

tric lighting department being carried on practically as a separate concern. Whenever cheques need signing—and they have to be signed daily—the mayor and the town clerk and the treasurer have to be waited on for that purpose. This Bill is introduced simply in order to empower the mayor and the general manager of the electric lighting department and the accountant of that department to sign cheques. It is introduced at the request of the Perth City Council, and has passed another place without amendment. It will be a great convenience, and will enable the work to be carried out more expeditiously.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Does not Clause 4 include Clause 3?

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: No. Clause 4 has to be inserted because it incorporates Part XXV. of the Municipal Corporations Act, providing for the keeping of proper books and accounts. The Bill is purely a formal measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

Read a third time and passed.

House adjourned at 9.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 2nd November, 1915.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, State Trading Concerns, progress of audit of accounts for year ended 30th June, 1915 (asked for by Hon. Frank Wilson). 2, Papers re case of Hugh McLeod (ordered on motion by Mr. Smith).

By the Attorney General: 1, Particulars of loans from Supreme Court funds (asked for by Mr. Smith). 2, Report on inspection of liquors for year ended 30th June, 1915.

By the Minister for Mines and Water Supply: 1, Amendment of by-laws, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department. 2, Papers re grant of special lease at Kalgoorlie to W.A. Trotting Association (ordered on motion by Mr. Smith).

QUESTION—STATE HOTELS, PURCHASE OF COMMODITIES.

Mr. FOLEY (for Mr. O'Loughlen) asked the Attorney General: 1, Is he aware that commodities required for the State hotels can be supplied by the local traders? 2, Why, therefore, should these supplies be brought from Perth, thus retarding the development of country centres?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes, some of the requirements are obtainable locally. 2, Supplies are only sent from Perth where the department's interests are served thereby. Where satisfaction is given, local storekeepers receive preference.

QUESTION — RAILWAY TICKETS, COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS'.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Minister for Railways: How many commercial travellers' railway tickets have not been renewed since 1st May last?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: It is impossible to state the number of commercial travellers' tickets renewed since the 1st May last, as since the concession in force has been abolished there is no means of distinguishing a commercial traveller's season ticket from an ordinary one.

QUESTION—TRAMWAYS, PERTH-MOUNT LAWLEY SECTION.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Railways: Will he arrange for the first morning tram from the Mount Lawley district to start from York-street instead of Beaufort-street, so that it will connect with the first country trains?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: This has already been arranged and will come into operation with the new time table on Monday next, 8th instant.

QUESTION — AGRICULTURAL BANK, ADVANCES TO GERMANS.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: What was the total amount on loan to natural-born Germans from the Savings Bank on the 1st July, 1915?

The PREMIER replied: This information cannot be supplied, as details regarding the nationality of applicants have never been tabulated. It may be pointed out, however, that no officer of the Savings Bank has any control over the matter of loans from Savings Bank funds.

All loans are made by the Colonial Treasurer on the recommendation of the Under Treasurer.

QUESTION—SUPREME COURT FUNDS, MORTGAGE LOANS.

Mr. SMITH asked the Attorney General: 1, What are the names of the solicitors for all the mortgagors of Supreme Court funds lent during the past five years? 2, The total amount lent through each solicitor? 3, When were the securities so held last inspected and valued? 4, By whom and what was his report?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: The matter referred to in the above questions does not come within the province of the Attorney General's Department. Such matters are dealt with by orders of the Judges of the Supreme Court, and are not subject to revision by the Government. His Honour the Chief Justice has been asked to direct the information to be supplied, and particulars will be laid on the Table of the House when received. I have to add that a return has been furnished, with a covering minute by the Master of the Supreme Court. I move—

That these papers do lie on the Table.

Question passed.

QUESTION—FREEZING WORKS, WYNDHAM.

As to Select Committee's Report.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (without notice) asked the Premier: In view of the approaching end of the session—I understand it is the Premier's intention to try to get through the work this week—will he afford the House an opportunity of fully discussing the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Wyndham freezing works? I am wishful, and members of my party are wishful, that there should be an opportunity of discussing the report before the session closes; and I desire an assurance from the Premier on the point.

The PREMIER replied: To-morrow is private members' day, and, if it is desired, I am prepared to make the consideration of the select committee's report the first Order of the Day, and the discussion can continue until it is completed. It is not the intention of the Government to force the closing of Parliament for the purpose of avoiding the discussion of any Order of the Day. The Government have no desire to close the session until all the Orders of the Day are fully disposed of.

QUESTION—GAOL PRISONERS AND THEIR TREATMENT.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (without notice) asked the Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Has the Colonial Secretary's Department yet received a further report in regard to the treatment of the prisoner George Hughes at Kalgoorlie, and, if not, will it be available before Parliament prorogues?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister) replied: The Colonial Secretary's Department have not yet received the report. It is expected daily.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will you try to have it here to-morrow?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yes.

BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Further Message.

A Message having been received from the Council notifying that it insisted on amendment No. 6, disagreed with the modification made by the Assembly to amendment No. 4, and transmitted for concurrence an alternative amendment to amendment No. 1, the same was now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 6, paragraph (c.), strike out the words, "be elected by duly regis-

tered unions of mine workers in accordance with the regulations," and insert, "in accordance with the regulations be elected by the majority of persons bona fide employed in the mines in the several mining districts."—Alternative amendment—Clause 6, paragraph (c), strike out the words "be elected by duly registered unions of mine workers in accordance with the regulations," and insert the words "in accordance with the regulations be elected by persons bona fide employees employed in the mines in the several mining districts: Provided that no person shall be eligible to vote in any election for a Workmen's Inspector who is not a natural born or naturalised British subject":

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Council have insisted upon the amendments, which deal with the method of appointing workmen's inspectors. Originally, the Council's amendment provided that workmen's inspectors should be elected by a majority of mine worker; but the alternative amendment now provides that workmen's inspectors shall be elected by a majority of those taking part in the ballot subject to the proviso that those taking part in the ballot must be natural born or naturalised British subjects. In view of the fact that I have no option but to accept the alternative amendment, or lose the Bill, I move—

That the alternative amendment be agreed to.

Mr. FOLEY: I regret that another place has insisted on the amendment. The election of inspectors by unions was an arrangement arrived at by employers and employees on the goldfields. For many years there has not been a single difference of opinion on the goldfields which has not been settled by the union of employers and the union of employees. Apparently the other place do not wish in any way to countenance unionism. I feel it my duty to throw the onus of settling troubles right on the employers, so that they will not have the unions to fall back upon. We shall then see who is the stronger. Up to the present time the brains of both sides have been requis-

itioned in the event of trouble, but with a full knowledge of what they are doing, the Legislative Council now insist on their amendment being accepted. They are thus practically forcing the hand of the mining community to show the strength that they possess.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: The same conditions apply all over the world.

Mr. FOLEY: They do not. Now that the employers' union no longer countenance the union of employees, disputes will have to be settled in the best way possible.

Question passed; the Council's alternative amendment agreed to.

No. 4.—Clause 10: Add at the end of the clause the following:—"A workmen's inspector shall have power to do all or any of the following things, namely— (a) To make examination and inquiry to ascertain whether the provisions of this Act affecting any mine are complied with: (b) To enter, inspect, and examine any mine and every part thereof at all times by day or night, with such assistants as he may deem necessary, but so as not unnecessarily to impede or obstruct the working of the mine: (c) To examine into and make inquiry respecting the state and condition of any mine or any part thereof, and of all matters or things connected with or relating to the safety or well-being of the persons or animals employed therein or in any mine contiguous thereto, and for the purpose of such examination or inquiry the inspector may require the attendance of any mine official or employee, and such official or employee shall attend accordingly: (d) With the authority of a district inspector, but not otherwise, to initiate and conduct prosecutions against persons offending against the provisions of this Act: (e) Where a district inspector is not available, or with the authority of a district inspector, to obtain written statements from witnesses, and to appear at inquiries held respecting mining accidents, and at inquests, and to call and examine witnesses, and to cross-examine witnesses." The Assembly amended the Council's amendment by inserting at the end of the paragraphs,

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—" (f) To exercise generally such other powers as are in his discretion necessary for carrying this Act into effect." This amendment the Council declined to agree to.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As another place has refused to accept our suggestion, I have no alternative but to move in the direction desired by the Legislative Council to delete this paragraph. I move—

That the Assembly's further amendment to amendment No. 4 be not insisted upon.

Question passed; the Assembly's amendment not insisted upon, and the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 6.—New clause: Add the following clause:—1, Any regulation or by-law made or purporting to be made under or by virtue of this Act shall—(a) be published in the *Gazette*; (b) take effect from the date of publication or from a later date to be specified therein; and (c) be judicially noticed, and unless and until disallowed as hereinafter provided, or except in so far as in conflict with any express provision of this or any other Act, be conclusively deemed to be valid. 2, Such regulations and by-laws shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within fourteen days after publication if Parliament is in session, and if not, then within fourteen days after the commencement of the next session. 3, If either House of Parliament pass a resolution at any time within one month after any such regulation or by-law has been laid before it disallowing such regulation or by-law, then the same shall thereupon cease to have effect, subject, however, to such and the like savings as apply in the case of the repeal of a statute:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This amendment was rejected by the Legislative Assembly, but the Legislative Council has insisted upon it. The amendment deals with the question of regulations. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1915-16.

In Committee.

Resumed from 28th October; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Vote — *Railways and Tramways*, £685,975:

Item — Additions, Improvements, Opened Railways, £120,000.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I notice it is proposed to spend £120,000 on improvements to open railways. Last year we spent £133,000. I would like to know how it is proposed to spend the sum this year. I know that a great deal of work is taking place in the metropolitan area, and I know also that there is a sand-shifting competition taking place at East Perth.

The PREMIER: It is impossible to say exactly how this amount is to be expended. The hon. member might not know, but his colleagues who were in office will know that this vote is utilised largely for improvements which are necessary to existing lines. A fair estimate of what is required is arrived at by the Commissioner after his tour, and that has already taken place. If the Commissioner were here he would be able to tell hon. members that I cut down the item by one-half, and when I did so the Commissioner wrote stating that the amount was only sufficient to provide for works already in hand. As our railway system is extended, as it is being extended, it will be found that this vote will increase from year to year. With regard to what the hon. member was pleased to call the East Perth sand-shifting competition, that work is proceeding rather slowly. The Commissioner has urged that more money should be found to complete this work as quickly as possible. The present Government are not responsible for it. It is one of the legacies left to us by our predecessors. They resumed tremendous areas of land near the central

station for the purpose of improving the working of the railway there.

Mr. George: You resumed the East Perth land.

The PREMIER: Only a portion of it. The fact remains it is essential that this work should be undertaken, to permit of the better handling of the through traffic. The work would not have been rendered necessary if the South Swan railway had been constructed.

Mr. GEORGE: The working Railways when taking over new lines invariably found that they were not exactly what was required for the working of the traffic. During my term of office as Commissioner, we had consultations with the Works Department, and they met us as far as they were able to do, but at that particular time there was a wave of desire to construct cheap lines, and members of Parliament ran mad on those proposals. In other parts of the world the construction of railways is considered from the point of view of what they will ultimately cost to run. It is easy to build a line in such a fashion that the cost of running will be so great that alterations and improvements will always be found necessary. That is what this particular item is for. I have always held that the Government would be well advised if they allowed a bigger sum of money to be placed at the disposal of the survey officers so that they might seek for the best grades possible. One pertinent example exists on the eastern railway, just beyond Lion Mill. There are three lines there. The first was built in the early days; then when Mr. C. Y. O'Connor came along he proceeded to improve the grades as far as the means at his command allowed him, and he made a good job of it. In my time it became necessary to duplicate that line. When we made that duplication we seriously considered how best to cut down the running costs. In one place we found 13 curves in a mile, and a grade of one in forty-two. The railway surveyors got to work, and instead of 13 curves we had one, and instead of a grade of one in forty-two we got one of one in two hun-

dred and twenty. The reduction of a grade reduces the running expenses tremendously. In respect to the East Perth improvements, they are essential to the removal of the loco. sheds from West Perth, where there is not sufficient room for the purpose. To provide for the loco. sheds at East Perth it is necessary to level the ground, and the sand taken from there will serve excellently for reclamation work at the riverside. As to the re-grading of the line, it became a question some years ago of reducing the length of trains running to Fremantle, or of providing two engines to each of the longer trains. Most certainly this work can be regarded as essential. The Minister ought to be able to give us detailed information as to how the money provided is to be spent. Certain improvements in every respect desirable it should be possible to postpone, but certain other improvements are immediately essential to the working of the railways, and will result in true economy.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I was astonished to find so large a sum on the Estimates, because at the present time we should not be effecting any improvements that can possibly be left over. We must make what little money we have go as far as possible. Of course such improvements as will lessen the running costs are justifiable, that is to say, if the reduction effected in the running costs is more than sufficient to cover interest and sinking fund on the outlay. The Premier says the money is to be spent on railways generally and the removal of the running sheds from West Perth to East Perth. It is a pity the Minister could not have given us more detailed information. However, I do not propose to move a reduction of the item.

The PREMIER: Under the Railways Act the Commissioner of Railways has power to spend the money provided by this vote, but he must first secure the approval of the Minister. In the past it has been the custom to regard the securing of the Minister's approval as a purely formal matter, in fact, in regard to many works it has been no uncommon practice to have the works well nigh com-

pleted before the Minister's approval is obtained. I have succeeded in making myself very unpopular as Minister for Railways by insisting on my approval being sought before any but the smallest works are undertaken. I hold that at the present time we must all be satisfied if the Railways can get through at all with the conveniences and facilities already provided. In regard to detailed information concerning the expenditure under this vote, it is furnished by the Commissioner of Railways in his report to Parliament. Pages 75 to 79 of his report of last year are devoted to the furnishing of this information.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But we would like detailed information as to this year's vote.

The PREMIER: It is impossible to give it. I have declared that the sum provided is all the Commissioner can obtain for expenditure during this financial year on improvements to existing lines. The Commissioner claims that the amount provided is sufficient only to complete some of the works in hand, and that many necessary works will have to be suspended. If members desire a guide as to how this vote is to be expended, they will find it in the Commissioner's report, which I may say costs £109 to produce for the information of members. If members will not give any attention to these and other departmental reports published at great cost, we may just as well save the money involved in their production.

Hon. J. Mitchell: They are looked at.

The PREMIER: I am extremely doubtful. I have insisted that, wherever possible, the present facilities must be made to suffice. If there is some requirement essential to the working of the railways, it must be provided. I declined to approve of some expenditure at Spencer's Brook, and the Commissioner saw me personally and pointed out that if the improvements were not made, the expenditure of ten times their value would be involved in shifting the harvest. He asked if I thought it wise to refuse expenditure in such a case, and I agreed that the money must be found. Facilities

essential to the economical working of the railways must be provided, but that is all that is being provided for this year.

Mr. GEORGE: Among the items of expenditure shown in the Commissioner's report is one for the lengthening of jibs on water columns. This is necessary to permit engines to take water on either side. There is another item for the provision of telephones which are absolutely necessary. Check rails on bridges and kerbs are essential for the safe working of the railways.

The Premier: I would not like to take the responsibility for refusing money for such works.

Mr. GEORGE: The Commissioner could not submit a schedule for this amount, because such items of expenditure are cropping up from day to day. In the craze for building cheap lines many essentials have been omitted. In one instance half round sleepers were used and had to be taken out of the road. The lengthening of the goods platform was rendered necessary owing to the growth of trade. Such expenditure cannot be set out in advance.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Those items are maintenance more or less and should not be done out of loan.

Mr. GEORGE: No.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: An extra tap on an overhead tank is.

Mr. GEORGE: Maintenance consists simply of keeping things up to standard. If an extra tap has to be provided that is an addition. It would be impossible to expeditiously deal with the wheat traffic unless provision were made on some of the single lines for the crossing of trains.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: An overhead bridge should be provided at the Melbourne-road crossing. The plans were prepared about four years ago and the work is necessary for the convenience of traffic and the safety of the public.

The Premier: It is not essential to the working of the railways.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It is, because either the railways or the public are inconvenienced.

The Minister for Works: Railways in the country are of more importance.

The Premier: Yes, conveniences for handling the produce of the country are of more importance.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Is any amount for the bridge provided in this item?

The Premier: Absolutely not three farthings.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Then provision should have been made.

The Premier: If you want to conserve the lives of the people, I will close the crossing and let them go around the other way.

Mr. Allen: That is what they have to do half the time.

The Premier: And the other half might as well go around.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The Premier is entitled to his own opinion regarding that. Business should not be retarded in this fashion. Melbourne-road is an important thoroughfare carrying from the goods sheds heavy traffic which must necessarily cross the line there. A subway has lately been provided at Subiaco, and I question whether it will cater for anything like so much traffic.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is inconsistent as other members of his party have urged that the facilities in the metropolitan area are sufficient and that additional conveniences should be provided for the men outback who are producing the wealth which in a large measure is circulated in the metropolitan area. A man who complains at having to do for another 12 months what he has had to do for years is not a patriot. The Melbourne-road crossing is not an urgent matter even in normal times. It can wait for many years.

Mr. Allen: It has waited for many years.

The PREMIER: Some people would like an overhead bridge at every street crossing in Perth. A man in the country has often to make a detour of five miles with a load of grain while a man in Perth complains at having to go around by another street in order to cross by a bridge or subway. Not for many years will the time be opportune for providing this bridge.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Why have you provided a subway at Subiaco?

The PREMIER: That was provided some time since.

Mr. Allen: It was not as necessary.

The PREMIER: It was a different proposition. What other way have people to get over the line there except by a level crossing?

Mr. Allen: The same as those using Melbourne-road. They could go around to the Jolimont crossing.

The PREMIER: But there was no road connecting it. It was a cheaper proposition to the community to make that subway than to construct a road connecting with Axon-street. There are good roads connecting with Melbourne-road and people using that road, if they wish to avoid waiting a few minutes or longer to cross the line, must go around by the subway at West Perth or the overhead bridge at Perth. Whatever money is available is required to provide facilities in the interior. Perhaps it would have been cheaper if the railways in Perth had originally been constructed on the viaduct principle. However, the hon. member is not justified in urging the construction of an overhead bridge at this juncture.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The point is whether we should not have some general information regarding the £120,000 we are asked to vote for additions and improvements to existing railways. I appreciate the remarks of the member for Murray-Wellington, but the items he mentioned are not matters for Parliament or Ministers to bother about. The Commissioner is justified in deciding them for himself. We are asked here to vote a sum of £120,000 for improvements and additions to existing railways. I want to know what are the main items which it is proposed to spend this money on for the current financial year. I quite appreciate the fact that the Commissioner cannot give us complete details which will account for the whole of this sum, but, on the other hand, he cannot make up this amount without having in mind a number of general works which

he proposes to go on with. He must have a schedule of the main items which he proposes to spend most of the money on. I contend that we should have more information given to us than has so far been presented in respect to this item.

Mr. Smith: How did the Commissioner spend the money last year?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The particulars are contained in the Commissioner's report. The main justification for asking for this amount should be outlined for the information of the Committee. At the present time the Committee have no information. Is it the intention of the Government to reballast, duplicate, or relay any large section of the railway?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I agree with the Premier that the country districts are of more importance to the State at present than the metropolitan area in the matter of the expenditure of loan moneys. I contend, however, that much of this money has already been spent in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Mines: It is only for the purpose of providing additional accommodation for the handling of produce.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am satisfied that the Commissioner of Railways will spend the money wisely, if the Premier will allow him to do so. Will the Premier give us more information?

The PREMIER: I have given the House more information on this vote than has ever previously been given.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: I say, yes. This vote is drawn on from time to time as occasion arises for the making of improvements to meet the changes which take place in a growing State like Western Australia. To-day there may be no need for improvements to be made, but before the end of the financial year this need may be very great indeed. I have just telephoned to the Commissioner of Railways to ask what is now the amount which he can spend without first of all obtaining my approval. I have learned from him that he cannot undertake any work

of the value of more than £20 without first obtaining my approval as Minister.

Mr. George: How do you expect him to do his work under such conditions?

The PREMIER: I have done this with one object, namely, to give an assurance to the House that we are careful in watching the expenditure on this vote. I have no hesitation in saying that I have every confidence in the care which would be exercised by the Commissioner in the expenditure of money. In normal times, of course, I would not be so ridiculous as to suggest that the Commissioner of Railways should not spend more than £20 without my authority, but that is the case now, at all events.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Would it be possible under this vote to construct the railway which Mr. W. N. Hedges desires to be built, without special authority?

The PREMIER: That does not come under this vote at all.

Mr. GEORGE: If hon. members will turn to the report of the Commissioner of Railways they will find that there are 109 items of works which have been deemed to be necessary and approved by the Government, but which are marked as incomplete. Many of these items involve considerable amounts, and would go a long way to make up the £120,000. It is evident that the Commissioner could not have undertaken any of these works without the approval of the Government. I quite agree with the leader of the Opposition that it should have been possible for the Premier to have furnished a statement showing the main items of expenditure under this head, and for him to have told the Committee how much money was required for the works which are in hand but not yet completed.

The Premier: I have already stated that the amount provided is only sufficient to complete some of the works already put in hand.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What are they?

Mr. GEORGE: I have a great deal of sympathy for the Commissioner of Railways. Last year he had a deficit and this year he will have a bigger one. There

is a great deal of information in his report which hon. members could avail themselves of if they took the trouble to read it.

Item—Perth-Fremantle Railway—Cottesloe deviation, £5,000.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Will the Minister in charge of this work give the Committee some information upon it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is in connection with the deviation necessary in building the bridge over the Swan river for the purpose of carrying railway traffic to Fremantle. For some time past the Railway Department have been asking for a new bridge. It costs between £2,000 and £3,000 per annum to keep the present structure in order. The Railway Department will have to put in new foundations to the old bridge unless a new bridge is built. It will be cheaper to build a new bridge. This item will be necessary for any small area of land which may be required in connection with the railway.

Mr. George: Will this bridge be in the old position?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; nearer to Rocky Bay.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Before we approve of the deviation, we ought to know the Government's intentions in regard to the matter. The utmost economy should be exercised in connection with the expenditure of Loan money.

The Premier: You can take the responsibility of cutting out the item. All the information regarding this matter was before your Cabinet.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I ask for reasonable information. I want borrowed money to be spent in reproductive work in the country, as far as possible. The passing of this comparatively small item will be authority for the whole work. Is the present bridge unsafe?

The Minister for Works: I have said as much as I intend to say on that aspect.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: What will be the length of the deviation, and the cost of it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Fremantle bridge to-day is safe, but to

keep it safe will mean an expenditure of between £2,000 and £3,000 annually. The time is arriving when foundations will have to be put in, and it is necessary that we should get a new bridge ready in case the existing bridge becomes unsafe. The situation of the new bridge is now a matter of discussion between the Public Works Department and the Commissioner of Railways. My own wish is that, if possible, the bridge should be placed on land already purchased for the purpose. This small item is merely for land which will be necessary for deviation of the railway. I do not think it would be wise for me to say where the new bridge will go, even if I knew. Later, an item is provided for completing the tests for the bridge.

Mr. GEORGE: The Minister might take the Committee into his confidence as to whether the removal of the railway bridge is not rendered necessary by the extension of the Fremantle harbour. When I asked a question on the subject earlier in the session, I was told that I ought not to raise a scare. Since the opening up of the harbour works, an unexpected scour has been caused. As the dredging goes further, the bottom of the harbour is lowered, and the scour must continue until the safety of the bridge is endangered. The member for Northam desires that the matter should be fully discussed before even implied authority is given for the work. The difficulty might be overcome by adding to the item the words "land resumption." The testing could go on in the absence of authority for the entire scheme, before agreeing to which we should have plans and particulars.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am surprised at hon. members asking what is going to be done. The deviation has been in contemplation for many years, and has been frequently discussed. There cannot be further harbour extension until this work is done. The urgent necessity of the moment, however, is the bridge. Later, there is an item for deepening Fremantle harbour. Dredging has gone already as far as it can possibly go, hav-

ing regard to the existing bridge. All hon. members who know the district know what is proposed. If we had no authority to expend money before we brought down plans, what position would we be in? For the deviation of the railway, a special Bill will be brought down. The tests should be completed before the situation of the new bridge is decided.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not think anything is to be gained by adopting the suggestion of the member for Murray-Wellington. The Minister has said that the money is urgently required, and the necessity for this item has been plain for many years. On the north side of Fremantle harbour the wharves have been advanced 600 feet beyond the mark set by the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor. I only regret that the Minister has not made more progress with the borings for the bridge.

The Minister for Works: The borings are all down.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not know that any good purpose would be served by putting in the words suggested by the hon. member.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The objection I have is that we are in the dark. We do not know what the proposals are. What is the general scheme?

The Minister for Works: We want to use the land in connection with this deviation.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Is it proposed to take the line right from Cottesloe and run it across behind Buckland Hill, past the quarries, and construct a bridge leading to Fremantle; or is it proposed to go down the south side of the river into South Fremantle and across a bridge to North Fremantle? We do not know what the scheme is. I do not even know where the bridge is to be.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Not even the engineers know.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, they have their borings and are casting the permanent cylinders for the bridge. Parliament is entitled to know what the scheme is, and what it will cost on an estimate.

The Minister for Works: When we get to the item I will tell you the estimated cost of the bridge.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But we ought to have a plan showing us how the railways are to be arranged. No definite scheme has been put before us. Parliament is entitled to know something about the scheme, which apparently the Minister has approved of. Again, we have not complied with the Audit Act, which provides that we shall have shown on the Estimates the ultimate total cost of all proposed works. The Loan Estimates of 1911, our last year in office, show in column 7 the full liability. The Audit Act provides that this shall be done, but we have not had it since 1911. In regard to this £5,000 for the proposed deviation, pages 8 and 9 show that it is for the purpose of establishing a dépôt and purchasing some material; so evidently it is for the commencement of the permanent work, and we should know what the scheme is.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I told the hon. member the other night that it is impossible as yet to arrive at the total cost of this work. However, it does not mean the railway going down the south side of the Swan River, that is, not east of Rocky Bay. The railway will come in somewhere near Cottesloe, and cut through the area where the land purchase was previously made, cross the river at the eastern side of the hills the hon. member referred to, come down through Preston Point, and go on to the harbour. This money will be required for the purchase of certain land at a reduced figure.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Most certainly it is to establish a dépôt and to purchase some material. But I do not think it has to do exclusively with the bridge; because on page 26 we learn that it is to provide for testing foundations by borings practically completed, and for some progress with the sub-structure. Apparently there are two works, one for the deviation and one for the bridge. It makes it all the more imperative that the House should have some idea of the permanent scheme. I take the same exception to the lack of information in re-

gard to the harbour improvements. I do not know what we are going to do at Geraldton.

The Minister for Works: I do not either.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know what we are aiming at at Bunbury, or what we are attempting at Albany. It would be beneficial both for us and for the Government if light were thrown on these schemes. The time when the country is committed to a certain work is when the first few thousand pounds are voted. If we pass this item we shall be committed.

The Premier: What are we committed to?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government are committed to the general scheme, the establishment of a dépôt for the deviation.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is printed here; and further they will be committed to start upon the construction of the bridge itself.

The Premier: The only thing we are committed to is to provide £5,000, if it is found necessary, to purchase land in order to avoid paying an increased price for it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It does not say so here.

The Premier: Well, that is the position.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier must expect us to believe what is printed here.

The Premier: The hon. member can please himself what he believes. I am not asking to be believed.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not question the Premier's veracity. He must not ask the House to accept an *ex parte* statement when the purpose of the expenditure is already printed here in the Estimates. The wording should be altered if the money is for the purpose of purchasing land in connection with the deviation.

The Premier: That will compel us to spend it in that way. As soon as people hear that land is to be bought down there, we shall have to spend the money.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This House should have the whole of the information as to the general scheme which the Government are adopting.

The Minister for Works: That information has already been supplied.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We have had a few general statements on the subject. I should think that we are in for close on an expenditure of half-a-million when all this work has been done. The House should know what desperate need there is for going on with this work.

The Minister for Works: It is wanted in the interests of the State.

Mr. GEORGE: In order to test the feeling of the Committee on this item, I move an amendment—

That after the words "Perth-Fremantle Railway-Cottesloe deviation" the words "land resumption," be added.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not possible for an hon. member to alter an item in this way. I cannot accept an amendment in that direction.

Mr. GEORGE: Can I not move an amendment to strike out the word "deviation"?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot do anything in that direction. He can, of course, vote against the item, or move for a reduction.

Item—Rails and fastenings—Railways (works), £33,000; (railways), £18,000.

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister explain why the Katanning-Pingerup extension has not been included in this item? This railway was passed during last session, and the Minister assured us that he had the rails for the construction of the line. Unfortunately these have now been used elsewhere, but I see no provision for replacing them on this item.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no provision in this item for the Pingerup railway. This is a liability which we have to meet for rails. We had to pay at the rate of £250 per mile more for rails than we had to do 12 months ago. At the present time we are not buying rails if we can possibly avoid it.

Mr. Thomson: Why are the Government buying rails for other lines?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We called tenders a little while ago for rails and the increase in price was so great that it was thought advisable to hold over the question of purchasing them for the present. The lowest tender we had for rails was, I am glad to say, from an Australian firm but, owing to pressure and other orders, this firm withdrew the price quoted. It is impossible to say where we can get rails at anything like a reasonable cost.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Are you going on with railway construction?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So far as we possibly can. We have railways under construction, and if the money is available they will be carried out. I should like every railway which has been passed to be gone on with, but unfortunately we cannot do that just now. As soon as possible the Pingerup railway will be put in hand.

Item—Rolling stock—Railways, £40,000.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: What rolling stock is it proposed to buy? I hope the Government will spend the money quickly so that the harvest will be handled more expeditiously. There has been a great improvement in the manner in which the harvest has been handled during the last three or four years. We do not have the harassing time which formerly existed. I hope the Government will be able to keep this standard up.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We never had much trouble with our railways.

The Premier: There is no system in Australia, or indeed in the world, where the produce is handled more expeditiously than it is on the Western Australian railways.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The stuff is handled in Western Australia very well indeed. When we had the 14 million bushel crop we handled it all in three or four months' time.

The Premier: In the Eastern States the farmers are pretty lucky in a good season if they get rid of their produce before the next harvest.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We should give our railways credit for the way in which

they have handled the products of the harvest.

The PREMIER: This amount is to provide the bare necessities to complete the work which is already in hand. It includes the balance of 5 "C" class locomotives which are now nearing completion and which, I think, will be completed by Christmas, 10 A.C.L. carriages, and 20 Z brakevans. This stock is all required in connection with the harvest traffic.

Mr. Smith: Is a dining car yet provided for on the Great Southern railway?

The PREMIER: No, I am not aware that it is. That is certainly necessary for the purpose of providing reasonable comfort for people travelling on that line, but it is one of the matters that might well stand over under existing conditions. The people have for some time past put up with discomforts on that line, and it will not hurt them to suffer these a little while longer, while the war is on. They are not likely to get a dining car this year. The A.C.L. carriages are for country travelling and are equipped with lavatories. The harvest comes in almost simultaneously from the various parts of this vast country of ours, and I agree with the member for Northam when he says that it has been handled most expeditiously by our railways. It is true that we are expected to dispose of the harvest almost as soon as it leaves the field.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It has always been done.

The PREMIER: Not to that extent. It has been handled expeditiously.

Mr. George: It has been handled as fast as could reasonably be expected.

The PREMIER: I think it will be found, as the years go on and our production increases, that there will be difficulties in the way of shifting the harvest as fast as has been done in the past. It will take a tremendous amount of rolling stock and the trouble will be that much of the stock will only be used for three months of the year. No railway system could successfully conduct its business on the basis of providing a quan-

tity of rolling stock which would be lying idle for nine months of the year. We have been fortunate in the past in having a fair amount of traffic after the harvest was completed in the way of timber and freight to the goldfields, which have rendered it possible to make all our rolling stock pay for itself. We cannot hope to keep up the present proficiency in the handling of the harvest. It will take a tremendous amount of capital if we are to make every provision that is absolutely necessary for keeping up the standard which is at present in existence in this respect. The probabilities are that the producer will have to suffer some little inconvenience in order to avoid a very great additional burden being placed upon the State in the provision of a quantity of rolling stock, which, as I have pointed out, would only be used for three months in the year. This year we are fortunate in having additional rolling stock because we have some which will not be used in other directions. The Commissioner has gone into this matter carefully and he is certain that he will be able to handle the harvest, notwithstanding the greater quantity this year, equally as well as the harvest was handled in 1911-12.

Mr. THOMSON: In constructing second-class corridor cars for the Great Southern line I hope the Minister will have each compartment closed. Unfortunately on long journeys, some individuals take more liquor than they should and they are a nuisance to others travelling in the car. Besides through the cars being open from end to end it practically becomes a smoking compartment which is disagreeable to some persons who are travelling.

The PREMIER: I am exceptionally grateful to the hon. member for mentioning this matter. I recognise that along the Great Southern Railway line where there are no dining cars, many people take more liquor than is good for them and become an annoyance. I was told that this only occurred where there were dining cars but I am glad to find that this is not so. I think these compart-

ments should be closed, not to the extent of boxing them up as is done in connection with first-class compartments, for in a country like Western Australia we do not want that. These compartments could be closed to a certain height, leaving a space at the top.

Mr. THOMSON: I would not like it to go forth that the only reason I brought the matter forward was that people in second-class carriages took too much drink.

The Premier: That is the only reason you gave.

Mr. THOMSON: I also instanced that through the carriages being open from end to end they practically became smoking compartments, and there is also the dust trouble. I want second class passengers to have the same comforts and conveniences as those who travel first class.

Mr. SMITH: Does this item include any provision for the bulk handling of wheat? Do the Government propose to go on with the scheme for handling wheat in bulk and for that purpose construct special trucks?

The PREMIER: This item does not include any provision for the bulk handling of wheat. We have not dropped the matter, we have simply pigeon-holed it for the time being because of the difficulty of finding money and the delay in dealing with it piece-meal, also the difficulty in getting shippers to carry the wheat. In normal times, shipbuilders would build ships quickly for this purpose. I think that Western Australia will be forced to fall into line with other countries in connection with the handling of wheat in bulk, and then no doubt ship owners will meet us, but we could not get ships at the present time, therefore we must wait until normal times.

Item—Surveys. New Lines, £1,500.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This amount is too small for the survey of new lines. It is important that new surveys should be made. Money is spent when surveys are made in the first instance to get the best route, and the work of surveying lines ought to be completed as soon as pos-

sible. Some sessions back a Bill was passed authorising a survey of certain lines. This year there is no such Bill. Previously Ministers said they were going to do the work not as it had been done before, but to get the authority of Parliament to the survey of certain lines. Since then Ministers have found that it is not necessary to have such a Bill. I do not know if it was necessary previously, or whether it was done to deceive the people. Now I understand the Government can carry out surveys without a special Bill. The survey of the Wongan to Goomalling lines, the Cowcowing line and the line to Lake Yearling should be carried out, and there are many surveys that should be made. The Government should have asked for authority to spend more than £1,500 on this work.

[Mr. Carpenter took the Chair.]

Mr. THOMSON: Previously I stated that the Minister for Lands, when Minister for Works, made a definite promise to the people living between Ongerup and Needleup that the survey of a railway line should be made. As a result of the promise the people in the district put in larger areas of wheat this year than they would have done, and I do not think they will be able to get their produce to market. If the people in the district had thought they were not going to get a railway they might have hung off. The present Minister for Lands promise^d these people definitely that there would be a survey of the Ongerup-Needleup line and the same applies to Pingerup.

The Minister for Works: I told the people that it would not be done.

Mr. THOMSON: Possibly it would have made all the difference to the people as to whether they would hang on or leave the district. Other surveys are provided for, and I am disappointed that provision has not been made on the Estimates for the survey of this line. I notice that there is included the Perth-Fremantle Railway, Cottesloe deviation, the completion of the permanent survey, and others that may be authorised. Are

we pledging this House to a definite scheme and to spend a huge amount of money on a deviation at a point yet to be decided? If we are asked to pass an amount of money for a survey, we should at least have some information given to us as to what the ultimate cost of the construction of the line will be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am surprised that there is so much opposition to the urgent and necessary work at Fremantle. The hon. member is asking for information about the expenditure of £1,500 on the survey for the new line.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is not enough.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I agree with the hon. member. Unfortunately, we are in that position that we do not know where the money is to come from. The hon. member asks what it is going to cost to build this deviation. How is it possible to ascertain the cost until the survey is made. There is a difference of opinion between the Commissioner of Railways and the Engineer in Chief, and before we can determine anything that will have to be settled. In regard to the Ongerup-Needleup Railway, a deputation waited on me before the harvest, and I told them that there was no possible chance of that railway being surveyed this year. I do not think it is right to introduce Railway Bills for the express purpose of misleading people.

Mr. George: Has that ever been done?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On many occasions Railway Bills have been introduced when there has been no prospect of the line being constructed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did you pass the Margaret River Railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hoped that the war would not last so long.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The war has nothing to do with it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has everything to do with it. The desire to carry out this work is there, but we have not the money. We have provided on the Estimates all that we think we shall be able to deal with if we can get the money. I cannot give a guarantee that I am going to carry out the work in

question, but we hope to do so. The total amount provided for surveys of new lines this year is about as much as we shall require for several years.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What? £1,500?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have under construction at the present time the Wyalcatchem-Mt. Marshall line, the Newcastle-Bolgart extension, the Wagin-Bowelling line, the Kukerin-Lake Grace line, while material has been sent down for the Esperance-Northwards line. There are authorised and surveyed the Nyabing-Pingrup line, the Dwarda-Narrogin line, the Busselton to Margaret River line, and the Kondinin to Merredin line. Hon. members know that we cannot get money for these lines. We have also been authorised to make surveys of the Wongan Hills-Mt. Marshall line, the Wyalcatchem-Mt. Marshall extension and the Armadale-Dwarda line. Will hon. members inform me whether there is any immediate hurry for these lines?

Members: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I represented those districts, of course I should say "yes." If hon. members can assure me that by surveying these lines the money will be available for their construction, I will agree to have the surveys carried out straight away. The sum provided, £1,500, will not go very far, but it is as much as will be required this year.

Mr. PIESSE: I am concerned to hear that it is not intended to build more railways for some time to come. I would remind the Premier of a promise he made at Yorkrakine.

The Premier: I never made any promise.

Mr. PIESSE: The Premier admitted the justification of the request made to him by the people there, and he certainly told them that he would give favourable consideration to the proposal for the construction of a railway.

The Premier: I did not say that either.

Mr. PIESSE: I was present when the Premier gave the people every encouragement and stated that as soon as funds would permit the line would be built. The Minister for Works is not fully seized

with the conditions under which some people have to cart their wheat. Many have to cart as far as 17 or 18 miles, and this season many thousands of bags will have to be carted over a distance of 12 miles.

The PREMIER: When I went through the district I recognised the difficulties, but I told the people that the conditions would not warrant this State undertaking to build another line to serve three miles on either side. I said some means would have to be found to relieve them of having to cart such long distances.

Mr. Piesse: You made no reference to when funds were available.

The PREMIER: I did. Funds are not available to build a line 50 miles long to serve people three miles on either side when there are other settlers 20 to 30 miles away from a railway. It is extremely unfortunate that the men between the Dowerin-Merredin and the Merredin-Norham lines are outside the 15 miles radius, but they are confined to a strip of country seven miles wide. Can we build a line to serve that strip of country? In the Yorkrakine district are to be found some of the best crops in the State, but our duty is to provide for settlers who are still further removed from railways. I saw on Mr. Hedges' property a caterpillar train which should overcome some of our difficulties. The tractor of the ordinary wagon, having a small wheel, will not go over our roads, even the constructed roads.

Mr. Thomson: It cuts them up.

The PREMIER: No, it goes through them. The caterpillar train, although the tractor weighs nine tons, makes less impression on the soil than an ordinary wagon. This device might help us to overcome our difficulties but it will not pay us for years to come to build a railway to serve a strip of country seven miles wide.

Item—Wagin-Bowelling, £40,000.

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister be able to construct this line to the Perth-Albany-road?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Act provides that the line shall be car-

ried to the terminus, and we intend to build the whole of it.

Mr. Thomson: I mean for the time being.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This provision should enable it to be carried to the Perth-Albany-road.

Mr. Thomson: Will it be built to the Albany-road in time to lift this harvest?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope so.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The people at the western end of the line, near Mudiarrup, have been waiting seven years for a railway. This line is not following the route they and I thought it should take. I hope the line will be built quicker than the Minister suggests. To run from Wagin to the Perth-Albany-road and not give Bowelling connection, with its natural port, Bunbury, will be only half a job, and I am sure the railway will not pay unless it is carried right through.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not suggest that the line should be stopped at the Perth-Albany-road. I was asked to urge on the Government the necessity for having the line constructed at least as far as the Perth-Albany-road in time to lift this year's harvest.

Item — Perth Electric Tramways, £88,000.

Mr. SMITH: How is this money to be spent? The lines are in a very bad state and should be put in order, but it is more urgent to provide rolling stock, as more people are walking than are riding.

The Minister for Works: Is that why the receipts are increasing?

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You know the cars are useless without extra power.

Mr. SMITH: The department could do with twice the number of cars. I understand 10 bogey cars are being provided, but that number is not anything like enough. When I asked the Premier to extend the workmen's tickets from eight to nine o'clock, he explained that he could not do so on account of the shortage of cars. This is one of the few paying departments controlled by the Government and, in justice to the people using the service, the Government should

see that they are amply catered for. The department has been starved; during the past year not a new car has been provided, notwithstanding that the traffic has increased considerably. If extra cars were put on, they would be fully utilised. It is unfair that people going to work between eight and nine should have to pay the full fare. Most of them are young girls and young men earning 12s. to 20s. a week and they have to pay the full fare.

The Minister for Works: The great majority go before eight o'clock.

Mr. SMITH: No, the great majority go between eight and nine, whereas the workmen earning £3, £4 and £5 a week and going before eight o'clock get the advantage of reduced fares.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: We were promised all these things when the Government took over the cars.

Mr. SMITH: Yes. I hope that next year the workmen's ticket system will be extended to nine o'clock. Some of the cars are in a state of disrepair. To one of them the rain gained access through the roof.

The Minister for Works: That is very common.

Mr. SMITH: It shows sheer neglect. A little paint would have saved the car; now the roof is a complete wreck and will cost hundreds of pounds to put into repair. This appears to be the condition of affairs right through the department.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: To what is the item going to raise the capital cost of the Perth tramways? Those tramways represent possibly the worst purchase ever made by this State. The price paid was ridiculously high, and utterly beyond the estimate of the working railways.

The Minister for Works: The purchase was approved by all parties.

Mr. George: But not the price.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Now it is proposed to add £88,000 to the cost of the tramway system.

The Minister for Mines: Capital cost must increase as the lines are extended.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Certain additions were promised by the Government, but have not been made.

The Premier: Where were they promised?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: In a general way. The Premier can find them if he turns up his speeches. Before even the Government took over the trams, the wheels of the cars should have been discarded, and possibly also the rails. As regards the tram track, the Government have not kept faith with the municipalities even as well as the tramway company did.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Murray-street deviation is not merely an unnecessary deviation, but will have the effect of depriving the trams of traffic. The best part of the traffic is from the Hay-street West district, and it is plain that, with the deviation, there will be no advantage to residents from Havelock-street eastward in taking the tram into town. On the contrary, it would represent a pure loss of time to them. That circumstance was pointed out to the Government by a deputation. If, for the sake of argument, the tramways had to be shifted from Hay-street, the deviation ought not to have extended beyond William-street, or at all events Melbourne-road. The deviation scheme ought to have been postponed, firstly because a town-planning scheme was under consideration, and secondly because of the war. If the rails required renewal, still it is quite plain that to relay rails is an utterly different matter from the putting down of an entirely new line. According to the Press, the posts to carry the wires may arrive any time within the next nine months, and there is a prospect of the further unnecessary expense of temporary wooden poles. The turning off of the trams at Pier-street and Hay-street and at Murray-street and Havelock-street will involve two very dangerous crossings, and thus the deviation will mean the retarding rather than the facilitating of traffic. On

the other hand, at Melbourne-road there would be an absolutely level crossing. All the length of line between Melbourne-road and Havelock-street might have been saved. Traffic from the Mount-street district is similarly lost to the system. Under the deviation scheme, all the lines are thrown together to go near the railway, and the only result will be to feed the railway. I would advocate, in preference, laying the up tram line in Hay-street, and the down line in St. George's-terrace. As regards the extension from Mount's Bay-road, is it to connect with the Nedlands tramway or is it intended to run along the foreshore to Nedlands? I trust, not the latter, firstly because it would be somewhat absurd to run two lines of tramway so close together, and secondly because the effect would be to spoil the foreshore. In this last aspect, the same objection applies as to the proposal of the tramway company to lay a line into the King's Park. It would be a great mistake to allow the trams to go into the park.

The PREMIER: Although the hon. member sets himself up as an expert, he knows very little about the subject. The Government are content to accept the opinions of responsible officers who have studied the question. Being a national concern, the trams should be run from the point of view of the convenience of the citizens as a whole, and not of a small section thereof. When the Commissioner first suggested the deviation of the line from Hay-street we asked why it should not be left there for the present. The Commissioner said the track would have to be removed, for he would not take the responsibility of having to run cars over it. We have already decreased the speed of the trams in Hay-street because of the bad condition of the track, not only on the surface but below.

Mr. Allen: We told you that before you took over the trams.

The PREMIER: Whatever we were told the proposition was submitted to Parliament and Parliament approved it.

Mr. George: Parliament did not know the condition of the rails.

The PREMIER: In some places the base of the rails is absolutely destroyed and the rails are sitting on an edge. The Commissioner said that eventually one line would have to be taken out of Hay-street, and that as it was absolutely necessary to relay the track immediately it was far better to put one line in Murray-street now than to replace both in Hay-street and have to remove one to Murray-street in, perhaps, five years' time on account of the increasing traffic. The only extra expense involved in the removal of the line to Murray-street is the provision of the overhead gear. We are not responsible for the delay in connection with the poles. We have agreed that it is desirable to provide ornamental iron poles, but I have pointed out to the city council that under existing conditions, while we have to pay exorbitant prices for imported material—the ornamental iron poles cannot be made in Australia—it would be better to employ men on the preparation of wooden poles which would suffice until we again reach normal times. The answer of the council was, "Get the imported poles or none."

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Quite right. Why should the City be disfigured with wooden poles?

The PREMIER: At the present time we should, as far as possible, confine the expenditure of our money within our own boundaries. We should not import anything if a substitute can be provided within the State. I asked the city fathers to allow us to employ men in our forests, getting out the wooden poles in order that we may keep the money here until a favourable opportunity occurs for purchasing the ornamental iron poles in London.

Mr. George: And they would not let you?

The PREMIER: They would not agree to it.

Mr. George: They ought to be ashamed of themselves.

The PREMIER: It is not the first time we have found local authorities preventing us from doing the best for the State. We are just as much concerned about the beautifying of the City as are the

members of the city council, but at a time like the present I am opposed to sending money out of the State. Practically all the money expended in the deviation of the tramline to Murray-street has been expended in the State. It is absurd for the hon. member to continue to urge that the two lines should be left in Hay-street. The new post office is being erected between the railway station and Murray-street, and all know that the main body of traffic to the City comes through the central railway station.

Mr. Allen: But that is not the immediate necessity for deviating the line?

The PREMIER: No; it is the bad condition of the present track.

Mr. Allen: When you proposed to purchase the tram system you told us your expert officers advised you that the line was in good condition.

The PREMIER: No. They said it was not in good condition, and that for a number of years we have to expend money in bringing it up to standard. We have been doing that continuously since the purchase. In respect to the Crawley extension, that has been decided upon more for convenience in operating the system than for anything else. The Commissioner assures me that the additional traffic will more than pay for the extension, and that the extension will help very materially in carrying the summer traffic to the city baths and to Nedlands. The extension is not going along the actual foreshore. There is a considerable reserve between the rails and the foreshore. That reserve will continue right along to Nedlands, and, of course, will be open to the public.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not know whether the Premier intends to finish the remarks he was making before tea. He has given me only partial information in regard to the Perth electric tramways.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Get it out of *Hansard*.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That interjection is on a par with the remarks of the Premier on this particular item. I asked for certain information in regard

to the expenditure of £88,000. The Premier's argument consists of a number of insulting remarks to myself and the Committee generally. While this may be worthy of the Premier, it is not worthy of the position which he occupies. The only information he vouchsafed to me was in the form of general abuse towards myself and the city council.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): That was warranted.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: These remarks were made because the city council objected, as guardians of the City, to allowing the erection of some unsightly poles. They were abused high and low because they caused work to be sent outside this State. The city council would be wanting in their duty if they allowed money to be spent on work of this description. Because the city fathers had the temerity to object in this manner, both they, and myself for putting forward their views, have been insulted and abused. Abuse is no argument.

The Attorney General: You might take a lesson yourself in this.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: People in glass-houses should not throw stones.

The Attorney General: That is why I made the remark.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: What do we get for the original purchase of the tramways? It seems to me we get nothing at all. We are told that a number of cars have been built at the Midland Junction Workshops, that a number of lines will have to be relaid, and many sleepers, and that the copper wire cable will require attention. Because I ask for information I am insulted.

The Premier: You did not ask for information.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I asked why the trams should be put in Murray-street—

The Premier: I told you.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Premier did not tell me. I want to know why the trams were taken into Murray-street through Havelock-street and not through Milligan-street. The Premier says he has railway authority, and that he is pre-

pared to accept this authority on such matters. He accepts this authority because it suits his book to do so. Did he accept the authority when he brought the report of the Commissioner of Railways to the House to say that the purchase was only worth two-thirds of the money? He did not. If he was not told what the condition of the rails was, then the railway authorities he relies upon are to blame. If he was told, then there is no wonder that he should have shown temper because these matters are brought under the notice of the country. I question the railway authorities of the Premier, because the alterations were made purely in the interests of the Railway Department. I say I am as good a judge as the Premier and as the railway authorities as to the conveniences required for the travelling public. This is not only taking revenue from the State, which it can ill-afford to lose, but is causing the public a great amount of inconvenience.

The Premier: Read the Commissioner's report and do not waste my time.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It might be better to waste the Premier's time in this way if it took his attention off doing other things which would be a detriment to the country. The expenditure of £88,000 brings up the total expenditure on the tramways to over £600,000. This was a concern which should never have been touched by the State, and certainly not at the price. The city council were deprived of their rights.

The Premier: On a point of order, is the hon. member in order in discussing the question of the purchase of the tramway system under rolling stock?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That shows how much interest the Premier is taking. I am speaking on the item "Tramways, Perth Electric."

The Premier: Is the hon. member in order in discussing the question of the purchase of the tramways under this item?

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is keeping his remarks within the scope of this item.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: This £88,000 is to be used to make good the faults in the Perth tramways which were purchased at a cost of over half a million, but which were only valued at between £300,000 and £400,000 by the Commissioner.

Mr. ALLEN: I have been asking for information, but have not been able to get it, as to why the trams were diverted at Havelock-street instead of further up the track.

The Premier: Read the Commissioner's report.

Mr. ALLEN: I have done so but have failed to find any reason for the deviation.

The Premier: Paragraph 9, page 15 of the report will give the required information.

Mr. ALLEN: I do not see anything there. The Commissioner says that the Department accept the responsibility for advancing the proposal. Will the Premier tell us where to find the information?

The Premier: We paid £109 for publishing this information.

Mr. ALLEN: The Government diverted the trams at Havelock-street instead of Milligan-street, which would have served all purposes. This deviation would have served the travelling public from the south of Hay-street. The Railway Department will lose considerable revenue by diverting the tram at Havelock-street. The Premier has stated that Parliament purchased this tramway concession.

The Premier: And they did a wise thing.

Mr. ALLEN: That is a matter of opinion. At the present time it looks as if, instead of a system costing £475,000, plus the expenses of raising the money and so forth, by the time we have an up-to-date service and repaired the tracks, the cost will probably be nearer £600,000 or even more. However, we have to make the best of a bad bargain, bad from the country's point of view, but, of course, an excellent bargain as far as the company were concerned. The Premier might explain to the Committee

why the tram has been diverted at Havelock-street instead of at Milligan-street. It has been stated that the congestion of traffic was the cause of the deviation at that point, but I would explain that the congestion is in regard to the vehicular traffic and not pedestrian traffic. The Premier might also explain whether it is intended to leave the single line in Hay-street in its present position or whether it is proposed to remove it to the centre of the street. Then again, it would be interesting to know why the Government are substituting rubble instead of concrete in that portion of Murray-street where the wood blocks have been removed to permit of the lines being laid. While the policy of the Perth Municipal Council is to beautify the city as far as possible, the Government intend to erect unsightly wooden poles.

The Premier: The others are not made in Australia.

Mr. ALLEN: It is proposed to erect wooden poles so that the country might save a few pounds and so that a little more work might be provided for timber workers in the country.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It is surprising to hear hon. members objecting to this item for the extension of the tramway system. One would imagine they would welcome it with open arms, because everyone must realise that the extension of the system must be for the benefit of the business people in the heart of the city. I was of the opinion that the deviation should have been at Milligan-street instead of at Havelock-street, but I saw the Commissioner of Railways and he convinced me that Havelock-street was the only street at which the deviation could be made.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: He told me that, as far as the Railway Department were concerned, it did not matter where the deviation was, even if it went down as far as William-street.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The Commissioner told me he was strongly opposed to the trams going down Milligan-street.

Mr. Allen: Why?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If the Commissioner had objected to Havelock-

street, I feel convinced that the deviation would have been made elsewhere. We have heard to-night a good deal of criticism about the purchase of the trams, and I would ask how long is it going to continue? Surely hon. members have thrashed out the question sufficiently and they ought now to be satisfied that the deal was a good one from the Government's point of view. During last year we found that not only did the tramway system pay working expenses and interest upon the capital invested, but it also paid £10,000 for repairs and over and above all that there was a profit of 2.22 per cent. No matter what the price was that was paid for the system, it was the only price that the owners would sell at.

Mr. George: You could have bought their shares for less money than you gave for the whole concern.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It has been a good deal for the people. To-day we are in the position of being within reasonable distance of having one of the most up-to-date tramway services in Australia, and if hon. members object now to a reasonable amount being spent on extension, what is to become of the interests of the people?

Mr. Thomson: Where does it say anything about extensions?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The Minister has stated this amount is principally for extensions.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: He said for renewals.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: We know that extensions are under consideration, and it is mentioned that extensions are to be made, and this work cannot be done without providing capital. This is a matter which interests the people in the suburbs, far more than those in the city, because they have to come into the city and they enjoy the convenience or suffer the inconvenience as the case might be. When the diversion was proposed, not one public man in Subiaco would sign the petition protesting against the removal of the line from Hay-street, and a large number of those who signed did so under a misapprehension. A number signed because the gentleman

who was taking the petition around told them I desired them to sign. The member for Perth asked me to find a man to take the petition around, and the man concluded that I was supporting the protest. The members for the city constituencies are taking up an extraordinary attitude in objecting to this item because every extension of the tramway system undoubtedly benefits their electors more than the people whom the tramways serve, as it means the bringing of people into the city to spend their money.

Mr ALLEN: In order that it should not go out that we have opposed this item for extensions, I would point out that we have been seeking information regarding the diversion of the line at Havelock-street. If this amount is to be spent on extensions, we should have some particulars. The member for Subiaco said extensions are now being made, but I do not know of any.

The Premier: The Crawley extension.

Mr. ALLEN: That is completed. On what is this £88,000 to be spent? I believe it is for renewals which the Commissioner of Railways admitted was the primary reason for removing one of the lines from Hay-street. The member for Subiaco has little ground for complaint as to the service his constituents enjoy. The people I represent have a very poor service; I suppose a worse one could not be found. The Subiaco people get first call on the cars, and we at West Perth often have the experience of having to wait twenty minutes or half an hour while car after car fully loaded goes past.

The Premier: Those who travel from Subiaco are entitled to preference.

Mr. ALLEN: The Premier when introducing the Bill for the purchase of the trams, admitted that sufficient car accommodation could not be provided to overcome this difficulty. Now, however, the Premier has a big plant in course of erection, and he will need every fare he can collect to make it pay. By diverting the cars from Hay-street, he will lose a lot of traffic.

Mr. George: I do not know how they are going to get around the corner.

Mr. ALLEN: Looking at the curve from a layman's point of view, I think it will be a problem fraught with many difficulties. I would like to have particulars of the proposed extensions.

The PREMIER: The cost to complete the work already in hand is approximately £46,000. In addition, provision is being made for the extension of the Mount's Bay-road line from Crawley to Nedlands, and a duplication of the Leederville line in Oxford-street from Newcastle-street to the terminus.

Mr. Allen: We want to remake the road at the same time as you are doing the work.

The PREMIER: Yes; we are in agreement with the city fathers on that. An amount of £14,000 also is provided for repairs to enable us this year to relay the one line which will remain in Hay-street.

Mr. Heitmann: Why did not you shift them both out of Hay-street?

The PREMIER: I think it would have been desirable, but some hon. members argued that it would have spoilt the beauty of our leading business and commercial thoroughfare.

Mr. Heitmann: That is what was said in Adelaide.

The PREMIER: I made inquiries in Adelaide. The business men in Rundle-street nearly created a riot when the removal of the line from that thoroughfare was suggested, and subsequently they said there would be a riot if it were proposed to again run the cars in Rundle-street. These are matters which can best be decided by trained people who are not subject to wire-pulling on the part of business men who imagine that their business might be affected by any change. The Commissioner of Railways and his officers are not influenced by the business men in any street. They are merely interested in making the system pay, and they are doing that very well.

Mr. Heitmann: Some people said Perth was ruined when they built the Horseshoe bridge.

The PREMIER: Yes, and did not someone in the early days suggest that Perth would be ruined if the railway was built to Fremantle? We have also provided for ten bogey cars and material for ten single cars. These items account for the £88,000.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Notwithstanding that the Premier had the information, he tried to infer that we were opposing the provision for tramway extensions. The work in hand is unquestionably renewals.

The Premier: How do you know?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The only tramway extension is a short one of a mile or a mile and a quarter from the Perth-Fremantle-road to Nedlands. Out of £88,000, £66,000 is for renewals on account of the absurd purchase made by the Government. Why is the deviation made at the dangerous corner of Havelock-street instead of Milligan-street? If the Commissioner of Railways has recommended Havelock-street, he has changed his mind, because he stated to a deputation at which I was present that from a railway point of view the deviation should be at Milligan-street.

The PREMIER: I cannot allow the hon. member's statement to go unchallenged. The Commissioner of Railways may have told the hon. member that Milligan-street was suitable, in a private conversation.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No; it was at the deputation.

The PREMIER: I am satisfied that the Commissioner of Railways told the hon. member nothing of the kind officially. The Commissioner made a recommendation to the Government, and submitted a report to Parliament recommending the Havelock-street deviation. His last annual report states—

The Government as well as departmental officers have been subjected to some adverse criticism in connection with this matter. I, however, personally accept full responsibility in advancing the proposals. The principal object in view was to remedy an obvious disability and conserve the interests of the citizens as a whole, and I desire, therefore,

to place on record the facts of the case from the administrative standpoint, to demonstrate that my recommendation was not made from motives of "departmental expediency" as suggested in some quarters.

The Commissioner of Railways knew it would be absolutely absurd to run two lines of track in Hay-street with the increase of traffic year by year. The Commissioner said that Milligan-street would not be suitable from the railway point of view. His report further states—

After careful consideration of the views advanced by representative bodies, the Government finally decided that one line should remain in Hay-street and the other be diverted to Murray-street, with connections via Havelock and Pier streets respectively. The work is now in progress.

Notwithstanding what the Commissioner of Railways may, in the hon. member's opinion, have told him at some time or other regarding the operation of the trams, the Commissioner was desirous that while an alteration was being made in the tram track advantage should be taken of the opportunity to make another alteration which would be necessary sooner or later.

Mr. THOMSON: Am I to understand that the tram line in Hay-street is dangerous and that therefore it absolutely must be pulled up? That would be a reason why I could support an item such as this, while the country districts cannot get authorised railways because of lack of funds. An amount of £66,000 is to be spent on repairs to the Perth tramway system, which seems, as one hon. member has called it, a pup. I feel almost inclined to move a reduction in this item.

Mr. TAYLOR: Can the Premier give some idea as to when a start is likely to be made with the extension of the Oxford-street tram? The Oxford-street tram is getting in a bad state, and before the Leederville council became part of Greater Perth money had been voted for repairing that street, and negotiations were in progress with the Government for the taking of the tramway levels

in that connection, so that both works could be undertaken at the same time and money saved to the Government as well as to the Council, and, further, so that the public might be saved the unnecessary inconvenience of the traffic being impeded twice over.

The PREMIER: In reply to the member for Mount Margaret, as soon as the Crawley extension is completed so as to catch the Christmas traffic we propose to go on with Oxford-street. For the information of the member for Katanning, may I repeat the statement I made before tea, and in that hon. member's presence, that the Government found it essential to remove the tram track from Hay-street because that track was dangerous?

Mr. Thomson: That fact does not reflect credit on the engineers who reported on the track.

The PREMIER: We had to reduce the speed of the trams passing over that track.

Mr. FOLEY: I hope the Government will see their way to provide water carts to water the tram tracks. In Victoria Park and Leederville the tram tracks are absolutely a disgrace. Watering would be for the benefit of the passengers and also to the advantage of the tracks. A couple of water carts could go over the whole system in less than half a day.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Now that the Government have purchased the trams, I suppose the State must put them in repair.

The Premier: Did not you vote for the purchase?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No. The Premier made the purchase, and is responsible for it.

The Premier: I am proud of it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We now find the rails of the tram tracks are worn out, and that this deviation is recommended because the rails are worn out. I enter a protest against this expenditure on the City.

The Premier: If you have a no-confidence motion up your sleeve, launch it, instead of stonewalling.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The purchase of the trams has cost the country £300,000

already, and here is a further £88,000 to be spent on the system while the country is denied agricultural railways.

Item—Electric Power Station, East Perth, £182,000.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think the Committee should enter a protest against this item. What is the power house to cost? Will this item complete the works, or will we be asked next session to grant a further sum? It is impossible for the country to carry the burden of interest and sinking fund on a million of money spent between the Perth trams and this power house. Before I move for the reduction of the item, I would like to hear from the Premier what the total cost of the power house will be.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The original estimate of this undertaking was £200,000, and now the latest estimate approaches £424,000. Before we vote this £182,000 on the Estimates, we should have some information. If the cost of generating the current is to be nearly 1d. why is it to be sold to the council at .54d.? It seems that for 50 years the Government will have to sustain a heavy loss on the bargain they have made. I would like the Premier to inform us as to the arrangements entered into by Messrs. Merz and McLellan for the carrying out of this work. Evidently some very serious mistake has been made, for a work that was to cost £200,000 is now seen to be costing £400,000. Some time ago I was told that the plans used for this power station were those of a similar undertaking carried out in South America. If that is so, much of the huge mistake made is easily accounted for. The suggestion is confirmed by the use in the sheeting of the walls of reinforced concrete instead of local jarrah. The foundations originally estimated to cost £2,000 have cost, I believe, some £40,000. This also is largely accounted for by the use of an unsuitable plan. Apparently no satisfactory survey was made of the site. Again, I fail to see why it was necessary to pay a commission on the whole of the work of the foundations. The foundations consisted of powellised

piles. The work of cutting and piling the piles did not require the supervision of an expert electrical engineer. The foundation and walls could very well have been constructed by the Works Department or the Railway Department. The buildings could have been erected entirely by local officers with local material. The foundations were unnecessarily expensive, because of the unnecessary concrete reinforcements of the walls. What is the complete undertaking going to cost, and why was the building erected on this particular site, involving the expenditure of £40,000 on the foundation?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As the Premier refuses to give us some information I move—

That the vote be reduced by £100,000.
The Premier will not give us any information.

The Premier: I have given it half a dozen times.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This is no way in which to carry on the business of the country.

The Premier: No. The country demands that we should do business, and not talk of it without end.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Will the Premier not tell us why the estimated cost has been doubled, and is now in the region of £424,000?

The Premier: It is not anything like that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Parliament would never have agreed to the work if it had thought that so much money was to be spent.

The PREMIER: I think the member for Perth would not tolerate a reduction of this vote by £100,000 if he knew the facts. I would remind hon. members that two years ago I explained all the particulars in regard to this question to the House. The member for Northam also took part in the discussion, and in the vote. He is, therefore, equally responsible with any other member of this Chamber for the purchase of the tramways, and for the purchase of that essential portion of the tramway system, the power house. The House knew that we would have to erect a new power

house when we proposed to negotiate with the Perth City Council in order to have one power station to provide one centre from which to supply all the electrical requirements of the metropolitan area.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You produced the agreement with the city council.

The PREMIER: Yes, I did produce it here, and the member for Northam endorsed the agreement that was made.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You gave us a lot of wrong information.

The PREMIER: Now the member for Northam and one or two other members are trying to be wise and to show that they know something about the matter. One can only deny that their assumptions are correct, and say that time will prove as to whether they are right, or that the Government and their advisers are right. I am satisfied still that, when the power house is operated in the direction of providing the current necessary in the metropolitan area, the arrangements we have entered into with the local bodies will be found to be to their advantage. That is of advantage to the citizens of the State; and further that the power house will pay. That is a definite statement which will be placed on record and which will be turned up years hence in order to show how much value can be placed on the remarks of the member for Perth and the member for Northam, who, for party purposes, have condemned this State concern which is owned by the citizens of the State, irrespective of whether they are satisfied in their own minds or not that they are right in their judgment.

Mr. George: Is it costing too much?

The PREMIER: No. If we could have got the power house for one-half the price we should of course have been better satisfied.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What was the estimate?

The PREMIER: The estimate was £230,000.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Two hundred and five thousand pounds.

The PREMIER: How does the hon. member know that?

Hon. J. Mitchell: We have had it from you time and again.

The PREMIER: A most interesting statement. I deliberately said that for the purpose of enabling the hon. member to correct me. I know members on that side of the House have seen all the discussion on the matter which occurred in another place, and that the hon. member in particular knows all about it without asking for any explanation from me. The hon. member is only parroting.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Is the Premier mis-stating facts when he says that the estimate was £230,000? That is a nice thing for the Premier to do.

The PREMIER: Some things have to be done some time or other in order to get the strength of the attitude of hon. members opposite, which attitude is deliberately party-political. The correct estimate which was first given was £205,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did you not say so before?

The PREMIER: Before the agreement was submitted to the House there had already been an increase to the extent I have mentioned.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You said £230,000.

The PREMIER: Because of the cost of the foundations. The House knew it was to cost more than £205,000 before any mention was made of an agreement. The first estimate was £205,000.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What is it going to cost?

The PREMIER: Something like £300,000.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Four hundred thousand pounds?

The PREMIER: No; something like £300,000.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Will you do it for £300,000?

The PREMIER: Yes, for just about that amount. I will be able to explain, directly, when hon. members have finished interjecting, all about the position.

Mr. Thomson: Let us have the facts.

The PREMIER: The amount provided on the Estimates this year does not merely include the provision of the

power house. It provides all the capital expenditure necessary for the purpose of distributing the power created in the power house for the requirements of the metropolitan area.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But—

The PREMIER: It is all "buts" with the hon. member.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The item is for the provision of an electric power house at East Perth.

The PREMIER: That is only the account kept in connection with the scheme. The amount provided here, in addition to the power house, includes the erection of an overhead transmission line to Midland Junction, a sub-station there for the supply of the railway workshops, for the supply of the West Guildford and Guildford municipalities with current, and also for a transmission line to Fremantle and the Naval Base.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What is the cost of this?

The PREMIER: I cannot tell the exact amount. It covers all expenditure in connection with the items for the erection of a power house, plus the necessary provision for mains, sub-stations, etc., for the purpose of distributing current. What the member for Northam proposes to do in reducing the item £100,000 is to have a power station alongside the Swan River equipped for the distribution of electricity within the metropolitan area, but without any means for making use of it for this purpose, so that it will simply stand idle after being erected. This happens to be a concern in which the Government are interested, and for which they are responsible, and for that reason he is opposed to it. That is all he looks at. It does not matter to him whether it will be a loss to the citizens of the State, so long as he does something which will put difficulties in the way of the Government carrying out the project, which is all the hon. member is concerned about. The power house as now erected is not the power house upon which the estimate was first submitted of £205,000.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why?

The PREMIER: How many times, in the name of goodness, is a Minister ex

pected to give the Chamber information, and to tell hon. members the facts of a case? I told the member for Northam over and over again what he is asking for. He ought to be able to keep the information in his head, and if not, he should be able to turn up *Hansard* and find it out for himself, or else turn up the *Sunday Times* and find out what I did not say. Hon. members opposite should remember that the estimated cost was prominently put before them. I will read presently what I said in November, 1913. This statement was made when I introduced the Bill ratifying the agreement with the Perth City Council, and yet hon. members opposite who are so clever now and know so much about the bad bargain which has been made for the Perth City Council—the member for Perth in particular—and that the work is to cost so much, were asked to ratify the agreement, or otherwise, and were told that the capital cost was going to be increased beyond £205,000—

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It was a payable proposition at £205,000.

The PREMIER: I am saying that the House knew before the agreement was ratified that it was not a £205,000 proposition.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: A £230,000 proposition?

The PREMIER: I told the House this when I introduced the Bill for the ratification of the agreement with the Perth City Council. I made the following remarks—

We have entered into this after very careful consideration, and on the best advice procurable. Whilst the cost of the power station is going to be greater than first estimated, it is due to two reasons. Shortly after the estimate for the erection of the power station was got out, a general rise in price of approximately 33 per cent. took place in the old country. Moreover, the machinery necessary for the economical and safe working of the power station can be supplied only by a very limited number of firms. We are restricted in the choice of machines from different firms, with the result, of course, that when there was so

much demand for electrical machinery and plant in different parts of the world the prices jumped considerably, to 33 per cent. in most cases, and at least to 10 per cent. On the other hand, we first proposed to erect a generating station of 9,000 kilowatts, but eventually, after considering all things, the extending of tramways, and electric lighting and the supplying of current for all purposes, from Fremantle to Bellevue, and the possible electrification of the suburban railway system, we decided to increase the power from 9,000 to 12,000 kilowatts, and after it was also shown that it would be more economical than the plant we had previously proposed. And then again we have increased the size of the power house, the foundations of which and the structure itself are a costly item. Indeed we estimate the foundations will cost about £40,000.

Here is mention made of a sum of £40,000 before even we could commence the construction. That is what I said in 1913 before we commenced the construction. I then went on—

We have increased the size in order that it may take an additional unit, and with that additional unit the station will eventually have a capacity of 16,000 kilowatts—

Mr. George: What are the foundations to cost?

The PREMIER: My remarks on that occasion continued—

Which it is believed will be sufficient to supply the requirements of the Government for the next 25 years, including the electrification of the railway from Fremantle to Northam.

There is a statement which I made in November, 1913, when the Bill for the ratification of the agreement with the Perth City Council to provide them with current at .75d. per unit was introduced. I still assert that when the power house is operating, that is when the station is operating to its fullest possible extent, we shall be generating current at .75d. We could do this if the Collie coal proprietors did not increase the cost of their coal, and if they did not do again

as they did in the past, immediately the Government took over the tramway system, jump the price of coal up 100 per cent.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Use Newcastle coal.

The PREMIER: Never mind about Newcastle coal. People talk about the Government not being able to produce and to turn out work as cheaply as a private company. Is it not a fact that the tramway company was able to get smalls from the Collie coal proprietors at 3s. 6d.?

Hon. Frank Wilson: That was under cost price.

The PREMIER: We had the Collie coal companies providing coal for a foreign company at below cost, but who continue to knock at the front door of the Government to ask them to increase the price of coal consumed on the railway system, which is owned by the people of the State. Immediately the tramway system was taken over by the Government on behalf of the citizens of the State, and the contract had ended, the Collie coal proprietors jumped the price up from 3s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. or 7s. 6d.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why not get back to the trams?

The PREMIER: This all affects the price of the production of current, and the estimated cost of the production of current would naturally be based on the price paid for coal. Surely the Government, who have rendered such assistance to the Collie coal industry, might expect equal, if not better, treatment from the Collie coal proprietors, to that which a foreign company which was distributing dividends outside the State, would receive. We are to-day, I believe, obtaining coal from these companies at 4s. 6d. as against the 3s. 6d. charged to the Tramway Company. Over and above that, what the hon. member loses sight of is that we knew at the time that it was to our advantage to get the city council to take the current from our new station instead of erecting stations of their own, and for more than one reason; in the first place they consume a large quantity of current, and the larger the output of the station

the lower the cost of generating. Then by the city council retailing that current for reticulation to the Government at 1½d. per unit, where to-day we are paying 2½d. we shall be making ¾d. per unit. We are consuming 18 per cent. of the city council's current to-day and as soon as the generating station is completed we shall be getting it at 1½d. Members should not lose sight of that fact, even if we were to provide current for the city council at less than the actual cost of the production. I contend we have made a good bargain with the city council, and I will go further and say that in my opinion, when we are supplying all the requirements of the metropolitan area, whether it means that the power house will be working its full capacity or not, as soon as we have supplied the whole of the requirements of the metropolitan area, the generating station will show a profit and, as we extend it, so it will show a greater profit. We must provide the necessary feeders to the different centres in the metropolitan area and we cannot provide them without cash. That is why this vote is increasing year by year. But it is not all spent in the generating station. The price of material has gone up, it is true, but we shall have one of the best generating stations in the Southern Hemisphere, and it has been built on the basis of meeting the requirements of the metropolitan area as well as the electrification of the railway system to Northam if necessary for the next 50 years.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What will it cost?

The PREMIER: Perhaps £350,000 altogether. That includes sub-stations, feeders, even to carry current to the Fremantle Naval Base and to Midland Junction. It will include all the work in connection with the generating and distribution of the current.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is too much.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member know what it is costing Victoria to establish their generating station?

Hon. J. Mitchell: No.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not want to know anything.

Mr. George: Should we not have had all the particulars when you brought the

thing forward first? You did not give us the cost of distribution.

The Attorney General: Are you satisfied now?

Hon. J. Mitchell: No.

The PREMIER: I did not give the cost of distribution. Did I know what we were going to distribute at that time? I do not know at this moment just where we are going to distribute the current. We will distribute it wherever it can be distributed economically. We may have a request to-morrow for the supply of current to Armadale, and if it should be found that it would be a paying proposition we would be foolish if we turned it down.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You cannot spend any more on it now.

The PREMIER: The hon. member makes peculiar statements at times. The power station is there and we did not make provision for all this after the war but before the war. It is one of those propositions which we must complete and we must make it pay. When that is done it will be a paying concern and I will stake my reputation on that, if it is worth anything.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not think the Premier is serious when he declares that he will stake his reputation as a guarantee of the success of these works, because that will not be worth anything at all. What I want to know is, why Parliament was not taken into the Premier's confidence in regard to the cost of these works. We have an agreement with the city council to supply current for 50 years at a cost of not exceeding .75d. per unit. At that time the Commissioner wrote a minute pointing out that the increased cost of the works would probably increase the cost of the production of the current, and he suggested that further inquiries should be made from the consulting engineers as to the probable effect. The Premier should have taken the House into his confidence because we were approving of what he was doing and he should have told us there was some doubt about being able to produce current at the price he was to receive from the city council. It is no use the Premier saying now that if the

works are employed to the full capacity we shall make a profit. Works of this description are seldom if ever worked to their full capacity year in and year out. We agreed to supply at $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit on the understanding that the current would only cost .45d. per unit, and we were justified in endorsing the Government's arrangement with the city council on that guarantee. Now we find it is going to be a very different thing. Consulting engineers have told us that this current owing to the largely increased cost of the works, is going to cost in production .82d. per unit. Therefore, there will be a considerable loss on every unit we supply to the city council. The Premier says his Government are the chief customers of the city council and that therefore the difference between what the city council pays and what the Government departments pay to the city council is all gain. Surely it cannot appeal to hon. members in that way. It must appeal to any serious member of this Chamber that that is not so. If the Government, in the first place, are producing current at $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit, there is no earthly reason why it should not produce current for its own departments at that cost. That is no defence against the fact that we have blundered into a mistake. What does the Premier do? He adopts his usual tactics by first attacking the member for Northam who tries to question this transaction, and the member for Perth, and then he jibes at me on the question of the fuel supply. He wants to pass the responsibility for the loss on to the Collie coal owners because they would not give him coal at half the cost price.

The Premier: That is incorrect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Everyone else is paying exactly the same price and more.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And the Government are getting coal cheaper from the Collie companies than the value is according to Dr Jack's report.

The Premier: Why was the company getting it cheaper than us?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The company was not. The price of coal was raised all round. Did anyone ever hear of such an attitude to take up. What has the coal to do with the generating station? Even if we were supplying coal at 8s. 6d. a ton, is the Premier justified in expecting that he is going to maintain the same price for 50 years? A 50 years contract is not based on the price of fuel to-day. Everything may change. Fuel may be double the cost. There may be an advance. There may be all sorts of difficulties arising. The coal mines may be closed down and the Government might have to pay three times the cost for imported coal. Of course the Government, in making an arrangement with a public body like the Perth City Council, were perhaps justified in taking some of the risks of the market. I am not finding fault that they took a risk with regard to the cost of fuel, but I am finding fault with the Premier for daring to insinuate that I personally, because I happen to be interested in the coal trade, am the means of causing these works to be a failure for the next 15 or 20 years.

The Premier: I did not say so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier inferred as much. We have entered into a sort of partnership with the city council. That is obvious, for we endorsed the action of the Government. I supported it and thought they had done a very sensible thing. We gave the Perth City Council the five miles area from the town hall in which they could operate, and stipulated that they must pay cost price for the current, but in order that they might know they were on safe grounds and to enable them to make their arrangements accordingly we fixed a maximum price. But whoever dreamed that that maximum could possibly be out with all the information the Premier admits he had before him as to the increased cost of the works and with the splendid practical advice of his consulting engineers, and, with what he ought to have taken notice of, the gentle intimation from the Commissioner of Railways, no doubt instilled by his expert officers, that there was a

doubt as to the cost of the production of this current. Ought not the Government to have imparted that to the House and protected themselves in the agreement so that if the cost price did prove to be more than the price upon which the contract was fixed, the maximum with the city council should advance? That is the position, and members of the Opposition have taken up a very fair attitude in criticising the Government for not safeguarding the interests of the State as against the interests of the Perth City Council. I suppose the city fathers will not be amenable to amending the contract at the present juncture, but if it is at all possible, that contract ought to be made absolutely on the basis of the cost price of the current which was the intention, and the city council ought not to be above agreeing to pay the cost whatever it may be found to be if no negligence is shown and if the works are conducted on proper lines, so long as the price to the Government for what current they themselves use is increased proportionately. There is a fair amount of leakage between the current supplied wholesale to a municipal body and the amount that it recovers again through the meters of its consumers so that the difference in price is not so great as one would imagine. The city council will lose a fair amount of current and that is a matter for experts and not laymen to settle. But will the Premier explain why, when that minute was penned 10 days before he submitted the contract with the Perth City Council for ratification, it was not disclosed to the House so that we could know there was some doubt about being able to produce the current at the price then fixed?

The PREMIER: Some day we shall reach finality in connection with the discussion on the power house. The hon. member showed how much he knows about the question of providing current under agreement with the city council when he began by asking why, if we could generate it at .75d. per unit, we did not supply ourselves at that price instead of getting supplied through the city council, and then

concluded his remarks by admitting that from the point of supply in bulk to the point where it is distributed retail throughout the five miles radius there would be a considerable leakage. He might have added why it was necessary to pay more for the current reticulated by the city council for Government purposes than the actual cost of production. It is due, first of all, to the leakage which the city council bears, and secondly, because there is the cost of reticulating. Whoever reticulates has to provide capital to do it, and all the means for reticulating within the five miles radius have to be supplied by the city council who are entitled to get back interest on the cost. If we supplied ourselves, we could not do so at the actual cost of generating. The city council will get the current at the actual cost of production, but as they have undertaken to distribute it they have to provide capital to reticulate it and bear the loss in transmission. If we supplied our own requirements I doubt whether we could do so at less than 1½d. per unit. The city council are not going to make much profit, if they make any. But we decided to take our supplies through them for the purpose of economy from the taxpayers' point of view. We considered there was no necessity for the Government to carry a cable two miles through the city to supply a department and for the city council to carry a similar cable to supply their consumers when the one cable provided by the citizens would suffice for all. From the point of view of economy we are supplying them in bulk and they will undertake the whole of the reticulation. I still assert, notwithstanding all that has been said, that the station at the cost we are supplying current to the city council, is a better proposition than if we had merely erected a station for the tramways.

Hon. J. Mitchell : Did you have that minute ?

The PREMIER : Yes. This was the advice of our electrical experts, and surely the House did not expect me to submit an expression of opinion

by someone whose advice we were not prepared to take.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Merz and McLellan say it will cost 82d. per unit now.

The PREMIER : Merz and McLellan were engaged by the Government and it is a great pity any firm should have to risk the loss of their reputation through a party organisation because they happen to do work for a Labour Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Not at all.

The PREMIER : Merz and McLellan have been abused in connection with this matter by men who know nothing about the business. They are a world-wide firm with a reputation second to none, and are about the only firm in the world that foreign countries call in as arbitrators, and yet their reputation is being taken from them for political purposes.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Rot !

The PREMIER : I reassert that they are held up to ridicule.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You are held up to ridicule, not the firm.

The PREMIER : We paid these people to advise us, and I believe to-day that Merz and McLellan are the people who can advise us in this matter. I accepted their advice and if they were wrong in their advice, although we have to take the responsibility, they, as the consulting firm, will have to take their share of the responsibility. It is absolutely disgraceful that a firm of this description should be held up to ridicule by politicians for party purposes.

Hon. J. Mitchell : By whom ?

The PREMIER : The hon. member knows very well, by members of this House. It is a disgrace and defames the name of Western Australia. It is not fair to try to damage a reputable firm who have been established for many years and carried out works bigger than Western Australia is ever likely to undertake. It is time members took a reasonable view of these matters and put any responsibility on the Government, instead of trying to damage the reputation of this firm. I think I have answered the question of the distribution of the current and the cost of it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have said nothing about the cost.

The PREMIER: I have said we deliberately obtained the consent of the city council to join with us, not only to provide them with current, but to reduce the cost of production to ourselves and for economical working generally.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did not you tell the House that the current would cost more than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per unit?

The PREMIER: Because I did not know, and I do not know yet. I have a minute by the Commissioner of Railways from an officer whom I considered was not in a position to criticise Merz and McLellan. I was not coming to the House to give it and the country generally information on the statement of an officer, who in my opinion, was not capable of criticising Merz and McLellan. If he was capable of criticising Merz and McLellan, we had no right to engage that firm. He merely submitted the opinion and I did what I considered I was entitled to do, namely, brought the matter under the notice of Merz and McLellan. I was not going to bring that opinion to the House until I had consulted the men we paid to advise us. The files have been gone through by the hon. member's lieutenant, or colonel or commandant; he spent nine hours on it and knew less about it when he had finished than before he started.

Mr. George: If he had 128 files to go through, that is quite likely.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are squirming and objecting to being criticised roundly.

The PREMIER: If necessary I shall reply in the same way as the accusations are made.

Mr. George: Are you satisfied with the extra cost and extra commission you have to pay?

The PREMIER: I am perfectly satisfied with the arrangements we have made in connection with the station. I admit that the cost of the erection of the station is greater than we first estimated and greater than we assumed when we entered into an agreement with the city council. But would any hon. member ask

me to come to the House and say "Unfortunately, owing to the increased cost of material, I am going back on the agreement made with the city council"? We made that agreement, believing that the cost would be something near the estimate, but electrical machinery increased in price by 33 per cent. shortly afterwards.

Mr. Taylor: Is the additional cost accounted for by the increased price of material owing to the war?

The PREMIER: Not altogether. In the first instance it was due to the increased demand throughout the world for modern electrical machinery. There was a tremendous demand during the 12 months previous to the war, and manufacturing firms could not supply it. There are only a few firms in the world who supply this class of electrical machinery. Perhaps 75 per cent. of the generating stations in Europe and America to-day are out of date.

Mr. Taylor: Those firms, I suppose, could hardly meet the demand made upon them.

The PREMIER: That is so, and just after we made the arrangement with the city council we were advised that the cost of material had gone up by 33 per cent. Still, we could not turn back because of that.

Mr. Taylor: It is a terrible increase.

The PREMIER: It is indeed.

Mr. George: And the cost has gone up a lot more since.

The PREMIER: Yes, tremendously. Indeed, we are having great difficulty in getting the material. I do not know what we shall have to pay for the switch gear. The firms at home are so closely engaged on munitions that we cannot get permission from the Home Government for any of them to make this machinery for us in order that we might complete the station; and I suppose when they do make it they will be in a position to charge us what they like. But will hon. members complain, twelve months hence, when I tell them that the switch gear has cost us perhaps 100 per cent. more than was estimated? Am I to say "We will

not get this switch gear; we will work the station without it"? All the rest of the plant is there, but because of the increased cost and the difficulty of getting this switch gear we have had to allow the whole thing to stand idle. On the Revenue Estimates I told hon. members we had provided a large sum this year because we had not spent it last year, owing to the contracts not having been completed. The contractors have not completed, because they knew the switch gear would not be ready. I am perfectly satisfied with the power house.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No one else is.

The PREMIER: That does not dishearten me. If I thought the hon. member was satisfied I would have to admit that there was something seriously wrong. I do not want the leader of the Opposition to run away with the idea that I made any personal reference to him in connection with the Collie coal contracts.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But you did.

The PREMIER: I had not the slightest intention of doing so. I made a fair reference to what I considered one of the causes of the increased cost of production. As soon as the Government took over the trams the Collie coal companies put their heads together and bumped up the price.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There you go again; you do not know anything about it.

The PREMIER: I told them that they had put their heads together. It cannot be denied. We required a supply of coal. Six companies tendered, but each for only one-sixth of the quantity. The whole six of them combined for the purpose of making the Government pay what they asked. I am quite prepared to say this on any public platform at any time. It was absolutely unfair. They would have held a revolver to the head of the Government but that we put a royalty charge on them to persuade them to keep the price within decent bounds. The hon. member said we had no right to assume that the price of Collie coal would remain the same for 50 years. Who ever assumed it? If the world is to continue to

progress the price of coal will be materially affected by the application of improved labour-saving appliances in a much shorter space of time than 50 years. As a matter of fact we may find some means of applying radium before 50 years have elapsed, and will then have to scrap our station. I know this is only the introduction to a movement. Hon. members are going to make the most of their opportunities, and this is one of the things they propose to make use of. Therefore, I want the public to thoroughly understand the position. Anything will do for the purpose of criticising the Government, but I seriously ask members to refrain from defaming a reputable firm merely for the purpose of getting even with the Government. Hon. members have no right to defame the name of a reputable firm established longer as a firm than hon. members as members of Parliament, and knowing more about their particular business than hon. members know about politics.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Who said a word against them?

The PREMIER: It is done simply because this firm have carried out the work for a Labour Government. It is merely a political move on the part of a few, who will defame a reputable firm like Merz & McLellan, who are called upon in all quarters of the globe to advise and arbitrate on bigger questions than the one we are discussing to-night. If members desire to abuse the Government, let them do so, but it is up to all of us to protect the reputation of a world-wide firm.

[Mr. Male took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have heard a good deal about the price being charged to the city council for current. Let me point out that at Fremantle it costs us 3d. a unit to produce current.

Hon. Frank Wilson: A jolly sight too much.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And we are selling it to Cottesloe, North Fre-

mantle and the Harbour Trust at 2d., and are showing a profit. Let me also say that we quoted a considerably reduced rate for power to the Naval Base.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You will straighten out the implement works all right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hon. members laugh. To generate the current costs about a penny. Our standing charges would have to go on, whether we supplied Cottesloe, North Fremantle and the Harbour Trust, or any of the Government institutions. By generating for a penny and selling at 2d. we make 1d. profit.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But if you sold at three farthings at your station, would you be making a profit?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, if we sold under the same conditions, if the generating cost was half a penny.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But you say it is a penny.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It costs us 3d. a unit, including the standing charges, but we generate it at an actual cost of 1d. The standing charges, which make up the difference of the generating cost and the actual cost, would be the same whether or not we supplied the Harbour Trust, Cottesloe and North Fremantle. That is clear, because we must pay interest, sinking fund and depreciation charges on the machinery all the time, and the extra cost the works are put to in supplying these outside bodies is practically the cost of the Collier coal consumed; the same men are employed, and the extra cost is but a fraction over the price of the coal. So by extending the scheme and selling what I might term the surplus stock, we get an opportunity of making a profit. This applies to the manufacture of electricity, although perhaps not to all industries.

Mr. George: It is the same principle.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But it does not apply to the same extent in other manufactures. Even if we supply the Perth City Council at .75d. there is a chance of making a profit for the State, because it will tend to bring down the

cost of electricity for Government use. The Government would have to meet the same standing charges even if we had not the city council as customer. In 1913, if the Fremantle station had not supplied the outside bodies it would have shown a loss, but by supplying the outside bodies, even at a reduced rate, it showed a handsome profit.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The leader of the Opposition is never tired of telling the Chamber what great business capacity he possesses. He appears to be elated over this matter. When this question of the agreement was before the House in December, 1913, I took some interest in the matter, together with some other members representing suburban constituencies. We strongly opposed this proposition which was in the agreement of fixing the maximum price which was to be charged to the Perth City Council for their electricity. I will read from *Hansard* the stand I took upon that question to show that the leader of the Opposition did nothing whatever to assist me in what I desired to bring about. We were in Committee on the Bill, which was really the agreement, and my remarks were as follows:—

What he desired to move was an amendment, the effect of which would be to strike out the maximum cost of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. which was to be charged for the current.

I pointed out that it was absolutely unwise, when we were stating in the agreement that we would give the city council their current at cost price, to fix the maximum price. At the time I stood practically alone. The leader of the Opposition strongly supported the agreement entered into and raised no objection whatever. Some years later he comes along and raises an objection on this particular point. The Premier is right in asking what it is that brings along this belated objection. The answer is that to-day the objection is raised for political purposes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am surprised at the Premier letting himself loose and making such absurd charges as

to what has been said in regard to Messrs. Merz & McLellan. Whilst I was in the Chamber no mention was made of Merz & McLellan. He declares that their reputation is besmirched because we have ventured to make remarks upon the attitude the Premier took up on the information he gave to the House two years ago. I understand that Messrs. Merz & McLellan have advised the Government that the current is to cost .82d. per unit, owing to the increased cost of the works, which was, of course, unforeseen to a large extent, and that in consequence we are going to lose on our contract with the Perth City Council.

The Premier: No, we are not.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Is it right or wrong? The Premier has admitted that he had the Commissioner's minute before him when that gentleman advised that he should seek some further information from the consulting engineers on the subject of cost. Yet 10 days later he brought the contract to the House and got the House to ratify it on the distinct understanding that the cost was .54d. per unit. It does not matter whether the Premier's private views are such as to convince him that, regardless of what the cost of current is, the current is going to show a profit as sold to the city council. The Premier is not infallible. He was equally certain about the Implement Works and the Minister for Works was even more so, and yet there has been a huge loss. The Premier has no right to get up and abuse everyone and accuse us of party methods because we have asked for the true position in regard to this matter.

The Premier: There was never so much party bitterness in the political history of this State as there has been this session.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was nothing to what was in existence when the Premier was in Opposition four years ago.

The Premier: I was never bitter.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier was never anything else. The member for Subiaco criticised me for not sup-

porting him when the contract was before the House in 1913. We were justified in taking the statement of the Government at the time on the question, but the Government were not justified in withholding information from the House that would be likely to reveal a difference in the estimated cost. We had to take the Premier's word that the cost would work out at .54d. per unit and now we find on the authority of the consulting engineers that it is to cost .827d.

The Premier: That is not correct. That is on the basis of the output known when the estimate was made.

Mr. George: You will have to get a bigger output.

The Premier: Of course we will.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We are not to get a bigger output than the Premier outlined when he produced the contract.

The Premier: That is outlined at $1\frac{1}{2}$ units, and we have 3 units there.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is not the position. The Premier did not put that before the Chamber. He outlined the extra cost and said it was going to cost considerably more than the original estimate, and that he had increased the capacity of the works to 12,000 volts from 9,000 volts. Have we got the experts' actual statements now that we can produce current at .54d. a unit? If Merz & McLellan say we can do this I should be prepared to accept the statement and await results.

The Premier: No, the hon. member would not await results if it suited his party politics not to do so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We would be justified in using anything of the sort for party purposes if we desired to do so, but we do not. The Minister for Works made a wrong explanation in regard to the matter.

The Minister for Works: I gave the actual facts.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This principle applies to all undertakings, that there are certain standing charges and if the turnover does not reach a certain figure money is lost, but if that figure is exceeded then a profit is made. It does

not apply, of course, to the same extent in the generation of current. It is a question of plant and fuel as to what the cost of production will be. That does not take away from the position that if there was the slightest doubt as to the cost of the current under the agreement, it was the duty of the Premier to bring that before the House. He did not do so.

The Premier: I did not bring all the files here. I find there are many down there which you did not bring to the House.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If there was a doubt and the doubt was pointed out to the Premier he should not have asked the House to ratify the agreement.

The Premier: I had no doubt then, and I have no doubt now.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The member for Subiaco would have been amply justified, if this doubt had been expressed, in asking the Committee to support him in his amendment. I deprecate the attitude of the Premier in hurling accusations across the Chamber against all and sundry. He brought in the question of Collie coal. He knows that he forced the various companies to act together. The Government have negotiated with the companies as one firm all the time.

The Premier: That has nothing to do with the works. We called for contracts.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government forced the companies to act together. Since then the Coal Owners' Association decided on the prices and the values of coal. They have not put their heads together to defeat the objects of the Government. The Government forced them together all the time.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier would never receive a deputation from any individual firm, but would only take the coal owners as a whole. He jumped up the railway freights between Collie and the ports so that some companies suffered a great loss. He made it a condition that, if he had to go back to the old rates over the railway system to the ports to save the companies from bank-

ruptcy, this coal had to be supplied at a certain rate for the power station. Other companies which had no interest in the rates at the time and had no contracts, had to stand in with these companies and reduce their price below what the coal was actually worth, in order to save them from severe loss.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Messrs. Merz & McLellan have not been called into question at all. They are getting their five per cent. commission on an enormous expenditure of £400,000, apart from the £1,000 a year which I understand is being paid for their engineer. I am not concerned about their charges on these works. I regret, however, that an enormous sum of money is to be devoted to the completion of works such as we are now discussing. To my mind even £225,000 would be a large sum for the city of Perth, having 75,000 inhabitants, to spend on a work like this, but now it seems we are to spend £6 per head. The trams and the power house together will total a million of money, which is most excessive. Instead of centralising work, developmental work should be undertaken, in order to give employment. The bungling in connection with the power house has to be paid for by the people not only in cash but also in the deprivation of useful and important works. It is to be regretted that we on this side cannot ask for information without receiving abuse from the Premier and his colleagues. There never was a time when it was more necessary than it is now for members to interest themselves in Loan expenditure. The Premier jogs along cheerfully, quite regardless of the results of these State enterprises.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Harbours and Rivers, £157,883:*

Item—Albany harbour and improvements, £25,000.

Mr. THOMSON: How much do the Government propose to spend under this item, and on what works?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think I have already informed the hon. member that this item is for the first por-

tion of the Albany jetty, now in course of construction.

Mr. THOMSON: What provision is being made for handling this year's harvest at Albany? Is provision made for the installation of elevators and for laying on electric current to the jetty? If so, handling charges will be considerably reduced.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The item is for the jetty, and not for appliances. After the jetty is completed, the installation of appliances will be in the hands of the Railway Department.

Mr. THOMSON: To build a jetty and not provide the necessary equipment seems to me only half doing the work. If the Minister for Works will guarantee to lay on electric current, I will guarantee that handling charges will be reduced. Is there provision for handling facilities in connection with harbour improvements?

The Premier: If that matter were in this vote, the facilities would be provided. If not, it would be in a vote I control.

Mr. THOMSON: A private firm will guarantee to put in elevators for £300, if the Government will supply the electric current; and I will guarantee that the elevators will be used.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This item is solely for the building of the jetty, and not in any way for the providing of plant.

Mr. HEITMANN: It seems unfortunate that the management of a jetty should be under two departments. What were the determining factors in the allocation that we find here of funds to harbours? The amount of this item, though not large, is disproportionate to the amount provided for Geraldton. My district, I consider, has been badly treated.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Albany jetty alterations were found necessary, firstly because the jetty as at present constructed is not suitable for shipping, and secondly because it is in a bad state of repair. Instead of rebuilding the old jetty, the better course is to make a turn. The estimated cost of the work is about £65,000. This year we expect to spend

£25,000 and thereby make the jetty fit for use. As regards the work mentioned by the member for Geraldton, I will give him information when the item is reached.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Minister told us it was necessary to do certain works at the port under discussion. It would be interesting to know who found it necessary. On the one hand the Commissioner of Railways said that there was no necessity for improvements at Albany, yet we find the Minister prepared to go against the Commissioner, but when it comes to the question of spending money at Geraldton the Commissioner of Railways' opinion was put up and it was said that the Commissioner thought it was unnecessary. When it suits the Government to use the Commissioner as a buffer they do so, with the result that one hardly knows which responsible officer the Government is going to take notice of. There is no doubt about it that there must be recognition that the facilities provided at Geraldton are anything but what are absolutely necessary. We have a port there which will send away more wheat than any other port with the exception of Fremantle, and if it gets its just due, and gets the facilities for handling the harvest within its area, Geraldton will be sending away more wheat in a few years' time than even Fremantle. One would imagine there is a desire to handicap the port of Geraldton. The district behind that port is the best for wheat-growing in the State. In 1913-14 it had the highest average, and as the area under cultivation continues to increase the average also increases, and in a short time we shall find that the district which comprises one-fifth of the whole of the wheat belt of the State will require up to date methods for handling its share of the harvest. Yet the Government are making no attempt to improve the harbour. A scheme was drawn up by Mr. Ramsbotham, who was the only officer who went closely into the question, but when he went over to the Federal service we found that other engineers stated that there was a danger of silting and consequently they advocated another scheme.

The Minister for Works: The scheme that was adopted was not Mr. Ramsbotham's.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was drawn up on the information supplied by Mr. Ramsbotham.

The Minister for Works: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. HEITMANN: Whose suggestion was it that they should use the present reefs as a breakwater? Does the Minister know that?

The Minister for Works: I know the scheme was not Mr. Ramsbotham's.

Mr. HEITMANN: The scheme was drawn up by him on the suggestion of the Minister for Works (Mr. Johnson). The present Minister from the inception of the scheme opposed it, and he puts his own knowledge against the professional knowledge of Mr. Ramsbotham, the only naval engineer we have ever had in this State.

[*Hon. M. F. Troy took the Chair.*]

The Minister for Works: Speak straight.

Mr. HEITMANN: It is my custom to speak straight, and I will tell the Minister that he sold me a pup over this question.

The Minister for Works: I will sell you another pup if you like.

Mr. HEITMANN: Not if I know it. If it had been East Fremantle where these facilities were required the work would be done.

The Minister for Works: I opposed a scheme at Fremantle under similar conditions and I would do it again.

Mr. HEITMANN: That is no reason why Geraldton should be handicapped for all time. The port has not had a fair deal. The present facilities are totally inadequate; they are obsolete. Why is not some genuine effort put forward to remedy this state of affairs? The scheme to extend the present jetty at Geraldton cannot possibly be the basis of a permanent scheme. That is the opinion of Mr. Ramsbotham and it is the opinion also of everyone who has gone into the question. The alternative scheme is simply a makeshift and I am not satisfied with it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:

When I took office the first thing I did was to ask the Engineer in Chief whether some headway could be made in regard to the Geraldton harbour improvements, such as sending a dredge there. I found that the engineers had considerable doubt about the scheme which had been chosen because of the probability of silting taking place. Would I be justified therefore in expending even the first instalment under such circumstances? It was my first duty to find out the exact position in regard to that harbour scheme before commencing the work. A suggestion was made by the Engineer in Chief that the extension of the jetty should be carried out to meet the present requirements of the port. In discussing the matter with the Commissioner of Railways, he said that what we required there was deeper water, but it would be impossible to get that carried out in time, and that for this year he could meet the requirements of the port with what was there. I made arrangements that as soon as possible I would visit Geraldton and, provided our friends opposite do not turn us out, immediately the session closes I shall proceed to Geraldton to look into the question. Mr. Ramsbotham recommended a scheme somewhere near the present jetty and the present jetty was included in part of that scheme. Two of the engineers, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Rolland, informed me that they were of opinion that if the breakwater was run out to Point Moore, and dredging carried out inside, the sand would come round the breakwater and fill the harbour again.

Mr. George: The same as at Bunbury?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is worse than at Bunbury. I was anxious to extend this jetty. The Commissioner said he could do without it for the present but whatever is done should be made part of a permanent scheme. I honestly believe increased facilities and better accommodation for a larger class of vessel are necessary at Geraldton, but I would not be justified, in the face of the information given, in going on with the scheme. Something should be done

and I hope this money can be expended this year.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It is admitted that the Victoria district is an important wheat growing centre and that the facilities of this port are obsolete. I am glad the Minister intends to visit the port to see what can be done to give facilities in keeping with the importance of the district it serves. The improvement of the port of Geraldton will involve a considerable outlay and the people are anxious that provision should be made to serve present requirements. The Commissioner of Railways has stated that he will be able to handle the harvest traffic with the existing facilities, but I think the ground on which he made that assertion was that the exportation would be spread over a longer period than usual and that there would be no great congestion of traffic. The freightage arrangements recently announced are confined to December and January and, if the wheat export has to be crowded into those two months, there will probably be congestion. The Minister should see that such arrangements are made as will prevent any block this season.

Item—Wyndham Jetty, £15,000.

Mr. GEORGE: Will the Minister state the probable cost of this jetty, why it is needed, when it is likely to be finished, and whether it is to be constructed by day labour or contract?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The cost of the jetty is approximately £40,000 and it is to be used in connection with the freezing works. The old jetty has fallen to pieces. I cannot yet state whether the piles will be of concrete or cast iron. Where cast iron has been used it has been found cheaper and is standing well. The decking will be of wood and the work will be done by the department.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Water Supply and Sewerage, £337,120:

Item—Water Supply for towns generally, £91,580.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The question of the water supply for town and rail-

way purposes at Narrogin has been before the Government for the last four years. There has been some difficulty in devising a scheme suitable for the growing population of the town and the large railway requirements. I would like to know what is proposed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This item includes provision for a number of town supplies in some of the more important towns, particularly in the agricultural districts.

Mr. George: Are you going to give them decent water?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The best that can be obtained.

Mr. George: Not like you gave them at Geraldton.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Geraldton scheme was intended to be a temporary expedient.

Mr. George: The taxation was not temporary.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of the total, £57,000 is set aside for water supplies in towns, including Brookton, Bolgart, Dumbleyung, Katanning, Narrogin, Bridgetown, and Tambellup and other centres. Negotiations have been in progress between the Water Supply and Railway departments to provide combined supplies. Hitherto the Railway department have provided their supply independently of the requirements of the towns, but we find it is more economical for the two departments to combine in providing a general scheme which will meet the requirements of both. In respect to the towns I have mentioned, the schemes have been under consideration by the officers of the two departments. In some instances arrangements have been concluded, while in others consideration is still proceeding. In respect to Narrogin, the estimated cost of the scheme is £18,000. I cannot say when it will be started. It has been recognised for a long time that Narrogin is badly in need of a water supply, and as soon as an agreement can be arrived at between the two departments there will be no further bar to proceeding with the provision of

the supply, assuming that the money will be available.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Development of goldfields and mineral resources, £84,451:*

Item—State smelter, Ravensthorpe, advances on ore and working expenses in connection with smelting, £50,000.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Are we to go on increasing this vote for advances on ore at Ravensthorpe? We have already advanced a considerable sum, and the money ought to be coming back now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is difficult to say when the money will come in. I had expected some of it would be returned ere this, but owing to the difficulty in obtaining shipping we have not been able to secure it. They are shipping now. The first shipment of 400 tons reached England a few weeks ago, and we expect every day to have the returns in regard to the sale of it.

Mr. George: What will you do with the money when it is returned?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It will be available for use again.

Hon. Frank Wilson: When we spend this vote we will have £130,000 invested in this way.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If we spend this £50,000, yes; but although we have one shipment off it may be some time before we get another. We do not actually advance against the ore at all, we only guarantee the advance. The Commonwealth Bank are making the advances.

Mr. George: What did you do with last year's money then?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We must make provision for the guarantee.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What did you do with last year's money?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We did not advance anything, but the Under Treasurer considers that provision should be made against the guarantee. The facts are that we advanced nothing.

Mr. George: What became of the £60,000?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know. I only know it was not ex-

pended. We made provision on the Estimates to the amount guaranteed by the bank.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am sorry the Minister has not the information. It cannot possibly be that £60,000 is put down as expenditure last year if the money has not really been expended.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is a guarantee against the bond.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the money is put up there is no occasion for a bond. I cannot conceive that any Under Treasurer would set down an item of £60,000 as expenditure if the money was not actually utilised. It may be that the Government have deposited £60,000 at the bank, and that that is the form of guarantee.

The Minister for Mines: I cannot say whether that was done, but we did not find any money. It was a guarantee only.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is a pity the Minister does not know what has become of the money. I think we should report progress until the Minister can secure the information.

Mr. GEORGE: An amount of £60,000 is shown as having been expended last year, yet the Minister says that none of it was expended. Why not report progress and get the information?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are liable to the extent of that amount. The Government having given a guarantee for £60,000, provision must be made on the Estimates for that guarantee. There has been a good deal of difference of opinion between the Under Treasurer and the officers of the Mines Department as to the method of providing for that guarantee, but the Under Treasurer has insisted that provision shall be made. The bank advanced £60,000 under a guarantee from the Government. The bank has not been repaid any of that money, and until the money is repaid the Government are liable.

Mr. George: But where is the £60,000?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not expenditure, but it is a liability.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister, I think, must have been misinformed. The actual expenditure last year was £70,451. Sixty thousand pounds was voted, and is debited as expenditure against that vote. Then there is recoup to Loan Suspense Account of £10,451 under advances to the Treasurer, which is to be recouped out of this year's vote. I cannot conceive of this amount being put up as a guarantee; it requires some explanation. Are wages included in it? Perhaps this is also in connection with smelters.

The Minister for Mines: Operating charges are included.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Development of Agriculture*, £540,074:

Mr. GEORGE: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	18
				—
Majority against	..			1
				—

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson.
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Nairn	(Teller)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Chesson	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heftmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Mullany	Mr. Bolton
	(Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Item—Abattoirs, cold storage, freezing, chilling, and canning works, Wyndham; refrigerating works, export depôt, grain sheds, and sale yards (including land re-

sumptions and original equipment, furniture, etc.), £121,000.

Mr. GEORGE: This item refers to, amongst other things, freezing works at Wyndham. I desire as far as possible to avoid touching on the report of the select committee in this connection, but I think I shall be able to show hon. members, without doing that, a most serious position. Regarding the Wyndham freezing works, the Committee has not had yet any statement from the Government as to the probable cost. Twelve months ago the scope of the project was stated in general terms, but Parliament has merely affirmed, so far, the desirability of erecting the works. Matters have moved to such an extent that members cannot ignore the course of the proposition. The Government attempted to gain information for their guidance, and called in an expert, who made a report. That report dealt with the site of the works, with the questions of jetty accommodation and water supply, and in some measure, but very incompletely, with provision for stock to be treated at the works. With the commercial aspect of the proposition the report dealt in only these few words—

We consider the erection of these works would be a sound commercial proposition, and with the shortage obtaining in the world's visible supply of meat there is ample scope for advancement and development with profitable results.

The works can only be regarded as another of the trading concerns which the policy of the Government has placed upon the country. No estimates of cost of construction, cost of production, or probable returns and profits have been submitted, though it seems as though the cost will be half a million. We have nothing reliable to indicate that Wyndham can produce the stock required to keep the works going. On this point Mr. Cairns, an expert adviser of the Government, expressed himself as follows:—

Wyndham freezing works. As a first consideration, a written agreement with the suppliers of stock for ten years before we spend a penny.

The Minister for Works: We are not going to take his advice on everything.

Mr. GEORGE: This matter is one for experts, and on it I prefer Mr. Cairns' opinion to any *obiter dictum* of Ministers. The Premier gave an indignant declamation to-night because members belittled, as he said, the reputation of Messrs. Merz & McLellan as experts. Mr. Cairns further states that in connection with this project there are no data as to the material at hand. If Ministers are not prepared to give weight to Mr. Cairns' opinion, why do they keep him in the service? The capacity of the works, according to the papers laid on the Table, is 300 cattle per day. Mr. Nevanas' report of the 14th October last, estimates that 30,000 per head can be obtained per annum. But the officer deputed by the Minister for Works in March last to report telegraphed—

Local cattle owners deprecate more than 900 head per week being available.

There is no evidence whatever as to the number of sheep available. Let me give the House a few figures which I have put together and which I believe are correct. The contract, which was let in such a hurry and was afterwards cancelled, amounted to £155,000. The Minister for Works will not contend that under any arrangement he is making at present it is likely to cost less than £155,000. In addition to that the papers disclose that an expenditure of nearly £30,000 is required for the purpose of housing about 350 men, who will have to be sent up there. It is also patent in connection with freight that £6,000 extra will have to be paid. The jetty, we have been told by the Minister, will cost £40,000, and the Government have paid £8,845 to the expert who gave them a report. If the Government make the arrangement they have been attempting to make with Mr. Dunkerley the charges will run into £7,500.

The Minister for Works: Who says we have been attempting to make an arrangement with him?

Mr. GEORGE: I say so.

The Minister for Works: I deny it. Dunkerley will not get it if I have anything to do with the matter.

Mr. GEORGE: Will the Minister let me put it this way?

The Minister for Works: Well, speak honestly.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Yes, speak the truth if you can.

Mr. GEORGE: Mr. Chairman will you put that man out of this place?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): No, he cannot.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask hon. members not to make these interjections. They lead to unpleasantness.

The Minister for Works: It is hard to refrain from interjecting when one hears an hon. member making such incorrect statements.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no need to interject, because in a discussion of this character an hon. member can speak on the subject as often as he likes.

Mr. GEORGE: Will the Minister for Works deny that Mr. Dunkerley has been engaged for these works? Will he deny that Mr. Dunkerley and the Engineer-in-Chief went to Wyndham on the 22nd July in connection with these negotiations?

The Minister for Works: Mr. Dunkerley went there on his own. The Engineer-in-Chief happened to be on the same boat.

Mr. GEORGE: My statement is that an arrangement has been made with Mr. Dunkerley. Surely that cannot be objected to.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): No arrangements have been made.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GEORGE: I repeat that my statement is that if an arrangement has been made—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I tell you no arrangement has been made.

Mr. GEORGE: Mr. Chairman, what am I to do with such a yahoo?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Try to put him out.

Mr. GEORGE: If I was a younger man I would soon put the hon. member out.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is all right, we are about the same age:

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GEORGE: Mr. Dunkerley has been negotiating with the Public Works department and the negotiations resulted in that gentleman being engaged and his charges will probably be in the neighbourhood of £7,500. If no arrangement has been made with him an item probably amounting to that will have to be provided for supervision by the officers of the Works department.

The Premier: Have you a brief for Dunkerley?

Mr. GEORGE: I have not. The Premier knows well that he is not doing himself justice by making such an insinuation. I am stating what is a fact.

The Premier: You have seen Dunkerley more than once.

Mr. GEORGE: That is an absolute lie.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member said that I was out for a bit with Mr. Dunkerley; that is an absolute lie.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): No one said anything of the kind.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the Minister made the statement he must withdraw it and the hon. member must also withdraw the words "It is a lie." Did the Honorary Minister make that interjection?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I did not.

Mr. GEORGE: Then if he did not make the statement you will not require me to withdraw "It is a lie." I have no brief for Dunkerley in any shape or form.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I think the hon. member ought to withdraw the words "It is a lie." They are quite unparliamentary.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Murray-Wellington was of the opinion that his honour had been reflected upon by the Honorary Minister.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I never spoke.

Mr. GEORGE: If the Honorary Minister has nothing to withdraw my remark has no application. I was informing the Committee that if any arrangement had been arrived at with Mr. Dunkerley the charge will probably be in the neighbourhood of £7,500, and if that was not made there would have to be some provision for supervision by departmental officers and that supervision would probably cost a similar amount. There are additions which have been made to this original contract amounting to something like £12,000 and there must be provision made for enhanced costs, in consequence of the delay and also the general tendency of prices going up. I have brought this matter before the House so that members may consider in connection with the subject the probable expenditure of £264,000. There will have to be provision made for the product of these works and an estimate of £250,000 will have to be allowed for vessels, that is assuming that the Government do not charter ships. If they charter ships, that will make a difference. I shall be pleased if it is proved that these figures are the result more of nervousness than anything else. I have made up the cost of the probable turnover for the year. Taking 900 head of cattle per week for 26 weeks—and it will not be contended that the works can be run for more than half a year owing to the season—

The Premier: Easily eight months.

Mr. GEORGE: I am told that 26 weeks is rather a big estimate. However, taking it as 26 weeks, that would give 23,400 head of cattle. Calculating these at an average of 600 lb. per bullock—and I am told by cattle owners that 600 lb. of meat per bullock is a very generous estimate—and allowing that 3d. per lb. is realised by the factory, which I am told is far more than it is possible to get, that would give us £175,500 for the turnover. The hides, horns, bones and other offal I have set down at £25,000, or roughly about £1 per head, which brings the total to £200,500. To work this con-

cern we have to allow salaries for a manager, engineer, and other officers. For the manager I have calculated £750, and for the engineer and other officers £1,250, making a total of £2,000. For the wages of 300 men for 26 weeks—the accommodation for running these works is set down at 350 men—and allowing them £4 a week—I do not think they will be obtained for that—gives a total of £31,200 for wages. The up-and-down steamer fare for 300 men will cost at least £10 per head, a total of £3,000. Their time up and down will have to be paid for by the Government, which will run into another £3,000. The oil fuel, taking 1,000 tons for the 26 weeks, will cost £3,500. The travelling expenses of the officers, manager, supervisors, and so on will not be less than £2,000. For material such as tin plates, solder, cover for carcasses, salt, lubricating oil, repairs, etc., I have allowed £10,000, a total of £51,700. The purchase of cattle, calculated at £5 per head, will be £117,000. Interest at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., sinking fund at $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and depreciation at 2 per cent., will absorb £19,800, which makes a total of £192,100, and will leave a balance between turnover and expenditure of £8,400. Had these works been carried out under the proposition which was turned down by the Government, the remuneration for management alone on that turnover would have run into £6,500 per year, and the percentage for purchasing and other items would have run up to about £9,000. I do not profess to be a cattle man or one who understands the running of chilling or meat works. I have put these figures together as near as I can to let the Government understand what is running through my mind, and to give them an opportunity to offer the House some sort of an assurance as to what we are likely to expect in connection with these works.

The Attorney General: Are not you anticipating to-morrow night's debate?

Mr. GEORGE: No, I am trying to distinguish between the two. The report of the select committee deals with administration. These Estimates deal

with the proposition as a commercial concern. I hope I have said sufficient to cause members to think a little over what we are voting for on this particular item. The expenditure we are likely to incur—not that we wish to stop the works—is a matter the House and the country have a right to be informed upon, as well as the probable result of the operations. Unless we are satisfied on these points we shall have no grounds for voting this money. The works have been considered too large by those on whom we have to rely. Works of one-third the capacity would have been sufficient for Wyndham and works of one-third the capacity at Derby, with the idea of ensuring adequate stock to keep them going. The undertaking is a large one on which the House has a right to be thoroughly satisfied. When Ministers, after entering into these trading concerns, have satisfied themselves, such information as they can give should be given to the House to show that they are entering on good, sound, commercial propositions. So far I have been unable to find more than a mere expression of opinion to this effect, which seems to have influenced Ministers in every step they have taken in this matter. The Government ought to consent to report progress at this stage.

The Premier: You have got a check. Call on the next vote and then we will agree.

Mr. Robinson: Item 59, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Are not we to receive any reply to the questions which have been put? I asked the Minister for Works a few days ago whether it was proposed to let the completion of these works at Wyndham to Mr. Dunkerley or to anyone else by contract, and the Minister said that information could be obtained later on. Now, apparently, we cannot obtain the information.

The Premier: You can get all the information you want, and we shall sit till morning to give it to you.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I would like to know whether Mr. Dunkerley is to be employed as supervisor, whether the works are to be completed by contract,

and whether everyone in this State will have an opportunity to put in a tender. I hope the works will be completed by day labour, and I hope Mr. Dunkerley, whom I do not know, will be employed to supervise the work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) said the revenue from these works will just about balance the expenditure. Before we started running the State steamers cattle could be purchased at Wyndham at £3 per head. In his calculation the hon. member has allowed £5 per head. The price at Wyndham is nothing like that. Apparently the hon. member has cut his estimate of the expenditure as close as possible. It is rather late to question the policy of erecting freezing works at Wyndham. It was the policy of hon. members opposite for years; indeed they entered into a secret contract for the erection of the works. The hon. member went on to show the cost of the works. I know he has been repeatedly in communication with Mr. Dunkerley.

Mr. George: That is not correct.

The Premier: It is correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Will the hon. member deny that he has been at the hotel discussing this question with Mr. Dunkerley?

Mr. George: I never have.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will accept the hon. member's denial, but I have been informed that the hon. member used to go behind the select committee and discuss the question with Mr. Dunkerley at his hotel.

Mr. George: That is absolutely untrue.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If such was the case, in all probability statements were made which the committee could not investigate. The position is that a contract was let for the erection of the works, but unfortunately that contract had to be cancelled.

Mr. Heitmann: You said at one time that there was no contract.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said an interim contract had been entered into but never completed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The question is whether these works are not too large.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is a matter of opinion. I have been assured by a member of another place who represents the district that it will require the full capacity of the works to deal with the cattle to be grown on the outside areas that will certainly be taken up as the result of the erection of the works. That hon. member is very enthusiastic over the works. The member for Murray-Wellington has calculated an estimate of the cost of the works. He knows that the material we have on hand has been purchased at a very low rate, and he also knows that Mr. Dunkerley approached the department with a view to erecting the works on a percentage basis, and offered to put down a deposit of £4,000 as a guarantee that the cost would not exceed a certain figure. Mr. Dunkerley in his estimate provided a substantial sum for shipping, notwithstanding which the estimate did not even approximate the figure suggested by the hon. member. It was somewhere about £155,000, not including water supply.

Mr. George: My figures included water supply.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But Mr. Dunkerley included some £30,000 for shipping. I explained to him that probably the State would undertake that. No agreement has been entered into in respect to the carrying on of the works. The hon. member said we had attempted to get Mr. Dunkerley to make a contract with us; as a matter of fact Mr. Dunkerley tried to get us to make a contract. Again, the hon. member said an arrangement had been entered into. I say no arrangement has been made. I am in negotiation now with a man who desires to start cement works, but that is not to say I have attempted to persuade him to start such works. I object to the hon. member trying to lead other hon. members to a wrong conclusion. The hon. member said this was another State enterprise the Government were rushing into. Let me inform him that Mr. Dunkerley has offered, not only to erect

the works, but to run them for 12 months, paying us interest and sinking fund. It suggests that those who understand the question are of opinion that the works will be profitable. A point the hon. member lost sight of is that the works are to be erected with the object of developing a portion of the North-West at present lying idle, and to enable station owners to dispose of their stock. There are thousands of cattle there unfit to send to the market, and to deal with them it is necessary that canning works should be erected. Hon. members opposite have been enthusiastic on this point.

Mr. Heitmann: And you have been just as enthusiastic in your opposition to it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. Heitmann: At the 1908 election we fought the Wilson Government on it.

The Premier: That is incorrect.

Mr. Heitmann: Three years and four months ago the then Minister for Works reported against the project.

The Premier: It was not the works, but the method proposed, that we fought against in 1908.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There have been many changes since then. I have supported my friends opposite on many occasions on which they have since accused me of opposing them. It was a very common occurrence for me to cross the floor of the House to support the hon. member during the time when he was in office. I cannot be expected to say what is going to be the actual result in the commencement of these works. Mr. Dunkerley offered to erect them on a five per cent. basis at a certain figure, and to run them for the first 12 months, which would probably be the worst time of any.

Mr. Thomson: That was conditionally on his erecting them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He was to pay interest and sinking fund and depreciation for the first 12 months.

Mr. Willmott: That is well worth consideration.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have not yet considered that offer. I was personally sympathetic towards the project of Mr. Dunkerley carrying out the works on that basis. I thought when he came to discuss this question with me as Minister that we were talking the matter over in confidence. To-night the member for Murray-Wellington has denied that he was wont to go to Mr. Dunkerley's hotel for the purpose of discussing the works with him. At all events, I could not help thinking that many of the matters which Mr. Dunkerley and myself have discussed were conveyed to the hon. member to use indirectly against us afterwards.

Mr. George: Nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has, however, denied this. I got so far with the negotiations with Mr. Dunkerley that I had his offer typed and gave Ministers a copy in order that they might go into the matter and see whether or not it would be better to hand over the construction to him on the percentage basis. In the meantime Mr. Dunkerley left for the Eastern States. I believe the Chief Architect had made some arrangements with him for his engineer to inspect the machinery which was being manufactured in Melbourne, as Mr. Dunkerley had recommended the class of machinery which was to be used. Mr. Dunkerley has undertaken this at a small charge, and the method was cheaper to us than engaging an outside engineer. So far as the progress of the work is concerned, I may say that the water supply is being carried out, and we hope within a few weeks to have it completed. Men have been sent up for the purpose of erecting canning rooms, a house for the staff, and one or two other buildings which are to be used temporarily for the storage of material which has to be under cover during the rainy season. The question of the main building, which will be in reinforced concrete, has not yet been settled. The work will probably be carried out departmentally under the supervision of the officers of the Public Works Department. We have been advised not to have an engineer to take

charge of the construction, but to appoint the official who would in all probability run the works afterwards to advise the department as to the installation of machinery and other matters. Up to the present I have not placed that advice before my colleagues.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you got a man?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have made no attempt to get one yet. I did not place this question before my colleagues because I was waiting for the report of the select committee. It is probable that the concrete building will not be commenced before March next.

Mr. Heitmann: Have you any idea as to the cost of the water supply?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The capital cost is somewhere between £30,000 and £40,000.

Mr. GEORGE: I may explain that I have only seen Mr. Dunkerley three times in my life. I saw him once before the select committee was appointed, I saw him on another occasion when I went with the full knowledge of the committee to ask him to give evidence and I then saw him only for five minutes at his hotel, and I saw him once more when he came before the select committee. Since he left the committee room I have never spoken to him or had any communication with him, directly or indirectly, and I do not know where he is, on my word of honour.

The Premier: The name of the hotel where you saw him, and the time at which you saw him can be furnished.

Mr. GEORGE: I can prove that any assertion of that kind is untrue.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GEORGE: I have given my word, and I do not need to give my word twice to anyone.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat?

Mr. THOMSON: In my opinion, if the Government have a man with knowledge of works of this description and who will put them upon a 5 per cent. basis, they should accept the offer. I feel convinced that it would be a business proposition. Admittedly, on the Minis-

ter's own showing, the departmental officers have no expert knowledge of the subject. In my opinion the Government would be wise to reconsider their decision on the point.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It would mean another £8,000 for twelve months' supervision.

Mr. THOMSON: Under departmental control, I feel sure the estimate will be largely exceeded, what with district allowances, travelling expenses, and so forth.

The Minister for Works: We would have to pay for supervision in addition to paying the expert.

Mr. THOMSON: There is no need for the Government to appoint a supervisor of their own if the expert is competent. Even departmental work is not always carried out in accordance with plans and specifications, though, no matter how absurd they may be, these are always enforced on contractors.

The Premier: In connection with what departmental works has that been the case?

Mr. THOMSON: I speak of what I know. By letting the work to the expert suggested—whom, by the way, I personally do not know at all—the Government would get the work done within the estimate.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I would much prefer that public tenders should be called for this work, and indeed for every work. If, on the other hand, the Government have decided to carry out this work departmentally, let it be done with their responsible officers. The bringing in of an outside man would only mean another claim. But let us see that we have departmental officers who can do the work properly.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Roads and Bridges, Public Buildings, etc.*, £59,000:

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is behaving childishly and unfairly in not reporting progress at this stage, in accordance with his promise.

The Premier: No. I did not promise.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier cannot stand to his word.

The Premier: I take exception to that remark.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier said he would report progress after the last vote was passed.

Item—Perth-Fremantle-road, reinstatement, £6,500.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Will the Minister explain on what basis it has been decided to allot this amount to the different local authorities. I would also like to know if the Government are going to improve the back road, in order that we may be able to travel safely and conveniently to Fremantle. I would also like to know what is being done about the Karrakatta-road, which is in a bad state of repair. Moreover, a section of the Perth-Fremantle-road is closed to traffic.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I admit the work of reconstructing the Perth-Fremantle-road is going on slowly but I do not see the necessity for closing the whole of this road. I shall make inquiries and see whether a portion of the road cannot be opened. In regard to the payments, the Government came to a decision to spread the payment over a number of years. After that a select committee of the Legislative Assembly dealt with the matter and the report of that committee will doubtless come up for discussion in a day or two.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then you have not decided how you are going to apporportion it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has been decided to spread the payments over a period of 16 years.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about the Karrakatta-road?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have been effecting some repairs there in conjunction with the Cemetery Board.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Will you see that the Perth-Fremantle-road is kept open, because the Karrakatta-road is almost impassable.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was not aware that any portion of the Perth-Fremantle-road was closed. I will inquire into that without delay.

Item—Public buildings, £30,000.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Will the Minister inform the Committee how much has been expended on the Woorloo sanatorium? I notice it is to be completed this year. We are aware that a large sum of money has been spent there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot state the exact amount but I know it has exceeded the estimate. The increased cost of material has involved an excess of £18,000. The last estimate I saw in regard to this institution was £110,000, which, of course, includes machinery, electric light, plant, etc.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Other undertakings, £168,044:

Mr. ROBINSON: I understood the Premier to state that as soon as we finished the roads and bridges and public buildings vote he would agree to report progress. Is he going to keep his word?

The Premier: Is the hon. member entitled to address himself to the Committee in that fashion?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not entitled to do so. Moreover, the debates in Committee are becoming irregular and it will be necessary to restrict them in the future.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Surely we can elicit information from the Premier as to what he proposes to do, because his action will control our actions also.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no means by which the hon. member can rise on a vote and ask the Premier a question as to what he proposes to do.

The PREMIER: In view of the remarks made by the leader of the Opposition and the impertinent question asked by the member for Canning, I would like to explain that I am not desirous of detaining members unreasonably. An understanding was arrived at, although it was not in the nature of an agreement, that the balance of the Loan Estimates would be put through to-night. That understanding was come to on Thursday night last. We have not quite completed the Loan Estimates.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Excuse me, you never mentioned anything about it.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition is not the only member in the House.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I am the only member with whom you can have an understanding.

Mr. Willmott: Consult me and we shall all go home.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition was not consulted and there was no agreement made. There was an understanding that the Loan Estimates would be completed to-night. I am not going to argue the point. I wish to clear up the other point raised, that I am not keeping my word. At 11 o'clock members asked to report progress on the first item under development of agriculture. I then pointed out that it was not desirable to discuss this matter twice over. I had given my word earlier to bring on the motion for the adoption of the select committee's report to-morrow when the whole question could be discussed from every phase. Then I offered to report progress if members would allow roads and bridges to be called on, so that we could catch the last train.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: They did so.

The PREMIER: No. The member for Murray-Wellington spoke till 11.30 and asked for an explanation. Would the Minister for Works let him go without an explanation?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I thought he was going to let it go without an explanation.

The PREMIER: No. I told the Minister to make the explanation. We have now been detained till after midnight and it is unfair to those members who have to travel by train to ask that progress be now reported.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: When we agreed to meet at 3 o'clock instead of 4.30 in the afternoon, it was understood that we would adjourn at a reasonable hour, an earlier hour than we had been in the habit of adjourning.

The Premier: Not with the stonewalling going on.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There has been no stonewalling. We have not yet

adjourned at a reasonable hour since we have been meeting at 3 o'clock and the Minister has not conducted the business of the House properly or treated us fairly. There was no understanding with members of the Opposition nor were we consulted.

The Premier: I sat there once and know how you consulted me.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Now the Premier is getting insulting. I always consulted the Premier and on every occasion kept my word and I ask him to keep his arrangement. If he wants fair treatment from us, he must keep his promise. If there is an arrangement to be made, as leader of the Opposition, expect the arrangement to be made with me, and when made to be carried out. There was no understanding when we reported progress last week.

Mr. Robinson: But there was an understanding at 11.30.

The Minister for Works: I had not given my explanation.

Mr. Bolton: The member for Murray-Wellington was stonewalling.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He was not. The Premier is wrong in stating that we can debate the whole question to-morrow. The member for Murray-Wellington simply called attention to the excessive cost of the proposed works and warned the Government that the works might be too large. To-morrow we shall deal with the report of the select committee on the contract of Nevanas & Co. That has nothing to do with the item on the Estimates.

Mr. Bolton: Do not you think it was a fair proposal, when the Premier promised to put that motion first on the Notice Paper for to-morrow, not to stonewall to-night?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There has been no stonewalling.

The Premier: There has.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There has not. I know what stonewalling is from scores of experiences when the present Premier was in Opposition. No one on this side has made a stonewalling speech.

The Premier: There was reason for our stonewalling, but there is none for yours.

Mr. Thomson: There has been no stonewalling.

The Premier: What do you propose to do if I report progress?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The member for Murray - Wellington had finished speaking and the member for Canning had called on the next item and the Premier said if he passed that he would report progress.

The Premier: If I agree to report progress, will you finish these Estimates to-morrow after finishing the motion?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know how long that debate will take.

The Premier: There you are; I cannot make any arrangement with you. You will not commit yourself.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I will promise to sit to get these Estimates finished after we have finished the debate on the motion to-morrow but I cannot say that we will finish the debate to-morrow.

The Minister for Works: We had better get them through now.

The Premier: That is an undertaking. If we report progress now you will complete the Loan business to-morrow. We have to get it up to the Council.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am willing to do that but I cannot undertake that the debate will be finished to-morrow. We shall be considering the report on a big question and if every member wants to speak when shall we finish it? I will undertake, after finishing the other debate, to complete these Estimates.

The Premier: I am speaking of getting the Appropriation Bill to the Council. They are waiting for business.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then start with these Estimates at 3 o'clock and take the other motion afterwards.

The Premier: Will you complete the Appropriation Bill?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Before we rise, if you wish it. There has been no stonewalling.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT CONTINUANCE.

Message received notifying that the Council could see no reason for departing from the procedure adopted in amending the Bill.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with a further amendment.

*House adjourned at 12.28 a.m.
(Wednesday).*

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 3rd November, 1915.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.