

dalously misused or had allowed to get into a dreadful state, and the Court took the view that a man who did not deal properly with the lessor in that manner should not be granted relief on the others. I do not think relief was granted on account of the covenant to repair. I think the Court would give relief in circumstances where no substantial breach of covenant had taken place, and the present Bill, therefore, seems to be one in the right direction. It extends the law and gives an opportunity to the lessee to remedy any breach that may have taken place, on the receipt of a notice from the lessor. I assume the lessee would pay reasonable compensation. If the repairs are not effected or the injury made good, then an appeal can be made to the Supreme Court, and it rests with that body to give relief if they think it necessary. That seems to me a reasonable provision, and I think the Bill will, therefore, be an addition to the statute law. I am sorry the mover of the second reading is not present, for I would have liked an explanation with regard to Subclause 5 of Clause 3, but doubtless he will be able to give the information when the Bill reaches the Committee stage. At present I can scarcely see what is the meaning of that subclause. I fully approve of Clause 4 of the Bill, as it is a very wise provision. It provides that where a man is asked to consent to the assignment of a lease, and there is no objection to the proposed assignee or transferee, he should not refuse to allow the transfer. I have known instances where fines or the payment of large sums have been demanded for such transfers, and in cases where it would have been impossible to find more decent persons than those to whom the transfer was desired to be granted. I am also in accord with Clause 5, which provides reasonable and very proper protection for under-lessees, because if this clause were not inserted it would mean that where a property, or portion of it, was sub-let, the tenants of certain portions may have kept their portion up in perfect condition and may suffer grievous

wrong. Under the clause, however, they are fully protected.

On motion by Hon. W. Kingsmill, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.1 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th November, 1909.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERY CHARGES.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Railways,—In view of the decision of the Minister to increase crushing charges at the State batteries on the ground that the battery system is unprofitable, does he intend to apply the same procedure in the case of unprofitable railways?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: While not admitting that the State battery system is unprofitable, the amended battery charges were framed after giving consideration to the general cost of treatment at the State batteries, a principle which is generally followed in framing railway rates.

QUESTION—BIRTHS IN GAOLS.

Mr. BATH asked the Premier: In view of the undesirability of innocent children having to endure through life the stigma of having been born in gaol, will the Government take the necessary

steps to obviate the possibility of this occurring in the future?

The PREMIER replied: I am pleased to be able to state that the Government have already given instructions in the direction suggested by the hon. member.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

2. Fisheries Act Amendment, returned to the Legislative Council with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1909-10.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from 14th October; Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Vote—*Joint Houses of Parliament*, £6,449:

Item, Typist, £200:

Mr. UDERWOOD: What was the position with regard to the office of typist?

The PREMIER: The gentleman who occupied that position had retired, and it was not the intention of the House Committee to appoint a successor. The question of the appointment was in the hands of the House Committee, and when the intimation was received that the office had been abolished, the Estimates had already been presented to the House. That accounted for the item remaining on the Estimates.

Mr. HOLMAN: It seemed a remarkable thing that the only convenience a number of members had in the way of being assisted by a typist should be taken away from them. It was in keeping with the paltry actions of the Government and the House Committee as well. The remarkable genius of a number of members who were sitting on the House Committee in doing away with the typist, one of the most useful officers attached to the House, could not be understood. Why was not the position of the sergeant-at-arms or some equally useless person done away with instead of that of the typist? The typist was frequently engaged in typing extracts from reports and returns which had been laid on the Table, and it

was absolutely necessary for members to have an opportunity of availing themselves of the services of such an official. If Ministers want typing done, it was a simple matter for them because they could get it done in their offices or even by employing the *Hansard* staff, but every hon. member was not similarly advantageously placed. In the past Ministers had curtailed the issue of copies of the *Government Gazette* and *Hansard* to unions in order to cover up doings in the House, and to force the unions to take for gospel what they saw in a hostile Press. Why was not another typist engaged? More consideration should be shown to the requirements of members.

Mr. COLLIER: Before the item passed we should have an assurance from the Treasurer that a typist would be re-engaged. It was remarkable if 80 members of Parliament could not find sufficient work for a typist during the session. Members must be neglecting their duties. Was this idea of abolishing the office of typist the result of the brilliant genius of the Honorary Minister? After three years of office the Honorary Minister had got down to something petty, paltry, and miserable. It was understood the Honorary Minister was running round the building for four or five weeks ferreting out information to justify his moving that this office should be done away with. The Minister was just getting down to his level.

The Minister for Works: You are down to your level now.

The Honorary Minister: He has been there a long time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. COLLIER: I am not down as low as the Honorary Minister.

The Honorary Minister: I would be ashamed to be down as low as you.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask hon. members to refrain from interjections, and also to refrain from personal recriminations and inferences.

Mr. COLLIER: Whoever was responsible, it was a miserable, petty, and paltry action. Some members of the House Committee boasted of the fact that they had dispensed with the typist because most of the work performed by that offi-

cer was done for Opposition members. One was justified in referring to the high ideals and attitude of the member of the House Committee who secured the dismissal.

The Honorary Minister: Perhaps you had better name him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Troy: The cap seems to fit.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. COLLIER: The Honorary Minister knew the member of the House Committee who proposed this, or perhaps could place him. We might do without the typist during recess, but the officer was absolutely indispensable during the session.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The typist was not used by a fifth of the members of both Houses, and by only three or four men with any degree of regularity. The first he heard of the matter in the House Committee was in connection with the proposal that the position should be abolished. He secured an adjournment of the discussion for a fortnight, but the member for Boulder, with his usual inaccuracy—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The HONORARY MINISTER: The member for Boulder was inaccurate in saying that for five or six weeks inquiries were being made. As a matter of fact there was only a fortnight between the two meetings. The appointment was for the benefit of both Houses, and the officer was controlled not by Government but by the House Committee. After inquiries the House Committee ascertained that an extremely small number of members used the services of the typist, and as Mr. Ford was resigning they saw no need that he should be replaced. As to the statement that members made a boast that the typist was only of service to the Opposition, and was therefore dismissed, he (the Hon. Minister) had never heard of it, and did not believe it was ever said. If it was said then the member for Boulder might give the name of the member who said it.

Mr. SCADDAN: The items under the heading of "Joint Houses" were not con-

trolled by the joint committees. The Printing Committee, for instance, made recommendations to the Government, and the Treasurer could agree to them or not. It was no use the Honorary Minister leading members to believe that the House Committee had the first and final say. Committees had recommended increases in salaries to servants of the House, but the Treasurer had declined to agree. These Committees were nothing more or less than advisory boards, and in this instance the Treasurer could appoint an officer irrespective of the House Committee. During the last few months the House Committee had been determined in ascertaining a few paltry things to inconvenience members. A communication had been received by him in connection with some remarks made in the House. He would not allow the House Committee to dictate to him.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not discuss that on this question.

Mr. SCADDAN: Could not the House Committee be discussed under the items controlled by the House Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee are discussing the items at the present time.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was a pity there was no item for the House Committee, otherwise he would move to strike it out.

Mr. Taylor: Hear, hear!

Mr. SCADDAN: One thing one could be proud of was the fact that the House Committee did something. The Printing Committee, of which he was a member, did not meet. What were the committees for? The Printing Committee was expected to decide what papers should be printed, but they were printed and charged to Parliament without reference to the Printing Committee. That was how people were told that Parliament was costing so much. The departments should bear the cost of printing these papers, and not Parliament. As to the typist, he had a typewriter in his own office and did not use the services of the Parliamentary typist. If the typist was used by the members for work that was not public business or in the public interests of members' constituents, it was the duty of the House Committee to in-

form members that the services of the typist could not be used except for public business. As a matter of fact this typist had been worked overtime. Could one-fifth of the members cause him to work overtime? Another use to which members put the typist was in copying papers laid on the Table, and if no typist was available members were inconvenienced and put to expense in that regard. These papers could not be taken away from the building, and the *Hansard* typists were already fully occupied when the House was in session. Ministers went round ascertaining how many members used the typist, but that was not the question. The question was how long, and on what work the typist was engaged.

The Minister for Works : Copying files.

Mr. SCADDAN: No matter; it was public information and should be obtainable. We could not ask the *Hansard* typists to do it, as they were already employed long enough hours in the building, and the papers could not be taken away, so that someone had to do it, and how was it to be done without a typist?

Mr. ANGWIN: Many other things could be removed before the typist. Some members used the typist to put matters in order which they wished to have placed before their electors clearly and distinctly. One could quite understand the action of the House Committee if they did away with the billiard table. With regard to the typist he found that the officer very frequently did work for an officer of another place. We must realise that the members of another place spent very little time in the building and did not require for their use a typist in the same manner as members of this Chamber. The typist was an officer useful to almost all members. On many occasions he had found that officer very useful although he did not make it a practice of going to him regularly, and he realised that other members, except those having typists of their own, being connected with large establishments, might also find him extremely useful.

The Government should realise that the officer was needed by members and reconsider the recommendation, if any had been made by the House Committee, and appoint another typist in place of Mr. Ford who had gone on the land.

Mr. BOLTON: The House Committee consisted of members from both Chambers and it seemed absurd that four or five members from this Chamber should decide what was best in the interests of the other forty-five members and, to suit their own sweet will, dispense with the typist's services. The matter should have been referred to members of both Chambers. The House Committee had exceeded their duty by taking the action they had done in getting rid of the typist and refusing to employ another. In the interests of members another typist should be appointed.

The PREMIER: It was to be presumed that the dispensing with the typist was the result of a circular sent to every department, that it was the desire of the Government to effect economies where it was considered by the various departments that such could be done.

Mr. Underwood: No, it was not; we had no circular.

The PREMIER: Anyhow a letter was received by him from the House Committee in which it was stated that in view of the desire of the Government to effect all possible economies in the public service, the committee had decided to retrench Mr. Ford, who had been typist for about five years, with the intention of making other arrangements, which would effect considerable saving in the department. Mr. Ford's services were dispensed with. If it had not been intended to abolish the position, it would have been far better not to have got rid of him as he was given a retiring allowance. It would have been more economical if he had been retained, instead of being paid that allowance and a new officer being employed in his place.

Mr. Bolton: Should not members have been consulted?

The PREMIER: The committee consisted of members from both sides of the House. When members discussed a question like this it would be just as well to

avoid the personalities which had been indulged in. If a man spoke moderately and dealt with a matter temperately he was always prepared to do what he could to fall in with the suggestion of that member, if a reasonable one; but it was very objectionable that members of the Government should be accused on every occasion of doing all kinds of paltry actions. This was one of the things which choked a decent man off being in Parliament. If there were a fair and reasonable argument the Government were prepared to listen to it but they did not want to be abused in every step they took in the interests of public economy.

Mr. Collier: Is the laying down of a bowling green in the interests of economy?

The PREMIER knew nothing about that. His duty as Treasurer was to impress on all departments the necessity of giving the most careful supervision over expenditure. That was done in this instance and as a result of the intimation to the committee it was proposed to do away with the position of typist. Whether that officer was required or not, he was not in a position to say, any further than that when he was a member of the Opposition some years ago he had no occasion whatever to use the services of the typist. Any letters he wrote, he wrote himself, and from what he could see other members now did the same thing. He was not aware that there was a position corresponding to that of Parliamentary typist in the other Houses of Parliament in Australia.

Mr. Bath: In the Federal Parliament they call them library attendants.

The PREMIER: The matter was one which the House Committee had within their jurisdiction and now that members had expressed an opinion upon the point, that committee would be able, if they chose, to take it into consideration again. The Treasurer had nothing whatever to do with it; and if he were to interfere the House Committee would be the very first to resent it.

Mr. TAYLOR: As a member of the House Committee, and having filled that position for some four years, he had some knowledge of the functions that com-

mittee performed. Out of the eleven items appearing in the vote now being discussed, seven were wholly controlled by the House Committee, and the money voted for the items was expended by that committee without intervention from the Government, the Treasurer, or anyone else. The items in question were items 1 to 6 and 11. The House Committee had a certain amount of money placed at their disposal to carry out the affairs of the House, and when that money was passed, the authority of Parliament, over the matters to be controlled, ceased. The year before last the House Committee saved something like £700 a year on the vote. The other items under the vote referred to *Hansard*, but they did not come under the control of the House Committee. With regard to the typist, it might be mentioned that Mr. Ford desired to avail himself of the land settlement scheme promulgated by the Minister for Agriculture, on behalf of civil servants. He intimated so to the committee. Mr. Ford had been for twelve or fourteen years in the employ of the Government and a certain sum would come to him on retiring. The committee, falling in with his idea, rendered him every assistance in order to facilitate his desire to get on the land. When Mr. Ford was accepted by the department as a fit person to go on the land the committee decided to get another typist. They put an advertisement in the *West Australian* and received twenty or thirty applications. At that time some members of the committee evinced considerable interest as to the functions performed by the typist and they became aroused on the question; hence the remarks made by members this afternoon. The committee, when the applications were before them, ultimately decided that it would not be wise to make an appointment. It was not right for him as a member of the committee to indicate the attitude he took up on the question, although it was pretty widely known how he felt on the matter.

Mr. Scaddan: Why not express an opinion?

Mr. TAYLOR: When a member was on a committee he discussed matters with other members. If after a debate he

were defeated he should not leave the committee room whining; whereas, if successful he should not go out boasting. That was his attitude, and he did not care whether, in giving expression to his opinions on that question, he pleased members or not. He always fought his battles fairly, squarely, and straightforwardly. He expected members to "raise Cain" when they found there was no typist. As a member of that committee he would take his share of the blame, for he had no desire to put it upon the Government or any other authority. The members of the committee were appointed by the House, and if there were any grounds for dissatisfaction, it was open to the House to remove those members. There was a proper course to pursue. If the work of the committee were to be investigated, it would be found that the committee had done more work for less money than had any other committee since responsible Government. As a member of the committee he had told hon. members that if they desired to retain the typist it behoved them to move in the matter. This had occurred before it was decided to dispense with the typist. Those opposed to the retention of the typist had got to work in the matter, while those who wished for his retention had taken no action at all.

Mr. Horan: But if the item on the Estimates be passed, what right have the House Committee to throw it out?

Mr. TAYLOR: The item had appeared on the Estimates for several years past and, probably, the department in making up the Estimates had not been aware that the House Committee was thinking of abolishing the position. As a matter of fact applications had been called for a successor to the typist who left, and it was not until these applications were being considered that certain members of the committee had put before that body the advisability of abolishing the office.

Mr. Holman: Who put it before the committee?

The Honorary Minister: I did for one.

Mr. TAYLOR: There could be no doubt that the typist had not had sufficient legitimate work to do. Rarely could a member of Parliament get the

typist to do work for him on the day on which it was asked for; because the typist was generally busy doing work for the officers of the House. On the occasion of the visit of the American Fleet the Premier had monopolised the typist for a couple of months doing the whole of the correspondence in connection with that visit.

The Honorary Minister: And the typist was not missed by members.

Mr. TAYLOR: Whether or not the typist was missed by members, undoubtedly the scheme had saved the State the cost of an extra typist. However, if hon. members wanted the position re-established, it was for them to, in some way, indicate that desire to the committee. It would not be sufficient for them to pass the item; some more definite mark of their wish would be required. If, for instance, they succeeded in reducing the vote by £1, specifically for the purpose, and if the same thing were done in another House, then the committee would readily carry out the wish of members as thus expressed.

Mr. GORDON: The fact that the item appeared on the Estimates did not in any way implicate the Government in respect to this matter. If any sub-committee working in the interests of Parliament saw their way clear to the saving of £200 a year, the fact that that £200 appeared on the Estimates would surely not be sufficient reason to prevent their effecting the economy. As a matter of fact, if the House Committee deserved censure at all in respect to the typist, it was deserved for having allowed the typist to be employed as a servant for a few members of Parliament. It had been a complete waste of money. The committee had made exhaustive inquiries as to the work the typist had to do, and the typist who had gone away, and the temporary typist who had taken his place, had both declared that there was not sufficient work to keep a typist going. It had been stated that during the visit of the American Fleet the typist was employed for two months by the Premier to save someone else being employed, and no complaints were made to the House Com-

mittee that the typist was not in his place; that in itself was sufficient evidence that the officer was not required. There were only four members of the Assembly who used the typist to any extent, and three members of the Upper House, and these three members of the Upper House only used the typist about once a month. Four members of the Assembly used the typist constantly, and one or two would have taken up his time altogether if it had been given to them. The typist complained that he was given work to do which was nothing to do with this Parliament, but with other Parliaments. In his (Mr. Gordon's) opinion it had been clearly proved as a member of the House Committee that it was a waste of money to employ a typist, and quite unnecessary.

Mr. McDOWALL never gave the typist any work to do, but he did not know for a moment when he might find it necessary to employ the services of such an officer if available. Therefore he thought the committee could have been better employed in cutting down expenses in other directions. Members had pointed out that there was not sufficient work to keep this particular officer employed. If that was to be the logical argument in connection with officers of Parliament, then all he had to say was that several officers should be dismissed from Parliament at the present time.

Mr. Gordon: Put them under the House Committee, and we will dismiss them.

Mr. McDOWALL: It was said there were only seven members of Parliament who employed the services of the typist.

Mr. Underwood: That was not correct.

Mr. McDOWALL: If it was correct the fact remained that the rest of the members of Parliament were entitled to the services of the officer if they required them while he occupied the position. That seemed to be an important consideration. He emphatically protested against a useful officer in connection with Parliament being dispensed with. The efficiency of Parliament depended on its being properly officered. Barring

Tasmania, members here were the worst paid of any members of Parliament in the Commonwealth, and we were not allowed anything for postages and telegrams.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was out of order.

Mr. McDOWALL: It was a fair illustration that we should at least have certain privileges, because we lacked privileges in other directions. It was not necessary to employ a typist when Parliament was in recess, but beyond all doubt a typist was necessary and essential when Parliament was in session. Under the circumstances he hoped those who were responsible for the position taken up would endeavour to alter the matter and reinstate the typist, because he was an officer of value to many members.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was his intention to move an amendment indicating that the House required the services of a typist. There was no cause for complaint against the Government, because it was not the fault of the Government that the typist had been dispensed with; it was the decision of the House Committee. The member for Canning had said that Mr. Ford complained to the House Committee that members gave him work to do that was not on public business. He (Mr. Underwood) had never heard such a complaint all the time he had been on the committee, and he had been on that committee as long as the member for Canning. Further than that the first complaint the committee received was not from the typist, but from members, that the Clerks of the House were using the services of the typist to the exclusion of members of Parliament. The committee inquired why the typist was appointed, and found that he was appointed for the convenience of members by the late Speaker, the member for Swan, and it was decided that the Clerks had not the power to come before members, but that whatever work was on the typist's desk first was to be done first. Time after time members had gone to the typist and had been unable to get work done because he had too much to do. This item was

under the control of the House. It was not under the control of the House Committee. When members passed an item on the Estimates it was an indication from the House to the House Committee that a typist was required, and he (Mr. Underwood) would not assume, as a member of the House Committee, that he had power to override the decision of the Assembly. The proper course was to decide in the House, and on the Estimates. If members required a typist, let the House decide and pass the item, and once it was passed it was the duty of the House Committee to appoint a typist and see that he did his duty. That was as far as their power went. He was sure the Premier was misled when he told members that this action was taken in the interests of economy. He (Mr. Underwood) had never seen a letter asking the House Committee to cut down their expenses, and, to prove to members that there was no idea of economy in dispensing with the typist when Mr. Ford gave notice that he wished to leave, the Committee advertised for a typist to fill his place, and there were meetings held to decide upon the appointment of a new typist. Several applicants were tested as to their capabilities for filling the position. Then the member for Fremantle desired a postponement to make inquiries.

The Honorary Minister: What was the proposition before the committee when the postponement was made?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That a typist be not appointed. The hon. member made inquiries, and by that time worked up sufficient courage to abolish the office. He (Mr. Underwood) endeavoured as far as possible to do as much of his own work as possible. At the same time he found it a great convenience and assistance to him to come to a typist and get a letter or documents copied which he wished to send to road boards or other local bodies in his district. It was said that only 20 members used the services of the typist. That was really 20 members out of 50, because there were only two members in the Legislative Council who employed the typist, and the Legislative Council had no legislative work to

do except blocking the work of the Assembly. The members of the Council did not get letters to answer in the same way as did members of the Assembly. There were many members in the House to whom a typist was unnecessary. Possibly the member for Subiaco did not require a typist, because he lived alongside his constituents, and that applied to all City members. It was found on inquiry that the work done by the typist was almost wholly for members representing out-back constituencies.

The Honorary Minister: No; for four or five members.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There was the member for Mount Margaret, the member for Pilbara, the member for Swan, the member for Mount Magnet, and the member for Murchison.

Mr. Jacoby: Nothing for me?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, the hon. member's name was on the list.

Mr. Jacoby: He only typed two letters for me

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The typist was of great convenience to some members, and seeing that we were not so hard pressed for money, as the Committee had passed many items already which were really not required, and there was an amount of £97 excess for typing on the Estimates for the Assembly, he opposed the dismissal of the typist, and with the idea of indicating that the House required the appointment of a typist, if necessary he would move the reduction of the item by £10.

Mr. BOLTON: Perhaps the hon. member who had taken the initiative would move that the item be deleted. That would give members a chance of saying if a typist should be employed or not. An amendment to strike out an item could not be taken as an indication that an officer should be appointed.

Disorder.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am much obliged to the hon. member. When he gives me such advice on absolutely incorrect premises—not an unusual thing for him to do—

The CHAIRMAN: Order; the hon. member must withdraw that remark.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The member for North Fremantle made his statement on incorrect premises and I am going to stick to that.

The CHAIRMAN: The Honorary Minister said that the hon. member made that remark, and that it was not an unusual thing for him to do. I must ask him to withdraw that remark.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will withdraw "unusual thing." I am extremely surprised to see that temperate language of that sort incurs your displeasure after some of the remarks which have been made to-night.

Members: Chair! Chair!

The CHAIRMAN: I must insist that the hon. member shall apologise to the Chair for that remark.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I withdraw the remark.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall call upon the Honorary Minister to apologise to the Chair; if the Honorary Minister does not apologise I shall name him.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I regret if you take exception to anything that I have said in this connection.

[A pause ensued.]

The CHAIRMAN: I must insist upon an apology.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Very well then; I will not make it.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I shall name the Honorary Minister for disorder.

Mr. FOULKES: I do not know whether I am right in intervening—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FOULKES: I would like to ask—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have asked the Honorary Minister to apologise and he has declined, and I have named him.

Mr. FOULKES: Mr. Chairman—

Members: Chair!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FOULKES: I merely wish to ask, subject to your ruling, whether I shall be in order in moving that your decision be disagreed with.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The PREMIER: I feel sure that the Honorary Minister in the statement he

has made, did not do so with any intention of reflecting on the Chair, and I have no doubt that he will not hesitate to withdraw his remarks.

Mr. Angwin: On another occasion a member got seven days for the same thing.

The CHAIRMAN: What I desire to say is that I will not allow the Chair to be reflected upon by either side of the House. The Honorary Minister undoubtedly reflected on the Chair in the remarks which he made. He has withdrawn them, it is true, but I insist upon an apology. I am willing to withdraw my decision to name him on condition that he apologises for his remarks. Unless the Honorary Minister apologises I must ask the Leader of the House to support the Chair.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is not usual—

The CHAIRMAN: I must have an apology or nothing.

The PREMIER: The Honorary Minister will make an apology.

Mr. FOULKES: I rise to a point of order—

Members: Chair!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Claremont must sit down. I must point out that there can be no point of order raised at present.

Mr. FOULKES: I will not—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must call the hon. member to order and insist upon his obeying the Chair.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have no desire to be disrespectful to the Chair, and if my remarks are considered to have been disrespectful I offer my apology. I may say—

The CHAIRMAN: I desire to say that the hon. member must not qualify his apology.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not wish to do so; I only wish to point out that I heard some remarks which were extremely personal to me, and spoke under great provocation on that account.

The CHAIRMAN: The Honorary Minister, or any other member who considers that personal remarks or remarks

of an objectionable character have been made, should draw the attention of the Chair to such remarks, and the Chairman will insist upon their withdrawal. I desire now to say that there is a great practice of interjecting while the House is in Committee. There is no justification whatever for interjections in Committee. I have endeavoured this afternoon, and on previous occasions to stop these interjections, and I hope hon. members will help me to prevent personal remarks being made, and also to check the practice of interjecting in Committee. Hon. members all have the chance of speaking frequently in committee, and if they will more readily assist the Chair in stopping interjections and conversations across the House, while hon. members are speaking, it will be more easily possible to maintain the dignity of our debates. I hope for the support of the Committee in that respect.

Resumed.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The member for North Fremantle gave advice on absolutely incorrect premises. The hon. member said that the Honorary Minister took the initiative on the House Committee. How did the hon. member know what went on in the House Committee? When he (the Honorary Minister) first heard of this matter the House Committee had already arrived at the decision that the services of the typist should be dispensed with. At that time he (the Honorary Minister) was not acquainted with the extent to which hon. members used the typist and he asked the House Committee that the consideration of the question should be postponed until the next meeting in order that information might be obtained upon the subject; and what he did subsequently, was upon the information that he received from hon. members. The mere fact that he had asked the Committee to delay the matter showed that he was actuated only by a desire to see that the moneys entrusted to the House Committee were expended wisely and economically.

Mr. BATH: The point to be decided was, who was to use this typist, or for whose particular convenience was he appointed. If the information gained by the House Committee was that only a few members of the Assembly or Council were using the typist, it would be because others who were not members considered that they had a prior claim on his services. There was no member in the House who had more correspondence to deal with than he (Mr. Bath) and there was no one who had to spend more time at the writing table than he had, and the reason he had to do that was that when at times he required the services of the typist he found that this officer was engaged in doing work, not for other members of the House, but for the Executive Council or for the gentleman who was the Clerk of the Executive Council.

The Premier: The Executive Council never wants a line typed.

Mr. BATH: Rather than submit to delay therefore he always settled down and wrote his own correspondence. If it were clearly laid down that the typist's services were to be utilised by members, more would avail themselves of the opportunity to get him to do their work.

Mr. SWAN had a great deal to do compared with members representing less important constituencies and there were many times when he would have been pleased to avail himself of the services of the typist. In his opinion the services of the typist should be retained.

Mr. HOLMAN: On many occasions when he required the services of the typist he found him doing work for somebody else, either for the Executive Council, or sometimes for the *Hansard* staff. On one occasion when he wanted a copy of a return struck off it was necessary for him to apply to the leader of the *Hansard* staff that a typist should be allowed sufficient time to strike off a copy of the return. It had been suggested that the typist was not necessary, but with country members who had fourteen or fifteen centres to correspond with, and three or four public bodies as well, it was impossible for them to do the correspondence in a proper manner

unless they had assistance. When he heard that the services of the typist were to be dispensed with, in conversation with the member for York he learned that the position was to be abolished because the hon. members for Mt. Magnet and Murchison monopolised the typist's services. In the street, too, he (Mr. Holman) had heard that he, and the member for Mt. Magnet had the almost exclusive use of the typist's services. It had been said that members in another place did not avail themselves of the typist, but those gentlemen did not have the same amount of correspondence to deal with as the members of the Lower House, and they were not in session as much as the members of the Lower Chamber. Some of those on the House Committee opposed to the employment of a typist should move that the item be reduced to such an amount that an officer could not be engaged, and that would enable members to discuss whether a typist's services were needed or not.

The Premier: The Leader of the Opposition complained that he could not get the services of the typist.

Mr. HOLMAN: That was because the typist was engaged doing work for other servants of the House. Other members had the same experience.

Mr. GORDON: There seemed to be some misunderstanding as some members did not know there was a typist employed, but it seemed to be the wish of members that there should be a typist. The House Committee did not want to deprive members of the services of the typist. They thought they might save a sum legitimately, and did not fill the position when it became vacant; but seeing members convinced him (Mr. Gordon) by their arguments that a typist was needed, at any rate during the session, he would take steps to see that a typist was engaged during the time the House was sitting.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It would be better if some member opposed to the employment of a typist would move to strike out the item, so that members could have a fair vote on the question.

The Premier: I cannot vote against my own Estimates.

Mr. COLLIER: The matter should be definitely settled before we passed beyond the item. It should not be possible for four or five members of the House Committee to deprive hon. members of the services of a typist, if the majority of members wanted a typist; and unless there was a definite assurance from the members of the House Committee that a typist would be engaged, members should give a deciding vote on the question. What was the good of putting the sum on the Estimates if the money was not required?

Mr. HOLMAN: There was a certain expenditure necessary, but in order to test the feeling of the Committee he moved—

That the item be reduced by £100.

Mr. Jacoby: You will have to vote for the amendment.

Mr. Holman: That does not matter.

The PREMIER: The object would have been served if the members of the House Committee could judge from the expressions of members whether it was desirable the services of another typist should be engaged. It seemed an extraordinary way of expressing a desire to retain the position by moving that the salary be abolished. There was an element of inconsistency about it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was impossible for the House Committee to take the view of having heard an expression of opinion from the Committee. The members of another House had to be considered in the matter. It was regrettable indeed those who opposed the typist would not give members a fair vote on it. If he were opposed to the typist he would move to strike out the item.

Mr. GEORGE: The question was whether one typist was enough. As a country member, the letters he received to-day would take two hours to dictate, and it would take the typist eight hours to transcribe the notes. It was a farce to have only one typist in the circumstances. If members carried out their political correspondence with their con-

stituents we would need an increase in the item to have more typists.

Mr. OSBORN: What was indicated by the amendment? If the appointment was to be made for the sake of country members and only while the House was sitting, it was reasonable; but there was no need for appointing a typist for the convenience of country members during the recess. Was it intended to reduce the item by £100 to employ temporary typists during the session? He could not understand the idea of moving to reduce the item and at the same time advocating reinstating a typist for the sake of country members.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

Mr. HOLMAN: As there had been given an understanding that a typist would be appointed while the House was sitting, and if necessary during recess, he would ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. UNDERWOOD objected to the amendment being withdrawn. He would like to know from whom the member for Murchison received an assurance that a typist would be appointed. If the House Committee had agreed in this direction he would be prepared to let the question go, but not otherwise.

Mr. GORDON: During the dinner adjournment he had given the assurance to the member for Murchison that so far as he was concerned he would be agreeable to the appointment of a typist during the session.

Mr. TAYLOR: As a member of the House Committee he had spoken to all the other members of that committee in this Chamber with the exception of the member for Pilbara, and it was unnecessary to speak to him for he knew their opinions agreed. The members to whom he had spoken had agreed to the appointment of a typist during the session; he therefore spoke to the member for Murchison with regard to the matter.

Mr. HOLMAN: Having received an assurance that practically all the members of the House Committee had agreed to make the appointment, the object for

which he had moved the amendment was attained, therefore he would again ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. ANGWIN: The House Committee were to be complimented upon the improvements they had made during the year around Parliament House, but there was one matter upon which he desired information and that was whether the committee intended to provide a bowling green. If a green were to be provided then it would be a waste of money as there were several bowling greens within a few minutes' walk from this building. There was no necessity for one here and certainly the people of the State should not be put to the expense of maintaining one for Parliament. It was to be hoped the House Committee would give this matter further consideration. The making of a green was a very small matter in comparison with the cost of upkeep, which would be greater each year than the cost of having a typist for members. While no doubt the motives of the committee were good, apparently they had only taken into consideration the cost of construction without considering the cost of maintenance.

Mr. GORDON: The sand on the spot where the green was proposed to be built in the future had to be shifted so the committee thought it advisable to arrange for a bowling green to be put there. The committee, however, were going to spend nothing more this year in connection with the work. The expense had now stopped and no grass would be planted this summer.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was to be regretted that the committee were not going on with the work of preparing a bowling green, for it was absurd to spend the money they had done if they were not going to continue the work. The ground in its original state was unsightly enough but it had been made worse by making a sand bank there. Notwithstanding the fact that considerable improvements had been made around Parliament House its appearance was still a disgrace. If it were not intended to proceed with making the green the committee should never have started the work. Members of this Cham-

ber had various tastes and it was not right that those who differed from others with regard to recreation should for that reason say that no facilities for that recreation should be provided. Personally it would mean nothing to him if the House Committee decided to close up the bar and refreshment room, but because he would not mind he was not justified in urging that such a course should be adopted. The member for East Fremantle objected to the public having to pay for the upkeep of a bowling green, but he said nothing about the public having to provide £1,006 for cleaners, kitchen and dining room hands' wages. If the public provided means for the convenience of members in that direction, surely there was no objection to their providing it for healthy recreation. He would far sooner see a member on the bowling green than in the corridors drinking to excess. The committee could not improve the surroundings better than by constructing a bowling green and they should be encouraged to proceed with the work.

Mr. Hudson: Why not have a tennis court?

Mr. SCADDAN: There was no reason why one should not be provided. He had urged the Colonial Secretary some time ago to make provision for the recreation of members. It was to be hoped the green would be provided and thus allow members to enjoy wholesome recreation.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Only the initial stages with regard to the construction of a bowling green had been taken, for it was realised that after the levelling had been done it would take some time for the sand to settle. The committee were of opinion that when the gardener had spare time he could devote it to planting turf. It was not proposed to go on spending money particularly on that work, but the regular staff employed in the gardens would make the bowling green when they had time. It was intended to get the green made in due time without undue expense. A proposal to make a tennis court had not been before the committee so far but it was possible one might be laid in the future. It was the duty of the committee to make the grounds around

Parliament House an attraction to the City and he was in favour of improving the ground as money became available.

Mr. George: Where do you get the money from?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Some was obtained from the Public Works Department.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was to be regretted that the member for East Fremantle had complained of the action of the committee in endeavouring, with the limited funds at their disposal, to make the Parliament House grounds attractive. At the request of some members the Committee removed a quantity of sand and prepared the ground for a bowling green. Operations, so far as further outlay was concerned, had been suspended as it was realised it would not be economical to continue the work of making the green at present. If we waited for a few months the sand would settle and then it would be a more economical time for planting turf. Later on the committee would plant grass and they intended to beautify the grounds at the least possible expense.

The PREMIER: The House Committee were to be congratulated on what they had done during the last session in improving the surroundings of the House. Certainly the aspect to Hay Street had been very much improved, and the work had been done at a low cost, but he would warn the committee that if they took on the bowling green they would find that it would prove more expensive than they anticipated. Bowling greens were expensive undertakings.

Mr. ANGWIN: The House Committee ought to be warned about the continual expense that would be involved in the upkeep of a bowling green. In starting that green, they had entered on an undertaking without due consideration of the cost. Members would agree that the grounds were very much improved, and the committee should be complimented on the work they had done.

Mr. JACOBY: The cost of maintaining the dining room was a matter which he wished to refer to. The time had arrived when the House Committee should take the matter into consideration. Already there was an expenditure of nearly £3,000

in connection with the dining room. There was an expenditure on incidentals which was £1,000, and a similar amount for cleaners, kitchen and dining room wages, while there was an item of £150 for the caterer. This total expenditure would work out for meals at over £21, or an average of 2s. per meal. Possibly some means might be found to reduce this expenditure. It was beyond reason that the State should spend an amount of money equal to £21 in meals, or 2s. per head, and in addition that there should be a large expenditure out of the pockets of hon. members in payment for those meals. If we estimated that the House sat for five months, and there were three sitting days a week, or a total of 78 sitting days, and if for the purpose of an estimate it was said there would be 100 meals per day, it would work out at 7,800 meals during that time, and at a cost of 2s. per meal, which would be the average price paid, we would have an expenditure by members of £780, making a total expenditure of £2,150 by the State and £780 by members, or a total of £2,930; and that worked out at nearly 8s. per meal. The premises he was arguing from were fairly reasonable, and they gave some idea that there was room for investigation in the cost of the dining room. Some attempt should be made by the House Committee to discover what was the actual cost to the State for each meal, and the actual cost to members. As there was a reasonable demand on the part of taxpayers that expenditure should be reduced, it was to be hoped that they were not going to overlook the opportunities occurring at our own door.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member's remarks were rather surprising when one considered that he was Speaker of the Assembly for 12 or 15 months, and by virtue of that dignified position was a member of the House Committee. The member for Swan had given a fair idea of the interest that he took in the affairs of the House Committee while he was Speaker, when he spoke as he did about the cost to the country of the refreshment room. The only expense so far as the State was concerned was that the State provided the third item, that was £150,

for the caterer's salary. The State naturally provided the caterer with his furnishings, linen, cutlery, glassware, crockery, cooking utensils, and labour in the way of cleaners, cook and kitchen hands, while in item 11 there were included in "incidentals," telephone rent, uniforms, firewood, and water. As far as all the supplies for the refreshment room were concerned, these were provided by the caterer at his own cost. Those commodities however were under the supervision of the House Committee who saw that the caterer provided the best of everything for members. The House Committee regulated the prices the caterer should charge, and the caterer had to look to members for his profits. It did not cost the State one penny, as far as providing provisions was concerned. The hon. member for Swan, who was Speaker for over 12 months, showed that he had not done his duty, and it made him (Mr. Taylor) feel strongly when members found fault about a work which was the best that had been done since Responsible Government. The member for Swan did not know his duties when he talked about the price of meals, and the cost of these to the State. Perhaps nowhere else in Australia could so good a meal be obtained for the money.

Mr. George: How many complaints have you had?

Mr. TAYLOR: There had been complaints, it was true; but the hon. member would recognise that it was impossible wholly to wipe out complaints in respect to any service. When an hon. member was found making such foolish statements as had emanated from the member for Swan, it was calculated to rouse resentment; more particularly when the hon. member making such statements had been Speaker of the Assembly at a time when the Speaker was all-powerful and practically ran everything in connection with the joint Houses.

Mr. Jacoby: Things were very well run then, were they not?

Mr. TAYLOR: So far from that being the case, it was the sins of the hon. member for which the committee were now suffering.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw that.

Mr. TAYLOR: If it were not in order he would cheerfully withdraw it. Still, it had annoyed him exceedingly to hear some of the foolish statements made that evening.

Mr. Jacoby: What statements?

Mr. TAYLOR: The statements used in respect to the cost to the State of the provisions. This matter was wholly in the hands of the caterer, who very frequently had to run the provision department at great loss. For instance, when both Houses were sitting and both rose at about 6 o'clock, there was scarcely an hon. member left to occupy the 70 or 80 chairs provided at the dinner table. This meant a heavy loss to the caterer, and it had happened twice this session. The hon. member would make out that the State provided the provisions, which was distinctly untrue.

The PREMIER: The amounts quoted by the hon. member were accurate, but why they should have been debited in any way to the cost of the provisions was not easily comprehended. For instance, the item referred to covered fuel, telephone, water rate, stationery, uniforms, washing, garden, house supplies and fittings, new furniture, decorations and alterations, cartage and sundries; none of these matters could very well be debited to the kitchen. The other item included in the calculation, namely, that of £1,006 was made up of the whole of the cleaners, waiters, cooks, and all attendants in connection with the Houses. Since 1906-7 a very considerable amount of money that previously had been paid by the Public Works Department was being expended from the vote "Joint Houses of Parliament." In 1907 £150 had thus been spent on linen, and £160 on a supply of glass, while last year £200 had been expended on furnishing and decorating. As a matter of fact the fuel bill had been reduced by something like 50 per cent. The hon. member would realise that the House Committee were by no means carrying out their duties in a perfunctory way.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Committee were indebted to the member for Swan for having called attention to various directions in which economy could be effected. Still, the member for Swan should pin in his hat the old saying, that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. When that hon. member was Speaker of the Assembly he had wanted a special servant told off to attend to his—

The CHAIRMAN: There was no relevancy in that.

Mr. Jacoby: The statement is incorrect.

Mr. HEITMANN: At all events during the time the member was Speaker of the Assembly there had been exhibited more frill than ever before or since.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It really seemed that an inquiry was warranted because, while there was £1,000 for cleaning and stewards, etcetera, there was also £150 paid to the caterer. It was to be remembered that there must be a fair profit derived from the bar, while the meals supplied did not represent a very considerable loss. He would like an inquiry to settle once and for all the question of whether the committee were overpaying the caterer. In his opinion the place could be run without paying the caterer anything. He had no desire to cut down wages, but at the same time he objected to anybody getting an excess of wages. It was pretty well certain that the service was not being done as cheaply as it might be.

Mr. George: Why not close it during recess?

Mr. GORDON: It was to be remembered that during last year nearly £300 had been saved by dispensing with the services of the waiters when in recess. That question had now cropped up again, and the waiters wanted some consideration for the period of recess. And while some hon. members said it was quite right that they should be paid during recess, on the other hand a member of the House Committee had declared that the service should be run more cheaply. In his (Mr. Gordon's) opinion the place was very cheaply conducted. Certainly there was no place in town where one

could get for 1s. 6d. anything like the meal provided at Parliament House.

Mr. FOULKES: Notwithstanding what had been said, the cost was far more than the country could afford. He had no wish to criticise the administration of the House Committee; still he could not but take exception to the expense of providing the accommodation during recess. No doubt a certain amount of accommodation was required when the House were sitting, but when in recess the place was used by but a very small number of members. When the sittings were held in the old Parliament House, it had been the practice for Ministers to attend and take luncheon on the Assembly premises every day during recess; and members, knowing that Ministers could be found there, used to attend also. Now, however, there was but one Minister who ever attended for luncheon, and his presence was due to the fact that his offices were close to Parliament House. During the last four or five years the only Minister one saw in the building was the Minister who happened to hold the portfolio for Works.

Mr. Horan: The staff is not kept on during recess.

Mr. FOULKES: There was a large staff kept on during recess. Why should this expensive establishment be kept going for the sake of forming a club for two or three hon. members?

[Mr. Taylor took the Chair.]

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Premier's Office—agreed to.

Vote—Treasury, £8,064:

Mr. KEENAN: Was it the intention of the Premier and Treasurer to make any statement on this vote?

The PREMIER: No. When delivering the Budget he had gone fairly extensively into the various departments. He would be, however, pleased to give any information on any item on which information was sought.

Mr. KEENAN: It was regrettable that an examination of the Estimates under "the Treasurer" showed that the policy of economy the Government properly considered necessary to adopt was confined, in most cases, to small grants

made for assistance in various ways to small communities in the back country. Every member and the majority of the electors agreed that economy was necessary, and no doubt, however much it might mean to the small settlements alluded to to be deprived of grants meaning a great deal to them, in the sense that they were possessed of but little of the enjoyments of human life and many of the ills, if it were necessary to economise they would be prepared to waive these grants until better times; but their real objection was that while they were deprived of the small grants necessary, having regard to the circumstances in which they lived, large sources of expenditure were continued which were not necessary for the development or for the real happiness of the people of the State. In the course of his observations he would point out the items to which he took exception, but before doing so he wished to say he had no objection to expenditure of this character if the public purse could afford it. He had no objection to the expenditure for the maintenance of many establishments which, though doing nothing for the development of the country, were, to some extent, educational, if the public purse were in a position to pay for it; but when we were faced with financial difficulties, and when a policy of economy was absolutely necessary, it was the very first way in which we should economise by refusing expenditure on these items which were more or less ornamental. One item in which there could be a large saving was in Division 16, on the item "Agent General." The Commonwealth Parliament had passed a Bill, and as a result a High Commissioner would be appointed, so that it was no longer necessary for the States to have anything more than business agents.

The CHAIRMAN: Was the hon. member discussing Division 16, London Agency?

Mr. KEENAN: Yes, as an item in speaking generally on the Treasurer's departments.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order in discussing Division 16 under the Treasury vote. The hon.

member could discuss any item in Division 8, Treasury.

Mr. KEENAN: A general discussion usually took place on the Estimates presented by the Treasurer, and included all divisions under the Treasurer.

The CHAIRMAN: That discussion took place on the Budget after the speech delivered by the Treasurer on the first item of the Estimates. Members must now discuss the various divisions.

Mr. KEENAN: The practice was to discuss every Minister's department on the general discussion on the Budget, and when each separate Minister brought forward his Estimates there was a general discussion on the Estimates the Minister presented.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was in order in discussing Division 8, Treasury, £8,064. There could be a general discussion on that division, and a discussion on each division as it came along; that was the procedure.

Mr. KEENAN: With all due deference, the practice had been for the Minister to introduce the whole of the Estimates under him, and not to introduce a single division. On this occasion the Treasurer had not made an introductory speech, but that did not preclude members from dealing with the whole of the Estimates the Treasurer presented, unless there was a new practice. If so, it was an unfortunate practice.

The CHAIRMAN: If that was the practice it appeared to be wrong. The vote before the Committee was Division 8, Treasury, £8,064. Members, he hoped, would confine themselves to the discussion of that division.

The PREMIER: It had not been customary for the Treasurer to make an introductory speech in connection with his departmental Estimates, although it was the custom for every other Minister to do so. The point was raised last session, and it was shown that for 12 years no Treasurer had made any statement beyond the Budget when he went into the whole question of the finances. Last session the discussion immediately proceeded to the item "Under-Treasurer."

Mr. KEENAN: Whether the Treasurer made a speech in introducing his departmental Estimates was immaterial. Having delivered his Budget speech the Committee, by courtesy, might allow the Treasurer not to make a second speech; but that did not deprive members of their right. The question now was the whole of the departmental Estimates of the Treasurer and not any one division, otherwise it would lead to a great deal more discussion, because members would have to repeat themselves on each division. The wisest course to avoid that was to allow a general discussion. It was certainly the practice to have a general discussion. It was, therefore, unfortunately necessary to differ from the ruling, and to ask that Mr. Speaker be requested to advise on the matter, if on reconsideration the Chairman considered it necessary to stand by his ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: There was no desire to curb hon. members in any way, but whatever had been the custom in the past the vote under discussion was Division 8, Treasury, £8,064, and it appeared to him the discussion must hinge on that division, and not on the Treasurer's departments generally. If the hon. member desired to dissent from the ruling the hon. member must move.

Mr. KEENAN: Did the Chairman stand by the ruling that, in fact, the Committee were confined to the discussion of Subdivision 8?

The CHAIRMAN: The question under discussion was Division 8, and on that division the discussion must range.

Mr. KEENAN: The previous page showed "VIII. — Colonial Treasurer, £180,939," and on that the discussion should take place, and not on any subdivision. It was necessary for the Chair to first allow a general discussion before any discussion on items or subdivisions took place.

The CHAIRMAN: If the Committee desired that a general discussion should take place there was no wish to prevent it; but the practice that had existed in the past was not correct. The only question before the Chair was Division 8, Treasury, £8,064, and to go beyond that

and discuss Division 16, London Agency, was certainly not in order. If the custom had existed in the past it did not make it right, but if the Committee were anxious for a general discussion he had no hesitation in allowing it.

Mr. KEENAN: There was scope for making considerable savings in the department. One division in which there would in the future be no necessity for the same expenditure as in the past was that of the London Agency. When the formal duties in connection with the representation of the States in London were taken over by the Commonwealth, and a High Commissioner was appointed, as one would be shortly, there would be no necessity to have a State Agent General in London on the same scale as in the past. A business man to look after the business contracts of the State, and two or three clerks instead of an under-secretary and five clerks, as at present, could do all the work required in the London office. This also might do away with the possibility always hanging over the heads of Governments of the great attraction that London held to everyone. When the London Agency division was reached he would move to reduce the vote by £1,000, as in the reduced form the total vote would be more than enough for the purpose. There were other items of expenditure which none would have grudged if the State purse had been full, but when it was a case of keeping expenditure down to the lowest limit, cutting down everything, then such items were not justified, and particularly so, when they were compared with the small grants that were struck out, but which meant so much to the back country communities. For instance, there was a sum of £35 which had been voted last year for the purpose of affording secondary education in connection with endowment lectures at Kalgoorlie that had now been struck off. If the Government had desired to save money in connection with secondary education they could have saved it easily by striking off £1,000 voted for a school not far from Parliament House. The pruning knife had been applied to those cases that made least re-

sistance. Members who could worry Ministers, and were on the spot, had been able to get consideration far above the deserts of the districts they were looking after. Believing that economy was absolutely necessary, that we must reduce expenditure, and prevent the burdens from becoming too much for the people to carry, he could not conceive that any Government had the right to claim the support of the country unless they could show in this most important matter a national policy, one having no reference to locality, but a policy designed to afford the people all that assistance they should receive, and yet curtail anything in the way of unnecessary expenditure. The municipal votes were cut down by a very large amount, but at the same time the vote for the Zoo—which after all was only for the maintenance of beasts, whereas the other item was for the maintenance of humanity—was scarcely touched at all. It was such comparisons that made the people irritated and discontented. If all were treated alike there would be none of the grumbling existing now, but it was because of the votes left on the Estimates and the reduction of smaller amounts that the grumbling occurred. The Estimates presented nothing that commended them to him, for they were a repetition in the worst form of the Estimates which had been presented year after year to the House when the State finances were more flourishing. We must make up our minds that all matters except those for proper expenditure must be struck out. It was to be regretted that the Government had not taken a bold course and reduced many of the votes appearing on the Estimates. If they had done so, and had cut off many items which were really unnecessary, then, even if it had been necessary to go so far as to reduce the items for the country districts, the people in those districts, and especially on the fields, would have raised no complaint against the economies for they would have known that they were shared in by all the people in the State.

Mr. GEORGE: There was a question affecting a considerable portion of the employees of the State to which he de-

sired to refer. A few days ago he asked the Premier a question with reference to the dealings of the Government with the classification of the Public Service. He would like to know before proceeding whether he would be in order in speaking on such a question on the vote now before the House.

The CHAIRMAN: Did the matters to which the hon. member wished to refer come under this vote?

Mr. GEORGE: There was provision in the Estimates for bringing certain civil servants employed in this department up to their minimum, therefore, he wished to refer to a matter that came under the vote.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the member could discuss it.

Mr. GEORGE: In referring to this question he had no desire to embarrass the Government or take up the time of members unduly, but seeing that there had been a spirit of unrest, absolutely undesirable, in the Public Service, the time had come when there should be a definite announcement in this Chamber as to what was the desire, not only of the Government but also of members, in regard to the interpretation of the Public Service Act. No State, the same as no business house, could afford to have discontent, unrest, misstatements, and misconception as to the true position; and this State could not afford to allow the matter, which was more or less becoming a canker, to continue, and bring about trouble not only for Ministers, but also for members of Parliament. This was the position. For many years civil servants complained that they had not been properly treated; that their chances of promotion were difficult, as the great bulk of promotions and advancements had been obtained principally by influence, or by the making of back door statements, possibly by members of Parliament and others, and they felt they could not rely upon merit, combined with good behaviour and knowledge of work, resulting in that advancement which a person had the right to expect. This state of unrest occurred some years ago, and after a deal of agitation and discussion in Parliament

a Public Service Bill was brought before the House; and after a deal of trouble, was passed. Whether it was a perfect or imperfect Bill was immaterial so far as the point he wished to bring forward was concerned, but under that Bill there was appointed a commissioner whose duties were to go through all the departments, classify the different officers, place them in their grades, and so allay the trouble and discontent. When the commissioner was appointed most members thought the troublesome question was ended. None imagined it was only the beginning of the trouble. The classification made by the Public Service Commissioner was made known.

The CHAIRMAN: What item was the member discussing?

Mr. GEORGE: The various matters under the control of the Treasurer which he was discussing generally. In the particular division he was speaking of there was the question of money being provided to bring certain civil servants up to the minimum of their classification.

The CHAIRMAN: The member had better discuss that when the item was reached.

Mr. GEORGE: Perhaps the Treasurer would find it more convenient to have the matter dealt with now.

The PREMIER: Why not deal with it under the vote for the Public Service Commissioner?

Mr. GEORGE: If it would be more convenient for the Treasurer to have the subject dealt with under the heading of "Public Service Commissioner," further remarks could be delayed until then.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could proceed.

Mr. GEORGE: The Public Service Commissioner having been appointed, it was felt that matters would be all serene, and that discontent would be swept to one side. The feeling of the civil servants in connection with the matter was that their positions would be immediately improved and that if the salaries they were receiving were less than the minimum fixed, those salaries would be raised to the level of that mini-

mum and that the extra money would be paid. Further, they had the impression that as long as a man remained in that classification he would receive increases in salary annually until he reached his maximum. Under Section 84 of the Public Service Act no one could hold that the civil servants were entitled to annual increments, because it was stated there that the Commissioner would so deal with the service as to properly grade the members of it; but there was no word whatever in the whole of that Act as far as could be seen, certainly not in Section 84, which would signify that providing a man was kept on the same work year after year he would be entitled to increased pay for doing that work. The intention of Parliament was that if a man by good conduct retained his position, and from the fact that he was doing his work properly and his conduct was satisfactory, he would receive further remuneration as time went on; but under Section 84 it seemed that when once a man had been placed in his class or grade, unless his work increased in value, the experience was such that he had no more hope of getting an increase in his salary than he (Mr. George) had of becoming king of Timbuctoo. This year the Government had made provision for bringing all the civil servants up to the minimum salaries fixed by the Commissioner, but the object of the questions he (Mr. George) had submitted to the House was to ascertain what would have been the amount paid, if the minimum had been given when the classification was made. There was a good deal of trouble and perturbation of spirit among public servants because of the withholding of what they believed to be their rights. If the amount in question was not an insuperable one, say it came to £2,000 or £3,000, or even £4,000, it would pay the country hands down to give that amount and end the discontent which undoubtedly existed. There was no intention to assail the Government with regard to their action, because Ministers were after all simply administrators of the affairs of the State subject to the direction of members of Parliament, and if

it should be decided by the Chamber that the interpretation of the Public Service Act by the Government of the day was not what the Chamber intended, there would be no question of loss of dignity on the part of the Government if the wish of the Chamber was unmistakably made known to them that that course was not desirable. While members were at one with the Government in the wish that there should be economy in all departments, members certainly desired to be at one with them in the view that the State could better afford to make its service contented whether with regard to the salary or the wages men, than it could to have them justifiably discontented and set on edge as was the position at the present time. If it was the intention of Parliament that when the Commissioner's classification was made it should be put into force, then it was the duty of the Government to see that the wishes of Parliament were carried out. If there were obstacles in the way of carrying them out, it was the duty of the Government to make them known to members; but it was not part of the duty of the Government—and it would be wrong of the Chamber, too, if it knew of discontent among the civil servants—to shut their eyes and allow that state of affairs to continue.

[*Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. GEORGE: Reading day after day as there had been the opportunity of doing during the last few months about the discontent in the service, he had made up his mind, if no one else brought the question forward, to submit it to the House in such a fashion as would draw an expression of opinion from members, and an expression of the views of the Government. Assuming that the Government felt that owing to the finances they could not well provide the money required, they might have allayed some of the trouble had they placed the men in their classification, and put them on the Estimates at the sum according to which they had been classified, and then brought them down to the sum that the Government could afford to pay, and

by that means submit them to a percentage reduction as had been done in Queensland. When he (Mr. George) attended a conference of Railway Commissioners a few years back, the Commissioner of Queensland received a telegram from his Premier with reference to the wages and salaries of the railway servants in that State, to the effect that owing to the exigencies of the finances of that State it would be necessary to reduce those salaries and wages by a percentage. It would be seen therefore that the suggestion he (Mr. George) had made about the percentage reduction was not original, but it could be contended that it would be better if a civil servant knew what his position would be, and that he would be kept in that position because the State could not afford to pay more. It was to be hoped that it would be possible to deal with this question and that the Government would give the House to understand what interpretation they placed upon the Public Service Act.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine himself to the Treasury Vote.

Mr. GEORGE: It was to be regretted that the Chairman was not in the Chair when he (Mr. George) began his speech. There had been a little discussion with Mr. Taylor while acting as Chairman, and he gave permission that the speech might be continued on the lines that had been followed.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not continue on the lines he had been proceeding.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member for Kalgoorlie was permitted to discuss the London Agency, and the member for Murray ought to be permitted to discuss an item which appeared half a dozen times in the Treasury Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: The question was Treasury, £8,064, and the hon. member could discuss all the items if he wanted to do so.

Mr. GEORGE: So far he had discussed the question of minimum salaries.

The PREMIER: When the question arose some little time previously as to whether the hon. member might proceed

with his discussion, Mr. Taylor was in the Chair, and he (the Premier) intimated that it would be preferable to permit the hon. member to proceed in connection with the Public Service Commissioner and the Chairman told him he might proceed.

Mr. GEORGE: Would the Chairman inform him now what the position was?

The CHAIRMAN: The position was the Vote Treasury, £8,064.

Mr. McDOWALL: On a point of order, was not the procedure now being adopted the procedure adopted during last session?

The CHAIRMAN: That was not a point of order.

Mr. McDOWALL: May I ask a question?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. GEORGE: Having had permission from Mr. Taylor when in the Chair to make the speech that had been made, it was a bit rough to be ruled out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: What the hon. member had said had not been ruled out of order. The hon. member must now confine himself to Treasury, £8,064.

Mr. GEORGE: Well, on item No. 1.

Mr. BATH: If the hon. member got on to item No. 1 he would prevent other hon. members from dealing with Division No. 8. For the past four years hon. members had pointed out that so far as economies effected by the Treasurer were concerned they had been exercised in the wrong direction. We would never be able to secure proper administration from the Treasurer, whoever he might be, unless those who believed that the administration was wrong were consistent in their attitude in regard to the question. The member for Kalgoorlie had been returned to reform the Treasury, or to lead the Treasurer to reform his ways. As a private member he had had the opportunity of doing this, and a better opportunity still as a member of the Government; yet we had had four years of mal-administration of the finances and of economy exercised in the wrong direction, and now we were getting back to the old position when these economies were not carried out.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would have to adhere to the Treasury

vote; a general discussion on the division could not be allowed.

Item, Under-Treasurer and paymaster of Imperial accounts, £750:

Mr. GEORGE: It would be interesting to learn if the resignation of the gentleman who held the office had been accepted, and whether any efforts had been made to induce him to withdraw his resignation. So far as could be gathered Mr. Eliot had sent in his resignation under circumstances which did not to-day exist, and, having regard to his long experience in the service and his many qualifications, it would be agreed that his services were invaluable to the State.

The PREMIER: Mr. Eliot had retired at his own request, and so far as he (the Premier) knew there had been no alteration of circumstances, such as would warrant any alteration in the arrangements made. The resignation had been accepted as from the 1st January, when Mr. Eliot would retire with 12 months' leave of absence and a pension of £500 per annum. In the near future his successor would be appointed.

Mr. GEORGE: It was known that an accountant had been engaged by the Government with the object of going into the various accounts, not only of the Treasury but also of all other branches of the service; and it seemed that it was necessary that this accountant, associated with the Public Service Commissioner, should re-organise the whole of the public accounts. Until that new scheme was formulated the services of Mr. Eliot should, if possible, be retained, for that gentleman knew more about the accounts of the State than any other man in the service, and in consequence his services and experience would be well-nigh invaluable. The State could better afford to keep a man who had been so long in the position that it could allow him to retire. While as chief of one of the departments he (Mr. George) had been brought into constant touch with Mr. Eliot, he had been so much impressed by that gentleman's knowledge of the Treasury accounts that he now viewed with some considerable concern the idea of Mr. Eliot's services being lost to the State.

The PREMIER: Before adopting any of the proposals to be made by the special commissioner appointed to go through the accounts the Government would consult Mr. Eliot, and would give full consideration to his views on the subject before any drastic alterations were decided upon. Mr. Eliot had already been commended by the commissioners for the way in which his accounts were kept and for his system generally. Under the proposed new system considerable duplication of accounts would be avoided, and an endeavour would be made to have an analysis once a month. Several other suggestions had been made. No one had a greater respect for Mr. Eliot than he. Mr. Eliot was the senior civil servant, and his advice on matters of accountancy was of the greatest value.

Item, Minimum increases, Stamps Embossing Branch, £30:

Mr. BATH: How many officers would this provision apply to, and what would it mean in each individual instance?

The PREMIER: The total minimum increases were distributed amongst the various subdepartments. At the end of each subdivision provision was made for the minimum increases. This was for two officers employed in the Stamps Embossing Branch.

Mr. GEORGE: Was it in order to deal with the civil service on this item?

The CHAIRMAN: Not generally.

Mr. GEORGE: What were the names of the individuals who got the minimum increase of £30? This information was necessary to see whether these were the people he (Mr. George) wanted to get at.

The PREMIER regretted the names of the individuals referred to could not be given; he had only the items. He could assure members that all the civil servants would be provided for.

Mr. Scaddan: The rumour in town is that it is not so.

Mr. GEORGE: Without this information we could not go further with the Estimates. We should report progress until we got the information.

The PREMIER: One officer received an increase of £20 and another received an increase of £10.

Mr. GEORGE: There was no desire to embarrass the Premier or to make a

farce of the matter, but a principle affecting a large number of people could not be discussed unless the information was given. The Premier did not mention the classification of the officers, their grades, or the period covered by the increases, or why the increases had not been given from the time the classification was made. Without that information he must persist in his motion. He moved—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Premier should say why the Estimates did not show the particular officers receiving these increases. One or two civil servants were doubtful as to whether the whole of the officers were receiving these increases.

The PREMIER: These amounts were provided by the Treasury Examiner amongst the whole of the departments. After having obtained all the information, it was considered advisable, instead of providing one lump sum, for the minimum increases to be distributed among the various departments, because there might be a possibility of some officers being omitted.

Mr. SCADDAN: Why were they not put opposite each item so that members could see no one was overlooked?

The PREMIER: The minimum increases were added after the draft Estimates were printed. To do what the hon. member suggested would mean redrafting all the Estimates.

Votes put and passed.

*Vote, *Audit*, £7,560:

Mr. BATH: When were we likely to have the report of the Auditor General this year? Last year it was somewhat earlier than usual, having been laid on the Table when the Estimates were going through. The report was practically useless to members if it arrived after the Estimates were passed.

The PREMIER: The report, according to the Auditor General, would be presented earlier this year than in any previous year, probably about the 20th of the month. The hon. member could remember that the Budget speech was not delivered last year until the 28th November. Dealing with this department gen-

erally, a new Audit Bill had been drafted, and was the subject of discussion between the department and the Treasury. It would not be possible to bring it down for consideration this session, but early next session it would probably be one of the first measures brought down.

Mr. ANGWIN: Seeing the Supply Bill was passed, the Estimates might stand over until the Auditor General's report was presented. There was plenty of other business on the Notice Paper.

The PREMIER: It was only during the last two or three years that the Auditor General's report was not 12 months behind. We should not hold up the Estimates and then have another Chamber objecting strongly that all these matters were thrust on it at the last moment.

Item, Minimum increases, £80:

Mr. SCADDAN: What officers were going to receive this minimum increase?

The PREMIER did not know the names of the individuals. He could not give the names of any of the officers of the department.

Mr. SCADDAN: Why was the Premier not in a position to know where the money was going?

The PREMIER: To give the names of over 2,000 officers in the public service?

Mr. SCADDAN: In this case it was only a matter of 33 officers, and the Premier should be able to give the names.

The PREMIER: I will endeavour to get all the information when we proceed further with the Estimates.

Mr. SCADDAN: There was a doubt among the civil servants as to whether everybody would receive the advantage of these increases, and he had been asked to ascertain who was going to receive them. An endeavour should be made by the Treasurer to get that information.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Reducing the item would not help the officer who possibly had been omitted. The Treasurer had said that later on he would supply a list of the officers who would receive the additional sum. It could not be expected that the Minister would have at his fingers' ends all these details. Evidently what some members were afraid of was that some of the

civil servants might have been omitted, and that the amount necessary to bring them up to the minimum had not been added to their salaries. The Treasurer had pointed out that he had provided, so far as he knew, for all civil servants to be brought up to their minimum. If any were omitted the mistake could be rectified.

Mr. Swan: The civil servants say that the money provided is insufficient to bring all up to the minimum.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the money were not sufficient the Treasurer would take good care that an additional sum was provided.

The PREMIER: The list of officers was supplied by the Public Service Commissioner, and the sum set apart would enable all officers under the three classifications to be brought up to their minimum. In the event of any omission, that could be made good by the amount being exceeded, if necessary, by approval of the Executive Council.

Mr. GEORGE: That was satisfactory as far as it went, but there were other matters to be taken into consideration. Under the Public Service Act there was appointed a Public Service Commissioner who had to classify and grade every officer.

The CHAIRMAN: The question under discussion was Item 8.

Mr. GEORGE: Under that item it was provided that the minimum increases totalled £80. What he wanted to know was how far the minimum increases went, and whether the increases were to date from the time when the classification was made, or merely from the 1st July last? If the increase were only to date from the beginning of this financial year, there was not provision for the amount really due to the officers. The question members should know was whether the Government, in their interpretation of the Public Service Act, were in accord with the opinion of members? What was the date from which the increases would take effect?

The PREMIER: The question was a big one, and it was a pity it should be raised on this item, as one was restricted in discussion by the ruling of the Chair.

The increases were made in 1907-8 by increments estimated approximately as one-fifth of the difference between the existing salary and the minimum. Last year that was suspended, but under these Estimates provision was made to bring all the civil servants up to their minimum in the one instalment as from the 1st July of this year. There was a certain amount of reduction to be made in connection with salaries in excess of their maximum classification. Instead, however, of reducing those salaries in one instalment, the reduction was spread over five years. The position was this: that every civil servant in the three classes was now on his minimum salary, but that those civil servants whose salaries were in excess of the maximum classification had not yet been reduced to that maximum.

Mr. GEORGE: Although some civil servants had been receiving a sum of money in excess of what their services were estimated to be worth, and the Government had shown a very laudable consideration for them, still while that might be of service to those whose reduction was gradual, it was not of much satisfaction to those whose increments had been taken from them. The House should understand distinctly from the Government the attitude they took with regard to the Public Service Act, and whether they thought they could suspend its operation as they had done in the past. It would be well that in this matter the Government received a clear intimation from members as to what their interpretation of the Act was. Personally, he could find nothing in the Act which justified the Government in taking up the position that they were entitled to refuse to give the minimum to those men when once their position was settled by the Public Service Commissioner. If the Government justified their action by saying they disagreed with the conclusions of the Public Service Commissioner there could be only one way to deal with the matter. If the commissioner were not fit to do his duty, or exceeded his duties, it was for the House to say what should be done to him.

The CHAIRMAN: That hardly came under this item.

Mr. GEORGE: It dealt with the question of minimum salary, and it was impossible to discuss that question without referring to the Public Service Act, and the maker of the classification.

The CHAIRMAN: The member could discuss the Public Service Commissioner under a subsequent vote.

Mr. GEORGE: Surely a member could not be debarred from referring to matters merely incidental. At present the Public Service Commissioner was merely a peg—

The CHAIRMAN: The member was continuing to discuss the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. GEORGE: Did the Government consider they had under the Public Service Act the right to keep from a public servant the amount due to him from the day his classification was made?

The PREMIER: The question the hon. member asked was such that one would prefer to have formal notice of. Did the hon. member consider it would be legal to adopt this suggestion to make the increases and then impose an all-round 10 per cent. reduction on the salaries? The question of finance governed the whole position. It was not possible to make bricks without straw, and if the money was not available increases could not be paid. When the Committee reached the Public Service Commissioner's vote he would speak at some length, and it would be preferable to leave the explanation of the position to when that vote was reached.

Mr. FOULKES: It was satisfactory to have an assurance from the Premier that this question would be dealt with fully at a later stage.

Vote put and passed.

Vote — *Compassionate Allowances*, £592:

Item, P. Hannan, £100:

Mr. JOHNSON: When the last Estimates were being discussed the position of this old prospector was brought under notice and a promise was then made by the Minister for Mines that the matter would be submitted to Cabinet,

and the decision of Cabinet conveyed to Mr. Hannan. Mr. Hannan, however, had not received any information whatever from the Government. Some years ago, out of recognition for the services rendered to Western Australia by Mr. Hannan, a sum of £200 was placed on the Estimates as a compassionate allowance. When the vote came before Parliament a claim was put in by Mr. Moran, then a member of the House, on behalf of O'Shea, another prospector who, it was said, had equal right to recognition, and it was urged that O'Shea had assisted Hannan in the discovery of Hannans. Realising that there was a danger of losing the vote, those who considered Hannan should receive the full amount compromised, and it was agreed to add the name of O'Shea to the vote with the result that each received £100. It was thus clear that the original intention of the Government was that £200 per annum should be paid to Hannan, and it was only owing to the contention raised by Mr. Moran that O'Shea got a share. O'Shea had since gone to his rest, and Hannan was left with us. It was desired now to make an appeal that this old prospector should receive more consideration than the Government proposed to pay him. At the time the sum of money was divided between the two men, Hannan was in fairly good health, and was prospecting. He had always been a man who had devoted all his money to prospecting; he had not lived a high life; he had always practically lived in the bush and all the money that he earned around Kalgoorlie had gone in prospecting in the hope of doing something more than he had done for the State. Having strength to follow mining, he did not feel at that time the loss of the £100 which was granted to O'Shea. The position to-day was different; Hannan was an old man and he had contracted some form of disease that made it impossible for him to go out into the bush again, and he found himself in the position that he could not with safety go out of Perth, and all he had to depend upon was the allowance he was receiving from the Government.

The sum of £2 a week was not sufficient to keep this man in his old age; he deserved more at the hands of the State. He had done good work not only in discovering Hannans but in prospecting other centres. The Government should reconsider the matter and determine that the old man should receive sufficient to keep him in Perth where he could receive medical attention and other comforts in his declining years.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was quite right in the statement he had made with regard to Hannan. The Government realised the valuable services which had been rendered to the State by this old pioneer prospector, and in his present condition of health the sum of £100 annually would not go very far. Under these circumstances it could only be said that the Government would not neglect to see that the matter received consideration at an early date with a view of increasing, if possible, the amount that was now provided.

Mr. JOHNSON: The Premier's promise was satisfactory, but it was necessary to emphasise the one point that originally it was intended that Hannan should receive £200. Every member would endorse the action of the Government to fully restore to the prospector that which it was intended to give him when the matter first came before Parliament.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Government Savings Bank*, £14,873:

Mr. BATH: When the Act of 1906 was being considered, and the clause was first introduced providing that the Treasurer could make a charge for keeping accounts, the then Treasurer stated that it was not proposed to impose this charge all round, but that where, owing to the increased facilities, people operated frequently on their accounts, it was necessary to have a charge as a set off against the extra business involved.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must take an item to speak on.

Mr. BATH: Could not a member speak on the Government Savings Bank generally?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. BATH: It was allowed on previous occasions that on the general vote one would have a chance of dealing with the administration.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could deal with principles on the Budget, and he could deal with items subsequently.

Mr. BATH: It was desired to refer to the administration.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. member could take an item.

Item, Manager, £450:

Mr. BATH: The Treasurer when discussing the Bill had stated that it was not proposed to make a general charge.

The Minister for Works: I think the hon. member is wrong there.

Mr. BATH had a very clear recollection of it.

The CHAIRMAN: No discussion of the sort could be allowed on the item.

Mr. BATH: Surely hon. members would be afforded some opportunity of discussing the administration of the bank: without such opportunity an hon. member would require to speak for a year on the Budget.

The CHAIRMAN: Nothing but discussion on the items could now be allowed.

Mr. BATH: Would the Chairman inform the Committee on which item this particular subject might be discussed.

The CHAIRMAN: A great deal of latitude had been allowed in the past, but when once the Budget debate was over members should confine themselves entirely to items. There could not be half a dozen Budget discussions. He was quite willing to hear the hon. member on any item in any vote, but not on a general discussion in regard to the policy of the Government Savings Bank, or in regard to the Act under which the bank had been established.

Mr. Gill: What was the matter under discussion?

The CHAIRMAN: Government Savings Bank, £14,873. Either the whole question could be discussed or the individual items.

Mr. BATH: Would the Chairman explain what was the whole question?

Surely the whole question of the Government Savings Bank was the question of the administration of that institution.

The CHAIRMAN: The question was the various items making up the vote. It was quite open to hon. members to discuss those items, but hon. members could not discuss questions of law.

Mr. BATH: Except as a passing reference no mention had been made in regard to law. In order to show that those administering the bank were doing something which it had not been contemplated they should do, he had been pointing out that they were making a general charge of 1s. on all accounts. He knew of an institution that had lodged in the bank as much as £1,000 which had not been touched for years. Other institutions had lodged, it might be only £5; but it was a deposit not touched, and yet the bank was making a charge of 1s. for keeping the account.

The Premier: You would pay one guinea in an ordinary bank.

Mr. BATH: Such a charge was pure robbery, and we did not require to imitate it in connection with the Savings bank.

Mr. FOULKES: When the Committee had been discussing the civil servants of the State, the Chairman's ruling had been that the time for such a discussion would be when the vote was arrived at. Now the ruling given this evening was that only items could be discussed.

The CHAIRMAN: Was the hon. member going to discuss the Government Savings Bank?

Mr. FOULKES: What he desired to know was what items could be discussed.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must resume his seat or discuss the question.

Mr. FOULKES: In view of what the Leader of the Opposition had said as to the charges being made, perhaps the Treasurer would tell the Committee what was the scale of fees and charges for keeping accounts in the bank.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Leader of the Opposition had been wrong when he said that the then Treasurer, when discussing the Bill, had said

it was only intended to make a charge on certain accounts. As a matter of fact the Treasurer had mentioned that it was proposed to make a charge of 1s. on each account to cover a portion of the cost of keeping such account; but the Treasurer had also said that that 1s. would only be chargeable against the interest, and that if the interest were not sufficient to cover the 1s. no charge would be made. That was the system adopted. He would have to dissent from the hon. member's dictum that it was robbery to charge a person 1s. for keeping an account on which he was drawing 3 per cent. interest.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Government Stores, £8,171:

Item, Clerks, £4,336:

Mr. ANGWIN: There was here shown a reduction of £2,445. He had pointed out last year that the board appointed for the purpose of going into the question of the Government stores had anticipated a saving of £2,000 in salaries, but that that saving had not been effected; and that a saving of only some £200 or £300 had been effected in the management of the stores. The Treasurer had then pointed out that the system was not fully established, and that if hon. members would wait until it were so established they would find a considerable saving in the salaries. But even now this decrease of £2,445 was merely shown on paper, for the money had to be expended in another direction. After two years of working, the system of centralising the Government stores had not been found to be the success anticipated by the board when they decided to bring the stores to Perth. At North Fremantle, buildings in which the clerks had carried out their duties in connection with the stores branch were now empty, while the Government were paying rent for the buildings used in Perth. If in no other direction there was room for economy in respect of this rent being paid while Government premises stood idle.

The PREMIER: Since 1905 a considerable reduction had been made in con-

nection with the expenditure in this direction, due largely to the fact that the Stores Department had been amalgamated, and was now under the Government Storekeeper instead of being under different departmental stores. The total saving was £2,537 since 1905. There was £11,326 expended in 1905; last year the expenditure was £8,789. The total decrease compared with last year was £618. There was exceptional expenditure during the present year, but it was anticipated by the Stores Manager there would be considerable reductions effected. It was a matter to which he (the Premier) would give attention, to see whether it was possible with more careful supervision for further reductions to be made. As a matter of fact, the Tender Board consisted of officers of the various departments, who received no fee for the services rendered by them on the board.

Mr. GEORGE: There was a reduction of £2,455 in this item, but there was another item, "Storemen and packers, £1,475," which was new.

Mr. ANGWIN: The storemen and packers were included among the clerks last year.

Item, Incidental, £1,000:

Mr. ANGWIN: What rent was paid for the Perth premises?

The PREMIER could not supply that information.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Indenting Office*, £1,636:

Mr. KEENAN: Was this money expended in London?

The PREMIER: Yes. It was really not a charge to revenue, inasmuch as the inspection costs were debited to the particular works. The estimated revenue was £1,636, as explained in a footnote.

Mr. GEORGE: Was the inspecting engineer doing the work previously carried on by a Mr. Carruthers, to whom many thousands of pounds were paid for commission?

The Minister for Works: That is so.

Mr. GEORGE: Was the passing of material entirely satisfactory to those who had to use it in the State?

The PREMIER: Mr. Salter was the present officer; Mr. Palmer preceded him.

Mr. Palmer's salary was £900, and his retiring allowance appeared in last year's Estimates. It was understood the work was being carried out satisfactorily.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 16th November, 1909.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Roads Act, 1902—By-laws of Upper Blackwood roads board. 2, Fremantle Harbour Trust regulations. 3, Plans of the following proposed railways: (a) Dowerin-Merredin. (b) Boyup-Kojonup, (c) Goomalling-Wongan Hills.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Land Act Special Lease, returned to the Legislative Assembly with an amendment.

2. Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

BILL — METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly), in moving the second