

and no member could justify before his constituents the supporting of any such proposal. The management of hospitals needed comprehensive action, and it would be better to strike out the clause altogether; but as a member representing a Fremantle district, he would be ill-advised to move in that direction, though he would strongly support any country member who would move in the direction of the deletion of the clause. At any rate he protested against public monies being paid to private hospitals and moved an amendment on the amendment—

"That the word 'public' be inserted between 'district' and 'hospitals' and that the words 'public or private' between 'hospitals' and 'Provided' be struck out."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Having explained the reason for the inclusion of the word "private" he would now offer no objection to the proposal of the hon. member.

Amendment (Mr. Moss's) passed: the Colonial Secretary's amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 27th October, 1909.

	PAGE
Papers presented	1136
Questions: Railway delays, Perishable goods	1136
— Railway Officers and Postal work	1136
— Goldfields Water Supply, meter rents	1136
Bill: North Perth Tramways Act Amendment, 1b.	1137
Return: Land selection, small holdings	1137
— Pearlery Statistics	1155
Report: North-West Shipping Inquiry	1140
Motion: Land Transfers System	1142
Hospital Subsidies	1157

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1. By-laws of the Municipality of Cottesloe. 2. By-laws of

the Local Boards of Health of Leederville and Moora.

QUESTION—RAILWAY DELAYS, PERISHABLE GOODS.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Railways: 1. Is the Minister aware that trucks of perishable goods for Mr. Magnet were cut off and detained at Crowther for twenty-four hours on Wednesday, October 6th, and Friday, October 8th, thereby causing heavy losses to consignees? 2. Will the Minister make inquiries regarding the persons responsible for the delay, and instruct against a recurrence of such delays in the future?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1. No. 2. Inquiries will be made.

QUESTION—RAILWAY OFFICERS AND POSTAL WORK.

Mr. W. PRICE asked the Minister for Railways: 1. What amount was due to the Railway Department from the Federal Government for postal work carried out by railway officers between 1st July and 30th September last? 2. What extra remuneration was allowed railway officers for the performance of such duties? 3. If none, why.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1. £125 15s. 2 and 3. No special remuneration is given for the performance of postal duties, but any extra work entailed is taken into consideration when fixing their salaries as railway officers, and providing assistance where necessary.

QUESTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY, METER RENTS.

Mr. COLLIER asked the Minister for Works: 1. In view of the decision of this House not to charge rent for water meters attached to private residences in the metropolitan areas, does he intend to abolish the charge for meters under the Goldfields Water Supply? 2. If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1 and 2. The Goldfields Water Supply is being worked at a large annual

loss. The administration has been and is prepared to abolish rent of water meters attached to private residences if an equivalent is paid in increased water rates and charges. Several of the municipalities concerned have been advised accordingly, but so far none have accepted.

BILL.—NORTH PERTH TRAMWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Works, and read a first time.

RETURN—LAND SELECTION, SMALL HOLDINGS.

Mr. JOHNSON (Guildford) moved—

That there be laid on the Table of the House a return showing the number of areas under 1,000 acres granted during the last 12 months by the land board to selectors.

His object in moving the motion was to draw attention to the fact that the land board, in granting small areas, was not acting in the best interests of the agricultural industry, and, in many cases, their actions were detrimental to the interests of land settlement. In moving the motion he had been influenced by the fact that he had heard it laid down by the managing trustees of the Agricultural Bank that, at all events in the Eastern districts, it was utterly impossible for a man to make a success of farming on less than 1,000 acres. Yet he knew of instances in which the land board had divided areas, already small according to the ruling of the trustees of the Agricultural Bank, amongst several applicants. The hardship of it was that when settlers were granted these small areas their applications to the Agricultural Bank for assistance were refused because the trustees were of opinion that they could not successfully farm their holdings. In one instance a certain area had been thrown open at Doodlakine which previously had been reserved to the Railway Department. It was but a small area, and a number of applications were received for two sections of it, aggregating a total of 700

acres. The applicants went before the land board, and the board had divided it up and had given one man 350 acres and another man 350 acres. The Minister for Lands would probably agree that it was quite impossible for the holder of so small an area to make a success of it. In another instance, a man from New South Wales had taken up 1,000 acres. Adjoining his holding was a block of 880 acres for which his son applied. Another application for the same block had been put in by three partners from the gold-fields. The son of the New South Wales farmer desired one homestead farm of 160 acres, while the other applicants wanted three homestead farms out of the area, and desired to secure the remainder under conditional purchase. After considering the applications the land board had granted the 880-acre block, with three homestead farms, to the three individuals, refusing it to the settler's son, who, no doubt, would have made an absolute success of farming it.

Mr. Foulkes: In what district was that?

Mr. JOHNSON: The land was situated near Kellerberrin. The land board, undoubtedly, was not working in with the generally accepted policy of the Agricultural Department, and he desired an expression of opinion from the Minister for Lands as to whether the Minister thought rulings such as those referred to were in the best interests of the settlers. He (Mr. Johnson) quite realised that a return of the description asked for would occasion some expense, which he had no desire should be incurred. He believed the Minister would agree with him that the land board should work in with the generally accepted policy of agricultural development and land settlement as outlined by the experts of the Agricultural Department. If the Minister would intimate this he (Mr. Johnson) would be perfectly satisfied, and would not press the motion.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue): It was a good thing that the motion had been brought forward, as many people had been at a loss to understand the reasons of the land board for coming to many of their decisions. One would naturally think the board would consider the advice of

the specialists in the department as to the amount of land necessary for a man to hold to give him a fair chance of making a living. A number of instances had been given of peculiar decisions arrived at by the board. On one occasion where a block of 160 acres was thrown open, three applications were sent in for it; two under the residential conditions, and the third under the non-residential conditions. Peculiar to relate the land was granted to the man who did not intend to reside on the block. That same gentleman held two or three hundred acres in the district previously, and had done so for two years, but he failed to improve the land in any way and was forced to sell or lose it by forfeiture on the part of the Crown. That individual, who was an agent at Narragin, appeared to be nothing more nor less than a land speculator who was prepared to take up a block for what he could make out of it.

The Minister for Lands: What is his name?

Mr. HEITMANN: The name and full particulars about the affair were sent in to the Minister some time ago by letter. He always understood it was the desire of the Government to settle as many people as they could on the land, but here was a case of a man who did not intend to reside on the block being given the preference over two others who intended to fulfil the residential conditions. At the time the board took that action he had brought the matter before the attention of the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. Mitchell): The two members who had spoken had apparently been misinformed in regard to the matters to which they referred. Assuredly the land board, which was composed of the most intelligent men of the department, at all times attempted to do their duty in deciding properly between the claims of various applicants. One of the first questions asked an applicant was whether he desired to reside on the land. Without exception the land was granted to the man who would reside upon it.

Mr. Heitmann: I have written to you and told you differently.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member must have been misinformed in the case. The mover said that settlers had been put on areas which were too small for them to obtain a fair living out of. The policy of the department was to give every man a chance, and it was well known that if the land were in the wheat belt a man could not make a living on less than 640 acres of good land. The board endeavoured not only to grant a holding of that size to each applicant, but also when the reserves were being subdivided, to bring up the area so that no selector held a less quantity. As a rule the lands in the wheat belt were surveyed into 1,000-acre blocks. With regard to the statement as to the Doodlakine reserve, he could not reply to that at present, but surely a block of 700 acres was not divided and granted to two men.

Mr. Johnson: The area of 700 acres was divided into two blocks. If it had been sold as one block it would have been all right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A less area than 700 acres in that district was not enough for a man to make a living on. The land board must have been actuated in that particular instance by some other motive. For instance, the man granted the land must have owned the blocks adjoining.

Mr. Johnson: That was not so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As a rule where an area was less than a square mile it was granted to a man holding the adjoining land. It was the desire of the board to bring up the area of every man holding less than a square mile in that locality. It was very different in the South-West, for at Denmark, for instance, 100 acres was sufficient for a man to make a good living out of. The board were most particular in connection with the conduct of cases brought before them. Evidence was taken on oath. Unfortunately at times false representations were made to the board, but that body endeavoured to ascertain exactly the position of the applicant, and to allocate the land to the man who could use it best. They asked a number of questions, and if an applicant could not appear he was asked to fill in answers to a number of

questions which were sent to him on a printed form. The first question asked was "Do you hold any land in this State"? and this was followed by the question "If so, what quantity have you under cultivation; how much of it is improved, and in what manner"? That indicated a desire to give every man a sufficient quantity of land. There was also question No. 3, "Are you willing to utilise the land"? All the applicants answered that in the affirmative. The board always asked the applicant whether he intended to reside on the land. Having asked all these questions, and having ascertained whether the man was married or single, and if he had a family, all necessary inquiries were exhausted; at all events such inquiries as could reasonably be expected to be made by a board endeavouring to do their duty. The preparation of the return asked for would entail a considerable expense. Evidently, however, the mover brought it forward with the idea of getting an explanation with regard to the doings of the land board rather than for the information to be supplied. The land board had, almost without exception, acted wisely in allocating blocks. They had listened to the advice of experts of the department, such as that of Professor Lowrie, for instance, and had followed out the ideas laid down by that gentleman. In Professor Lowrie's opinion a man should have sufficient land to keep him occupied the whole year. It was not only essential that he should have sufficient land to live upon. We knew fairly well after years of experience, and certainly Professor Lowrie knew, how many acres would be sufficient for that purpose. It was to be hoped the motion would not be pressed.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): The Minister for Lands had indicated the principles which governed the board as a rule in granting an area applied for. There must naturally be considerable dissatisfaction where there was more than one applicant for land, seeing that only one man could get it. As a rule in cases where it appeared to an individual that the improvement conditions were not being carried out, that individual wrote to the Lands Department and indicated

that in his opinion the conditions under which the land was granted were not being complied with. Very often he was correct in that assumption, but there were cases where permission was given by the department to allow certain work to be concentrated on one block. Often a man was anxious to get a return without unnecessary delay, and in such a case permission was given him to put all his energies on one block without complying with all the conditions laid down for an adjoining block. Members would recognise that it was advisable for a Minister to have discretionary power in matters of that kind. Very often it was in the best interests of the settler, and of the country as well, that he should get a return without unnecessary delay. After the report as to the non-compliance with the conditions was received by the Lands Department, as a rule instructions were given for an inspector to take the earliest possible opportunity of making an inspection of the land. Often it was found that the complaints were founded on fact, with the result that the land was gazetted as being forfeited, and the department then intimated they were prepared to throw it open for selection. Very often the individual who had complained of the non-observance of the conditions considered he was in the same position as the man who complained of non-compliance with conditions under the Mining Act and considered he was entitled to jump the property, and that the land should be granted to him. His information did not give him any pre-emptive right, but as a rule, all things being equal, the man who brought the non-fulfilment of conditions under the notice of the department would, if there were any advantage, get it. That was only fair and reasonable, but he should get nothing beyond that. So far as he (the Premier) knew of the board, that principle governed their decisions in allocating the land. Complaints were often received from settlers in different parts of the State that they were dissatisfied with the decisions of the board, but very often, after giving the matter due consideration and investigating such complaints, he had come to the conclu-

sion that the judgment of the board in their allocation of the blocks was well founded.

Mr. JOHNSON: My contention is that the board depart from the generally accepted policy of the Agricultural Department, inasmuch as they grant too small an area.

The PREMIER: One of the first inquiries ever made by the board was whether the area of land applied for would be sufficient to enable a man to make a fair living. As to the case brought forward by the hon. member, there must be some extenuating circumstances as the board would assuredly not split up a block of 600 or 700 acres into two holdings. All realised that it was absolutely essential that a man should have a decent area if he were to make a living out of the land. That was the generally accepted policy of the Lands Department, as well as of the Agricultural Bank. Doubtless the matter having been brought under notice the board would give greater consideration to the fact in the future. The main fact which governed the decision of the board was first of all the quantity of rural land already held, what quantity of it was fit for cultivation, and what improvements had been effected. If a man had been dilatory in improvements the board would be well advised not to give him further land. If he had sufficient to make a living on but had not complied with the conditions, then in such case the board should not give him an additional area. The board always asked a man what his experience in agricultural pursuits had been, whether he was married or single, and if married the number of his children, what their ages were and the sex, and, as the Minister had said, provision existed for the answering of certain questions of this nature in the event of the applicant not being able to appear in person before the board. The hon. member had no doubt brought the matter under notice in order to obtain the assurance which had been given. Doubtless he was satisfied that in the wheat areas it was necessary for a man to get at least one thousand acres in order to

make a living, and that was a policy which had been endorsed by the Government.

Mr. JOHNSON (in reply): As the Premier had stated, that was really the object in bringing the matter forward. There was no special grievance, neither was there dissatisfaction on the part of any individual. The matter was one purely of general principle, and it was known that in the two cases mentioned the decision of the board was against the advice tendered by the experts of the Agricultural Department. That being so the motion standing in his name was tabled. The object was not so much to get a return, but to receive the assurance which had been given him. It was wrong to put a man on the land when we knew from the start it was impossible for him to make a success of it. Such a course did not tend to create that satisfaction we should lay ourselves out to get, and so make a man a good advertising medium, and thus get others to follow his example. Having received the assurance he wanted, he desired to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

REPORT—NORTH-WEST SHIPPING INQUIRY.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) moved—

That the report of the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the North-West shipping be laid upon the Table of the House.

This matter was first brought before the public at a meeting of the chamber of commerce. The chamber claimed that the conditions prevailing in the shipping trade in the North-West were somewhat unfair to the settlers and traders on that coast. The Minister at that time came forward with a proposal to run State-owned steamships on the coast, but he did not do so. Then the Minister approved of an inquiry being made. That inquiry into the shipping conditions was conducted, no doubt, at some expense to the State, and it was advisable now that the people of the State should hear the facts, and know why nothing further had been done in

connection with the matter. It had been stated that the report had not been made public because it was found that it was not in favour of the shipowners. That was hardly a fair reason for the non-publication of the report. Being opposed to class legislation, he regarded it his duty to protect the shipowners just as he would protect the squatters or miners, and if it was found that the rapacious settlers of the North-West had not been giving the shipowners a fair deal, it would be the duty of members to protect those shipowners against the settlers on that part of the coast. No harm could be done by giving publicity to the report. Many people, and he among the rest, had been waiting for the decision of the Government on this matter, and they would like to know the reason why the Government had refrained from taking action.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): It was not intended to oppose the motion. He had not had an opportunity of going fully into the matter, but he had been informed that it would be advisable not to make the papers public. After a hasty perusal of the file nothing was found in it which was very objectionable, and therefore there was no intention of opposing the motion. The matter was one which the Acting Premier took up during his (the Premier's) absence, and was the result of a deputation to which the Acting Premier promised that a commissioner would be appointed with a view of reporting on the question. The outcome was that Mr. Sinclair, of the Harbour and Light Department, was appointed a commissioner, and that officer visited various parts of the State and compiled a very voluminous report which no doubt it would be possible to place on the table without any unnecessary delay.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): In connection with this report, it was some time since instructions were given that an inquiry should be made for the purpose of seeing in what manner the Government could assist and benefit the North-West portion of the State, and give some better facilities with regard to shipping and freights, and also to make other inquiries in connection

with the trade of the North-West generally. The instructions given were that Mr. Sinclair was to make special inquiries with a view of supplying information to the Government. His instructions were to find out how it would be possible to benefit Port Hedland, Roebourne, Onslow, and Geraldton, and even to make inquiries with regard to the South-Eastern portion of the State, independently of whether the trade would benefit Fremantle, Geraldton or any of the other ports. The Commissioner who was appointed advised the Government how they could best assist the various settlers, and very long and detailed instructions with regard to what was wanted were given to him. In the letter of instructions which was written to this gentleman there was the following:—

“Your first action, I think, should be to find out from the producers what their complaints are. They must be our first care, irrespective of trader, manufacturer or shipper. The pastoralists have an association and I have asked their secretary to arrange for a committee of that body to meet you and give you all the assistance in their power. It will not suffice for them to merely urge State subsidised steamers as a panacea for their troubles, they must show that they have complaints and justify them. It will not be possible for you to make direct inquiries into the mineral trade of the North-West, or that of the South, although probably Mr. Klug, of the Mt. Cattlin mine, Ravensthorpe, would probably advise you (if you inquired from him) re Hopetoun facilities, but such information could be obtained of the trade at Port Hedland, Roebourne, Whim Creek, Onslow, etc., from Mr. Montgomery, State Mining Engineer, whom I will direct to place fully at your disposal all his knowledge of the districts interested. Mr. Durbridge, also, could give you a lot of information regarding Onslow trade, and also Mr. Sutherland of the Fremantle Smelters has special knowledge of Northampton. Any information I have is also at your disposal, but Mr. Montgomery's and my knowledge go no further than Port

Hedland. . . . Lastly the shipping companies should be asked their view of the question. Some information they will give you will, I understand, be confidential, but I do not wish you in the early stages of the inquiry to accept confidential matter from them. They may give you information as confidential which may be publicly obtained from other quarters and so far as possible nothing should be promised which may tie your hands when making the report."

Attention should be drawn to the last paragraph of the instructions. The shipping companies advised that they would be pleased to give any information in their power, but that the information they might give would be of a confidential nature. Mr. Sinclair was instructed not to take confidential information, so that under no circumstances could the value of the report be nullified. It was not known what information of a private nature might be on the file. If there was such information, of course it would be a gross breach of confidence to make it public. Therefore in agreeing to lay the papers on the Table, it should be understood that should it be found that there was information which had been given confidentially either by the shipping companies or any other persons that this would be deleted. So far as could be seen, however, there did not appear to be anything of a confidential nature in the file.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—LAND TRANSFERS SYSTEM

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill) moved—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable, in the interests of the quick despatch of business and general efficiency, that the old method of land transfers should be reverted to.

He said: I move this motion with a desire to revert to a condition of things that proved to be eminently satisfactory, at least so far as the goldfields were concerned. I understand that, prior to the inauguration of what was called a scheme of decentralisation, in the Kalgoorlie and

Boulder districts where there are a large number of tenements under the Land Act it was always possible in regard to residential leases, residential areas, working men's blocks and other forms of land tenure for those transferring them or dealing with them to have the transfer effected with considerable expedition in the local lands office; but some time ago the Public Service Commissioner issued a circular, which was printed and issued to all members of the House, and published in the Press, to the effect that the system of the control of it by the Lands Department was entirely unsatisfactory, his reason for urging that being that the banking institutions in the metropolis and those engaged in the legal profession objected to it because it entailed some difficulties upon them. I do not know whether the position was arrived at as a result of those representations by the Public Service Commissioner, but at any rate since the beginning of the year—I have not the exact date—it was decided that the transfer work should be removed from the Lands Department to the Lands Transfer Department and that all the business should be transacted in Perth. The result of this has been to cause a great deal of delay and annoyance to those who have been accustomed to these conveniences in the various land offices throughout the State. I received a letter from a gentleman in Kalgoorlie, but, unfortunately, I have mislaid it. In this letter he detailed the particulars over a simple matter of a transfer of a residential lease on the goldfields. The transfer was effected because the owner or lessee was desirous of going to the Eastern States, the price and everything was agreed to, but it took seven weeks for the transfer to be made, and during that time the person who disposed of the block had to wait until the transfer was finally fixed up. That is one instance, and there are others which have been brought under the notice of the local governing bodies on the goldfields where similar delays have taken place in regard to other blocks. There seems to be no reason whatever for the change. Throughout the various districts, where lands offices are established, we have a number

of settlers who have business to transact through these offices, and the present position is that, instead of being able to go to the nearest lands office, as they could in the localities of Katanning, Narrogin, Northam, Beverley, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Boulder and other places throughout the State, they have to fee someone in Perth to carry out the business for them. Not only does it put them to additional expense, but it also means there is an additional delay in having the transfer effected. It seems to me there is no object to be gained by this change, and there is no justification whatever for putting the clients of the Government to this expense and inconvenience in order to suit the convenience of the banking institutions and those engaged in the legal profession. If we are to consult the convenience of anyone, surely it should be the convenience of the clients of the Lands Department, who are the people more vitally affected, and whose interests should be first considered. In other respects the change seems to be altogether an injudicious one. At present in regard to many of those forms of land tenements as, for instance, conditional purchases, grazing leases, residential leases, residential areas, and working men's blocks, there are certain conditions to be conformed to before a transfer can be effected. For instance, unless the holder of a conditional purchase carries out certain improvements he is supposed not to be entitled to a transfer. Of course, I know that transfers have been given where these improvements have not been carried out; but, still, the law is that these improvements have to be effected before the transfer can be made. Now, before such a transfer can be put through, the Lands Transfer Branch officers must have a certificate from the Lands Department to the effect that these conditions have been fulfilled, and this means that the officers of the Lands Department have still to carry out the greater part of the work necessary before a transfer can be effected. All that the Lands Transfer Branch will do is, after having received the certificate from the Lands Department, to finally put the transfer through. In the circumstances, it seems

to me it would be a simplification of the transfer, and would suit the convenience of those who are the clients of the department, and, furthermore, would save them expense and loss of time, if we reverted to the old system and had these transactions carried out at the chief lands offices throughout the State. For that reason, therefore, and with the view of getting some more lucid explanation for the change than has been vouchsafed so far, I move this motion.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. J. L. Nanson): The hon. member has put forward as the principal reason why the motion should be agreed to, that it is desirable to revert to a condition of things which had proved eminently satisfactory. The difficulty that occurs at present in regard to the system which the hon. member is advocating is mainly the difficulty of rendering these conditional purchases a satisfactory security on which money can be borrowed. The matter has been represented to the Government by the Chambers of Commerce, by the banks, and by solicitors, and the reasons advanced are such as I believe, when they are put before the Chamber, hon. members will deem to be reasons to which the Government are bound to give a great deal of weight. It must not be supposed that because the banks and business men and solicitors have advocated this change, they are doing it solely in their own interests and in opposition to the interests of the general public. The contrary is the case. Hon. members are no doubt aware that what is desired is that the registration of lease instruments and similar documents should be kept at the Titles Office instead of in the Lands Office, as was the case until quite recently. One reason why the change is advisable is that we have in the Titles Office an expert staff who have been trained in the particular work they are called upon to do, and there is a further advantage that there is uniformity in dealing with both leasehold and freehold titles. At present, as hon. members are aware, freeholds are dealt with at the Lands Titles Office, and I did not gather from the remarks of the hon. member any reason why leaseholds

should not be dealt with in the same manner. If the reform instituted be adopted permanently, instead of causing inconvenience and greater expense to the public, it will have precisely the opposite effect. Matters will probably be dealt with more promptly in the one office. Certainly where one is dealing with mortgages, and where it is required to take as security for advance a freehold block and also a conditional purchase block, there will be great advantage in the whole transaction being carried through and completed in the one office, instead of the freehold transaction having to be put through the Titles Office and the transaction in regard to the conditional purchase having to be put through the Lands Office. Let me give an illustration to hon. members to show the cost and delay that may be incurred in consequence of there being two Government departments dealing with this class of work. We will suppose that under a will certain properties, some portions of them held under conditional purchase and the other under freehold, are left to one person. At present two transmission applications have to be put in—one at the Titles Office in respect to the freehold, and the other at the Lands Office in respect to the conditional purchase. It is necessary, therefore, first of all to send a clerk to get probate, and then to go to the Titles Office to lodge an application. When this is done the clerk has also to be sent down to get probate and has then to go to the Lands Office and lodge an application for the transmission of the conditional purchase lease, and after that is passed he has to get the documents back again. Then to get them to the person who is entitled, transfers have to be signed by the executors, one for the Titles Office and one for the Lands Office. It may be said, why should we study the convenience of the solicitor and simplify his procedure, but it is not the solicitor who wants this procedure simplified. It would be more profitable to him no doubt to have the complicated method, but it would be less complicated to him if, instead of sending the drafts to the different offices, the matter were put through the one office, the Land Titles Office. Un-

der the present system, or the system that did exist until recently, for the sake of convenience I may call it the present system because the new one is not permanently adopted—

Mr. Hudson: Have you any authority for registration yet?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: All we are doing is absolutely within the law. The hon. member can rest assured of that. The Act will require to be amended before the full measure of reform can be introduced.

Mr. Walker: Till it is amended the method is illegal.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Certainly not. The member can be assured that what we are doing at the present time is not illegal. Under the system I have been describing the cost is very much increased. It has been estimated that the cost under the old system is treble what it will be if this new system is introduced.

Mr. Angwin: You have altered the policy of the Government since you have been there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not aware of that, but if that is the case there is no reason for the hon. member to be aggrieved.

Mr. Hudson: The hon. member is the Government.

Mr. Angwin: As far as this is concerned.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: To resume the thread of my argument. We will suppose that the whole of the registration was done in the Titles Office. Under these circumstances one transfer under the will would be sufficient and two attendances, instead of six, as at present. I can understand members who represent the legal profession objecting to the reform as it will diminish the number of attendances by a solicitor or his clerk, but I am somewhat amazed at the member for Brown Hill, who we must assume is looking after the interests of the public, coming forward as a champion in favour of an unnecessary, expensive, and clumsy procedure.

Mr. Bath: How do you justify the procedure from outside offices to Perth?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I can only think the hon. member is bringing forward the motion under a misconception as to the actual inconvenience caused by the system of which he is the advocate.

Mr. Hudson: You do it by correspondence, do you not; both in the Titles Office and the Lands?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In South Australia they have the system that it is desired to adopt here, and the Government have the opinion of legal gentlemen who have had experience of the working of the system in South Australia, and that opinion, I may say, is an entirely favourable one. It is pointed out by one legal gentleman who speaks with experience of the South Australian system that supposing the system were adopted here in dealing with leaseholds and freeholds one document would deal with the whole lot: that is to say a person wishing to borrow on a leasehold and a freehold could have the mortgage prepared in one document. Then you have the further inconvenience with the present system; it is very awkward in regard to the issue of execution under *fi fa*, a copy of the *fi fa* having to be issued with the Titles Office and another with the Lands Office, whereas if all the dealings were transacted with the one office, one copy would cover the lot. Mr. Cox's testimony—he is the solicitor who has had experience of the South Australian system—in regard to that system is that it is a great saving of time, and also of expense.

Mr. Bath: Are you going to make the Titles Office keep in touch with the carrying out of improvements, the inspection?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the Bill that is being drafted making this change, due provision is made on that point, ample provision.

Mr. Bath: What provision?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will deal with that when we come to that Bill.

Mr. Bath: But what is the provision?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will get to that when we come to deal with the Bill.

Mr. Bath: But we want to know it now we want to know what the provision is.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is a further great convenience in making searches connected with land. Instead of having to go to two offices, the whole search can be made in one office, and instead of occupying the greater part of a day, and in some cases days, it may be got through probably in half an hour, or in one hour. Then, in regard to the fees, the public will benefit by a substantial reduction of the fees for transfers. At the present time the Lands Department requires a fee of one pound for each lease transferred; and if a man owns a large number of small blocks—in one case a man had to pay as much as £15 in order to get a transfer of each of his blocks: under the Titles Office system if a man owns some land it would cost him, no matter how many blocks, one pound for the transfer fees.

Mr. McDowall: If a man owns 15 blocks, do you mean that he can get a transfer for one pound?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In regard to one transaction. Of course the great advantage of this change is that it will enable the holder of a conditional purchase lease to obtain accommodation which at the present time is debarred him; or if he does obtain it he can only obtain it under circumstances of great difficulty.

Mr. Bath: From the Agricultural Bank.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No; from the ordinary banks.

Mr. Bath: Ah! That is the difficulty.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know if the hon. member wishes to prevent a conditional purchase holder from borrowing from the ordinary banks. It is surely an advantage to the community if you give them the greatest facilities for borrowing money in the easiest manner. If the Agricultural Bank can give accommodation, why not other banks? The Agricultural Bank would prefer to have the system simplified, and the security improved, which would be affected if the change is carried out. The hon. member is in error if he supposes that this change is not desired by the Agricultural Bank. I believe I am right in saying that there is no financial institu-

tion by which the change is more desired than by that particular institution; and if the hon. member will think over the matter for a time he will discover how it will be impossible for anybody who lends money, whether a private individual or a joint stock bank, or a Government bank, not to welcome a change of this kind. At the Lands Office you have not the register books such as you have at the Titles Office, and it is therefore very often a difficult matter to make a proper search in order to discover the state of a man's title in respect to a conditional purchase lease. Then we have the circumstance that nearly all conditional purchase leases are converted into freeholds, and when the freehold stage is reached and the lease and the mortgage die, the title may issue free of encumbrance to the holder. One can readily understand that a lender is somewhat chary to lend money when his security is liable to disappear on the freehold being obtained. If this change is made the transaction will be endorsed on the conditional purchase lease, and when the conditional purchase lease matures into a freehold, if the encumbrance is still existing, the endorsement is carried on to the certificate of title. Furthermore at the present time there is no provision that when rents have fallen into arrear, and the land is liable to forfeiture on that account, there is no provision that notice of such arrears shall be sent to the mortgagee. The leaseholder may omit to pay his rent, and the lease may be forfeited without the mortgagee knowing anything about the matter. Surely it would be an improvement that the lender should be protected to that extent. And anything that will protect the lender must necessarily be an advantage to the borrower because there will always be the difficulty of getting any large number of these advances if they are subject to results such as the one I have mentioned. At the present time we have the banks opening branches in various country districts where practically the whole of the lands are held under conditional purchase. And the question whether the banks will extend banking facilities to the holders of these condi-

tional purchase leases or not is very largely dependent on whether this change is made. The banks are fairly independent. They are willing to do business, no doubt they are anxious to do business, but certainly their policy is a conservative one so far as safety is concerned, and they are not going out of their way to extend their transactions in this direction unless a proper measure of security is afforded them. The member for Brown Hill has referred to the delays and inconvenience caused by the changes which have been made; but I gather from what he said that what he had in his mind was merely the inconvenience which he supposed to have been caused at, or in the vicinity of Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Bath: Inconvenience that I know of.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: On the other hand we have to consider the large amount of advantage which will be given to the conditional purchase holders throughout the South-West if this change be made permanent; and I am sure, from a report I have from the Lands Department, that the inconvenience at the present time has practically been reduced to a minimum. The Under Secretary for Lands is of opinion in regard to dealings in Kalgoorlie that if in order they will be completed within a week. Surely for the better security which the new system gives this small amount of delay will be uncomplainingly borne.

Mr. Bath: That week is seven weeks, and I know of another case of four weeks.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member has quoted a case where the delay was seven weeks, and now he mentions another case in which it was four weeks. But does it not occur to the hon. member that where we are making a change of this kind, in its initial stages there might be some amount of delay which will not occur when the system gets into full working order? And the hon. member will remember that these cases occurred some little time back; and if he make inquiry he will find that this estimate of the Under Secretary is well within the mark. To show how small the inconvenience is, I might mention that

only half-a-dozen applications from Kalgoorlie are pending. The system, I may say, has been adopted in several other States, in South Australia, in Victoria, and I think in Tasmania, and has given the very same amount of satisfaction as has been given by the adoption of the system of freehold. Surely it is a progressive step to extend the purview of the Transfer of Land Act. As the Act was originally adopted it was intended that it should apply to leases, and it is perhaps unfortunate that it was not made so to apply from the outset; but I am convinced that if this new system be given a trial it will in a very short time, if it has not already, be found that the convenience and security afforded are so immeasurably superior to anything we have under the existing Act, the Land Act, that the saving in expense and also in time is so great that there will be no one found ready to urge that we should go back to the old system of having these matters dealt with by the Lands Office instead of, as freeholds are, by the one registration office, namely, the Lands Titles.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): I was rather surprised that the Minister for Lands should have asked the Attorney General to reply to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition; and the more so because it is generally accepted in this House that a motion affecting a particular department should be replied to by the Minister controlling that department. But when we go back twelve months and realise that the Attorney General of to-day fought very strongly against the decentralisation scheme, I can only come to the conclusion that as far as the Government is concerned he is the one strong man of that party.

Mr. Holman: He is strong indeed.

Mr. ANGWIN: The Premier in his policy speech of two years ago said that part of the policy of the Government was to decentralize as far as the Lands Department was concerned. We have had that repeated throughout the length and breadth of the State, and the people of the State have realised that it would be to their advantage if that policy were carried into effect. Then we find that the

Public Service Commissioner, appointed for the express purpose of dealing with the public service alone, took it upon himself to object to the Government policy in regard to decentralisation; and in 1908 the action of the Public Service Commissioner was assisted very strongly by the present Attorney General. The Premier, speaking on the decentralisation scheme, on 18th December, 1908, said—

"We have adopted a system of decentralisation in the office itself which tends to the smoother working of the department. Previously applications for grazing leases and other lands went forward through the ordinary routine and passed on. We have made provision now that as the applications come in they are referred to the eight or ten officers who are detailed for the separate districts. If an application comes in, say, from the Avon district it is passed on to the officer dealing with that locality. He has lithographs of that district, and the consequence is that the officers will have a knowledge of the particular districts which they otherwise would not have if the applications were treated in the ordinary routine. We find thus that the applications are much more expeditiously dealt with. If a man goes for information to an officer who has been assigned any particular district, this officer, having a knowledge of the district, and having the plans, the result is that delay which was prevalent before the system was introduced is entirely done away with."

Now we find that the system introduced by the Premier when Minister for Lands, which did away entirely with the delay caused under the old system—and which I may say inflicted upon Western Australia the worst advertisement the State ever got—the bad old system wiped out by the Premier has now been put back again by the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: No, that is not so.

Mr. ANGWIN: That is so as far as the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is concerned.

The Attorney General: This has nothing to do with applications.

Mr. ANGWIN: But it has to do with transfers, and if an officer has power to deal with an application, he also has power to deal with transfers. I am sorry the Premier did not realise that the people of the State look to him as the head of the Government, and look to him to see that no officer has the power at any time to interfere with the policy of the Government. I am sorry the Premier has allowed one of his colleagues to dictate to him on a matter of this description, and I am sorry the Government have not stuck to that policy which they inaugurated, and have not shown the Public Service Commissioner that no officer shall be allowed to exceed his functions. On the 26th January, 1909, I put the following question—

“Is it the intention to apply the policy of decentralisation of the Lands Department to one portion of the State only, as approved by the Public Service Commissioner?”

To this the Premier replied—

“No, the scheme will be extended as circumstances warrant.”

Now I ask, if the scheme had been extended what reason would there have been for this motion by the Leader of the Opposition? It shows that the scheme has been curtailed and that instead of extending the scheme which they believed to be in the best interests of the State the Government have allowed it to be set aside entirely by the Attorney General who upheld the view of the Public Service Commissioner. I hope hon. members will support the motion. It is in the best interests of the people as a whole, if not of a few such as solicitors and bankers. Where is this difficulty spoken of as existing in regard to getting conveniences? Up at Tammin the banks are asking the settlers to withdraw from the Agricultural Bank; this, of course, with a view of getting the lands into the clutches of the private banks. I hope the House will agree to the motion and that we shall go back to the old system, which is the best, of giving transfers without delay.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) : Although I had not intended to speak on

this motion, yet as the member for East Fremantle is so anxious that I should be as far as possible assisted, perhaps some explanation is due. This is another instance of a little knowledge being a dangerous thing. The hon. member has quoted my remarks in regard to the decentralisation, and I am glad to say that the proposals then outlined have been given full effect to. The proposals were in regard to applications for land, and at that time I made no reference whatever in regard to this very vexed question of dealing with and registering transfers through the Titles office. As far as selections are concerned, the procedure now is that the land board meets in the various districts and considers applications on the spot. This is one of the proposals then made—and I understand from my colleague that it is being followed at the present time. At Denmark, for instance, provision is made for the board to sit to-day, so that applications can be dealt with without unnecessary delay. So that so far as the member's charges of inconsistency are concerned they absolutely fall to the ground.

Mr. Angwin: I do not think that you are: it is the other man.

The PREMIER: As to this matter, I may say there is no secrecy about it that I was opposed to the alteration at the time. When the deputation met me I argued that it would cause unnecessary delay, and that the system then in force did not appear to be very unsatisfactory. Since then an inquiry has been made into the whole matter, and the Under Secretary for Lands, who was opposed to the proposal, has now come round to the conclusion that it would be better in the interests of the transferees that the transactions should be dealt with in a different fashion: that is to say, that where a transfer of a conditional purchase holding is to be effected, the same course should be adopted as in the case of a freehold. Under this proposal all the registrations of the man who holds both conditional purchase and freehold lands will go through the one office, that controlled by the Registrar of Titles. The additional work can be undertaken by the Titles De-

partment practically without any additional staff being required. As members know, at present the freehold transfers go through the Titles Department, which is controlled by the Attorney General, and the transfer of conditional purchase, homestead and other lands in course of alienation, are registered through the Lands Department, which is controlled by the Minister for Lands. So far as my memory goes, one of the arguments that carried considerable weight in connection with the proposed change was in regard to better provision for the protection from fire of the deeds in the Titles Office than in the Lands Department. In the former office there are proper fireproof provisions, and it is contended that the transfers of conditional purchase lands should be safeguarded equally with the titles of freehold lands. I would like to read what Mr. Clifton, the Under Secretary for Lands, has to say in regard to this matter. In response to an inquiry as to what had occurred in regard to delays in Kalgoorlie he said—

“As you know, the Government land agent was empowered to do this work as far as the residential leases and working men's blocks were concerned, with the result that parties effecting a transfer or mortgage could generally get the matter fixed up without any delay, and it is the necessity for sending these documents to Perth under the new system that is the cause of complaint. It must, however, be remembered that the Kalgoorlie dealings are but a small thing as compared with the whole business, and now that we are practically up to date I think that we can promise that dealings from Kalgoorlie, if in order, will be returned completed, inside a week, and for the better security which the new system gives, it is worth these few days' waiting; there are only half a dozen Kalgoorlie transactions pending in the office at the present time.”

The whole matter has been gone into very exhaustively by the Attorney General, who has given reasons for the change. When I left the Lands Department I did

not follow the matter further and, on being assured by the Minister that as the result of the investigations made, the Under Secretary for Lands and the Register of Titles were in accord with him that there would be an improvement, I offered no objection to the new proposal which has been adopted. I would point out again to the member for East Fremantle that my proposal with regard to decentralisation on selection and surveys of land, and matters of that kind, has been absolutely adhered to. The matter under discussion now is one, which, to a very large extent concerns the Titles Office more than the Lands Office, and as a result of the investigations I have waived any objection I had to the proposed change.

Mr. FOULKES (Claremont): I would not have risen to speak to the motion but for the desire to remind the Premier of the fact that when the matter was brought up last year, I contended that as the Public Service Commissioner had reported strongly in favour of adopting the system in force to-day, his advice should be followed. The Government opposed the recommendation then, but I am glad to see that they have since recognised that the Public Service Commissioner was absolutely right in the opinion he gave.

Mr. Taylor: And that the Government policy was wrong.

Mr. FOULKES: As was often the policy of the Government of which the hon. member was a member. I am very glad that the Government have agreed to the proposal. This is not the first time the question has been brought up in the House, as in 1893, when Mr. S. Burt was Attorney General, there were complaints made from the far distant places of the policy of centralisation then adopted, and it was suggested that in connection with the Titles Office branches should be opened at some of the outlying towns. For instance, it was proposed that offices should be opened at Northam and Coolgardie. When referring to what was termed the centralisation policy the people there complained of the lawyers in the City getting all the fees. The same complaint was

raised in Geraldton. The Leader of the Opposition now refers to Kalgoorlie, but, after all, that town is comparatively close to Perth, and it is peculiar that there should be complaints of the kind he has indicated. The Leader of the Opposition has said that it takes seven weeks to get some transfers through. I am sure it will be found on inquiry that the original transfer was full of inaccuracies, hence the delay.

Mr. Bath: It was absolutely correct.

Mr. FOULKES: Owing to the fact that there has not been too much work in the Titles Office during the past 12 month all the transfers are being put through there now without delay. The people in the extreme North-West, such as those living at Port Hedland, might well complain of delays in getting transfers through, for it takes a considerable time to come down to the City from there; but one does not hear any complaints coming from there.

Mr. McDowall: How many transfers have they a year?

Mr. FOULKES: They have a certain number, and the people who want to get the documents executed have to wait a very long time. Another argument against the suggestion for a number of branches is that there is a feeling among the banks against such a proposal, as they are afraid their securities might be jeopardised. Suppose, for instance, I issued an application in Kalgoorlie to register a transfer, and another application is made by a fraudulent individual to register another transfer of the property at the same time in Perth, then would come in the question of which transaction was to take priority. There might be endless difficulties arising if some of the suggestions made by the Leader of the Opposition were carried into effect. Some people are apt to think that the solicitors in Perth are in favour of the centralisation scheme, and of retaining the old system of having all transfers registered in the City. This is not so, for it would be an advantage to the lawyers if a number of these offices were established throughout the State, for it would mean that it would be necessary to have documents registered,

perhaps, in two or three different branch offices. A case of the execution of a transfer occurred last week. A farm was sold in one of the agricultural districts which contained a certain amount of freehold land, and the whole transfer was able to be put through in one morning. The parties went to the Titles Office, and no delay occurred. Had there been a branch office at Broomehill, where there are no solicitors, considerable delay would have occurred in getting such a transfer put through, as it would have been necessary for a solicitor to have gone down there from the City. I am glad to think the Attorney General is satisfied that the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner was perfectly justified. I am pleased to notice also that the Under Secretary for Lands, who was strongly opposed to the change in the first instance, now realises that it will work simply and well. The present system of having all transfers executed in the Titles Office will mean that work should be done much better than hitherto.

Mr. Bath: When was the Under Secretary opposed to it?

Mr. FOULKES: I think he was opposed to it last year. However, the Under Secretary is a man who is quite capable of forming his own conclusions, and is honest and sincere in the determinations he arrives at, and in his endeavour to carry out the duties of the department in a proper manner. He exhibits no hesitation about informing the Minister of what his real opinion is on any question brought before him.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. Mitchell): I desire to say with regard to this subject that the only place where registration took place outside Perth was Kalgoorlie. The very room used by the Lands Department when they controlled the registration is now used by the Registrar of Titles, and there is no delay or inconvenience caused. It seems to me that the Registrar of Titles is the proper person to carry out the work of registration of all documents. After all what is the difference between the registration of a

conditional purchase lease and a certificate of title? There are four million acres held as freehold and 10,700,000 acres under conditional purchase conditions. Still there is a Registrar of Titles who deals with these four million acres and an officer of the Lands Department doing the registration in connection with twice as many acres. It does not seem right that there should be practically two registrars. On the one hand we have a fully equipped staff with a well appointed office, and on the other hand we have an adjunct to an already over-worked Lands Department—the registration office. The Registrar of Titles is much better qualified to control this registration than the Under Secretary for Lands. After all it is the duty of the Lands Department to subdivide and sell the land, and afterwards for the Registrar of Titles to take the matter in hand. We realise that the development of this country is not proceeding as quickly as it should, and it is all surely because the people who own the land have not the money to develop it with. Although we are apt to say that estates are unimproved we have to remember that a great deal of this country, practically a greater portion of this ten million acres, is held under small blocks, and most people who hold these small blocks can go to the Agricultural Bank. It is true that this bank only advances to a certain extent, and in the opinion of some, this is not far enough. If that is so we should give facilities to people to borrow from other financial institutions, and we should afford those financial institutions every possible security; they should feel absolutely safe. After all, as it is with the Savings Bank so it is with the ordinary banks. They take in the money of the people and let it out to the enterprising man without capital. There must be the greatest possible measure of security, and to bring that about it is necessary that the registration of all documents should be with the Registrar of Titles. Members talk as if the registration of documents were a matter of everyday occurrence. I can realise that at Kalgoorlie it was simply a matter of walking into the office, and depositing the transfer and lease for

registration. But, after all, is it a troublesome matter now? Every land agent is willing to assist those who desire to register their documents. All that people have to do is to go into the office and seek the assistance of the representative of the Lands Department there and get the aid they want. Apart from the delay of a couple of days there should be no further delay in connection with the registration of a transfer. This question has no bearing on that of decentralization, but we realise that that policy should be followed up and it is in force to-day to a greater extent than before. The Premier when Minister for Lands instituted the system. If one wants land at Northam he has to put in his application there, the land board sits there, and the whole business is dealt with in that place. Decentralisation has been followed to the greatest possible extent. Would it be possible to have a dozen registration offices throughout the State? A man might wish to mortgage his holdings, and if he had a dozen of them situated in different districts he would require to have a dozen mortgages in order that they should be sent to the various offices for the purpose of registration. It is not necessary to employ a solicitor in Perth. The documents can be posted to the office in Perth just as easily as they can be sent to any other centre. The trouble with the registration is that the officer in charge of the Lands Department is not as expert as he might be, and these financial institutions seem to think that the registrations have not always been done as accurately as they would have been done by the Registrar of Titles. We wish to practice economy. It did seem unnecessary that we should have two sets of books, two sets of officials, and two registrars attending to this work. Economy will be effected now, and the registration will be expeditiously and accurately carried out under the new system. Apart from that, the work of the taxation office will be light because the index will disclose the holdings of every man, whether they are freehold or held under conditional purchase conditions, so that the search will be minimised in connection with the taxation and road board matters, and in con-

nection with land matters too. This registration under the system adopted by the Registrar of Titles will facilitate the work. It is quite right that the interests of the people should be considered. It is the people who have taken our lands who have dealings with the Titles Office. They regard the conditional purchase as something they can pledge, and the Attorney General has referred to the fact that it should be made possible for those people who take our lands to borrow, and the member for East Fremantle, too, said that some bank had asked for business in the Katanning district. Banks have been opened throughout all the country districts. In the district I lived in before I came down here, there were three banks, and to-day there are no fewer than 15, and all because it is realised that the broad acres are a good security. As money has become cheaper it is lent at 6 per cent., often with the result that the men who hold our lands under conditional purchase conditions are to-day able to negotiate a loan as easily as the men who have freeholds. It is not a small thing for these people that we should make it safe for these banks to lend money, and it is not a small thing to enable them to go to a bank and offer conditional purchase land which the bank will consider as good security as freehold. It seems to me we should endeavour to do for these people who select our lands all that is possible. Have we not before the House at the present time a Bill authorising the increase of the Agricultural Bank capital to two million pounds for the purpose of clearing our lands? The banks did not feel too safe under the old conditions, but they do feel safe when the registration is conducted by the Registrar of Titles. There will be no great trouble in connection with this matter because the very simple method of ascertaining at the end of each day where improvements have been done by the blocks sought to be registered will be adopted. At the end of each day a list of documents presented for registration can be supplied by the Registrar of Titles to the accountancy office of the Lands Department, and a reply given as to whether the transfer can be registered or not. I admit that a

little inconvenience may be caused at Kalgoorlie, but it is right that documents should be sent down to Perth, registered here, and returned. The Under Secretary for Lands assures me that this should be done within a week. If men with experience of the methods of the Registration Department count for anything I think these registrations will be done quickly and safely. The Registrar of Titles has in addition to his ordinary staff the advantage of the assistance that can be rendered to him by the officers of the Attorney General's department. I daresay the Solicitor General attends to these matters, and is of assistance to the Registrar of Titles in any cases in which it is necessary to refer to a solicitor. A very wise course has been followed in centralisation, so far as registration is concerned. Decentralisation for all other purposes in connection with land has been practised, and will be practised. The greatest possible assistance will be given to selectors to make application in the district where the land is situated, and in all other respects their applications and their dealings with the department will be facilitated. Decentralisation can never be followed in regard to registrations. There are 101 reasons against it, most of which have been stated by the Attorney General. I hope the motion will not be agreed to. The experience I have gained in connection with the Lands Department, and my experience during the time I was Honorary Minister in connection with the Agricultural Department, have led me to believe that it is absolutely necessary that some change should be made; and we have made that change, a change which will result in business being done more economically and expeditiously than was possible under the old system.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I feel inclined to vote against the motion. I must say that what little I have seen of the decentralisation scheme introduced in connection with the Lands Department has not, in my opinion, been so satisfactory that we should be anxious to continue the system. My experience would not induce me to vote for any more decentralisation. Another point in con-

nection with this is that it is to apply only to Kalgoorlie. Although Kalgoorlie is a very important part of Western Australia I still hold that if the residents of all the other parts of Western Australia have to register in Perth it is quite possible for the residents of Kalgoorlie to do the same.

Mr. Bath: But if it be shown to be a convenience, why should we not have it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If it can be shown to be a convenience and not a costly one, I may vote for the motion; but I want the mover to show me that it is so. The fact that there have been difficulties and delays under the present system is no guarantee that the system is bad. It may be owing to the fault of the officers; and a bad officer does not necessarily imply a bad system. Now I believe that in respect to many of our difficulties it is not the system that requires altering, but some of the administrators; and possibly if we could shift the whole administration altogether we would have fewer complaints about the systems we have in Western Australia. I say again that unless the leader of the Opposition in his reply can show me some better grounds than I have seen for voting for this motion I intend to vote against it.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): All the arguments used in connection with this matter are really departures from the subject. All I have listened to go to prove that it is advisable to have one registrar. I do not think the hon. member for Brown Hill is disputing that in any way. But it is possible to have one registrar for these different land departments and still have a system of registration which will convenience the public of Kalgoorlie. It must be admitted that the business of Boulder and Kalgoorlie is very extensive. I do not know whether transfers were completed at Kalgoorlie or not, but it seems to me a special effort should be made to convenience a large centre of population. The people of Kalgoorlie have complained very bitterly of this change, and have constantly pointed out the very serious delay that has taken place. I therefore intend to support the motion.

Mr. BATH (in reply): I wish to make reference to some of the alleged arguments brought forward by hon. members opposing this motion. The affability with which the Attorney General refrained from giving information should convince hon. members that something is being withheld, and that an effort is being made to assure them that the convenience of clients of the department is being studied, while no information is vouchsafed to support that contention. There was one practical admission made by the Attorney General, namely, that instead of banking institutions being the philanthropists he would like to have us believe—

The Attorney General: No.

Mr. BATH: The Attorney General said they were not doing this for their own advantage.

The Attorney General: I never used the word "philanthropists." The hon. member is wrong in saying that I used the word "philanthropists." They are business institutions.

Mr. Underwood: You used words to that effect.

Mr. BATH: Certainly the hon. member did not use the word "philanthropists," but, as pointed out by the member for Pilbara, he used words which conveyed the same impression. Now, as a matter of fact the Attorney General has practically admitted that this proposal has been advocated by the banking institutions with the object of doing away with the conditions surrounding the taking up of land in this State, the conditions under which the lands of the State are alienated, so that they or their clients can acquire land without the inconvenience of having to fulfil the conditions under which our lands are taken up. He pointed out that because these conditions are found by them to be irksome they desire to have the business transferred to the Titles Office instead of, as at present, its being done through the Lands Office where they keep a daily record of how the conditions are being fulfilled. As a matter of fact the Titles Office can only be an office of registration, and unless they institute a staff themselves or borrow officials from the Lands Department, the Registrar of

Titles will have no knowledge whatever as to whether the conditions under which these various tenements have been taken up have been fulfilled. And it will possibly, and even probably, be that from the registrar's point of view the transfer may seem all right, while it may be that in the Lands Office there are proceedings going on by which that land is liable to forfeiture; and the question of forfeiture may even be under the consideration of the Minister at that very time.

The Minister for Lands: Who would run the risk in that case?

Mr. BATH: When the Attorney General was speaking, and when I asked the question as to what safeguard the Titles Office was going to impose in order to see that the land was not transferred, and that no transfer was effected unless the conditions were fulfilled, the Attorney General gave us some vague assurance that this was going to be provided for in the Transfer of Lands Act.

The Attorney General: And that is so.

Mr. BATH: It will mean that we will have to take holus bolus the various clauses of the Land Act and transfer them to the Transfer of Lands Act.

The Attorney General: No; not at all.

Mr. BATH: The Minister for Lands was sitting alongside the Attorney General at the time, and he failed to supply the information. Why? Because that gentleman knows that it will still be necessary for the bulk of the work to be done by the Lands Department. It will be necessary for the officers of the Lands Department to go through the records and to turn up the files and ascertain if the conditions have been fulfilled; and it will still be for the Lands Department to do 95 per cent. of the work and hand over a certificate to the effect that the conditions have been fulfilled before the Registrar of Titles can effect the transfer. Reference has been made to the fact, and we have the assurance in a letter which the Premier read from the Under Secretary for Lands, that there is going to be no greater delay than a week. Now, as a matter of fact up to the very latest information I have secured from the goldfields these delays are still going on. The

inconvenience of this new proposal lies in this fact: previously, if it were the case of a working man's block, a residential lease, or one of the earlier forms of lease, and a resident of the goldfields—the leases are mainly held by miners and other workers on the goldfields—were desirous of selling out to go elsewhere to work, all it was necessary for him to do was to go into Kalgoorlie, to the officer in charge of the Lands Department, effect the transfer within the very shortest space of time, and the money was paid over there and then. Under the system which has replaced that delays have taken place. Many who have disposed of their areas have had to cool their heels in Kalgoorlie for weeks, waiting for the transfer to be effected. And if it only applies to Kalgoorlie, why deprive the residents of Kalgoorlie of this convenience? Hon. members ought to see that the convenience is assured to them in the future, more particularly as the forms of land tenure dealt with are especially those held by the general body of workers on the Eastern goldfields. They are people who cannot afford to wait the convenience of the various departments in regard to this new method of transfer. Again, the Premier stated that one reason which actuated them was that they felt it was necessary to be able to concentrate all these deeds in the Titles Office, presumably because that was the place of greatest security; but, as a matter of fact, we have never had a report from the Registrar of Titles unless it contained a complaint from that officer as to the insecurity of the present safety appliances for the storage of deeds. And if a fire took place in that locality it would be a poor look out for the deeds.

The Attorney General: It would be better accommodation than in the Lands Department.

Mr. BATH: I am rather doubtful on that score. I am satisfied there was more security, if security were needed, in the provision made in the Kalgoorlie office, because that was a building standing to a large extent by itself, and, therefore, with less risk of fire than is the case with the present Titles Office in

Perth. In order to try to make out a case against this motion Ministers have not scrupled to cast a reflection upon the officer of the Lands Department who hitherto has done this work.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. BATH: It is said he has not had sufficient experience and that the banks would not touch these transactions because they were afraid he did not have sufficient knowledge to do it; but what justification is there for such a reflection on that officer? Can the Minister for Lands point to one instance where the interests of the department have been jeopardised by reason of this officer having done the work in the past?

The Minister for Lands: I could give you a dozen instances if I were in the office.

Mr. BATH: It is strange we have not heard of them.

The Minister for Lands: You were Minister for Lands and you must have heard something of them.

Mr. BATH: Not in connection with transfers. I have heard complaints in regard to other officers. We are told that the banks will not lend money to the poor unfortunate settlers in the State because of the present conditions. As a matter of fact there has been no difficulty so far as the holders of conditional purchase and grazing leases are concerned in securing loans from the Agricultural Bank, and we are told that as a result of the new regime introduced the banks are going out into the agricultural settlements, into areas where conditional purchasers predominate, and are opening branches in order to lend money to the farming community of the State. As a matter of fact the other day the Minister for Lands gave an entirely different reason. He said it was because the Agricultural Bank had led the way, and they had at last been stirred up to some enterprise, and were following on the road cut for them by the Agricultural Bank. Which argument is correct?

The Minister for Lands: Both.

Mr. BATH: It seems to me that Ministers, instead of trying to justify themselves, instead of giving to the House in-

formation as to how these delays can be obviated, are attempting by the use of statements such as these, altogether different from what they have given on previous occasions, to mislead the House into voting against the motion. No Minister has given any evidence whatever that this change is in the interests of any other than the banking institutions of Perth, and I am very dubious indeed when I find this is the only justification which can be urged for the change which has been effected.

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

Ayes	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	23
			—
Majority against	..		4
			—

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. W. Price
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Ware
Mr. Holman	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Horan	Mr. Troy
Mr. Johnson	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Male
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Daglish	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Draper	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. J. Price
Mr. George	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gordon	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Layman
Mr. Hardwick	(Teller).

Question thus negatived.

RETURN—PEARLING STATISTICS.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet) moved—

That there be laid upon the Table a return showing—1, The declared value of the pearl shell exported from Western Australia during the past ten years from the North-West grounds and Shark Bay grounds respectively. 2, The estimated value of pearls from the same. 3. The revenue derived from the same

by—(a) *Export duties.* (b) *Boat licenses.* (c) *Pearl-dealers' licenses.* 4. *The estimated number of male adults employed, distinguishing—(a) Europeans.* (b) *Aboriginals.* (c) *Asiaties.*

As the Premier had given assurance there was no intention of opposing the motion it was unnecessary to do more than move it formally. The return would not cost much. The idea of asking for it was with a view to securing information. It would be useful to show what the industry meant to the State, the revenue we secured from it, and how it was progressing.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): The motion was quite unnecessary. It simply displayed a certain amount of ignorance and want of knowledge on the part of the member moving it, because all the information required was published annually, and the hon. member could have secured a copy of the Fisheries Report from the Fisheries Department, and obtained all the information without tabling a motion, necessitating the taking up of a certain amount of time on the part of members in considering it and expense in getting the information together. If the hon. member wanted the information for the past 10 years, it was only necessary to get the Fisheries Reports for the past 10 years; or to save himself trouble the hon. member might have got the information from the *Commonwealth Year Book* or from the *State Year Books* published from time to time. But it seemed that lots of members thought they must table a motion whenever they wanted information whereas they could go directly and get it without bothering the House. The information was easily obtained.

Mr. Walker: Then why begrudge giving it?

Mr. MALE: Not at all; it was given every year. But why should members bring these motions before the House? Surely we had more important work than to waste all this time?

Mr. Troy: You are wasting time.

Mr. MALE: The object was to prevent similar motions being brought down when the information could be obtained direct from the departments. All the informa-

tion asked for in the motion was obtained from time to time by the department. The value of the pearl shell was declared month by month, and the annual statistics showed the estimated value of pearls fished, and the estimated revenue in regard to boat licenses and so forth. Returns were also obtained by the Fisheries Department as to the number of men, distinguishing between Europeans, aborigines, and Asiaties. The hon. member by ringing up the Chief Inspector of Fisheries could have got all the information straight off without any delay, or he could have rung the bell and a messenger would have brought him the departmental report, and he could have got all the information he wanted from it.

Mr. Collier: Is it in the annual report?

Mr. MALE: It was in the annual report, in the *Year Book of Western Australia*, and the *Year Book of the Commonwealth*. If the Premier promised the information he had no objection to its being given. Had the hon. member asked him (Mr. Male) for the information he would have been only too glad to have given it. Motions of this kind were absolutely unnecessary, being a waste of time and of public money. Members might get the information they desired to obtain in a more straightforward and direct manner.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): Some of the information asked for would have to be obtained from the Federal Department. For instance, the declared value of the pearl shell exported from Western Australia was a matter for the Customs Department, but he had no doubt the head of that department would supply the information. The second return asked for was as to the estimated value of the pearls. The information with regard to that must be practically approximate, for a certain number of pearls were sent away without their actual value being declared. In regard to the other matters, the boat licenses and pearl dealers' licenses came exclusively under the State Department, and the information could be obtained. The other information would have to be obtained from the Customs Department, and from

the reports to which the member for Kimberley had referred. He did not intend to oppose the motion.

Mr. TROY (in reply): Thanks were due to the Premier for complying with the request set out in the motion. For the information of the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male), who supplied a lot of gratuitous and unnecessary advice, he might say that he had endeavoured to secure the information from various sources but was unable to get it. Had one but known that the oracle was in the House one might have approached him, but ignorance on that score was due to the fact that the hon. member had given such little knowledge to the House, during his tenure of office, that it did not strike one to refer the matter to that member. The information was first sought for in the form of a question, but it was refused. If the information was so easy to obtain then it would have been a simple matter to have given it as an answer to the question.

The Premier: Did we refuse the information as an answer to a question? I do not think so.

Mr. TROY: The information was asked for in the shape of a question, but was not allowed to be put in that form.

The Premier: It is for the officials of the House to say if such information should be asked for by motion or question.

Mr. SPEAKER: That information could not be given in the form of an answer to a question. Acting in compliance with the Orders of the House, he had refused to allow the information to be given in that manner.

Mr. TROY: It was well that the matter had been discussed, as it had given the member for Kimberley an opportunity to tell the House what he knew of the employment of Asiatics and aborigines in the pearling industry. As a matter of fact, the member desired to have silence kept as to the number of those men employed in the particular industry which he so worthily represented.

Question put and passed.

MOTION — HOSPITAL SUBSIDIES.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) moved—

That this House disapproves of the proposed treatment of the goldfields and country hospitals by the Government in the withdrawal of all subsidies, and in other ways destroying the autonomy of these institutions and limiting their general usefulness.

He said: I recognise that the motion is a very far-reaching one. It does not affect me as a member of this House any more than it affects any other member of either side of the House. It is necessary that members should deal with a motion of this kind on its merits. The question is one that affects that section of the community, the members of which are unable to help themselves during the period when they require the aid of medical men and hospital treatment. In their desire to turn the existing deficit into a surplus the Government have entered into certain retrenchment schemes which they have put before the State, and we find that they have started operations by curtailing the aid to that section of the community which should receive most regularly benefit from the State. They have begun to retrench in the place which should have been left to the very last. Certainly the taxpayers of the State will agree that the Medical Department should be the very last in which retrenchment should take place.

The Attorney General: The effect would not be harmful to anyone.

Mr. TAYLOR: No member could be more deeply sensible of the effect of the retrenchment scheme proposed than the Attorney General. It was only necessary to carry one's mind back to the time when the present Attorney General, then a private member, referred in the old Parliament House to action taken by the then Government with regard to the salary of an officer in his electorate. On that occasion the hon. member breathed fire upon the Government for daring to interfere with the health of the people of his electorate by reducing the salary of the medical officer there. He referred to the conduct of the Government as atrocious.

The Attorney General: I desired to provide the very facilities we wish to extend now.

Mr. TAYLOR: The very facilities the Government desire now to deny the people. Surely it cannot be suggested for one moment that the way to facilitate the progress of the work in the back districts is by reducing the subsidy of pound for pound granted one year, to 15s. and the next year to 10s., or as an alternative to grant a lump sum amounting to not more than 10s. for every pound collected. We find a cry against such treatment arising from a hospital to which patients from the Attorney General's own district are taken, namely, Geraldton. The people of that town have refused point blank to accept the Government's new scheme. Practically all the assisted hospitals in Western Australia also refused to accept the conditions. This remark not only applies to the districts represented by private members but also districts represented by Ministers of the Crown.

The Minister for Works: What about Busselton?

Mr. TAYLOR: The people have refused to accept the conditions, for they know that under them they could not possibly manage the hospitals. They are compelled to work extremely hard to keep the hospitals going under the old system, and all the work done is honorary, with the exception of that performed by the secretary. Later on I will point out the difficulties under which the committees of the hospitals on the goldfields suffer. The people of Laverton, Morgans, Malcolm, Southern Cross, Kanowna, Menzies, and Leonora, all object to the new proposal. These towns cover the whole of the Northern goldfields. Not only have they sent in their objections by letter, but the people have also raised their voices at meetings against the proposed change. The mayors of the towns, and the leading citizens have addressed public gatherings, opposing the new scheme of the Government. There are many other districts in which similar action has been taken, but I am only dealing at present with the Northern goldfields. Five hospitals there have objected to the new conditions.

Coming to the Cue district, I notice that in the member for Murchison's district there are four hospitals, namely, those at Peak Hill, Meekatharra, Nannine, and Wiluna, which have objected to the new conditions imposed by the Government. All the people in the outlying districts know the difficulty there is in keeping the institutions up, and in meeting the demands made upon them owing to the conditions under which men work there. It is idle for members to say that in the settled districts, in the farming areas, the likelihood of danger surrounding the workmen is anything like that surrounding the men who are working on the goldfields. There is no comparison, and on the goldfields where you have in a district 400 or 500 men working underground there must be a medical man, and you cannot get a medical man who has had sufficient knowledge in his profession to meet the requirements of a district where men are brought up from underground unrecognisable through meeting with those disasters that are associated with mining. You cannot employ students who have just received their diplomas, perhaps in England, and give them a salary of £100 or £150 a year. This kind of medical man is of no use on the goldfields. We want men who have had experience, and Australian experience too, in order to meet the requirements of goldfields districts. We know full well that it is not possible to get a doctor to accept a position on the goldfields where there is practically no private practice unless a salary of £400 or £500 a year is paid, with quarters added, and permission to practice privately. But the private practice in out-back places is so small that the medical man must really depend on his salary. The hospital is kept up by the people who subscribe 1s. a week to maintain it, and consequently, all these subscribers are eligible to go to the institution.

The Minister for Mines: Private practice in some of these places is always worth something.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am informed by the people of Morgans and Laverton that

private practice in those places is not what the Minister believes it to be worth. Perhaps in a place like Menzies it might be worth more than it is in towns which are further out.

The Minister for Mines: In Laverton it is worth about £600 a year.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not think that is so.

Mr. Male: What does the shilling a week cover?

Mr. TAYLOR: It is subscribed by the residents and it qualifies them for admission to the hospital. I will read a letter which I have received from the secretary of the hospital at Morgans which will give to the House more information than perhaps one could give who had not had the experience that a secretary of a hospital has had. This letter has been written to me by the secretary (Mr. Alford), and reads—

"Mt. Morgans general hospital. The hospital was established by the residents of Morgans and district in the year 1900 and serves the centres of Linden 60 miles, Yundamindera, Alicia, Australia United, Hawks Nest, Margaret, Transvaal, Redcastle, Corrong, Murrin (in part), and Morgans, and the residents of these centres have contributed annually an average of £1,200, the public subscriptions and donations being £1,083 17s. 7d. for the past year. The mode of finance is to collect at the rate of 1s. per week from single subscribers and 1s. 6d. from family subscribers in moieties that the subscribers can afford to pay. This system of insurance is appreciated by the residents, and were it not for this, 90 per cent. of the subscribers would be forced to be declared indigent if called upon to pay private hospital and doctor's fees, and would therefore become a charge wholly upon the State. The number of patients treated last year was 74 in-patients and 1,311 out-patients. The cost of treatment per patient is necessarily high as the staff has to be retained irrespective of the number of patients, and the nurses employed must have more than ordinary ability, the domestic management being in the

hands of the nurse in charge, who also has to do nursing for twelve hours a day for the seven days and whilst off shift must be relieved by a nurse who is not only certificated but competent to act skilfully in an emergency. Consequently it is found necessary to pay a salary which guarantees efficiency, but at the same time is not equal to that earned by the local 'slavey.' Under the heading of salaries the medical officer accounts for nearly half of the expenditure. He is indispensable and the P.M.O. says that he cannot advise any course to economise on this head and will not undertake to supply doctors to hospitals. The assistance now offered by the Government, £50 per month, will not allow of the local committee carrying on, and the Medical Department could not even under any decent circumstances finance the institution for that amount, and the crack of the whip by Dr. Hope that the hospital may be abolished if the reduced assistance is not accepted, will in no way affect the stand taken by those affected by that threat in this district. The salaries at present paid to the staff are as follows:—Medical officer with board and quarters £450 per annum; nurse in charge £125; nurse £100; cook and general £130; wardsmen-orderly £130; secretary (no board) £156. I regret that owing to the short notice the cost per week per patient cannot be given, but it is of course high in comparison with the large hospitals."

The Honorary Minister: Is anyone eligible to pay the shilling per week?

Mr. TAYLOR: Only the wage earners employed in the mines. With the subsidy the hospital received last year the total received came to only £1,083, and I may say for the information of the House that I saw the last balance-sheet which showed that the year ended with a balance of £7. That was the result on a subsidy reduced to 15s. Now that a further reduction is threatened they will be unable to carry on at all. With regard to the secretary's salary of £150 a year this officer has to do all the collect-

ing. He rides around on his bicycle, and I have seen him myself going from one mine to another collecting money.

The Minister for Mines: Will not the mines collect the money?

Mr. TAYLOR: I dare say that the big mine will collect, but on the smaller mines where men work on tribute it is necessary that the secretary should personally visit the subscribers so that they will pay up, and it is really the only way in these outlying centres where any decent form of collecting can be taken up. Taking the district of Morgans, no one will quarrel with the salary which is paid to the secretary who is responsible for the working of the institution. Then there is a skilled trained nurse in charge who receives £130 a year, and a cook and laundress who receives £130 a year. About five weeks ago there was a conference of all the representatives of the hospitals on the northern goldfields. They met at Malcolm and discussed the position, and so that there would be no doubt about the arguments advanced being sound the conference was adjourned to enable the Principal Medical Officer to be present. At that time Dr. Hope was touring in the Murchison or in the South-Western districts. The conference desired my attendance; however, I saw the Colonial Secretary and it was suggested that if the conference were held over for a fortnight Dr. Hope could attend. Dr. Hope did attend but he was not in a position to suggest economies further than those that the people themselves had already practised. I only wish the Colonial Secretary who controls the hospitals of the State were in this House: I would try to penetrate some soft spot in his heart.

Mr. Collier: He has none.

Mr. TAYLOR: That would prevent me from trying to find one if he were here. And if I have any possible chance I shall try to do it now through the Premier. The Treasurer knows the difficulties under which these men work, and the conditions under which the out-back hospitals are worked, but I want to tell him that in connection with the management of the hospital at Laverton representatives are appointed to the com-

mittee by the subscribers, and Burtville which is 18 miles away subscribes to that hospital, and representatives are sent to attend the meetings from that and other outlying districts. These very committee men who recognise the value of that hospital, who have carried their mates to the hospital when wounded, and who have brought them out pretty well cured, or in some cases have followed them to the grave, realise the value of the institution. They contribute to it, and they offer themselves as committee men so as to have a voice in the management. They often lose a day's work by riding 18 miles into the town on their bicycles to attend committee meetings, and in some instances they have lost their jobs by doing so. These men would not do that unless they were deeply sensible of the value of such an institution, and in spite of that we find the Government removing from these people the wherewithal to carry on an institution which is beneficial to the country—the people who are making it possible for Ministers to grace the Treasury benches, who are making it possible for the bricks and mortar to stand in Perth and Kalgoorlie. Those in the back country are treated in this manner by an economical Government. No Government is justified in economising at the cost of the health of the community, and the people have no intellect or they would not stand it. It is not fair. If the hon. member for Murray would go out into the back country—

Mr. George: I have been there.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member was out there with the rest of the boodlers trying to take down unsophisticated prospectors like myself. I want to say it is quite different for the hon. member, or any other speculator, to bounce through that country on the back of a riding camel or in a buggy with leggings up to his knees to protect him from snake-bite—his is a case quite different from that of the men who are compelled to work out there for a living.

Mr. George: I never saw any snakes up there.

Mr. TAYLOR: The prospectors all said you did. It is all very well for hon.

members who perhaps have not had the bad fortune to have been domiciled in these out-back places for any length of time sufficient for the hardships to impair their health—it is all very well for such hon. members to pretend to regard this matter as being of little importance. Prospectors are not men with large banking accounts. Where a man's labour is his capital, he takes it to the best market; and the best market is in the large centres where the living is more agreeable, and where health resorts are available which are wholly out of reach in the out-back towns. A man only goes out there when he finds he cannot get employment elsewhere. I am speaking now of the wages man, and not of the prospector. The wages man in such circumstances goes out-back and the conditions under which he lives are harder by far than those prevailing in Kalgoorlie or the metropolitan area. Those of our miners who come from the Eastern States stick round the large centres before they venture into the interior; consequently, as I said before, the man who finds himself out-back is a man pretty badly pushed, otherwise he would not accept the conditions out there. I have mentioned Peak Hill, Meekatharra, and Nannine. We find the same thing applies in the Mount Magnet district. There is the Mount Magnet hospital, and there is the Sandstone hospital. The Sandstone hospital was practically built by the people. They are raising a protest. Collie, quite close to Bunbury, is also raising a protest—so loud that if the Premier were electioneering down there at Bunbury just now he would hear the protests from Collie.

Mr. Troy: If Collie had a different representative there might not be occasion to protest.

Mr. TAYLOR: By that interjection the hon. member has indicated to me that if some other hon. member were representing Collie this state of affairs would not be.

The Premier: Nonsense, the same protest has been made at Bunbury.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier is wrong. Bunbury was the first place that accepted the conditions of the Government. When I protested to the Colonial Secretary two

months or more ago, he not only sent me a statement of the conditions under which the Government were going to carry on the hospitals in future, but also sent me a clipping from a leading article in the *Bunbury Herald* referring to a public meeting which had unanimously eulogised the Premier for his brilliant scheme and accepted it with open arms; while, of course, they winked the other eye and said "Our member is the Premier." So the Premier is wrong. I have not the clipping here, but I can produce it. The Colonial Secretary sent it to me as showing that it was a foregone conclusion when Bunbury said it was right. I was given to understand that the scheme would apply equally all over the State. Take Albany. Albany has absolutely objected to coming under this scheme. Then we have Geraldton, even sleepy Geraldton. Just imagine Geraldton raising its voice against anything, or any Government! As soon as I heard Geraldton's voice I said to myself, "It is time something was done." We find, too, in other districts meetings have been held of which I have not kept Press reports.

The Honorary Minister: Tell us from memory.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member could not tell us anything from memory. Memory is a thing dependent on the brain. When there is no brain there is no memory. The only memory the hon. member has is the memory of getting the dock through. Unfortunately for this State our revenue will be decreased considerably by the interest and sinking fund on that project, for which these hospitals have to suffer.

Mr. Foulkes: Your party supported the dock.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am very sorry for the support. If that is what the hon. member calls support I do not know what he would call opposition.

Mr. Foulkes: You voted for it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I opposed it every time it obtruded its ugly head in this House, and I will oppose it on every occasion. No arguments have been advanced in favour of it so far as I am concerned. While we have a Government who desire to build up non-reproductive public works

on loan funds, and open up projects for party purposes which will mean a drain on the revenue, so long will I oppose such works. These services which the people have been in the habit of getting, and which they are justly entitled to, are being withheld. Naturally they must be withheld when money is squandered in that fashion.

Mr. Bolton: That dock is suspended till the next election.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is a pity the hon. member was not suspended for all time. I say there can be no justification at all for this form of economy. These people whom I have described, who take so much trouble to work these hospitals, working them within their means and subscribing their money and their time to see that they are carried out properly—from these people the Government are withholding the subsidies which they are entitled to. The Government are heartless enough to say, "We shall lock up these institutions." Is that really the intention of the Government? These people cannot carry on. They have investigated the matter thoroughly; they have called a conference to discuss ways and means by which they may meet the Government, and they have found it to be impossible. They had the Principal Medical Officer at that conference, and he failed to suggest any way out of the difficulty. He said "I cannot give you any more money, and if you cannot carry on we must shut up shop." Is that the way to look after the people? Cut them down, sacrifice them, do everything to square the finances. But are the finances being squared. Are we not getting further into debt, and are we not taxing the people every session, increasing the burden of taxation, and at the same time withholding the services the people are entitled to? We are compelling the local governing bodies to tax everything to carry on services in their districts which hitherto have been carried on out of consolidated revenue.

The Attorney General: We are doing more than any other country in the world.

Mr. TAYLOR: You are! You are ruining the country, that is what you are doing; and the people know it, and every time the people have had an opportunity

at the ballot-box since you have been doing this they have shunted your party. If you are on the Treasury benches for two more years, I do not know what will become of the country. You are increasing the deficit and withholding from the people the services which have hitherto been rendered them. Is that what you call economical management? Is that administration which would recommend itself to any intelligent thinking people? I say, No! I say it is absurd. It is absolutely absurd to increase the taxation and give the people fewer services. It is the hospitals—it is the sick and the needy that are being pinched by the Government. It seems to me the Government have not the backbone to withhold services from people who are sturdy and strong. No! They will attack those people in the hospitals who are lame and halt, and unable to protect themselves. It is a standing disgrace. The people of the State are educated to the belief that it is right that every citizen should receive medical treatment at the cost of the State. I have advocated free medicine for the last 20 years. I have had the experience of being on the Perth hospital board for the last two years, and I find people, who to all appearances in Hay-street seem to be living in fairly comfortable positions, going into the hospital and not paying because they believe it is a right; they do not look upon it as a charity. The day has gone when they used to put "pauper" over a man's bed in a hospital. It has gone through men standing up on platforms and in Parliaments advocating the rights of the people and the justice of revenue collected in the way of taxation and rates being spent to give free medicine and hospital attention. I have yet to find in this State where any section of the community have refused any vote out of consolidated revenue for free education and for the care of the sick. The one vote deals with the aged or young when they are physically infirm, and the other vote deals with the intellect when it is young and tender and, may I say, infirm. The one is to cultivate the intellect, to make the young robust to face the world; that is the vote which is used for the purpose of teaching the young in

schools; the other vote is used for persons stricken down by illness or accident in a mine, or any calling, to restore him to health and to make him robust to be able to go out and become a wealth producer once more. I have yet to learn that any section of the people of the State object to the expenditure of revenue in that direction; and if the Government do not learn it to-night in this Chamber they will learn it from the mandate of the people. The people will not stand this economy, this pruning knife cutting into the hospitals vote. It is absurd. I would like to see the gentlemen who grace the Treasury benches in the outside centres in agricultural districts, let alone the gold-fields, having to meet hardships there with no hospital treatment when they fall ill.

Mr. Bolton: You would like to meet the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. TAYLOR: I would rather meet the Colonial Secretary in the House and debate this point with him, than I would meet him out in the back country. One might, perhaps, reach some soft spot in him if he were here, but no man with any heart would be so callous as not to realise what he has done. In all probability he has acted on the advice, not thoroughly investigated, given by some officer whose geographical limits of the country are bounded by Guildford and Claremont, and who knows nothing about the interior. It is necessary for a man to live in those outlying parts of Western Australia, or in portions of the Eastern States similar to Western Australia, to thoroughly appreciate the value of a hospital. I have seen in the early days men brought down for treatment from places, where hospitals now stand, to those centres where hospitals existed, 100 or 200 miles away. That was 10 or 14 years ago. I have seen them fall ill and die on the road down, and their bones are there to-day, with sticks stuck up recording where they lie buried. If the tracks were straight the cut road passes their graves to-day; where the old tracks twisted they now lie in the silent bush, not one or two of them, but dozens. I speak feelingly. To-day those outback places have railways to them, but I speak of the valuable assistance rendered by those hospitals in opening up

the country. And to-day they are just as essential. The dangers of working underground are greater to-day because the mines are more numerous and are getting deeper; consequently we want more hospitals; and the doors of those already existing should not be closed. The Government must find the means by which these hospitals can be subsidised. They should at least realise that they should not go back, even beyond the subsidy of last year, that of 15s. in the pound, and in some of the outlying places they should give a pound for pound subsidy, and then they would get out of it lightly. The Government could not keep up these institutions and pay the officers and do anything like the efficient work being carried on by the local people, and they would not inspire into their officers the enthusiasm to carry them on that the local people have, knowing as they do the value of the institutions and having the gratification occasioned by carrying on work of this character.

Mr. Gourley: There has been over £11,000 collected by the people in Leonora for the hospital.

Mr. TAYLOR: These people have done so much to carry on these institutions, and is it the duty of the Government to remove that zeal from them, taking away that enthusiasm from these people who are anxious to give their services to carry on these institutions? The Government would be in a hopeless position and the people would suffer largely through this form of economy instituted by the present Government. I believe it has been done by the Colonial Secretary, but it has been suggested to me that the ex-Treasurer gave birth to this brilliant splash of financial genius while he was in the Treasury.

The Minister for Works: Who suggested it to you?

Mr. TAYLOR: It has been suggested to me. The hon. member knows well where these suggestions come from; they generally come from behind the Treasury Bench, from those who are behind the screen and know all about these things. At the same time I hope the House will not look upon this matter as a party question. Perhaps I may have spoken with some heat on the subject; because, speak-

ing from experience of the areas affected on the goldfields. I know the value of these institutions, and I know the difficulty they have in securing nurses and doctors to go to these outlying districts to take up the work involved in the hospitals. I hope the matter will be dealt with by members on its merits. It affects the whole of the State, particularly those places where assisted hospitals are in existence. Of course some districts are fortunate enough to have Government hospitals and they are not affected, but all the assisted hospitals are affected, and I maintain the Government should assist the people who are endeavouring to assist themselves, and who have assisted themselves so far as providing good hospitals and accommodation suitable for the demands made upon them in outlying places, even when they were built long before the railway service was provided, when the material had to be conveyed to the localities by teams or camels. The Government should not do anything to save a few thousand pounds per annum to remove that local interest in these institutions, the work done gratis by the people, economically and in the best interests of the people and the State generally. I hope the question will be dealt with on its merits, and not from any party standpoint, and I hope it will be considered by the Government, not upon the appeal I have made, but upon its merits, and upon the justice of the claim it covers. I hope the Government will see their way clear to fall in with the views set out in the motion, which I have every confidence in placing in the hands of members.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): After the dramatic appeal of the hon. member, one approaches this question with a considerable amount of diffidence. As a matter of fact, the Government recognise any effort put forward in the direction of economy is bound to be unpopular. There is no form of economy which commends itself to everyone as a rule. The member for Mount Margaret has complained that we have been taxing the people continually in this House during the last year or two, but the general complaint from the Op-

position benches is that we are not taxing the people sufficiently; at least that was the complaint made by the Leader of the Opposition during his remarks recently upon the Financial Statement, so that among members opposite there is apparently a difference of opinion in this regard. The hon. member has referred to the Government in terms which can hardly be considered complimentary, but I do not propose to let the House think that the matter brought under notice, the reduction of these subsidies, is one for which the Colonial Secretary is going to carry the blame, if blame there be. The matter has been discussed by the Government, and as a result of the information the Government have received from the officers who have inquired into the matter, they have come to the conclusion that considerable economies can be effected in connection with hospital management in Western Australia. I have had an opportunity of seeing many of these hospitals and am satisfied there is any amount of room for economy. As a matter of fact the cost of administration in a large number of the hospitals is entirely too high. The member for Murchison was with me on one occasion when a deputation was introduced, in which the administrative expenses were altogether out of proportion to the value received by the people who attended the hospital. Recognising that economies could be effected, and more especially when it was pointed out that the amount contributed by the State was so much in excess of that contributed to hospitals by Eastern Governments, the Government took what they considered to be the proper means of impressing upon the people of the localities the need for exercising more supervision in connection with administrative expenses, and also of pointing out that as the country was getting more settled it must necessarily follow that private subscriptions must be responsible to a larger extent than in the past for the upkeep of hospitals. In the past the hospitals have been maintained mainly at the expense of the State, and we considered the time has arrived for the vote to be reduced. Comparing

the amount contributed in this State by the Government with those contributed by the Governments of the Eastern States it will be found that the amount paid by the Government here is far in excess of all the States. I do not wish to weary members, but I will give them just one or two figures showing the comparison. Western Australia, with a population of 270,000, contributes £69,795, which amounts to 5s. 2d. per head of the population. South Australia expends £36,000 with a population of 383,381, or a per capita contribution of 1s. 11d. In Victoria the per capita contribution is 7d., and in Queensland, where the conditions are very similar to those existing here, the amount is 2s. New South Wales, with a population of 1,530,000, expends £95,889, or 1s. 5d. per head of the population.

Mr. Bath: How do the revenues compare per head of the population?

The PREMIER: Do you mean the State revenue or the revenue derived from the hospitals?

Mr. Bath: The State revenue.

The PREMIER: I do not know; although we know that the revenue per head is higher here; but it is nothing in proportion to the figures I have quoted.

Mr. Hudson: You forget about the original grants to the hospitals.

The PREMIER: I have referred to the amount contributed by the State. In Western Australia many people take advantage of the hospitals who could pay for treatment. The member for Mt. Margaret contended during the course of his speech that everyone, irrespective of his means, who desires to do so should be allowed to take advantage of the Government hospitals.

Mr. Taylor: I pointed out that the people had arrived at this stage themselves that they should not be considered paupers if they go into the hospitals.

The PREMIER: The hon. member went further than that, for he said the people had arrived at the position when the hospitals should be free to all, irrespective of whether men could afford to pay or not.

Mr. Taylor: That is so.

The PREMIER: I do not agree with that. I do not see that people who are in a position to pay for medical attendance and nursing in their own homes should be treated at the expense of the State. In some of the districts in the State the Government's new scheme has been accepted. The member for Mt. Margaret referred to several districts where the proposal was refused, and he mentioned Laverton, Mt. Morgans, Malcolm, Peak Hill, Meekatharra, Nannine, and others. The administration expenses of the Laverton hospital work out at a cost per head per day of 19s. 2d.; at Morgans it is 19s. 6d., and at Malcolm 44s. 10d.

Mr. Hudson: What is it at Bridgetown?

The PREMIER: I have not the figures, but the cost would be very much less there.

Mr. Hudson: And you gave them £750 as against £400 in the back country.

The PREMIER: The proposal has been accepted at Bridgetown, Greenbushes, Katanning, Newcastle, Wagin, Busselton, and Kookynie, and I believe Narrogin and York are now arranging to accept the proposal. As the member is aware, the Perth and Fremantle hospitals have made very considerable economies. The member for Mt. Margaret is a member of the Perth committee, and he realises how it has been possible, by certain alterations in the staff and more economical administration, to save a very large sum.

Mr. Taylor: The board have been at their wits ends to do it.

The PREMIER: They have effected a considerable saving, and why cannot boards elsewhere do the same and reduce the running cost very considerably.

Mr. Collier: They have made economies in Perth by turning away people.

The PREMIER: Cases have occurred where people having good incomes have gone to the hospitals. One case was brought under my notice where a person was treated in the hospital, and his dressings cost 25s. a day; yet nothing was paid by the patient although he was in receipt of a very good income. Surely

it is not equitable for the State to pay for hospital accommodation and medical attendance of men who are receiving handsome incomes. I cannot understand that line of argument.

Mr. Collier: Your change of policy will not make such persons pay more than they did in the past.

The PREMIER: It will have the effect of making the hospital committees see that people do not get away without paying their just dues. Instances have occurred in Bunbury where sailors from the ships have been taken to the hospital, treated at the Government's expense, and when they are able to leave the institution have gone on board their vessels, and the Government have found that they have had all the expense of treating these men without receiving any consideration from the owners or agents of the vessel.

Mr. Hudson: Why not?

The PREMIER: For the reason that while the Government went on paying no trouble was taken. When it is brought home to the committees of the hospitals that the strictest supervision must be exercised, all abuses such as I have indicated will be put a stop to. I have heard of one instance where a man drawing £6 a week received a slight injury and was taken to the Perth hospital. He received, whilst there, an allowance from a benefit society, and, in addition, his employer paid his wages for the time he was laid up. That man left the hospital, after having been there for six or seven days, without contributing anything for his maintenance. Such cases impress the Government with the necessity for the strictest supervision being exercised in the future. To hear the member for Mt. Margaret speak one would think that the Government were savages wanting to suck the life's blood out of the people of the State. Let him and other members give us credit for the possession of feelings of humanity. Evidently the hon. member thinks that to stand up and wave his hands about gives the impression that he is more filled with charitable desires than anyone else. So far as the member is concerned, I know there is more powder than shot in his arguments. He re-

ferred to the fact that if the Government went to the country they would be put in their place by the medium of the ballot box. The member himself recently had an experience of the ballot box.

Mr. Taylor: Where; at the Albany election?

The PREMIER: No; in the ballot for the Federal Senate.

Mr. Taylor: They recognised the necessity of my remaining here to look after the Government.

The PREMIER: We would have been sorry to lose the services of the member, but we realise that on an occasion like that the ballot box does not always speak truly. I am voicing the opinion of members when I say it would have been a severe loss had the hon. member gone to pastures new. We can only hope that as a result of his effort to-night he will not be landed in a hospital. I know that the effort he has made to-night might have an ill effect upon the malady from which the hon. member suffers.

Mr. Taylor: If you do not come to more decent terms you will hear from me again in the near future.

The PREMIER: If we offer decent terms or not we will hear from him. I would impress upon him to be generous enough to recognise there are those besides himself who are prepared to do what they can to assist in affording accommodation and providing attention for the sick and suffering in the State. We do not wish to create any hardship, but we are anxious so far as possible, in the interests of the people of the State as a whole, to secure the exercise of the strictest economy in the administration of our hospitals. I feel sure the majority of members will recognise that by asking the various institutions to accept a reduction in the amount which they have received by a total of some £10,000 or £12,000 a year, the Government are only making a fair and reasonable request, and one in the best interests of the State as a whole.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): I do not think that anyone will question that the Premier particularly, and, I suppose, his colleagues, are actuated by the desire to do as much for the convenience and com-

fort of the poor as those sitting on this side of the House ; but I venture to think, despite what has been said in this respect, that they are wrongly advised and have been counselled by officers who have looked at the question more with the eye of the cold business man than with the eye of a philanthropist. It is all very well to say this State has paid more in proportion to its inhabitants than any other State of the Commonwealth. What State has the territory that this has ? What State has to administer under such trying circumstances the subsidies to the poor as this State has ? Where in the whole of Australasia is there such an enormous mining area where accidents are so liable to occur, where it is so necessary to have immediate medical attendance for those who are pioneering the State ?

Mr. Gourley : The communities out back are so much smaller.

Mr. WALKER : The population is distributed over a much vaster area than in any other part of the Commonwealth. It is absurd to compare our great gold mining fields with the settled population either in South Australia or in Victoria. There are old settled communities there, with regularly established habits, and, consequently, with other means of alleviating suffering and distress, and of meeting difficulties in cases of accidents. They have a recognised society there, but here we have all the pioneer work, all the development work, and when the Premier compares these outback mining hospitals with the conditions existing in Perth and Fremantle, he makes a false and misleading comparison. Does he begrudge the slight payments that have been made in the past to those who have created the wealth of this country. The mining population to-day is the population crying out against this false economy on the part of the Government, and what a debt of gratitude is due to this mining population by every section of this great State ! Where would Perth be : where would Fremantle be : where would the agricultural districts be, had it not been for the pioneer work and the wealth exploitation that the mining population has given to the country. I want to point out that

whatever the Government might have in the way of heart, those who advise the Government have very little heart in dealing with this great question. The member for Mt. Margaret drew attention to the Conference that was held at Malcolm. Now I wish to draw the attention of the Premier to what was said by Dr. Hope at that Conference. Dealing with this hospital question, Dr. Hope in replying to the delegates said that he was sorry it had been found necessary to ask the committees to curtail the expenditure, but he was only the mouthpiece of the Government. Apparently he put the blame on the Government for the course they had taken. Dr. Hope was sent to represent the Government at that conference of hospital representatives, Laverton, Malcolm, and a number of these different districts being represented. Dr. Hope added—

“ The Government looked upon some of these places, Malcolm, Kanowna, and Morgans, as not altogether requiring hospitals, as they were near other large towns. If the hospitals in those places were kept as casualty wards it would meet requirements, as the doctor could always attend patients and send them on to the nearest hospitals. Of course this was only a suggestion ; the Government were of opinion that this could be done. Then again in some cases you pay the secretaries high salaries, but I agree oftentimes that they collect more money than a cheaper man could, so it is hard to say whether you could curtail in that direction. There appears to be no uniformity in the salaries paid, and that should be adjusted, and it would be reasonable if you charge your subscribers for board while in the hospital for treatment.”

And then he goes on suggesting a reduction in the staff salaries. He goes on to say—

“ We do not ask you to sweat people up here, but we could supply you with a competent and contented staff at the following rates :—Matron, £100 : nurse, £70 : orderly, £90 : and cook and laundry dress, £90.”

Mr. Heitmann : That is not sweating.

Mr WALKER : That was a suggestion which came from Dr. Hope, the Principal Medical Officer. I will read the reply to Dr. Hope by Mr. Hughes, of Laverton. Mr. Hughes said—

“He did not think they could reduce the salaries to that level up there, for it would be sweating, and workmen would not support an institution that was reducing the uniform rate of wages ruling in the district. Waitresses on the Northern fields were getting £100 per annum, and it would not be reasonable to expect a nurse to do the work required of her for £30 a year less.”

I approve of that spirit. That shows what Dr. Hope was willing to do. It is not proper to reduce the salary of the matron to £100 per annum in the outback district, and I want to draw the attention of the Premier to the fact that such a proposal was scarcely fair to these people. The suggestion was made too, that the patients should be sent from the Kanowna to the Kalgoorlie Hospital, but what does that mean? Does it mean that it is proposed to enlarge the present hospital at Kalgoorlie? Whilst Dr. Hope is preaching in that direction to the Conference at Malcolm I will read a circular letter which was published in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of Saturday, 9th October, and which was addressed to the medical practitioners of Kalgoorlie and Boulder. It says—

“Central Board, Perth, 4th October, 1909. Sir,—As it is necessary to very materially decrease the expenditure at the Kalgoorlie Government hospital—(this is the hospital to which patients are to be sent from outlying districts)—I beg to request that the medical practitioners of the district will exercise the greatest care in their recommendations of patients for admission to that institution. It has frequently happened that the patients have been sent to the Kalgoorlie hospital who might have been suitably treated, or allowed to die, in their own homes, and who could receive no benefit from hospital treatment. Septic cases, which constitute a danger to the other patients have also been sent to the hospital. These patients are often so ill that it is im-

possible to refuse them admission. For the future I beg to request that in all such cases you will first communicate with the secretary or the resident medical officer before sending the cases in, detailing the special circumstances which make it necessary for the patient to obtain hospital treatment. It has also been decided that in future members of lodges or miners' funds will not be admitted to the hospital without a written guarantee from the lodge or doctor for payment of the hospital fees.

—J have, etc., James W. Hope, Principal Medical Officer.”

Here is a difficulty with which we are met. Dr. Hope says that we can close the Kanowna hospital, and that patients can be sent on to Kalgoorlie; then there is the statement from Dr. Hope that they do not want the people in the Kalgoorlie hospital, that they can die in their own homes. That statement is contained in the circular letter sent out by the Central Board of Health. I wish to say if the proposal made by the Government is carried out, we shall close these hospitals out back, and we shall close positively all these institutions.

Mr. Collier : That is what they want.

Mr. WALKER : Undoubtedly that is what they want. Is it not fair and just to accuse the Government of want of heart if they close these institutions out back? These institutions are not for a moment to be compared with similar establishments in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, or even Perth or Fremantle. These institutions in the mining centres are absolute necessities, they are little oases in the desert of disaster and of misfortune. There, in these mining townships, every possible danger that can attack a mortal rages around the place. You are in the thick of accidents and fatalities? Not a day passes but some miner loses a limb, or his life, or is crippled for the rest of his days. As regularly as the pendulum swings these accidents are occurring, and can it be said there is real heart in those who would take these institutions away from centres where they are not luxuries but absolute necessities? What kind of charity is that which will close the Kanowna hos-

pital and compel patients from the way back portions of that electorate to go past Kanowna into Kalgoorlie where they are told by the Principal Medical Officer they are not wanted, and to keep them out of it if it is possible? Is that charity? Is that kindheartedness? I ask the Attorney General to remain in his place to listen to what I am going to say.

The Attorney General: I am not leaving the Chamber.

Mr. WALKER: When the member for Mount Margaret was speaking the Attorney General was prolific in his interruptions, and he told that hon. member of the great kindness of the State towards its sick and its suffering. What a mighty change a little position gives to a man?

The Attorney General: If we economise now we will be able to spend more in the whole of the State.

Mr. WALKER: Since when has this economy been going on? In 1909, only this year, the Attorney General sat where the member for Murray now graces the chair, and what did he say then? The Attorney General now has got his figures ready to prove how magnanimous, how charitable he is as a member of a Government. Just see what he said then—

"Greenough, one of the oldest established agricultural districts in Western Australia, was a fitting example. Some ten years or more ago and for many years previous to that time, that district had enjoyed the benefits of a resident medical officer. What was the position of the settlers there to-day? An epidemic of diphtheria was raging in that part of the State. Many of the people were down with the terrible disease, and deaths had occurred, and only to-day he had received an urgent telegram asking him to represent the condition of affairs to the Government and to beg that medical assistance and medical appliances should be sent up immediately."

The Attorney General: I say that still.

Mr. WALKER: Keep still for a few moments longer.

The Attorney General: If you had less extravagance with regard to the gold-

fields hospitals it would be possible to subsidise a medical officer in every district throughout the State.

Mr. WALKER: For this relief, much thanks. Listen further.

"What a fine advertisement that was when one thought of the way in which we treated our out-back people, and Greenough can hardly be called an out-back country, yet in the policy of economy which had characterised the Government it was a district like Greenough, like agricultural centres, and the mining centres such as that represented by the hon. member for Kanowna: it was in all these places where there were small populations and where the people were leading a hard life: these were the people who were called upon to bear the burden of this economy and the hardships that sprang from it."

My text is none other than that of the Attorney General. The circumstances have not changed one iota. The economy is practised upon these out-back districts, and undoubtedly it is worse now than then. The Government first of all gave them grants, and also pound for pound. This was reduced to a 15s. subsidy for every £1 collected, and now that has been taken away from them. With what result? That the hospitals must shut up: Kanowna must close.

The Attorney General: No.

Mr. WALKER: I say yes.

The Attorney General: I say no.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member knows nothing about it. Besides, who would take his word? You cannot believe him for 12 months together.

The Attorney General: Time will show.

Mr. WALKER: Time will show the chameleon nature of the member's character.

The Attorney General: Time will show about the closing of the hospitals.

Mr. WALKER: I have had a letter from the secretary of the Kanowna hospital, whose word I would take at any time before that of the hon. member: for I have never discovered in that official any prevarication or equivocation, though

I cannot say the same of the hon. member. The letter reads—

“The Principal Medical Officer stated at the conference that he was there at the instance of the Colonial Secretary, not with the object of offering any concessions, but to point out means whereby hospitals could save money, as, for instance, by having their staff engaged through the department at Government rates. He said in reference to the maintenance of indigent patients at subsidised hospitals that after an indigent patient had been in a hospital for three weeks the patient should then be forwarded to a purely Government hospital for further treatment. If subsidised hospitals adopted that system the Kalgoorlie hospital would soon have to increase their accommodation and number of beds, as this hospital would send a large quota every month.

As regards our position the Government still owe us the 15s. in the £1 for November and December of last year, and when we run short, which may be in a few months from now, I will not fail to again demand our just dues. I do not think there is another subsidised hospital but what has received the 15s. in the £ up to the end of December.”

They owe £200 there, and for this month here, and they talk about their generosity, talk about the saving of money. I tell you it is a dishonest policy; it is a policy which goes back upon one's word of honour. It is one that falsifies. If it were committed by a private firm, that firm would be exposed throughout the length and breadth of the land as commercially dishonest. Yet it is done by the Government in the name of economy on behalf of the State.

Mr. Taylor: At the instigation of the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. WALKER: If this policy is to be carried out these hospitals will close. I cannot stand the shaking of the head by the Attorney General: what does the hon. gentleman mean?

The Attorney General: I mean the hospital will be kept open to the extent

of the Government grant under the new scheme.

Mr. WALKER: What he means is that the hospital will not be there as an institution, but there will be a Government staff sent up to a casualty ward to turn out all patients except those who cannot possibly be removed, and to keep out all but accident cases which cannot be carried one inch further, which cannot be taken past the casualty ward run by a small staff of sweated nurses. Every hon. member knows that these hospitals are institutions in these way-back places. They have a civilising influence upon the community. They are centres of attraction, each is a source of social entertainment and recreation. It is to see the hospital properly furnished and made comfortable for the sick and suffering that every woman in a mining township works and toils and tramps amongst her neighbours. They get up social entertainments for the purpose of benefiting the institution. There is social intercourse, and the happiness of blending hearts revolves round the word “hospital.” It is to these people the centre of enthusiasm, a matter of pride and a source of constant encouragement to the doing of good and charitable deeds. Take that from the mining township and what have they left? What other institution has such warm hearts around it as the hospital of the mining township? I know, and every representative of the goldfields knows, that the hospital is a sort of union and compact between township and township. It is the means of bringing into communion those who are separated by miles and miles of arid waste. From this township to that township there are periodical visits. A ball here to-day and from yonder townships 40 and 50 miles away there come the visitors to the ball for the purpose of giving the hospital a helping hand. Return visits are made, and what is the consequence of all this blending of enthusiastic warm hearts—what is the effect of it? That it makes life tolerable upon the goldfields, that it relieves the fields of that dreadful monotony of the wilds of nature. It makes mortals out-back feel that after

all it is a place to live in, that it is a place where homes may be built. It makes them content with their lot. Now we are removing all this. We will take the hospital away and give them a casualty ward in place of it, a sort of police station in substitution. I say the Government have not grasped their responsibilities when they treat all the hospitals precisely on the same footing. They have not judged their functions accurately. These out-back hospitals cannot be treated in the same way as those in Kalgoorlie and Perth, and Fremantle.

Mr. Underwood: These are treated badly enough.

Mr. WALKER: But surely there should be some differentiation for these pioneer spots; some consideration for those risking life and limb in the daily avocation, in pursuit of bread. Surely there should be some thought for those who are opening up the country, who are giving the wealth that has made this country what it is. But no, they are just to be the same there as if in our streets in Perth. No consideration whatever for them. Give them an iron bed and a black draught—that is good enough for the miners. Send them on stretchers to the next nearest hospital. They are out of our sight. We do not see them; we never hear their groans, never look upon their dying faces. I say this is shocking; I do not know the name by which to describe it. There has been no country in the history of the world, however stricken by poverty, which has not had consideration for its maimed, for its sick; no country above the level of absolute savagery but has desired to mark its progress by the establishment of hospitals. It is the first evidence of civilisation, the first step that marks our progress from savagery. But, for us, we are going back from civilisation into savagery. I have no objection to any people who can afford it in these back centres paying for their medical treatment. But that is quite a different thing from providing the accommodation requisite in these mining townships. We must expend that money if we want to keep our goldfields open—unless indeed

we wish to advertise ourselves as utterly heartless and absolutely devoid of charitable instincts. While these mining townships remain we must give them their hospitals. They are surrounded by peculiar conditions. The avocation of mining is so fraught with danger that we cannot blind our eyes to it; and to be just and humane we must know the danger these miners are constantly running, running every day of their lives. Every time a man leaves his camp to go to his work he takes his life in his hands, and his wife knows not whether she will see him alive again. Every morning she says "good-bye" to him with the hope, of course, of meeting him again at night. But how many are there who say "good-bye" in the morning to their husbands on these mining fields and see them no more in life.

Mr. Heitmann: One for every week in the year in Western Australia.

Mr. WALKER: Probably that is about right. And it is not alone those who die in this way, but those who are maimed and those who are constantly contracting that terrible disease, miners' complaint, which requires treatment at an early stage. And we would just treat these as ordinary mortals; we would make no special provision to cope with dangers of this kind. I say, it is not civilised Government. And whilst I can speak in this Assembly I shall protest with all the vigour of which I am capable against this course of treatment. It is not economy; it is robbing the State of its citizens. It is causing us to risk the loss of human lives valuable to this community, far more valuable than are the few paltry hundreds to be saved to the coffers of the State by deducting these sums from the out-back hospitals. The real facts are concealed in the reports of the medical officer. That talk about Kanowna hospital not being necessary because it is near to Kalgoorlie—why Kanowna serves big districts 20 odd miles away. Gindalbi, for instance. The mines are working there, and if an accident happens the man has to be brought into the Kanowna hospital. But this is

tion : Do not admit him at the Kanowna hospital, take him along to Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Heitmann : Where he may be refused admission.

Mr. WALKER : Where he may be refused by the medical officer when he gets to the door. He must bring a certificate that he is able to pay his way before he is admitted. It is not humanity, it is not sound Government, it is government by the medical officers in Perth who have no conception of the conditions prevailing in these districts, who do not know the circumstances there. I venture to say the Attorney General is taking his cue from these medical officers who are closeted in Perth, who get their ideas from the staff about them, getting them, perhaps, from Mr. North, whose opinion on this subject I remember hearing before the Government took decisive action. Over their books and ledgers they tried to see what accounts they could put the pen through, what expenses they could cross out, and they crossed out these hospitals.

Mr. Hudson : And put it on to North's salary.

Mr. WALKER : I could not say that, but this is happening—this officer gets an advance and these hospitals are reduced. We cannot talk of classes and distinctions in these outlying districts. We may in Perth where the rich man with £300 or more is indulging in the luxuries of bandages and wrappings which cost £20 a day ; but we cannot make these comparisons outback where there is one class of people only, workers, miners, and prospectors, all in one class on a large scale, comrades filling townships, people who are the pioneers of the country, heroes in the strict sense of the word, who have opened up the unknown of this land, have gone where whites have never ventured before, and have by their enterprise and energy brought about wealth that is adorning London and Paris to-day. Out of sight, far off, lightly complaining, their sufferings little heard of, they live a few years there, catch that fatal complaint which makes it impossible for them to live there longer, and come back here to Perth or go to the East or some far off land to

spend their last few hours under this terrible disease. But just give them casualty wards, with matrons at £100 a year in those districts, and say it is generous, and that they do not do it anywhere else ; but I say that in no other part of the world have they the same conditions ; in no other part of the world was there ever a State so indebted to its mining population as this State has been. Yet we begrudge them 15s. in the pound to look after those who are injured in mining accidents, or who get miners' complaint, or who suffer the privations of those undeveloped tracts. It is a surprise to me that mortals can be so callous in a matter of this great importance. If distinctions are necessary to be shown, let us come nearer home and have economies at our doors, but do not let us deprive the miners. I protest against this course being taken by the State, and if this policy is taken by the Government I repeat it must inevitably close the Kanowna hospital as a hospital, or the Broad Arrow and Bulong hospitals as hospitals, it must take away from them all those qualities that constitute a hospital ; and in the circumstances, as one who knows the good, the civilising influences of these hospitals in these far off centres, I protest, again, with all my vigour, against the present policy of the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. F. Wilson) : I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	20

Majority for 2

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Male
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Daglish	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Draper	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. J. Price
Mr. George	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Layman
Mr. Gregory	
Mr. Hardwick	

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. W. Price
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Swan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Ware
Mr. Holman	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Horan	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hudson	(Teller).
Mr. Johnson	

Motion thus passed: the debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10-10 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 28th October, 1909.

	PAGE
Bills: Public Education Endowment, 3r.	1173
Permanent Reserves Rededication, 3r.	1175
Coolgardie Recreation Reserve Revestment, Com.	1175
Land Act Special Lease, Com.	1176
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, Com.	1177
Adjournment, one week.	1183

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

BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ENDOWMENT.

Third Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) moved—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): It was not possible for him to give a silent vote, his excuse being that he was not present on the former occasions when the Bill was before the House. He was at a loss to understand why at this stage in the history of public education in Australia there should be the movement for land endowment. As a matter of fact, this movement ran in the face of the settled policy of all the Australian States. It could only be imagined that

someone had come into contact with the old world conditions, saw that land endowments had had a large part to play in the old world, and thought that a stroke of business could be done in Western Australia. Australia began with this policy, found it entirely hampering, and cast it over. One-seventh of the whole of Australia was dedicated to education, or rather to a corporation for church and educational purposes. After a time the church element was bought out and the lands were held for education, but it was found that the policy hampered settlement, brought a stigma on the administration of education, and that it would be very much wiser to absorb the lands again in the Lands Department, and control the public education from the current revenues of the countries. That change was made in the light of experience as a settled policy, and it had been the settled policy of Australia from that day to this. The Bill was the first departure from that policy. Was the House to assume that the wise men of the other States had been less interested in education, or that they had been less alive to the benefits that might be gained by trading in land speculation, for that was what the Bill provided for, land speculation on behalf of education?

The Colonial Secretary: They have it in force in New Zealand and South Australia.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: In South Australia there was a dedication for the University of 50,000 acres, just a single purpose, and that was an entirely different matter, but for public education the whole of Australia had had this settled policy. Public education was one of the things that ought to depend on the sympathies and interest of the people from year to year. Let the House look at the question whether education was a matter on which we should trust posterity. Was posterity likely to be wanting in the matter of education? Was not interest in education growing deeper and broader year by year? Was it not essentially the thing that could be trusted to the people from year to year? Had there ever been a difficulty in carrying any