

high honour which they ought to maintain in the House.

MR. HIGHAM: May I rise to a point of order. If this debate is continued, the Fremantle members will not be able to catch their train.

THE SPEAKER: I do not see what that has to do with it.

MR. HARPER: It will do the Fremantle members good to be kept here. Sometimes we have had to sit here till midnight, and this matter has been postponed on three separate occasions out of consideration to the Fremantle members. If they do not wish to wait they can go, and the House can finish the business in their absence, as we have done in relation to many other matters. I cannot quite support what I understood to be a promise given by the Premier, that he was prepared to give a portion of this land and the value of the balance. I do not think it would be right at all.

THE PREMIER: I said a money grant. I do not think I spoke about the land.

MR. HARPER: I am pleased to hear the hon. gentleman say so. I cannot see what is required more than ample space for the building of this hall and for any necessary little offices.

THE PREMIER: I certainly would give them a substantial grant.

MR. HARPER: I have no objection to that, but I do not think it would be right to give them a grant of land worth £1,000, and £5,000 in money. If I understand the hon. gentleman not to mean that, I am certainly quite agreeable that a sufficient portion of land should be given for this building, and I have no objection to a grant of money also being given, but I protest against this system of giving the country's land behind Parliament. If grants are to be made, they should be made by Parliament.

THE PREMIER: Would the hon. member withdraw his motion, and then we can perhaps fix it up and bring the matter down again to-morrow in another form, on the Supplementary Estimates?

MR. HARPER: If I withdrew this, I should be withdrawing the condemnation of a principle. That is what I object to. It might be said then that the House did not agree to the condemnation of the principle. I say I want to condemn the principle.

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

Ayes ...	13
Noes ...	11

Majority for ... 2

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Harper	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Higham
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Holman
Mr. Leake	Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Monger	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Nanson	Mr. Reid
Mr. Phillips	Mr. Reside
Mr. Quinlan	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Rason	Mr. Doherty (Teller).
Mr. Thomas	
Mr. Wallace (Teller).	

Question thus passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11-28 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 4th February, 1902.

Papers Presented—Motion: Midland Railway Inquiry, Conditions before Purchase (negatived)—Motion: Public Works, to Inquire as to System—Leave of Absence—Judge's Pension Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Motion: Coolgardie Water Scheme, to Expedite and Test (resumed)—Fourth Judge Bill, Recommittal, reported—Gaols Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, reported—Kalgoorlie Tramways Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Criminal Code Bill, in Committee, Schedule 4 to end—Early Closing Bill, in Committee, Clauses 9 to 13, progress—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4-30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By HON. A. JAMESON: 1, Conservation of jarrah forests in Western Australia by use of sawn telegraph poles—Copy of Correspondence between the Western Australian and the Commonwealth

Governments. He said this was a new departure in this Chamber. When matters were referred to the Commonwealth, considerable time elapsed before we could get a reply, and the reply in this instance had been received from the Commonwealth Government. 2, Return (moved for by Hon. R. S. Haynes) of amounts received by the Government from the sale of portions of the 2,400,000 acres held as security on behalf of the Midland Railway Company.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

MOTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY INQUIRY, CONDITIONS BEFORE PURCHASE.

HON. J. T. GLOWREY (South) moved:

That this House is of opinion that no agreement should be made by the Government for the purchase of the Midland Railway until the terms and conditions of the proposed purchase are laid before both Houses of the Legislature, and their concurrence obtained.

He said: I have pleasure in moving the motion standing in my name. In going through the report of the select committee, presented to this House last week and adopted, I may say unanimously, I find that this recommendation is made by the committee:—

From time to time attempts have been made, directly and indirectly, by the company to dispose of the undertaking to the Government: the price has fluctuated to a considerable extent, and on the whole great dissatisfaction exists in the public mind in respect of these negotiations and the manner in which they have been conducted. It will undoubtedly be to the advantage of the State that any proposal for purchase should be accepted conditionally upon being approved of by both Houses of Parliament.

One clause of the report of the joint committee adopted by this House during last week being the same effect as my motion, I do not think many arguments will be needed from me to induce the House to pass the motion. Indeed, in view of the report, it appears to me more necessary than ever that some such motion should be passed. I have carefully read the report of the joint committee, and think they are to be congratulated on the thoroughness of their inquiries and on the careful manner in which they have drawn up their report. A great deal more information appears to be required before we can decide on the question of purchase. The report

tells us that certain agreements between the Midland Railway Company and the Government are not to be found. While these documents are missing we would not be justified, I think, in entering into any agreement for the purchase of the undertaking. Farther, we need a good deal more information before we shall be justified in arriving at anything like a valuation of the property. We have nothing to guide us as to the value of the land unsold, though we have been told something of the value of the land which is already sold. Moreover, we have nothing to guide us as to the earning power of the railway. In order to arrive at an estimate of this we require a complete audit of the Midland Railway Company's books for the past three years at least. In addition, we ought to have before us a valuation of all plant and appliances belonging to the company. It has been said that the adoption of a motion of this character will hamper the Government. I do not think that statement affords a good excuse for rejecting the motion: in fact, I do not regard it as an argument at all. If the company want to sell, and if the State wants to buy, the adoption of my motion will not interfere with the progress of negotiations at all. We, as the State, want to buy as cheaply as we can; and the company, of course, want to get the best price possible. Under such circumstances a motion of this character cannot hamper negotiations. I do not think it necessary for me to enter into a lengthy statement, particularly as the motion is practically covered by the joint committee's report. So much was said last week concerning the report that I have no desire to take up the time of hon. members in labouring the matter now. I hope the motion will be carried. If the Government proposed to build a new railway, the proposal would have to come before this House and before another place for approval. Arguing on the same lines, I say that before the Government complete a bargain involving an expenditure of perhaps a million of money, it is only right that Parliament should have a voice in deciding whether the money shall be spent or not.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson): The Government raise no objection to this motion. In the ordinary

course, the concurrence of Parliament would be sought. That is to say, any agreement entered into by the Government for the purchase of the railway would have to be ratified by Parliament.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Ratified by Parliament?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Must be agreed to by Parliament.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: That is a different thing.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not at all desirable that the Government should enter into any agreement in this matter without the consent of Parliament. The purchase of this line involves an important question of policy, and the Government would be only too glad that, at any rate, part of the onus of deciding that question should rest on Parliament. I assure hon. members that nothing will be absolutely completed, though negotiations may be entered into, before the Government have the consent of Parliament to carry out the purchase.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): It seems to me that the adoption of the motion before the House at the present moment would tie the hands of the Government to a very considerable extent. I do not see how the Government can continue negotiations if this motion be adopted here and agreed to in another place. Certainly the hon. member should be quite satisfied to permit the Government, if the terms offered by one side or the other were such as would be likely to prove acceptable to the country, to enter into an agreement for purchase, subject to the approval of Parliament. If the motion were worded somewhat after this fashion, the Government would be free to continue the present negotiations and might thus be able to carry certain points. Any arrangement eventually entered into between the Government and the company could of course be subject, as an hon. member has said, to ratification by Parliament. That is to say the Government should not complete an agreement.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It should be a conditional agreement.

HON. G. RANDELL: Yes; the agreement should be conditional.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The adoption of the motion would allow of that.

HON. G. RANDELL: I do not think so. The terms of the motion are very stringent, that no agreement should be made by the Government for purchase until the terms and conditions are laid before both Houses of the Legislature, and their concurrence obtained. Let us suppose that, immediately after the prorogation, favourable offers are submitted by the company to the Government: it should then be open to the Government to fix those offers by a conditional agreement. That is to say, the Government might bind the State so far as they could, and the company would bind themselves absolutely, to the terms and conditions which the Government, in their wisdom, might think would prove acceptable to the country. We should be perfectly safe in allowing the Government to proceed so far. Of course if the proposed terms and conditions were made public property, injury might result. It is not for me to say, of course; but if I were a member of the Government, my endeavour would be to have the hands of the Government at liberty to the extent I indicate. This would be a business-like way of going about the negotiations between two parties where the consent of a third party is required. The strict interpretation of the motion, as it stands, is entirely in the opposite direction, and binds the Government not to enter into any agreement until such time as the terms and conditions have been submitted to the House. We are all agreed that the Legislature should have a voice in the making of the agreement, since it will have to vote the money required for the purchase. But preliminary negotiations should not be hindered or stopped, as I think they will be if the present motion be adopted here and agreed to in another place. Of course, I leave it entirely to the Government to say whether they will accept the motion.

HON. R. S. HAYNES (Central): Lest objection should be taken to the form of the motion, I rise to move an amendment which I hope will make the motion perfectly acceptable both to the Government and to Parliament. I move as an amendment:

That all the words after "that," in line 1, be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu: "It is desirable that any agreement to be made by the Government for the purchase of

the Midland Railway undertaking should be made conditionally on the ratification thereof by Parliament."

HON. W. MALEY (West): I prefer the motion as it stands; because the amendment implies that it is desirable to enter into negotiations with the company. My opinion is that the company have only one possible buyer, and that buyer is the Government of this State. The company know where to come when they want to sell, and they know how to approach the Government when they want to sell. There is in these matters usually a middleman, who arranges a good deal and gets a large profit. If by the adoption of any motion this House implies that the Government are disposed to purchase the line, then such implication will be taken every advantage of by the vendors. The Government, if they understand the first principles of business, should have no difficulty in getting an option; that is, if the company are disposed to sell. Of course, if the Company are not disposed to sell, then it is the duty of the Government and Parliament to wait until they are so disposed, and not by any means to offer inducements to sell. The company have their property here, and they have certain rights which must be protected; but it is a moot point whether a narrow-gauge railway running all the way from Geraldton to Perth is the best service under present circumstances. We live in moving times, and a broad-gauge railway alongside the Midland narrow-gauge line is quite within the limits of possibilities. The company must be given to understand that they are not dealing with the State as it was in the old days; and it may be that with the prospect of a broad-gauge railway before them, they will feel inclined to impose easier conditions of sale.

HON. J. M. SPEED (Metropolitan-Suburban): I think the amendment hardly meets the difficulty pointed out, because the Government are in exactly the same position in any event. We know the Government have the power, subject to the consent of Parliament, to make agreements. They have done so in the past; and those agreements have invariably been ratified by Parliament. What we want to guard against, however, is the danger of the Government

entering into an agreement which Parliament will feel honourably bound to adopt. We want it clearly understood that the contract, whatever it may be, shall not be binding until Parliament has confirmed it. The amendment moved by Mr. Haynes hardly meets the difficulty.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I have no desire to press the amendment.

HON. J. M. SPEED: The original motion does not debar the Government from entering into negotiations; but it does debar the Government from binding themselves to such extent that Parliament would feel honourably bound to ratify the agreement entered into. The original motion does convey what we really desire to achieve.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put, and negatived on the voices.

MOTION—PUBLIC WORKS, INQUIRY AS TO SYSTEM.

HON. J. T. GLOWREY (South) moved:

That a Royal Commission be appointed to inquire into the system adopted in connection with the carrying out of Public Works in Western Australia, also as to the control, cost, and supervision of such works, and generally to inquire fully into the Public Works Department, with a view to the more economical and efficient working of same.

He said: I recognise that this motion asking for the appointment of a Royal Commission is one of more than usual importance. I hope, however, that the few remarks I shall offer in support will sufficiently prove the necessity for the appointment proposed. As we all know, the Public Works Department is our great spending department. It behoves us, therefore, to exercise every economy in connection with that department, and to give it the closest supervision. We have had an experiment, firstly, of contract work; and contract work has been condemned as a failure. The condemnation passed on it by the Engineer-in-Chief was couched in particularly strong terms. Secondly, we have had an experiment in departmental day labour; and a bitter experiment it has been. The system of day labour has also been condemned in strong terms by the Engineer-in-Chief. Both the contract system and the day labour system have, in my opinion,

proved failures. As regards the former, it has been said that the system adopted by the engineering division of the Works Department has been more than unsatisfactory. When works are let by contract, there is almost invariably much trouble in arriving at a settlement between the contractor and the Engineer-in-Chief, which trouble is undoubtedly caused firstly by laxity or inefficiency on the part of departmental officers, secondly by the form of contract in vogue, and thirdly by errors of judgment in supervising the works. The Public Works Department have generally admitted their blunders. We have strong evidence of this by the very high awards made by the Engineer-in-Chief when acting as arbitrator between the contractor and the Public Works Department. I will give members two or three instances of that. We have the Niagara reservoir, a work which was originally intended to cost about £15,000; that was the sum I believe Parliament was led to believe this work would cost. It was, however, let by tender to a contractor for £24,000. The work was so altered and increased during the construction that a very large award was made by the Engineer-in-Chief, which brought the total payment up to £60,000, that being £36,000 more than the contract price, or very nearly equal to four times the amount Parliament was led to believe the cost would be when the work was first undertaken. This is not the worst of it. Notwithstanding the heavy financial loss incurred by the State in the construction of this work, the undertaking has proved almost an absolute failure. It is well known to many members, goldfields members I am sure, that this work has been an absolute failure. The reason of course can be easily stated. I will refer to two or three contract works. That was the first one of any magnitude I can remember that took place on the goldfields. Then we have the Donnybrook-Bridgetown railway, a work which was let by contract for about £86,000. The data upon which this work was let was so incomplete that it was found necessary to enlarge the work in order to make it an engineering success, and I think the contractor finally received about £126,000 for the work, that being £40,000 more than the original contract price. On these two small contracts the

State has been called upon to pay a sum of £40,000 each more than they were originally let for. I will try to explain the reason later on. Then we have the Mullewa and Cue railway. This was let by tender for £85,000. The railway was so insufficiently designed that periodically during the course of construction the line was washed away for miles, the earthworks had to be raised, and the area for culverts and bridges had to be considerably increased so as to allow sufficient waterway, with the result that the contract was considerably delayed in the first place, there was a very heavy loss, and a very large claim was made by the contractor. The total amount of the claim made by the contractor was £150,000. The contract was let in the first place, I repeat, for £85,000. The Engineer-in-Chief who usually deals with cases of arbitration of this kind as arbitrator awarded, I think, £160,000, and that amount was paid to the contractor, that being twice the original amount of the contract. On those three small contracts we have been called upon to pay a sum of £141,000 over and above the contract price. I say "small" contracts because they are so—the largest one was £85,000. We have, I say, been called upon to pay in addition to that contract price a sum of £141,000. [MEMBER: Cheap at that.] Yes; very cheap. Of course there is always some reason to be found when there is a wrong like this. In my opinion the principal reason for these heavy claims was the form of contract made by the Engineer-in-Chief. The form of contract adopted by this department is one which is generally known as the "lump sum" contract. A contractor is supposed to supply a schedule of rates in this contract, but the great trouble is, when the contract is complete, to dissect what are extras, and what was in the original contract; because it appears to me—and I think any member of the House will be able to satisfy himself whether I am correct or not—that in letting those contracts there has been no proper statement of quantities taken out. Members will understand that when a contractor tenders for the work and tenders a certain sum of money, he also has to give a schedule of rates for what he is going to do. The trouble arises when the work is completed to know what is in the original contract, and what

is in the schedule of rates. I do not know whether I have made myself quite clear to members on this point. However, this difficulty or informality, or irregularity, or whatever you like to call it, has been on more than one occasion, I think, brought under the notice of the department, but, notwithstanding that fact, they still stick to the same principle. In South Australia an altogether different system prevails. A contractor there has to supply a schedule of rates. It appears to me to be a very satisfactory arrangement, and it protects the department against any unnecessary claim that can be made by the contractor. We have had a considerable amount of delay in the completion of these contracts. I am sure every member will know that the time lost in the completion of these various railways was a very important item to the State. It is rather a remarkable circumstance also in connection with the Donnybrook and Bridgetown railway and the Mullewa and Cue railway that the supervising engineer, who had to depend in each case upon the claims made out by the contractors and the blunders of the department—and no doubt there were a great number of them—was retrenched from the service. That fact would lead one to believe it would be much better if the supervising engineer did his best not to bring this strain upon the department and not to incur the displeasure of the Engineer-in-Chief. There is no doubt as far as our experience of the contract system is concerned it has not been a great success. I have just enumerated three instances, and doubtless several members in the House who have taken some little trouble to go into this question will be in a position to support me, and probably mention many others. In fact, the Engineer-in-Chief—I will refer to that in a few moments—at a banquet which was held at Midland Junction when the making of the Coolgardie water pipes was initiated, condemned in very strong terms the contract system. I will read his remarks later on. With regard to the departmental system and its results, we have had experience of that, and a very costly one, I am sorry to say. Our experience has been that the system has been very slow, very costly, and unsatisfactory. We have only to go to

the Fremantle harbour works, the Bunbury harbour works, the Goomalling railway, the Cue and Mullewa railway, and the Menzies-Leonora railway. All these works have been going on at a terribly slow rate, and at very great expense to the country. With regard to the departmental works, the primary fault appears to me to be that the works are commenced, as I said before, with insufficient data. There is no reliable estimate of the work prepared when the work is undertaken. That is an extraordinary state of affairs, but notwithstanding, it is true, and anyone undertaking a work such as any of these railways without in the first place having some exact estimate of what the work is likely to require, cannot reasonably be expected to make it successful. Public works are undertaken by the Government for the advancement of the State, and the benefit of the general community. They are not undertaken for the benefit of any particular class. We are told by some people that we must not do away with day labour or else we shall injure the workmen. I contend that this is not correct at all. There are any number of working men who would sooner take contracts than go along at the same rates as they get in the Public Works Department. A good man will get some reward, because he will probably take a sub-contract from the contractor, and he will have some chance of a reward for his intelligence. Besides this, we have, of course, a large amount of interest to make up now, more particularly on works of such great magnitude as the Coolgardie Water Scheme. In connection with the recent offer regarding the laying of the Coolgardie Water Scheme pipes, it is rather interesting to notice the change of front made by the Engineer-in-Chief. In recommending this officer to the department, or in speaking of departmental *versus* day work, at the banquet held at Midland Junction some considerable time ago, when this work was first undertaken—and no doubt there were several other members present on that occasion—the Engineer-in-Chief in his speech said, amongst other things:—

I also wish to say something to you of a wider significance, and I sound a warning to modern contractors who seem to be rather bush lawyers than workmen, and who posi-

tively lay themselves out to make money out of any claims they can make out of their interpretation of the specifications than out of legitimate schemes.

That is rather an important thing for the Engineer-in-Chief to say, because contractors are generally, I believe, expected to rigidly observe the conditions of their contract. I do not think there is anything wrong in a contractor taking up that position. He went on to say:

Really, if these things go on to the extent I have seen recently, we will not be able to continue the works.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: "We"?

HON. J. T. GLOWREY: I am using the words of the Engineer-in-Chief. He said:—

The contractor employs a man half-lawyer and half-engineer, whose efforts are not to assist in the work but to see what can be made out of it, and the outcome is that an enormous claim is sent in which the engineer has got to rebut as best he can. There is no cordiality between them, and the work is not so satisfactorily done.

Mr. George, who was present, interjected, "It is you who give him his specification."

Mr. O'Connor went on to say:—

We can write specifications. I don't wish to blame the *bona fide* contractor at all, but when people, whose only qualification is a little money for the purpose of deposit, tender for works to see what they can get out of them, we have to consider whether contracting has to be abandoned. It is a great pity if it has, but it would get rid of enormous difficulties in the works. It will be a disadvantage, however.

Mr. George again interjected, "I know you are smarting." The Engineer-in-Chief went on to state that he had nothing more to say on that head. Well, it appears to me the Engineer-in-Chief took advantage of this utterance to base on it a change in the policy of his department; for, strange to say, since that utterance certainly no public work of any magnitude—indeed, no public work whatever to my knowledge—has been let by contract. The Fremantle Harbour Works, the railway workshops at Midland Junction, and the Menzies-Leonora Railway and other railways, have all been constructed by departmental day labour. Certainly, the remarks made by the Engineer-in-Chief on the occasion I have referred to were very pronounced; and there can be no doubt in the mind of anyone who reads those utterances that he condemned the

contract system as a complete failure. It is interesting, however, to compare the statement on that occasion with one which the Engineer-in-Chief made a few days ago in regard to the completion of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. As hon. members are aware, Messrs. Couston and Co. some little time ago offered to complete the laying and caulking of pipes by contract in place of carrying out the work departmentally. The few words in which the firm state their objection to departmental work convey the position very correctly, in my opinion:—

First, the conditions attending contract work are such as to enable the contractor to obtain at the same rate of wages a far greater amount of work from the men employed.

I think they might have added something. However, they did not do so. I should have added, "And with much more satisfaction to the men themselves." Messrs. Couston & Co. farther say:—

Second, the difficulty in obtaining stores under the present arrangements has been such as to seriously impede the progress of the work.

That is the opinion of Messrs. Couston and Co. on the subject of departmental work. I will now read the remarks of the Engineer-in-Chief, who recommended the acceptance of Messrs. Couston and Co.'s offer. The Engineer-in-Chief, in writing to the Minister in charge of the Department, expresses himself as follows in favour of the contract system, which but a few years ago he unreservedly condemned:—

If Messrs. Couston, Finlayson, and Porritt had a contract for the work they would have a freer hand than they can have by doing it departmentally, as they could employ whom they liked and discharge whom they liked, and they would also have greater facility in obtaining stores, tools, etc., as they could obtain them wherever it was easiest to get them, instead of having to obtain them from the Government Storekeeper. They would also be free from the labour and trouble of sending in reports and returns showing progress and cost, etc., and their system of dealing with the men and paying them and keeping their time, etc., would probably be simpler than is required in the Government service. Altogether, therefore, it is probable that they could do the work by contract for considerably less than it has been costing.

That is a very big admission indeed to come from the Engineer-in-Chief. The disadvantages inseparable from the system of departmental day labour are well

known to every private employer of labour; and it is a matter for regret that it should have taken the Engineer-in-Chief years to discover them. Undoubtedly every private business man considers the contract system greatly preferable to departmental day labour. If, however, on the admission of the Engineer-in-Chief contract labour is preferable to day labour on one class of work, why should it not be preferable on other classes? Indeed, why should it not apply to the whole of our works? Why should not the whole of the Coolgardie Water Scheme have been carried out by contract work? I venture to say that had we adopted the contract system at the initiation of this huge undertaking we should have saved hundreds of thousands of pounds, instead of the comparatively paltry £30,000 to be saved by adopting the system at this juncture. Undoubtedly, the Engineer-in-Chief, by his recommendation that Messrs. Couston and Co's. offer be accepted, admits the system of departmental day work to be from a financial point of view a ghastly failure.

HON. G. RANDELL: Did he let a contract for the dam?

HON. J. T. GLOWREY: I shall come to that later, and show that £100,000 has been lost in connection with the dam. The Engineer-in-Chief in condemning the contract system was actuated by a desire to relieve himself of the responsibility of drawing up plans and specifications. I think it must have been a very sore point with him that such large claims should come in at the completion of every work. As I said previously, on contracts let for £170,000 the claims which the State had to pay amounted to £140,000. I cannot help thinking this must have been a very sore point with the Engineer-in-Chief. As regards Messrs. Couston and Co's contract, if we can save £30,000 on the balance of the laying and caulking to be done in connection with the Coolgardie water main, over and above the contractors' profit, what could we have saved had the whole work been let by contract? The matter is a most important one, and I ask hon. members to give it their consideration. We are told by employees of the department that they can make their own profit and save the State £30,000 if permitted to do the work privately, by contract; and our Engineer-

in-Chief recommends the offer for acceptance. We have now heard something of the contract system. Let us turn to the system of departmental day labour. Both systems have been in the nature of experiments: I maintain, in the nature of most expensive experiments. Both have certainly proved failures. The Fremantle wharf was built by departmental day labour. I will not dwell much on the defects of this important structure; because other members know more about it than I do. I am told, however, that it is continually giving way, that it is faulty in design, and that the deck is too low. I feel certain this statement of the defects of the structure will be supported by other members. On several occasions breaches have occurred in the Fremantle breakwater. The stone wall in the first place was not sufficient to resist the action of the waves; and it has been found necessary to replace the wall, or at any rate to put down heavier stones, in order to resist the action of the sea. Similar things can, I believe, be said concerning the Bunbury breakwater. It appears to me that the walls are made too steep in the first place. We have been told by certain engineers that it is the practice to make the walls of breakwaters steeper, perhaps, than the angle naturally adapted for resisting the force of the sea. We are told that the idea is to let the sea bring the walls down. I maintain, however, that this is rather an expensive way of doing the work. It is clear that if the walls are made steep and it is left to the action of the sea to bring them to the angle at which they may be expected to hold, a large quantity of stone must be carried away from the line of the breakwater altogether. Next, let us take the Ashburton jetty. I have read a good deal about that work; and no doubt other hon. members are well informed concerning it. I understand that the original structure collapsed after a gale. Surely someone is responsible for that collapse! The work had to be undertaken again, and then was left to be done by certain contractors, who received a very large sum, of course out of the coffers of the State. Next we have the Broad Arrow tank, a work concerning which I have some personal knowledge. This tank was intended to hold 10,000,000 gallons of water. As it was well known

that the ground would not hold, it was puddled in the first place.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: The tank was to hold 13,000,000 gallons.

HON. J. T. GLOWERY: My hon. friend says the capacity was intended to be 13,000,000 gallons. I stated the capacity at 10,000,000 because I would sooner be under the mark than over it. Anyhow, the ground was puddled in order to make it hold; but the clay with which it was puddled was absolutely unsuitable, and had to be removed. Thereupon the sides and bottom of the tank were asphalted, at considerable expense. The large amount of money spent in puddling in the first instance is, of course, lost. The clay puddling proved so absolutely valueless that asphaltting had of necessity to be resorted to. The execution of the Coolgardie Water Scheme is a very big subject indeed, and one might write volumes on it; but I do not propose to say much. With the mistakes which occurred at the Niagara Dam, fresh in the memories of the departmental officers, one might reasonably expect that they would have avoided a repetition of those costly blunders. Nevertheless, it is well known that there was a large fissure at the Mundaring weir.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Yes; and the fissure swallowed a lot of money, too.

HON. J. T. GLOWERY: The utmost care and precaution is necessary in carrying out works of this magnitude. I venture to say that any hon. member undertaking the excavation of a dam—let us say our friend Mr. McLarty—would put down trial shafts in the first place, to see whether the ground will hold. In the case of a work like the Mundaring weir, it was surely a crying necessity to take every precaution by means of bores. I believe boring was resorted to, but only to a small extent. If boring had been carried out on anything like an extensive scale there is not the slightest doubt that the full nature of the fault, or fissure, or whatever it may be called, would have been discovered at an early stage and heavy loss in consequence avoided. I understand that either the Engineer-in-Chief or Sir John Forrest stated the amount required to make good the fault was close on £100,000. Taking a general view of the manner in which the Coolgardie

Water Scheme has been carried out, one cannot but be struck by the fact that the work has been delayed for an unconscionable time. I do not blame any particular person for the delay, which I consider due solely to want of system in the administration of our Works Department. I remember well how we were told four years ago that the work would be finished in two years. Next, three years ago, we were told that it would be finished in two years. Two years ago we were told that it would be finished in 12 months; and 12 months ago we were told that it would be finished in another 12 months. At the present moment we are being told that the scheme will be completed at the end of this year. I am sure I do not know whether it will or not. It would be a very nice calculation to work out the date of final completion on the basis of previous forecasts. The first big mistake, as I have pointed out, occurred in connection with the Mundaring weir. The next big mistake was made in connection with the pumping plant, which in my opinion, and in the opinion of many people who possibly know a good deal more of the subject than I do, ought to have been the first thing placed in position. I understand that some of the pumps are not in position even to-day.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Some of the pumps have not left England yet.

HON. J. T. GLOWERY: The pumps ought to have been placed in position first of all; and yet some of them are not here at this very day. The pipe trenches were dug some two years ago, with the natural result that a large number of them have fallen in during the winter months, and will have to be dug out again. Let hon. members consider the amount of money we have spent during the last 12 months or so on work which will have to be done again. Would it not have been much better to keep the trenches just a little in advance of the pipe-laying? It appears to me that if the work had been let by contract, the contractor would have done both classes of work with one gang of men, whereas we have to pay a great deal away to men who are moving camp. There is no doubt in my mind that a large amount of money has been lost in carrying out this work. This is a question on which I might occupy considerable time,

but I am sure there are other members anxious to speak on it. I might go into the control of public works, but I leave that at present. There is also the matter of our engineering staff, and I think it should be altered, that we should have an amalgamation of offices, and we might do well to carry out the system adopted in Victoria, by having an inspector general of public works. The system works there, producing good results. At the present time we have so many different branches, and on the goldfields you will find the Department of Public Works and perhaps two or three other departments in the same building. You find officers perhaps in each department travelling away to some remote district at the same time; and I contend that if these offices were combined and had a little more clerical assistance, perhaps one officer would do the whole work, thus save an enormous amount of money. With regard to the Coolgardie Water Scheme and such undertakings as the Fremantle Harbour Works, I think works like those could very well be placed under the charge of a separate board, and when the time is ripe for a sewerage scheme for Perth that scheme also could be placed under the control of a board. I hope some of the facts I have brought before members will justify them in supporting the motion I have moved, and I trust the Minister for Lands and his colleagues will see their way to support it. In fact I notice that in another place a move has already been made in this direction. There has been a suggestion in some quarters that a Royal Commission should be appointed to go into the whole of the public service, but I am inclined to think that would be absurd, because in regard to this one department you require men who have knowledge of the work, and an inquiry into it would be quite enough work for any one commission to undertake. I hope the question will not be raised, and I am not sorry to say that, if it be raised, I shall have to oppose it. I have much pleasure in formally moving the motion standing in my name.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

THE PRESIDENT: I must ask for the Orders of the Day to be read, as an hour has elapsed since I took the Chair.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): I move that the Orders of the Day be postponed until after the consideration of the motions on the Notice Paper.

THE PRESIDENT: All of them?

HON. G. RANDELL: All of them.

HON. A. JAMESON (Metropolitan-Suburban): There is a good deal of work to be gone through, and we hope to get through it as rapidly as possible. Of course, if the motions are allowed to be considered first, there will be very little time left for Orders of the Day. I do not want in any way to burk discussion, and I would be very sorry to move in that direction. At the same time, as I say, we have very important work, and if too much time be taken up with motions, much of the discussion will have to go over.

HON. G. RANDELL: I think the motions after this will not take long.

THE PRESIDENT: The Minister has drawn attention to the fact that we have important Bills to deal with.

HON. G. RANDELL: We could proceed as rapidly as possible.

Motion—Postponement of Orders of the Day—put and passed.

DEBATE CONTINUED.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): I second the motion, moved by Mr. Glowrey, and am quite in accord with it, because I think it is one of great importance to the welfare of the State. As Mr. Glowrey has pointed out, there is not the slightest doubt that an enormous amount of money has been wasted in consequence of improper supervision, and, perhaps, in the first place, specifications of a proper nature have never been drawn up. We have heard, time after time, of work undertaken by contractors, and that, in consequence of improper specifications, the cost of extras and additions has been such that the contractors have had double the amount originally named in the tender. This shows there must have been a very great deficiency on the part of those who have inspected and arranged for the construction of the different railways. The numerous instances Mr. Glowrey has brought under the notice of the House show how gross the mismanagement must have been. But I should be very sorry to say anything which would detract from the merits of our respected Engineer-in-Chief. I have always enter-

tained for him feelings of a very high character. We know there could be no question as to his ability, his integrity, and the knowledge he possesses in most of these matters.

HON. J. M. SPEED: Or in the extravagance.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I do not know about extravagance. He has done a good many things in this State which it would have been very difficult to get any other man to carry out effectively, but I think there has been more left to his charge than it was possible for any one man to carry out successfully, and that, on this account, a great deal of unnecessary cost has been incurred by the country. There has also been a very great amount of opposition in the various departments. The railway working department has done all it possibly could in working in opposition to the constructing department, and on that account a good many mistakes have been made, and we have incurred double the expense that ought to have been incurred. There is one work which has come particularly under my notice, that being the construction of the Goomalling railway. If that had been properly carried out, with a view to the material welfare of the State, it would only have taken about 12 months, it would have cost only a small sum, and the probability is that we should have reaped advantage from it at an earlier date; but in consequence of its having been made use of for other purposes, and money being taken away for other works—I believe the Mullewa line got a portion of it—the line is not completed at the present time, and it will cost about three times as much as it should have done. Surely the department are very much to blame in that respect, and the same argument could be applied almost to any other work undertaken by the Government in late years. There has been a want of proper superintendence, the result being that everything has suffered. It is most necessary in the interests of the country that a proper board shall be appointed to go thoroughly into these matters. I am not prepared to say what would be the best system, but I think this may end in good being done, and lead to that reform which will prevent the State from suffering in the

future as it has done in the past. The enormous additional cost on that Niagara dam is, I think, a matter which has often been brought before the House. Surely those who in the first place laid out a work of that kind should have been able to see what was necessary, and to form a pretty good idea of the cost; and I think the fact that the work has cost the country so much shows a great want of proper knowledge in this direction, and that there is not that care given to these matters which ought to be given; therefore I consider that in the interests of the country we should provide against these mistakes being made in the future.

HON. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): Whilst admitting that in some of the works constructed by the Government, in some of the contracts, there are faults, and that we could have done better, at the same time, as cases have been pointed out where there has been mismanagement, bad workmanship, or neglect to carry out proper supervision, I wish to refer to one matter which has been particularised and which I understand. I speak of the Bunbury breakwater. The ultimate scheme and plan, as everybody knows, was that this breakwater should be narrowed where it led to land, and that it should widen out as it went seaward. That was known to everybody who took an interest in it. The consequence was that in constructing that breakwater the Government employed a man who was thoroughly competent to carry out the work, and he carried it out expeditiously and in a workmanlike manner. There was a short line of railway leading to the quarry, and also the building in connection with the quarry. There was a great deal of noise made about the construction of that breakwater. Sir John Forrest wanted to see as much protection afforded to that harbour as possible in the shortest possible time, hence the engineer, contrary to his own idea, carried out as it were a narrow bridge of rocks just wide enough to carry the railway, and not quarter the width of the ultimate scheme. The only thing that was actually lost on that breakwater consisted of about a dozen pairs of rails and a few sleepers. If anyone will go on to that breakwater and walk along the parapet, he will find there is not a

stone that is not serving some purpose. They were simply placed there as far as that could be done with the grade, and I maintain that any gentleman who knows anything about the scheme must be aware that it is impossible, or next to impossible, to build a perpendicular wall to resist the action of the sea. I think all the engineers are agreed on that. One breakwater of this description stood for many years in New Zealand; but at last it collapsed. The plan of modern engineers is gradually to meet the swell of the sea by means of a sloping bank. In constructing a breakwater, therefore, the engineers throw the stones out as far as possible and leave it to the action of the water to carry them to their natural angle of repose. I say again that the breakwater is built in such a way that all the stones—and some of them are very large ones, weighing as much as 30 tons—have simply rolled out, and are now breaking the action of the sea. I maintain that I am speaking of a thing I do know when I say that in this particular instance there is no foundation in fact for fault-finding. I make this statement whilst quite prepared to admit that faults have been committed. Anyone who doubts my accuracy need only take a walk along the top of the parapet and follow it out to the extreme end, when he will see large rocks lying three feet or six feet away from the main body of the breakwater. Everyone with a knowledge of the action of the sea on breakwaters will admit that those stones are doing good work in breaking the force of the swell coming against the main body of the breakwater. Undoubtedly, those stones serve a good purpose. It was said some months ago that the breakwater had been washed away; but those who made the statement simply showed that they did not know what they were talking about. The sea has simply flattened out the narrow ridge—a ridge of just sufficient width to carry the rails. All who know the action of the water in such circumstances are aware that such a ridge will not stand; and the engineers responsible for the construction of the breakwater knew as well as possible that the work would not stand as first constructed, and that the sea would flatten it down. The object of the engineers, however, was to get the

most protection for the harbour in the shortest time possible.

THE PRESIDENT: The question is not a general debate on the Bunbury breakwater. I think the hon. member is rather trespassing—taking too much latitude, perhaps.

HON. E. M. CLARKE: I was merely defending the Government engineers in this particular instance. A wholesale charge of incompetency has been launched against the Works Department in various respects; and my remarks have been directed to refuting the charge in connection with the Bunbury breakwater. That is the only charge of incompetency which I do understand; and I feel it my bounden duty to protect Mr. O'Connor in that instance, if in no other.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM (South): Members who know anything of the difficulty of obtaining facts and figures will, I think, join with me in complimenting Mr. Glowrey on the manner in which he has handled this motion. [**SEVERAL MEMBERS:** Hear, hear.] I have obtained a certain amount of information with respect to works carried out, or being carried, out by the Works Department. The first matter I shall deal with is the Leonora railway, which work has been, or rather is being, constructed by departmental day labour. A firm of contractors, Messrs. Smith and Timms, offered to build that line for £25,000, and moreover to have it open for traffic in six months. The distance from Menzies to Leonora is 80 miles. The Government have been building this line by day labour and have taken over twelve months to do three-quarters of the work. The cost to date is a point on which I am not able to give information. I am prepared, however, to accept, for the purposes of my argument, the total estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief, £240,000. Allowing out of that amount £140,000 or £150,000 for rails, surveys, buildings, engineering and so forth, there remains an amount of about £100,000 allocated to the construction of the line by departmental day labour. On these figures the Government would, therefore, have saved something like £70,000 by letting a contract for the work. From a commercial point of view the contract system should therefore have commended itself to the Works Department in general and to the

Engineer-in-Chief in particular. To prove that the time in which Messrs. Smith and Timms offered to build the line, namely six months, is not unreasonable, I need only state that the same firm built the Kalgoorlie-Menzies line, 81 miles in length, and had it open for traffic inside six months. The excuse tendered by the Engineer-in-Chief for the delay in the completion of the Menzies-Leonora line is the shortage of trucks. He claims that the department have been unable to get material for the line forwarded. I maintain, however, that no private contractor would enter on a large scheme of works unless he could see well ahead of him. A contractor would certainly have made sure that he would get the rails delivered so as to permit of his completing the work expeditiously and under the most advantageous conditions. The Government at the present time are paying 3s. per day for the trucks being used in the construction work. The charge of 3s. per day amounts to £47 per year, whilst the original price of the trucks was only £27 each. The Government hire these trucks from Smith & Timms, the people who offered to carry out the work under contract. It is apparent from the figures I have given that the Government are paying annually almost double the value of the trucks by way of hire.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Yes; and Smith and Timms bought them from the Government.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: I understand they bought them privately. But the Government could have secured them had they gone about it in a proper fashion. The matter of engine hire is another heavy item in this contract.

HON. G. RANDELL: Do you know what is the reason of the delay in completing the line?

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: The Works Department state the delay is due to the shortage of trucks and their consequent inability to push the work on. I give as a farther reason the fact that the line is being built by day labour, and that the men working on the line—or, indeed, the men working on any other line being built by the Government—are not anxious to work themselves out of a job.

HON. J. T. GLOWREY: Government stroke!

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: The order for the rails used on this line was placed in 1900, nearly 18 months ago; consequently the rails have been, or ought to have been, in the State for some time. The Engineer-in-Chief states the cost of the rails at £12 per ton delivered at Menzies. The freight from Fremantle being £1 13s. 9d. per ton, it is apparent the cost of the rails delivered at Fremantle was £10 6s. 3d. per ton. At the date I refer to, the trade price of similar rails landed at Fremantle was £9 per ton. I ask hon. members what has become of the difference? I cannot say, I am sure. There is a difference, but where it is I do not know. The cost I have stated covers insurance and everything else up to Fremantle. There is a difference of £1 6s. 3d. per ton not accounted for, over and above the trade price of the rails. Mr. Dempster referred just now to the Goomalling Railway. This line was started on the 2nd April, 1900—just 22 months ago—and is very far from completion yet. The Minister for Railways was asked some time ago—I think at the beginning of the session—the cause of the delay, and of course gave the same old reply that the delay was due to irregularities in the supply of rails. When this line was started in 1900, the Hon. F. H. Piesse, then Commissioner of Railways, stated that the reason why the Government were not calling for tenders for the construction of the line was that they desired to push it forward, so as to carry the harvest of 1900 over it. Here we are with the harvest of 1902 ripe, and the rails of the Goomalling line still but partly laid. The station buildings and other works are also very far from completion. The Cue-Nannine Railway was commenced in April, 1901, about 10 months ago. The completion of that line also depends on the supply of rails. There are some curious features, however, in connection with the rails being used on that line. It appears that a portion of the Eastern Railway has been taken up and relaid with heavier rails. The rails taken up are now being conveyed a distance of 900 miles to be relaid on the Cue-Nannine line. The life of these rails is half over, since the ordinary rail does not last for more than 15 years. The Government are, as I say,

carrying them from the Eastern line, a distance of 900 miles, to be used again on the Cue-Nannine line. If those rails were sold on the fields they would realise now £5 per ton. The cost of carriage from the Eastern Railway to Nannine is equal to £2 1s. 3d. per ton. Putting down the price which the rails would realise now on the spot where they are taken up at £5 per ton, it follows that their cost to the Government, delivered on the Cue-Nannine line, is £7 1s. 3d. per ton. And this for rails which have been in use for seven or eight years already. Against that cost, we have the fact that new rails landed at Fremantle can now be supplied for £6 1s. 8d. per ton.

HON. G. RANDELL: It is to be remembered that the life of a rail on the Cue-Nannine line will be very much longer than on the Eastern Railway.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: These are second-hand rails, which have been in use for seven or eight years.

HON. G. RANDELL: Quite so.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: Half their life is consequently gone. New steel rails, on the other hand, could be supplied at Geraldton for £6 1s. 8d. per ton. Consequently I say the Government are losing £1 per ton, whilst getting rails half worn out instead of new rails. Again, we must look at the trucks locked up from general traffic in the cartage of the material from the neighbourhood of Coolgardie to the coast, and thence up the Midland Railway and along the Cue line towards Nannine. I understand that the carriage of those rails means the locking up of 100 trucks for a period of four months. And this in spite of the truck difficulty, from which we have suffered so acutely during the past few months, and in spite of the immense amount of haulage now entailed on the Railway Department through the scarcity of water! These facts alone go to prove that the Railway and Works Departments are not being managed on a thoroughly business-like system. When there is such a leakage as there appears to be in the case of the Cue-Nannine railway, whether that leakage be due to lack of knowledge, or inexperience, or what not, undoubtedly inquiry by a Royal Commission is warranted. I have to point out, farther, concerning that line,

that the earth-works are now 25 miles out from the base. Anyone with experience of railway construction knows that earth-works should be done almost simultaneously with plate-laying, so that everything may be executed with the greatest economy of labour and time. The duplication of the Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie line was carried out also by departmental labour, and from very reliable information I have received from engineers who have gone into the question and calculated it very finely, the Government have expended over £9,000 more than they need have done had the work been carried out by contract. If all work in the department were carried out by contract, the public and members of Parliament would be in a position to know what each separate work was costing, whereas at the present time, through the lump-sum system adopted by the Engineer-in-Chief, it is very hard to realise and to get at the cost of the different works.

HON. G. RANDELL: They ought to be able to tell, surely.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: They ought to be able to tell, but I know that in the House questions have very often been asked, and there has been a lot of delay in getting the information. If the work had been let by tender, members would not have asked the questions in the House, for they would have had the information. With that system all the information would be published, and it would save a lot of delay.

HON. J. M. SPEED: How about the extras?

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: According to the present system—the lump-sum system—as mentioned by Mr. Glowrey, it is very hard to tell where the contract ends and the extras begin, and on the figures given by him it is shown that the extras amount very often to two or three times the sum of the original contract. Not only that, but with the present system regarding departmental work, it is impossible to obtain the correct cost of any work, and this allows an opening for mistakes made by engineers in the works they are carrying out. The lump-sum system allows all these blunders to be covered up, and it is very difficult to analyse them. In the Auditor General's report for 1898 and 1899 he

condemns Mr. O'Connor's system—the lump-sum system—very strongly. He says:—

It is obvious that votes can be re-appropriated and excessive costs re-imbursed from other sources, and accounts manipulated without proper check on the system to enable the Auditor General to properly control expenditure.

HON. J. M. SPEED: Has he anything to do with this?

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: I say the Auditor General in his report asserts that in auditing the expenditure in the department it was quite impossible under this system to analyse the various works. Then again Mr. Glowrey spoke about the supply of stores from the Government storekeeper, which necessitates a very large waste of time, through people having to go through such a very detailed red-tapeism. Delays are occasioned in some contracts, or some works being carried out at a distance, and very often men instead of working have to be paid off and taken on again when the machinery, or whatever the engineer wants, turns up, from the Government storekeeper. The various chambers of commerce have requisitioned the Government and pointed out the iniquity of this, as the supply through the Government storekeeper creates a monopoly to large firms and traders, and the public are not properly protected in the requisitions that go from the storekeeper's department. I take it there are several members who are going to speak on this motion. I think the evidence Mr. Glowrey has brought forward, and some evidence we heard last week from Mr. Crowder with reference to the Coolgardie Water Scheme, will quite justify the House in carrying the motion.

HON. F. T. CROWDER (East): I offer no apology to the House for rising to speak to this motion, notwithstanding the remarks which have fallen from the gentleman who represents the Government in this House, for in my opinion a debate on the motion moved by Mr. Glowrey is of far more importance to this country than the Bills we have to consider afterwards. Stripped of all side issues, I take it that the motion moved by the hon. member is purely and simply for a Royal commission to be appointed to inquire into the running of Western

Australia by the Engineer-in-Chief. For after all, in discussing the Works Department, Mr. O'Connor, as far as I can find out, is the only fixed engineer in that department. There is an old saying, "Give a man a reputation of rising early and he can stop in bed all day." So it is somewhat with the Engineer-in-Chief. We have given him a reputation, but I do not know what for. I cannot find out that he is deserving the reputation he holds. Anyhow, with that reputation he has been able to make the most insane blunders in Western Australia, blunders for which any man who had not his reputation would have been dismissed long ago. If for no other reason, and on no other ground, a Royal commission were asked for, surely the Engineer-in-Chief's connection with the Coolgardie Water Works Scheme would justify the House in voting for the motion. No doubt we shall be told, and it has been said, with regard to this water scheme, that Mr. O'Connor had this business forced upon him, that he was not in favour of that scheme. I differ altogether from people who make those assertions. I say that although the Premier of those days, the Right Hon. Sir John Forrest, brought forward the motion for the Coolgardie Water Scheme, it was submitted to the Engineer-in-Chief of this State, and as the adviser of the Government it was his place, if he was not in favour of the Coolgardie Water Scheme, to plainly say so, and not come down to the House with estimates that are proved to-day to be entirely incorrect. For instance, when we were asked years ago to vote the money, we were assured by the Engineer-in-Chief that the work could be carried out in three years, and would be carried out for two and a half millions of money. I say, and I do so after careful consideration, that the Engineer-in-Chief having made that statement, that statement having proved to be entirely incorrect, he is not worthy of being looked up to. Neither in regard to his estimate of the time in which the work would be carried out, nor in regard to the money it was going to cost, has he been right. To give members some idea of the absurdity of the estimates that were brought down to this House—the absurdity of which estimates I in my place in this House pointed out

six years ago, but I was not listened to—I will mention a few instances, and if members will look back to the speech I made six years ago in the Legislative Council they will see whether I was right or wrong. According to an estimate brought down to this House, the weir and ten service reservoirs of the Coolgardie Water Scheme were to cost this State £320,000. At the present time the weir has cost this State £500,000. It is all very well to say it was a thing which could not have been foreseen, but I assert that no engineer, knowing that an expenditure of two and a half million pounds depended upon the work, should have started that weir without properly testing the ground. I have over and over again heard the whole scheme ridiculed by engineers who have come to this country. It is to my mind absurd that any man who was adviser to the Government in a matter involving an expenditure of two and a half millions should have started that work without first of all putting down proper bores. Anyhow, we stand to-day in this position, that in that estimate we have £320,000 put down for the construction of the weir and ten service reservoirs, and we have spent on the weir alone £500,000. From that we can guess pretty well what the other ten service reservoirs are going to cost. Then in the same estimate the pipe track was put at 2s. per yard, or £145,000. The pipe track has cost us 4s. per cubic yard, or £291,000, and, to add to that, half of it has to be gone over again. Miles and miles of pipe track which were filled in have had to be dug out.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What estimate are you quoting from?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The estimate of six years ago, on which you voted to expend the money. The estimate then brought before the House for the joints of the scheme was 6s. per joint, £20,000. But they are costing to-day 39s. 6d., or £120,000. I know the Engineer-in-Chief claims that he sent down another estimate later on, but that estimate is just as far out. Let us look at the engines. According to the estimate the engines were to be put down as purchased, and placed in their proper positions, at a cost of £79,460. With that estimate staring them in the face, members will hardly credit that the Engineer-in-Chief let the

contract for the engines in London for £261,500; and to that has to be added something like £15,000 or £20,000 for freight. In that estimate the pipes were put at 9s. per pipe for distributing. If members can carry their minds back they will remember that six years ago I absolutely ridiculed this point, and proved most conclusively that the work could not be carried out at the price, and that the estimate was at least £200,000 out. The Engineer-in-Chief let the contract to the Railway Department to carry these pipes at £1 6s. 2d. per pipe, the Works Department to load and unload, which costs another 9s. per pipe. On top of this we have the Engineer-in-Chief recommending that Messrs. Couston and Co. be paid another 4s. 6d. to put them into the trench. This brings the cost of distributing the pipes up to £1 19s. 11d., as against the estimate of 9s. And these, be it remembered, are only a few of the items. They all show, however, an increase of 40 or 50 per cent. on the estimated cost. From all I can gather I am led to the conclusion that the cost of the whole work will be pretty well on a par with the cost of the items I have referred to. My belief, I regret to state, is that the estimate of two and a half million pounds will be exceeded by another million, and perhaps by two, if the work is to be completed at all. The items I have adduced show the utter unreliability of estimates submitted by the Engineer-in-Chief. I consider these facts quite sufficient to induce the House to call for an inquiry. Bad as they are, however, they are little or nothing, in my opinion, beside the position taken up by the Engineer-in-Chief in carrying out this great scheme, involving an estimated expenditure of £2,500,000. The position which Mr. O'Connor has taken up is one of direct opposition to the views of the London experts. I do not wish to repeat the arguments I used last week, and will content myself with saying that it is true this great undertaking has been carried out on Mr. O'Connor's lines, which are entirely different from and opposed to those laid down by the board of experts paid by this State to advise. In this matter, if in no other, there should be immediate inquiry. As I have said before, the work as now being carried out is an experiment: it is

not being carried out in accordance with the expert advice. The London engineers recommended that the first section of the line should be tested immediately on completion. According to the experts, one of the first things to do was to erect the pumps, so that mile by mile, as the work progressed, it might be tested. Some of the pumps, however, have not even yet left London. Now it is urged that we should let a contract to Couston and Co. with the object of having the laying and caulking completed in nine months' time. This proposition is submitted to the House while it is well known that the engines will not be here in nine months. Indeed, I doubt whether some of them will be erected inside two years. And now I come to one of the biggest scandals ever perpetrated in Western Australia—I refer to the contract entered into with Messrs. Couston and Co. I have gone through the jacket of papers bearing on this matter. At the outset £200 was given by the Engineer-in-Chief to Couston and Co., who were also permitted the run of the Works Department and the assistance of the labour employed by that department in conducting experiments with their caulking machine. When, with all this Government assistance, Messrs. Couston and Company had contrived a machine which they considered of some service, they offered the patent rights to the Government for a sum of £5,000. In fairness to Mr. O'Connor it should be stated that he absolutely refused to pay any such sum for the rights: he considered that £2,000 was ample recompense to Messrs. Couston and Co. for their patent. Nevertheless Mr. Hodgson, the engineer in charge of the Coolgardie Water Scheme, insisted on £5,000 being paid for the patent. Mr. Hodgson made out that the country would gain such enormous benefits from the use of the machine that the Engineer-in-Chief—at any rate, this is to be presumed—in the end gave way, and £5,000 was paid to Couston and Company. On the top of that, the firm appear to have received another £2,500. Certain very serious rumours are afloat with regard to these transactions. These rumours are such as call for inquiry. If there is nothing in them, the people accused should be exonerated. I give the rumours for what

they are worth. It is said that about the time Mr. Couston, having completed his experiments, approached the Government with an offer of the patent rights of his machine for £5,000, Mr. Hodgson applied for and took up a poison lease, which may be valued at £25. I put the value at £25, because that was the cost of the survey. It is stated that immediately after Messrs. Couston and Co. received £5,000 or £7,500, whichever it may be, for their patent rights—which amount be it remembered was paid them at the insistent desire of Mr. Hodgson, and against the wishes of the Engineer-in-Chief—immediately after that Mr. Couston bought from Mr. Hodgson for £2,500 the poison lease for which Mr. Hodgson had paid £25. That rumour alone demands immediate inquiry. I think inquiry would elicit the fact that Messrs. Couston and Hodgson did not first make acquaintance in Western Australia, and that this is not the first transaction of the kind they have been engaged in. I do not want to take up the time of the House in commenting on the proposed contract. I will content myself with characterising it as the most fishy and disgraceful contract which has ever come under my notice. Here is a gentleman given practically an unlimited run of the Government workshops; he has hundreds of men put under his charge; and he uses the money of the country in perfecting his machine and in training labourers to the use of it. Then, all his arrangements being complete, and thinking that he has swindled the Government up to the bursting limit on that particular line of fraud, he says, "If you will let me have a contract, I will do the work for £30,000 less, and will do it in less than half the time." I have been greatly amused at some of the letters appearing over Messrs. Couston and Co.'s signature in the newspapers. We have it on the authority of the Engineer-in-Chief that two men can do four joints per day by caulking. From Mr. Couston's letters it appears that his firm have been employing 450 Government labourers in machine caulking. Those 450 men, doing four joints per day without the use of the machine, would be able to get over 900 joints, or five miles per day. But, as against that estimate, we find it has

taken Mr. Couston, with these precious machines which have cost the country £19,000, and with the services of 450 men, 11 months to do 70 miles. By hand-caulking, the same number of men should have done 70 miles in 14 days. I repeat, therefore, that the transaction is a very fishy one indeed. It appears that with machines costing £19,000, the work has taken 22 times as long to do as it would have taken without the machines. And now we find the Engineer-in-Chief recommending the acceptance of Messrs. Couston and Co.'s proposed contract. As one who has employed labour, I say that if Mr. Couston had been working for me, if he had been given the run of my workshop, the use of my men, and the spending of my money for 11 months, and had then come to tell me what he now tells the Government, he would have been kicked straight out of the door, and I would have been content to put up with the consequences. I do not think it necessary to enter into the details of the contract. No doubt we shall have an opportunity of dealing with it more fully.

HON. J. T. GLOWREY: But not this session. We shall prorogue this week.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The question arising in my mind is, why does Mr. O'Connor now urge the acceptance of Couston and Co.'s contract? Is the reason that he has lost all faith in the scheme? Does he now see that the joint which the commission of experts utterly condemned, and which he used in spite of that condemnation, will not fulfil the mission intrusted to it? Is Mr. O'Connor's endeavour now to turn the contract over to Couston and Co. in order that the responsibility may lie on their shoulders, and not on his own? It seems to me there can be no other reason, for Mr. O'Connor stands forth as the preeminent champion of day labour in this State. To my knowledge he has wasted hundreds of thousands of pounds of this country's money under the day labour system; and, if a Royal Commission be appointed to inquire into the matter, oceans of evidence will pour in to prove what I say. At the present day, however, Mr. O'Connor abandons everything he has said in favour of the day labour system hitherto, and recommends the acceptance of a private contract. Of course, so far as Mr. O'Connor's personal integrity is

concerned, that is altogether beyond question—[SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear]—but I cannot say the same of all his subordinates. The matters I have placed before the House are such as justify inquiry. Attention might be devoted to our consulting engineer in London, Mr. Carruthers, who receives a commission for buying all the material ordered by this State from England, in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme as well as in connection with other works. The arrangement with the consulting engineer is that he shall receive a certain rate of commission on orders under £100,000, and a lower rate on orders exceeding £100,000. Seeing that the indents going from this State to England during the past few years have averaged £400,000 or £500,000 annually, it seems to me strange that a number of items could not have been included in one large indent, thus carrying the lower rate of commission, instead of being sent in a number of small indents carrying the higher rate of commission. That is a point for inquiry, particularly as Mr. Carruthers has drawn £35,000 from this State during the past seven or eight years.

HON. J. T. GLOWREY: Was that all he drew?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: This gentleman receives £35,000 in seven or eight years for protecting the interests of the country. Now let me invite the attention of hon. members to the fashion in which he looks after those interests. At the present time we have on hand 6,000 scour rings which are absolutely useless. Six thousand of them! I have examined these rings and find that one side is five-eighths of an inch less than the other; in fact, one end of the ring will not go over the pipe at all. I personally thrust a toothpick through half a dozen of these rings, which are intended to stand an enormous pressure. It seems to me that a lot of the rings consist mainly of holes and paint. When we start the water through the pipes—if ever we do start it—we shall discover the exact value of the services Mr. Carruthers has rendered this country. Those 6,000 rings have cost the country £1 2s. 6d. each; and I want to know whether Mr. Carruthers proposes to refund the country the price of the rings. I will pass away from the Cool-

gardie Water Scheme with the remark that it is a business which stinks in the nostrils of every person in this country. Turning next to the Midland Junction Workshops, I have to point out that only the other day about 30 men were employed on the site, and that out of these six were highly-paid officers and seven were "bosses." This sort of thing has been going on for months and months past. I have no hesitation in saying that the proposed Royal Commission may devote some of its attention to the work going on at Midland Junction. I think the members of the Commission will have little difficulty in coming to the conclusion that if the construction of the workshops had been carried out by contract the country would have saved many thousands of pounds. The same thing is going on to-day: 20 men with the six highly-paid officers and seven "bosses." The Fremantle Harbour works have been, and are being, constructed on the same principle. It is all very well to move for returns showing the cost to date of this, that, and the other work. Neither Mr. O'Connor nor anyone in his department can tell what the work has cost, or is costing. It has been pointed out over and over again, in connection with the Fremantle Harbour works, that we are proceeding on utterly antiquated lines. Take, for instance, the blasting of the rocks, or the bar. You see 500 or 600 men sitting there asleep until somebody kicks them, or until a blast going off in the river wakes them up. Surely in this twentieth century our Public Works Department might adopt some cheaper and better method of blasting out rock. The present system affords a perennial subject of ridicule to the people who see it in operation from the mail steamers. For my part, I believe that the money which has been wasted in the carrying out of various public works by day labour would be sufficient to construct a railway line from here to Melbourne. The Hon. E. M. Clarke waxed highly indignant concerning the criticisms which have been passed on the Bunbury breakwater. I know the Engineer-in-Chief will shelter himself behind the plea that he was against the construction of the present Bunbury harbour works, inasmuch as he recommended the cutting away of the foreshore

to go into the estuary. This work, he stated, would cost £250,000, and therefore he would not recommend it, but would go on with that now being executed. The Engineer-in-Chief, however, had no right to proceed with the present work if he foresaw that it would turn out what it is to-day.

At 6-30, the PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7-35, Chair resumed.

HON. F. T. CROWDER (continuing): Having referred to the Bunbury breakwater, I hold that seeing the Engineer-in-Chief was the responsible officer advising the Government, he should have made known to Parliament what his objections were, because at the time the breakwater was suggested it was reckoned that Bunbury was going to be an important harbour. Sir John Forrest, in referring to it, said that a day would come when the harbour would be a sea of masts. There is no doubt Bunbury is an important harbour at the present moment: there are more sailing vessels at Bunbury than there are in the harbour at Fremantle. Seeing that it was built to accommodate a large number of ships, more care should have been taken before it was started. I mention this because when the Bunbury breakwater was completed there was water at the end of the jetty to a depth of 23 feet. At the present moment the depth of water at the breakwater is about 1½ feet, and the drift from the sea is now pretty well blocking up a good deal of the Bunbury harbour. When the Engineer-in-Chief found that drift was coming in to such an extent he said that when it had reached the angle of repose—we have heard a good deal about the angle of repose—it would stop. I have gone down several times to see it, and in my opinion when the angle of repose is reached the drift of the Bunbury harbour and the land will be one, that this drift will add to Bunbury some 200 or 300 acres, and the present jetty will be on dry land. Anyhow, the cost of removing this drift will be more than the estimate expounded by the Engineer-in-Chief; it will be about five times as much as the harbour dues will come to, and I think myself that, knowing the breakwater was to be put up to

accommodate a large number of ships, Mr. O'Connor should have acquainted Parliament with the fact which he now holds, that he was not in favour of carrying out this work, for I am confident that had this been done, neither House of Parliament would have agreed to the expenditure. As it is now, before Bunbury can receive any benefit at all from that breakwater, the breakwater will have to be extended, and it is doubtful whether the extension will in any way stop the drift. I should like to refer for one moment again to Fremantle Harbour Works. Those works have been carried out to my mind in a haphazard way. Only a short time ago dredges were placed in front of the position now occupied by the mail steamers, and if they had not been taken away the present railway station and the jetty would have been in the harbour. There is no doubt that there have been some dozens of thousands wasted during the last two years by the way in which the work in regard to shifting the bar was done; and it has been stated on good authority that the piles holding the breakwater are swimming. Now, with regard to the Goomalling railway. That is a crying disgrace to Western Australia. Last November 12 months Sir John Forrest promised a deputation that the work should be completed and handed over, but I do not think it is much nearer completion now. During the whole of this time Mr. O'Connor has produced a good balance sheet to show that day labour has not been a cause of loss; but unfortunately they make the farmers pay double rates on all produce sent to Northam. I maintain without any doubt whatever that, had that line been contracted for, the work would have been carried out for a third of the cost, and it would have been completed 18 months ago. The same applies to the Leonora line. If tenders had been called for, instead of the work being carried out by departmental day labour, the work would have been completed by this time. Instead of that, however, from what I can gather, there are about a dozen bosses on the job, and not one of them knows what he is up to. The only excuse I can find for the adoption of the day labour principle by the head of the engineering department—Mr. O'Connor—is that under the day labour

system he is enabled to cover up his bad mistakes. With regard to the construction of the Blackwood railway, the Bridgetown railway, those who have gone through the evidence which was taken must look upon the whole of the construction of that line as a disgraceful affair in the history of this country. Under the system in use until lately—the contract system—the contractors were induced to enter into contracts, the specifications of which absolutely robbed them when the work was done. Then they found themselves face to face with a gentleman who, by his actions, allowed the “bovery” to take place, sitting as judge to say whether the contractor was entitled to any extras or not. In relation to the Blackwood and Bridgetown railway, the stations were shifted, the line was shifted, the bridges were shifted *ad lib.* all over the place. The contractor was called upon to alter them, and when he sent in a bill Mr. O'Connor refused to pay the just claim. To show how disgracefully these specifications were drawn, I may say that in one instance one and a half inches of ballast less than was required was in the contract. The contractor, when the mistake was found out, was called upon to add that inch and a half, and to the present day that has never been paid for. It is not my intention to take up the attention of the House. If I have taken up the time of members it is because I claim that the motion we have debated this afternoon, and shall debate further on this evening, is of the greatest importance to Western Australia. The importance of it cannot be gathered to-day. I believe that had the motion been moved two years ago this State would have saved something like a million of money. The position to-day is one that cannot go on, because although our revenue is large now it may not always be so; and we cannot afford the wilful waste of money that has been carried on from one end of this country to the other. A third of the facts that have been adduced to this House would have warranted an inquiry, and I hope that every member in his place in the House to-night will see his way to vote for the motion. In supporting the motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission I wish it to be distinctly understood, however, that I do not want

a commission consisting of members of Parliament. The Commission should be selected from people who know exactly what contracting in all its branches means, from people of unblemished reputation, and above all things from men who are fearless of what others may say of them.

HON. G. RANDELL: And who have a thorough knowledge of the subject.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Certainly. I want no hole-and-corner commission, but one that will investigate and pass judgment regardless of what stands in front of it, or what stands behind it—one that will do its duty to the country fearlessly. I am sure that if such a commission be appointed it will be inundated with evidence that will convince it of the necessity for, at any rate, inquiry.

HON. A. B. KIDSON (West): I do not know that much good can result from debating the matter farther. I think every hon. member has long ago made up his mind to vote in favour of the motion. Certain features in the carrying out of public works in this State are so well known to all members that the motion hardly needs to be spoken to. We are all, I think, agreed on the necessity for the appointment of the suggested Royal Commission. Having said so much, I may be permitted to add—although I do so without the slightest intention of giving offence—that possibly a good deal of the time of the House might have been saved if certain speakers had realised the unanimity prevailing among members on this subject. There is, however, one matter I wish to touch on. As a member of the House, I take strong exception to the calling in question here of the characters of high Government officials. I am bound to take this exception, because Mr. Crowder's speech from beginning to end was a condemnation of the Engineer-in-Chief.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Quite so.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Then all I can say is that I regret extremely the hon. member should see fit to pass such a condemnation. I say fearlessly that no member of the House will be more ready than myself to condemn the Engineer-in-Chief if he be found guilty of what is charged against him; but to condemn him unheard is not, I think, a proceeding

which will receive the indorsement of hon. members generally. Undoubtedly, opportunity will be given for ascertaining whether or not the Engineer-in-Chief is to blame in connection with the matters which have been mentioned. That question will be decided when the Royal Commission furnishes its report; but I do join issue with Mr. Crowder on the question of prejudging a gentleman occupying either a high or a low position in the service of the State. Mr. Crowder thought fit to say that the Engineer-in-Chief had done nothing to warrant the high esteem in which he is held in this State; and I again join issue. I draw attention to these matters because I think it due to the Engineer-in-Chief that his case should not be prejudged. I trust and believe that all hon. members will uphold the officers of the State in doing their duty until those officers are proved to have done wrong. In passing, I cannot refrain from congratulating the House on having among its members what I may term an expert engineer. Mr. Crowder has put forward his views in opposition to the views of the Engineer-in-Chief. He has favoured the House with a criticism of the Bunbury harbour works.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: My criticisms were right six years ago.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Mr. Crowder maintains his views as against those of the Engineer-in-Chief; and I am now merely congratulating the House on having in its midst a member with the expert knowledge which Mr. Crowder can boast. At the same time, I venture to think that notwithstanding Mr. Crowder's condemnation the Bunbury harbour works will form a subject for inquiry by the Royal Commission. When that body furnishes its report we shall be able to see who is in the wrong. In the meantime I desire to place on record my emphatic protest against the condemnation in the House of any public officer, be his grade high or low, unless he has been proved guilty.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (South): I shall support the motion. It is within my knowledge that public works on the goldfields have been carried out in a most unsatisfactory fashion. Inquiry is undoubtedly necessary. I have sufficient confidence in Mr. Glowrey and Mr. Crowder, the two gentlemen who have

spoken so strongly regarding the Engineer-in-Chief, to support them in their action. I shall not delay the House by speaking farther at this juncture.

HON. J. S. HAYNES (South-East): I cordially support the motion so ably proposed by Mr. Glowrey and so ably supported by other speakers. I have listened with attention to what has been said; and I consider the facts or allegations advanced by members supporting the motion as certainly startling. The figures adduced alone are sufficient to justify us in carrying the motion, and, moreover, to justify the Government in giving effect to it. Members know perfectly well that when the great Coolgardie Water Scheme was first proposed, a minority in this House, of which minority I had the honour to be one, fought bitterly against it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I was one of the minority.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: We opposed it not because we objected in any way to giving a water supply to the goldfields, but because we wanted more details to satisfy our minds as to the practicability of the scheme. There were several bitter fights in connection with the matter, and we did manage to get certain details, but they were of the most meagre description. Most of the hostile minority were not engineers or specialists, but their common sense told them that the estimates of cost were altogether too low, and that the work would never be done for the money. Mr. Kidson twitted Mr. Crowder with criticising engineering matters while not an engineer; but I maintain that one does not need the training of an engineer to form an opinion in certain cases as to the cost of a work. The practical details of works must, of course, be left to the decision of skilled engineers; but I think an ordinary man's common sense may at times show him clearly that the cost of a work has been under-estimated. I have said the opponents of the scheme were a small minority. I think there were only seven of us; but we stuck out as long as we could. The excesses in the Coolgardie Water Scheme are simply stupendous, and the same remark applies to the Bunbury harbour works. Concerning the latter, we were told at the time it was proposed that it would cost £40,000 or £50,000. But what do we find now?

After an expenditure of four times the amount estimated, the result is, as Mr. Crowder states, that there is less depth of water in the harbour than ever there was before. The impression I gained from a report made by the Engineer-in-Chief after a visit of inspection to the Bunbury Harbour Works, is that it would be better to drop the job altogether. The amount likely to be received from the harbour in the shape of dues is not such as to warrant the expenditure. In fact, this can never be a reproductive work. However, as I said before, I shall cordially support this motion, and indeed any motion tending to secure to this State more economical and more reliable methods than those at present obtaining in our great spending department. Stress has been laid on the fact that contracts for public works are loosely drawn. I think there is no doubt that the specifications are in many instances drawn in a scandalous fashion. It is outrageous to find that a work costs practically four times the amount estimated. We know that in every day life we can enter into contracts for the building of houses, say, and that private companies can enter into contracts for the construction of large works, without exceeding the estimates. The most carelessly drawn contract in private life would never result in an expenditure of four times the estimate. It is certainly an enigma to me why Government contracts cannot be drawn with greater skill. The departments have at their command the means to employ the very best talent in drawing these documents, and yet the drafting appears to be of the most slipshod description. I regret there should be occasion for supporting the motion. The instances given this evening of the mismanagement of public affairs would, if transferred to a private business, spell utter ruin; and I maintain that such mismanagement, if allowed to continue in the public service, will mean ruin to the State. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] We cannot go on for ever in the present reckless and extravagant fashion. As regards the Engineer-in-Chief, I think the trouble may be that he has too much to do. I have often thought that his work is too great for one man. In the circumstances it is the duty of the Government for the time being to see that

the work at present thrown on the Engineer-in-Chief is subdivided, and that other good men are employed; so that the energy of one man may not be over-taxed, with the result that the country pays through the nose in the scandalous manner which appears to have obtained hitherto.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson): In reply to the mover, I wish to say that the Government have never opposed the motion; that they have, in fact, been strongly in favour of it from the outset. However, after hearing the criticisms of hon. members, I think the decision of the Government to appoint a Royal Commission will be strengthened. A Royal Commission should be appointed, not only on grounds of economy, but also on grounds of justice; for undoubtedly it is hard, as Mr. Kidson has pointed out, for officials to be attacked in this House, where they have no means of replying. Such a course is very harsh towards the officials, and therefore it is certainly due from the Government, on the ground of justice as well as that of economy, to constitute a tribunal before which these officers may be heard in their defence. No doubt, in regard to many of the charges the officers concerned will be able, if not to entirely exculpate themselves, to put matters in a different light from that in which they have been presented to-day. The Government will, therefore, appoint a Royal Commission at once, or at as early a date as possible, to go into the whole question of Public Works administration. The Government intend to move in that direction accordingly.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): I have only a few words to offer. I entirely agree with Mr. Kidson's condemnation of the manner in which the motion has been brought before the House. I deeply regret that manner, and I feel certain that many of the statements which certain hon. members have made to-night are such as they will be only too happy to withdraw at a future time. I regret to observe that certain members have followed the bad example set in another quarter, and that wholesale accusations have been cast right and left against various individuals, contractors and officers, and against the Engineer-in-Chief himself. It is not my

business to defend the Engineer-in-Chief, who will be quite able to take his own part when the time comes. I am heartily in sympathy with the motion, and I think enough has been said to induce hon. members to vote for it. Unquestionably, after what has passed in this House it is incumbent on the Government to appoint a Royal Commission. One member, Mr. Crowder, threw out a suggestion that they should not be members of Parliament, but that persons outside, of known ability and integrity, should be appointed on the commission; but if, as has been promised in another place, certain members of the Legislative Assembly are appointed on that commission, then I think this House ought to insist upon having representatives on it, too. I hope, however, that course will not be followed. I think that the report of a commission consisting of such men as Mr. Crowder has in his mind would have far more weight than any report from persons occupying political positions as members of the two Houses. I trust the point will be taken notice of by the Minister for Lands and placed before his colleagues. It is desirable, in the interests of the country, that a full report should be given upon the matters which have been mentioned here to-night, and which are included in the scope of the motion by Mr. Glowrey. I hope that only good will come of it. The Engineer-in-Chief has been between the upper and the nether millstones. I do not know which is the upper millstone (perhaps Mr. Glowrey will be able to say) and which is the nether millstone. Mr. Glowrey did not give us his opinion on that point. He has contended that neither contracting nor departmental day labour is satisfactory; and the Engineer-in-Chief has been accused of going right in the teeth of what he said some little while ago in reference to departmental work. Apparently the Engineer-in-Chief was disgusted with the sum of money we had to pay certain contractors over and above the amount of the agreement or contract, and in his desperation, perhaps, he thought he might be able to get better results from departmental works. Apparently he has been undeceived, and bitterly undeceived, otherwise he would never have altered his mind; and he says the time has come for several reasons, but par-

ticularly on account of the slowness of the work, and the extra cost which has resulted from the departmental labour, when departmental labour must be given up. I am sure there is a rude awakening in store for this State if members in this House who are politicians of all classes do not pull together for preventing what I believe is going to be the greatest tyranny ever known in this country; and I trust members will be able to look forward and face this great difficulty which is staring us in the face. It is reported that no officer in the department dares to recommend the dismissal of a man. I do not know what will be the consequences. That is how it has been put to me, and I am very ready to believe the statement. It has been represented to me that labourers are overrunning one another in the branches of the Public Works Department, and are merely marking time. I do not want to go into particulars. I have had particulars placed before me which make me believe that in the near future, if we do not take the greatest care with regard to this difficulty, which is increasing day by day, and nip it in the bud, the country will be in a very difficult position. I trust that such commission will be appointed as will secure the confidence of members of both Houses and the country generally, that an exhaustive report will be given, and that no duty laid upon the commission will be shirked, but that they will carry out the matter in its entirety, and make a report to this House that will be, if not satisfactory in its results, at any rate one that will enable us to ascertain with the greatest clearness where the difficulty and the loss have occurred. I trust that may be the result of the appointment of this commission. I consider that a word of thanks is due to Mr. Glowrey for having conceived the idea, and having presented it to this House. The need of the appointment of a commission is so apparent from what has been passing in the newspapers, and from what we have heard all round, that I do not think there was any necessity to go into these details—details which I am sure will be refuted.

HON. J. M. SPEED (Metropolitan-Suburban): After the able speeches which have been made upon the subject by two or three members, it is almost unneces-

sary for me to say anything. Still, as matters have been brought forward incidentally, I think it only right to say a few words. First I regret it is necessary to bring forward such a motion. I believe that under our system of representative Government we put a Government in power to do certain things, and to carry on the business of the country.

HON. G. RANDELL: Responsible government.

HON. J. M. SPEED: Responsible government; but lately we have had no responsible government: we have had irresponsible government in Parliament. We have had certain members of Parliament drawing a certain amount of money from the State as salaries, but where any responsibility has had to be undertaken, it has been given into the hands of a board or a Royal Commission. It is about time the Government were prepared to take the responsibility for which they are paid. I certainly deprecate attacking any man in the service as the Engineer-in-Chief has been attacked this afternoon, because I hold that the men who should be attacked for the acts of their servants are the superiors of those servants. Parliament does not look to any understrapper, but to the Minister of that particular department, for an account of what he has done, and I think it is unfair to attack a man when he is not in a position to answer in a fair way the men who attack him. I trust that when the Commission sit Mr. O'Connor will be able to defend himself, and that the result will be satisfactory. I am sorry that in the answer he gave in respect to handing that contract over he furnished such trivial reasons, because those reasons (whatever the true reasons may be), he ought to have been able to alter in a couple or three days by applying to the Minister and getting the necessary power. When we look at the contractors themselves, we find they give no reasons for saying they can do the work cheaper. They do not say how it is to be done cheaper. However, that has little to do with the subject. So far as departmental or contract work is concerned, as Mr. Randell said, it seems to go against the country whether it is contract or departmental; it all seems to be the same: the country seems to lose by it. My opinion is that men are chosen more for education and

less for their ability in the Government department, whereas a private contractor chooses them first for their ability and next for their education. That seems the distinction. What we must do is to put men in control who will give us a satisfactory account of what they do. So far as the tyranny of labour is concerned, Mr. Randell must know, as well as we all do, that labour has the vote and has the power in Australia. There is no doubt about that. It has that power, and it is going to use it.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Do you use that as a threat?

HON. J. M. SPEED: Not a threat at all. I use it as a fact, and I do not think you or anybody else can get away from that fact.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I do.

HON. J. M. SPEED: I say that whatever the course of legislation may be, labour advocates will be the first to suffer, if that legislation be bad. If the country is going to be ruined, the first man to feel the effects will be the labourer himself.

THE PRESIDENT: We are now discussing the question of the appointment of a Royal Commission.

HON. J. M. SPEED: I am only commenting upon the language of another member of the Chamber, and I am not aware that I am out of order in doing that. I am talking about what my friend Mr. Randell said. However, I do not think it is necessary for me to say more at the present time, so much having already been said by members of the House; but I was obliged to give my opinion with regard to these matters which have been brought forward.

Question put and passed.

HON. J. T. GLOWREY (South): I will now move that this resolution be transmitted by message to the Legislative Assembly, and their concurrence desired therein.

Put and passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON (North) moved that leave of absence for 14 days be granted to the Hon. D. McKay (North Province) on account of illness. The hon. member was, he believed, from what he had heard, very ill indeed.

Question put and passed.

JUDGES' PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and, on motion by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, read a first time.

MOTION—COOLGARDIE WATER SCHEME, TO EXPEDITE AND TEST.

Debate resumed from the 29th January on the motion by HON. F. T. CROWDER, "That the Government should call upon the Works Department to concentrate its energies upon the completion of the first section of the pipe line of the Coolgardie Water Scheme, with the view to providing a test under working conditions before the prorogation of Parliament."

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): I had no intention to speak on this matter when I moved the adjournment of the debate. I moved with the object of giving the leader of the House an opportunity to reply, if he chose, to some criticism of the Public Works Department with reference to the Engineer-in-Chief, and after what has passed this afternoon, I do not think that, if I had intended to speak, it is incumbent on me to say anything. I am entirely in accord with the motion, though I disagree with the manner in which Mr. Crowder placed it before the House.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson): Speaking on this motion when it was last before the House, I did not consider it necessary to reply to the strictures made by Mr. Crowder, contenting myself with stating that investigation would be made into the matters to which he had drawn attention, and that all the points raised would be fully and carefully considered. I also said that no doubt replies would be forthcoming from those concerned. Of course, it was impossible for myself, as one member of the Government, to deal with all the questions raised within the last few years concerning the Coolgardie Water Scheme. A test of the pipes before the prorogation of Parliament, I must inform the House, will not be possible. Owing to the fact that the pumping machinery is not available, the test unfortunately cannot be made. The Minister for Works, however, is thoroughly alive to the great necessity for pushing on the scheme as rapidly as possible. Hon. members are aware that the matter is being considered

in another place. No doubt a decision will be arrived at, and on that decision immediate action will be taken by the Government. I now merely desire to point out to hon. members that when a member of a previous Government I said, in speaking on the Address-in-reply, that one work of the Government would be to complete the Coolgardie Water Scheme as rapidly as possible. Speaking as a member of the present Government, I have to inform the House that such is still the desire of the Ministry. Though all the members of the present Administration were opposed to the scheme at its initiation, they now recognise that the best interests of the State depend on the scheme being carried through as rapidly and as economically as possible. I fear the public do not even now recognise what an enormous cost the undertaking represents to a small community. The Ministry see, however, that the only means of averting a national disaster is to complete the scheme as quickly as possible; and such will be the endeavour of the Government in the interests of the country.

HON. F. T. CROWDER (in reply as mover): This motion was not adjourned at my desire, but mainly on account of certain remarks which fell from Mr. Hackett. That hon. member asked whether the Government intended to sit by and give tacit assent to the very strong accusations I made with regard to the execution of the work. I am glad now that the adjournment did take place; because, a week having gone by, I take it the Government are not in any way prepared to refute my allegations. Had they been prepared to do so, they would certainly have done it. The House may rest satisfied, therefore, that everything I said in introducing the motion was in strict accord with the facts. That is to say, the Coolgardie Water Scheme is being carried out on lines directly opposite to those recommended by the London experts. I regret that the Minister for Lands can hold out no hope of a test of the scheme being made before the prorogation of Parliament. If in the face of my motion the Government allow the expenditure of large sums of money to continue on present lines, their responsibility will be a heavy one indeed. The Minister, of course, understands that in

attacking the methods adopted by the Government in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme, I do not refer to the present Administration. In common with all hon. members, I am aware that every member of the present Government has during the last year, in and out of office, spoken in condemnation of the scheme. I recognise that the present Government are simply carrying out the work as it has been transmitted to them from the old Government. I can only hope the motion will bear this fruit—that the Government will do their best to give members of Parliament at the earliest possible opportunity a proof that the pipes will stand the necessary strain.

Question put and passed.

On farther motion by HON. F. T. CROWDER, ordered that the resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, with a message requesting their concurrence.

FOURTH JUDGE BILL.

RECOMMITTAL.

In the absence of the Chairman (Hon. H. Briggs), SIR GEORGE SHENTON took the Chair.

Consideration resumed from the 29th January, on the amendment moved by Hon. G. Bellingham, that the following be added to stand as a new clause:

A medical certificate shall be produced that the person appointed under this Act is in a sound state of health and fitted to undertake the duties of circuit travelling.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: The proposed new clause had been fully explained to hon. members at a previous sitting, and he was now content to leave it in the hands of the Committee.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member could move the addition of this clause only as a suggestion.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM moved accordingly.

HON. W. MALEY: The suggested clause was very necessary in order to prevent the appointment to the fourth judgeship of a gentleman suffering from the same physical disabilities as the present Judges were stated to labour under. Otherwise, the establishment of circuit courts might be farther delayed.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: No doubt the Judges would feel flattered at the remarks

which had fallen from certain members. Personally he was unaware that their honours were in such a bad state of health. If everything alleged of them were true, their best course would be to resign immediately and draw their pensions. An hon. member had said that one of the Judges was in so parlous a state that he had to be carried about.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: When had that been stated?

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Both Mr. Connolly and Mr. Brimage had made a statement very much to that effect.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY and HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Certainly not.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: The suggested clause was most peculiar. It amounted practically to a vote of no confidence in the Government, or a vote of censure. The appointment of a Judge was a matter to be left to the Government of the day, and hon. members should have sufficient confidence in the Administration to trust them to appoint to the judgeship a gentleman sound in wind and limb, as one member put it. He feared that the adoption of the suggested new clause would bring ridicule on the House.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The suggested new clause would have his support. Ministries were not likely to let slip an opportunity of exercising patronage in favour of their friends; and he would be glad of a provision compelling the Government of the day to select a strong and healthy friend for a judgeship. He trusted all Governments, but did not feel disposed to trust them more than necessary. For his part, he could not see anything ridiculous in the clause. He disagreed with the remark that it was casting a slur on any Government to take care that the people's money should be well spent.

HON. W. MALEY: The hon. member (Mr. Kidson) had not a keen sense of humour, and did not notice that the remarks by him (Mr. Maley) were made in a humorous vein. Doubtless the hon. member was anxious this clause should not pass into law; but one could not sympathise with him. Business in this country required the attention of men who were not only skilled lawyers, but healthy and able to go about the country.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The motion ought to be amended, because it said a medical certificate should be produced stating that the person appointed under this Bill was in a sound state of health. But who was to produce it, and what kind of a certificate was it to be? He moved that the words "previous to such appointment" be added at the beginning.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM accepted the amendment.

HON. J. M. SPEED: We had to trust to the Government in a matter of this sort, and he would like to hear the opinion of the Minister for Lands on the question, considering the position adopted by him last session as to what sort of person would be suitable. The hon. gentleman was then very anxious for the Government to let us know what sort of person should be appointed; and so disgusted was he then with the whole thing that he moved that the Fourth Judge Bill be rejected, and it was rejected. One would like to know the hon. gentleman's reasons for bringing this forward now.

MEMBERS: That was 12 months ago.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: In regard to having a Judge who was sound in health, one was very much in sympathy with members; but surely it must be known that we looked more to the character and ability of a Judge than to his physical condition. If we were to take Judges who sat upon the finest bench in the world—that in England—he doubted whether many of them could pass stringent examinations. As to the matter of a medical certificate, what sort of a certificate was it to be?

HON. G. BELLINGHAM: That he was fit to go on circuit.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: A Judge could, one supposed, go on a journey, and sit on a bench when he reached his destination. We were not in a country where it was arduous work to ride long distances, for we had the railways, and he thought the Judges would be well treated. They did not require any great power physically. From his knowledge of medicine, he ventured to say he could at any time get a certificate, if he chose, by giving directions as to the class of certificate wanted. There was such a variety of certificates. He was sorry to hear that one of our Judges on the bench now was unwell, and had to

undergo some operation. Surely the fact that a Judge suffered from some illness was not a reason why he should not sit on the bench. He hoped the hon. member would not push the amendment or cause a message to be sent to the other place.

Amendment (Hon. R. S. Haynes's) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	11
Noes	...	...	...	10

Majority for ... 1

AYES.
Hon. G. Bellingham
Hon. T. F. O. Brimage
Hon. R. G. Burges
Hon. J. D. Connolly
Hon. F. T. Crowder
Hon. C. E. Dempster
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. R. S. Haynes
Hon. W. Maley
Hon. J. E. Richardson
Hon. J. T. Glowrey
(Teller).

NOES.
Hon. E. M. Clarke
Hon. S. J. Haynes
Hon. A. Jameson
Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. A. B. Kidson
Hon. R. Laurie
Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. G. Randell
Hon. J. M. Speed (Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

HON. R. S. HAYNES farther moved that after "certificate," the words "to the satisfaction of the Governor" be inserted. The word "Governor" in this clause meant the Governor in Executive Council. No doubt the Government of the day would require such exhaustive examination as the exigencies of the case required. It was to be hoped that the teeth of the proposed fourth Judge would be examined.

Amendment put and passed.

Question (new clause as amended) put, and a division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	...	10

A tie ... 0

AYES.
Hon. G. Bellingham
Hon. T. F. O. Brimage
Hon. R. G. Burges
Hon. J. D. Connolly
Hon. F. T. Crowder
Hon. C. E. Dempster
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. W. Maley
Hon. J. E. Richardson
Hon. J. T. Glowrey
(Teller).

NOES.
Hon. E. M. Clarke
Hon. S. J. Haynes
Hon. A. Jameson
Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. A. B. Kidson
Hon. R. Laurie
Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. G. Randell
Hon. J. M. Speed
(Teller).

THE CHAIRMAN (Sir George Shenton): The voting being equal, he gave his casting vote with the Noes, as he considered a matter of this kind should be left to the discretion of the Government of the day.

Question (new clause) thus negatived.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

GAOLS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

SIR GEORGE SHENTON took the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 9, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 10—Time during every period which prisoners unlawfully at large to be excluded in computing sentences:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that the clause be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—

Time during every period which prisoners unlawfully at large to be excluded in computing sentences.

(1.) Every prisoner who escapes from lawful custody while undergoing a sentence involving deprivation of liberty shall be liable, upon recapture, to undergo the punishment which he was undergoing at the time of his escape, for a term equal to that during which he was absent from prison, after the escape and before the expiration of the term of his original sentence, whether at the time of his recapture the term of that sentence has or has not expired. (2.) This section shall not affect the liability of a prisoner to be punished by further imprisonment or otherwise, for breaking gaol or otherwise being away from lawful custody.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The new clause was less clear than that now in the Bill. The desired object could be attained very simply by inserting the words "except as aforesaid" at the beginning of Sub-clause 2.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The present clause was taken from the New South Wales Act.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Nevertheless the clause was not clear. The second sub-clause conflicted, or appeared to conflict, with the first. He moved that the words "except as aforesaid" be inserted at the beginning of the second paragraph.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS withdrew his amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Haynes's) put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 17, inclusive—agreed to. Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

KALGOORLIE TRAMWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and, on motion by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, read a first time.

**CRIMINAL CODE BILL.
IN COMMITTEE.**

SIR GEORGE SHENTON in the Chair.

Consideration resumed from the 30th January.

Schedule 4 :

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY moved that the following words be added to the schedule :—"55 Vict., No. 27, Police Act, 1892, Section 59."—Insert "(1)" at the beginning of section, and omit the words "and any common prostitute who shall solicit, importune, or accost any person or persons for the purpose of prostitution, or loiter about, for the purpose of prostitution, in any street or place, or within the view or hearing of any person passing therein."

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This code had not been drawn up with the object of codifying police offences at all, and there were so many sections in the Police Act that it seemed a pity and almost unnecessary to make one alteration for this point alone, at the present time. Without going into details of the amendment, it appeared to him the amendment was exceedingly harsh. From his own knowledge as a professional man, he considered that the men were more to blame than these women, and it appeared extremely hard for the women to be attacked in this way. He hoped the hon. member would see his way not to push this amendment at the present time. The time to bring it forward would be when we were amending the Police Offences Act, codifying the Summary Jurisdiction Act, and re-enacting the whole of the police offences. If that were done, it would be taken in hand very early next session—June or July.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: There was great necessity for this amendment. He would not have moved in regard to it, but for the fact that he had a very urgent request from the Municipal Council of Kalgoorlie. Dr. Jameson asked for a farther postponement, but that would mean postponing it for six or twelve months. What was complained of had been the case for many years, and the hon. gentleman had not put forward any arguments why the amendment should not be passed, except that it would not look well in the criminal code; but we could get over that very well, seeing there was a necessity for legislation of

this kind being enacted. He did not consider the amendment harsh. The legislation on the statute book at present had been found wanting in dealing with these women, and it was only by inserting a couple of clauses of this kind that the difficulty could be overcome at all.

HON. T. F. BRIMAGE: For some considerable time past an endeavour has been made to get in the municipal laws something to prevent this kind of thing. In the goldfields towns it was daringly advertised, more particularly in regard to young children.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The hon. member should withdraw the suggested new clause, which was altogether too drastic. He was quite prepared to admit that there might be some trouble in this respect on the goldfields, but it was worse in Perth than elsewhere. To put it in the power of the police to arrest a girl for merely winking at a man was altogether too much. The clause threw a burden on the women and let the men go scot-free.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: The question was an unsavoury one, and he did not desire to say much on it. He would support the amendment, because the evil with which it proposed to deal was more glaring on the goldfields than elsewhere.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The proposed clause would disgrace the statute book. Nine times out of ten the fault in cases of soliciting lay with the man. The penalties proposed were absolutely outrageous.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The proposed new clause was unnecessary, because what it proposed to effect was already provided for by Section 25, Sub-section 8, of the Police Act. There should be no distinction between the crime of soliciting on the part of men and on the part of women. He protested against any mock-modesty in connection with the subject, which, though ugly, had to be faced and dealt with. One reason for opposing the new clause was that it was not suitable for inclusion in a criminal code, being cast rather in the form of an enacting clause of a statute, whilst it was proposed to be inserted here in a schedule.

New clause put and negatived.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: The feeling of the House being adverse, he would not move the remainder of the amendments he had placed on the Notice Paper.

Clause 109—Offences by presiding officers at elections:

On motions by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, resolved that Sub-clause 1 be struck out; that in Sub-clause 2, line 3, the words "unlawfully and" be inserted after "voting"; and that the following be added as a new sub-clause:—"If an elector satisfies the presiding officer that he is so blind as to be unable to vote without assistance, it is lawful for the presiding officer to permit any person named and described by the elector to accompany him into the voting compartment, and to mark, fold, and deliver his voting paper for him."

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 428—Defacing brands:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that in line 8 the word "twenty" be struck out and "fifty" inserted in lieu. This amendment was in accordance with the Brands Bill, which would come before the Legislative Council shortly.

Put and passed.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS farther moved that all the words after "pounds," in line 8, be struck out.

HON. G. RANDELL: The proposed amendment would still leave the penalty £50 in respect of each animal whose brand was defaced or altered.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The clause as it would read if the amendment were adopted would be in accordance with the Brands Bill, was purely permissive.

Farther amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 429—Time of prosecution:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that, in line 2, the word "six" be struck out and "twelve" inserted in lieu; and that all the words after "committed," in line 3, be struck out.

Put and passed.

Clause 663—Execution of sentence of death:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved that after "superintendent," in lines 8 and 25, the words "or gaoler" be inserted.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Schedule as amended put and passed.

Bill reported with farther amendments, and the report adopted.

EARLY CLOSING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

SIR GEORGE SHENTON took the Chair.
Resumed from the 30th January.

Clause 9—Closing of exempted shops carrying on other trades:

HON. F. T. CROWDER: If those who had a shop in which they carried on two or three different classes of business happened to carry on any of the trades not mentioned in the schedule, they would have to shut up.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Unless warded off.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: There was nothing said about warding off.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Half-holidays in exempted shops:

HON. G. RANDELL moved that the words "every person employed in any office, bank, or," in lines 2 and 3, be struck out, with a view of inserting "all assistants employed in any wholesale or commission agent's." He moved the amendment in consequence of a desire to extend the operation of this Bill farther than provided for by the original Act. There seemed to be no desire to retain the words he proposed to strike out, and they certainly applied to a class of business houses which should not be included. The wholesale houses gave their employees a good deal more privilege than was given in retail houses. For instance, most of them began at nine in the morning and closed at five, and the employees got a half-holiday on Saturday without the operation of this measure at all. It was perfectly understood that a business carried on in a bank and in an office was very different from what was carried on in a retail store, and it seemed to him that those words were entirely opposed to the spirit and intention of the Act. In a bank, if the officers were in error and found themselves unable to balance, they must stay to do so. It would be impossible to carry on to the next day, for that would, he believed, interfere with the whole of the arrangements of the bank, and the same applied probably to many offices. He believed that in lawyers' offices it was absolutely necessary for a clerk to stay at times.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Would not a cashier in a big shop have to balance too?

HON. G. RANDELL: It had been intended by him to move to the same effect regarding a cashier or accountant, but having consulted men of business he decided not to do so, because he believed they could always manage in some way or other.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Was there any difference between the feeling of a person who stood behind a counter and that of a person in a bank?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Look at the title of the Bill.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: This was supposed to be a humanitarian Bill, and he did not see why clerks should not be protected. He thought that shop assistants at present had a little bit better time than the unfortunate clerks. The average run of clerks in this State had a very unhappy time. Some time ago there was an attempt to improve their position by forming a union or association, but nothing came of it. The object of this Bill was to limit the hours of labour, and to see that no person was overworked. Many clerks in this State were absolutely overworked, and unfortunately some were forced to come here and work for a bare pittance. He knew some instances where clerks had lived on practically next to nothing, where they were almost willing to work day and night, and he regretted to say there were employers who were not unwilling to accept their services and sweat them. Clerks could be sweated as well as any other class of employees. No employer should ask a clerk to work longer hours than from 9 to 6. Lawyers, he wished it to be noted, all closed their offices at 5 o'clock. Clerks worked harder than shop assistants, and were entitled to at least equal consideration.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Hon. members should note that bankers had stated that the provision, if applied to them, could not possibly work. The books and the cash of a bank had to be balanced every day.

HON. J. M. SPEED: The banks could get more men to do the balancing.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Only one man could do the work of balancing, and only one man could count cash. The application of the half-holiday provision, by

preventing a clerk from balancing his ledger or a teller from balancing his cash, would upset the whole system of banking. So far as lawyers were concerned, he was glad to be able to join with Mr. R. S. Haynes in saying that the lawyers were prepared to accept the provision. His own clerks worked from 9 to 5, and got a half-holiday regularly every week.

HON. G. RANDELL: Hon. members should note that a ledger-keeper whose ledger was not correct could not allow another clerk to touch the book, and that a teller could not allow any other person to touch his cash. The working hours of bank clerks were only from 9 to 5, with an hour's intermission for lunch. The application of this measure to banks would cause serious inconvenience.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Randell's amendment would be accepted. The desire was to make the Bill more liberal; not less. Undoubtedly, banks were outside the scope of a measure dealing with shops. A banker who had seen him on this subject had stated that to apply the provision to banks would disorganise business. If the banks were not allowed to do their balancing after closing hours, they would simply have to close earlier, and thus inconvenience would be entailed on the public. Therefore it was not advisable to extend the operation of the Bill to banks as well as to shops.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It was to be hoped that hon. members would not wreck the Bill. Surely Mr. R. S. Haynes would not maintain that a bank was on the same footing with a shop. The hours of bank clerks were certainly not long, except when there was something wrong with the books, or at balancing time. It was a strict rule that no banking establishment should close until the books and the cash had been balanced, and this rule of the banks should not be abrogated by Parliament.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: If a bank was not a shop, still it bore all the appearance of being one. Clause 11 only proposed to secure to the clerks one half-holiday per week, from one o'clock onwards. The banking business of Perth was not so great as that of Sydney; and he was in a position to say that the Sydney bank clerks were always able to leave their work at one o'clock on Saturdays. The reason was simply that the banks in Sydney had

sufficient clerks for the work. He was in a position to state that many bank clerks in this State went back to work until nine or ten o'clock for weeks at a stretch on every night except Saturday, moreover without getting extra pay for it. If any sweating at all was going on in Perth, it was in connection with bank clerks. The argument as to the necessity for balancing did not amount to much, because any ledger-keeper or teller should be able to balance by one o'clock if the bank closed at 12. It was to be hoped the Committee would hold out a liberal hand to a very large body of our fellow colonists, amongst whom there was no strike; he supposed that if they went out on strike we should see a crowd of 500 ready to take their places next day. Their position was not a very pleasant one, but it was very arduous and a very high and important one.

HON. J. M. SPEED: There was no reason why a bank clerk should be studied any more than anybody else, and there was only one drawback about the clause, that being that it did not go far enough. It was very well for Mr. Randell to talk about balances and that sort of thing, but what employers kept these clerks at were weekly, monthly, and quarterly returns; he had known clerks to work up to nine and 10 o'clock in the evening. He did not care whether a man was a clerk behind a counter or a shop assistant, we should do our best to see he had somewhat reasonable hours of labour and some relaxation.

HON. W. MALEY: When it came to a question of a bank, the liberality of the Minister for Lands was all for the bank and not for the clerk. He (Hon. W. Maley) did not see the least difficulty in giving every clerk in existence in this State a half holiday without interfering with the business. There were plenty of clerks looking for situations. If there were a hundred situations vacant for clerks, he could fill them at once. He got numerous applications for such posts. He saw one gentleman off who started for the Phillips River, and he had fortunately got a billet; but one could put his hand upon 99 others who would be glad if they could fill up the gap occasioned by a half holiday. Where we could afford to make the Bill liberal, we should do so in the interests of the great

majority of the people of the State, and we should not make it illiberal in the interests of the few capitalists.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: The clause as it stood would be supported by him, and he, like Mr. Speed, only regretted that it did not go far enough. He could not follow Mr. Randell in the assertion that it would be impossible to give this benefit to an assistant in a bank. Banks closed at 12, and if a teller could not balance his cash by one, he was not efficient or he was overworked.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Sometimes it took a man a week.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: Then he was not efficient.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Oh! Was he not?

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: The same applied with regard to ledger-keepers. He had known five or six who had gone back to work in the evening.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	13
Noes	...	...	...	7
Majority for				6

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. T. F. O. Brimage	Hon. G. Bellingham
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. R. G. Burges
Hon. C. E. Dempster	Hon. J. D. Connolly
Hon. J. T. Glowrey	Hon. W. Maley
Hon. S. J. Haynes	Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. A. Jameson	Hon. J. M. Speed
Hon. A. G. Jenkins	Hon. H. S. Haynes
Hon. A. B. Kidson	(Teller.)
Hon. R. Laurie	
Hon. E. McLarty	
Hon. G. Randell	
Hon. J. E. Richardson	
Hon. F. T. Crowder	
(Teller.)	

Amendment thus passed.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Why had the Minister extended the hours for assistants in public-houses and restaurants? Under the old Act the time specified was 1.45, but the present clause mentioned half-past 2. He moved that the words "half-past" be struck out.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: Luncheon came on at one o'clock, and people were not always quite punctual, so a little consideration might be extended on that account.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Under the old Act the time was, as he had stated, 1.45.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	8
Noes	...	...	...	12

Majority against ... 4

Ayes.
 Hon. T. F. O. Brimage
 Hon. J. D. Connolly
 Hon. A. G. Jenkins
 Hon. A. B. Kidson
 Hon. R. Laurie
 Hon. E. McLarty
 Hon. J. M. Speed
 Hon. R. S. Haynes
 (Teller).

Noes
 Hon. G. Bellingham
 Hon. R. G. Burges
 Hon. E. M. Clarke
 Hon. F. T. Crowder
 Hon. J. T. Glowrey
 Hon. S. J. Haynes
 Hon. A. Jameson
 Hon. W. Mailey
 Hon. R. C. O'Brien
 Hon. G. Randell
 Hon. J. E. Richardson
 Hon. C. E. Dempster
 (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

[Hon. G. Randell crossed the floor from the right of the Chairman, with a view to voting for the amendment, but one of the tellers had then been appointed, and Hon. F. T. Crowder therefore claimed the vote.]

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Limitation of hours of employment of women and young persons:

HON. A. B. KIDSON moved that, in line 3, the word "nine" be struck out and "eight" inserted in lieu; and that, in line 5, the words "fifty-three" be struck out and "forty-eight" inserted in lieu. It had been a matter of surprise to him to find that this measure proposed to increase the working hours of women and young persons. Under the old Act, the working day was eight hours, and 48 hours constituted a week's work.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The provision under the old Act as to 48 hours constituting a week's work had really been a mistake; and the provision had, in fact, remained a dead letter. Clause 13 was intended to meet the schedule of exemptions. From eight o'clock in the morning till six o'clock at night, with one hour for meals, was equal to a nine hours' day. The assistants would work these hours for four days, making a total of 36 hours. On the half-holiday they would work only five hours, from eight to one o'clock. That brought the working hours up to 41. On the Saturday they would work from eight in the morning till 10 at night, with two hours' intermission for meals. This made the week's work 53 hours. In New

Zealand the week's work was 52 hours; but in the sister States it was 53 hours, as provided here. The provision constituting 48 hours a week's work had been found unworkable. By Clause 8 the hours during which shops might be kept open were extended. Mr. Mailey had said that he could not understand why a measure, liberal in one respect, should be illiberal in another. But this Bill was not intended to reduce the hours of labour in shops. Work in shops was comparatively light, and the effort was rather to extend the hours than shorten them.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Under this provision a shopkeeper could keep his assistants for half-an-hour after closing time to fix up remnants and so forth. It would be necessary to insert some such limiting words as "any keeper of a shop exempted being a shop mentioned in Schedule I." Clause 10 distinctly said that a shop might be kept open for the purpose of sales to the public for 53 hours per week. Under this clause, a shopkeeper might work his employees for nine hours a day.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Fifty-three hours a week was the limit.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Under Clause 10 the shopkeeper was prevented from keeping his shop open except during certain specified hours. Clause 13, however, empowered the shopkeeper to work his female assistants nine hours a day. Where in the Bill was there any provision for preventing a shopkeeper from keeping his employees for an hour and a half or two hours after the shop was closed?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Clause 10 laid down the working hours very clearly. An employer could keep his employees from 8 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock at night, or even half an hour afterwards. An ordinary male employee could be worked nine and a half hours a day; but in the case of women and children that could not be done.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Did the Minister for Lands wish to see shop employees work for nine hours a day?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; for 53 hours per week.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: In the course of his lucid explanation the Minister had

mentioned that the tendency of this Bill was to liberalise; but he ought to have added that its liberalisation was in favour of the shopkeeper, and by no means in favour of the shop assistant. The clause would not, however, effect its intended purpose, namely of covering the shops mentioned in the schedule of exemptions. Hon. members would see that it applied to women and young persons under the age of 16, but did not apply to men. The Minister for Lands had stated that the provision of the old Act limiting the hours of women and children to 48 hours per week was found unworkable. No complaint had ever reached him concerning that clause, except from the hon. gentleman himself. On the other hand, he had heard complaints as to the increase in hours proposed to be made by this Bill. Such being the case, would it not be better to adhere to the provisions of the old measure?

HON. G. RANDELL: As the President was doing double duty to-night, he moved that progress be reported.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:28 p.m., until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 4th February, 1902.

Question: Midland Railway, Firewood Trucks—Question: Pastoral License, Renewal—Question: Stinkwort, to Eradicate—Question: Land Settlement, Esperance District—Question: Police Detective, Gratuity—Question: Petroleum Storage, Risk at Fremantle—Question: Cue-Nannius Railway, Rails and Completion—Question: Vaccination, Compulsion Threatened—Question: Parliament Houses (new), Freestone—Question: Police Uniforms, Contract Cancelled—Question: Companies Amendment Act, Enforcement—Standing Orders Suspension, to Expedite Business—Judges' Pension Act Amendment Bill, all stages—Bush Fires Bill, third reading—Dividend Duty Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, progress—Kalgoorlie Tramways Act Amendment Bill, second reading, etc.—Roads Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Health Act Amendment Bill, second reading—Public Service Act Repeal Bill, second reading (moved)—City Sanitary Depot, Order discharged—Light and Air Bill, second reading—Land Act Amendment Bill, second reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Return showing Working Hours of Warders and Officers of the Fremantle Prison (ordered 22nd January); 2, Boulder School Accommodation, Particulars (ordered 15th January).

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: Papers connected with proposals of Messrs. Couston, Finlayson, and Porritt, for completion of Coolgardie Water Scheme.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY, FIREWOOD TRUCKS.

MR. M. H. JACOBY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether he is aware that, owing to the scarcity of trucks on the Midland Railway, the firewood trade is disorganised, and the farmers at Chittering are about to revert to the old system of carting to Guildford. 2, Whether such scarcity is caused by the refusal, as alleged by the company, of the Government to continue the arrangement which long existed whereby the company were able to use Government trucks on certain conditions.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. Kingsmill) replied: 1, I am not aware of this. 2, I have no knowledge of any such arrangement, nor has any application for trucks been made by