

are entitled to represent 200 or 300 electors, my constituency should have a few more representatives. There are other questions on which I should have liked to touch; but I do not wish to take up more time, therefore I shall conclude.

On motion by Mr. F. CONNOR, debate adjourned until the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at one minute past 10 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th August, 1902.

Papers presented—Question: Railways, Spark Arresters
—Question: Land for Selection—Address-in-Reply,
seventh day—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

BY THE MINISTER FOR WORKS AND RAILWAYS: Paper relative to alteration in Classification and Railway Rate Book.

BY THE PREMIER: Regulations under Workers' Compensation Act.

BY THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Census Returns, 1901, Parts 1 and 2.

BY THE TREASURER: Charts of Esperance Bay.

Order: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, SPARK ARRESTERS.

MR. J. EWING asked the Minister for Railways: 1, When the locomotives of this State were first fitted with the Standard Deflector (better known as the Rotheram spark arrester). 2, How many locomotives have been thus fitted. 3, What is the back pressure caused by this deflector. 4, Whether it is a fact that

this spark arrester has proved a failure, and is now being removed from the locomotives. 5, What this experiment has cost the State. 6, On what date was the Harwood spark arrester first brought under the notice of the Government. 7, Whether the Harwood spark arrester has been thoroughly tested; if so, with what result. 8, What is the price of the Drummond spark arrester, which is being fitted to some of the new locomotives now being imported.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, About November, 1900. I am not aware that it is known as the Rotheram spark arrester, as it is in general use and is adapted for burning brown coal or lignite. 2, 170. 3, The deflector does not directly cause back pressure. The area of the exhaust nozzle has to be slightly reduced with the standard deflector. The back pressure varies with the shape, area, and position of the exhaust nozzle, also the speed that the engine is running and the quantity of steam used. 4, No. 5, The cost to the 30th June, 1902, has been approximately £5,200, and the work is not regarded as an experiment. 6, October, 1901. 7, It is now being tested. 8, About £75 each.

QUESTION—LAND FOR SELECTION.

MR. JACOBY, for Mr. Thomas, asked the Premier: 1, Whether arrangements are being made for the throwing open of the land at Grass Patch and Salmon Gums for selection, as recommended by Inspector White. 2, When will this land be available.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, In about a month's time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SEVENTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous Wednesday, the proposed amendment having been negatived and the general debate continued.

DR. M. O'CONNOR (Moore): I join with the Government in offering my sympathy to Mrs. C. Y. O'Connor and her family in the great loss they have sustained; and I hope we shall have an opportunity of giving them on the Estimates a substantial bonus, for Mr. O'Connor's work in this country should,

undoubtedly, be adequately rewarded. Had he been dishonest, he could have made thousands of pounds; but we find at his death he has practically left his family without an income. I notice the Auditor General in his report calls attention to the advisableness of changing the end of the financial year from the 30th June to the 31st December. It seems to me rather absurd that when Parliament meets we should be asked to consider expenditure which is 12 months old. I think it advisable that the year should be made to end on the 31st December, for I notice that the Auditor General's report to the Governor was presented on the 25th February last; therefore, if the year were to end on the 31st December, he could easily be ready with his report on the 1st June following.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The difficulty would be precisely the same.

DR. O'CONNOR: But the Auditor General presents his report on the 25th February—seven months after the end of the financial year. If the year ended on the 31st December, I do not see why he should not present it on the 30th June following. The Auditor General tells me this could be done. He calls attention also to some difficulties in getting replies to his queries. I think Ministers should see that such replies are given immediately. He mentions also the necessity for bringing down the Estimates as soon as possible during the session of Parliament. I understand this will shortly be done by the Treasurer, and we shall consequently have an earlier opportunity of passing the Appropriation Bill. The Government have appointed a Civil Service Commission. I think it would have been much better had Ministers and Under Secretaries looked into their departments, and themselves tried to reduce expenditure. If the Commission find it necessary to retrench in any department, the Under Secretary or the chief clerk responsible for excessive expenditure resulting from employment of unnecessary officials should be dealt with, and not lower-grade officers drawing salaries ranging from £100 to £300 a year. Several branches of the service might well be severely cut down. The architectural branch, I think, we might annihilate altogether. At present we are spending about £14,000 a year to keep

this branch going; and it appears to me much better work would be done if the Government employed outside architects at the ordinary rate of five per cent. I understand the present cost of buildings constructed by the architectural branch is from seven to ten per cent. [MEMBER: No.] That has been stated publicly, anyhow. Then the astronomical branch costs from £3,000 to £4,000 a year. In Queensland the astronomical branch has already been got rid of; and I do not know that we get any particular value from the present Government Astronomer or from his department. I have nothing to say against Mr. Cooke.

MR. HASTIE: He regulates the weather.

DR. O'CONNOR: He did not regulate it the other day when the Governor was laying the foundation stone of the new Houses of Parliament. I think it would be much more advantageous had we simply a meteorologist to give us some reliable weather forecasts. I notice that an under secretary recently appointed in the Colonial Secretary's Department has been brought from the Premier's Department and put over the heads of older officers. I believe that under the Public Service Act seniority should, other things being equal, give first claim to promotion. In this case we find the chief clerk was passed over in favour of an officer from another department. I do not think that was the intention of the Act, and I hope the Government will not allow promotions of that sort to recur. In the Mines Department, too, I notice that an officer from another country has been appointed mining expert. I do not know what are his qualifications, but it seems very strange that we should have to go outside the State to fill such a position; for in this large mining community there must be someone capable of acting in that capacity. I hope the Public Service Commission will inquire whether it is advisable to retain the present number of Ministers. I think five Ministers should be quite sufficient; and five were sufficient some years ago, in Sir John Forrest's time, when we had, in addition to our present departments, the Customs and the Postal Departments also, with several others now taken over by the Federal Government.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But only one-third of our present revenue.

MR. DIAMOND: And less than half the population.

DR. O'CONNOR: I think we could do very well with five Ministers. For instance, the Colonial Secretary cannot have very much to do, and I am certain the same applies to the Minister for Mines. These departments might well be combined. The Government have promised us better arrangements for the accommodation of lunatics. I have heard it stated the Government have been asked to buy large blocks of land for very large sums. I hope such offers will not be accepted. The Crown has ample tracts of land near Perth, which would be just as suitable for an asylum as any private lands. We have been promised abattoirs, and they are an urgent necessity. We have at present slaughter-houses in all parts of the metropolitan district, and there is absolutely no inspection; consequently it is highly probable that diseased meat has been sold for human consumption in Perth, in Fremantle, and perhaps on the goldfields. The Central Board of Health have at different times seized in Perth diseased meat just on the point of being made into small goods, the inspector happening to turn up in the nick of time. All stock should be slaughtered at one place, and a competent inspector appointed to see that no diseased meat gets into consumption. I congratulate the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) on the stand he took when Treasurer in opposing the application for a farther grant of money made by the chairman and members of the board of trustees for the Perth Museum. I think we have so many necessary demands to meet that we should not spend any more money in providing accommodation for dead rats, cats, mice, butterflies, and similar objects. A useful suggestion is to create larger municipalities. It would be well to have Perth enlarged so as to include the suburbs of Subiaco and Leederville, and the districts as far as Claremont; while Fremantle should take in the others. From a health point of view, and for licensing and other purposes, this arrangement would be much more workable than the present. It would be a good thing if the Government could or would bring in a Bill enlarging the municipalities. There is one other matter to which I desire to

refer. I took notice of the speech made by the member for Hannans in reference to the locomotive branch of the Railway Department. If the remarks made by the hon. member are true—and I think the Minister for Railways should immediately inquire into the subject to prove whether they are true or not—Mr. Rotherham should get notice to quit at once; whilst, on the other hand, if they are not true, the Minister should come in and protect that officer.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): I beg, first of all, to congratulate the Premier and those sitting with him on having secured a majority in this House. This Parliament has been through a rather crucial experience in the last 18 months, which is easily accounted for if you look into it; but I am sure it is very gratifying to the country that there is a Ministry at present in possession of a working majority of the House. In speaking last year, I referred to the very unsatisfactory condition in which the Ministry were placed; and I think it is a still greater source of gratification that the Ministry now hold, I believe, a majority irrespective of those members representing labour. I said I considered that it was not conducive to good Government for the representatives of the Labour party to hold the balance of power, and be in such a position that they could turn the Ministry out any day they liked. In expressing this congratulation to members I must, I think, point out that when the present Ministry were in Opposition their views were not quite the same as they are now, because I consider the principal reason why there was not a change of Ministry before was that the then Opposition had two planks in their platform which the country would not accept; one being their opposition to the expenditure of money on public works, and the other their belief in private enterprise in public works. There is a remarkable silence about that now. The Premier, the other night, made a remark which rather astonished me. He said he considered this House of 50 persons was not sufficient to enable party government to be run. When the hon. gentleman first came into this House he was a strong opponent of party government in any form, yet last year, and I think the year before, he worked the party system