Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 17th July, 1906.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4·30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

ELECTION RETURNS (2).

MR. SPEAKER announced the return of two writs for elections extraordinary; showing that for Coolgardie Mr. William Trezise Eddy (who had resigned and stood for re-election), also for South Fremantle Mr. Arthur Elvin Davies (in room of MR. A. J. Diamond deceased) had been duly elected.

MR. EDDY and MR. DAVIES took the oath and subscribed the roll.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the TREASURER: Copies of Orders in Council under Section 35 of the Audit Act.

QUESTION—TIMBER AREAS FOR SETTLEMENT.

MR. A. J. WILSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has any inspection been made by the Lands Department with a view to ascertaining the extent of land suitable for settlement on the Rockingham and Jarrahdale Timber Concession? 2, Is the Department in possession of such information approximately? 3, If not, are the Government prepared to make this investigation at an early date?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: Yes. The inspection was made by one of the forest rangers, and his report with plan is filed in the Lands Department, but the information obtained is only very approximate. If it is desirable to get more information of a detailed character, we are prepared to do it.

QUESTION—TIMBER CUTTING, FLORA AND FAUNA RESERVE.

MR. A. J. WILSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Was the application for a protection area by Whittaker Bros. on the Fauna and Flora Reserve referred to the Advisory Board before approval? 2, If not, why not?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. 2, Apparently it was not considered necessary by the then Minister.

QUESTION—TIMBER FOR EASTERN STATES.

MR. A. J. WILSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Do the Government propose taking any action for the purpose of securing to local timber producers the right to tender for all Government and municipal supplies of hardwoods in the Eastern States? 2, If so, what?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Representations are being made to the various Governments of the Eastern States with the view of inducing them to include Western Australian timbers in specifications in connection with tenders called for the supply of hardwoods.

QUESTION—ADVERTISING, PER INCH.

MR. GORDON asked the Premier: What is the price per inch paid by the Government for advertisements in the *West Australian* and *Morning Herald* newspapers?

THE PREMIER replied: (1.) *West Australian*, 4s., 5s., 6s.; average 5s. per inch. *Morning Herald*, 3s. and 4s.; average 3s. 6d. per inch.

QUESTION—STATE HOTEL, PROFIT.

MR. LYNCH asked the Minister for Mines: What were the profits for the State Hotel, Gwalia, for the years ending June 1904, June 1905, and June 1906?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied:—

	£	s.	d.
Year ending June, 1904, not including depreciation ...	588	16	4
Year ending June, 1905, not including depreciation ...	589	17	1
Year ending June, 1906, not including depreciation ...	2,547	7	10
Total	£3,726	1	3
Less depreciation written off in profit and loss account for year ending 30th June, 1906, as under:—			
Building, 10 per cent. off cost (£5,575 0s. 5d.)	557	10	0
Furniture, 15 per cent. off cost, £1,105 17s. 11d.	165	17	8
	723	7	8
Balance after allowing for above depreciation	£3,002	13	7

QUESTION—SPIRITS ANALYSES.

MR. MONGER asked the Treasurer: When will the report of the Government Analyst on certain spirits tested by the department under his control be placed upon the table of this House?

THE TREASURER replied: Any such request will be fully considered, if a motion desiring their production be moved in the House.

QUESTION — METROPOLITAN WATER-WORKS, A CLERK.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Works: 1, The name of the clerk recently appointed to the Metropolitan Waterworks Office? 2, Date of appointment? 3, By whom appointed? 4, The name of his last employer?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Walter Turpin. 2 and 3, Appointed for two months on 31st January, 1906, permanently appointed by my predecessor on the recommendation of the Secretary of the Metropolitan Waterworks Board on 29th March, 1906. 4, The Proprietary Coalfields of W.A., Limited.

QUESTION—JETTY CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR.

MR. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has an appointment as supervisor over the contractors of the Cottesloe and Bunbury jetties been made? 2, If so, who was appointed, when was the appointment made, and by whom? 3, Was the person appointed an officer of the Public Works Department?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1. A well-qualified temporary supervisor was placed in charge, on wages, no staff supervisor being available. 2. (*a*) Mr. M. Reid. (*b*) 17th April, 1906, to Cottesloe Jetty, and afterwards transferred to Bunbury Jetty, his place being taken by a supervisor paid on wages sheets. (*c*) Executive engineer for the contract. 3. Not recently, but he was formerly in the Public Works Department for four years, and in the Goldfields Water Supply Department for over three years.

QUESTION—ASYLUM ELECTRIC LIGHT.

MR. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Was a contract for the installation of an electric light plant (or any part of it) for the Claremont Asylum let to Messrs. Noyes Bros. or any other firm? 2, If so, when, and for what amount? 3, Were public tenders called for the work? 4, If not, why?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No contract has been let for this work either to Messrs. Noyes Brothers, or to any firm, but, in consequence of the Government Electrical Engineer being absent in England, Messrs. Noyes Brothers, on the recommendation of the officers of the department, were appointed to draw up plans and specifications on which tenders can be called for the machinery and electrical work. 2, 3, 4, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—COLLIE COAL TENDERS.

MR. HOLMAN asked the Treasurer: 1, The names of the collieries tendering and prices per ton submitted when tenders were called for the supply of local coal? 2, The calorific value of and the price per ton paid to the various collieries for coal supplied? 3, Whether the full amount is paid by the Railway Department? 4, If not, what arrangements have been made? 5, What amount of royalty per ton is the State entitled to? 6, Is the royalty collected, or allowed as a rebate in addition to the price paid for the coal?

THE TREASURER replied: 1, Cardiff Coal-mining Company, Limited, 7s. 9d. per ton; Collie Proprietary Coalfields of W.A., Limited, 8s. 2d.; Scottish Collieries of W.A., Limited, 8s. 5½d.; Collie Co-operative Collieries, Limited, 8s. 10d. 2 (*a*), Co-operative 10,833 B.T.U., Proprietary 10,560, Scottish 10,302, Cardiff 9,571; (*b*) Co-operative 8s. 9d. per ton, Proprietary 8s. 9d., Scottish 8s., Cardiff 7s. 9d. 3, To the Proprietary and Co-operative, yes; to the Scottish and Cardiff, no. 4, The price fixed by the Government is 8s. 9d. per ton for coal of or above 10,500 B.T.U., with a proportionate reduction for less calorific value. 5, 3d. per ton. 6, A rebate off the royalty, as recommended by Dr. Jack, is allowed in addition to the price paid per ton.

QUESTIONS (2)—SHOOTING AT FREMANTLE, COMPENSATION.

MR. TROY asked the Attorney General: 1, In connection with the shooting of Mr. Albert by Detective Hornsby, what solicitor or firm of solicitors acted on behalf of Mr. Albert when claiming compensation? 2, What process of law was issued for the recovery of such compensation, and by what process was the compensation assessed? 3, Who signed the receipt in settlement of the claim?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Messrs. Moss and Barsden. 2, Compensation was obtained without issue of process at law, and the amount paid was the sum suggested by Mr. Albert through his solicitors. 3, Messrs. Moss and Barsden.

CONSTABLE HUNTER'S POSITION.

MR. TROY also asked the Premier: 1, Was Constable Hunter reduced because of his connection with the shooting of Mr. Albert at Fremantle? 2, Is it true that he has since been reinstated with an increase in pay of 1s. 6d. per day? 3, If so, who recommended his reinstatement, and what were the reasons for same?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Constable Hunter was returned to uniform duty in consequence of the part he took in connection with the wrongful entry, by the police, of a house occupied by Mr. Albert and others in Fremantle, and the arrest of an innocent man, in March, 1904. Mr. Albert was shot by another member of the force on that occasion. 2, Constable Hunter has since been reappointed to plain clothes duty, with the usual extra allowance of 1s. 6d. per day. 3, The Officer in Charge, Criminal Investigation Branch, because of Hunter's special fitness for the work to be performed.

QUESTION (REPLY)—COPPER LEASES MR. GRANT'S.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The other evening the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) asked me certain questions in regard to the purchase of certain leases from Mr. Grant in the Phillips River. I was not able to obtain the information then, but I have certain information to-day which I wish to give to the hon. member. The original options obtained last year by Mr. Kaufman were secured by Mr. Grant, and included the Elverton group of leases. The option over the Elverton group was abandoned. Subsequent to the abandonment, Mr. Grant made an attempt to float the Elverton leases locally, but was not successful. He afterwards, I am informed, went East for a similar purpose, but again with a similar result. On Mr. Grant's return, he and Mr. Kaufman met on or about the 4th June, and the latter offered to purchase the leases, which offer was accepted by Mr. Grant on or not later than 11th June. The smelter was sold on 18th June, and agreement of sale completed 6th July. Mr. Grant informed the Secretary for Mines during the progress of the negotiations for the sale of the smelter that he saw no objection to such sale provided the person acquiring the smelter was bound to purchase ore under the existing Government Regulations.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

MR. GORDON.

MR. GORDON (Canning): With the permission of the House, I would like to make a personal explanation in reference to my resignation as Government Whip. A good deal more prominence has been given to this matter than would have been done if the Government had not on last

Thursday evening blocked me from speaking.

MR. HEITMANN (Labour Member): It was not so.

MR. GORDON: Or it was the Labour party? I do not know which, but it is just the same. Under the circumstances it seems to me I am compelled to make a fuller explanation. My reasons for resigning the Government whipship are not that my political opinions have altered in any shape or form, nor that my allegiance to the party has changed one iota; but for the simple fact that there are too many Premiers for me to do justice to the position. I want to point out to the Premier—[MR. BOLTON: Which one?]—that he has sitting behind him and supporting him a very solid majority. But members should recognise that they are sent here to represent the people, and not to represent any individual member of the Ministry; nor are they in any way going to allow the Ministry to use them as a number of catspaws or pawns for their individual self-advancement. My action, I hope, is one that will bring home to the Premier and his Ministry that they must act in unison, that they must, with their majority behind them, see that the business of this House is conducted in a proper manner.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is exceeding a personal explanation. He must confine himself to that.

MR. GORDON: The explanation of my resignation is that there are too many Premiers, and I could not act under them with justice to my constituents.

MR. HEITMANN.

MR. HEITMANN (Cue): I crave the indulgence of the House in a matter of personal explanation. I spoke in this Chamber last Thursday night on the Address-in-Reply; and at the beginning I asked for an adjournment of the debate, which was refused by the party sitting opposite. After speaking for about an hour, the question (adoption of Address) was put and carried, the House adjourned, and I was leaving this Chamber when I was accused by a certain member of conspiring with the members sitting opposite to deprive him of speaking in that debate. I was also surprised to read next morning in a newspaper that I sat here merely for the purpose of stonewalling. I wish to explain to the House that I had no idea of depriving the hon. member of the right of speaking, nor was there any agreement whatsoever between the party opposite and myself as to how I should act or how long I should speak. I should also like to say, in personal explanation, that I had no idea of stonewalling. I spoke for an hour, and it is well-known to this House that some members spoke for at least two hours. I merely wish to say again that I was accused of conspiring with the party opposite to deprive the hon. member of the right of speaking; that it is not true; and that there was no agreement whatsoever between myself and the party sitting opposite, or myself and the Leader of the Opposition.

SUPPLY BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) in moving the second reading said: I wish simply to remind members that on the motion that the House should go into Committee in connection with the Message received, I explained that this was a temporary measure, and that it went on the usual lines; that it was to provide sufficient funds to carry on for two months. Members will find in Schedule A the particulars of the several departments under which this expenditure will take place, and in Schedule B they will see particulars of the expenditure which is proposed from General Loan Fund. The amount is estimated very crudely, just taking one-sixth of the past year's expenditure as the approximate amount, which may or may not be reached. As I have previously informed the House, I hope that some considerable time before we get to the end of August I shall be in a position to have the Budget Speech and the Estimates ready to place before Parliament.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): We are glad to have the assurance that the Budget Speech and the Estimates are likely to be down in August, although when, at the termination of last session, we came to an agreement by which the House was to meet on the 31st May, it was predicted then that we were to have the Estimates even earlier than before the end of August as is now suggested.

The Treasurer stated the other night that I was very pleased indeed to enter into that arrangement to conclude before Christmas, but the only motive that prompted me on that occasion to enter into such an agreement was not that I was desirous of completing the work before Christmas, but rather that I was desirous of entering into an arrangement by which this House could assemble much earlier than in previous years. I would like to have the opportunity, on the second reading of this measure, to refer to some of the remarks which were made by the Treasurer the other night, and to which I had no opportunity of replying, having spoken previously. I referred to certain expenditure from revenue in three departments of this State being much less for the financial year which has just expired than for the year ending 30th June, 1905. The Treasurer seemed to doubt the information which I supplied. I supplied it from the financial publication of the Government, namely the *Statistical Register*, which is published monthly, and it is stated on the first page of that publication that it is issued expressly for the purpose of supplying to the members, politicians, and others interested in the welfare of the State reliable information, which they may use for the various purposes required. [Interjection by the TREASURER.] If the hon. gentleman did not express any doubt as to the reliability of the records, he must have expressed doubt on my statement, because he certainly did doubt the information I gave to the House. However, I may say I have compared those returns as issued in that publication with the returns published in the Treasury Department itself, and I find that they tally and that the expenditure was less in those three departments—the Railways, Mines, and Public Works—to the extent of £174,000. The Treasurer in making the comparison and trying to show the superior qualities from a financial point of view of the Administration with which he was connected, had a great deal to say in regard to what they were going to do and the contracts which had been signed; but, after all, the Administration with which I was comparing his term had only twelve months, and therefore it was much fairer, if we were to have any comparison, to take the twelve months previous in order to see what was actually done, rather than what was promised to be done in the future. That is the result of the comparison, and one can only express pleasure that it will not be necessary this year, according to the promise of the Treasurer, to have several Supply Bills brought down and to grant supplies to carry on affairs without the Estimates being brought down for our consideration, or without Parliament being made acquainted with the nature of the expenditure which is contemplated. I have no farther remark to make, except to say that of course this is one of the Bills which we have to expect at the beginning of the session, and I hope it will be the last of this nature so far as the present session is concerned.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I have heard that before from that seat.

MR. W. B. GORDON (Canning): In regard to the item "Lands surveys contingencies, £11,066," I do not know whether this amount provides for alteration of trucks. A question was asked in the House of the Minister for Railways, but that hon. gentleman never gave me any direct information with regard to the alteration of those trucks. I have been led to believe that an expenditure of something like £60 a truck, covering a good many trucks, running into something like £1,600, is about to take place. I should strongly object, because there is no reason whatever to alter all our cattle trucks. That is what it means. They are tin-lined, and are simply water tanks. In the summer the cattle are stifled. The member for Yilgarn says the answers given to him were incorrect.

MR. HORAN: Absolutely.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: What item is the hon. member discussing?

MR. GORDON: "Lands and Surveys": Does it not come under that department?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No; under "Agriculture."

MR. GORDON: It makes no difference to the way in which these tick cattle are handled. They are kept weeks and weeks in the yards, and it is no wonder they are ticked. To show what a fallacy this question of tick is—and I believe it is only done in the interest of certain parties—the Government two and a half

years ago gave three firms in Fremantle three steers to be kept in their yards with tick cattle. I believe that one of those steers was sold the other day as a fat bullock to Connor, Doherty and Co. after being two and a half years in the yards. That surely ought to be proof enough to the Minister for Lands that tick will not kill a bullock or steer or anything else. In addition to that, we have the opinion of Mr. Morton Craig that he would be only too glad to keep tick cattle on his property, for he has proved that tick will not generate here to the detriment of stock. Also as to America we have noticed in the *West Australian* that tick cattle and clean cattle are divided in yards only by a little gangway. Here we have tinlined trucks on our railways, and mind you, the railways are fenced. If the ticks did fall out they could not get into paddocks. The position is absolutely ridiculous and absurd, but it has a serious aspect as regards the cost of meat in Perth. In 1905 something like four or five thousand head of tick cattle went from the north of South Australia and from our State to Queensland and New South Wales.

MR. GULL: That is where the tick came from.

MR. GORDON: It is where we get our "tick" from, I believe.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is hardly making a second-reading speech. I consider it is a committee-stage speech. The hon. member will have an opportunity of making a speech in Committee on any particular clause. He is at liberty to speak as often as he likes in Committee, but he is not making a second-reading speech now.

MR. GORDON: Very well.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Schedule A—*Consolidated Revenue*, £469,509.

Division VIA.—Premier's Department, £63:

MR. TAYLOR: If no member wished to speak to a previous item, he desired to know how many officers were employed in the Premier's Department.

THE TREASURER: Two; the secretary and another clerk.

MR. TAYLOR: In past years there had been much discussion as to the necessity for a Premier's Department. When Sir John Forrest was Premier there was a Premier's Department, but when Mr. Leake became Premier there was considerable discussion, and the abolition of the department followed. It was held that it was only necessary for the Premier to have a secretary without any department. He (Mr. Taylor) had been strongly opposed to a Premier's Department, and he was equally now opposed to building up one.

THE TREASURER: No Premier's Department was being built up.

MR. TAYLOR: But there was an increase. He hoped the Premier would follow the attitude of Mr. Leake or Mr. James in his relation towards this department.

THE PREMIER: It was Mr. James who instituted it.

MR. TAYLOR: Prior to that the Colonial Secretary's Department and the Premier's Department had been amalgamated. There was no longer necessity for a Premier's Department. He had noticed for a considerable time that there was more than one officer in the department; and it would mean that the old difficulty would arise and Parliament would again have to emphasise the need for abolishing the department, except as it was carried on by Mr. Leake or Mr. James.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member had spoken with much assurance regarding the duties of this department; but the officers of the department had as much work as they could possibly do. The secretary was back almost every night of the week. On Friday last there were 86 letters dictated and sent out of the office, and that took a considerable amount of time. All the communications with the Federal Department went through the office, also those with the Public Service Commissioner. The position of secretary to the Premier was no sinecure.

MR. BOLTON: It would be far better to increase the staff and stop the miserable coming back at night.

THE PREMIER: Owing to the number of persons seeking interviews with

the Premier during the day it was often night before the secretary had a chance to attend to his work.

MR. BOLTON: That should not be.

MR. TAYLOR: There was no desire to cast any reflection on the secretary, who was a good officer, as his (Mr. Taylor's) experience has long since told him; but we did not desire to see a department built up. He quite recognised there was a deal of work being done in the way of correspondence, but a large portion of it could be done by the correspondence branch of the Colonial Secretary's office. He hoped the Premier would go into that aspect of the question. When he was Colonial Secretary he repeatedly pointed out to the then Premier (Mr. Daglish) that there was no necessity to build up a Premier's department. Six or eight years ago the Opposition repeatedly attacked Sir John Forrest concerning this department, and very harsh and nasty things were said concerning the then Premier's secretary, who was a very able officer. There was plenty of work for the Premier's secretary to do, but a deal of it could be done by other departments. He desired to pass no strictures upon the officer who had too much work to do, but it was the desire of every officer to build up a department because he (the officer) would be more important if he had five or six officers under him.

THE PREMIER: This officer happened to have only one.

MR. TAYLOR: At one time the officer had none; so there had been an increase of one for the year. It only meant that in a few years there would be a staff. He would debate the point when the Estimates came on for consideration, if there was any increase in the number of officers and the amount.

Division VII.—Treasury, £2,174:

MR. BOLTON: Where was the necessity for such a large sum for contingencies? There was a sum of £179,267 for contingencies in Schedule A, against £290,000 for matters specified. That was unsatisfactory. The Treasurer should be able to give some reason why contingencies amounted to such a large sum.

THE TREASURER: In the olden days, when a temporary Supply Bill was brought down, there was no schedule attached, and the House was asked to vote a lump sum to carry on with. Evidently members were attempting a second-reading debate, as on the Estimates.

MR. TAYLOR: The money would be spent when the Estimates came down for consideration.

THE TREASURER: The services of the Government must go on. These estimates of expenditure for two months were based on last year's expenditure. The hon. member wanted to know what the item "contingencies" meant in the Treasury Department. If the hon. member referred to last year's Estimates, he would see exactly what the item meant.

MR. BOLTON: Before asking the question, he had looked.

THE TREASURER: Under the Tender Board, there was a sum of £1,000 for incidentals, including advertising etcetera. There was another item of £2,700, including postages, stationery, printing, travelling, etcetera. Members would understand just as well as he did what that meant. When the Labour party were in power, they had to bring down a Bill with a schedule exactly similar to this. It was to be hoped the Bill would be passed through, as the Government wanted the authority of Parliament to spend the money they were spending.

MR. BOLTON: There was no desire to have a second-reading debate; but he had asked on the first item for an explanation of the amount for contingencies. There was in one case a sum of over £40,000 for contingencies, against £3,000 for matters specified.

THE TREASURER: The amount for contingencies was based on the amount voted last year. If members required more information, they must refer to the Estimates for last year.

Division XI.—Literary and Scientific Grants, £2,738:

MR. BATH: If this vote was based on the amount passed last year it would include the extra £1,000 voted for the public library, and £500 for a snake house.

THE TREASURER: It did not necessarily mean that this amount would be expended, and it would not commit the Committee to the items referred to.

MR. WALKER: Was there any money available for up-country mechanics' institutes and libraries? Generally small votes were granted like £20 for the town of Kanowna for the library there, or £20 for Bulong. He had approached the Treasurer and the previous Treasurer to get special grants for these places. Could a few pounds be obtained for this purpose? It was a serious matter to the miners in places outback. In Perth, not only had the people a public library, which was luxuriously supported, but there were other lending libraries and institutions. In outback places, however, no such institutions were provided, and the public had to depend on the mechanics' institutes. Could any provision be made from this item for grants for such institutions as he had named?

MR. A. J. WILSON: The time had come when the indifferent, haphazard, and spontaneous way of giving grants to institutions should be stopped once and for all. There should be some system, so that the question whether certain institutions should or should not get a vote, and whether the sum of £5, £10, £15, or £20 depended on the persuasiveness of a member. There should be a system by which every public library and reading room should get a fair distribution of the vote provided by Parliament. The Treasurer should give the Committee a definite promise that the indifferent and haphazard system which had obtained in the past should not be carried on. He hoped that by the time the Estimates were considered, some plan of distribution would be brought about.

THE TREASURER: In reply to the member for Kanowna, votes such as had been referred to were granted in a lump sum on the general Estimates and then allocated. No grants would be made until after the general Estimates were passed, when the sum voted would be divided amongst the different institutions throughout the State. With regard to the question raised by the member for Forrest, he would be only too happy if the Government could place the allocation of the votes on some sound basis. He was in accord with the idea, but it was a more difficult subject to tackle than members considered. He would look into the question to see if he could devise some scheme by which a certain sum could be handed to institutions commensurate with the amount subscribed. That perhaps would not be fair to new institutions. If the member had some scheme in his mind, he would be glad of the suggestion.

Division XV.—Printing, £6,325:

MR. A. J. WILSON: No one could gainsay the fact that in connection with the Government Printing establishment a condition of affairs existed which was not creditable to the administration of that department. The Government Printing Office had generally been regarded as a sort of old men's depôt for people who by some means or other had got behind the ordinary up-to-date methods in regard to printing. A considerable sum was swallowed up by this department, and the time had come when it was incumbent that the Treasurer of the day who controlled the department should recognise that some economy was necessary in the general expenditure. This was the most extravagant and expensive department in the State, and it was to be hoped some endeavour would be made by the present Government, in the opportunity which undoubtedly existed in the department, to exercise some economy which would be of advantage to the State in general. The time had come to adopt some modern methods. There appeared to be an unduly large percentage of hand operators employed at the Government Printing Office, but the time had arrived in modern establishments when machinery had to be obtained. The printing department had a right to be run as cheaply and as advantageously to the State interests as it possibly could be. He hoped the Treasurer would be able to assure the country that as far as he was concerned, some legitimate endeavour had been made to place this department on a basis of economy and in keeping with the finances of the State.

THE TREASURER welcomed the hon. member's remarks, and had already taken the action indicated. So far, the Government Printing Office had been very costly, and Ministers were considering means for effecting economy in printing and stationery. The office had just been placed under a new manager, whom he (the Treasurer) had instructed to conduct it on the same lines as a private

printing establishment. An estimate of the cost of all work passing through the printer's hands was expected. The new Government Printer, who had been in charge for about a fortnight only, was considering the reorganising of the establishment and the installation of more modern machinery. His report would receive the earnest attention of Cabinet, who recognised the need for economy, and intended as far as possible to carry it out.

MR. TAYLOR: The pensions paid to the ex-Government Printer and his predecessor totalled about £700 a year, while the present printer received £500. If the pensions were a charge on the department, no wonder it was so unsuccessful. The Government Printer and other officers should be adequately paid, so that they might like men, in private employment, make some provision for old age.

MR. WALKER: Was not this contingency vote intended to cover the expense to be incurred at the end of this month by the retirement of a number of public servants to whom the Commissioner, Mr. Jull, had given notice of dismissal?

THE TREASURER had no knowledge of any such notices; and even if they were given, the sums due to the officers affected would be included in salaries and not in contingencies. As to the query of the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor), all pensions under the Superannuation Act were separately provided in the Estimates, and not charged to the departments concerned. He (the Treasurer) sympathised with the hon. member's desire to curtail pensions, and had often said so. But we must deal fairly by our deserving servants; and the existing Public Service Act provided that pensions should not be given to officers appointed after that Act came into operation.

MR. HORAN: During this and the last Parliament he had persistently blamed the administration of the Government Printing Office. The cost of printing the documents tabled was astounding; and the establishment was run on practically obsolete lines. The machinery was altogether obsolete, belonging almost to another age. New machinery would secure cheaper and better work. Many official publications were sent to people who considered them valueless. The department persisted in sending him the *Agricultural Gazette*, notwithstanding his expressed wish to the contrary; and half a-dozen copies were sent to various institutes in his electorate, one institute sometimes receiving several similar copies. This was an absolute waste.

THE PREMIER: The various heads of departments had been asked to curtail as far as possible the printing bill. He had suggested that instead of sending to each member a copy of the numerous official reports, one copy should be laid on the table, and any member desiring extra copies might obtain them from the department concerned.

MR. WALKER: To throw documents on the table and leave them there without distributing them would be penny-wise and pound-foolish, for they would be lost sight of by members and the public. True, no member could study all the documents; but some were of the utmost value, and an intelligent member could easily distinguish these from the rest. We could hardly spend too much money in the hope of giving members and the public an opportunity of knowing what was being done in Parliament and in the departments. As well abolish *Hansard* and other parliamentary records, and do the business of the country in the dark. The modern policy was to do all public work in the daylight, making it a man's own fault if he were ignorant of public affairs. There was more money wasted in the Printing Office than would pay for twice the number of documents produced at twice the present speed. Here was a document that had just reached us—an account of the Government Observatory Experiments until 1904, published this year. The information was tabulated, and therefore cost more than continuous printing; but a private firm would print it for much less than the actual cost, £136. The document was two years late, though for this the Observatory might be responsible. The men in the Printing Office were not up-to-date. Some of them were loafers who could not get a day's work in any private office. One drunken man was paid for looking after another drunken man in this thoroughly disorganised establishment, where men in the lower

ranks bossed those supposed to be their superiors, and told them what should be done and what neglected. The office was run by the old loafers, who were there practically as pensioners. He was glad to see that the Premier had instituted inquiries into the department, and that steps were being taken to remodel it. It was an Augean stable, and required cleaning from top to bottom. Though not in favour of increasing the supply of unemployed labour, for he rather believed in giving as much employment as possible, he did not believe in the State or anyone keeping on a lot of loafers at the cost of the State.

THE PREMIER: Expenditure on publications such as *Notes on Timber* might be cut down by reducing the number of copies printed. Such a publication might interest half-a-dozen persons, but it would be a bound publication and would cost more than the ordinary unbound publication. No doubt the tests of hardwoods carried out at Midland Junction would appeal to timber people in the whole of the world; but the wish of members might be met by putting a copy on the table, and any member wishing a copy could make application for it. It was not intended that the usual number of copies issued of ordinary publications should be cut down.

MR. BATH: Though not a practical printer, he was aware that it was not so much the number of copies printed as the cost of setting up that told. One hundred copies could be produced almost as cheaply as twenty-five. For instance, members should not be deprived of the report of the Auditor General or of the annual reports of the Lands and Mines Departments. Economy might be effected in the running of this department and in the securing of up-to-date machinery, but it would be false economy to cut off publications that might be useful to members and of advantage to the State.

MR. GULL agreed with the Premier that such a publication as the Meteorological Report to July, 1904, recently distributed to members, might as well be placed in the waste-paper basket. A good deal of the blame for the delay was due to the Observatory.

MR. DAGLISH: Some remarks concerning the Government Printing Office went farther than it was right for members to go in the criticism of this department. Undoubtedly there had been a large amount of expenditure year by year which might have been avoided if there had been better management. In any large body of employees there was sure to be a proportion of men not of the best calibre as workmen who were not in some instances anxious to work; but it was very wrong to denounce the whole body of men because some who were not workers had secured admission to the department. If there were a number of unfit men, the fault rested on the management. If there were inefficient management and a lack of supervision from top to bottom, we could not expect success or efficiency in the working of the department. He contended that whatever faults there were were due, first of all, to bad management, and, next, to parsimony on the part of Parliament and unwillingness to provide money for up-to-date machinery so that work might be carried out with the same expedition as in private firms. Some of the delays were caused by departments being late in supplying matter for the printer, and much of the expense of printing was due to the fact that documents were not revised before being sent to the printer, and were often revised two or three times after being put into type, each revision meaning added cost to the printing. Often certain large departments indulged in the practice of sending along imperfectly prepared matter for the printer, and of putting it into shape after the matter was in type; so necessarily the printing costs ran far beyond what they should be. The Ministers might do something in the direction of checking expenses by seeing that departmental papers were fully revised and put in a fit state before being sent to the printer.

MR. FOULKES: Nobody could congratulate the various Governments in reference to the management of the Printing Office. Various Treasurers had made promises that they would pay greater attention to the management of this department. He agreed with the member for Subiaco that if any blame arose with regard to the cost of production it was owing to the fact that there was not a proper man in charge of the printing office, and that we had shown

our unwillingness to pay an adequate salary for a first-class man. A few months ago when it had been decided to appoint a new manager, the Rason Government offered £500 as a salary. How could we expect a first-class man at such a salary for a department costing £36,000 per annum? The agreement with the present Government Printer was that he held his position for 12 months, and a renewal was subject to his carrying out his duties properly. If the Government wanted first-rate management they must be prepared to pay a more liberal salary. The Public Service Commissioner had gone to the Eastern States for a printer, and the result was he could not recommend any of the applicants from the other States. The reason was that he could only get applications from men in receipt of £300 or £400 by offering a salary of £500, and then we would not get the best man. It was no good saying, "We will issue instructions to do this or that." It was necessary to see that the instructions were carried out. He (Mr. Foulkes) impressed on the Treasurer, who had the credit of being a good business man, the necessity of seeing that we got a first-rate man to take charge of the printing office and to overhaul it, and of seeing that instructions were carried out. We could not reduce the expenses of the department by limiting the number of the various publications. What was more urgent was that we should see that the cost of printing was materially reduced.

MR. TAYLOR: What were the credentials of the present manager? Was he appointed by the Minister or by the Public Service Commissioner?

THE TREASURER: The appointment was made on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner. He (the Treasurer) believed the credentials were good, though he had not gone into them personally. The Public Service Commissioner had introduced the new manager to him. The manager had his credentials in his hand, and on glancing through them they certainly seemed to be excellent, so far as he could see from a casual glance. He, however, depended on the recommendation of the Commissioner who had gone through the credentials thoroughly, and who had visited the Eastern States and could not get a man he deemed suitable.

MR. FOULKES: Because the salary was so low.

THE TREASURER did not know so much about that. The present manager was previously employed at the *Morning Herald* office, and had been in responsible positions from a youth, and seemed to be a capable man. The hon. member would find that we had a good man in Mr. Simpson.

MR. TAYLOR: There was no reflection on the present manager, but if the Treasurer had been in charge of the office as a private man in his business capacity, no matter who had recommended the manager, he would have read the credentials before making the appointment, and not afterwards. The Treasurer was reputed to be an up-to-date commercial man; but to make the appointment of an officer to manage a department which was spending something like £30,000 a year, without reading the credentials of the person before appointment, was far from what commercial people should do. The Treasurer had stated that Mr. Simpson was introduced to him by the Commissioner, and that he then perused the credentials, and that the new Government Printer appeared to be a good man. If that was recognised in the commercial world of Perth as up-to-date management, he (Mr. Taylor) as one who had no commercial knowledge did not look on it as such. He knew the recommendation came from the Public Service Commissioner, but Ministers should read the credentials and recommendations of applicants before appointments were made.

Division XXXII.—Observatory, £602:

MR. A. C. GULL: Who was responsible for the Observatory report for 1904 being laid on the table of the House in July, 1906? No doubt the Printing Department were responsible for some delay, but a great deal of the blame must be thrown on the Observatory Department. Bearing in mind that the Federal Government were talking about starting an Observatory, and in view of the promises and exhortations of Ministers as to economy, he seriously recommended the consideration of the whole of the Observatory vote to the

Government. The amount should be examined closely to see whether a publication which was brought down to the House years after date should not be wiped out altogether.

THE TREASURER: Having looked at the publication, he found it was for the year ending 1904, and it was sent to the Printing Department on the 10th October. The present Government were not in power in that year; therefore he must refer the member for the Swan to the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor), who was Colonial Secretary at the time, and who should have seen that the document was sent to the printer before the date on which it was forwarded.

MR. SCADDAN: If the late Colonial Secretary (Mr. Taylor) was to blame in not seeing that the report was sent in earlier, surely the Colonial Secretary who was in power when the document was printed was more to blame in not seeing that the document was printed earlier. On the outer cover was the date 1906, and if the document was printed in October last, why was it not laid on the table last session? Members received the document this session.

MR. TAYLOR: This document was sent to the Government Printer in the late Government's time, when Mr. Walter Kingsmill was Colonial Secretary. The Labour Government were not in power in October last. On page 6, it was set out that the document was sent to the printer on the 10th October, 1905, and the present Government were responsible for the passage of this document from the Colonial Secretary's Department to the Printing Department. He (Mr. Taylor) left office on the 7th June. The present Government were responsible for the delay. He would not allow members opposite to saddle the Government with which he was connected with the sins of the present Government.

Division XLIII.—Purchase of copper ore, £10,267:

MR. SCADDAN: Why did this item of £10,267 appear in the Bill, seeing that the Government had sold the smelter and were not buying more copper ore?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The Bill was printed prior to the sale of the smelter. There was no necessity for the amount.

MR. SCADDAN: After the statement by the Minister for Mines, he moved:

That Division XLIII., contingencies £10,267, be struck out.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not make that alteration.

MR. TAYLOR: What was the use of discussing items on the Estimates, if members could not deal with them? It was a waste of time if members could not reduce votes. In a subleader in the *West Australian* last week, it was pointed out that the debate on the Address-in-Reply was taking up a great deal of time, and that no object was being served, because members could discuss all matters on the Supply Bill. Although he did not think that was so, members should not be misled. He thought that items could be reduced in Committee. He moved:

That the item be reduced by £10,000.

MR. BATH: The Standing Orders, in dealing with Committee of Supply, provided that an amount could be struck out or a vote reduced; and he thought by referring to page 573 of *May*, the Chairman would find there was a provision for the reduction or striking out of an item, or the reduction of the total amount.

THE CHAIRMAN: This Bill was equivalent to the Appropriation Bill, and *May* on this point said:—

Latitude permissible in debate.—An amendment on going into Committee of Supply does not extend to the stages of the Appropriation Bill. Debate and amendment on these occasions must be relevant to the Bill, and must be confined to the conduct or action of those who receive or administer the grants specified in the Bill. Nor can amendment be moved to its clauses or to the schedule to effect a reduction of the amount or an alteration of the destination of a grant; nor are the enacting words of the Bill open to amendment.

Members would see they could not make an alteration, as the Committee had already fixed the amount of supply. The time for dealing with these amounts was when the Estimates were before the Committee.

MR. STONE: Could not some explanation be given of the amount, which was rather large? There was a sum of £10,267 down for the purchase of copper ore.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: This sum would not be required. The Bill

had been printed some time. The information was supplied by the Mines Department to the Treasury before the sale of the smelter.

MR. HORAN: Would the amount be transferred to other items?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No.

Division XLVIII. — Railways and Tramways, £205,457:

MR. HORAN: On several occasions he had asked Ministers to justify themselves, but he had been ruled out of order by the Speaker. He asked that Ministers should not again intentionally offend the intelligence of the House by inaccurate replies. In regard to the question of the member for Canning, as to the construction of cattle trucks, the Minister said that none of the trucks had been constructed, and none were running on the lines. As a fact, they had been up to Kalgoorlie half-a-dozen times. The next item was when the Minister replied to him and stated that the cost of running the Ministerial car from Perth to Kalgoorlie and back had been 40s., when an extra engine had had to be put on at Southern Cross to pull it through. He did not blame the Minister, but wanted him to give the Commissioner of Railways to understand that there were sensible people in this House who did not want their intelligence insulted by such an absurd reply. He had received two or three telegrams from people in his district regarding cattle having been killed by passing trains owing to the fact that the railway was not fenced, and he asked the Minister to take seriously into consideration the question of the fencing of the railway line near Southern Cross.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS thought the hon. member must be in error with regard to the alteration of the cattle trucks, as he (the Minister) happened to be visiting the workshops at Midland Junction about the time the hon. member had asked his question, and he had seen the trucks in the course of being altered, and it was impossible for them to have been running at the time the question was asked.

MR. HORAN: The Minister had not seen those which were running.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They were in the yard at the time, and it would not have been possible for them to be sent out for three or four days. With regard to the other matter, the cost of sending the Ministerial car from Perth to Kalgoorlie, it was put down at approximately £2. He would, however, make farther inquiries, and if additional information were available, the hon. member would be supplied with it later. In regard to the fencing of the railway line near Southern Cross, he was not inclined to undertake the fencing of the line. By a report submitted to him about nine months ago, it was shown that if the Government were to undertake the fencing of the whole of our railways, it would cost us another £160,000. He could not see why, if a man took up a bit of land, we should fence him off on both sides. The matter could be taken into consideration when we were dealing with the railways; but he wanted members to understand that if it was decided to fence in the railway lines, it was going to cost an enormous amount of money.

MR. TAYLOR: The position drawn attention to by the member for Yilgarn obtained in even a larger degree on the railway system from Kalgoorlie to Laverton. At a distance of 80 or 100 miles beyond Kalgoorlie, one got into the best pastoral portion of the State. The herds in that part of the country were, he thought, more numerous and more valuable than those about Southern Cross, and he trusted that the Minister, in giving consideration to the necessity for affording protection to the people around Southern Cross in the matter of unfenced railway lines, would also bear in mind that those engaged in the industry of cattle raising in the district he had referred to also deserved the same protection.

Division XLIX.—Cossack and Roebourne Tramway, £412:

MR. HORAN asked the Minister for Railways whether any proposals had been received for the private leasing of the Cossack and Roebourne tramway.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS thought arrangements had been made for the leasing of that tramway some four or five months ago; at any rate the Government was prepared to lease it if a reasonable offer were made.

Division L.—Public Works and Buildings, £51,664:

MR. H. BROWN wished to draw attention to the Architectural Branch of the Public Works Department. With reference to the Claremont Asylum he believed that the building had been completed without any provision having been made for drainage or even for lighting, and it had been admitted to-night that it was now thought necessary to instal the electric light. The new wing of the Perth Public Hospital had been vacant for six months for the introduction of the electric light, whereas if a little more foresight had been used the lighting plant could have been built in with the new wing. Even in regard to the Old Men's Depot it was said the buildings were completed, and it was found that no provision had been made for quarters for the staff. He wished the Minister for Works to inquire and ascertain what architect was responsible.

THE TREASURER admitted the correctness of the statement that no provision had been made for lighting the Claremont Asylum. He had inquired into the matter, but had not been able to get satisfactory information. They had designed the main building and overlooked the details. He found the kitchen and cooking utensils had not been ordered, and the drain, the locks and furniture for doors absolutely necessary had not been decided on. [MEMBER: Whose fault was that?] He could not tell whose fault it was. There had been a change in the Architectural Branch just at that time. Mr. Grainger had resigned and then came the Acting Architect.

MR. BROWN: This was not under the Grainger *régime*.

THE TREASURER: Oh yes; Mr. Grainger was responsible. Provision was made but no action was taken. Special knowledge was necessary, and there was a lot of delay by the manufacturers themselves. When he took charge he went into the matter and had things put into shape as quickly as he could, and everything was now in train. He had found that there were no pipes in the walls for running the electric wires, the result being that the walls of a fine building which had cost thousands and thousands of pounds had to be opened. He believed there were 3,000 electric lights, and there was the question of the alarm bells in case of fire, and of electric pumps to be used in case of fire. These had not been taken into account, and he had found it necessary (the chief electrical engineer being away in the old country at the time) to call in outside expert advice as to the best system to adopt, and to provide plans and specifications. He believed they were almost ready, and he understood they were to be received in a very few days at the Works Department; and the whole of the work would then proceed.

At 6·30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.
At 7·30 Chair resumed.

MR. H. BROWN: It was regrettable to find that the Treasurer had to make so many admissions regarding the Architectural Branch; but the discussion should bear good fruit. The action of the Minister in expediting the completion of the asylum was doubtless right; but this was another case of one department fighting another department. Surely the advice of the railway experts could have been obtained for the electrical installation. The present Minister for Works (Hon. J. Price) should place on the right shoulders the blame for the huge mistakes of the past few weeks.

Division LI. — Lands and Surveys, £20,664:

MR. EWING: Would second-class and third-class lands be made available for selection in the South-Western District? Large areas were now withheld, and selectors would be glad to add them to their present holdings. True, in the past the system had been abused; but if the lands were thrown open at reduced prices and abuses prevented, the public benefit would be great.

THE PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR LANDS: The new Land Bill, which he hoped would be read a first time next week, would contain provision for the selection of these lands under certain conditions; but they would not be thrown open till that Bill became law.

MR. BATH: Would provision be made for pastoral leases under the regulations of 1888, which leases were falling in at the end of this year?

THE PREMIER: Yes; and provision would be made also for resumptions from pastoral leases without the notices which were now obligatory.

MR. GULL: Would the Minister consider the question of throwing open for selection large areas now unnecessarily locked up in the Mundaring and Canning reservations? The Mundaring reservation was made before the site of the dam was fixed; and gullies which discharged water below the weir were still withheld from selection. Could not such areas be made available? If permitted, the public would soon take them up.

MR. BATH: It might be necessary to increase the water supply by utilising such areas.

THE PREMIER: Inquiries would be made, and the lands thrown open if possible; but it might be necessary to make another weir at a lower level than the existing dam at Mundaring.

Division LII.—Woods and Forests, £1,228:

MR. A. J. WILSON: This showed an increase of £327 on last year's vote. Towards the end of the 1904 session a Bill was brought in for the appointment of an Inspector General of Forests, and applications were subsequently invited within and without the Commonwealth. The time for receiving these had long since expired, and it was stated that the Public Service Commissioner, when in the East, investigated the qualifications of the applicants; but nothing was done. Surely none could say that the administration of the Forestry Department had been satisfactory since the death of the late Conservator of Forests, Mr. Ednie Brown. The appointment was too important to be farther delayed; and the sooner a competent head was appointed the better, for he was sadly needed.

THE PREMIER: The Government did not at present intend to appoint an Inspector General of Forests. Of the applicants for the position it was not considered that even the best possessed the necessary qualifications. The Government, in their desire for economy, would do without unnecessary officers. However, the importance of the position was recognised, and the Ministers knew that the prosperity of the country depended largely on the success of the timber industry. No farther announcement could be made now.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The salary offered (£750) was probably insufficient to attract a qualified man. Should not the Government secure permission from the House to offer a higher salary? In India, he understood salaries for similar positions far exceeded £750, and sometimes reached £1,250. He objected to the undue continuance of the administration of this important department by an Advisory Board, none of the members of which had any scientific knowledge, while their technical knowledge was not worth £750 a year. They might have some practical experience of the industry, but not the knowledge essential to a successful administration of the department. A number of business people in the timber industry had recently refused certain information to the board, because a member of the board was one of their business rivals. He did not suggest that the gentleman was in any way biased, but the fact remained that material information was refused, as witnesses did not feel that they were safe in disclosing their private business to a gentleman interested in a similar business. We knew the limitations of the experience of members of the Advisory Board; and the mere fact that the House placed £750 at the disposal of the Government to appoint an Inspector General indicated that members wanted something more than the services of the Advisory Board, and that the board should not continue to administer the affairs of the department for any period. No doubt the Premier, as Minister for Lands, was in charge of the Forestry Department, but he had no time to worry over details which were important to the department and which should be attended to by an Inspector General. Some endeavour should be made to overcome this state of affairs.

THE PREMIER: The Advisory Board would need to be continued if an Inspector General were appointed, because the Act provided that an inspector might be appointed and that an Advisory Board of gentlemen with practical knowledge of the requirements of the timber trade and timber matters generally should advise the Inspector General, it being recognised that a gentleman of possibly high scientific training but with no particular

practical experience in our timber might be appointed. The Government were endeavouring to save where they could, and they considered that the appointment might be held over until the next Estimates come on. Provision was made for three members of the Advisory Board; but owing to the fact that one member had resigned, no new appointment was made. The Advisory Board gave good value for the small fees paid. Its members only acted in an advisory and not in an administrative capacity.

Schedule (Revenue) put and passed.

Schedule B. — *General Loan Fund*, £95,239:

Vote—Departmental, £6,040:

MR. A. J. WILSON: This seemed extraordinary in loan expenditure.

THE TREASURER: It represented salaries in connection with the carrying out of works from loan funds.

Vote—Railways, etc., £49,536:

MR. BOLTON: Was part of this money to provide for duplications now in progress?

THE TREASURER: Yes.

Votes—Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, £11,068; also Development of Agriculture, £8,195:

MR. LYNCH: Members were aware that owing to the exigencies of the year we had been obliged to construct roads and buildings out of loan moneys. Was the practice to continue during the present year?

THE TREASURER: No; there were no roads or buildings in connection with these votes. The question of providing farther moneys from loan funds for the construction of roads or buildings had not been considered. They would appear when the Loan Bill came down.

MR. BATH: There was no desire to cavil at these items; but in the course of Financial Statements members were informed by returns as to the amount that railways, water supplies, and harbours earned on the moneys expended on them. We did not know how far the money spent in these two votes for mining and agricultural development were directly reproductive. It would be an interesting return if one were prepared showing how all the items on which loan money was spent were reproductive. It would probably show that the railways, water supplies, and harbours were making an increased percentage to bear the burden of the development of goldfields and mineral resources and the development of agriculture, which were not reproductive. The return might have a particular bearing when we came to consider the question of a reduction of railway freights. It would be useful if the Treasurer in his Budget Speech could supply information in this direction.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: A full statement would be given to the Treasurer in regard to the expenditure from loan funds on the development of goldfields and mineral resources. At the same time, it was fully understood that a large proportion of the money spent in the development of the mineral industry was not reproductive. For instance, nearly 1,000 wells had been put down in the Pilbarra district, and none of them were reproductive in any sense, and the work was done from loan funds to a great extent. It was well understood that the works carried out were not directly reproductive, though many lately undertaken were reproductive.

THE PREMIER: The same remarks would apply to the development of agriculture. We put down bores and cleared tracks and did work from which it was hard to estimate a direct return. At the same time, the country gained a return from the money spent.

MR. TAYLOR: Was the money to be spent in the two months from loan funds as it was spent during the last two months of the last financial year?

THE TREASURER: Yes.

Schedule (Loan) put and passed.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING.

THE TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) in moving the second reading said: I would like briefly to explain the amendments proposed to last year's measure. They occur principally in the schedule of the Act, and the first is in connection with exemptions under affidavits

or declarations. It is necessary to have power to exempt certain declarations under certain statutes. For instance, where a tax has been imposed and collected it is thought that any declaration made should be exempt from farther taxation under the Stamp Act, as in the case of a declaration in connection with dividend duties. Declarations have to be made very often in connection with lost baggage on our railways. As the people have already paid for the carriage of the baggage, it seems hard that they should be forced to pay a shilling duty for making a declaration. Also there are declarations under the Licensing Act which should be exempt. It is proposed to add a subclause to the list of exemptions under this heading as follows—

6. Of any other kind which the Governor may exempt

in order that the Governor-in-Council, from time to time, may exempt declarations similar to those I have already referred to. Then on page 9 of last year's Act there is another thing which has cropped up in connection with bills of lading. Bills of lading or shipping receipts of any kind whatsoever of or for any goods, merchandise, or effects to be exported bear a certain stamp. Shipping companies have raised the question as to whether the words "to be exported" in this section cover intercolonial trade. In a commercial sense I admit it is generally understood to export it from within the boundaries of the country to some other portion of the world beyond the seas. The question arises whether shipping receipts with these words can be justly claimed to carry a stamp. Therefore it is proposed in that section of the schedule that the words "to be exported" shall be omitted, thus removing the doubt raised by the shipping companies.

Mr. Bath: Will it affect bills of lading from Geraldton or Carnarvon?

The TREASURER: Yes. Shipping receipts will have to bear a stamp without exemption.

Mr. Walker: Even if it were an empty tin trunk, or a small parcel?

The TREASURER: Whatever it is. Then the next matter, which perhaps may be of more importance than those just referred to, comes under the question of conveyance or transfer on sales of property. This covers, as no doubt members are aware, the transfer of mining shares: scrip being transferred from one person to another has had to bear an *ad valorem* duty stamp. It is found that this impost is driving away the business in mining scrip, especially to men in South Australia where many of our companies have offices. Therefore in order to avoid this duty, those who wish to transfer shares do so in Adelaide instead of in Western Australia. Under these circumstances, in order that we may conserve this class of business as far as possible and have our business in mining shares conducted within our State, we propose at the end of the section on page 10 that there shall be a provision to exempt scrip in the following words: "Conveyance or transfer on sale of any property in any scrip or share certificate of any incorporated mining company carrying on the business of mining within the State." That is, as I have explained, that we may keep the business of Western Australia within our own boundaries as far as possible. Then on page 14 of last year's Act we have a difficulty in connection with the discharge of bills of sale: it has been confusing somewhat. A subsection provides that a receipt or discharge given in repayment of money shall bear a stamp of 1s. This was not intended to be a discharge of a bill of sale given under subsection 3 where there is an *ad valorem* duty of 1s. for £100, or any fraction of £100. Doubt has been raised in connection with this matter, and it is thought desirable to settle it by an amendment providing for a specific amount for the discharge of a bill of sale. We propose to do that by making the impost 6d. for every £100 value. It is thought this is only a reasonable charge to make for the discharge of a bill of sale, for there are numerous discharges of bills of sale, more numerous than any other document of a similar description. Therefore if a charge of 6d. per £100 is made we think it will be fair and equitable. A clause will be introduced accordingly. The paragraphs will be altered and numbered to suit. Then we have on the last page of last year's Act, page 16, exemptions in connection with receipts. It is provided under receipts as the law is to-day, and always has been the law, that any payment of money to the amount of £2 and upwards shall bear a revenue stamp of

1d. This unfortunately has covered receipts given for wages, and we do not think it fair to insist that workers should put a 1d. revenue stamp on a receipt given for wages. Besides it is very inconvenient in many instances that receipts shall be taken, and it is very inconvenient that stamps shall be put on a pay-sheet. There is difficulty enough in getting pay-sheets signed without having a stamp on the sheets by everyone who draws wages. We propose under the heading of receipts to insert a paragraph exempting receipts given by workmen, artificers, or labourers for or on account of wages received by them. There is another exemption consequential on the transfer of any sale of property or scrip or shares. A new paragraph is to be inserted there as follows:—

Every transfer of any scrip or share certificate or scrip of any incorporated mining company exempted from *ad valorem* duty under the heading "Conveyance or Transfer," one penny.

MR. BATH: For each share or for one certificate?

THE TREASURER: A penny stamp on every certificate.

MR. BATH: You will lose revenue on that.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is one penny at present.

THE TREASURER: The last amendment in the Bill is a new clause to add certain words in connection with stamps. If any stamp that has been issued by the Treasury has been damaged or spoiled, the original Act of 1882 I think provided that the Treasury shall be compelled to replace it with a similar stamp or stamps of equal value. Now it is proposed we should be empowered, by adding certain words to the clause, to make a certain charge. We propose to add the words:—

And on payment by the applicant of such fee as may be prescribed by regulation which the Governor is hereby authorised to make.

The Treasury shall give a new stamp of equal value for one which has been spoiled, on payment by the applicant of such fee as is prescribed by regulation which the Governor is authorised to make. At present, when cheques for instance are destroyed and sent back in any number there is a certain small charge made. When promissory notes are sent out by tradespeople, sent to their customers and returned, and many are returned without being used, a small charge is made for embossing these. It is not much, but the charge is made without proper legal authority. Therefore we ask the House to insert these words in the clause. This covers the whole of the amendments proposed in the Bill. I beg to move the second reading.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): This is largely a Bill which will necessitate consideration in Committee, and I do not think there is any great need to debate it on the second reading of the measure. But I may state, in regard to the amendment referring to affidavits or declarations made under statute, that it would be just as well to exempt these affidavits altogether, because I notice the Treasury have sent out circulars to justices of the peace throughout the State telling them what kind of affidavits have to be stamped, and those which are exempt. The result is that justices of the peace, especially those engaged in business who have other things to think of, find a great deal of uncertainty when affidavits or declarations are brought before them to be stamped, to know which exactly should be stamped and which not. This amendment will not clear the atmosphere very much, because it states:—

Any other kind which the Governor may exempt.

Declarations will be exempted from time to time by the Governor, and notices sent to justices of the peace. I think we should exempt these affidavits altogether. It would not entail a great loss of revenue, and it would do away with trouble and confusion to those who in an honorary capacity act as law-givers. There is one startling omission, and that is the failure of this democratic Ministry to make some provision in the measure to provide for the fees for articles of clerkship for a solicitor to be brought in line with those of other trades or professions. We find that under the Stamp Act of last year a boy can be apprenticed to a trade, and I presume to a professional man such as an architect, for a fee of 5s., but when it comes to a question of being apprenticed to the profession of the law, then the poor unfortunate fellow has to pay a fee of £10. We attempted last year to have this amended

by making it more liberal in the way of giving a smart boy, who may have the misfortune to be poor, an opportunity of being introduced into this close preserve, the legal profession. I hope that before the Bill passes the Committee stage the Treasurer will see his way to have such an amendment inserted in the Bill, and failing that I shall take the opportunity of moving in that direction.

MR. A. MALE (Kimberley): I should like to refer to one item in the amendment under the heading of bills of lading or shipping receipts. I think by imposing a charge of 1s. on all shipping receipts, which includes coastal receipts, it will be unduly penalising coastal shippers.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That exists at present.

MR. MALE: No.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Oh yes, it does.

MR. MALE: The Act of 1882 contains the following:—

> Bills of lading of or for any goods, merchandise, or effects to be exported, 1s.
> Bill of lading coastwise, 6d.
> Receipt of master or mate coastwise in lieu of Bill of lading:
> If over half a ton weight or measurement, 3d.
> If under half a ton weight or measurement, 1d.

The minimum rate, we will say from Fremantle to Broome, is 5s., and to have to put 1s. stamp on that shipping receipt certainly would be unfair. The minimum freight from Fremantle to Geraldton would probably be considerably less, and the sum too, in that case, would be nearly 100 per cent., which I do not think would be right and proper. I think that a clause should be added similar to that in the old Act of 1882, to the effect that the receipt of the master or mate coastwise taken in lieu of the bill of lading should be covered by not more than a 3d. stamp; and when this Bill gets into Commiteee, I will move an amendment to that effect.

MR. H. BROWN (Perth): There is one thing I think should be defined in relation to which trouble has cropped up. We are all aware that under life policies there are exemptions from stamp duties; and some trouble has arisen on the transfer of these life policies. In my opinion, the matter should be made definite.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—SECOND-HAND DEALERS.

SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan), in moving the second reading, said: This Bill is intended to assist in the administration of the criminal law. I do not mean to fasten on that class of persons who carry on the business of second-hand dealing any imputation that that they are connected with attempts to commit crime. On the contrary, I am prepared to recognise that very many men who follow that calling are honourable men and absolutely honest; but it must be apparent to any member of the House that, with regard to the crime of larceny, the real difficulty arises in dealing with the receiver. The person who carries on the business of second-hand dealer very often uses that business merely as a cloak, and the present position of affairs is that we have no control whatever over that class of person. I should like to point out that elsewhere, including New Zealand, an Act similar to the one I now propose is already existing law, and farthermore in the United Kingdom two similar Acts—namely an Act governing marine store dealers and one covering second-hand dealers—are found. In this State we have an Act dealing with the marine store dealers, which was passed in the year 1902; but we did not at that time couple with that Act, as did the Imperial Parliament, an Act providing for the registration of dealers in second-hand articles. The general principle of the Bill is that it requires that a second-hand dealer shall apply for a license. The consequence of his having to obtain a license is that he is a known quantity, where he resides is known; and a record has to be kept of all licenses which are granted, and the name of the licensee has to be displayed in some prominent position, which enables at all times those who want to institute inquiries to find out the individual they are looking for; also the dealer is obliged to keep a register of all articles he has bought or sold or exchanged, and that immediately gives an easy and

rapid means of detection in case he has been using his position as second-hand dealer for the purpose of covering up the receipt of stolen articles and the disposal of them. Also he is obliged to produce his license on demand. That is practically only a machinery clause, because if we require a second-hand dealer to possess a license, it follows we should take power to require him to produce it. The most important part, perhaps, is the restriction which is placed on the second-hand dealer from carrying on his business before the hour of eight in the morning and after six in the evening. The reason for that provision is that those are the natural hours of business, and if a man is doing any illegitimate business he is far more likely to do it in the hours of darkness than in the hours of daylight, when the usual business of his trade is carried on. If you prohibit him from dealing in the dark, you in a measure have a restriction on him, and you may possibly prevent crime, although you may not always actually do so. It is also provided in the Bill that goods are not to be sold for a certain period after their receipt by the second-hand dealer. I should like to point out that in the Marine Stores Act of 1902 a similar provision is made, the object being to prevent the rapid disposal of articles by a man who has an opportunity (as unfortunately men in this calling must always have) of receiving goods that have been stolen and getting rid of them. These are the principal features of the Bill. The only other features are purely consequential ones; and it is a measure which I feel sure it is unnecessary for me to dilate upon at any length in order to point out to the House that it should be put on our statute-book. I therefore move that it be now read a second time.

MR. P. STONE: How are you to class the goods that are second-hand?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is defined in the Act. I understand that in moving the second reading I am not entitled to refer to any clause of the Bill; but there is a definition included of what is a second-hand dealer, and that definition is restricted by a subsequent clause, which provides that any man carrying on trade, and who buys an article for the purpose of manufacture, for instance one who buys broken iron and articles of that description for the purpose of working up, is exempt from the Act.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): The Attorney General has moved this Bill in a formal fashion, but I do not think members of the House will be prepared to receive it in so formal a fashion. I should call this Bill a measure for the discouragement of second-hand dealing, and when we recognise the very important part the second-hand dealer plays in the economy of so many of our population who receive a scanty wage, we will recognise that any discouragement may perhaps detrimentally affect such population. So far as Australasia is concerned, New Zealand is the only colony which has a measure of this kind on its statute-book; and I notice that this measure practically follows the lines laid down in that Act. In looking through the second-reading debate in the New Zealand Parliament, I find that they based their claim that the measure was necessary largely on the evidence of police officials and police magistrates. While I find that those gentlemen are very worthy, there is always a tendency for them to exaggerate the importance of their occupation in life, and there always seems a tendency, not only on the part of those limbs of the law but also of those who gain a livelihood by the law to pass measures of this kind to secure, as it were, their own position. So far as the State of Western Australia is concerned, I have not seen any evidence in newspapers, either as to the police court proceedings, or the remarks of magistrates or of Judges, that a measure of this kind is necessary; and when we recognise the restrictions the Bill places on the conduct of the trade of a second-hand dealer, it seems to me that the necessity has not been made plain for such restrictions to be enacted. In the first place, the second-hand dealer has to procure a license, and the license continues good for a year. No provision whatever is made for a renewal. It does not say that the holder will be entitled to a renewal unless something can be proved against him, or he has been a receiver of stolen goods. After all, when a second-hand dealer embarks in this occupation, he probably places all the money he has in the business, and if at the end of the year, owing to some arbitrary or autocratic action of

the police magistrate, he were told his license would not be renewed, he would be placed in a very difficult and precarious position. I think that a renewal should be provided for as a right, depending of course upon his good conduct as a second-hand dealer. Then, again, we have in another clause the provision that any goods he has purchased in the way of his business shall not be disposed of until a period of seven days has elapsed. That will mean a very severe restriction indeed on the business, because a man may have articles which he could sell the following day or within two or three days, but he will be absolutely precluded under the provision of this Bill. I think the Attorney General, in introducing a measure of this kind, should have given us some evidence that there was a demand on the part of the public for the Bill. So far as I know, its introduction is cast rather on the lines of a prosecuting counsel of the second-hand dealers in this State, and from what I have seen of their business—I have not had any personal acquaintance with second-hand dealers—they seem to me to carry on their business on very legitimate and honest lines, and they certainly perform a service to the community in regard to people who have not money to pay cash prices for new articles, and who buy things at a price commensurate with the money they have in their purses. We all know, for instance, what is the case with regard to furniture. I presume that a young man setting out in life, a married man, generally tries to obtain new furniture, but it is not long before it becomes second-hand if he finds it necessary to dispose of that furniture, and then at any future time he finds it is much more economical to buy second-hand furniture, because he finds that new furniture depreciates very quickly. Under the circumstances, it seems to me we should have some justification for a measure of this kind, some good grounds for its being introduced, before we carry a measure which will prove so detrimental and which will be so restrictive to the calling of the second-hand dealer in this State.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I would like to assure the Leader of the Opposition that it was not through any discourtesy on my part that I did not reply to his remarks. I did not know that you, sir, intended to put the second reading. I thought some other member might speak, and I desired to reply to all at once. I wish the hon. member to understand that it was not through any discourtesy on my part that I did not reply.

MR. BATH: I did not take it as such.

BILL—EVIDENCE.

CONSOLIDATION AND AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING MOVED.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan) in moving the second reading said: This Bill is a consolidation measure, and also introduces some new provisions governing the law of evidence. At present in our State of Western Australia, we have 21 local Acts governing the law of evidence, two Acts of the Commonwealth, and several Imperial Acts. By the Bill we propose to wholly repeal 19 of the local Acts, and to partially repeal the other two. Of course it is not within our power to deal with the Acts of the Commonwealth, or with the Imperial Acts whose operation includes in their scope the State of Western Australia. In the present Bill the first provision of any importance is one dealing with the competency of witnesses in criminal cases. At present our law stands in this position, that if an accused person, in the course of his defence, gives evidence of his own character, or if his counsel or if he himself, acting without counsel, cross-examines any witness produced by the prosecution as to the character of the witness, then the prosecutor is entitled to offer evidence as to the character of the accused, or as to the character of the person aspersed, as the case may be. It frequently happens, as members know, that more than one accused is tried at the same time; and it also happens that, for the purpose of saving his own particular skin, one accused party gives evidence which damages, or attempts to damage, another accused party. That circumstance has hitherto been wholly unprovided for in our criminal law. This Bill makes a new provision whereby, if an accused person does something of that kind—in other words, tenders any evidence which impugns the character of a jointly-accused person—then the latter person is

to be in the same position as the prosecutor occupies under our existing system of jurisprudence, and has the right to examine that man as to his own character, and therefore as to the credibility of the evidence the witness gave against him. This provision is eminently fair, because it simply puts on exactly the same basis all the parties before the Court. The next provision to which I desire to call attention is in regard to witnesses in revenue cases. We have taken power to compel witnesses in revenue cases—that is, in actions or proceedings brought for the breach of any Act relating to revenue, to stamp duty, or to the sale of intoxicating liquors, and so forth—to answer any question addressed to them. In doing so, we have followed an Act already appearing on the statute-book of New Zealand, and also the Commonwealth legislation. But we provide that if a witness makes true discovery- -if, having been compelled to answer any question in a revenue prosecution, he does so, and in the opinion of the presiding Judge he makes a true discovery or one to the best of his knowledge true and faithful—then the presiding Judge may grant him a certificate in writing under his hand; and the effect of that certificate is wholly to remove the possibility of the witness's being prosecuted in respect of any statement or any admission made by him in that evidence. So that we protect the witness and at the same time secure the ends of justice; because, in matters of this kind, it is clear that it must be frequently necessary to obtain evidence—perhaps the only possible evidence—from a person in some measure implicated, especially in cases of revenue prosecutions. And when we provide that a man who makes a true and faithful discovery is entitled to receive a certificate of immunity, we fully protect him, and prevent any injustice arising. The same provision is made in regard to Customs prosecutions. As to witnesses failing to attend a trial, we propose some simple provisions which we have adopted from New South Wales, for compelling witnesses who have failed to attend to appear and answer for their non-attendance, and to pay some reasonable penalty for their default. The next most important provisions are those as to impeaching the credit of witnesses. We provide in the Bill a simple method of doing what has previously been provided for in more than one statute. This is not so much a novel feature as a consolidation of provisions in other Acts; and the object achieved is identical with that already aimed at, or partially achieved, by former legislation. One of the most important provisions in this Bill, and one which I hope the House will heartily commend, is that dealing with the cross-examination of a witness in a manner intended uselessly to discredit his reputation. It is undoubtedly at present a proper principle of law that when any man goes into the witness-box to give evidence, the other side is entitled to gauge his credibility by showing what character he bears, or by showing that he has done something in his past life which would impugn the reputation which alone attaches weight to the evidence he has given. But that, I admit, is frequently carried a great deal too far; and the provision we make in this Bill follows out what has been laid down for years by Mr. Justice Stephen, the greatest English authority on the law of evidence, who instances the fact that if a man goes into the witness-box and gives any evidence, he is liable to have every incident of his private life dug up and brought out in Court for the mere purpose of weakening his evidence; and Mr. Stephen shows, in his treatise on evidence, that it is most desirable to restrict that power—not to abolish it altogether, but to restrict it. Because, when a man goes into the witness-box, any man on the jury may necessarily require evidence about him, in order to know whether he is to be believed implicitly, or whether his statements are to be received with great caution. But it is necessary that we should put some limit on that power; and that limit is pointed out by that learned authority to have been properly reached in a certain Indian statute framed by English jurists and known as the Indian Evidence Act. We have, with some slight alteration, adopted the suggestion made, and have provided that on the cross-examination of any witness on any matter not relevant to the proceeding—which means not actually relevant to the cause being inquired into—except in so far as it affects the credit

of the witness by injuring his character, it shall be the duty of the Court to decide whether or not the witness shall be compelled to answer it; and the Court may, if it think fit, inform the witness that he is not obliged to answer it.

MR. HORAN: Will not that enable the Court to draw certain conclusions from the witness's failure to answer?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member misjudges what I have read. The Court can there and then, of its own initiative, inform the witness, before he attempts to answer, that he need not do so; so that the question is not relevant, and that it goes beyond the bounds within which the cross-examination should be kept. And we farther provide that if such questions are proper, but if they convey an imputation, the Court still has power to exercise discretion in regard to compelling witnesses to answer. One farther step which we have taken also from the Indian statutes relates to indecent or scandalous questions; and apart altogether from relevancy the Court, if the question be indecent or scandalous, has been given power to disallow it, although it may have some bearing on the case, unless the question relates to facts in issue, or to matters necessary to be known in order to determine whether or not the fact in issue existed. And we take from a New Zealand Act a very useful provision which I am sure the House will fully endorse—that any newspaper shall be guilty of contempt which publishes any question that the Court has prohibited, or that it has ordered shall not be published. It is clear that this will be a safeguard; because we know that such questions are in most cases asked for ulterior purposes, instead of for the purpose of the case before the Court. And the fact that we impose a penalty on their publication if a Judge has exercised his discretion by declaring them improper will, I believe, be the most effective method of stamping them out. In Bills of this character it must be understood that I point out only those salient features which deserve particular attention and which are novel; and when it comes to the Committee stage it will be my duty in regard to every clause, whether novel or simply a repetition of a section already existing and forming part of our law, to point out the full extent to which it applies, or, as the case may be, the reason for its retention. But to-night I confine myself to the clauses which are not only new but are of grave importance. The next clause of that character deals with poisoning cases; and I mention this particularly because, since its inclusion in the Bill, the necessity for its being there has to a large extent—in fact, almost wholly—been removed by a decision of the English Courts. The clause goes to the extent of providing that in poisoning cases it shall be evidence against an accused person that he has administered poison on previous occasions to other persons. It is a most easy defence to a charge of poisoning to say that the giving of the poison was only a mistake. That is a defence which stands out almost on the surface, and the intent can scarcely ever be gauged from a single act. But if it is in evidence, and beyond all doubt, that the same person administered poison to other individuals and on other occasions, then clearly from that evidence the jury can judge of the intent, and can honestly say, "We will reject the evidence that the poisoning was a mistake, because we have evidence before us that the same person has followed a system, and has been guilty of similar conduct on other occasions." Some members, and particularly the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), will perhaps remember a famous baby-farming case in New South Wales, where a person was charged with contributing to the death of a number of infants, and to the death of one infant in particular. Of course the indictment alleged only one infant; but on digging up the garden of the house in which the baby-farm was situated, a number of bodies was found. Possibly the member for Kanowna will recollect that an appeal went home to the Privy Council. Evidence was given at the trial to show that this one child had not died owing to a mere accident; but to show that the children were not given sufficient sustenance, evidence was given as to the number of infant corpses found on the premises. The man was convicted, and an appeal was made to the Privy Council on the ground that the evidence was not admissible; and it was held that the evidence was admissible. Owing to a decision of law that has now been made

and the report of which only arrived in the State a few days ago, in the case of the King against Bond, we are in this position, that it is not necessary to state this doctrine in our statute-book, as it has been held to be a part of what is known as the common law covering criminal cases. For that reason, when we come to the Committee stage this particular clause will be deleted. If any member wishes to retain it I have no objection. It then becomes what is a declaratory section, but being no longer necessary, I do not wish to burden our statutes with it. The next matter is evidence in cases of stolen property. We have in this Bill included Imperial legislation covering evidence that can be tendered in cases of receiving stolen property; and again the same line of thought and reasoning is followed as I have already pointed out in the clauses I have dealt with, which owing to a decision of law have become unnecessary. This clause provides that evidence can be given at any such proceedings that there was found in the possession of the accused person any other thing obtained by similar means during the preceding 12 months, and such evidence may be taken as a means of proving that such a person knew the goods to have been obtained by an act constituting an indictable offence. Some person is in possession of some article which is proved to have been stolen, and the offence is that he received it knowing that it was stolen, not that he stole it. Intent is one of the first facts. It is very difficult to prove a charge of that character. The House will see that if you find on a man's premises any quantity of stolen stuff, stolen on other dates and from other people, it is not likely that evidence that the man did not know it was stolen will be received by the jury; and it is in the interests of justice that we should prove it. If a man is charged with receiving an umbrella knowing it to be stolen, and his evidence is that he paid a shilling for it and that he really thought it was the genuine property of the man who sold it, the story as it stands is one that is very difficult to meet; but if one can give any evidence that upon that man's premises, upon a search, were found hundreds of articles, or half-a-dozen articles, all of which were stolen and which had been taken from persons without any consent on their part, there is immediately something one can go on to gauge the knowledge of that man and his intent in the act on which he stands charged. Therefore I strongly recommend the adoption of the section which has been adopted for a number of years in the home country, and which has been in force so long and has proved so efficacious in the criminal law of the old country. Clause 48 is one that when the Bill gets into Committee I will myself propose to restrict to a great extent, because I believe its severity is great. It was included because the two sections were included in Imperial legislation. It deals with the evidence that can be given of previous convictions which involve fraud and dishonesty. It seems to me that a previous conviction of that character, especially over the term of five years provided, is beyond question too severe. It might possibly amount to this, that a boy who stole some apples out of an orchard, an act involving dishonesty, and was convicted for it, and was subsequently within five years charged with the serious offence of receiving goods knowing them to be stolen, might have the first conviction brought up in evidence against him, though it was of most trifling importance and did not really follow the lines of a similar offence. I think the safe course to follow, and which I shall ask the House to follow, is to give evidence only so long as it relates to a similar offence; but when it becomes so wide as in this clause to involve anything of fraud and dishonesty, then we are travelling in the direction of possible abuse. When the Bill is in Committee I shall be prepared to submit amendments dealing with the clause. We have also in this Bill entirely altered the present claim which is brought for an action known as an action for seduction. It is at present a most peculiar principle of law that an action for seduction has no relation to seduction at all, but merely to loss of services occasioned by it. If the father of a family suffered from the dishonour of his daughter and there was no birth as a result of that dishonour, he would have no action whatever. His right of action arises not from reason of any dishonour or loss of credit or fame his daughter suffers, but merely from the loss of services he himself

suffers from her temporarily being unable to give those household services which it is thought at law a daughter can give her father. That is the state of our law almost from time unknown, and we propose in this legislation to put it on one side and give a right of action for seduction to any person who is a parent of the woman seduced, or who stands in the relationship of parent, without its being necessary to prove that the woman was in the service of the plaintiff or that she sustained any loss from the seduction. I think the House will agree that nowadays, though these antiquities of law from their very antiquity are looked upon with reverence and serve a useful purpose, they should be put upon a more common-sense basis. There is a subclause which provides that the plaintiff in such action shall not recover damages unless the evidence is corroborated by material evidence of seduction. The clause is taken from the New Zealand Act. I desire to make it clear, however, that I am prepared to accept the decision of the House as to whether in all the circumstances it is wise this proviso should be included. It must be remembered that in an action of this kind secrecy is one of the first elements. It never takes place in the light of day, on the roads or public places; and therefore it in a large measure handicaps the possibility of recovering damages if we insist that there should be some material evidence over and above that of the woman to prove seduction. Yet the man is almost entirely at the mercy of the woman if he is fool enough to put himself in circumstances that he could commit such an action, and if the woman is unscrupulous enough to say that he did. It is hard to keep the balance between the two, on the one hand to prevent the law from being abused by those who are prepared to abuse it, or on the other hand not to make the path of the seducer easy. This is a matter in which the opinion of a lawyer is worth no more, possibly less, than that of an ordinary man in the community. It is a most difficult matter to hold the balance properly, and I submit it to the House and hope that the wisdom of the House will solve the position in the proper way, and find that solution which is most consonant with the interests of justice. The next provision of any novelty is one in which we provide that any person in civil proceedings will have the right to bring up to give evidence in his case any person in lawful custody of the Crown, provided he puts up sufficient money to pay for the cost of the prisoner's production. At present there is frequently a difficulty, because there is no absolute right on the part of persons bringing civil proceedings to obtain the attendance of prisoners of the Crown. We now make it a person's right, and give it him on the distinct terms that the Crown is not to be a loser. It is clearly seen that we must have that provision; because otherwise, the liberty of the subject not being in danger in civil proceedings, the right might be made use of indiscriminately for the mere purpose of seeing people confined in gaols, in instances where they have some notoriety. If this provision had been law in England at the time Mrs. Maybrick was confined in gaol and when there was some notoriety attached to her name, people interested might have been able to take her into civil proceedings for the mere sake of the notoriety of getting their own names into the Press. I do not think we can go any farther than give to those interested in civil proceedings the right to ask for the attendance of any person in lawful custody of the Crown, on the payment of sufficient money to pay for the cost of such production. Towards the middle of the Bill we have taken power to produce books of law which have not been actually issued under the authority of the Government for the purpose of guiding the Court on questions contained in such books, and being questions of law and custom in other countries or States of the Commonwealth. Also we have taken the power to produce standard books dealing with law, and which are admitted not for the purpose of binding the Court by the opinions expressed in them, but merely for the purpose of guiding the Court. Both will be useful provisions; because now the Court is restricted by legislation from taking judicial notice of anything excepting a limited amount of text-books or statute-books, so that the Court need pay no attention to any law book unless by long process of time and some easy and slow stages it has been accepted as a governing authority. On the other hand, text-

books are taken as so much gossip. It is not desirable that this should continue, but that these law books should have some standing in a Court. While we provide that they shall have no standing in a Court, we admit them to the right of being brought to the notice of the Court, and if it is wise and proper that they shall be accepted for guidance they will be accepted.

MR. BATH: Will the provision extend to works of political economy?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If there was a case on which works of political economy could throw some light, of course in civil cases books of that character would be admissible; but there are very few questions in a civil court of law, that is to say questions of justice and right between parties, in which books of that kind would be relevant. There is nothing much farther that I desire to comment upon, except possibly that we have taken a peculiar provision in law enabling a witness to be sworn in the Scotch form. I do not know that that is of any importance, but it may be pleasing to people of that particular nation to know that in future they may observe their national form of oath, which is, I believe, by holding up the right hand in the air at the time of being sworn.

MR. A. J. WILSON: There is no provision as to cases of gaming.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: We have another Bill to which attention will be drawn and which is already on the Notice Paper, treating with police offences, that will deal with gaming transactions and cover the whole ground. This is a Bill in relation to giving evidence, not proof.

MR. A. J. WILSON: There is a clause here dealing with gaming which is taken from the Criminal Code, I believe; Clause 39.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is only *primâ facie* evidence; it is already our law, and is not a new enactment. It already exists on the statute-book; it is only a presumption, and is not in any way proof. There is a broad difference between presumption and proof, and when we come to deal with the clauses of the Summary Jurisdiction Bill, it will then be found what is to be taken as proof of an offence. An offence is held to be committed when certain acts are committed. The clause referred to is only to the effect that when a person is charged with a certain offence, it is not necessary for the Crown to prove that some unlawful game was actually being played, or to prove that any persons found in the gaming-house at the time of the playing were playing for a stake or for money. It is to remove from the Crown the burden of proof, in that regard it is an important provision, because its absence would be used as an answer to the Crown case.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The onus of proof will lie on the accused.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member must understand it will be no answer to the Crown case that the person or persons found on the premises were not playing for money, but were playing for beans; they may have counters, which is a usual form of gaming; they may have chips.

MR. TAYLOR: Matches.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: They may have pieces of bone, little bits of chips, and it would be no answer to a prosecution for gaming to say that the persons were not playing for so much money but so much ivory, or so much composition, whatever it may be. There is another clause I should like to draw attention to, dealing with the evidence of children. At present, as members know, the evidence of children is admissible in certain cases. That is provided in Clause 103. We have extended the provision for the admission of evidence of children to all cases appearing before a Court where, in the opinion of the Court, the child understands the nature of an oath, and the child is possessed of sufficient intelligence to justify a reception of the evidence and understands the duty of speaking the truth. In order that there may be no danger of injustice we provide that no person shall be convicted of any crime or misdemeanour on the testimony of a child who gives evidence, unless the testimony of such child is corroborated by other evidence. Furthermore, it is provided that if a child is guilty of perjury, that child shall be liable to the same consequences as would be an adult person guilty of that offence. I think the House will recognise that it is wise to extend the law in this direction, and we are

following the Imperial Act in that regard, because as a matter of fact to-day in our Courts of justice evidence of children is admitted in the most serious cases, and it would appear absurd when this evidence is admitted in cases of that character we should not admit their evidence generally. It is provided that precaution shall be taken by the Court to insure that the child is able to understand, in the words of the clause, "the duty of speaking the truth." I need scarcely say, while in civil cases there is no need to take the provision as to corroboration, yet where a person is charged with a crime which involves the liberty of the subject, evidence of the child must be corroborated. These are the main provisions of the Bill, and I trust I have explained them sufficiently well to be understood by members, and that the Bill, although a technical one, will be grasped by the House. Members will see it is intended for a twofold purpose, firstly to reduce into one volume the complicated statutes now found existing in twenty-one volumes of our law, and therefore to make it much easier of reference, and in the second place to introduce the provisions I have dwelt on, which I hope will be introduced into our statutes and receive the support of the House.

MR. LYNCH: Are you going to include the provisions of the Imperial Acts?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have dwelt on all the new provisions that are included.

MR. WALKER: Still it is possible to go outside this Bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is as far as our State is concerned. We have not the power to repeal Imperial statutes which extend to this State, neither have we the power to repeal Commonwealth statutes which are the law of this State; therefore we can only, in an attempt made to codify these statutes, consolidate the statutes of this State. In regard to provisions of a Commonwealth character, they are few and far between, and the Imperial ones are still fewer and farther between. As far as the practical administration of the law is concerned it will be comprised within this Bill.

ADJOURNMENT.

MR. BATH moved that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday next.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the debate were adjourned until Tuesday next it would be somewhat difficult to keep before the House sufficient business to transact. Already he had met members in regard to another Bill, and there were no matters of great importance before the House.

MR. BATH: Wednesday was private members' day, and the Committee stage of some of the Bills had been fixed for Thursday.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL was willing to accede to the request.

Motion passed, the debate adjourned.

BILL—COLLIE AND ESPERANCE RATES VALIDATION.

SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan), in moving the second reading, said: This measure is purely a formal one, and it is only necessary for me, in moving the second reading, to explain the reasons under which it becomes necessary to submit it to the House. In regard to that portion validating certain rates made by the municipality of Collie, I desire to inform the House the reason for this measure being necessary is, that the late town clerk omitted to enter in the rate book a memorandum of the striking of the rate under Section 337 of the Municipalities Act of 1900, and when the council were suing for certain rates they were met with the objection that the rate had not been properly signed in accordance with the section, and a verdict was given against the council. Members will see that the matter is purely a formal one, to rectify an omission on the part of the late town clerk of Collie. As regards the other portion of the Bill, the audit at Esperance, the circumstances are these. A special audit was had in regard to the municipality of Esperance under Section 407 of the Municipalities Act. That audit was made at the request of the necessary number of ratepayers. Under Section 408 it is necessary to confirm that audit within three months, but it has been found impracticable to do so, and the present Bill is merely for the purpose of extending the power of the Governor to confirm that audit notwithstanding the expiration of the three months. The

Bill being of a purely formal character, I move that it be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Validation of rates:

MR. FOULKES asked whether any land had been sold by the council for arrears of rates, or whether the council had taken any illegal steps to collect rates, as this Bill was introduced for the purpose of validating these particular proceedings.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL having no knowledge of the subject had consulted the member for Collie, who informed him that no such action had been taken.

MR. TAYLOR wished to know whether this measure would validate the rate that had been struck if it had not been collected. Would it be retrospective?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. The Bill validated the rate.

Clause passed.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING MOVED.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan) in moving the second reading said: The measure which I now submit to the House deals with the registration of bills of sale, and the subject has been one of complaint both to the present Government and I understand to the two preceding Governments. It arises from the fact that frequently a man in business who finds himself in financial difficulties gives a bill of sale to one particular creditor with whom he is doing business, covering the whole of his assets, the result being that the balance of his creditors are left entirely out in the cold. It has been submitted, I understand, to the Government of which Mr. Daglish was head, and also to the last Government and to the present Government, that this is not a desirable state of affairs to be allowed to exist, and it has been farther pointed out to us that in Victoria provision has for some years past been in existence to prevent the occurrence of what I have pointed out; this is so also in Tasmania. For that reason we have brought this measure before the House. We have not adopted in its entirety the measure as framed by the Victorian law makers, because I am not personally prepared to agree to the wide term of 14 days being allowed to elapse between the time when persons apply to register the bill of sale and the date when it becomes registered. It must be apparent that no man gives a bill of sale except one who is desirous of obtaining money, and who is generally desirous of obtaining it in the shortest time possible. It is probably money for a business venture, or it may be that in the ordinary course of his business he is called upon to produce money at short notice. Therefore we must not, by giving a long period, handicap that man unduly. The measure provides that any person who is desirous of registering a bill of sale has to give notice of his intention to register it on the expiration of seven days, during which it is open to any creditor to come in and lodge a caveat. If a caveat be lodged, the person applying to register brings the matter before a Judge of the Supreme Court, who hears the application for the registration of the bill, and also hears the creditor, and in the word "creditor" are included all creditors of the man whose estate is being conveyed or pledged under that bill of sale. Upon hearing the parties the Judge makes an order such as justice requires. It is farther provided by the Bill that at any time any person who has lodged a caveat may withdraw the caveat on being satisfied that he is protected. In other words, if in any event the man who is a creditor of the person being the grantor of the bill of sale, and who has seen the necessary advertisement of his intention to give security over all his assets, lodges a caveat, he may at any time in order to facilitate business withdraw the caveat, which immediately allows the bill of sale to be registered on expiration of the necessary time. This Bill is a short one, although the clauses are somewhat numerous, because most of the clauses are merely the machinery of the Bill. The whole principle of the Bill is in what I have said to the House. We provide that before a bill of sale becomes

registered an interval of seven days must elapse if the Bill be executed within 20 miles of the principal towns set out in the schedule; if elsewhere, after an interval of 14 days outside. I have provided 14 days in the latter case because we must make some provision for the huge distances we have in this State. After the expiration of that time, if no caveat is lodged the document goes on its ordinary course as a bill of sale now does. On the other hand, the creditors are enabled in the interval to come in and protect their interests. I have personal knowledge of scandalous instances of one creditor mopping up the whole of an estate, and of other creditors equally deserving of recognition at the debtor's hands being left out. The present law on the subject under our existing Bills of Sale Act is that any bill of sale which is made under those Acts is invalid as against a trustee in bankruptcy if executed within six months of the date of filing the petition in bankruptcy, except for contemporaneous advances or for the price of goods sold or supplied subsequent to the granting of the bill of sale. But the unfortunate exception is just exactly what covers the case I am dealing with. The case invariably arises from someone who is asked to supply a man in business, and who, before he supplies him, finds out that he has already obtained generous credit from other sources, instead of dealing with him on the same lines obtains a bill of sale over every atom that debtor possesses. Therefore that bill of sale does not become liable to any challenge under proceedings in bankruptcy. I commend the Bill to the consideration of the House, and beg formally to move that it be now read a second time.

On motion by MR. GORDON, debate adjourned.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING MOVED.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan) in moving the second reading said: A member in speaking on another Bill to-night remarked something about the close corporation which is supposed to represent the legal profession. However, the Bill I now submit to the House is one to enable those to enter the profession who have not served articles in accordance with provisions under our existing legislation, but who have served such a term as warrants us in supposing they have a due knowledge of the law. Let me here observe that when one speaks of the hedge which surrounds any profession, we must remember that it is in the interests of the public at large that we should not allow men to enter a profession unless we are certain they have gone to a school which has fully qualified them to discharge the duties of that profession. No greater harm could happen to a community than to pour out on it professional men who have not been properly and carefully grounded in the work their profession requires them to discharge; and of all professions none of them could be more dangerous in that respect than the legal profession, because if there is one man calculated to do infinite harm to any community, it is a lawyer not capable of properly performing his work. While we propose to make the entry to the profession of a more open character under this Bill, I have no intention whatever of making the profession one in which any Tom, Dick, or Harry can call himself a professional man, and thereby victimise the public; because unconsciously, without any design on his part, he would certainly victimise them if entrusted with business he was incapable of understanding or carrying out.

MR. HORAN: Who is going to decide his capability?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: His capability is decided in this way. He is assumed to be a man of ordinary intelligence. Being that, he is then taken through a careful school of training, such as in the medical profession and any other profession of a similar character, and then he takes part in an examination which is in some measure a test of his knowledge. But the examination alone is really only a small test, because we all know that a number of us are endowed with a gift of memory which for the time being enables us to grasp the subject and answer all the questions put to us about it, and in a few days our knowledge is absolutely a thing of the past. Therefore, a mere examination alone is not sufficient, but an examination cul-

minating with a man's training does give some fair ground for assuming that the man is qualified to carry on the profession with which we entrust him, with credit to himself and some benefit to the community. I should like to acquaint the House with the provisions which exist elsewhere with regard to the admission of members to our profession. In England a person can be admitted as an attorney or solicitor—and there a distinction exists between the bar and solicitors which does not exist in our case—if articled to a practising attorney or solicitor for five years—absolutely articled, and by being articled one is not in the position we now propose that these persons can occupy, that of being managing clerk, but he is a person who is supposed to be in a state of pupilage, to be constantly made the subject of lessons, and to be taken on every occasion that it is possible to do so for the purpose of learning by experience, in Court and other places, the carrying out the functions of his office. Under a certain statute at home the period of articles is reduced to three years when the applicant can produce a university degree; in other words, when he can show that he has already passed through a university, and therefore has some slight knowledge at any rate, entitling him to consideration in the matter of the length of his articles. In Canada the law varies considerably in the various provinces. In Prince Edward Island four years' articles, in Quebec four years' articles, in Ontario five years' articles, in Manitoba five years' articles, in Yukon three years' articles, and in British Columbia five years' articles are required. So throughout all the different provinces of the Dominion of Canada in every case it is provided that only by a system of articled pupils is admission allowed to the profession. In New Brunswick the term is four years as a student at law, and in the North-West territory five years as a student is required.

MR. BATH: A student at law is different from an articled clerk.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. As I explained, articles are required in every province of the Canadian Dominion, except those two. A student at law, in the provision made there, is a student regularly attending law classes—not merely passing examinations. There is great difference between a man who regularly attends lectures and a man who merely presents himself at the end of a term to pass an examination. A man who attends lectures must grasp much more than the information necessary to answer questions; because a lecturer covers a great deal of ground outside the ground which can be made the subject of set questions at his lectures. Therefore a pupil attending lectures acquires far more general knowledge than a man who merely reads a text-book and subsequently presents himself for examination. In Cape Colony three years' articles are required, four years in Natal, and three years in the Transvaal. In the Orange River Colony, though three years' articles are required, there were certain exemptions on passing an examination entitling them to be admitted to the High Court of the Orange River Free State when that country was a republic. I come to Australia, the practice in which is perhaps more likely to guide the House. South Australia requires five years' articles, or the applicant must have been for that period an associate to a Judge. Tasmania requires five years' articles, and Victoria three years. In New South Wales, a provision is made which I shall now point out, and which really forms the groundwork of the provision I am submitting to-night. In New South Wales, a person who has completed a term of ten years' clerkship in the office of a solicitor practising in New South Wales, and has been at least for five years of such ten years a managing clerk of such office, may, on obtaining permission of the Judges and passing both the intermediate and the final examination, be admitted as a solicitor. But he is admitted as a solicitor only, and not to the full privileges of the profession. He is not admitted, as we propose here, to be both a solicitor and a barrister. There, the profession is still in its dual form. [MR. TAYLOR: As in England.] As in England. And the only power that the statute which I refer to gives is the power of admission to the ranks of that portion of the profession known as solicitors.

MR. WALKER: Was there not an amending Legal Practitioners Bill brought in recently?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This memo. from which I quote is very much up to date. Such a Bill may have been brought in; but I am speaking of what is law, not of what has been proposed and not accepted. I am not sufficiently conversant with what has been brought in by various New South Wales Governments and not passed, to be able to answer the hon. member. Queensland requires five years' articles, or five years as associate to a Judge. The only exception, therefore, to the rule in the whole of Australia is to be found in New South Wales; and that exception only goes so far as allowing a man who has been ten years a law clerk and five years of that ten years a managing clerk, on passing two examinations and with the approval of the Judges, to be admitted to the ranks of that part of the profession known as solicitors.

MR. BATH: Yes; but he can be admitted as a barrister after three years.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not aware of that.

MR. WALKER: That is correct.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I shall make any inquiries the hon. member wishes; but I understand from the information supplied to me, which I am at present quoting to the House, that the facts are as I have stated. However, what we propose in this Bill is that a clerk of ten years' standing, who has been for five years of the ten years a managing clerk, and who passes not two examinations but merely a final examination, and who has obtained for the purpose of presenting himself for examination a certificate that he is a fit and proper person—in other words, a character certificate—from the Barristers' Board, shall be entitled, on passing that examination, to practise with the full rights of the legal profession in Western Australia. And farther provision is made to deal with exceptional cases. The Barristers' Board may, in its discretion, reduce the term of ten years to seven years, providing that the seven years include five years spent in the position of a managing clerk. In other words, if circumstances justify an application for that indulgence, the Barristers' Board may authorise a clerk who has been only seven years in the State, but who has been for five years a managing clerk, to present himself for the final examination; and on passing that examination he shall be entitled to practise the profession in the State of Western Australia. Provision is made in the Bill to prevent a managing clerk from going out of his employer's office, passing an examination, and setting up next door to his employer and taking his employer's business by reason of the confidential position which he formerly occupied in that employer's office. This the clerk cannot do without the consent of his employer, until 12 months have elapsed after his leaving his employer's office. There can be no question as to the justice of this provision; because in a lawyer's office the managing clerk is given almost direct power with regard to business of a certain character. He represents the firm entirely, and his relationship with the clients is of the most intimate character; therefore, if he were empowered and chose to practise, immediately after his admission, alongside his employer, there can be no doubt he would do his employer a great injury which nobody would wish to authorise, because it would be neither fair nor just. In presenting such a measure to the House, it is desirable to present one which meets the wishes of those for whose benefit it is intended; and therefore I should like to state that, although I have not in any wise infringed the privileges of the House by showing to anyone the Bill printed as we have it here to-night, I have discussed the lines of it with the Managing Clerks' Association, and I can say that the representative of that association with whom I had the pleasure of discussing the Bill was prepared to extend to it his hearty acceptance. It has been long promised, although it has been overdue for some sessions, in fact for some Governments; and the association is perfectly willing to recognise that the Government must keep a middle course and not attempt to throw the gate wide open; because to do so would, for the reason I have already explained, inflict a grave injustice on the public. Another point I should like to mention is that no man now in the profession objects for a moment, with a view to his own interest, to the gate being thrown open; for the simple reason that if we admit to the profession a man who makes a lot of blunders and puts in false positions

people whose legal rights he has to adjust, he creates far more business than the business he absorbs. For the little business he absorbs in his own person he creates tenfold for others who are in the profession and are doing business on proper lines. And no man in the profession, or no man who simply confines his view to his own interest, would really object to our throwing open the profession to every person who chose to announce that he was prepared to practise as a solicitor. But to give that indulgence would be a grave injustice to the public; and from that point of view I look at the Bill and ask the House to look at it. It would be just as foolish to allow anyone to start as a medical practitioner without taking every possible precaution to ground himself up slowly in the rudiments of his profession, and to be fully possessed of the necessary qualifications for carrying out his professional duties. I do not know that I can at any farther length elaborate this subject. This is a simple Bill, which is meant to give what has been for a long time promised to a certain section in our midst which deserves consideration at our hands; and I trust this is the light in which the Bill will be received by the House.

On the motion by MR. BATH, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9·40 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th July, 1906.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4·30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

ELECTION RETURN—GUILDFORD.

MR. SPEAKER announced the return of writ for the election extraordinary of a member for Guildford district, in place of Mr. C. H. Rason resigned; showing that Mr. William Dartnell Johnson had been duly elected.

MR. JOHNSON took the oath and subscribed the roll.

QUESTION—RACECOURSES LICENSING BILL.

MR. A. J. WILSON asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce this session a Racecourse Licensing Bill, as promised last session by the Rason Government?

THE PREMIER replied: Yes.

QUESTION—WAGIN-DUMBLEYUNG RAILWAY DEVIATION.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Premier: 1, Have operations been suspended on the