

have a thoroughly competent man. I should like the Minister to have told us the system of sewerage that has been adopted. I have not seen the reports that have come in.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: They have been published in the Press.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: As it is said, they have not come before us officially. I have given some attention to the question of sewerage and above all the systems I think the septic tank system is the best. I gave some months of my time to inquiring into sewerage systems in England and personally I am thoroughly convinced, if competent men carry out the septic tank system, it cannot be improved on. In reference to the water supply I agree with what fell from Mr. Loton and Mr. Randell as to the bore water. I cannot say that the bore water meets with my approval at all and I think there is some doubt as to the supply, for permission has to be given by the Minister to put down bores. In many instances the bores I have seen at work I should not call artesian. For that reason I would sooner see a gravitation scheme for the supply of Perth and the bores done away with. I am not going into the Bill at length. I shall not oppose any measure of this kind that the senior members for Perth and the suburbs agree with. I shall give them my assistance and see that this matter is pushed forward as quickly as possible.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—The Board:

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: It would be advisable to have a board consisting of five members instead of three.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill was to tide the Government over a probationary period. The member objected to the number of members of the board provided by the Bill, and in the second place to the shortness of the term. These particulars could be altered within a reasonable time if found not acceptable. The only function of the board for the next year would be the administration of the water supply of Perth. The other water supplies were within the control of the Government now.

Clause passed.

Clauses 9 to end—agreed to.

Schedules (twelve), Preamble—agreed to.

Title:

HON. G. RANDELL: Was there any provision for wells in addition to artesian bores?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 25 minutes to 6 o'clock, until the next Monday.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 18th December, 1903.

[ALL-NIGHT SITTING.]

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 2:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—KALGOORLIE CYCLONE, RELIEF OF DISTRESS.

MR. JOHNSON, without notice, asked the Premier: Whether the Government will take immediate steps to relieve the distress in Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and district, occasioned by the recent storm.

THE PREMIER replied: I thank the hon. member for drawing my attention to the matter. I shall have great pleasure in moving in that direction.

QUESTION - CUSTOMS TAXATION, TEST CASE.

MR. THOMAS asked the Premier:
1, Whether the Government intend to pay any of the costs in connection with the recent litigation between D. and W. Murray and the Commonwealth Government. 2, Whether there is any arrangement between the Government and D. and W. Murray with regard to such payment. 3, If so, what is the amount paid or agreed to be paid.

THE PREMIER replied: The Government promised the Perth Chamber of Commerce to bear the cost of a test case to settle the construction of Section 95 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act. The chamber selected the case of D. and W. Murray as a test case. Taxed costs would be paid as agreed.

ELECTORAL BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

THE PREMIER brought up reasons, prepared by a committee, for not agreeing to certain of the Council's amendments [*vide* Votes and Proceedings No 68].

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

THE PREMIER moved that the report from Committee be adopted.

MR. JACOBY: Was this in order, in the absence of the statutory majority?

THE PREMIER: Unfortunately for the hon. member, it was.

THE SPEAKER: The statutory majority was not needed at this stage.

Question passed.

THE PREMIER brought up reasons, prepared by a committee, for not agreeing to certain of the Council's amendments [*vide* Vote and Proceedings No. 68].

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

THE PREMIER brought up reasons, prepared by a committee, for not agreeing to certain of the Council's amendments [*vide* Votes and Proceedings No. 68].

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

FREMANTLE TRAMWAYS BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

MR. FOULKES in the Chair; MR. HIGHAM in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 26, strike out the whole:

MR. HIGHAM: This clause should have been struck out when the Bill was passing through Committee in the Assembly, in consequence of a new clause having been inserted providing for a different rotation for the board from that provided. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2 (consequential)—agreed to.

No. 3—Clause 30, strike out Subclause (e), and insert in lieu, "If he be absent from three consecutive meetings of the board without permission of the board."

MR. HIGHAM: This alteration was suggested by the member for Mount Magnet, providing that absence from a specific number of meetings should disqualify a member of the board rather than absence for six weeks. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4—Clause 33, line 1, strike out "November" and insert "September."

MR. HIGHAM: This was an alteration of the time for the preparation of the accounts. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 5—(consequential) agreed to.

No. 6—New clause to stand as Clause 9, Additional special rate in case of loss:

MR. HIGHAM: This new clause provided that a special rate should be struck in the event of the undertaking making a loss beyond the amount required for interest and sinking fund. He moved that it be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 7—New clause to stand as Clause 19, Free passes:

MR. HIGHAM: This new clause limited the power of the board to the granting of 10 free passes during one

financial year, with the addition of the passes for the staff. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 8.—New Clause to stand as Clause 39 (Running powers):

Mr. HIGHAM moved that the amendment be agreed to. The clause was inserted to provide a means of settling any dispute which might arise between contiguous municipalities and the municipalities undertaking this work. It was inserted at the instance of North Fremantle, so that North Fremantle might be granted fair terms on entering into the scheme, or have rights over the Fremantle and East Fremantle section of the line, if they so desired. The clause provided that in the event of the municipalities themselves not being able to come to terms, the Minister for Works should be the arbiter in the matter.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. FOULKES in the Chair.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Hon. C. H. Rason, Minister).

Vote — *Public Works*, £350,845 4s. (farther consideration):

Item—Yardarino, water supply, £300:

Mr. WALLACE: The reason he had moved that this item be struck out was to give members acquainted with the conditions under which this work was started an opportunity to express opinions as to the continuation of the work. When the work was first authorised, it was to be on a reserve on the old river, that land being since cut up and offered for sale. This bore was authorised for testing the country for coal. Messrs. Atkins and Law had the contract for sinking, and if he remembered rightly they had a Government grant. He met Mr. Law on his way to Perth to obtain more rods. The second lot of rods broke,

and eventually the work was not completed. It was then converted into a water bore. Two or three years ago he pointed out that there was a spring in the river-bed, and that in his opinion if a water supply were required, it could be obtained by opening up the spring. He would not say because a bore was put down and coal not found we were going to waste the work done; but were we going to perpetuate expenditure?

THE MINISTER: No. This was only making use of large expenditure incurred years ago by putting in a small bore which would allow the water to gravitate into the river.

Mr. WALLACE: That he knew all about. The late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor was in favour of putting a pipe into the bore to take advantage of this water supply, but at that time it was not considered necessary. If it was not considered necessary then, why was it considered so now? For a great period of the year the river did not carry water, but when that was the case this spring was available. A lot of money had been expended unnecessarily, when there were other districts languishing for small amounts, and he entered his protest against the granting of votes in a blindfold manner.

Amendment withdrawn.

Item—Railway Construction, £118,000:

Mr. PIGOTT: Would the Minister for Works give some reasons why he had included these items for railway construction in the present Estimates? It was understood when the Budget speech was delivered that these railways were to be constructed out of revenue, because we had plenty of money for the purpose and it would save borrowing. We were also told by the Treasurer that the only moneys to be borrowed by the present Government were to be used for reproductive works only. We found when a Loan Bill was brought down it contained provisions for loan moneys on works which could not by the greatest stretch of imagination be deemed reproductive. The Government were making a mistake in this matter, and he would like to hear from the Minister if he would take into consideration the advisability of transferring these items of railway construction from the Revenue Estimates to the Loan Esti-

mates, and of taking from the Loan Estimates and placing on the Revenue Estimates certain items which could not be considered reproductive works.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The fear was that it was not possible to follow out the suggestion. To do so; if it were possible, would probably be regarded as a breach of faith by most members, because last year the House was assured that the Gooseberry Hill Railway, the Jandakot Railway, the Malcolm-Laverton Railway, and the Owen's Anchorage Railway were works that, as far as possible, should be constructed out of revenue. In order to carry out that distinct understanding these items appeared on the Revenue Estimates this year. The point the hon. member raised would have been better raised on the Loan Estimates.

MR. PIGOTT: Then it would be too late.

THE MINISTER: It was too late to make the suggested alterations. To do so would upset the whole of the financial arrangements.

MR. PIGOTT could not agree with the Minister when he said that, if this course were carried out, it would probably upset all the financial arrangements. If we were not to be recognised as a Parliament that said one thing and did another, the course he suggested should be taken. In our schedule of works to be constructed out of loan moneys we had many items which were not reproductive works. One item was simply discount on current loans, and if that was a reproductive item he (Mr. Pigott) did not know much about our financial position. This was one item alone of £63,000, and he was satisfied that when the Bill came before the House he could prove there was another £120,000 provided for expenditure on works which could not be classed as reproductive. We were paying out of revenue for railways which were acknowledged throughout the Commonwealth as the best security we could give for our loans. The policy adopted by the Government was not a good one, and would probably lead to a lot of false opinions being held with regard to our finances. It was all very well for us to say that we were spending £118,000 from revenue on railway construction. It sounded nice;

but all the benefit of the statement would be wiped out when it became known that we were spending £200,000 out of loan moneys on unproductive works. These items should be struck off the Revenue Estimates; but as the Government with a huge majority would not let that course be pursued, he was satisfied with making this protest.

MR. HASTIE agreed that some of the Loan items should not be in the schedule. The hon. member proposed to rectify the matter by striking the railway construction items out of the Revenue Estimates, but the cure would be worse than the disease, for we would cease to do a lot of railway construction out of revenue. The hon. member should rather encourage the Government to do as much railway construction as possible out of revenue. Regarding Gooseberry Hill Railway, for which £5,000 was provided, we were led last year to understand that it would cost £18,000; but we had now spent over that amount, and the cost appeared to be so far about £23,000. Was the additional item unexpected expenditure; also, would it complete the whole purchase of the line?

MR. BATH could not see the force of the reasoning of the leader of the Opposition, that because we had decided to borrow money for reproductive works alone we should only build reproductive works from loan money.

MR. PIGOTT: Not at all.

MR. BATH: Works were just as reproductive when built out of revenue. If the hon. member had any objection to certain works on the Loan Estimates, considering them not reproductive, and if he could convince members that they were not reproductive, the hon. member's opportunity for opposing them would come later. However, the hon. member should not say that works were not to be put on the Revenue Estimates because they were reproductive.

MR. PIGOTT: It was all very well to build railways out of revenue, and it was a good procedure if railways were properly built out of revenue; but it was a farce to say we were building them out of revenue when we did nothing of the kind. That was how we showed it on the books, but as a matter of fact these railways were built out of loan money. If the Loan Bill should not go through,

these railways would not be constructed. We had to pay £63,000 out of loan moneys for discount and this money must be paid, no matter whether we raised a loan or not, because it was discount on current loans.

THE MINISTER: With regard to the Gooseberry Hill Railway, it was generally understood that £18,000 was not the amount to be expended, and that the amount was to be something like £30,000. The additional £5,000 was an expenditure rendered necessary to put the railway into a better state of repair by putting in new sleepers and new rails and by widening the track in many cases, absolutely necessary expenditure in the interests of the safety of the travelling public.

MR. PIGOTT: This was not construction, but maintenance work.

THE MINISTER: This was railway construction work. A railway that might be safe for a timber line was hardly safe and fit for passenger traffic.

MR. PIGOTT: Would the Minister explain about the Malcolm-Laverton Railway?

THE MINISTER: This was a continuation of the policy of last year that the railway should be constructed out of revenue.

MR. THOMAS protested against these items appearing on the Estimates. Though always favourable to the construction of public works out of revenue, he was not prepared to allow a statement to go forth which he considered exaggerated and apt to mislead the people from whom we borrowed the money. The items of railway construction were most of them reproductive works, and he was glad that some reproductive works were to be carried out out of revenue; but we must at the same time consider the schedule of the Loan Bill; and taking the two schedules he came to the conclusion that these items were placed on the revenue Estimates to create a wrong impression in the minds of those from whom we intended to borrow money. In the Loan Bill we had such items as rolling-stock, £150,000; development of goldfields and mineral resources, £69,000; development of agricultural resources, £50,000; and discounts, £63,000. Thus, in putting these railway construction items on the Revenue

Estimates, even if the intention was not to mislead, the fact remained that the people from whom we borrowed money would be misled when they took the loan schedule into joint consideration with the Revenue Estimates. The Treasurer boasted in his Budget Speech that most of our loan funds had been spent on reproductive works, that our public buildings and some railways were paid for out of general revenue. But the cost of upkeep and improvement of such assets should be charged to revenue and not to capital. The loan schedule contained items which ought to be written off to working expenses.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. member discontinue his argument that certain items should be taken out of the Loan Bill schedule?

MR. THOMAS: The items under "railway construction" on the Estimates could not be dissociated from loan items.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could argue that these items should be put in the Loan Bill, but not that items mentioned in the Loan Bill should be on the Estimates. The hon. member was going too fully into the details of the Loan Bill schedule.

MR. THOMAS: Any credit the Government might get for spending £118,000 for railway construction out of revenue would be discounted when the loan schedule was compared with the Estimates. For years past the capital cost per mile of our railways had been steadily increasing; and instead of cost of upkeep and renewal of rolling-stock and plant being charged to revenue, we found £150,000 in the loan schedule for that purpose, while the Government claimed credit for spending £118,000 out of revenue for railway construction. True the railway estimates showed some attempt to replace rolling-stock out of revenue; but the greater part of such expenditure was wrongly charged to loan. An additional sum of £170,000 in the Loan Bill schedule should also be charged to revenue. Year after year such charges had been piled on the capital account. Hundreds of thousands must still be spent to put rolling-stock and plant in an efficient condition. Many years ago our railways were capitalised at £2,000 to £3,000 per mile, and that amount had been increasing until it now approximated to a

capital value of £6,000 per mile. The same thing would occur with the Gooseberry Hill Railway. Last year he understood that £18,000 would complete that scheme, but now another £5,000 was asked for. If the Committee passed items of this sort without a clear understanding from the Government, we would be landed in the same position as we were in regarding railways generally. He objected to items such as this being passed through the Committee without a strong protest. There should be items alongside for the improvement of rolling-stock and the replacement of obsolete stock. Instead of asking the Committee to expend huge sums of money from loan on unproductive works, the Government should ask the Committee to pass sums of money from the general revenue for these works. First of all we should clear up our back accounts and pass a sufficient sum of money from the general revenue to see that the railways were put in a proper state of efficiency. In a mine or business, the board of directors wrote off a certain sum for depreciation, and if any machinery was repaired the cost was not charged to capital but to working expenses, to be written off when the expense was incurred. In connection with the railways nothing was written off for depreciation or worn-out rolling-stock. The rolling-stock was replaced from capital account, and instead of asking for £118,000 for a Gooseberry Hill railway, a Jandakot railway, a Laverton railway and the Owen's Anchorage railway, before any attempt was made to do this and to take any false credit to ourselves, we first of all should put our books in order. The people at home from whom we borrowed money would not be led astray. They took our Estimates and went through them, and thoroughly examined the balance-sheet of the country, and they would find that we were spending hundreds and thousands of pounds of loan money on unproductive works and spending revenue on reproductive works. The Committee should enter a protest against including these works in the general revenue Estimates.

[MR. QUINLAN took the Chair.]

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : It was rather difficult to follow the hon.

member, seeing that last year Parliament agreed that these railways should be constructed out of revenue, and he could hardly see how the Committee could be asked to reverse that policy and say that the works should be constructed out of loan. The hon. member made use of a peculiar line of argument. Criticism such as his one expected the country to receive from enemies and not from friends. It went forth to the world that in the hon. member's opinion we were deliberately deceiving the people who lent us money, and that this was done with the deliberate intent to deceive the outside world. The railways which were constructed out of revenue he stated should not be so constructed; we ought to put our accounts in order and stop hanky-panky with them; we should put our railways in a state of repair out of revenue rather than construct new railways. What the hon. member said practically amounted to this, that the affairs of Western Australia, instead of being in a prosperous and bright condition, were in a very bad condition. The hon. member pointed out that the balance-sheets were being faked to delude the money lenders. He would use the hon. member's own words: "We were hanky-panky with our accounts to mislead those who were lending us money." That was a very serious statement to make, and one of the last utterances we should expect to hear from a member of the Assembly. It would be bad enough if it were correct, but it was ten times worse when there was not the shadow of foundation of truth in it. The railways of the State were being maintained out of revenue, and were to-day in as good a condition as when they were constructed. The Government were spending more on the upkeep of our railways out of revenue than was any Government in Australia, in proportion to the mileage open. He stated that without fear of contradiction. We were spending out of revenue an ample sum every year and had done so for years past to keep our railways up to a fair value for those who lent us the money.

MR. THOMAS : How was it that the capital account went up year by year?

THE MINISTER : Money expended out of revenue was also debited in many instances. The hon. member took the

whole capital expenditure as being loan money. We were all the time making the asset of more value, and yet the hon. member said we were depreciating the value.

MR. THOMAS: No.

MR. PURKISS: If more money was being spent on the railways they could not be paying, yet we had been told that they were paying interest and sinking fund and a trifle over.

THE MINISTER: In spite of the money spent out of revenue there was still sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund and something to the general revenue. He had no hesitation in saying that as to deceiving those who lent us money, they had to-day in the railways of this State an asset which would wipe out our whole debt. The railways under discussion were authorised last year to be constructed out of revenue.

MR. PIGOTT: Did the Minister think it a good idea?

THE MINISTER: Yes.

MR. PIGOTT: Notwithstanding the Loan Bill?

THE MINISTER: Yes; because he knew of nothing calculated to have a better effect and not a misleading effect on the outside world than the fact that we could construct these railways out of revenue and still do justice to the existing railways out of revenue.

MR. THOMAS asked one question. Assuming that a line was laid with 40lb. rails and these were found not heavy enough to carry the traffic, and the Government engineer recommended that the line be laid with 60lb. rails, the Minister in that case would debit the cost of that alteration to capital?

THE MINISTER would do nothing of the kind. He would debit the difference between the 40lb. and the 60lb. rails.

MR. THOMAS: No; he would debit the difference between the selling cost of the 40lb. and the selling cost of the 60lb. rails.

THE MINISTER: That was not so.

[Sitting suspended for 10 minutes.]

MR. HARPER took the Chair.

Item — Lithographic and printing plans, £300 :

MR. BURGESS asked for information as to this item.

THE MINISTER: This item was to reimburse the Government Photo-Lithographic Department for work carried out for the Public Works Department. Under the new procedure each department was charged for the work done.

Vote put and passed.

Public Buildings, £252,133 :

Item—Bunbury residency, £1,200 :

MR. BURGESS: Why was this amount down?

THE MINISTER proposed to strike out the word "residency" and insert "police court." There was a necessity for a new residency, but still greater necessity for a new police court. The present police court accommodation was totally inadequate, and the Attorney General advised that "residency" should be struck out and "police court" inserted in lieu.

MR. HAYWARD: The present accommodation was totally inadequate. The building was erected about 20 years ago, when Bunbury was not a fourth of its present size, and did not contain a quarter as many inhabitants as now.

Amendment passed.

Item—Northam residency, £1,500 :

MR. BURGESS moved that the item be struck out. He wished to have some explanation for this extravagance when we had struck off three magistrates. There were residential quarters at Newcastle and at York. Northam was not now the centre, but all the settlement was going on from York upwards. It would be absurd for the Government to spend £1,500 on Northam, when the whole of the new settlement was going up the other way. If this amount were spent, in two or three years it would be necessary to either build a residency the other way or appoint an extra magistrate. He was not fighting for one district against another. He had never asked the Government for anything unreasonable, and what he had asked for he would fight for to the bitter end, till he got it.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member would not, he hoped, press the amendment to a division. We had amalgamated the three old magisterial districts, Toodjay, Northam and York, and the present

district was comprised of those three townships. The great bulk of the work, nine-tenths he thought, was done between Northam and York. The central position at Northam was more economical regarding the magisterial time, and therefore more economical to the time and money of the State than would be the residency at York.

MR. BATH: There was a residency at York.

THE PREMIER: That old building at York which needed repairs. It was false economy to object to the construction of a residency at Northam merely because there was one available at York. The new arrangement would save the magistrate's time, and would greatly convenience and benefit the public. For that reason the item appeared here. A promise was made during last session or the previous session that steps would be taken in this direction. If it were not for the claims of York the item would be a very fair one, and the energy of the hon. member on behalf of York should not stand in the way of a work which would be of great assistance to the people of the eastern agricultural districts.

MR. BURGESS: The magistrate could leave York in the morning and reach Northam in time for the sitting of the court.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member should look at the demand travelling would make on the magistrate's time.

MR. BURGESS: The whole of the settlement in the eastern districts was going on beyond York. Near Northam the country was settled and could not develop any farther. The Minister for Lands should open up the land to the east of York, instead of putting foolish lands-purchase clauses in railway Bills.

MR. MORAN: This was the hon. member's good Government!

MR. BURGESS: Good Government or not he intended to wake them up. He did not oppose this item because it was a case of York *versus* Northam, but because he considered the expenditure would be a waste of money. No doubt when the railway and water construction works were going on recently near Northam that centre had a lot of drunks; but the latest returns would show a different state of affairs. Beverley was developing rapidly—another argument why the

magistrate should not be removed from York to Northam. He moved that the item be struck out.

MR. MORAN: A seat behind Government was not the best from which the hon. member could wake the Government up. It appeared that York always got the worst of the bargain, and that the member for Northam always gained the advantage; but the figures of the Attorney General made out a strong case for Northam. The member for York brought forward no figures to strengthen his case.

MR. WALLACE: Would it not be prudent to defer the work for a year?

MR. BURGESS: Yes; for another ten years.

MR. WALLACE: Owing to the great increase in land settlement in its neighbourhood, York might become the true centre of the eastern agricultural districts.

THE PREMIER: If the item were not passed, £100 would need to be expended in repairing the residency at York.

MR. THOMAS: Could not the Government obtain a temporary building at Northam pending the development of agricultural settlement?

THE PREMIER: No suitable building could be obtained.

MR. THOMAS: York would become the true centre because the development about York was in advance of that going on in the Northam district.

MR. GORDON: What about the settlement that had taken place in the past at Northam?

MR. THOMAS: From an agricultural point of view York district was to be preferred to the Northam district. He thought the residency should be established at York.

MR. GORDON supported the item. Members forgot that there was a large settlement going on around Newcastle. He believed the magistrate's duties would be taken up in attending to Newcastle, Northam and York, and that another magistrate would have to be appointed to attend to the districts to the south of York.

MR. BATH: In view of the fact that Newcastle had some claims for consideration, the residency should be built at Spencer's Brook, which gave easy access to all the centres.

MR. BURGESS: Absurd!

MR. ATKINS: The magisterial area extended from Pingelly on the south to Newcastle on the north. York was the more central place for a magistrate to be located for working the combined district.

THE PREMIER: The great bulk of the work was at Northam.

MR. ATKINS: That might be so while many works were going on, but it was not so now. Northam also was a teetotal place, and there were not many cases for the court.

MR. THOMAS: Members would recollect that last year the member for Beverley pointed out in connection with food supply, that the portion of the State which would be the principal food producer for the goldfields would be the district comprising Beverley, Northam, and Newcastle. This being now a combined district for a resident magistrate, York would be the most convenient centre for locating him.

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

Ayes	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	11
Majority against			1

AYES.

Mr. Atkins
Mr. Bath
Mr. Connor
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Pigott
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Yelverton
Mr. Burgess (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Diamond
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Hastie
Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. James
Mr. Oats
Mr. Rason
Mr. Walter
Mr. Higham (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. BURGESS moved that the item be reduced by £100.

Amendment negatived.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In view of the closeness of the division on this item, the Government would be bound to make farther inquiry before proceeding with the work.

Item—Midland Junction, ambulance and casualty ward, £1,030:

MR. THOMAS: A debate last year resulted in an understanding that as there was a properly equipped hospital at Guildford, the people at Midland Junction would be sufficiently provided for by having an ambulance and casualty ward.

Would this sum be all that was required?

THE MINISTER: A contract was let for the work, and this amount would finish the work authorised by Parliament.

[MR. QUINLAN took the Chair.]

Item—Bunbury Hospital, septic tank, £175:

MR. BURGESS asked whether a proper septic tank could be constructed for this amount. If so, the information would be useful for householders especially in Perth, where the sanitary service was in a scandalous condition and a disgrace to civilisation.

THE MINISTER: A septic tank could be built for £175 sufficient for a hospital of this character, and a septic tank for an ordinary household could be built for a much less sum. He would be glad to show any member plans and particulars relating to this kind of work.

Item—Claremont Hospital for Insane, farther works, £20,000:

MR. HIGHAM: Only £20,000 was provided for expenditure this year, and this sum would be absorbed in erecting some of the administrative buildings, which he understood would be temporarily used. The amount placed on the Estimates would make very inadequate provision for the insane under present circumstances. He had been through the Fremantle Asylum many times, and through it within the last few weeks. The asylum was absolutely congested. The demand was so great that in many ways the superintendent had to evade giving access to the institution as much as he could; in fact there were, he believed, cases in which the insane were kept in prison in order that they should not overcrowd those already in the asylum. One might see 10, 15, or 20 in a ward which had only sufficient space for half the number. Everything possible had been done in the present buildings for the comfort of the patients, but it was impossible for them to receive proper attention. Proper accommodation would not exist for some time on the Claremont site, and with the growing demands on space, the Fremantle asylum would be as crowded as ever in a short period. During this year at least £40,000 or £50,000

ought to be spent on the new asylum. The way in which the insane were being treated was a crying shame to the country.

MR. ATKINS: When would the buildings intended to be erected with this money be completed? Unless they were taken in hand and completed without delay, there would probably be a terrible mess in the asylum, which would be a great deal worse than now. The inmates were increasing every day. We had not in this country the ordinary ratio of insane, but the ratio was increasing, and it would continue to increase every year until we got to the normal percentage. Would the work for which this money was to be paid be completed within the next 12 months, as it ought to be?

MR. CONNOR: It was absolutely necessary that the proposed work should be carried out as early as possible, and he was sure no member on either side of the House would raise any objection to the use, if necessary, of Form J, in a case of this sort. If members continued on the lines on which we had been going, there might be need for special wards.

THE PREMIER: "Opposition" wards.

MR. DIAMOND: In this particular instance the members for Fremantle were working for a public object which would take the expenditure of money away from Fremantle to another district. Having had several opportunities of seeing the work done in the Fremantle asylum, he asserted that the asylum was absolutely a disgrace to the State. He believed we had one of the best men in Australia in charge, and Dr. Montgomery had not anything like a fair chance under the present circumstances. He trusted members would assist the Government in pushing forward the erection of this new asylum at the earliest possible date.

THE MINISTER: The Government fully recognised the necessity of pressing on with this work. The necessity had existed for years past. It was only quite recently, however, that a serious attempt had been made to deal with it. The ultimate liability authorised to be incurred was set down at £60,000, but it was anticipated that no matter how we pressed on with the work, not more than £20,000 would be spent before the end of the financial year. Should we, however, be able to get more done than would be represented by the expenditure on the

Estimates, there would, he was sure, be no objection to an additional amount being spent. Dr. Montgomery had pointed out more than once the absolute necessity of pushing on this work as soon as possible, and that would be done.

MR. ATKINS: The Government should spend all the money provided on the Estimates for this purpose.

Item—Perth Hospital, new wing, £4,000:—

MR. TAYLOR: In relation to hospitals he desired to draw attention to Item No. 82 of last year (Laverton Hospital, grant-in-aid, £1,000.) This year there was no such vote for that institution. The Laverton hospital committee got £600 out of the £1,000 voted last year for extension of a ward or work of a similar nature, but because they were in a flourishing position the Government officer garnisheed against that £600, the Medical Department having advanced the money. The regulations set forth that subsidies could only be used in hospitals for maintenance and upkeep, not for extensions and buildings. He felt that the Laverton people were badly treated. The medical officer told him that there was an understanding with the committee that the money should be garnisheed, but the committee denied that such was the case. Because some people contributed freely and had a decent banking account, the Government would not build for them, yet grants were made year after year for the upkeep of other places where people contributed nothing to that upkeep.

MR. YELVERTON: As to the Perth hospital, was it not possible to have proper plans and specifications drawn so that when the contract was let it might not be necessary to alter it afterwards, as had been the case regarding almost every public building or work that had taken place for many years past? In the matter of the Supreme Court buildings, the William Street bridge and the new Parliament Houses, serious alterations to plans and specifications had been made in such a way as to cost the State enormous sums of money, and allow bogus contractors to make money from the State. If we were to make important buildings before the contract was let, the plans and specifications

should be final and complete, and such as were necessary for the purpose, and they should not be altered afterwards. The enormous sum of £248,475 was provided for the purpose of erecting new buildings for hospital purposes. Thousands of pounds had been spent on hospitals which, in many instances without sufficient justification, had been absolutely closed. The Busselton Hospital which was a very necessary institution, notwithstanding there were persons in it at the time and that patients were constantly coming into it, had been suddenly closed, and the patients had to be sent over 40 miles to Bunbury. Shortly after the hospital was closed, a man injured by an explosion at the Point Naturaliste lighthouse had to be taken to Bunbury for treatment, and he nearly died on the journey through the shaking-up he received. In another case an old man died on the journey. It would have been better to have spent the small sum of money required in maintaining this hospital, than to have lost valuable lives or to have run the risk of doing so. It was an absolute shame that the hospital at Busselton should be closed, and it was a penurious action on the part of the Government, for the saving only amounted to about £200 per annum, and the Busselton people were prepared to subscribe a certain amount per annum towards its upkeep. He did not propose to vote against any of these items, because he was in favour of them. The sick and insane should receive the largest consideration from our hands, and it was a blot on our civilisation that the insane had been so badly treated in the past. It would have redounded much more to our credit if we had spent money on a modern hospital for their treatment.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member was not present when the matter of departure from specifications was under discussion at a previous sitting. Positive instructions were now issued that in no case were specifications to be departed from in the future without Ministerial sanction. With regard to the Busselton Hospital the matter would be noted, but he was simply the builder of the institution. The same remark applied to the case referred to by the member for Mt. Margaret. He was surprised that any

part of the grant-in-aid for the Laverton Hospital should have been garnisheed, as the hon. member said, but that was a point for the Colonial Treasurer.

MR. TAYLOR: The hospital at Mt. Malcolm was closed under circumstances similar to the closing of the Busselton Hospital a few weeks before the Public Service Commission recommended the closing of a number of goldfields hospitals; but it was strange that the hospital in his district was closed while hospitals in districts of members supporting the Government were not closed, in spite of the recommendations of the Commission. If they were now closed it was only recently. The people of Mt. Malcolm had been running their hospital ever since, thus showing the necessity for the institution, which was closed down by the Government just when considerable railway works were commenced in the district.

Item—Derby Hospital, water supply, £200:

MR. CONNOR: Why was the Wyndham water supply not attended to? There was as great necessity for a water supply at the Wyndham Hospital as at Derby.

THE MINISTER: Inquiry would be made.

Item—York, lockup-keeper's quarters, £450:

MR. BURGESS: Did the Government intend to spend any more money in York in improving the condition of the lockup and other quarters?

THE MINISTER: Out of the sum of £500 provided last year only £100 was spent. It was proposed to spend another £450, making £550 in all, to complete the quarters. With a decision to erect a new magisterial residence at Northam the old residency at York would be available for the police. The arrangement having been somewhat altered it might be found necessary to make other arrangements.

MR. MORAN: What alteration?

THE MINISTER: The item for the magisterial residence at Northam having been carried by such a small majority, it would be absolutely necessary to make farther inquiry before proceeding with the work.

MR. BURGESS: As the magistrate's residence was so far out of town it would not be an adequate building for the police. The lockup was in a disgraceful condition, and the Minister's attention had already been drawn to the need for repairs. There were cells in it which were not fit to be occupied by prisoners.

MR. TAYLOR: This item might well be struck out, as there was no requirement for a lockup at York.

MR. MORAN emphasised the fact that the Government were going to reconsider an item passed this afternoon because it was carried by a small majority of one. There were other resolutions of an important kind, relating to constitutional questions, carried by a majority of one or two—would the Government also reconsider these?

Item—Boulder, quarters for single men, £1,200:

MR. THOMAS: How many men required accommodation at Boulder in connection with the police?

THE MINISTER: These quarters were represented to be necessary, and on inquiry he found that by spending this amount there would be saved a sum of £220 a year now paid as lodging allowance.

Item—Perth branch of Royal Mint, additions and extension, £3,200:

MR. THOMAS: A sum of £5,000 was passed last year on the representation of a Minister that the work was urgently required. It now appeared that only £1,077 was spent in the financial year, and the balance would be claimed as an economy in administration.

THE MINISTER: A contract was let, and although only £1,077 was spent in the financial year, this additional amount of £3,200 was necessary to complete the contract.

Item—Fremantle (South Terrace), school, £1,620:

MR. CONNOR opposed the item, not because a school there was unnecessary, but as a protest against the high-handed manner in which the Colonial Secretary had treated the people of Fremantle in reference to the site on which the school was to be built. It was suggested by the Government to take from the hospital

ground a portion on which the old Governor's House stood fronting South Terrace. The Government, without consulting the Fremantle people, decided to resume a portion of the hospital ground and build a school on it. The people of Fremantle resented that action individually and by public meeting, for they regarded the action as unjust if not unconstitutional. Was it proper to put an infant school against a hospital, on the other side of the school being a public morgue? The school was in a position where a tremendous amount of traffic caused great noise and was dangerous to children. Because some member of the Ministry—he meant the Premier—had taken a huff in reference to some Fremantle matter, he said this school should be built on the hospital ground; and in this he showed no regard for the opinions of the people of Fremantle. This was a bad state of affairs, and it also showed a want of backbone on the part of members who represented Fremantle. He moved that the item be struck out.

MR. DIAMOND, in supporting the motion, said he had intended to adopt a similar step. Public opinion in Fremantle had been flouted. The Fremantle municipality gave a site near the Smelting Works to prevent the school being built in this unsuitable position in the hospital ground, and the Education Department made a *quasi* promise through the Minister that if the municipality did not give up a site at the lower end of Mandurah Road the school would be built on the hospital ground. The municipality foolishly gave up that site; but still the school was built since on the hospital ground. The committee of the Fremantle Hospital unanimously objected to the site adopted, the medical staff also objected, and the municipal council to a man were against it. In fact there was a unanimous expression of opinion from Fremantle against the site. He did not know of one dissident from that opinion, except the Colonial Secretary.

MR. HIGHAM: Fremantle members fought as far as they could to prevent the Government from erecting this school on the site referred to, but they failed, and the school was now practically built, though not complete. He was not going

to vote against the present item, because it would be absolutely useless to do so.

MR. CONNOR: Fremantle and North, South, and East Fremantle objected to the site which had been adopted, and every member of the municipal council expressed his opinion on the public platform. It was a disgrace that this scheme should be carried in the face of public opinion at Fremantle, and it would be a wise thing on the part of the Government to forego what work had been done, and have the other site, which was still available. That site would suit the children, and it would please the people.

DR. HICKS, who lived as near to this site as anyone, had never seen any reason why the school should not be built there. The only objection was that it was on the street where the main traffic took place, and the children might come to some injury. Several schools in Fremantle were built in similar positions in other main streets. As to the hospital staff, one could quite understand why they complained. They were looking ahead to the time when they might require more room; but that was not a sufficient reason why the school should not be erected on the site which had been adopted.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	8
Noes	...	...	...	16

Majority against ... 8

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Connor	Mr. Atkins
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Bath
Mr. Moran	Mr. Burges
Mr. Nansou	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Purkiss	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Thomas	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Diamond (Teller).	Mr. Gregory
	Mr. Hicks
	Mr. Hopkins
	Mr. Oats
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Wallace
	Mr. Walter
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item — Kalgoorlie (South) school, £2,000 :

MR. BATH: No provision was made on the Estimates for a school at Williamstown, one of the suburban areas in the Hannans electorate. On all sides it was agreed that Williamstown needed a school; and although repeated representations had been made to the Minister,

the school was not provided. The children at Williamstown had to walk a long distance to the central school.

MR. JACOBY: Was it necessary to have a number of schools in each town? Was this school more than half-a-mile from the nearest school?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Rather.

MR. JACOBY: We should not have schools too close together. We were providing a very large amount each year for temporary schools.

MR. BATH: The school was over a mile from the central school, and the children had now to pass over an ordinary railway crossing. Although he agreed with what the hon. member had said, it was absolutely necessary to establish schools for the younger scholars in the districts around Kalgoorlie. Any member who lived on the goldfields in summer time would recognise the discomfort the children had put up with in having to go long distances to school.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: There was a mistake about the Williamstown school, because an area had been reserved for a school and the matter brought under the notice of the Minister for Education. He would again draw the attention of the Minister for Education to the great necessity for a school at Williamstown.

Item—Kalgoorlie (North) school additions, £900:

MR. JACOBY: How far was this school from the nearest school?

THE MINISTER had not at hand the information required, but the school was very much overcrowded, and the teacher was constantly asking that additions should be made.

MR. MORAN: There was a tendency to build schools at every corner.

THE MINISTER: These were only additions.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The school was certainly half a mile from the nearest school.

Item—Lakeside school and quarters, £375:

MR. THOMAS: The only work carried on at Lakeside now was the cyaniding of tailings dumped from the Boulder Perseverance battery. This work would shortly be finished, and he did not know if the population around this battery

would be permanent. Any building put up should be one that could be easily shifted.

MR. BATH : Though unable to give information as to the probable permanency of the district, he knew there were sufficient children at Lakeside to justify the erection of a school. Lakeside was a considerable distance from Kamballie, and a school had been needed in the district for a considerable time.

MR. THOMAS : For how many children was the school required ?

THE MINISTER : could not supply that information. He had, however, the assurance of the department that a school was necessary, that the population was increasing, and that there was no school available for the children.

MR. THOMAS : The residents might have to shift from Lakeside at an early date, so he would counsel delay. The children should be able to get to school by train, as the children between Bullabulling and Coolgardie had to do at present.

MR. CONNOR : While this district received every attention, Wyndham could not get a school. There was a large Government staff at Wyndham, but the officers complained that they could not keep their families there, as the children could not get any education. A former Government promised to build a school at Wyndham, but it was not built. The favours of the Education Department should be more evenly and justly distributed.

MR. TAYLOR : Though the children at Lakeside would only have to walk two miles to a school, the children at Mount Sir Samuel, 35 miles away from the nearest school, could not get any education. Requests had been repeatedly made for a school at Mount Sir Samuel, where there were about 18 or 20 children of school age. The people of the district secured portion of the Mechanics' Institute for a school, and guaranteed £50 a year towards its upkeep, but the Government did not meet their wishes. It seemed that members sitting on the Government side of the House could get schools only short distances from one another. If he were sitting on the other side of the House he could get school facilities which he was unable to get sitting in Opposition. The people in the district he represented

had to suffer because he was in opposition to the Government.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : With reference to Lakeside not being a permanent place, members need not be anxious about that. There was a permanent population there, and they were not likely to leave.

MR. THOMAS warned the Minister for Works that Lakeside was not a permanent settlement. The population there was comparatively large at present, but it would be gone in a few weeks, probably before this money could be spent, because the Great Boulder Perseverance Mine had nearly finished dealing with the tailings, and then there would be nothing to keep the population there. No leases of any value were working in that locality. If a school were provided for Lakeside, it should be put on wheels so that it might be removed when no longer required.

Item.—Perth Technical School, permanent buildings, £5,000 ; total liability £10,000 :

MR. THOMAS asked for information as to the character and extent of the buildings proposed. He hoped these would be permanent buildings, on a scale that would provide for a technical school up to date, and designed in such a way as to admit additions as the population of the country increased, so that the general design might not be impaired.

THE MINISTER : The present site of the technical school would be required for other purposes, and in any case the temporary buildings now occupied were inadequate for a technical school. It was proposed to erect a new up-to-date technical school estimated to cost ultimately £10,000, and of this sum £5,000 was proposed to be expended in the current financial year. The site selected was on the end of the Commonage at Thomas Street. The desire was to erect a substantial building, and not spend a great amount in needless ornament. It was estimated that £10,000 would suffice to erect a substantial building, and if it became necessary to increase the building hereafter he had no doubt this House would willingly pass a farther vote for so worthy an object.

MR. THOMAS did not object to the amount, but regretted that it was not

more, for he was convinced that an expenditure of £10,000 as the total amount would be inadequate for such a purpose as this. This State was going ahead, we must make provision with an eye for the future, and it would be a mistake to begin on a small scale such as appeared to be contemplated. He would not quibble if a scheme well thought out was to cost ultimately even £25,000, for the purpose was one which would justify a liberal expenditure, and he hoped members would say that this should be only a portion of a larger scheme.

At 6-28, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. JACOBY: It was to be hoped the Government would erect public buildings adequate to the growing needs of the country for educational purposes, and that this £5,000 was the first instalment of a building for the carrying out of a complete system of technical education. He understood it was the intention of the Government to undertake some such proposal, and if there was an expression of opinion from members it would help the Government in coming to a conclusion. We had watched with interest the development of technical education in the State up to the present time. It was to be hoped the Government would erect, on the site proposed, buildings sufficient to ultimately accommodate a complete system of technical education in all its branches. He supported the item.

MR. MORAN: Anyone not blinded by prejudice must come to the conclusion that Australia was entering on a career of gradual protection, by building up, with the aid of technical education, those trades which had made America, Canada, and Germany the envy of the world at the present time. He was in favour of a system of technical education in preference to spending money on some kind of secondary education. We should have something tangible to show for a system of technical education. We had too many over-educated young men in Australia, well educated generally, but having no particular knowledge to apply profitably in any of the walks of life. He held that the technical education vote should be followed up, rather than have another vote for secondary education which would

build up well-educated men without training for any profession or trade. The time had come for Western Australia to go in for a proper system of technical education; not confined to Perth alone, for if so it would be centralisation of the most obnoxious character. The children in Bunbury, York, and Kalgoorlie were equally entitled to technical education as were children in Perth, if not more so. He did not think we had money at the present time to enter upon an elaborate system of secondary education as well as technical education, and he hoped the Government would devote all their energies at present to technical education. If a boy was fairly well educated according to the primary standards in the State schools, up to 14 years of age, he had all the education that nine out of ten wanted in the world. If boys wanted more there were means of getting it. We wanted nine out of every ten earning a living, and we wanted 99 out of every 100 in big countries like Australia who would be able to turn their education to practical account by becoming artisans, without which Australia could never be a nation. [MR. DIAMOND: And agriculturists.] Artisans and agriculturists. The experience of America had proved that the artisan was the creator of the agricultural industry. He found a market for it. If we had home consumption there would not be that keen necessity to look abroad for markets. Western Australia must not lag behind, for we had our natural disadvantages in competing with the Eastern States in manufactures, and let us not add to those natural disadvantages the disadvantage of not having our young men well trained. He hoped the technical vote would be increased, and that great attention would be paid to it, and that not so much attention would be paid to the more fanciful schemes of secondary and university education.

MR. BATH: No member of the Assembly who desired the progress of the State of Western Australia would be niggardly in the vote for technical education, and he supported the member for Dundas when that gentleman pointed out to the Minister for Works the necessity of being almost generous in this respect. It was about time we gave our attention

to turning out good artisans and tradesmen in the shape of blacksmiths, carpenters, and other descriptions of workmen, rather than turning out ill-paid clerks and clerical workers. There were too many of those in Australia at the present time for the number of billets that were going. If it was instilled into the minds of the people of Australia that it would be infinitely better to bring up their children to trades than as clerks who could only earn a miserable pittance, it would be doing good for the State. In regard to technical education in the Eastern States, there had been some great difficulty preventing the system becoming as useful as it should be. The trouble had been that those at the head of the institution had not the grounding themselves, and they had turned out a number of jackaroo tradesmen who only had a smattering of the trade which they ought to have learned. It was hoped that, as far as Western Australia was concerned, in our technical education we should make it as thorough as possible, and no system of education could be made thorough unless the Government of the State were prepared to support it generously and devote money to it, for money could be devoted to many worse uses. Without making any stipulation as to the amount whatever, he hoped money would be used in a judicious manner to make the system of technical education as thorough as we desired.

MR. DIAMOND supported the remarks generally. We should not be spending money on what was known as university education just at present. Good work was being done in the State now in the shape of technical education on a small scale. The old building at Fremantle which was formerly used as a girls' school on South Terrace was now a technical institution. As a member of the school board, he highly commended the technical instruction given to the evening classes in the Cantonment Road school. Amongst the most earnest students were railway workshop apprentices. There were classes for girls also. But the system should be extended throughout the State in connection with primary education. Such extension was much more important than the establishment of a university. In her universities, Australia had too closely copied

Oxford and Cambridge, instead of taking the practical universities of America as models. Our aim should be to turn out practical artisans, farmers and miners, secondary education for that purpose embracing the useful arts and sciences.

Item—Secondary school for boys, £1,000:

MR. PIGOTT: This proposal was mentioned in the Governor's Speech, but not since. The Premier ought to explain it, as he anticipated ultimately spending £10,000. It did not appear that secondary schools were needed, and the item should not be passed without full debate.

MR. MORAN: From the very nebulous replies he had received from the Minister in charge, it was evident that this scheme had not been fully considered. Better postpone it till after the general election. We had already secondary schools in Perth; and if a Government institution were established, its benefits must for a long time be confined to Perth, which was the last place deserving consideration while country places were crying out for primary schools. Extravagance in secondary education must result in the starving of primary school teachers. Strike out the item and transfer the amount to the vote for technical instruction.

THE PREMIER accepted personal responsibility for the item. He was a great believer in national education, and did not think that the duty of the State ceased when the pupil left the primary school. A person could not be too well educated; and the State's duty began in the kindergarten and ended in the university. Ours was undoubtedly the best system of primary education in the Commonwealth. The great education reformers of the past, though believing in State education, thought this should be confined to the three R's; but as years passed the public became alive to their responsibilities, and the system was extended until to-day we had a primary education which 30 years ago would have been looked upon as a first-class secondary education—instance the seventh A standard superimposed on the ordinary standards in schools at populous centres. Year after year the standard of primary education was raised. The establishment

of State schools invariably led through competition to the improvement of private schools, the State setting the example and fixing the standard. In the absence of State education there was no standard, and instruction was neither so efficient nor so generally availed of. In this country the obligation to provide primary education was recognised. But why should our obligation cease there? Was it right that, accepting as we did our obligation to provide a primary education for our young people and realising that year after year this obligation extended the curriculum of primary education, we should place a child in the doorway of a primary school and say, "Beyond that the State cannot assist you," the State recognising no farther obligation? Did the obligation of the State cease at the doorway of the primary school? Doubtless that was the theory a few years ago, but we had been encroaching upon that, and subject by subject had been added. By technical education and by means of bursaries and scholarships we recognised some obligation upon the State to encourage a higher system of education than our State schools provided. The development of education in this State gradually moved forward. Twenty years ago our State school education in Western Australia was of the most rudimentary character. He himself passed through that system, and he asserted without hesitation that a lad who passed through the highest standard then had no better education at that time than one who would be only in the second or third class now. Those who passed through the old State school of Western Australia twenty years ago could appreciate the enormous advance which had been made. Were we to loyally recognise that this State must provide for its children not only a primary system of education as understood in days gone by, but also a secondary system?

MR. PRIGOTT: Was the hon. gentleman going to make it compulsory?

THE PREMIER: No. He believed the duty of the State was to seize hold of a child and place it under the kindergarten system, and eventually pass it through the university. We provided that education should be compulsory between certain ages; but when youths

passed beyond that it became voluntary. Under our system of education, whilst dozens, he believed hundreds, of young intelligent and industrious pupils had to pass away from educational advantages at the age provided by our existing Education Acts, we made no provision by which these youths could avail themselves of a secondary system of education, and make themselves better citizens of Western Australia.

MR. JACOBY: The provision existed all the same, although the State did not make it.

THE PREMIER: We heard exactly the same argument when dealing with the question of primary education. It was said there was no reason why the State should provide machinery to meet this need, and that private energy and private schools could meet it. Yet we knew to-day that it was because of the existence of State primary schools, and by means alone of the existence of State primary schools, that primary education occupied the high position it did here.

MR. MORAN: That was because education was compulsory.

THE PREMIER: We could not apply compulsion unless the State provided the education. In those States which had a system of State education we should find the higher educational standard, and in those States where there was no system of State education a lower educational standard.

MR. MORAN: Which States were these?

THE PREMIER: We could pass from America to the old country, to Germany, or even to France. He had never heard controverted the assertion that where the State provided for education we had the best system. When primary education was first urged in this State those who opposed it said, "Leave all this to voluntary effort;" but the system had been so complete and emphatic that he did not believe there was a man in Western Australia or in the Commonwealth of Australia who would not agree with him that the system of State education had been abundantly justified. Inside the domain of primary education the State was doing good work, and by doing that good work was setting an example to private schools which also supplied primary education. Year by year we added to the curriculum

of our State schools, and we recognised that while we added to our State curriculum certain subjects dealing with technical education we could not make that system complete unless we had separate schools, which we provided for in our present Estimates, and hoped to extend throughout the State in due course of time. There was in connection with education as with so many other matters a gradual growth and gradual expansion of the area of the State's obligations, and a gradual quickening also of the sense of the State's duty. The first educational reformers reckoned that the obligations of the State ceased when they taught boys to read and write. Their idea was, "Give to every child an opportunity of acquiring these rudiments of education, and that is all you need give him." Every year we had been departing from that old idea, and had increased the obligation of the State and given a better education to the children, until to-day we had, he believed, in Western Australia as good a system of primary education as could be found in any part of the world. It was wrong that we should put out of the doors of our schools every year dozens, perhaps hundreds, of children who, if they had an opportunity of farther carrying on education, would make better citizens of the State. Why should it be that, whilst we recognised the obligation to establish a system which quickened the desire of a child to acquire education, we turned him out of our doors at the very time when he was acquiring that appetite for knowledge and a desire to attain knowledge which tended to make for the benefit of the future? It was said that system ought to obtain. Everyone would agree that within this State there must be some system by which we could take the child from the State school and carry him onward; but it was said that, once we passed beyond the doors of the State school, private organisations should be left to provide secondary education. He did not believe it. On the contrary, he believed the day had gone by when we should hear, in connection with education, the question of rich and poor. We too frequently heard this question, and it was frequently said: "You are providing no system of secondary education, and are simply encouraging the rich." In education there

was no question of rich and poor. We needed the educated citizen. Whether that citizen be the child of rich or poor parents was entirely beside the question. Farther than that, those who talked about secondary education, meaning the system which provided education only for the rich, and by means of such an argument tended to divert the attention of the State from its obligation to provide secondary education, simply created for the rich a close preserve into which the children of the rich alone could enter. Why should we not have a system of education which any child—however poor its parents might be, or however rich its parents might be—should have a right to enjoy, if it had brains and energy enough to earn the prizes or pass the qualification examinations that would lead to the higher system the State would provide?

MR. JACOBY: Was it to be free?

THE PREMIER: We were not dealing with that now. He was not one of those contemptuous quibblers on either side of the House who talked about details.

MR. MORAN: That was not fair.

MR. JACOBY: The Premier should not get cross.

THE PREMIER: One could not help getting cross on hearing quibbling interjections. He was a great believer in education of all sorts and descriptions, and he believed that there rested upon the shoulders of the people of this State an obligation to provide for our children the best system of education we could possibly get; but all we had to deal with now was whether it was necessary or desirable to provide a system of secondary education. Farther than that, was he not right in saying that the efficiency of primary education in this State, and in other places where it existed, was due to the fact that the State system applied? also that in countries where the State recognised its obligation to provide a system of education there was a higher standard of education than in countries where the State did not recognise this obligation?

MR. MORAN: All civilized countries recognised the obligation. Could the Premier mention any that did not?

THE PREMIER: Spain, Italy, Greece, and South America did not. The countries

where we found a clear recognition that the State should provide education were America, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Australia. Broadly speaking, those were the places where we found impressed upon the State the obligation to provide education.

MR. MORAN: No country was more forward in technical education and otherwise than Russia.

MR. BATH: Only in a few isolated instances.

THE PREMIER: Outside the places mentioned, we did not see a clear recognition of the obligation on the State to provide a primary education. In Germany and America there was a clear recognition of the obligation on the State to provide a better system than primary education, and in Germany that obligation was loyally recognised, the State providing a system of national education beginning with the kindergarten and ending with the university. In America the obligation might not be so loyally recognised owing to private intervention, but the State provided secondary schools and universities. Here in Western Australia we merely had the primary schools. The East Australian States were to a large extent content with providing a primary education and nothing beyond. In New South Wales and Queensland liberal subsidies were given to secondary schools, but in none of the other States did we find what he asked the House to affirm, the obligation of the State to provide means of secondary education to every young child of the State with sufficient brains and persistence to avail himself or herself of the opportunity.

MR. MORAN: This was hardly the time to discuss the matter.

THE PREMIER: The desire of the Government was to make farther inquiry in relation to these schools, not so much as to the principle, but as to the curriculum and management and in regard to designs for buildings. The Government and he (the Premier) strongly thought that we needed a secondary school system modelled not on the example of the old country, nor on the example of the Eastern States which followed too closely the old country, but on the example of secondary schools which provided an education somewhat similar to that provided in the schools of Germany

and America. The Government wanted to have imparted not only a theoretical knowledge, but the practical, technical and scientific education provided in America and Germany. Because they believed there was need for this the Government had placed this sum on the Estimates to obtain discussion on the point. He hoped the majority of members would agree in affirming the principle that the obligation of the State towards its children was not discharged by giving them a primary education, and that we should place within the reach of every child with energy and persistence the means of acquiring that education which would enable him to fill any professional position in the State. At present, however bright a lad might be and however hard-working or persistent, we passed him out of the State school unfitted or unqualified to fill the highest positions in this or any other State. We ought to provide a system to remove these difficulties, and to give the intelligent and energetic lads of the State a ladder by which they could obtain the highest offices and positions the State offered. Believing this, he hoped the House would support him in an endeavour to establish a secondary school in Perth.

MR. PIGOTT: The Premier gave a very bright account of his idea of what a complete system of education ought to be. The Premier expressed the belief that the State could not give too much education, and then dilated upon the present system of primary education, and showed that our system was the highest standard of primary education throughout the whole of the Commonwealth. The Premier might have gone farther and said it was the highest system of primary education throughout the civilised world. There could be no doubt that the stage at which we had arrived with regard to the education given in the primary schools would compare very favourably with any system of primary education throughout the whole of the civilised world; and when we compared our primary education with that of countries where a system of secondary education was in force, we found at once that our standard of primary education was far ahead of any primary system where secondary education was also carried out. The Premier did not give

any description of the methods the Government intended to introduce, but said that the main objection to the scheme would be raised by people who would consider that the introduction of secondary education would tend to reduce the standard of the primary system. To-day we had a very fine system of primary education. We had under this system the right of forcing a training on all the children until they arrived at a certain stage, and then the complaint was made by the Premier that under our present system these children, no matter how bright and intelligent and energetic they might be, were taken away from the doors of our State schools and sent out into the world to fight for themselves. The Premier asked members to assist in passing the vote to introduce a system of secondary education in order that we might still have the care of the bright and intelligent lads and give them the benefits of a secondary education, and the Premier went farther and said a university education. It was no doubt a very pretty picture to draw, but it could not possibly be carried out. We should not take into consideration what was going on to-day in the United States or in Germany. We had not the population of those countries. The result would be, no matter what system was introduced, if it followed the lines of the American or German secondary education system we would find that a system was introduced into this State which would become valueless unless we made it compulsory. At the present time we had a system by which any lad who went through his primary course and proved himself to be a bright and intelligent and exceedingly capable boy, and was anxious to get farther on in his work and learn more, could get to the top of the tree. If that system was not sufficient, at a small cost it could be improved. We could do that without building huge secondary schools and taxing the people of the country. At present we were spending something like £132,000 a year on our primary system of education. We had also a good system of technical education, and on top of that the Committee were asked to pledge the country to another scheme of secondary education which would, if carried out on the lines suggested by the Premier, run the State into

another expense equal to that we now had to bear. The Premier introduced into his speech the question of an education for the rich and another for the poor. He (Mr. Pigott) could not see what that had to do with the question before members. If a rich man's son was anxious to have a good education and the parents were anxious to give it him, such parents should not have the right to come to the State and say the State must educate their child.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That would be easily regulated.

MR. PIGOTT: How many children were there being educated in the State whose parents could afford to allow them to go in for secondary education, having gone through the full primary system now to be availed of? The Premier overlooked the fact that in America and Germany where there were systems of secondary education the system was split up. The starting point was not where the primary system finished, but was midway between the beginning and ending of the primary system. That was the position in America and Germany, and it was acknowledged all the world over to be the only good system that could be carried out.

MR. BATH: At what age did they go to the secondary schools?

MR. PIGOTT: In America the limit for the compulsory primary schools was 14 years, but if a boy showed signs of brightness and capability he was taken away from the primary school before 12 years of age.

MR. BATH: That was not according to the latest articles which he had read on the subject.

MR. PIGOTT: It was according to the latest books on the subject. The paper he was quoting from was entitled "Secondary Education in the Democratic Country," which was placed before the Education Board in England only last year. In that paper a doubt was expressed as to whether it would not be advisable to reduce the age to 10 years, so that a boy entering a primary school should be enabled to go into a secondary school, provided his teachers came to the conclusion that he was suitable to go in for secondary education. In Germany or America a boy had not to wait until he attained the top of the

primary school, but he was taken away when he had certain rudimentary elements of education, and when it was found that the seed had fallen on good ground. The average boy left the primary school at 14, having finished his education as far as the State was concerned, and he was then fit to go out into the world and earn a living for himself; but a boy fit to go in for a university education was turned out at 15 or 16 years of age. The Premier had this fetish, that he could introduce a system of secondary education in Western Australia where we had a small population. No doubt the system could be introduced, but he (Mr. Pigott) prophesied that it would be an utter failure, a huge expense to the State, and would not be taken advantage of by the parents of the children, for the majority of the parents of children who went to primary schools could not afford to give their children a secondary education. They could not afford to pay for it, and they could not afford to allow their children to be a tax on the family after a child arrived at the age of 14. It was quite evident therefore that no system of this kind should be introduced here at this time. He advised the Government to look on the matter from a different point of view. He agreed with the Government that we should do everything possible to assist the children of the State to get the best practical education that could be given, but he suggested that this could be done by means of scholarships in the primary schools, given at a certain age, say at 10, 12, or 14 years. If scholarships were provided by the Government which would give a secondary education to children who had proved themselves capable, everything that should be required would have been done. He failed to see a necessity for Parliament authorising the Government to enter into an arrangement to bind the State to a huge expenditure of money, the result of which might be very doubtful. This question should be held over so that the Government might make the fullest inquiries and put the matter before the electors at the general election, and allow the new Parliament when elected to deal with the question. If it was found the system could not be properly entertained, the State would not be bound to a policy

which was being introduced now by the Government without its having been fully considered. He moved as an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Committee were asked to provide £1,000 only.

MR. PIGOTT: Then strike out the £10,000 in the next column.

THE MINISTER: To that there was no objection. The desire was to make farther inquiry and call for competitive designs. The only argument against the item was that a scheme for State secondary education was not matured. This was true. The scheme was only in the inquiry stage; but the leader of the Opposition had compared German and American secondary schools with the school to be established here, ignoring the fact that we had not adopted a definite system.

THE CHAIRMAN: By the Standing Orders, the item could be postponed until all the remaining items were passed; and if it were postponed, this vote could not be put nor the other items therein be discussed.

On the motion by the **MINISTER FOR WORKS**, item postponed.

Buildings and other services for Minister for Mines' Department, £16,140:

Item—Cue, quarters for inspector of boilers, £400:

MR. TAYLOR asked for information.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: This was a new departure. The officer's district would extend from Yalgoo to Peak Hill and from Wiluna to Lawlers. Formerly the work was done by the inspector of mines; but the duties clashed, as a mines inspector had to make surprise visits, and the visits of a boiler inspector must be notified in advance. As the officer at Cue was paying £60 a year for rent, the Government proposed to erect a residence.

Item—Kalgoorlie, Warden's Court, alterations and fittings, £400:

MR. BATH, at the request of the member for Kalgoorlie, called attention to the defective acoustics of the Kalgoorlie Court, of which local magistrates and visiting Judges complained.

MR. HASTIE: Moreover, the noise of passing trams was so loud, and dust so plentiful, that windows could not be opened. This was the worst court-house in the State.

Item — Kanowua, Warden's Court, casing in brickwork, £250 :

MR. TAYLOR: Why the expenditure under Form J?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The building was falling to pieces, and had to be repaired.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The total expenditure would be £250.

Item — Mining School, Kalgoorlie, £4,750 :

MR. BATH: What had been done in consequence of complaints by the local Carpenters' Union and the Trades and Labour Council as to defective furniture?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The complaint was that the furniture was defective, and had not been obtained locally. The contract was let to the lowest tenderer, without regard to his locality. Instructions had been issued that specifications must be strictly adhered to, and no faulty work passed. Defects would be made good at contractor's expense, and some had been made good already.

Item — Woodman's Point, removal and erection of magazine buildings and fencing, £6,100 :

MR. CONNOR: When would the removal take place, and the road be made?

THE MINISTER was not aware of any road to the abattoirs across there.

MR. CONNOR: The only excuse for the road being built to the abattoirs from Rockingham Road was the existence of these magazines.

THE MINISTER: If the hon. member would call his attention to the road he would see to it.

Item, Abattoirs, Goldfields, £5,000 :

MR. BATH asked what was the intention of the Government with regard to this matter.

THE MINISTER: Regarding both the goldfields and metropolitan abattoirs, there had been considerable delay between the Works Department and the Stock Department in determining upon the

plans that would be suitable. It was a large question, and although the delay was exasperating, still it was of great importance that there should be no mistake in the buildings when they were erected. The site for the goldfields area had been definitely fixed, and that for the metropolitan area had been practically fixed, and the plans determined upon. The work of erecting both these abattoirs would proceed without delay.

MR. BATH: Where was the site for the goldfields abattoirs?

THE MINISTER: About midway between Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The site of the abattoirs for the Eastern Goldfields was not far from Kalgoorlie, towards Coolgardie, along the railway line. The site had been fixed there first because of its suitability, secondly the water scheme, and thirdly the railway communication to it. The various trucks of cattle could be shipped by a side line right to the abattoirs. There was some discussion as to the site, but ultimately it was determined by the combined board of health representing all the districts to endorse the site chosen by the department.

Item, Abattoirs, Metropolitan — £5,000 :

MR. CONNOR: Would the Minister state the locality it was suggested these abattoirs should be in?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The site had been fixed at Owen's Anchorage.

MR. CONNOR: Would any compensation be paid to people whose abattoirs would be closed up? He was not personally interested.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The site chosen was, he believed, the best available. As to whether stock would be slaughtered at other places, that was a question which would be dealt with entirely on its merits. That aspect of the question had not in its details been dealt with so far. We could not assume that when the Government abattoirs had once been erected, slaughtering would be permitted in all the suburbs in and around the city. One great controlling factor in the establishment of abattoirs in any country had been to bring all the slaughtering into one area, to make meat inspection possible, and to obviate as far as practicable diseased and

unwholesome meat going into consumption. Much might be said on the question. In establishing abattoirs we were following what had become a necessity in all parts of the world, and he believed medical science clearly indicated that the absence of proper meat inspection was the cause in a great measure of cancer and tuberculosis in human beings. These were matters of serious importance to the State, and members would agree with him the time had arrived when abattoirs should be established. As to whether compensation should be paid, that presumably would be dealt with entirely on its merits, seeing that if a person was ordered to close his abattoirs such person would make a claim, and his claim would be considered. He (the Minister) did not think he could be expected to make an announcement as to whether any compensation would or would not be paid.

MR. CONNOR: Was the amount on the Estimates to be spent on buildings, or was the question of compensation taken into consideration? If this sum was intended to cover both, it would be absolutely insufficient.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The amount was for the buildings only.

MR. CONNOR: If the abattoirs to be erected were taken charge of and run by the Government a rather serious state of affairs would occur, because there would be triple control, as the Government, the municipality, and the board of health would each claim a certain amount of control. The system of abattoirs would be a great protection to the public, the only fault being that it must necessarily increase the price of meat to the people; but that was the people's look-out. Practically triple control existed to-day. When the abattoirs were opened regulations would be necessary. The Minister would have much trouble, because to-day there was a lot in connection with abattoirs. Instructions were given by the roads board man, by the Stock Department, and by the health board, and they were as contradictory as possible. The committee should have information.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The question of abattoirs had been very fully ventilated during three sessions, and it was of no use for members to run away with the idea that due consideration had

not been given to the proposal. As far back as 1896 Sir John Forrest sent Mr. Cavanagh, a Perth architect, to visit the Eastern States and report, and £500 was spent on the plans, specifications, and report. At last we had reason to be gratified that the proposal had matured into something practical. It was unnecessary to go into a long rigmarole to justify the expenditure which appeared on the Estimates, for he did not think we could find in this Committee one member who would not support the proposal. As to compensation, the amount which would have to be paid now would certainly be less than would have to be paid 10 years hence if the system were deferred to that time. Regarding dual control or anything of that kind, the abattoirs were being erected by the Government and would be controlled by the Government. The central board of health or the local board of health would be at liberty to inspect the premises to see that the yards were kept in a healthy and proper condition.

MR. CONNOR was pleased to hear that it was the intention of the Government to take complete control. The people connected with the trade would now know the true position.

MR. WALLACE: Would the present abattoirs be abolished?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Item — Lake and Mammoth Caves, development, £750:

MR. BATH: We were assured last year that this work would be reproductive. Had the expenditure proved a good investment?

MR. YELVERTON: This was really a re-vote, as the money voted last year was not expended. Electric light was installed in Yalingup Cave, and was such a pronounced success that the Government were justified in asking for the light to be installed in Lake and Mammoth Caves.

Item — Yalingup, accommodation house, furniture and stock, £1,500:

MR. HASTIE: Last year we voted £3,000 for this house, and now we were asked to provide an additional amount. Was it intended to make the place a State hotel? He would like to know when the house would be open to visitors,

and whether the place had become a popular resort.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The house, now completed, would be run on the same lines as the State hotel at Gwalia, and the amount on the Estimates was to provide furniture and stock. The furniture had already gone down, and it was hoped the hotel would be ready for visitors early in January. From the inquiries already made for accommodation it was assured that at all events in the summer months there would be plenty of visitors, and it was already a matter of doubt as to whether the accommodation provided would be sufficient. He had no hesitation in saying that the house would not only supply a much needed want, but would be a payable concern.

MR. YELVERTON, as a member of the Caves Board, said a manager had been appointed for the house, that the place would be open for visitors by Christmas Day, that there was every expectation the house would prove successful, and that the business done would be profitable in every way.

Item — Fremantle, pilot quarters, £1,870:

MR. ATKINS: Why were new pilot quarters wanted at Fremantle?

THE MINISTER: These were rendered necessary by the removal of the pilots from Rottnest.

Item—Perth, Victoria Library, £3,500:

MR. HASTIE: Last year we voted £4,000. How much of that money was spent?

THE MINISTER: The whole sum was expended. The additional amount was required to complete the building.

MR. HASTIE: Was it to be an annual vote?

THE MINISTER: No.

Item—Perth, lodge for orderly, £500:

MR. JACOBY: Where was this lodge?

THE MINISTER: This was a new lodge for the orderly at Government House, whose present tenement was a disgrace.

Item — New Parliament Houses, £15,000:

MR. HASTIE: Last year we voted £25,000; and the understanding was

that that amount would sufficiently complete the buildings to allow them to be occupied, and that afterwards there would be only a small annual expenditure. When would the buildings be available, and how much more money would Parliament have to vote to complete the buildings?

THE MINISTER: The control of the expenditure and the authorisation of work in connection with the new Parliament Houses were in the hands of a committee consisting of the Speaker, the President of the Council, the leader of the Government, and the leader of the Opposition. Up till June last the sum of £22,562 was spent, and it was estimated that £15,000 would complete the work so far as existing authorisations went, sufficiently to make the buildings available for occupation when the new Parliament met next year.

MR. ATKINS: Was the work to be covered by this vote not included in the original contract, or was this one of the contracts that had been altered and messed about so as to make the work cost half as much again as the original tender?

THE MINISTER: The amount of £15,000 was included in the original idea.

MR. ATKINS: Was it included in the original tender?

THE MINISTER: The original tender was for a certain amount of work, with scheduled rates for any additions that might be decided upon.

MR. ATKINS: What about the alterations?

THE MINISTER: The hon. member was unwittingly unfair. No alterations were made by the Public Works Department except with the thorough approval and indorsement of the parliamentary committee referred to, which committee, so far as this work was concerned, were masters of the department.

MR. ATKINS: Apology was due to the Public Works Department, but not to the committee, which he blamed for all the alterations and messing about the contract.

MR. FIGOTT failed to understand the trouble in the mind of the member for the Murray. On taking a seat on this committee as leader of the Opposition he saw that at the suggestion of the com-

mittee certain alterations had been made and carried out at scheduled rates, and that beyond this there was no extra expenditure. There was no addition to the contract in any way. Without any doubt the work would be finished a few days after the expiration of the contract in February. The committee had found it desirable that certain alterations should be made in the building, and had put their suggestion in writing. New plans were got out, and these were on the table of the House for some weeks. If members looked at the plans they would agree that the suggestions of the committee should be carried out. The contract for the completion of certain work to enable the new Parliament to meet in the new building would be finished in time to allow the new Parliament to meet any time after April. This was a most important building, and though a little more money was required for it, if the money was refused it would be a penny wise and pound foolish policy. The committee had suggested that extra accommodation should be provided which would be acceptable to all members and would add to the beauty of the building, while the extra cost would be very small. Several alterations had been suggested and drawings made which would give farther accommodation and would enhance the appearance of the building. These suggestions were before members, and it was to be hoped they would agree to them.

THE MINISTER: The item of £5,000 was to enable the additions as shown on the plan to be carried out.

MR. PIGOTT: That was the extra work suggested, and if the work was to be carried out it should be taken in hand at once. The work could not be carried out if the House refused to pass the amount.

Vote put and passed.

Grants in Aid of Mechanics' Institutes and Kindred Buildings, £3,000:

MR. ATKINS: There should be better regulations in regard to what had been done in the past in the management of agricultural halls. Although the management of these halls was supposed to be left in the hands of committees, as a lot of Government money was controlled by the committees, the Government should

have some supervision over committees to see that these bodies carried out their obligations, and also to see if the halls were kept in good order and the accounts kept so that people could understand them.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was very desirable that there should be some control over the management of the agricultural halls and kindred institutions. The Government were anxious to apply that supervision, but it was by no means easy to do this, for the buildings were vested in trustees, who resented interference of any kind whether by the Government or individuals. It was recognised that there should be some supervision, and he was endeavouring to mature some system by which the supervision could be brought about.

Vote put and passed.

Total estimated amount for Public Works Department postponed, until a previous item which had not been dealt with had been passed. A postponed item was dealt with later; the Works votes being otherwise completed.

Railways and Tramways, £1,299,869 13s. 4d.—postponed on motion by the MINISTER.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCHES (HON. J. GARDINER, Treasurer).

Vote—*Treasury generally, £7,929:*

STATEMENT ON ADMINISTRATION.

THE TREASURER: It is as well that I should lay before the Committee some of the matters connected with the department I have administered. When the Estimates were before the Committee last year, I was suffering from bad health; but I made several promises to the Committee, and I should like to show that I have, as far as possible, endeavoured to fulfil the promises I then made. I would like the Committee to remember, as far as this department is concerned, that whilst I have had the honour of being in the Ministry, some 18 months, practically during 12 months of that time Parliament has been sitting. The first department under my direction is the Treasury, and I do not think any department has carried on the business of the State under greater dis-

advantages, so far as staff is concerned, than the Treasury has during the last eight or nine months. The accountant of the Treasury, when it was getting towards the end of the financial year, unfortunately was struck down with hemorrhage of the lungs; since then the Under Treasurer, I very much regret to say, has been suffering from indifferent health; and so the work of the office has been thrown to a great extent on the acting accountant, Mr. Whitely, and on myself. I say this unhesitatingly, that I very much regret the Under Treasurer has had to apply to me for three months' leave of absence. He is an officer who has given wonderfully good service to the State, and I am sure all members, and the State generally, will admit that he is a thoroughly conscientious officer. I am afraid that unless some alteration takes place in his health it may be necessary for him to tender his resignation. I sincerely trust, however, that the trip I am sending him away on will bring him back restored to health, and that this possibility will be far distant. I am looked upon as a pretty hard taskmaster, and I have to acknowledge very freely that no one could have had more loyal assistance than I have had from the various officers of the Treasury. I think I can conscientiously say that I know nearly every officer's work, and every officer has done his best, even in spite of some mistakes. They have given loyal service; consequently it is only just and right that I should say this. It has been said that the heads of departments who come into contact with the Ministers are the only officers the Minister sees. I may say, and if the members will look through the Estimates they will notice, that is not justified. The Under Treasurer is down to receive £750 a year. He at present receives £100 a year from the Commonwealth, and I spoke on this matter to the Premier, and I think the general impression is that the Commonwealth will have their own officers almost immediately, and then the Under Treasurer will only receive £750 a year. The Royal Commission recommended that the Under Treasurer should be paid this amount. The Committee will agree with me that the Under Treasurer holds the most important position held by any public officer outside the Auditor General. His position requires peculiar and specific

knowledge, and it is not fair to put the Under Treasurer in the same position as the Commissioner of Police or the Sheriff. His position calls for greater recognition. It will be seen by the Estimates that the acting accountant, Mr. Whitely, has been raised by me from £365 a year to £410. In addition to discharging his own duties, we are so circumstanced that Mr. Whitely requires to discharge the duties of Under Treasurer as well as his own position during the absence of the Under Treasurer. When we get a good public servant we should honestly tell the House and the country that we have servants in the employ of the Government of which they might well be proud. During the last six months the office hours that Mr. Whitely should have worked, had he been a nine to half-past four servant, were 913, but he actually worked 1,417 hours, or 504 hours overtime. I myself have raised an objection to this, but he is a man who conscientiously wants to do his duty, and he has found, taking over the work under very unfavourable circumstances, that it has been a big tax upon him, and he has honestly done his best and given his time to the duties of the State; therefore I am sure members will not begrudge him the rise I have given him in his salary. So far as the increases to other officers of the Treasury are concerned, they are all in the lower grades, and nearly all have had a rise varying from £10 to £25. The Under Treasurer and myself classified these officers, and we did not agree with the classification of the Public Service Commission; still the amounts we gave were collectively about the same as recommended by the Public Service Commission. We did not agree with the Commission's classification; so we classified the work of the ledger-keepers, in order that those doing more important work should receive salaries slightly higher than the others. We fixed the maximum salary at £200 a year, without regard to whether the officer has been employed for 10 or 20 years so long as the work remains at its present volume. We had a Government advertising officer receiving £350 a year with expenses, which brought up the item to £420 or £440. We found on looking into his duties that he was a capable man, but that there was not sufficient work to justify our

paying that salary; and we are now employing an advertising officer at £150 a year, and he is not overworked. This is work of which I have had considerable experience, so I speak of that which I know. I have appointed a tender board, as promised last session, and it is very successfully endeavouring to assume the position which the House desire it to occupy. At first great difficulty was found in getting together a good working board, but now the members are getting into harness and working efficiently. A few days ago the secretary of the board assured me that by calling tenders instead of following the customs of the past a saving resulted of about $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. The secretary is a very capable man. When he took the position I told him he would be employed for 12 months on trial, at the salary he was then receiving. I believe the Commission recommend him for an increase in salary, but that must stand over till next year's estimates are prepared. The Audit Office is also under my control. As members know, I have advertised for an Auditor General, and have kept them informed through the Press of all the steps I have taken. I am assisted by a board consisting of Mr. Percy, Inspector of the Union Bank, and Mr. Andrews, of Ford, Rhodes, and Ford. We have examined the three local candidates for the position, all of them being civil servants. On Wednesday next Mr. Whitton, who examined our Audit Department, and the Auditor General of Victoria, Mr. Bruford, who was a member of the Public Service Royal Commission here, will in Melbourne examine the inter-colonial candidates. The best of these will be sent here to be examined by the board I have mentioned, and the choice will lie between him and the best local candidate. I trust the plan adopted will result in our getting a capable officer. I have issued only one instruction to the two examiners—to select absolutely the man they think most capable. I have not raised the salaries of the officers of this department, as is suggested by Mr. Whitton in his report; but I have provided a sum of £500, so that the new Auditor General may select his own officers, test them, and grade them according to his idea of their abilities. The annual Compassionate Allowances are as usual, the

only "final" item of importance being the £500 payable to Mrs. Whelan, whose husband was killed in the magazine explosion at Fremantle. The next department is the General Stores. I told the House that we intended to intrust the care of Works and Railway Stores to the departments concerned; and we did that I think with fairly satisfactory results. Members will find that last year's estimate for the Stores Department was £12,509. By transferring the Public Works Stores to the Works Department and the Railway Stores to the Railway Department, a saving of nearly £3,000 has been effected. In olden times, such material as coal was brought into the Government Stores, unloaded from the trucks, and when required reloaded and sent away to the Railway Department, this involving a large unnecessary expenditure for labour before the material reached its destination. None of the officers in the Stores Department has received an increase of salary, because the stores remaining in charge of the department are comparatively small, being those of the minor departments. In Literary and Scientific Grants, the only advance is to the Acclimatisation Committee for fish, birds, and animals—from £400 to £600. To the Zoological Gardens was granted last year £4,900, of which £1,000 was for a house. This year they ask for a special grant for improvements in the grounds, £500. The London Agency has given me much food for thought; and I hope the suggestions I have to make will be favourably received. Two items to which I took great exception were the shipping charges and the Consulting Engineer, Mr. Carruthers. The shipping charges I found varied from £1,700 to £2,200 a year. I desired an alteration, but my proposal was not very favourably received. However, as the result of a continuous effort I got a West Australian firm to undertake that shipping at a maximum of £500 a year; so that we are practically saving from £1,200 to £1,700 a year in shipping alone. I went into the question of payments of Mr. Carruthers, and when in the East I made inquiries as to what was done in this respect in South Australia, and obtained particulars from the Public Service Board of New South Wales also. I find that in four years we paid Mr. Carruthers com-

mission amounting to £35,706 12s.—practically £9,000 a year; and I think the House will agree that it was nearly time to try some less expensive arrangement. It was said this could not be altered; but practically three months after commencing inquiries we came to the conclusion that if New South Wales and South Australia could get the work done more cheaply, there was no reason why we should not follow suit. So two months ago I instructed the Agent-General to give Mr. Carruthers notice that his appointment would be terminated at the end of six months from that date. Members will see provision made on the London Agency estimates of £450 for an engineer. That is practically £900 per annum; but I do not wish to lead members to think that the item will cost only £900 per annum. This officer, like Mr. Carruthers, will probably have to employ supervisors; but judging by the experience of South Australia and New South Wales, I think members have every justification for believing that the work will be done for about £2,000 a year. The new engineer will be solely in our employment. The next department is the Photo-Lithographic. At the end of last financial year I investigated both our printing departments; and comparing the work done with the wages paid, I found that after making liberal allowances for material, etcetera, there was a leakage in the Photo-Lithographic Department of £1,000 a year. I asked for explanation; and after careful investigation concluded that the department was absolutely overmanned. As a result I have practically got rid of a sufficient number of men to leave the department unimpaired in efficiency while saving a little more than £1,000 per annum. In effecting such retrenchment there is always some hardship, and some of the officers I have had to get rid of had been for a considerable period in the public service. So I made it a personal matter, and obtained for two men out of the three retrenched positions as draftsmen in the Lands Office, where draftsmen are badly needed. Unfortunately, I have so far been unable to make satisfactory arrangements for the draftsman who was in charge of the others. Members know that the Royal Commission's report on this department stated, as I myself con-

cluded after careful enquiry, that there was no necessity for a supervising draftsman in addition to a photo-lithographer. Last year's expenditure was £6,492, and this year's £5,991; but I thought I should have to pay compensation to retrenched officers amounting to £320. If, however, I can make satisfactory arrangements for the draftsman who was in charge, I do not think I shall have to pay any of that compensation. It will be observed that I have given the photo-lithographer an increase of £50 a year. I said to him: "We wish this office run as a business office. Parliament will expect that if we pay you a certain wage we shall have certain work done, and that the work will be charged to the various departments. If not, I venture to say that while the House may now agree to your increase they will support any action the Government may afterwards take to get rid of you if you are not capable." I found, too, that there was a leakage in the process work. We have very fine and beautiful machinery, but not quite enough process printing to permit of our doing work as cheaply as it could be done for us outside; but I think that during the coming year we shall be able to show a better result. In any circumstances, it would be a pity, for the sake of the small saving we could effect, to let such first-class machinery lie idle—the latest machinery so far as that is concerned. There is another department under me, this being the Post Office Savings Bank, and when I took charge of the Treasury I found that Bank in a very unsatisfactory position. Indeed the books, as I had pointed out, had never been balanced since it was a savings bank. There were several other methods pursued which I am sure would lead to nothing but error and so forth in that bank. For instance, each pass-book carried in the front of it the signature of the man who paid money in and drew money out on that signature. One can easily understand what opportunities that afforded for fraud. When I went to the Eastern States I put in four days at the savings bank at Adelaide, and four days at the savings bank at Melbourne, mastering, as far as I could, the system there, and when I came back I got the acting accountant, as he was then, to introduce some of the methods of the

Eastern States. We found some of those methods very satisfactory, and others not quite so satisfactory as they might be. Then there was the question of the manager, and I took the same course with him as I am taking with the Auditor General. I refused to have any say in the appointment. One frequently hears of Ministers getting favourites and desiring to push them on. I called for applications in the service and had the applicants examined on their fitness by a committee consisting of the Under-Treasurer, Mr. L. A. Woolf, and Mr. McDonald of the National Bank. After that committee had examined them there were practically three left, and the decision was given in favour of the man who had been acting there. I asked these gentlemen when they had finished their examination if they were satisfied they had the best man obtainable at the salary, and they assured me that if I had called for applications outside I could not have got any more capable men than the last three left in after the examination. Then I was in this position, that the member for West Perth complained to me of the fact that the Savings Bank was not the best place we could get for the office; in fact it was far from it. I was served with a notice by the Board of Health to vacate the other premises we were in, and it was absolutely necessary for me to get a place to use as a Savings Bank. We tried everywhere, and as a result the premises they are now in were the only ones we could obtain at the time that were at all satisfactory; and I say they are far from satisfactory for more reasons than one. The manager and myself quite recently have been trying to see what we can do to ameliorate the position. We recognised that owing to the transference of work many ledgers were absolutely falling to pieces. There has been entailed upon the officers of this bank a huge amount of work, and so far as the payment for this work is concerned we have engaged a large number of temporary hands and are trying to get through the work as quickly as possible. It will be noticed that the salaries of these clerks are in most instances increased; but I am not satisfied now that I am paying up to the standard that I should. However, I went round to in-

quire amongst the bank authorities, and one of the first inquiries I made was what they paid their ledgerkeepers. I do not always take banks as a standard, because I am pretty well satisfied they do not pay the best wages. At any rate the salaries as they stand here will require to stand for this year. I have asked the manager to point out to my successor the most capable men, and make a recommendation so that these men will get honestly paid for good work. So far as the Savings Bank is concerned the question has cropped up of what we have to pay the Commonwealth. When I was in the Eastern States I went carefully into this, and it was found that the amount was 6s. per £100, that would be the money paid in and out. That is what the expense ran into for collecting, so far as the Savings Bank is concerned. I went into the figures of the various branches and found it would not suit us to pay the Commonwealth 6s. to the £100; consequently we have now our own agency at Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and Fremantle. The Fremantle agency will be opened almost immediately and it will be a distinct branch so far. It will be away from the Post Office altogether. When we get the books balanced I am going to suggest, and I think this House will agree with the suggestion, that we should follow the attitude of Victoria and have branches at these various places, just the same as they have there, or as a bank has, so that people will not have to put up with a great amount of inconvenience. So far as withdrawals are concerned, we have simplified that a great deal by a system of telegraphic messages, by which means people in the large centres will be able to transact their business just the same as they can in the city of Perth.

MR. JACOBY: You still manage the small offices through the Post Office?

THE TREASURER: Yes; it would never pay us to do other than that so far as the small offices are concerned. Members have made a large number of requests to have savings banks opened at branch offices throughout their constituencies. In several cases we have been able to grant them, but in several others the Federal Post Office have said, "If we are to take the savings bank work at that place, it will necessitate employing

another hand, and we cannot afford to do it for the business." I am trying to get over the difficulty by seeing if we cannot make a satisfactory arrangement. Another department is the Government Printing Office. I made a promise to this House last year that I would go into this department and see what I could do. I have been in the Arbitration Court and everything else so far as this department is concerned. I am going to make a suggestion to this Committee—I do not know whether it will meet with their approval or not—but I found much the same existing in this department as in the Photo-Lithographic Department, and I have not been able to apply a cure. I found that we paid £32,606 last year as against work worth £28,934. I tried to get hold of this leakage, and I have had all kinds of excuses given to me, but I do not think they have satisfied me. I said to the manager, "Well, if I put you in the same position as the manager of an outside business, that is giving you the right to employ men, paying them the same wages and giving them the same privileges, the same right, as people outside, can you run this business in a proper way so that I can look upon it as a business concern properly managed?" Up till now I have not had a satisfactory reply. There is one point I would like to place before the Committee, and it is this, that a number of these men are placed upon the fixed salary list, and naturally they claim to be civil servants within the meaning of the Civil Service Act. I may tell the Committee I have gone very carefully into these privileges. Employees under arbitration award are entitled to three days' leave and we give them four; the others are entitled to the full number of gazetted holidays, probably from 12 to 15, and a fortnight's leave of absence, besides which they have had any quantity of sick pay, in some cases the number of days amounting to 28, 25, 22, 35, and nearly all numbers during the year are double figures. That is what the privileges run into. Of course, there are all kinds of things. For instance, a man would have 28½ days' sick leave, and would still take the full leave and his full number of general holidays; consequently, this system has grown to such a state of abuse that these privileges now cost us something like

£900 odd a year. I have gone carefully into the question of buying these men out, because at the present time, by the award of the Arbitration Court, I have two sets of men working different hours with different pay and different privileges, and I am absolutely certain that state of things cannot continue.

MR. TAYLOR: Doing the same work?

THE TREASURER: Doing the same work. Men who appeal to the Arbitration Court get outside wages and outside privileges, the outside hours being practically 48. The inside men get inside pay, and in many instances more pay, but not very much more. They also get, however, all the gazetted holidays, sick leave, and annual leave; the consequence being that there is in that office, as there ought to be, a feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction in every possible way. The only solution that I can see is that we should buy out these men so far as their privileges are concerned, and let them start from scratch. The Act never contemplated that they should be brought under the Act, but they claim to be under it, and so far as that is concerned they are under it. I do not feel inclined to go back on the decision of the Commission, but I assert that as long as we go on these grounds it is utterly impossible for us to get satisfactory work performed there. I thought of suggesting to these men: "You have your privileges; we will pay you on the basis on which we paid the other men we have had to get rid of through retrenchment. They practically amounted to £1,600 a year. We are prepared to do this and to pay the wages paid outside, you working the same hours." If that arrangement were come to, the privileges, instead of amounting to about £950 a year, would practically amount to only £200 a year. I hold the view, and hold it pretty strongly, that if the Government are going to run this concern, it should be run on a commercial basis pure and simple. I also hold that even the Labour organisations ought to admit we should, as a Government, pay only outside rates and give outside privileges. It seems to me that is a fair position for the Government to take up, if we are to run these business institutions. Otherwise, but for the machinery in the Government Printing Office, we need only keep on those

men we need for our secret and private work, and give the whole of the rest of the printing outside, because it would mean a material saving.

MR. TAYLOR: Would this provision apply through the whole of the Service?

THE TREASURER: I had an idea that one could run a number of these things on business principles; but I am getting disabused on various matters, so I am not so cocksure now.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: You go in with good intentions.

THE TREASURER: The road to a certain place is paved with good intentions. So far as the Miscellaneous Services are concerned, they will be explained as we come to them. Another thing I tried to do was the grading of municipalities. I do not know whether the result is satisfactory, but the matter can be discussed when we come to it.

MR. MORAN: Surely we are not going to discuss it this year?

THE TREASURER: I think a majority of the municipalities would only be too glad to have my proposal carried into effect straightway. Only one municipality is raising the slightest objection, and I think members know the feeling of their municipalities right through from beginning to end. I promised to grade the municipalities, and be it good, bad, or indifferent it is another promise I have fulfilled. There was another question of recreation reserves. I am given to understand that the member for Mount Margaret and the member for the Swan have something to say about this. When these grants were being made I said: "Well; if we are going to give grants for this, it is a fair thing every place should have a grant; and it is not within the province of a Minister to say what place should or what place should not have a grant." I could not find any system to apply; so I went to practically every member and put the question to members, leaving it to each member's honour as to what he thought was a fair thing. As a result, I found that the collection of requests made by members practically took out the vote, so I think it was not a bad scheme. One thing I have not done, and about which I feel sorry, was the promise I made to bring in a Fire Brigades Bill. So far as I am concerned

I have acted perfectly straightforwardly about it. I got all the particulars and sent them down, but at the last moment I found that the Water and Sewerage Bill might have to stand by for my Bill. All that I could do, therefore, was to prepare the way for my successor to bring in a Bill next year to put the fire brigades subsidy on a proper basis. I thank the House for listening to me so attentively; and I will be only too glad to give any farther information. When I first went into the Treasury I used to think this item "miscellaneous" would be controlled by me, but I found that everybody else controlled it. Therefore, so far as this item is concerned, my colleagues may be able to give better information than I can.

[General discussion on administration ensued.]

MR. MORAN was glad the Treasurer had paid some little attention to the mystic department known as the London Agency. The idea seemed to prevail that this was a sort of fanciful department, where men who had attained political prominence might be sent to enjoy a holiday; but if there was one department that ought to be well filled it was this department. In the past more attention was paid to ornamenting it. The history of Australia showed that the rugged, unconventional, hard-working man did better in the position of Agent General than any other class of man. Mr. Reeves, who filled the position with great advantage to New Zealand, had done much to enlighten the old country upon the true spirit of democracy in the southern lands. Mr. Copeland, a rugged, forcible Australian, had filled the position of Agent General for New South Wales very well; and a recent Agent General for South Australia, Mr. Playford, with his rugged personality did all the work of advertising South Australia in England by placing her commodities before the people of the old country so that South Australia reaped great advantage.

THE TREASURER: Mr. Playford gave us a great deal of information with regard to the engineer.

MR. MORAN: These were the men whose personalities became noticed in England, and who pointed out that Australian legislation did not endanger

investment in Australia, and that with all our democratic legislation material progress was not neglected. Mr. Reeves had placed before the old country the fact that New Zealand's prosperity had been brought about by the liberal party.

THE TREASURER: Mr. Reeves was a marvellously able literary man as well.

MR. MORAN: As the result of that gentleman's efforts New Zealand was now looked upon as being one of the best gems in the Imperial Crown. Western Australia could hold her own against the world in showing her material advantages to the old country; but judging by the absurd ideas held in the Eastern States with regard to this State, we could well imagine how little was known of Western Australia in the old country. It was desirable that we should have immigrants, men with money who must be shown that they had better opportunities here than in Canada. We must tell the sturdy men with little capital that we would take them in hand, place them on the land, show them its advantages, and advance them money. The action of the Treasurer should bear good fruit. One was astounded that £35,000 was paid to one man for the ordinary business transaction of passing a handful of goods for Western Australia made by engineering firms of the highest repute.

THE TREASURER: The expenditure on the item was £8,197 in 1898-1899, £4,882 in the year 1899-1900, £12,657 in the year 1901-1902, £9,206 in 1902-1903.

MR. MORAN: If anyone told him it had cost £35,000 to watch the splendid firms in England, of which we heard so much, to see that they did not rob this State, then it was a mistake. It should not cost such a large amount of money. It was now costing us, according to the Treasurer, how much?

THE TREASURER: It was costing £2,000 a year. It had cost New South Wales about £3,000, and that country was getting out a very large quantity of goods. It cost South Australia, under Mr. Oswald Brown, with the same arrangements, £5,600 a year.

MR. MORAN: No matter how much it had cost, there was something wrong when £35,000 was paid away. There had been an uneasy suspicion for years that other commissions were paid. For

£2,000 we could in England secure a man or two who would do the work well. A suitable man for the work might not be able to be obtained in Western Australia. This was not a country in which to find mechanical engineers ripe enough for such work, but in the old country there were numbers of these men, and no doubt the Treasurer would be able to find an honourable man to do the work.

THE TREASURER: The object in getting an Australian was that he would have a knowledge of local surroundings.

MR. MORAN: That would be of no use to him in passing the quality of an article. It might be useful to him in saying what pattern of article was best for Australia, but in the composition of an article, the building of pipes, the manufacture of rolling-stock and locomotives, it would be necessary to have an expert mechanical engineer who would know the processes of manufacture. One presumed the man appointed would have an assistant, someone who had gone through the process of manufacture of such articles, but that such a man could be found in England for several hundreds a year was undoubted. England was full of men of that class and the appointment would ultimately lead to a bigger position in Australia. A man who could get in touch with a State like this had everything to gain. The Treasurer was unwittingly a great slave-driver in connection with the officers of the Savings Bank, and there was an uneasy feeling that the gentleman at the head of that department was a bit of a nigger-driver too. There was a deal of dissatisfaction on the part of the officers with the head of the Savings Bank. He worked his officers too hard. What the qualifications of this officer were be (Mr. Moran) did not know. The most under-paid and over-worked men to-day in the service were the officers of the Government Savings Bank. The time they worked was appalling, and they were working in premises which were not fit to work in at all. The Treasurer knew that he was missing a lot of valuable service through sick leave.

THE TREASURER: An effort was being made to get the Assembly building.

MR. MORAN: It would make a good banking chamber. The time had come

in this State to house the Government institutions under one roof. Touching the matter of compassionate allowances he had a motion on the Notice Paper dealing with Mrs. Waugh, the victim of a great misfortune in this town. He was sorry he had not had an opportunity of bringing the case of this lady before the House. It was the most unfortunate case ever heard of. A respectable woman, the mother of a family, was dragged up and accused of a dreadful crime under a case of mistaken identity. She was taken up one night and put into a cell with drunks, under the opinion that she was a Mrs. Lever. Mrs. Waugh had two sons in the public service, and it was a shocking thing to occur, but perhaps the matter could not be helped. The police officers in following a clue of this kind were to be commended, but this unfortunate woman had not received redress or the sympathy of the House. She had not even had her expenses paid. This was a case in which an allowance should be made. It was a shocking affair, and it was to be regretted that it had occurred without having been taken notice of by the Government. A similar occurrence might have taken place in connection with any other woman in Perth. Imagine the feelings of this unfortunate woman. The Government should show their sympathy with the mistake which had been made and give this woman a *douceur* of some sort.

THE TREASURER promised to give attention to the matter.

MR. MORAN: Touching the Printing Department, he sympathised with the Treasurer to some degree, but one could go too far in pursuing commercial principles in dealing with public departments. How could one assess the commercial services of any department, say a warden or the police? Something was due for confidential work and fidelity in cases of this kind. If it was not too much, we should not scruple. The Printing Department had to work at all seasons and at all times. There was confidential work to do, and more important duties than any private firm was called on to perform. If the Notice Paper was not here ready or Bills were not printed promptly, what happened? The work done at the Printing Department was high class. There was a margin of

£3,000 now on a commercial basis. The commercial principle was a very commendable one on the part of the Treasurer; it was a very fine idea; but there might be times when allowances should be made for special service of a confidential nature given to the State. He did not intend to refer to Miscellaneous Services. This was a standing dish for members. He had listened with pleasure to the explanation of the Treasurer, and as far as he was concerned he had nothing more to say on these Estimates.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It was pleasing to hear the remarks of the Treasurer, which showed an intense desire on his part to do his duty in the best interests of the State. He (Mr. Piesse) understood the difficulty which Ministers had to contend with, and efforts had been made by Ministers in days gone by to do their duty. Some had succeeded and some had not. With regard to the commission paid to Mr. Carruthers, members should not lose sight of the fact that the commission was paid at the time when the business of the State was very great. We were dealing with the Coolgardie Water Scheme, and if the Treasurer would refer to the files of 1897 and 1898 he would find that he (Mr. Piesse) took great exception to the high commission paid, and proposed that some similar arrangement to that now suggested should be brought about which would effect a great saving; but there was a difficulty in securing an officer who would do this work as well perhaps as it had been done, because it needed a great deal of supervision, and a great deal could be lost to the State on imperfect supervision. A salary of £900 a year seemed sufficient, but when one took into consideration the fact that business people doing nothing like the work the State did paid larger sums, the amount did not seem to be very great. If the Treasurer was able to select a good officer the difficulty might be overcome, but it was not easy to get a class of man to deal with the affairs of a country in regard to our requirements. There was less necessity for as much supervision now as in the past, because the Government were calling for tenders in the State for all that could be done here, and they were practically buying goods through large mercantile firms. That

did away with a great deal of the necessity for supervision. The amount which had been paid, £35,000, was a large sum, but the business transacted was great. Mr. Carruthers had to send an officer to America, and the expenses of that officer were charged in the amount for commission. The commission paid was not greater than that usually paid by business houses, but the conditions under which it was paid were different. He (Mr. Piesse) took a great deal of interest in this work, as he felt the commission was too great. He hoped the innovation the Government were introducing would be successful.

MR. PIGOTT: How was the commission paid?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It was paid on a sliding scale. The amount for the Coolgardie Water Scheme plates was two per cent.

MR. PIGOTT: What about the secret commission?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Was it proved that secret commission was paid? He believed that Mr. Carruthers was above taking a secret commission. He was a man of high repute, and was recognised by both New Zealand and this State as being above commissions of that sort. Mr. Carruthers was also spoken highly of by the late Engineer-in-Chief. It was to be hoped that a better arrangement would be made under the proposal of the Government.

Vote put and passed.

Audit, £7,561—agreed to.

Compassionate allowances, £737—agreed to.

General Stores Department, £2,472 17s. 11d.—agreed to.

Literary and Scientific Grants, £14,150:

Item — Mechanics' Institutes, etc., £2,000:

MR. WALLACE: Would this sum be distributed as before?

THE TREASURER: The old system was not very good, some bodies receiving larger grants than others. The total was reduced because arrangements had been made for the Public Library to lend books

to such institutions. The cost of this would probably amount to £250.

Vote passed.

London Agency, £4,868—agreed to.

Photo.-Lithographic, £5,991—agreed to.

Post Office Savings Bank, £9,625 8s. 4d.—agreed to.

Printing, £31,438 0s. 4d.:

MR. JACOBY: The Treasurer invited the co-operation of members so as to put this department on a business-like footing. Something should be done to stop a leakage of about £3,600 a year. The Treasurer said some wages compositors had from 12 to 15 days' gazetted holidays with 14 days' annual leave and full pay when on sick leave, the cost of these privileges averaging £28 to £35 per man.

THE TREASURER: No; a total of £961 last year.

MR. JACOBY: Why was the authority of the House needed in order to make necessary reductions?

THE TREASURER: If the drastic step were taken of dismissing men on the fixed list, some £1,600, or a little more than two years' purchase, must be paid as compensation.

MR. JACOBY: Confidential printers must, of course, be treated as a special staff; but as regarded other men the Treasurer should be assisted to put the department on a commercial footing.

THE TREASURER: The Commission recommended a reduction of about £600 a year in the office.

MR. JACOBY: Reductions could be made near the top as well as in the wages staff. What need for a Government Printer, an assistant Government Printer, and a superintendent? The duties of these officers must overlap, and one might be dispensed with.

THE TREASURER: Retrenchment was under consideration.

MR. CONNOR: Better report progress.

MR. WALLACE: The Treasurer's desire for economy had led to confusion, against which he (Mr. Wallace) protested. Throughout the session the supply of Bills had been short. The other night only three copies of an amended Bill were available. This was a penny-wise-

and-pound-foolish policy. The Estimates were in a state of chaos, two sets being provided, one wrong and the other incorrect. The Treasurer should consider whether it was wise to get Parliamentary printing done outside or the other printing done outside. The *Hansard* staff had been instructed to exercise discretion as to what portions of members' speeches should be reported. It was no use members appealing to *Hansard*, for *Hansard* decided what to print and what not to print. This was a result of the determination of the Government to effect economies in every department. Probably most members would join with him in saying they would rather not have *Hansard* printed. At times references to it had awkward results. But let us have the work done properly or not at all. If it were a question of the abolition of *Hansard*, he (Mr. Wallace) would employ a man to report his own speeches, and then what he said would be reported. Notwithstanding the kindness of Press and *Hansard* reporters in editing his speeches, if he could abolish both he would do so. He would employ one to report his own words. Then we could see on reference to member's speeches what they said.

THE TREASURER: The hon. member might have discussed this when we were on the item "*Hansard* staff."

MR. WALLACE: Things were a bit rushed at the beginning. In regard to printing, after the admission of the Treasurer, it was evident the hon. gentleman had not brought about the reorganisation he had hoped to achieve. We had been enduring all this confusion during the last two or three sessions. We had several times been short of Bills, and even now probably there were not half-a-dozen spare copies about the House; and as to Estimates he believed every member was limited to one copy. This economy by the Treasurer might have a bad result, and he knew the hon. gentleman had been urged to this economy by the Premier.

THE TREASURER: Whilst perfectly willing to bear his own faults, he had not a word to say as to what Bills or number of Bills and what documents should come down to the House. He did, he believed, make a suggestion that a number of people were getting too

many copies; but the late Speaker drew his attention to the fact that he (the Minister) had nothing whatever to do with what printed matter should be brought to the House, that the Speaker controlled the whole of the printing for this House, and that though he (the Treasurer) was the nominal head of the Printing Department this had nothing whatever to do with him.

MR. WALLACE: The Premier could not say that, because he gave instructions about *Hansard*.

THE PREMIER: No instructions had been given by him about *Hansard*.

THE TREASURER: The hon. member suggested the giving out of certain work, but there was this difficulty, that so far as regarded the Printing Office he could not get any local expert here, because they were anxious to get work outside; consequently so far as that object was concerned the question really had been that of outside wages and outside privileges, or inside wages and inside privileges. The Arbitration Court settled one case, and the point he (the Minister) put before the House was whether we ought not to have all the employees on the same basis.

MR. CONNOR must record his opinion that the *Hansard* staff here consisted of an excellent lot of gentlemen, and that their work was well done. He must also express his appreciation of the Press, for the reporters very rarely made mistakes in regard to some members, because they did not report those members at all.

MR. GORDON: The Treasurer admitted there was a good deal of dissatisfaction in the Printing Department, and he attributed it to the fact that some were inside men and some outside men, inside men being under the Civil Service Act. The remedy for this was to give the men under the Civil Service Act three months' notice to leave, and let them go or stay on. Still, they should be fairly dealt with, and if they were under the Act they were entitled to be treated accordingly.

Item—Extra labour, £8,500 :

MR. CONNOR asked for information.

THE TREASURER: The amount down last year was £10,000, of which £9,572 was spent. The amount down

this year was £8,500. There were, he thought, 120 men.

Vote put and passed.

Miscellaneous Services, £128,587 14s. :

Item—Cottage-by-the-Sea Convalescent Home, £ for £ towards upkeep, £250 :

MR. WALLACE : Had the Government entered into an obligation to make this vote a perpetual one ?

THE PREMIER : No.

MR. WALLACE : This would be the last vote ?

THE PREMIER : Not necessarily the last ; it had to come before Parliament every year.

MR. WALLACE : It was not right that we should be asked to pass votes of this sort. We had at Cottesloe a convalescent home and he did not remember seeing on the Estimates a vote in aid of that. He was told that the convalescent home at Cottesloe was run on almost strictly business lines by several residents in that locality and Perth. We found a lot of ladies, belonging to the W.C.T.U. probably, banding together to start an institution of this sort—the Cottage-by-the-Sea Convalescent Home, Sailors' Home, or something else—and they went away and left on the State the obligation of carrying on those institutions. We had on the list now a number of institutions. It would be better if these people were made to understand that these institutions were to be self-supporting. We could not call them self-supporting by giving these grants. He moved that the item be struck out.

THE TREASURER : This institution received a pound for pound subsidy, which showed that some people were raising subscriptions, and were satisfied the institution had a good object. Certainly it relieved the State to some extent. The vote was £500 last year ; but this year it was £250.

MR. TAYLOR : Did the institution receive pound for pound on the actual money raised ?

THE PREMIER : Yes.

Amendment negatived and the item passed.

Item—Boulder, home for friendless women, £100 :

MR. CONNOR : Did the Premier intend the sitting to go on all night ? If so there would be trouble.

THE PREMIER would accept the trouble. He could not let two or three members control the House.

MR. CONNOR : The Premier had not been in the Chamber very long during the evening, and only came in and tried to disturb it. What was this item for ?

THE TREASURER : This was a subsidy to a Home for Women at Boulder. The W.C.T.U. had raised a good deal of money for the home, and this subsidy was the outcome of a promise made by the late Mr. Leake when he was at Boulder.

MR. CONNOR did not object to the vote, but wanted to know to whom the money was to be paid.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : The ladies of the W.C.T.U. in the first place found a lot of money to erect the premises before appealing for assistance. They had worked hard and long, and had made considerable sacrifices to raise the funds for the institution, and very encouraging reports of the work they were doing were received.

Item—Shortage in cash account, late Land Agent, York, £2 8s. :

MR. WALLACE : Would the Treasurer explain the shortage of cash in the police account, Cue, amounting to £43 11s. 8d. ? There seemed to be nothing to recoup the difference between the total amount and the amount already paid back last year.

THE TREASURER : The total deficiency had not been arrived at previously, but now the matter was closed.

Item—Glasgow Exhibition, £100 :

MR. WALLACE : Was there any intention to be represented at the St. Louis Exhibition ?

THE PREMIER : No.

Vote put and passed.

Government Stores (no items under this head).

These completed the votes for the department.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT
(Hon. Walter Kingsmill, Minister).

Postponed vote—*Education*, £136,230:

[11-20 o'clock; MR. FOULKES in the Chair.]

MR. PIGOTT moved that progress be reported.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	8
Noes	...	...	...	19

Majority against ... 11

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Atkins	Mr. Bath
Mr. Connor	Mr. Burgess
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Moran	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Pigott	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Fergusou
Mr. Yelverton	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Thomas (Teller).	Mr. Gordon
	Mr. Gregory
	Mr. Hastie
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Holmes
	Mr. Hopkins
	Mr. James
	Mr. Oats
	Mr. Eason
	Mr. Wallace
	Mr. Walter
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

MR. PIGOTT: The Opposition had been accused of obstruction. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] Last night the Opposition allowed a Bill to pass through without criticism, which was unknown in the history of any Parliament, and this was all the thanks we got. This evening there was an item before the Committee which might have been debated for 24 hours, and at his (Mr. Pigott's) suggestion it was postponed. This again was the return we got.

MR. MORAN asked for information as to the working of the technical school.

THE PREMIER: That would be given when dealing with the vote "Technical Education."

MR. MORAN: The Premier was rather unfair in his remarks to-night on secondary education. He (Mr. Moran) now drew attention to the state of the House.

THE CHAIRMAN: The late Speaker had decided, following the House of Commons practice, that if he was satisfied the number of members in the precincts of the House was sufficient, he would not take notice of a statement that a quorum was not present. A few minutes ago a division showed 8 Ayes and 19 Noes; therefore it was unnecessary to ring the bells.

MR. MORAN: The rule and the custom was that the discretion of the Chair should not be exercised until attention had been repeatedly called to the absence of a quorum. The Education Departments of the Eastern States had suffered like other departments from retrenchment, proving that though those States had not initiated secondary education the burden of primary education alone was too heavy; for extravagance in other departments there made it necessary to starve the Education Department, especially by cutting down to miserable pittance the salaries of country teachers. In this State the Premier would have been wiser had he put before the electors his secondary education proposals, obtained their opinion, and then passed a resolution or brought in an enabling Bill to establish secondary schools in different parts of the country. He did not agree with the Premier that it was the duty of the State to take a child from the kindergarten to the university. If we were to have a university in Perth large enough to accommodate all the State children of Western Australia, the premises would cover about ten acres. Surely we could not propose to bring all the children of the State to Perth for secondary education; therefore it would be necessary to build secondary schools in other places. What would it cost to establish a system of secondary education in all parts of the State? He much regretted the Government should see fit, after what had been done in the last three days, to rush these Estimates on as they had been doing to-night. He had only spoken three times in the last three days, and never for longer than ten minutes; and he adopted this course with the specific idea of helping the Government through before Christmas. The Government might, he thought, have postponed the consideration of this vote until Monday. He did not think the report to the Minister for Education had been read. [Extracts read at length from annual Report of Education Department, the member making occasional comments.] There had been an increase of 2,217 in the number receiving primary education, and he thought the cost per head was about £4 odd, so there was an increase in the ordinary annual charge of about £10,000.

He supposed that was without buildings and other services. The report said "This is a larger increase than in the previous year." If there was a larger increase last year than the year before, it meant that next year there would be a larger increase than there had been this year, thus again increasing the charges on the revenue. He did not want us to come to the stage in Western Australia when it would be incumbent upon the Treasurer to report to Parliament that he would have to do as had been done by Treasurers in the Eastern States, cut down to starvation point the primary education vote in this State. [Reading continued.] That the daily attendance amounted to 18,500 out of a total of 23,000 children on the rolls spoke volumes for the enthusiasm of the parents in Western Australia in taking advantage of the opportunities offered for educating their children. [Reading continued.] The ordinary natural standard of increase would go on steadily while our prosperity lasted. It was during the December months that the attendance showed a decrease, because in the agricultural districts children were engaged in harvesting, and because many parents took their children to the Eastern States. One was glad to know, however, that the employment of young children in harvesting in this State was decreasing, and that the conditions of the metropolis and coastal towns were being improved so that parents need not now take their children out of the State at Christmas. The Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Bill, which the Opposition had helped to pass through, would improve the conditions of the city. [Reading continued.] There were 2,205 hired or temporary schools. What were these temporary premises, and when would they be got rid of?

THE TREASURER: They would be replaced by permanent schools.

MR. MORAN: That was not sufficient information.

THE TREASURER: Fuller information could not be supplied immediately.

[12 o'clock midnight.]

MR. MORAN: Although the Government were trying to force these items through the Committee no Minister knew anything about this item. [Reading continued.] As far as most of the buildings in Western Australia were con-

cerned, it was true they were substantial, but there were buildings in the country which were not comfortable or a pleasure to work in. [Reading continued.]

POINT OF ORDER—RULING.

MR. PIGOTT: A quorum should be present.

THE CHAIRMAN: Attention was called to the State of the House ten minutes ago.

MR. MORAN: But no notice was taken of it.

THE CHAIRMAN: No; it was not proposed to do so.

MR. MORAN: Not at all to-night?

MR. PIGOTT moved that the ruling of the Chairman be not agreed to.

[Bells rung.]

MR. MORAN: There was no occasion for an appeal now, for the Chairman having called for a quorum, the point would not now lie.

THE SPEAKER (after the Chairman had stated the case): I do not think any ruling has been given, so far as I know, that it is within the discretion of the Chairman to refuse to call for a quorum unless it has been indicated by the Speaker previously. On this occasion the correct procedure would have been to have acquainted the Speaker, and if he thought there was any indication of obstructive tactics it would have been for him to say so. The initiative should have been from the Speaker, not the Chairman.

DISCUSSION RESUMED.

THE CHAIRMAN: The member for West Perth could proceed. There was a quorum present.

MR. MORAN: When interrupted, he was reading the second paragraph of the Education Report. [Reading continued.] The increase in buildings was a very good one. The re-opening of 20 schools during the year was not bad. The bulk of the new schools he presumed would be on the goldfields where the big increase of settlement was taking place. Permanent school buildings should not be erected on temporary goldfields.

MR. PIGOTT called attention to the state of the House.

DIRECTION AS TO A QUORUM.

THE SPEAKER (having been called in) said: A quorum is now present. As

there is certainly a quorum on the premises, the Chairman is not now obliged to call the Speaker's attention to the absence of a quorum in the Chamber, as attention is being drawn to the absence of a quorum for the purpose of delaying business.

DISCUSSION RESUMED.

MR. MORAN (continuing to read from the Report, with occasional comments): What would happen to the Education vote if the Federal Parliament decided to rob us of £400,000 a year of customs revenue? The general civil service and education officers in particular must feel the pruning-knife. [Reading continued.] In schools ventilation was not everything if it consisted in admitting hot desert air. Witness the ventilation in Kalgoorlie during the recent cyclone. Insufficient attention was paid to the comfort of the children, as well as to this important vote. He moved that the Chairman do leave the Chair.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	8
Noes	...	...	...	19

Majority against ... 11

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Atkins	Mr. Bath
Mr. Connor	Mr. Burges
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Deglish
Mr. Moran	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Pigott	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Thomas	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Yelverton (Teller).	Mr. Gordon
	Mr. Gregory
	Mr. Hastie
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Holmes
	Mr. Hopkins
	Mr. James
	Mr. Oats
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Wallace
	Mr. Walter
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

MOTION FOR CLOSURE.

THE PREMIER: I move—

That the question be now put.

MR. THOMAS: What question?

THE PREMIER: The question of the whole vote.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Chair! Chair!

THE CHAIRMAN: The motion is that the House do now divide.

MR. THOMAS: What on, sir?

THE CHAIRMAN: The subject for discussion is the Education vote, according

to the records of the House, £136,230. Since then a motion has been tabled "That the House do now divide."

MR. CONNOR: Is this any particular item?

THE CHAIRMAN: The subject for discussion was the vote for education. I am dealing with the whole vote.

MR. CONNOR: You cannot do that.

THE PREMIER: Chair!

THE CHAIRMAN: According to the records of the House, the question is whether this vote on "Education, £136,230," shall be passed.

MR. THOMAS: I protest, sir.

MR. CONNOR: I would be delighted to discuss it.

THE PREMIER: There cannot be any discussion.

THE CHAIRMAN: There cannot be any discussion.

MR. CONNOR: I think there is too much heat in this discussion. In my opinion it would be against all—

THE CHAIRMAN: Under the Standing Orders no discussion can take place on a motion "That the House do now divide."

MR. THOMAS: Do we take the whole thing *en bloc*?

THE CHAIRMAN: I have nothing to do with that.

MR. FIGOTT: I want your ruling direct. I am not going to question it in any way; I do not wish to throw any disrespect on the Chair; but I want to know whether, if you put the question as you are putting it now, that will prevent debate on any particular item of the Education vote. That is all I want to know.

THE CHAIRMAN: As I have said before, the question we have had under discussion is the vote for Education, £136,230. The member for East Perth has proposed a motion "That the House do now divide." Standing Order 161 says, "The House shall vote on the question before it without farther debate or amendment." If this is carried—of course I do not know whether it will be carried—perhaps the hon. member will adjourn his question till we know whether this motion will be carried?

MR. FIGOTT: I would like the opinion of —

THE PREMIER: The whole vote will be carried, then.

MR. PIGOTT: I think my question can fairly be asked. I ask you, sir, in the most courteous manner possible, if you will give me your advice in this matter. I just simply want your ruling about this question. I wish to know whether, if this motion is put now and carried, that will prevent any future discussion of these items? I would like to point out to you that none of these items has yet been discussed by the Committee.

MEMBER: One.

MR. THOMAS: Not one.

THE CHAIRMAN: If this motion is carried, no discussion can take place upon the whole vote or any particular item.

MR. THOMAS: That is a most unheard of procedure.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! order!

MR. CONNOR: Then what is the good of putting the items on the Estimates for discussion?

THE PREMIER: Please, put the motion. It cannot be debated.

MR. THOMAS: I enter my protest against it in the most emphatic language. I will not have it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question is that the House do now divide.

MR. CONNOR: Before you put that—I think the hon. member for East Perth ought to be quiet—I want to disagree with your ruling.

THE CHAIRMAN: On what point?

MR. CONNOR: On the point that we cannot discuss any item, and I would ask the House to decide that.

Motion (that the question be now put) put, and passed on the voices.

MR. THOMAS: Divide!

THE PREMIER: Only one voice.

MR. THOMAS: There was another voice (indicating Mr. Pigott) for No. My voice was so much stronger that it drowned his. (To the Premier:) Don't start that game. Do you think I will allow anything of the sort to go on in this country? I will not allow it.

THE PREMIER: Quite right. Don't you allow it.

MR. THOMAS: I will not allow it. I am absolutely disgusted with the Premier. [Interjection by the PREMIER.] What? I will give you "what" directly. If you start on this sort of business we will soon

see where you are. We do not want the New South Wales style here; but if it is necessary we will have it. This is the thickest thing I have ever known. The Premier will be ashamed to-morrow morning.

MR. MORAN: It is no use. It is the first time a vote has been taken *en bloc* in this Chamber; but the country will be able to judge. They are the masters of the situation.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	16
Noes	...	...	...	9
Majority for				7

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burgess	Mr. Connor
Mr. Diamond	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Moran
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Pigott
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Yelverton
Mr. Holmes	Mr. Atkins (Teller).
Mr. Hopkins	
Mr. James	
Mr. Oats	
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Wallace	
Mr. Walter	
Mr. Higham (Teller).	

Motion thus passed that the question be now put.

MR. THOMAS: Now what are we going to do? Are we going to put the Estimates *en bloc*?

THE PREMIER: I must ask the Chairman to take notice of the conduct of the member for Dundas, if he continues in it.

MR. THOMAS: If the Premier continues, I must ask that his words be taken down. I am entitled to have that done. I will take the same privileges as the Premier.

THE TREASURER: We have stood a good deal from the hon. member.

MR. THOMAS: We have stood a jolly sight more from the Premier.

MR. JACOBY: The Treasurer should not pour kerosene on the fire.

Question (that the Education vote, £136,230, do stand as printed) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	17
Noes	...	...	...	8
Majority for				9

AYES.

Mr. Burges
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Diamond
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Hopkins
Mr. James
Mr. Oats
Mr. Rason
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Walter
Mr. Higham (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Connor
Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Moran
Mr. Pigott
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Yelverton
Mr. Atkins (Teller).

Vote thus passed.

This completed the votes for the Colonial Secretary's Department.

[12:40 o'clock, a.m.]

CONTENTION ON MINES ESTIMATES.

MINES DEPARTMENT (Hon. H. Gregory, Minister).

Vote—Mines Generally, £31,324 8s. 1d.:

MR. PIGOTT rose to speak.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Let the Minister speak.

MR. PIGOTT: I understand the Minister does not wish to speak.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Go ahead.

MR. MORAN: I move that the question be now put.

MR. PIGOTT: Can that motion be taken? I had the floor.

MR. MORAN: That being the case, I withdraw my motion.

MR. PIGOTT: I ask that my words be taken down.

MR. THOMAS: I move that the hon. member's words be taken down. I have a right to do so.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member can ask that they be taken down.

MR. THOMAS: Well, I ask that the words of the leader of the Opposition be taken down.

MR. PIGOTT: The Premier need not be afraid. There will be nothing offensive in what I say. The public, as well as the Committee, will understand the action of the Government during the last two hours in this Committee when they know that the Education vote was put through *en bloc* and that the Mines vote is also to be put through *en bloc*. When we consider what has taken place in our Law Courts within the last few days, we can thoroughly understand why it is the

Government are so anxious to prevent any discussion whatever on the Estimates. There can be no other complexion put on this matter, for there can be no reason whatever for the action of the Government, except this one reason I have stated. The action of the Opposition this evening in regard to the Estimates, just as it will be in regard to the Mines Estimates, has been one of ordinary criticism, with the full intention of assisting the Government to pass the Estimates; and the Minister for Works and the Treasurer I am certain are quite in accord with this statement. Though the Opposition have been accused of obstruction, I would like to remind the Minister for Works of the passage of the Water Supply and Sewerage Bill, which was passed through this Committee in a few minutes, whereas if the Opposition wished to obstruct, that Bill would have taken six weeks to pass.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The country wants the Bill, I presume?

MR. PIGOTT: Now, though we have come to the Estimates of the Mines Department, one of the most important departments in the State, and have other items on these Estimates to put through and important Bills to consider, I propose, as a protest against the action of the Government, to ask every member who sits on this (Opposition) side of the House to withdraw from the Chamber for the remainder of the session. That is the action I deem fit to take, and I shall rely on the people of Western Australia to say whether in their opinion I have done the right thing, and to give directly to the Government themselves at the next general election their opinion of the action of the Government this evening.

[Mr. Pigott, followed by members sitting on the direct Opposition benches, also by Mr. Moran and Mr. Connor (cross-benches), then retired from the Chamber.]

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Before the leader of the Opposition withdraws —

OPPOSITION MEMBERS (speaking from end of gangway while retiring): We don't want to hear you.

THE MINISTER: I can quite understand the member for West Perth and the leader of the Opposition. I am fully satisfied that the leader of the Opposition has stated what is absolutely false when

he said that the desire of the Government was to try and burk comment in regard to the Estimates of the Mines Department. It was not the desire of the Government to burk any argument with regard to these Estimates, nor did the Government for a single moment desire that these Estimates should go through without the fullest discussion.

MR. TAYLOR: At one o'clock in the morning!

THE MINISTER: The member for Mt. Margaret gets up item after item and wants to know all about the school at Balla Balla, and where other schools are, and tries to waste the time of the House.

MR. TAYLOR: On a point of order, is the Minister justified in accusing me of asking about Balla Balla school, when I did not ask such a question? It was the member for Mount Magnet who asked it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must remind the Minister that the subject of discussion is the Mines vote and not the Education vote.

THE MINISTER: I only desired to say that the motion that this vote be put *en bloc* came from the member for West Perth. The Government have no desire to burk discussion by political trickery and dirty proceedings as adopted by some members of this House. I say I for one resent anything of the sort, and want the fullest discussion on these Estimates. I would like every member to discuss the Estimates.

MR. MORAN (who had re-entered the Chamber): Just before I leave, I would ask the Minister for Mines to withdraw the words "dirty proceedings."

THE MINISTER: Perhaps the hon. member thinks it was a little bit "oily."

MR. MORAN: I resent and call for the withdrawal of the words "dirty proceedings."

THE CHAIRMAN: As applied to whom?

MR. MORAN: Gentlemen on this (Opposition) side, of whom I am one.

THE CHAIRMAN: Nothing should be said in this House—

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I wish to withdraw the remark, and substitute the word "oily."

MR. MORAN: That suits the Ministry much better.

THE MINISTER: The "wily" remarks, perhaps. I would like to deal with my Estimates, with the object of trying to invite discussion. In dealing with the Mining Bill, we have had a full *résumé* of matters pertaining to mining. A good deal has been said about the administration of the Mines Department, and I thought it would be best if we had some criticism of the working of the department and I would then be able to reply to any criticism brought forward. I had intended to make some remarks in connection with the recent action, but when I inform the House that the matter is *sub judice*, as I have applied to the Court for a rehearing of the case in the nature of an appeal to the Full Court, I think it would be improper for me to make any remarks on that subject. I think it was bad form for those who I do not think are opposed to me personally, but who are opposed to the Government politically, to perform the political trick they did to-night. I think a large amount of discredit is thrown on those who went out of the Chamber without listening to what I have to say in explanation. The object of the Government is to try to end the session before Christmas. We want to push through the Estimates, and I want members to discuss the items. If members like I am prepared to explain the working of my department, the savings that I claim to have made, and other remarks generally about the administration of the department. I thought first of all it would be better to listen to the criticisms of members, and then reply to any charges which they liked to make as to administration. I await with pleasure any criticism in regard to the matters on the Estimates, and I shall take very great care that an opportunity is given to the leader of the Opposition and others who I say took an action just now that savoured to me personally of very great unfairness, and I shall give an opportunity for the discussion which they tried to avoid to-night. I hope other members will discuss the Mines Estimates to see if some better administration can be adopted, or to point out where faults have occurred in the past, so that they can be rectified.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot help saying that the country will view with disgust the action taken by

some members of the House this evening. The Minister for Mines did not attempt in any way to burk discussion on the Estimates. There has been no attempt to evade the discussion on a single item. The question which was submitted came from the other side of the House and not from the Government side, and the remarks of the members of the House who left the Chamber saying they "did not want to hear you," addressed to my colleague the Minister for Mines, must be taken to be a deliberate insult. I venture to say that the Minister for Mines has the confidence of the majority of the people of the country. They are satisfied that the administration of his department has been honest and fair, and that he has been actuated by only one desire throughout, the desire to do his duty to this country. That is the feeling of the country at large, and I am sure it is the feeling of his colleagues in the Ministry. An insult to him is an insult to every one of us. If the conduct of members who left the House to-night is to be taken to mean that he is not fit to hold his position in the Ministry, then I am voicing the opinions of every member of the Ministry when I say that if he is not fit to hold a position in the Ministry neither is any one of us. If blame is attached to him it is attached equally to every member in the Ministry, and on behalf of the Ministry I resent it. I will not waste more words. I resent with all the force at my command the insult offered to the Minister for Mines and to every member of the present Ministry.

MR. TAYLOR: Brought on themselves.

[General discussion ensued on mines administration and estimates.]

MR. HASTIE: One must regret what occurred to-night at the time when we were about to discuss the Mines Estimates. Not having been present when all the rumpus occurred, he could not express an opinion on what was done, but from what he knew he could not help feeling that the gentlemen who left the Chamber did not leave it on account of having any fault to find with the administration of the Mines Department, for all must admit that we had never heard, publicly or privately, any word to

lead us to believe that there was any fault to find. It was the consideration of other items.

MR. TAYLOR: Other actions.

MR. HASTIE: No doubt it was the action of members. Other items were under consideration. It was a pity that any difference of opinion should take place.

MR. TAYLOR: It was not a pity, but an insult to the intelligence of Western Australia.

MR. HASTIE: The public could judge as to what was right. He was giving his opinion. If what had been done on the Government side was an insult to the intelligence of the people of West Australia, no doubt the people of West Australia would have an opportunity of expressing their opinions on that matter. If the people of West Australia thought that members were sent to Parliament to deliberately obstruct the business and not allow business to be done, the people would have a chance to——

MR. TAYLOR: Subside.

MR. HASTIE: Was the member in order in asking him to subside?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member, he was sure, would withdraw the word.

MR. TAYLOR: If it was out of order he withdrew it, but it was the first time he had thought it unparliamentary.

THE CHAIRMAN: It was not an expression one member should use towards another.

MR. TAYLOR: Was the member for Koroona in order in using the words "deliberately obstructing"?

THE CHAIRMAN had listened with care, and the hon. member did not use the word "wilful."

MR. TAYLOR: The Minister said "deliberate obstruction."

MR. HASTIE: What he had said was that if members came here to deliberately obstruct the proceedings of the House, the people of this country would have an opportunity of expressing their opinion upon it. He desired to say a word of two about the Mines Department generally. He had no particular fault to find with that department, although many things had been done which he had thought might have been better done in another way. The whole department seemed to have been managed fairly well, in fact better than ever

before in the State. On looking over the Estimates the general expenses of the department were not increased, at any rate they were not increased on account of what appeared to be the stupid system of crediting to the expenditure such items as the purchase of ore and also refunds to owners of tailings.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That was not done this year.

MR. HASTIE said he was glad it had been remedied. That was one of the results of the amended Audit Bill we had passed. If these items had not been credited in the past, the Mines Estimates would have been considerably reduced, and we should have been able to see at a glance at the Estimates whether this was a paying branch of the department or not, and to what extent the branch was paying. The fact of the Mines Department having done well was due in a large measure to the fact that the mining industry was an increasing industry. Hardly had any branch of mining gone down. Alluvial mining, he regretted, had gone down, but we had always to remember that alluvial mining in every country was a temporary industry, but we had the consolation that it always was the harbinger of the more solid and lasting industry of quartz mining. The general working of the department was made easy by the increase in the mining industry, which seemed to have been on the whole well conducted. The department had been carried on very well, although we had heard of some things which were not satisfactory to everyone. We should always remember that we had in this State mining ground to five or six times greater extent than the mining ground of any other country in the world. Our mines were very much scattered, and although the conditions of mining differed in various localities, there was nothing to place our finger on that we could seriously regret. As regarded the department itself, he would briefly take the opportunity of mentioning one or two matters which had occurred to him in looking over the Estimates. He found the Minister for Mines recommended increases in salaries to various officers, but he could not learn from the Estimates whether the increases were to the more humble positions. It was to be hoped the Minister had not forgotten the lower grade officers in giving increases.

THE MINISTER: A statement would be made as to that.

[1 o'clock, a.m.]

MR. HASTIE: The accountant and chief clerk were down for increases, also the chief draughtsman, and as there was a large number of officers drawing less than £300 a year and some less than £200 a year, it was to be hoped these officers shared in the general prosperity in the department. One item he had been unable to understand. Why was there a typographical printer in the department paid at the rate of £160? The Treasurer found it difficult to deal with the Government Printing Office; but it would be still more difficult to tackle the printer for the Mines Department. All would rejoice at the provision for mining schools, one of which had recently been established at Kalgoorlie. When the Coolgardie School of Mines was proposed he (Mr. Hastie) said it would be a failure; but its establishment seemed coincident with a considerably increased prosperity of town and neighbourhood, and from a comparatively small population resulted a comparatively large number of scholars; hence his estimate was erroneous. He congratulated the people of Coolgardie on the success of the school, and hoped equal success would attend the Kalgoorlie institution, which would then be highly beneficial to mining, especially to mining on the Boulder Belt. For salaries of officials purchasing copper ore at Phillips River £2,025 was provided, and an additional sum for purchase money. This experiment was undertaken because the value of the ore was great, and facilities for establishing private extraction works were meagre. Moreover, it was at times impossible to float a company to mine for copper. He hoped this system would be successful, and the precursor of a prosperous mining field. We must, however, remember that copper, unlike gold, fluctuated greatly in value, and for, say, two-thirds of a period of 10 years must be worked unprofitably; but the Minister's plucky experiment deserved success. He (Mr. Hastie) hoped the establishment of new State batteries was justified, and that greater care would be exercised in granting future batteries, not giving them to people who made the

greatest outcry, though in some instances they had not sufficient ore at grass. It was well that the Goldfields Water Supply Department had been transferred from Works to Mines; not that the former department did not do the work well, but because the Mines were always in close touch with goldfields requirements, thus saving circumlocution. The vote for the development of mining, £7,000, could be better discussed on the Loan Estimates. Concerning it neither those nor these Estimates gave details; in fact, it was impossible for the Minister to indicate exactly how he would spend the money, as this must be left to the judgment of his officers. Hitherto there had been no serious complaint, and none would grudge the vote if it resulted, as it generally had, in benefit to the industry. In the Geological Surveys Department was an increase of £700. It went without saying that we must have geological experts to record the progress of mining and advise as to what might be expected from different parts of the country. One need not dwell on the Explosives and Analytical Department. As these Mines Estimates ought to be fully discussed, better adjourn the debate rather than pass them at this early hour. The Estimates were apparently satisfactory; and he hoped the administration would continue to improve.

MR. OATS regretted to see so many empty Opposition seats during a discussion on this most important of all departments. Mining had made Western Australia, and was now only in its infancy. As a miner of life-long experience, he complimented the Minister on having done better than any preceding head of the Mines Department. These Estimates should be postponed and thoroughly discussed.

THE MINISTER: Perhaps if he dealt more particularly with the work of the department, some criticism might be forestalled.

MR. TAYLOR: A pity the Minister did not say that before so many Oppositionists left the Chamber.

THE MINISTER: Such an insult as was thrown out by Opposition members was not anticipated by him. He did not want any interruptions from the hon. member interjecting, nor did he care for his friendship. He (the Minister) could

fairly claim that he had the confidence of mine managers, of investors, and of miners. There had been, so far as the capitalist was concerned, an absolute freedom from that system of favouritism which, he said it with regret, existed in the past. At the same time there had been a feeling on the part of the men that so far as the inspection of mines was concerned far greater interest was being shown in relation to that work, and that it was compulsory on mining managers to comply to a far greater extent than ever before with the Mines Regulation Act. He regretted he was not able this year to bring in an amendment of that Act. He would have done so had not the Machinery Bill been thrown out by the Upper House. Had that Bill been passed, he would have considered it his duty to bring in the amendments he promised, but as the Bill was thrown out there was only one reason for bringing in an amending Bill, that being in relation to fortnightly pays, and he did not think it necessary for him to do so at this late stage of the session, more especially as he intended very shortly to appoint a commission to deal more particularly with the question of the sanitation and ventilation of our mines. That was a matter which needed a great deal of consideration, and that, with the question of tribute, would be laid before the mining people, so that before the next session the department could be fully seized not only of the desires of the mine-owners and mine-workers in relation to the Mines Regulation Act, but also the very important question of tributing on our goldfields. He had noticed in the Press some criticism of the very large increase in the expenditure of the Mines Department. Those strong criticisms would be justified if that expenditure were due to the administration of the department, but last year the Estimates for the Mines Department showed that the amount voted was £123,000; and the amount spent was £125,000; whilst this year the Estimates provided for an expenditure of £191,000. That was altogether exclusive of the Loan Estimates which were now being placed under the control of the Mines Department, and would bring the expenditure of the Mines Department to over £250,000. Although

the department did this extra work, the administrative costs were considerably reduced. The Mines Department now controlled all the receipts and expenditure of the mines water supply, the explosives and geological, and then there was increased work with regard to our batteries and also the loan vote; that was for the development of mining; yet the cost of administration was a great deal less this year than it had been in past years. This did not include the School of Mines, nor temporary labour, nor contingency batteries. As we kept increasing the number of batteries, the cost of labour and contingencies—that was, supplies for the batteries—must keep on increasing, yet at the same time that was not what he would term part of the administrative control of the Mines Department. Of course the ordinary administrative work of the batteries was in the Estimates he was giving, but not the outside work. All the outside work was absolutely apart. The work outside Perth he assumed to be outside work. The inside work had always been kept in the Perth department, and what he put down as being in the cost of administrative work. He did not include the mines water supply, which was quite a new branch placed within the department only a few months ago. In 1900-1 the administrative cost was £59,605; in 1901-2, £55,238; in 1902-3, £50,834; and this year we asked for £49,224. He felt satisfied we might be able to do with less than that; still we had made a very fair estimate of what we thought we wanted. We had got rid of the accountant of the Geological Department, whose work had to be done by the Mines Department. We had done the same in respect to explosives, and insisted on the whole of the accountancy work being done within the one department; yet although the expenditure had increased from £125,000 to £250,000, or just double in two years, he had been able to reduce the administrative expenditure of the Mines Department by £8,771.

MR. TAYLOR: How did the hon. member make the reduction? By retrenchment?

THE MINISTER: Absolutely by retrenchment, and it had not been done by reducing wages. Salaries in nearly every instance had been increased. He had

made particularly good increases, and had acted particularly fairly with regard to the whole of the department, yet there had been considerable reductions. He thought he could say that from the day he went into that department not one clerical appointment had been made in it. We had had some temporary hands there. Dozens and dozens had left, some had died, and some had been removed to other places. This had been done without in any way impairing the service, and members knew the difference there was now when one went into a warden's office as compared with the past. When members wanted information with regard to forfeitures, exemptions, or amalgamations, there used to be excessive trouble, but now a book was laid on the table of every office showing who were applicants for exemption or protection in the district. That was free to every person who liked to go into the department. The department had tried to make this as up-to-date as they could, and up to the present he had not heard a single complaint from any people with regard to that matter. In relation to salaries, there had been many increases, the first referred to in the Estimates being that of the chief clerk. The question of chief clerks had been considered by Cabinet, and it was thought that the chief clerks of all the principal departments should be paid at the rate of £400 a year. The proposal now made as to the chief clerk in this department was in accordance with that view. The next increase was that of the accountant, whose salary it was proposed to raise from £360 to £400 a year. He (the Minister) had pointed out the wonderful increase that had taken place in the accountant's work. Great business was being done with our public battery work, and the complicated system we had in relation to the payment for cyaniding sands had thrown an enormous amount of work on this man. This officer was one of the three accountants picked out from candidates for the position of Auditor General, for the purpose of a final selection. That would satisfy members that not only was this officer highly qualified, but that he was one who attended very well to the duties of the department. We had doubled the expenditure of the department owing to the increased work. The work was, he believed, two

or three times greater than it was two years ago, therefore he considered the increase of salary amply justified. The other increases were small, and he did not propose to wade through them; but the member for Kanowna stated that from what he could see the Minister had been fairly liberal in increases, and he hoped the Minister had been equally generous to the rank and file. During the two years he had been in charge of the department, which was more efficient now than in the past, he had given greater facilities to the public, and, as he had said, he had decreased the expenditure of administration by £8,771, yet he could show that in the head office out of 13 receiving less than £100 a year, 12 had received increases averaging £18 15s.: there were 33 receiving from £100 to £200, 24 of whom had received increases averaging £14 13s. 4d.: and there were 15 receiving between £200 and £300, 7 of whom had received increases averaging £12 8s. So there were 61 officers receiving from less than £100 a year to £300, 43 of whom received increases. The average increase of about £15 per officer showed that the interests of those who occupied what he might term the junior positions of the department had been well looked after. These increases were very reasonable. Whenever any recommendation was made for an increase amongst the junior officers he had been only too pleased to thoroughly inquire into it, and, if the increase was justified, to see that the officer got the extra payment. The same remark would apply to the goldfields offices. At his instigation the goldfields allowance was fixed at 20 per cent. on the Eastern Goldfields and 30 per cent. on the Northern Goldfields. Although in many instances the increase would not bring the salary of some officers up to what it was in the old days, still it was a considerable increase on past years. Hon. members might point out that officers on the goldfields were not receiving the salaries they were getting in past days; but in the past another system prevailed altogether. A mining registrar would be appointed at a salary of £260 per year; then the Treasury would appoint him Treasury clerk and give him £50 a year; next the Lands Department would appoint him as an officer and give him so much;

and then the officer would receive an appointment as electoral registrar, and probably an appointment in the Colonial Secretary's Department with an additional salary. The consequence was that the man sent up to fill a position at £260 a year would, in the end, be receiving from £350 to £400 a year, and the Mines Department was asked to appoint another officer because so much work was being thrown on this poor fellow. So the department would send along an assistant at £240 a year, while the original man would be getting £350 or £400. That practice was now stopped. With the increases given the officer's position was very much improved. Some little criticism might be expected on the public batteries. Eight batteries were at work, including new batteries at Burtville, Yundamindera, and Southern Cross, and seven cyanide plants were at work. New batteries were to be erected at Norseman, Wiluna, and Menzies; and plants were promised for Coolgardie and Black Range, while new cyanide plants were to be erected at Leonora, Coolgardie, and Menzies.

[MR. FOULKES took the Chair.]

MR. WALLACE: The Minister should not mention cyanide plants, because it worried him (Mr. Wallace).

THE MINISTER: A promise had been made to the hon. member; and having made a promise, he did all he could do to carry it out. The Mines Department was not stinted for funds, and no doubt many works should have been put in hand quicker. Remarks were made (he was not certain whether by the member for Dundas, but certainly by the member for Mount Margaret) that on account of the position a certain hon. member occupied in the House no work would be done by the Government in his district. He would therefore point out the work done in the district of the hon. member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas). The member for Kanowna drew attention to an exceedingly dangerous principle adopted by the department in purchasing copper ores. The department was asked to erect a smelter at Phillips River, and from the reports obtained there seemed to be a great element of danger. He had therefore asked Cabinet to assist him, and had pointed out to his colleagues that, even if we found a smelter should

not be erected, the loss to the Government would not exceed £3,000 to £4,000 if he were provided with money with which to buy copper ore under regulations by which the ore was purchased from those who took it out of their leases for development purposes alone. Cabinet gave him authority to engage an ore-buyer and to spend a sum of nearly £18,000 in a small portion of the electorate of the member for Dundas. This expenditure could have been stopped but for it being in the interests of the mining industry. He looked at the interests of the industry, and not at the man.

MR. TAYLOR : The Minister was getting value for the money in the ore.

THE MINISTER only desired to point out how unfair it was, so far as he was concerned, to say that because of the position an hon. member occupied in the House he, as Minister, would do anything that might injure the hon. member's constituents. His object was to try and do all he could to resuscitate a district that was going down, and the Government had come forward with a new principle. He proposed, in dealing with the item "purchase of ore," to add the words "and erection of smelter," so that when he went down to Ravensthorpe with the State Mining Engineer, if he were satisfied that the district warranted the erection of a smelter, he would have Parliamentary authority to erect one. That showed how careless he was of the position any member occupied in the House, and how idle and useless were the words of the member for Mt. Margaret when he made certain remarks.

MR. TAYLOR : The work was not in the Mt. Margaret electorate.

THE MINISTER : The member for Dundas was opposing the Estimates, and he (the Minister) desired to point out the unfairness of the member for Mt. Margaret's statement that works were not carried out in a member's district because the member sat in Opposition.

AN INTERLUDE.

MR. TAYLOR : On a point of order, the Minister is saying that I said something about Dundas, and is dragging me into some quarrel. I desire the Minister to deal with me and not with the member for Dundas.

MR. THOMAS (entering and speaking from his place) : On a point of explanation—

THE CHAIRMAN : It is not necessary for you to make an explanation.

MR. THOMAS : The name of the member for Dundas has been mentioned, and I have a right to claim a point of explanation.

THE CHAIRMAN : What do you want to explain ?

MR. THOMAS : With the indulgence of the House, it is known that my party have left the Chamber.

MR. HASTIE : Don't waste time.

MR. THOMAS : I am not wasting time.

THE CHAIRMAN : I must ask you what you wish to explain.

MR. THOMAS : I heard the name of the member for Dundas mentioned, and I claim that it is totally unfair for the Minister, knowing that I, as one of the leading members of the Opposition, had withdrawn from the Chamber, to drag my name into the debate.

MR. HASTIE : Don't desert your duties.

MR. THOMAS : The door of the Chamber was open, and I heard the Minister for Mines grossly and unfairly referring to me after I had left the Chamber with the rest of the Opposition.

THE CHAIRMAN : Order !

MR. THOMAS : One moment.

THE CHAIRMAN : Will the hon. member sit down ?

MR. THOMAS : We left this Chamber as a protest, and I will again leave it.

SEVERAL MEMBERS : Chair !

THE CHAIRMAN : I must ask you to take your seat.

MR. THOMAS : No, sir. I leave the Chamber. [Member retired.]

DISCUSSION RESUMED.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (continuing) : No member could say that an unfair statement was made about the member for Dundas, because he (the Minister) simply pointed out that he was doing work in the hon. member's district, and that the fact that the hon. member sat in Opposition made not the slightest difference in his calculations. When recently at Norseman he found that the Government tanks, costing £17,000, were practically idle. An application was made to have a tank built at the Princess Royal mine, and he spent £4,500 of loan money

in connection with a pumping scheme in the Norseman district, and was now supplying Norseman with fresh water at 1s. 9d. per hundred gallons, as against 12s. 6d. the people had to pay before the initiation of this work. It was a good business deal, because the work paid expenses and provided for interest and sinking fund, whereas for the sum of £17,000 expended on the tanks previously the revenue earned was hardly sufficient to pay the wages of the caretaker. He (the Minister) had gone farther and had agreed to spend money for the erection of a new battery at Norseman, and that work was now proceeding. During the last six months the Mines Department spent between £26,000 and £27,000 in the electorate of the member for Dundas, and that was not because he considered for a single moment the member for Dundas, but because he thought the interests of the district warranted the expenditure. He hoped that, when he visited Ravensthorpe district, his advisers would recommend the erection of a smelter, and that we would have a sound and prosperous district there. The same thing applied to the district which was represented by the member for Mt. Margaret. The finding of a water supply at this place was one of the quickest transactions which had taken place. A couple of parties had been going round putting down plants to enable prospectors to go out back. Whatever could be done was being done. Tenders had been accepted for the transfer of a battery from the district represented by the member for Mt. Magnet to Black Range. A battery had only just been erected at Burtville, and a plant had been sent to Laverton. Tenders had been called for sending a plant to Leonora, and as soon as possible he intended to visit the Erlistoun district where the Government had already spent a large sum of money in sinking wells. There were some four or five wells authorised in that district which also warranted the erection of a public battery. He claimed the department had done good work with regard to the batteries. A sum of £750,000 had been distributed by the batteries. There had been large losses in the past, but now he had reduced the cost of crushing by about 20 per cent. The scale of crushing

originally was from 15s. to £1 per ton. Now the department was charging from 10s. to 14s.; there was a sliding scale. He had not only got rid of all the loss, but this year he thought he would show a profit of £5,000. He did not say that he was satisfied with the working of the department yet, and he was thinking seriously of making changes in the administration; and he would make those changes unless the department could show a better record than at present. Although the charges made by the department were less than the charges at any private battery in the State, still he was not satisfied, and he thought he would be able to show a greater reduction in cost than at present. He thought the department should be able to make a profit and pay working expenses and sinking fund. No prospector and no mining man whom he knew wanted to be spoon-fed; they wanted good administration, and they wished to see the money spent as any man would spend his money privately. The cost should be reduced as low as possible, at the same time doing a fair thing to the department. In 1901 the crushing at the batteries cost 17s. 9d. per ton; in 1902 the cost was 13s. 9d. per ton, and in 1903 12s. 4d. That was the average cost to the department, and he intended to reduce the cost and try to get down to a much lesser amount. He would not be satisfied until he showed a fair reduction, and yet paid working expenses and something to a sinking fund. That was the principle which he intended to adopt in the future unless members said that the public batteries should only pay expenses. If that was the wish of Parliament he would carry out that principle, but he thought the batteries should pay interest on the money expended and three per cent. to sinking fund and depreciation of the plants. It was his intention very shortly to try and get the fullest information on the question of the sanitation and ventilation of mines. He looked on that as a most important question and one that should receive earnest consideration, and he proposed to go into it as soon as possible after the session was over. It was a question which should appeal to many members. We were getting down into very deep ground, nearly 2,000 feet, and it was time we had the most perfect

system of ventilation we could have in our mines. He did not want any of the diseases that had crept into the mines of England and of South Africa, nor the insanitary methods. He wanted to keep the mines clean from the diseases found in other places, and he felt satisfied if we had a good system of ventilation in the mines in Western Australia we should be able to show a very much better record as to the health of the working men employed in the mines. He hoped the Estimates would be considered by mining members and that they would be criticised. If there were any suggestions that could be brought forward to make the administration better, he would be only too pleased to receive those suggestions and see if something could be done to make the administration better than it had been in the past.

MR. WALLACE: Notwithstanding the expressed intention to reduce the charges for crushing, could not there be a reduction in the charge for cyaniding with more prompt treatment of the sand and quicker returns to the prospectors? It was known that a majority of shows were in the hands of working miners, and the stone crushed was not of a sufficiently high grade to give large returns. It generally took about two-thirds of the returns to pay for the crushing charges. He suggested to the Minister two years ago that instead of the Government deducting the cost of crushing from the first returns from the plates, the Government should wait for their payment until the tailings had been treated. If on assay the tailings showed sufficient contents to pay for the crushing and the cyaniding, the Government might give the full returns from the plates to the prospector which would enable him to go back and farther develop his show. In different parts of the country there was such a small amount given to the prospector in the first instance that it did not provide him with means to raise another crushing. In the past many men had been forced to sacrifice their tailings at 1s. 6d. per ton so as to raise money to go on working. It had taken the department six or seven months to provide a cyanide plant at Boogardie. Day after day he had received communications from the prospectors at Boogardie, and the last communication yesterday ad-

vised him that the men after stacking their tailings at the Government battery had to sell them to private speculators to raise money to continue their work. The department were to blame, for they did not go to work as a private firm would, though he was told the department had plenty of work to do, numbers of plants being in hand which caused delay. He was informed that the last portion of the cyanide plant had arrived on the fields, but the vats which were required first had not been made yet and were not likely to be made for some time.

THE MINISTER: Tenders were let some time ago.

MR. WALLACE: There was some dispute between the successful tenderer and the department.

THE MINISTER: That was not known to him.

[2 o'clock, a.m.]

MR. WALLACE: It had been going on for a week or ten days, and it seemed to him no one was particularly anxious to see the matter rushed along. The successful tenderer had not been treated fairly and refused to sign the contract. The objection was not to the treatment itself, but to the long delay before returns were available. If this delay increased in the Murchison district, many shows must be abandoned. For such delay he (Mr. Wallace) was being metaphorically torn to pieces; and he asked the Minister to put the blame on the right shoulders. In connection with public batteries there should be a sinking fund. Surely the plants were not intended to crush at bare cost price. Out of the surplus men should be encouraged to sink shafts below water, the crushing charges being reduced on all stone raised from below a certain depth, according to the nature of the ground. Notwithstanding what the Minister had done to supply the wants of such people as the alluvialists at Black Range, proper attention was not given to some settled districts. For instance, the Works Department sent an inspector from Day Dawn to a place 70 miles south of Yalgoo. He reported to the head office, and men were then sent from Day Dawn to do the well-sinking. For such a report a local mine manager might be relied on and the work intrusted to local men, thus saving

intolerable delay. Three weeks ago he (Mr. Wallace) was promised that the Murchison inspector would report on water supply for another place in the district, and only yesterday did the report come to hand. He congratulated the Minister on presenting the return of exemptions granted during the last financial year. The extent of the exemptions granted, not only in poor districts but in the most prosperous districts of the State, to mines both large and small, was astonishing. For boring £7,000 was provided here, and possibly more on the Loan Estimates. Many districts were languishing for want of money to prove their lodes; and in the absence of Government aid in boring the unemployed of the Eastern Goldfields might find their counterpart on the Murchison. Some time ago the Minister offered the Lennonville people a bore. In reply to a request an officer of the Geological Department recommended a bore at Boogardie. Why no attempt to supply these wants? If the plants available were insufficient, increase the number so as to give one at least to every district; and let the use of that one be a matter of local arrangement, instead of giving it first to those who clamoured loudest.

MR. TAYLOR regretted having to discuss these Estimates at such an early hour, and the little interest taken by members in the mining industry, the most important in Australia. Whenever mining was discussed only 11, 12, or 13 members attended. After sitting five days this week and five last week the Government insisted on forcing these Estimates through. The Minister for Mines should have spoken on the introduction of the Estimates, as requested by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pigott). He (Mr. Taylor) was not here to defend the Opposition, he being a Labour man; but he would vote with the Opposition when he found them acting in the interests of the State. The Minister's recent speech, if made when introducing the Estimates, would have had a good effect. It was pleasing that the heated debate of to-night was not the fault of the Labour party. This proved that members belonging to a very respectable portion of the community, including a legal gentleman, could make fools

of themselves. Had there been less liquor drunk in the late part of last night and the early part of this morning, there would have been less heat. He was sorry the Minister thought fit to mention the case which the hon. gentleman said was *sub judice*—that of himself and ex-Warden Hicks. Though Parliament was supreme, one did not think it would be prudent, whilst this rehearing of the case was pending, that the matter should be discussed here. It had been thought this application for a new hearing was made in view of the prorogation of Parliament.

THE MINISTER: Let the hon. member make no mistake; there were two newspaper actions as well.

MR. TAYLOR: It had been said the application for a new trial was perhaps made with the object of Parliament being prorogued before the matter could be dealt with, and the necessary fees and expenses paid over.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member would be sorry to believe that.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The amount had already been paid, and not by the Government. That might surprise the hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR was pleased to know the State was not going to pay for the hon. gentleman's blunder; also, that while men perhaps did not care about dealing with matters in Parliament, there were Courts to which they could go and get justice.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member had had experience.

MR. TAYLOR: The Minister had said he did not desire his (Mr. Taylor's) friendship. He had never forced his friendship on the hon. gentleman, but it was hard when a person so high in position as the Minister for Mines desired to carry warfare into private life. He had bumped up against the Minister. The hon. gentleman knew what his (Mr. Taylor's) friendship had been worth. They had been friends, and he thought they were now political opponents. He (Mr. Taylor) opposed the Mining Bill on what he considered sound grounds, and he was justified in opposing what he believed to be against the interests of those whom he represented. He had got on before without the hon. gentleman's friendship, and hoped he

would be able to do so in the future. The hon. gentleman enumerated what he had done for him (Mr. Taylor) in his electorate. Considering, however, what the Minister had done for other electorates, he would leave it to the Committee or the country to decide whether the hon. gentleman had favoured him or other members. A fortnight or three weeks ago a gentleman who went to Black Range said there were 70 stamps hung up. There was a general conversation, and it was intimated that the people there were going to have a Huntingdon mill and a 5-head battery.

THE MINISTER: What was referred to had been recommended, but nothing had been done since.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Owen, who had come straight from Kanowna, told him there were 70 stamps hung up; that was about three or four weeks ago. In the district of the member for Kanowna there had been a puddler costing something like £1,200 or £1,400. Plant worth £500 had been standing there, and people on the goldfields told him that none of that was standing there now except what could not be removed. According to the returns, they had put through 191 tons of dirt, and the gold they got out of that 191 tons amounted to 46 ounces. It was strange we should have to go to that amount of expense to find out puddling would not pay. He had made representations to the Minister from people in a district consisting practically of one-sixth of the whole State, and found that on the very best recommendations little would be done.

THE MINISTER: The department spent a good deal of money on the bore at Lake Darlôt.

MR. TAYLOR: The Minister sent the plant, but the people had to put it up. Not till months after the people had found the £50 stipulated, did the Government send the plant, although there was plant lying in several places. These people did good work, and he (Mr. Taylor) was sorry they were unsuccessful as far as obtaining a deep lead was concerned. The Minister said he sent a battery to Black Range. A battery which had been hung up for years had been promised to him (Mr. Taylor) at different times for the last eighteen months or two years, but the Minister would not send it and considerable delay

was experienced. At the time the battery was to be removed to Black Range there were 20 or 30 leases pegged out, and 800 men on the ground. But did Mr. Irvine, from Victoria, hesitate? No; he purchased a property and said he would put up 40 head of stamps at once. He sent only 10 head for one lease; but the Minister was only sending a five-head battery for forty leases. The Minister claimed to have done a great deal in the way of sending a battery to Burtville. That battery, however, was promised by a previous Minister. All the batteries in the Mt. Margaret district, except that at Black Range, had been promised by previous Ministers, and the present Minister was only carrying out work set in train by previous Ministers while taking all the credit for it. Had members on the Government side had the same opportunities for batteries in their districts they would have had them long ago. A battery was to be erected in Coolgardie where there were ample crushing facilities and batteries at present hung up, and a battery was to be erected at Southern Cross where there had been crushing facilities for years past and batteries were now hung up. In the Mt. Margaret district there was a mining centre 60 or 70 miles away from the nearest battery. That was the Eristoun district. The Minister tried to make us believe that it was a new field; but it was opened up years ago and abandoned for want of crushing facilities. The auriferous country at Eristoun extended for 70 miles. No battery had been erected by the Government within the past two years in a district which better justified one than the Eristoun district. Should this district be opened up by a public battery it would absorb the goldfields unemployed. Had he (Mr. Taylor) "knew-towed" to the Government he would have got a battery; but he would not prostitute his political views to get concessions for his electorate. His constituents would not desire him to do so. Though batteries were erected in places where already batteries were hung up, they were not given to back-country districts which were languishing and starving for them. After he had worried the present Minister it was decided that a battery should be sent to Laverton, but when it was *en route* the Minister, hearing something

at Kookynie, wired post-haste to Perth: "Stop the Laverton battery." He (Mr. Taylor) saw the Minister and asked him on what authority higher than the recommendations of his officers he had decided to stop the battery going to Laverton. The Minister then decided to have a farther report made, the consequence being that another favourable report was sent in regarding the claims of Laverton, and the battery subsequently went on to that centre, where it was doing good work and was the sole means of keeping a little township going and hundreds of men employed for the last 18 months.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member had nothing whatever to do with getting that battery.

MR. TAYLOR: The Minister desired to stop it going to Laverton and tried to oppose his officers' reports, but the reports were too strongly in favour of Laverton; hence the battery had to go on to Laverton. The Minister would not deny the difficulty he (Mr. Taylor) had in getting the battery for Wiluna. He (Mr. Taylor) was never so sick of anything as he was of trying to get that battery. The Minister always staved him off. Had he been on the Government side his chances would have been a hundred to one better. During this debate we saw how the Minister felt towards those who opposed him. The Minister could not enter into a political fight without bringing in a member's private life. We must expect a heated discussion and that people should feel warm and excited during a political fight; but all that should end with the fight. The Minister owned up when introducing the Mining Bill, and not for the first time, that when his liver was out of order an officer asking him for better conditions would be snubbed straight away. One felt sorry for those who had to work under a man with such a temper. If a man allowed his temper to persecute people, it was unfortunate for those under him. It was the talk of the Chamber that, when the Minister was ruffled, he lost his head and insulted people right and left. He (Mr. Taylor) and the Minister were at one time very friendly, and fought battles together, and the Minister knew how he (Mr. Taylor) could fight when it was required.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member behaved himself at that time.

MR. TAYLOR: With Ministerial behaviour during this morning and last night his (Mr. Taylor's) behaviour compared very favourably. The vote taken was nothing the Premier or any Parliament should be proud of. It was the most unstatesman-like piece of work which had occurred in the Parliamentary history of the Commonwealth. He did not know whether it was the intention of the Government to go on any farther with the Estimates now, seeing that it was nearly a quarter to three; but the Government should take into consideration the fact that there was nobody on the Opposition benches, and that there was only a small number of members in the House. It was a shame and a disgrace to Parliament that so few members should discuss such an important part of the Estimates. If the Premier had been wise he would have adjourned at a quarter-past eleven after sitting from half-past two, seeing that members had worked five long days this week. If the Premier had done what any reasonable person would have done, Parliament would not have been disgraced with these subsequent proceedings. He (Mr. Taylor) was sorry to see nobody on the Opposition benches while the discussion was going on.

MR. BATH: It was not intended to allow the Mines Estimates to pass without a few remarks. On previous occasions when the Estimates were before members the Minister for Mines was ready to explain the working of this department in a proper manner. He regretted the Opposition had prevented the Minister from explaining his estimates in the first instance. He (Mr. Bath) wished particularly to confine his remarks to the ever-present question of the inspection of mines. He freely admitted that an improvement had been made in the inspection of mines, but recent accidents on the Golden Mile and the verdicts of juries thereon were evidence of the need for the utmost care on the part of inspectors to see that the lives of the miners were protected. It seemed to be the current opinion on the Golden Mile that because the lode material was of a hard nature the stone could be taken out up to a great height without the stopes

being filled in. While the material was hard there was no danger as to falling stone; but when men were working to a great height with machine drills and heavy charges of dynamite, large flakes of rock were left perilously hanging. One of the most urgent necessities was for the inspectors to carefully examine the stopes and see that they were filled up within a reasonable distance of the back. Work could be done more efficiently and in a more economical manner. There was one matter on which he was disappointed in regard to the Mines Estimates this year, but it was not the fault of the Minister. It was rather the lack of success on the part of those sent out. He referred to the prospectors and the parties sent out and equipped by the Mines Department. Although we had parties sent out in various parts of the State and although they reported month after month, there seemed to have been no beneficial result from the prospecting operations. It seemed impossible to imagine that on the large goldfields of Western Australia, and the wide extent of auriferous country, no discoveries had been made by these parties. It was to be hoped before these parties had completed their labours something would be discovered which would add to the wealth of the community. There was one point in regard to the mining school. He believed assistants had been appointed at Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, and he believed the appointments had been left to the director of the school at Coolgardie.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: To the board.

MR. BATH had not heard that applications were called for and that the applications were submitted to any board or constituted authority to examine into the credentials. In the appointment of lecturers and those charged with the instruction of pupils the greatest care should be exercised to get the best available talent, so that the instruction both theoretical and practical would be the best available. There was an item "payment under Mining Development Act for the purchase of drills and bores." The member for Mt. Magnet had referred to the fact that an application had been received for drilling plants for the Mt. Magnet and the Murchison districts. As

to the Eastern Goldfields those applying for plants had to pay half the wages before they could secure any assistance. There had been no difficulty on the Eastern Goldfields, when the necessary amount was paid, in securing a plant. The Labour members had been accused of being able to secure more consideration for their mining constituents than the member for Mt. Margaret had. On glancing through the Estimates one saw the amount of money to be expended, and he noticed the member for Mt. Margaret had secured all the plums in his particular electorate. The bulk of the public batteries of the State were in the Mount Margaret electorate, and as far as water supplies and other works were concerned the electorate of Mt. Margaret was one of the best served in Western Australia. The same charge had been uttered in regard to other items on the Estimates in other departments, and he only had to turn to public buildings to find that the electorate of Mt. Margaret was almost plastered with public buildings in the shape of lockups and policemen's quarters and so forth. Generally as far as the Mines Department was concerned it was a model to the whole of Australia. He was glad to notice that a reaction was setting in, and that the information that had been supplied to the mining investors of the world, in the comparison between South Africa and Western Australia, had turned attention to Western Australia again. He noticed in the columns of one of the leading mining journals of London that Western Australian companies and shares practically monopolised the whole of the market at the present time. He hoped that by the development of the back country with public batteries and a judicious system of encouragement to mining development, not only the small prospector would be encouraged, but that the department would so develop the fields that a larger area would be taken up which would add to the prosperity of Western Australia. He had no fear as to Western Australia, which it was said suffered from the dangers of over-legislation in the mining industry. The fact that we had such a large auriferous area, and that it was developed to such a great extent, and that there were such splendid mines as far as the Golden

Mile was concerned, and the fact that the managers there had proved that with the high rate of wages ruling they could work the mines more economically than those in the Transvaal, which enjoyed the monopoly of cheap labour, showed that as far as mining was concerned there was no fear ahead of us in the future.

Item—Inspectors of Mines, £3,200 :

MR. WALLACE : As the qualifications of all the mining inspectors had to be the same, why were some inspectors paid less salary than others? This anomaly caused dissatisfaction amongst the inspectors.

THE MINISTER : Certain officers were engaged at certain salaries, and he had made a reduction from £425 to £400, but the allowances had been increased, making the salary what it was at present. Two officers received £200 a year. They were the senior officers, and he did not wish to make a reduction in their case. He had not increased the salaries but the allowances on the field. There was one inspector at £140 a year who was stationed at Collie, but that officer also received a salary from the Railway Department, which gave him about £360 a year. Taking it all round members should consider that a salary of £350 a year was fair with 20 per cent. allowances, although as against that there was a charge for rental for the houses used.

MR. CONNOR called attention to the absence of a quorum.

Bells rung and quorum formed.

MR. BATH : What sort of inspector could the department get for £140 a year?

THE MINISTER : That was the officer to whom he referred just now.

[3 o'clock, a.m.]

Items—Inspecting Surveyor, £5,522 ; State Mining Engineer, £768 16s. :

MR. BATH : By whom had these officers been appointed?

THE MINISTER : By a special commission, altogether free from political influence.

MR. WALLACE : Was it not time to dismiss Chinamen from the department? One Charley Ah Ting was employed as office cleaner at Marble Bar, having come there from East Kimberley.

THE MINISTER said he had not employed the man. Enquiry would be made.

MR. CONNOR contradicted the statement that the man had come from East Kimberley.

Item—Purchase of copper ore, Phillips River, £2,025 :

MR. TAYLOR : Farther on one found £16,550 for purchase money.

THE MINISTER : This item was for salaries. The assayer had been appointed during the last few weeks. The labourer broke up the ore and made it ready for assay.

MR. TAYLOR objected to the cunning manner in which such items, instead of being properly classified, were distributed over the Estimates.

THE MINISTER : There was no confusion. In the items in question the salaries were shown, and farther on contingencies.

Item—State Batteries, £29,810 :

MR. TAYLOR : The manager of the battery at Laverton engaged in Coolgardie a man as bookkeeper and amalgamator, who travelled over 200 miles to Laverton at his own expense, and gave satisfaction; yet after a month another man was sent from the department in Perth to fill the position, the first man being dismissed, though he had not earned enough to cover his return fare and had to shoulder his swag. Though the Minister had promised to rectify this injustice, nothing had been done. Battery managers did not make these appointments. The Minister for Mines, like other Ministers, appointed political friends of his own or of members.

THE MINISTER : The statement was absolutely untrue. One system he had adopted ever since he started was that of placing the manager absolutely in charge of the plant and putting upon him the responsibility. The Government appointed also from Perth the assayer, but gave the battery manager power to suspend the assayer if the assayer was not carrying out his duty satisfactorily. Other than that the battery manager had as absolute power as he would have if he owned the plant, subject to regulations. As to the member for Mt. Margaret, if that hon. member had a grievance and would send

it in writing, he (the Minister) would be only pleased to see that it was inquired into as soon as possible. We could not well place the responsibility upon a manager unless we gave him full power over the men he had working under him. If the hon. member could show him that men had been forced upon a manager, he (the Minister) would be only too pleased to give the hon. member satisfaction in the matter.

MR. TAYLOR: When he returned from his district, he made a memo. and read it in the Minister's room. He said to the hon. gentleman, "I am going to ask this question in the House," and the Minister replied: "Don't do that, Taylor; I will fix that up; you need not bring a thing like that before the House." He (Mr. Taylor) said it was a thing that should be shown up, and the Minister replied: "I give you my word that I will see to it." He did not bother about it until a few weeks ago, when he asked the Minister about it, and the Minister replied that the manager had gone to some other part. Probably the wonderfully well managed Mines Department would, when a shred of light was let into it, be found to be not so well looked after. We found that cyanide plants were erected. Cyanide plants were, however, erected before this Government came into power. A great saving in the public battery system was owing to the cyaniding of sands of unfortunate prospectors who had left them. But for that, the profits would be considerably less. Moreover, the Government charged for cyaniding about double the price charged by a private company.

Purchase of Copper Ore at Phillips River :

THE MINISTER moved that after "ore" the words "and erection of smelter" be inserted.

MR. TAYLOR: We should know something about this, and he would also like information as to a smelter at Greenbushes.

THE MINISTER: The money in hand would be hardly sufficient to carry on for twelve months. It was intended to pay a visit to the Phillips River, and if it was recommended that a smelter should be put in, to stop the purchase of ore, and then proceed with the erection of the smelter.

We had been buying ore under regulations. As to Greenbushes, he was shown a new class of smelter which was believed to be doing marvellously good work. He had agreed with Mr. Heads that if he (Mr. Heads) erected a smelter in Perth, he (the Minister) would have brought up from Phillips River 30 tons of copper ore—10 tons of each of three different classes of ore—and would pay him either £2 or £3 per ton for treatment, provided he gave us 90 per cent. of the contents of that ore. If Mr. Heads could treat that ore well for us, we might consider negotiations. A member of this Assembly had suggested the purchase of a plant from him (the member), and there had also been another offer of a plant.

MR. TAYLOR: What would be the cost?

THE MINISTER: The cost of the plant he recommended would be about £1,500. It would treat from 30 to 50 tons per day.

MR. TAYLOR: Would it be as elaborate as the smelter at Greenbushes?

THE MINISTER: That was a very small smelter at Greenbushes. This smelter would treat nothing less than 30 tons per day, which would be adequate.

MR. TAYLOR: Probably the Premier had an estimate of the fuel to be used.

THE MINISTER: The test would be made in Perth.

MR. TAYLOR: The test must be made with the same fuel it was intended to use at Ravensthorpe.

THE MINISTER: That matter would be considered. We would bring up the ore providing we received the smelted result.

MR. TAYLOR: Was the Minister satisfied that the district warranted the smelter?

THE MINISTER would have to go down to the district first.

MR. TAYLOR: Had any report been obtained?

THE MINISTER: No action would be taken till after his visit. If the erection of a smelter was not justified the work would not be carried out.

MR. BATH: An experiment with a small plant did not always guarantee that the operation would be successful with a larger plant. A plant for treating 50 tons could be worked as cheaply as one for 30 tons.

MR. TAYLOR: Evidently firewood was no item at all.

MR. BATH: Coke would have to be used.

THE MINISTER: Collie coal would not be used.

MR. TAYLOR: There were no reports from Ravensthorpe and many people were inquiring about the place. The Minister was taking credit for spending money in the electorate of the member for Dundas, but there was no obligation on the hon. member in that regard, for the Minister would get fair value for the money spent.

THE MINISTER: Let the item be struck out.

MR. TAYLOR did not want the item reduced or struck out. He wanted farther explanation from the Minister.

THE MINISTER: Every explanation was given.

MR. TAYLOR: The fullest information should be given, because inadequate explanations gave the impression that there was something lurking behind. The member for Dundas would be the very first to give an explanation. The Minister should tell the House what he thought of the chances of the transaction being a success.

MR. CONNOR: Did the Minister expect a profit?

THE MINISTER: Regulations were prescribed under which the buying would be carried out, leaving a margin of profit. If we had to send the ore away to other smelters for treatment it was possible the Government would lose money; but if we treated the ore at our own smelter we would be able to return to the prospectors the margin, which was at present retained after charging a certain rate for interest. There was no desire to make any profit.

[MR. HARPER took the Chair.]

MR. CONNOR moved that progress be reported.

Motion negatived.

MR. CONNOR drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and quorum formed.

MR. TAYLOR: Did the Minister buy the ore at the mine?

THE MINISTER: It was carted to the sampling works.

MR. TAYLOR: It cost a shilling a ton to cart it.

Amendment passed.

State batteries—Refunds to owners of tailings, £2,000:

MR. WALLACE: After recouping the expenditure did the Minister expect to have any refunds this year?

THE MINISTER: A new system of bookkeeping was in vogue now. There would be a special suspense account. In the past the Audit Department had objected. The department had pointed out that the gold did not belong to them; it was only in trust. After deducting the Government charges the gold was placed in a suspense account.

MR. TAYLOR: A sum of £25,000 was set apart for the erection of State batteries, which was rather a small amount when one took into account the opening up of the back country. There were three applications from Erlistoun for batteries, and one place was spoken highly of. A number of properties had been opened up. There were two or three places in the Erlistoun district, covering a long belt of auriferous country, where batteries should be erected. The people of Big Well, near Mount Malcolm, had applied for a battery. Dozens of men were there, and they had to cart their stuff 12 or 14 miles at a large cost. There were several other places in the district which he represented, and in other electorates there were places where hundreds of men were employed where the Government should erect batteries. At one time the Minister contemplated removing the battery from Leonora because stone was not being sent to the battery. The management was changed, and the present manager had worked up the trade so that the battery could not cope with the stone sent in. The Minister should do something for outlying places and not assist those districts where stamps were hung up. Southern Cross, Coolgardie, and Kanowna were given batteries while there were stamps in the district. The outlying places required batteries long before the settled districts, for prospectors working their own shows had to cart stone sometimes 20 or 30 miles. He had made an application for a battery at Mount Morgans, but he was afraid it would not be entertained.

THE MINISTER: The department were paying a subsidy to the men there, the same as at Edjudina.

MR. TAYLOR: There was no public crusher at Mount Morgans, but there was at Southern Cross, Coolgardie and Kanowna and at one of these places there were 70 stamps hung up. That was a *prima facie* case that it was a matter of placating members. If his support was as strong for the Government as his opposition to them was he would have received three or four batteries. He knew the full strength of the Government and he knew how straightforward their dealings were. One had only to look at the Estimates to see that Boulder and other similar places received large items.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What about Laverton?

MR. TAYLOR: A battery had been erected there for 12 months.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nothing about a railway?

MR. TAYLOR: It was necessary to build a railway there. He had secured a battery at Laverton without the assistance of the Government. It was to be hoped that outlying places would be granted batteries. Lake Way had been seven or eight years without a battery, and one was only just being erected after the greatest struggle to obtain it. Every thing possible was done to prevent its erection.

Mines Water Supply—Norseman and Princess Royal Water Supply to pump and gravitate water from Norseman tank to town and to Princess Royal, £5,100:

MR. WALLACE: Had this money been spent?

THE MINISTER: Instructions had been given for this work. When at Norseman he saw a tank there which cost the Government £17,000. There were 3,000,000 gallons of water in the tank and people were charged 12s. 6d. a hundred gallons to cart it to Norseman. There was no supply for Princess Royal. He gave instructions for the erection of a pumping plant, and for a pipe line to be run to Norseman and to Princess Royal. He also made arrangements with the Norseman Municipal Council to obtain water at 1s. 9d. per 100 gallons, and the same arrangement was made as to Princess Royal. The interest on the money expended was now being paid and

a fair amount for depreciation. It was a very fair investment. A good return would doubtless result.

MR. TAYLOR: If spending £5,000 would make a £17,000 investment pay working expenses and interest, the expenditure was justified.

Other items agreed to, and the Mines vote passed.

[4 o'clock, a.m.]

Geological Survey, £5,710—agreed to.

Explosives and Analytical, £2,680:

Item—Analysts, £730:

THE MINISTER moved that "one at £210" and "one at £190" be struck out, and "two at £200" inserted in lieu. This anomaly arose through error. The officer at £210 was a new man, while the one receiving £190 had long service to his credit.

MR. CONNOR: Would not this amendment introduce a bad principle? From the Opposition such a proposal would not be accepted. He (Mr. Connor) protested against creating such a precedent; and if the opportunity occurred he would take advantage of it.

MR. TAYLOR: Surely the Committee could not increase items, but could only reduce them?

THE MINISTER: As the hon. member objected, the amendment would be withdrawn.

Amendment withdrawn.

MR. CONNOR objected to the Minister's meanness.

THE CHAIRMAN: An improper expression.

MR. CONNOR substituted the words "this unconstitutional procedure."

MR. TAYLOR: Was it possible to increase an item?

THE CHAIRMAN: The amendment would have been in order; for it would not have increased the total of the vote.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the votes for the department.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at twelve minutes past 4 a.m. (Saturday), until the next Monday afternoon.