not in any partnership, but himself, was interested in jarrah country, because such a rumour was floating about the town." A nice job for a Premier to undertake.

Mr. Nanson: That is how he keeps himself busy.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: A nice undertaking for a man who has cast on him the duty of administering this vast country, a country which he says is too big for one Government to control. The Premier busied himself spying around trying to prove that Mr. Hedges was untrue and unpatriotic, and had abused the trust which the electors of Fremantle reposed in him. The attitude of the member for Fremantle in the House of Representatives was not as disgraceful as the attitude of the Premier; the Premier's action was disgraceful in the extreme. What is the truth?

The Premier: You are a scavenger frequently.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We find that Mr. Hedges was declared by the Premier to own 5,000 acres of some of the best of jarrah country in Western Australia.

The Premier: That is correct too.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I interjected then that that would not go very far towards supplying sleepers for the Trans-Australian railway. If we cut that 5,000 acres, even if it was the best timber in the country it would not mean more than 50,000 loads in the round, and it would be only enough to keep a mill going for about eighteen months or perhaps two years. The Premier emphasised the fact that Mr. Hedges was interested in this land, not in any partnership. Mr. Hedges

wired to me, and his manager wired to me from Kalgoorlie and Mr. Hedges said—

In 1910 I purchased a piece of land in the district of Murray for the West Australian Firewood Supply Limited. That company paid me in full during the same year, and hold the deeds which are in my name as managing director of the company. The land is an old poison lease, which was converted into freehold. The purchase price was, I think, less than 10s. per acre. You may use this as you please.

Then his manager at Kalgoorlie (Mr. Cleland) wired—

Hedges as managing director of this company on March 15th, 1910, purchased Murray location 528, and we on the same date paid a deposit of £500, and totally completed the purchase of this land August, 1910. We hold the deeds.

There is an explanation of the position. What about the Premier's charge that Mr. Hedges was personally interested?

The Premier: It was transferred to William Noah Hedges.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Mr. Hedges is interested as managing director of the firewood company for whom he purchased the land.

Mr. Green: He is the company.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Nothing of the sort. The charges of the Premier are disgraceful, and he ought to withdraw them at once.

The Minister for Works: You have proved them.

The Premier: I repeat them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I regret that hon. members are so dense, and that they will not own up when they are in the wrong. They will make any charges, and they will stick to them. But I defy them to make these charges outside the House, because then Mr. Hedges would make them sit up, and perhaps some of that £300 per annum of their salaries, which Ministers failed to return to the Treasury as they promised, will be annexed by Mr. Hedges by way of damages. Now, I must pass on to the taxation proposals. The repeal of the Dividend Duties Act was opposed by my friends opposite

during the last general election. When I announced that I intended to repeal the dividend duties, I was charged with playing into the hands of the rich companies. On every Labour platform in the State, it was said that my wealthy friends were to escape taxation, notwithstanding that I had made it abundantly clear, both in my policy speech and subsequently, that I was going to repeal the Dividend Duties Act, and bring in a graduated income tax on Queensland lines, together with a repeal of the land tax.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And the stock tax. Do not forget that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I will give the hon. member it all in a minute if he will not be so impetuous. I said in my policy speech delivered in Busselton—

We propose also the abolition of the Dividend Duties Act, and the substitution of a graduated income tax on the lines of Queensland legislation.

And speaking subsequently in the Queen's Hall, I referred to the subject again, because the Premier had been careful to poison the minds of the electors by saying that I intended to allow my rich friends to escape taxation. I said on that occasion—

He wanted to explain that the repeal of the Dividend Duties Act would not mean, as insinuated, that the wealthy companies were to escape taxation. They would all come under the graduated income tax, and pay on the profits earned, and those who now evaded the payment of taxation, either by the income or dividend duties tax, would be brought to book.

Then I went on to explain that the cost of working the department would be lessened by £4,000, whilst the amount of revenue raised would be increased. Notwithstanding this, I was charged with a terrible crime and what was a terrible crime then, protested against by my opponents led by the Premier, is now a virtue, another plank of the Liberal policy which the Premier has adopted for his own ends. He is going to repeal the Dividend Duties Act, as I promised the electors twelve months ago, for which I commend him, because it is a portion

of the Liberal policy, and for which he condemned me most violently. He is not only going to do that, but to also double the land tax, and do away with all rebates and exemptions. The small farmer is to be taxed to the limit, notwithstanding that he may be struggling with the biggest burden that any individual can undertake who is carving out his fortune in virgin country. The income tax is to be raised on a graduated scale to a shilling in the pound, but our friends opposite are looking after their own because the exemption which at present stands at £200 is to be raised to £250, in order that their supporters, those who are the power behind the throne and control the party from the Trades Hall, may have exemption up to £5 per week. In view of this, the farmers are promised cheap machinery in the sweet by and by, when the Government get their implement factory going, as a set-off to the increased taxation. Then we are to have a valuer general and staff appointed. Notwithstanding that the expenditure is going up by leaps and bounds, the Government are going to create another department. Why cannot we take the valuations of the income tax commissioner? Is all the work to be done over again? A vast amount of work has been done during the last few years, and how is the appointment of a valuer-general and his staff to prevent a person getting early information of resumptions intended by the Government.

The Premier: We will fix his value for him.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then the Premier proposes to resume land on his own valuation?

The Premier: I never said so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier implied as much, or why create the department? We are running into extravagance and increased expenditure that is unnecessary, and we can well leave this valuation work to the staff already in existence in the Taxation Commissioner's office. Turning to the trading concerns, I wish the Committee to specially note that the new trading ventures figure prominently in the Premier's

gamble to secure his revenue. I commend him for his announcement that Mr. Short is to be reappointed Commissioner of Railways, but I consider his proposal to bring the railways under political control one of the worst propositions that he or his party could suggest to this Parliament, and I hope it will never be adopted. With a Labour Government in power, it means that this great labour-employing department will be practically under the control of the Trades Hall, as the Premier and his colleagues admit. We have already had an increase of £107,000 in the wages of this department, attended by a decrease in efficiency.

The Premier: That is a libel.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Commissioner says that he sees no general increase of energy in consequence of this increase of wages, and the interests of the men themselves demand that there must be no political control, no hanging about Ministers' offices. If there is, we may expect to see this great asset of the State mismanaged as other departments have been mismanaged during the past few months, and bringing in big deficits. The Premier referred with commendable pride to the construction and opening of over 220 miles of railway during the last twelve months—all ours and well in hand when we left office. Every line opened this year belongs to the Wilson and the Moore administration. I am glad to see that he proposes in taking over the tramways, to get proper independent, outside, expert advice in the person of Mr. Merz, and I recommend him to get this gentleman's advice, not only with regard to the tramway system in the metropolitan area, but also in regard to the electrification of our suburban railways, in order that we may bring them up to date, and work them more economically than at the present time. The railway revenue, I venture to state, is considerably over-estimated, but what about the other State enterprises, State steamers for instance?

Mr. Lander: Those are the things that hurt you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They will hurt the hon. member and the people of the State before long. Time alone will show the results of these State steamers. They were purchased to reduce the price of food.

The Premier: And they have done it already.

[Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.]

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The "Una," when she had fulfilled her function of carrying the mails on the south coast until the new boat came out from England, was to reduce the price of fish by half. This scheme has evidently been abandoned, because we have heard nothing more about it. Now is the Premier's opportunity. Owing to the distress of the European nations and the war between Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States, we hear of Greeks leaving Western Australian shores to return to their native country. Now is a chance for the Premier to show his commercial acumen, not only by tackling State fishing enterprises, but also by buying out some of the dago fish-shops. I am sure he would be able to show a much bigger credit balance in connection with his trading enterprises. The "Una" cost the State some £2,000, and about £1,000 was expended in fitting her for the South-East mail service for a time. She is now on the slip having those fittings taken out, and being converted into a yacht to convey an engineer to the North-West to inspect jetties. The "Eucla" (late "Wexford") has, we are told, earned a profit of £250 in two months, but she has been principally engaged in carrying material for the Hopetoun jetty. The country is expending about £6,000, I am told, in lengthening that jetty, in order to avoid lightering. The private steamship owners had to take their goods from, and land them at the jetty, and I would like to know what the lighterage has been charged up to in the case of the "Eucla." No wonder the Government steamer showed a small profit if she did all the carrying of that material to Hopetoun. The s.s. "Western Australia," after being doctored at Port Said, is speeding across

the Indian Ocean carrying a cargo of 1,000 tons, not 2,000 tons as the Premier stated, which consists of 750 tons of rails, 100 tons of fastenings, and 150 tons of general cargo. As she will have to pay for bunkers 25s. to 35s. per ton, in addition to canal dues, it is difficult to see why she did not fill up with coal and steam out via the Cape, in the same way as other boats do when they are sent out from Home to trade on our coasts. In that way there is a considerable saving of expense, but the "Western Australia," in coming via the Canal, must show a big loss on the voyage out. The presence of the member for Albany (Mr. Price) on board no doubt accounted in some measure for her coming out via the Canal, and the fact that Captain Smith is assistant purser no doubt had also some weight in that direction. The "Kwinana," after cheapening the supply of meat by bringing store sheep down from the North for Mr. Gooch and carrying cattle from the Government stations, is now bringing store sheep for Mr. Holmes from the Eastern States. Then she is to proceed to New Zealand on special charter to carry timber for Millars' combine at 5s. or 6s. per load below the market rate, and she is to have the proud distinction of conveying the Minister for Works to the home of his birth. The State's solvency apparently, according to the Treasurer, is to depend largely upon the problematical profits of these concerns; and hotels, butchers' shops, dairies and quarries are all roped in in order to keep the deficit for the year down to the small amount of £166,000. Where are the sawmills with their huge profits? We have heard so much about these sawmills. We know what a large sum of money is to be expended in their establishment. We have heard of the millions that are coming to Western Australia as a result of this State enterprise. Why, if the Premier had only put his imagination to work and figured out with his pencil for ten short minutes, I am satisfied he could have evolved a profit on his sawmills that would have extinguished his deficit altogether. We have a statement with regard to the extension of the Fremantle

Harbour. We must all regret that the dry dock has proved a failure.

Mr. Lander : It was only a political job.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : It was very difficult.

Mr. Lander : I said it was a political job.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : I said "a difficult job," and that is what the hon. member meant. I am sorry to say the Premier apparently intends to hang up this harbour extension. He said—

As a preliminary, the Government have under consideration the desirability of providing further berthing accommodation within the existing area west of the bridges, totalling over 2,000 feet of wharfage, which will include provision for three vessels drawing up to 36 feet, whilst the harbour area already available is being dredged to 33 feet. Pending further definite information in regard to this project, the Government do not propose taking any further action.

Good-bye harbour extension at Fremantle!

In accordance with the promises made, preliminary investigations were commenced at Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton, with a view to extensions and improvements to harbours. These investigations will be continued until such time as the necessary data have been collected to enable the scheme to be prepared.

Poor Bunbury; poor Albany and poor Geraldton! The investigations which have been going on for 13 months now are to be continued, and that is all the consolation these towns and ports, who look to the Government to do so much for them to extend their trade and commerce, can look forward to—that the preliminary investigations are to be continued. Members must be pleased, and must be satisfied with the great energy of the Government they are supporting. With regard to the Lands Department I have a few comments to make. The Lands Department at the present date is in mourning, deep mourning, for its departed glory.

The Premier: Who is that, the member for Northam?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes. In the olden days it was a beehive of industry; now it is a place of despondency and despair under the present Minister for Lands. There is an old adage, "like master, like man." The master sets the pace and the men follow. The breezy optimism and confidence of my colleague, the member for Northam, filled the department with life, energy, and results. Now the funereal hesitancy of the Minister for Lands prevades the department. Why is it? Because he knows full well that he is experimenting in that department and experimenting with new land legislation. The wonderful march of progress can be seen by a reference to the *Statistical Register*, and it is wonderful the progress of this great department of our State. In 1906, the first season when we were responsible for the administration of the department, there were 364,000 acres under crop and 86,000 acres of new ground cleared and ready for crop. In 1912 there were 1,072,000 acres under crop and 293,000 acres of new ground cleared and ready for crop. In 1906 there were 195,000 acres under wheat and in 1912 there were 612,000 acres under wheat. Every year the area under crop increased by leaps and bounds, and our last year showed an increase of 217,000 acres, while this season only shows an increase of 21,000 acres, according to the Premier's figures. The Premier claims that there have been large areas of land approved. He claims that the approved applications for land selection have increased in number and in area, but what we want to know is when this area was applied for. The bulk of this year's approvals are last year's applications, and unless we can get the information—indeed no information is given—but we do know that 200,000 acres less was surveyed last year than in the previous year, and the total expenditure has increased by over £10,000. Then I come to this little item, that the Premier and I had a passage of arms about at the beginning of my speech—this £1,250 which he unfairly placed on the shoulders of my Administration. He says, "There you have evidence that we had to pay

the debts of our predecessors." In connection with "Lithography, £1,500," he says, "We had to pay this outstanding account which was due in 1910-11." He says—

Yet we were told that we had not to pay, last year, some charges which were rightly chargeable to the previous year, notwithstanding which here we have the reason why we had to excess the vote. £1,250, and he had to excess the vote! This is a departmental adjustment after all is said and done. There are always some accounts outstanding at the end of each financial year, and this does not affect any exceeded expenditure, it does not affect any deficit; it is like taking one pound out of the right hand pocket of the Treasurer and putting it into his left hand pocket; he is no poorer, he is no richer. We do not debit up the Lands Department with £1,250 for work done by the Lithographic Department, and we do not credit the Lithographic Department with £1,250 by way of revenue on the other side of the ledger. It makes no appreciable difference so far as the deficit is concerned. Yet we are pulled up with charges like this; we are held up to scorn as evil-doers because of £1,250 that some clerk in the Treasury or Lands Department has omitted to enter up properly and transfer to one department or another. It will be noticeable that the revenue of the Lands Department also reflects the energy and the policy of my colleague, the member for Northam, for the *Statistical Register* will show—and it is worth reading—that in 1905 the department had a revenue of £191,000, which increased to £362,000 in 1910-11, and the expenditure, on the other hand, under my colleague's wise administration and careful manipulation of the work of the department, decreased in the same period from £112,000 to £80,000. Last year the revenue was £356,000, something like £8,000 short of the revenue of the previous year, and in the same conditions and the same circumstances the expenditure has gone up £10,000. This is an instance of the benefits of the Labour Administration so far as the Lands Department is concerned. In the Agricultural Department credit is taken for the appointment of

three commissioners—our appointments—again for a wool lecturer, who has been working for the past two years, and the pathologist, Dr. Stoward, who was appointed by us two or three years ago.

The Premier: We do not take credit for that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And above all, the Premier had to explain, with regard to the distribution of literature, that he had to consider the question of whether we should continue what is known as the *Agricultural Journal*, or do it by way of bulletins. The *Agricultural Journal* was abolished by my friend the member for Northam a long time ago and bulletins were issued in his time. Tree-pulling and scrub-rolling were all initiated by my colleague. The credit is taken by our wise successors. I can hear the Minister for Works telling the Premier that I am misquoting him, but I am not misquoting, because I have read the words from the printed *Hansard* speech of the Premier. Now, I come down to milk supply. Great credit is claimed for the Ministry because they have been distributing a milk supply to some of our hospitals. Unfortunately this, like the meat supply, only affects a portion of the community. These cows were transferred from Brunswick to Perth. The cows were in the department when the member for Northam was Minister; others were purchased from a dairyman in the metropolitan area, and some of these cows have since been sold in Perth at half-price. The Perth hospital, which used to get its milk at 1s. 0½d. to 1s. 2d. per gallon, is now being charged 1s. 6d. per gallon, and thus we show a profit. The Fremantle hospital was ordered the other day to get its milk from the State farm regardless of the price that they might charge for its supply. In the Agricultural Department, with the exception of the proposal to export fruit as agents without any proper facilities having first been made, and to run this meat stall which has done so much already, according to Ministers, in the way of cheapening the meat supply, nothing has been done that was not done in the term of my friend the member for Northam. Oh yes, something has been

done. Mr. Despiessis received the sack and all efforts for the development of agriculture in the tropics have been brought to a standstill. The Premier's remark that nothing could militate against the produce of the State finding the markets of the world at as little cost as possible is hardly in keeping with his pronouncements, and the pronouncements of his colleagues, the Minister for Works and the Minister for Lands. We know the Minister for Works has condemned the suggestion to establish chilling and canning works at Wyndham.

The Minister for Works: I have never done anything of the sort.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I will have to quote from the hon. member's report.

The Minister for Works: I merely condemned freezing works.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What is the difference? He condemned all works. He said the cattle should leave the State on the hoof. And the Minister for Lands also gave a very curt refusal to Geraldton a short time since in connection with the proposed establishment of abattoirs. A deputation waited on him, several of them, and he said that he could not hold out any hope of abattoirs being erected at the present time at Geraldton. He pointed out that the demands of the State were likely to be greater than the supplies for the next three years or so, and said that, consequently, he could not countenance any scheme of export, but that when the supplies were more than were required for home use, and when the Government were assured that the right kind of cattle were being bred, they would find the Government sympathetic. That was a nice reply for a Minister to give. The abattoirs were required for the local trade. They are not even to have slaughtering accommodation at Geraldton for their own use until the Minister is satisfied that we do not want any more cattle in the State, and that they are producing the right type of cattle. Men who have been breeding cattle all their lives and exporting huge numbers to the far East are told by the Minister that they are not breeding the right sort for export. It is like the audacity of the Minister for

Works and the Minister for Lands to talk to people of things they know nothing whatever about, to tell these people they must not export because, in the opinion of the Ministers, the cattle are required within the State. Will any one ask me to believe that living is cheaper to-day than it was 12 months ago?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Beef is.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If so, why are our friends howling for increased wages every day? Every time they have asked for and received increased wages the cost of living has gone up; yet we are asked to believe that the Government have reduced the cost of living in Western Australia. The position is too absurd. If I had time I could point out exactly where these hon. members are blundering in this connection. No Government meat stall is going to be a permanent cure. No select few who can afford to go down to the Government meat stall in Government motor cars and buy a parcel of meat, as the Premier did, and send the joint home in the Government motor car—no select few can prove in this way that we are all getting cheaper meat. I am paying a higher price for meat to-day than ever before, and I am not asking a Government motor car to deliver my meat. As a matter of fact inquiries at that Government stall show that the prices have gone up a halfpenny a pound since the night Mr. Frank Connor produced a joint and laid it on the Table of the Legislative Council. The hon. member bought that joint at 4½d. a pound, and produced it in the House, and two days ago they wanted 5d. for a similar joint. Now, with regard to the Mines Department. The estimated revenue of State batteries last year was £81,650, and the actual revenue £45,798; the estimated expenditure was £82,775 and the actual expenditure £50,363. There is nothing to go into heroics about, yet the Premier declares that they are cutting their coat according to their cloth, and intend to reduce the expenditure.

The Premier: Who said that?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier did. And he said that this year he

was going to put an honest statement before the country in submitting as nearly as possible a correct estimate. Last year the Premier put down an increase in revenue, as far as public batteries are concerned, over the previous year of £14,000. The result clearly shows that was only a paper balance, with a vengeance. The prospectors do not seem to have rushed their ore along to the batteries because a Labour Government are in power. We received £67,000 revenue from batteries in 1910-11, and yet our friends opposite could only raise £45,000.

The Premier: We did not make any boom speeches in the Palace hotel.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, you made your boom speeches at the caucuses and at the Trades and Labour Halls. The Premier ought to go to the Palace hotel occasionally and see what they think of him there. He estimates he is going to lose this year £8,000 from State batteries. He regards it as a virtue and reckons it is a great thing by way of showing that we are going to do all we can to assist the industry. He further states that previous Ministers thought it their duty to make the revenue and expenditure balance. It was their duty, and it is the Premier's duty. The State batteries should only be required to pay working expenses, wages and contingencies, but the least the Minister for Mines can do is to make both ends meet if possible. When an industry seems to be falling, as this industry is at the present time, it is a difficult thing to so regulate your expenditure that your revenue will balance, but it is the duty of the Minister to attempt it; the Premier does not attempt it even.

Mr. Foley: You did it by putting 2s. a ton on the prospectors' stone.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And it is the Minister's obvious duty to make the expenditure commensurate with the revenue, more especially when the interest and sinking fund on the capital cost of these batteries are charged against the Consolidated Revenue of the State. My late colleague's, Mr. Gregory's, estimate was much more accurate than that of the present Minister for Mines. Mr. Gregory

was only £14,000 out in his estimate of revenue, but the present Minister was £36,000 out last year.

The Premier: The same officers advised him.

The Minister for Mines: The Estimates had all been prepared previously.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Oh no, I have explained that before. The Estimates had been in preparation by the officers, but so far as Ministers were concerned they were not prepared. Not only are we to pay interest and sinking fund on these batteries, but something like 15 per cent. that this loss amounts to on the working. Is it not about time the rates were revised? Had not the Government better get back the late superintendent, Mr. Dunstan, who was foully dismissed for political reasons?

Mr. Foley: That is a lie.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw and apologise to the Committee for making that statement.

Mr. Foley: All right, Mr. Chairman, I withdraw and apologise.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is an insult to the Chair that the hon. member should address the Chair from his seat. The reappointment of the Public Service Commissioner is a matter which, I think, we may congratulate the Government upon.

Mr. Foley: Why not give us some more mining?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Because I am afraid the hon. member would disgrace himself so severely that he would have to be turned out of the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in addressing the hon. member; he must address the Chair.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I was addressing the Chair, but through the ordinary Parliamentary term of the "hon. member." He asked why I had not given him more mining, but in his case mining seems to be like a red rag to a bull. I was stating that the reappointment of Mr. Jull comes as an agreeable surprise. I cannot help remembering the extravagant language used by the Premier 12 months ago when he, for the first time, heard that the previous Government had pro-

mised this reappointment. It was very amusing to read his language in the Press about the scandalous thing that had taken place, and which he was going to put a stop to immediately. It is still more amusing to-day to find that after mature consideration and after 12 months experience, he recognises that he cannot run amok. And I am particularly gratified that my colleagues, during my absence in London, prevented an innocent man and a good officer from being sacrificed to the clamour of a disaffected public service. I congratulate the Premier in that respect. After 12 months he has tardily acknowledged this gentleman to be a good officer, and declares that he is to be reappointed. The Savings Bank of the State is evidently to be handed over to the Federal Government. I cannot, of course, express any firm opinion with regard to the terms upon which it is to be handed over until the details are available. The remarks of the Premier, that he proposed to announce the terms on which it is decided we shall join with the Commonwealth after negotiations have been concluded, I think, convey with no uncertainty that we are to join in with the Commonwealth and give them control of our Savings Bank. The Commonwealth is undoubtedly encroaching upon a State province.

Air. Green: Old States frighter.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member is not a State frighter; he is a traitor to his country, and would like to go to the East and take his goldfields with him. The greed of the Commonwealth Government is unbounded, as shown by their passing of a three-million surplus Bill to convey the funds to trust account, so that they should not come back to the States. They have our Customs duties, they have imposed a land tax, they prevent us travelling by mail steamers, and now they want the people's savings. But, after all, why should there be all this mystery about these negotiations? Should not Parliament know what it is proposed to do with a big State institution of this description, having $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions of the people's money in its control, before negotiations are concluded. Is it because the hon. member has discussed the matter in

caucus that he is not going to consult Parliament but will make an announcement only after the thing is concluded, to use his own words? I here protest on behalf of Parliament and claim that this is the Chamber that ought to be consulted with regard to any proposed agreement between the Commonwealth and the State Government on this important matter.

The Minister for Works: Who said otherwise?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier.
The Premier: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have read his words.

The Premier: Then you did not understand me.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The words are—

When negotiations have been concluded I propose to announce the terms on which it is decided we shall join the Commonwealth in this scheme.

When the negotiations are concluded the Premier intends to announce the terms decided upon and not before. I wonder who is to be consulted. Then, I would like to know, what has this Government done for the settlers on our land?

The Premier: Why talk such rubbish?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I can understand the Premier getting sore. The Government have caused advances to be withdrawn by destroying public confidence. They have doubled the land tax or propose to do so and cancelled all rebates and exemptions; they are going to impose a heavy income tax in addition, notwithstanding that the local bodies, the roads boards, have increased their taxation from £51,000 to £80,000 in the last two years. They are imposing a taxation on water supply to a select few, some of whom do not want it, but have to pay whether or not, and they are bringing all the workers on the farms under the Workers' Compensation Act, making a farmer liable and responsible for men who are employed by others. They have, it is true, increased the limit of the advances by the Agricultural Bank to £2,000, but they have advanced only £100,000 more than the highest previous year.

The Premier: Only one hundred thousand pounds!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, with a double limit, which, according to some members at the time would rope them all in. Advances have been refused to scores of settlers, although good security is available. Complaints are rife. There is no use disguising the fact that they cannot get the money. I am met every day on St. George's-terrace by complainants who cannot get an advance.

The Premier: St. George's-terrace! What farmers are they?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Going to your bank trying to get advances, and for whom you will not find the money.

The Premier: We found more money in September than you found in any month.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government have supplied water from the Coolgardie water scheme in certain areas, but this is to cost a £5 tax 4d. per acre, and 6s. per thousand gallons, an impossible tax which many farmers openly declare they never can pay and that they will not pay. The Government supplied seed wheat to a small degree and charged in some instances exorbitant rates. Thirty pounds worth was applied for by one settler and he received it. He asked what he owed the department and was requested to pay £34 11s. 8d. at the end of six months, which means 30 per cent. charges and interest on a £30 loan.

Mr. Allen: They ought to hang up the three brass balls.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister for Lands will shortly have to be brought under the Money Lenders' Act to restrict the amount he charges for advances.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: He will have to reduce the high prices your colleagues put on the land.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government have spent some £93,000 during the year from loan funds in these wonderfully reproductive works which will come within the four corners of the Trades and Labour platform as being reproductive—paying interest and sinking fund. They have spent £93,000 on 122 wells and 97 dams and 1,145 bores. Fresh water was struck in 163 bores, stock water only in 89, and salt water or no water at all in 393 bores. The Minister for Works with

all his energy and enthusiasm sent parties all over the country to put down bores and find water anywhere, anyhow, regardless of cost and regardless of whether the country had been tested before. The result of course has been extravagant work and great loss.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Magnificent work.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The actual work of constructing the dams would cost something like £20,000. The actual cost of 122 wells ought not to be more than £12,200, leaving £60,000 expended for these bores, most of which have proved to be useless. Bores have been put down indiscriminately on the off chance of striking water in these districts which were tested years ago.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And mostly we found the water salt at a depth. The Minister has gone into the same areas again and thrown his money away regardless of the fact that his officers could have and no doubt would have advised him that dams were the only solution of the question in these areas and that the money if it had been spent on dams would have resulted in a permanent supply of fresh water. That is the way in which the money has been squandered and this accounts for the fact that the Premier does not know which way to look for funds at the present time. We are undoubtedly in hard times, yet in these Estimates no one can see the slightest evidence of an attempt at economy. On the contrary there is evidence of lavish expenditure, starting with the present Houses of Parliament with an increase of something like £1,700 projected for this year, £1,000 of which is for Hansard reports. Every department throughout the State shows large increases in expenditure excepting the Departments of Mines and Law. The decrease in the Department of Mines, as the Minister must admit, is due to the falling off in surveys; a very bad sign indeed so far as that department is concerned. With regard to the Attorney General's Department the decrease is more than covered by the fact that last year £9,000 was expended in connection with the general elections which is now

recurring. Local authorities have not, as far as these Estimates are concerned, been rendered any greater assistance than heretofore. We have the same sum provided for municipal subsidies and a like amount for the roads boards grants.

The Premier: Who increased it last year?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We did. We promised it before we went out. They had a written promise.

The Premier: You knew you were going out.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Acting Premier, Mr. Gregory, increased the subsidy and the hon. member knows it. The avenues of taxation have been practically exhausted. The bleeding process, forecasted by the Attorney General in an evil moment which had to be applied to the fat man has become no idle joke. The burden of the taxation is being placed upon the shoulders of the few. The citizens have done their part according to the Premier's own evidence, for trade has increased and wherever we look in the private enterprise of our people we can see evidences of that stern determination to succeed which go to build up a mighty nation, but I am sorry to say that my friends opposite, the Premier and his colleagues, have lamentably failed in that administration which, in the words of the Premier, must go to build up the country's progress and prosperity. Let me in conclusion just read the closing remarks of the Premier when delivering his Budget Speech on the 13th December, 1911. He was very full of the importance of his office and desirous, I believe, of doing his best. He was impressed on that occasion, at any rate, with a determination to be fair to all sections of the community. He said—

We (referring to his party and the Government) do not represent, nor will we legislate for any one section, but will at all times endeavour to do justice to all sections of the community. We stand here, in fact, by the will of the people, pledged to do our utmost for the advancement of Western Australia as a whole, from the educational, commercial, legislative, and administrative point of view. Our one object is that

it shall not be possible for the finger of derision or accusation of neglect to be pointed at us, for in everything we shall strive to do our duty, not failing to realise, however, that the foremost step is to build up our finances upon a solid foundation so that in this important connection we may best serve the interests of the citizens of the present day, whilst at the same time having proper regard to those of future generations. "For forms of Government let fools contest; whate'er is best administered is best."

Comment is needless.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 30th October, 1912.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. F. CULLEN, leave of absence for six sittings granted to Hon C. A. Piesse, on the ground of ill-health.

HIGH SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT BILL, SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. A. SANDERSON the time for bringing up the report of the select committee was extended for one week.