

have some misgivings as to whether this Bill will meet requirements. However, notwithstanding the shafts that have from time been fired at the legal profession by members in this House who hail from the country, and who sit during such times as their crops do not call for their attention, I propose to move that the Bill be referred to a select committee, and that the select committee report to the House certainly not later than to-morrow week. I am sorry there are not more members present. If I were requested to go through that Bill, I should ask for 12 months. I would not undertake to give that Bill back and say "I indorse that Bill, and it is a good Bill," under 12 months; but inasmuch as the criminal law does not apply to me—it may apply to other members—I do not propose to pay very much attention to it. I shall move that the Bill be referred to a select committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

SELECT COMMITTEE.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I move that the Bill be referred to a select committee.

Put and passed, and the Bill referred.

Ballot taken and committee elected, comprising Hon. A. Jameson, Hon. F. M. Stone, also Hon. R. S. Haynes as mover; with power to sit during any adjournment: to report on 29th January.

EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson) moved that the order be discharged.

HON. R. S. HAYNES (Central): Would the discharge of this order preclude the introduction during the present session of another Bill dealing with the same subject?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The Minister for Lands could withdraw this Bill and substitute another for it. The Minister had given notice of his intention to ask leave to introduce a new Bill on the same subject as that now proposed to be discharged.

Question put and passed, and the order discharged.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:38 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 22nd January, 1902.

Paper presented—Question: Military Contingent, Riding Test—Lease of Foundry Site: Personal Explanation (Mr. Nanson)—Midland Railway Inquiry (joint), Report; Debate as to Printing—Trading Stamps Abolition Bill, third reading—Return ordered: Railway Sidings, S.W. Line—Return ordered: Fremantle Prison, Hours of Officers—Motion: Experimental Orchard; Amendment passed—Motion: Smelter at Greenbushes, to pay Bonus—Coolgardie Water Pipes (laying and jointing), to accept Contract; adjourned—Annual Estimates, Colonial Secretary's votes to end; Public Works vote, progress—Broad Bill, first reading—Dog Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Return showing Inspection of Orchards under Insect Pests Act, ordered on motion by Mr. W. J. George.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—MILITARY CONTINGENT, RIDING TEST.

MR. G. TAYLOR asked the Premier: 1, Whether the officers chosen to accompany the West Australian unit of the Federal Commonwealth now being raised had passed the riding test. 2, If so, when and where. 3, Whether the Premier would arrange with the Commandant to put both officers and men through another riding test, in the presence of members of both Houses of Parliament. 4, Whether, to obviate unnecessary hardships, the Premier would have an ambulance in waiting when the test is on. 5, Whether the officers and members of the W.A. Unit were chosen because of influence, as against merit and experience. 6, Whether the members of the contingent were being fitted with

leggings or putties. 7. If the latter, who was responsible for the choice.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake) replied : The reply to numbers 3 and 4 is "No." To the other questions the reply is :—All questions relating to matters of defence must be referred to the Federal Minister.

LEASE OF FOUNDRY SITE—PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison) : I should like to make a personal explanation. It will be within the recollection of the House that on Wednesday last a motion was brought forward for the production of certain papers in reference to the granting of a lease for business purposes to Messrs. Clemenger and Co. ; and one member for an eastern goldfields district made certain charges then against myself, imputing to me corrupt motives. The words complained of were subsequently withdrawn, but the whole tenor of that speech, and other speeches delivered, imputed improper conduct to me as Minister. I refrained at the time from making an explanation or defence of my conduct, as the papers were not before the House. These papers have now been laid on the table, and although I am not desirous of occupying the House at any greater length than necessary, I crave its indulgence for a few minutes while I explain what will be found to be a simple matter, and I am sure it will be found that the adverse criticism was not justified. On the 30th of last November an application was received by the Under Secretary for Lands, on behalf of Messrs. Clemenger and Co., for a lease of land on the Boulder road, near Kalgoorlie, formerly a portion of gold-mining lease 37E. It was pointed out the object of the application was to establish a foundry on the site, and for that purpose Messrs. Clemenger and Co. had imported a large amount of machinery. Previous to making the application, Messrs. Clemenger had successfully applied for the forfeiture of the lease on the 4th November, and on the 22nd of that month notice of the forfeiture was duly gazetted. The next we hear of the matter was that the late Minister for Mines, the member who now fills that position, had consented to recommend that a lease be granted to Messrs.

Clemenger and Co. of a portion of the lease for the purpose of the establishment of a foundry. That is how the matter began in the Lands Department. Certain inquiries were made, and on my return from contesting the Murchison election, the matter came before me. I need not go through the whole of the correspondence : it is open for members to look at. They will be able to see, if they read it, that the application, so far as Messrs. Clemenger and Co. are concerned, was practically of a *bona fide* character. But to continue. On the 14th December, the Under Secretary for Lands penned a minute to the Surveyor General, in which he asked for a recommendation as to this application, because the matter was of an urgent description, and the Under Secretary wished to place the matter before myself on the following Monday, so that, if possible, it might be settled. In reply to this request from the Under Secretary, the Surveyor General, wrote on the following day, stating that he had gone into the matter very fully with the Under Secretary for Mines, and he saw no reason why the area recommended should not be granted as a special lease for business purposes, as he was satisfied that some fairly large sites were required for business purposes in that locality. He (the Surveyor General), went on to state that if the Minister for Lands was satisfied of the applicants' *bona fides*, he, the Surveyor General considered it advisable to grant a lease at a rental of, say, £15 per annum for ten years, with the right of renewal at the expiration of that time, care being taken that the lessee had no right to sub-let the whole or portion of the lease, and that the whole was used in a *bona fide* manner—that is for the purposes applied for, a foundry. The Surveyor General, however, added a recommendation that he personally would prefer to see the land thrown open to selection on a given date, as a special lease for business purposes, the rental and terms to be similar to those indicated in the foregoing portion of his minute. It seemed to the Surveyor General and others that the site might be required for business purposes. From that opinion the Under Secretary dissented. He pointed out that Messrs. Clemenger had applied for the forfeiture

of the lease, and that in his opinion they had a preferential right to it. That is how the matter stood when it reached me. I had to decide if it was advisable, in the public interests, to grant the land to Messrs. Clemenger without throwing it open to tender, or whether, by virtue of the power placed in my hands, I should grant the application of Messrs. Clemenger without making any public notification that other persons might come in and tender.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Was that lease under your control?

MR. NANSON: That particular lease was. I may explain that a large portion of the original lease was withdrawn from selection, and this matter only dealt with $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres of the land originally leased, which consisted of nine acres, constituting a larger portion of land than was required by Messrs. Clemenger. What I first wished to satisfy myself on was whether the rental to be charged Messrs. Clemenger was a fair rental, and in order to satisfy myself on that point I made inquiries as to the value of land in the vicinity, and I found that £15 did not represent what seemed to be a fair rental for the land; that a rental of £30 a year would represent a fair rental. I gave instructions, therefore, that if the application was granted it should only be granted on the condition that the rental should be £30 a year. However, I did not stop there. I wished to know whether there were strong local objections to the land being granted to these people, and in order to obtain an opinion on that point, I took what was the only natural and obvious course. I consulted the local body of the district in which the land was situated. A telegram was sent to the Kalgoorlie Roads Board in the following terms:—

Is your board aware of any objections to granting Clemenger's application of lease for foundry purposes of late Lease 37e, Kalgoorlie-Boulder road?

In order that one might get still farther information, and not satisfied that my first telegram would give all the information, I had a farther telegram sent to the roads board, as follows:—

My wire this morning should have added question: What do you consider would be fair rental for $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres?

It seemed to me that if this land were to

be applied for, so long as the rental was a fair one, no good purpose could be served by allowing it to be thrown open to public competition, because Messrs. Clemenger were entitled to the land so long as they were paying a fair rental for it. They were entitled to it under Clause 152 of the Land Act, which gives the Minister power to lease land for business purposes. I am informed it was not a case in which there was not plenty of other land available; so that if anyone wished to obtain land for business purposes in that locality, abundance of land was open for selection. Therefore, if this particular land had been thrown open to public competition, the only results might have been, in the first place serious delay, and in the second place that an attempt might have been made to extort money from Messrs. Clemenger, by getting the land over their heads, so to speak, and then compelling them to come in and pay a big price to the persons who obtained it in the first instance. Having made these inquiries from the Kalgoorlie Roads Board, I received certain replies of a satisfactory nature. The secretary to the board wrote to my Under Secretary, stating:—

In reply to your two wires of the 16th instant, asking if this board had any objection to the granting of a lease of portion of Lease 37e to a person named Clemenger for foundry purposes, and as to what would be a fair rent for $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres, I am instructed to say that the board see no objection to such being granted, but to point out—

And this seems to me a very proper suggestion:

that it comes within the area proscribed by the department from occupation, in accordance with the geological plan forwarded us some time since by the Mines Department.

In reference to that remark, I may point out that this difficulty had been foreseen. The Mines Department had been communicated with, and all we proposed to grant was land which the Mines Department had declared could be granted for that purpose—land which that department did not wish to have reserved for mining purposes. Then the roads board secretary went on to say:—

If a lease is granted, it is thought that £10 an acre would be a fair rental for the land.

Having received those replies, I wrote the

following minute to the Under Secretary in regard to the application:—

I approve of the special lease for business purposes being granted to Mr. Clemenger, on the terms mentioned in the Surveyor General's minute of the 14th instant, with the exception that the rental, instead of being £15 per annum, should be £30 per annum. Mr. Clemenger has seen me, and is willing to accept a lease on these terms.

Therefore I succeeded in obtaining for the country double the rental that had in the first place been demanded, and a rental that, according to the estimate of the value of the land made by the Lands Department, represented a fair interest on the value of that land. The matter went so far; and then came a notification to the Cabinet. I made the usual recommendation, advising His Excellency the Governor to approve of this application. It had been my intention, if there had been a Cabinet meeting before the Morgans Government went out of office, to explain to the Cabinet all the circumstances connected with this application; and then it would have remained for my colleagues to say whether they were agreed with me in the opinion that the application should be granted. Possibly they might have disagreed with me; and in that event it would not have been granted. My own view is that they would have agreed with me. But they had not a voice in the matter, which did not come before them; and therefore I wish to emphasise the fact that the charges made against the Morgans Ministry as a whole are absolutely without warrant; that no single member of the Morgans Ministry, with the exception of myself, ever had any knowledge of this matter; that they had no opportunity of coming to a decision on it; and that therefore, if there be any blame in the matter, the blame belongs entirely to me as a member of that Ministry, also to the gentlemen who now occupy the Ministerial bench in this House. But as the matter came before them as a Cabinet matter, I of course do not know their Cabinet secrets, though I see from a minute that the application was approved by the present Premier—

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake): This is a personal explanation. I am not aware of the contents of those papers; but if the hon. member is about to drag in any controversial matters. I should

like to reply. I hope the hon. member, in making a personal explanation, will confine himself to personalities.

THE SPEAKER: Yes. I think that should be done, because there cannot be any discussion on this explanation.

THE PREMIER: I wish the hon. member to remember that. I am not questioning any of his statements.

MR. NANSON: I do not wish to criticise; in fact, I entirely approve of the action of the Government. I am simply stating the fact that this application has been approved by the gentlemen who at present compose the Ministry. In connection with this application, there is one other matter to which I should like to refer. Among those members who took me to task is the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins).

MR. HOPKINS: I did not take you to task.

MR. NANSON: The remarks of the hon. member are recorded in *Hansard*, and other hon. members can form their conclusions as to whether he expressed approval or dissent.

MR. HOPKINS: What took place is no doubt borne in mind; and I have a right to say a few words in explanation. I said the transaction showed faulty administration, if people already camped on that ground were being removed to make room for Clemenger Brothers. I meant to say that instead of referring the matter to the roads board, it should have been referred to the local Government land agent, who would have pointed out that there was a certain number of people on that land, and would have informed the Government that if the land were leased those people would be evicted. It was the process of eviction to which I took exception. I said the comments of the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) were not fair.

MR. NANSON: In order to justify myself, I wish to read to the House a letter written on this subject by the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), addressed to the Minister for Lands, officially:—

Sir,—This will serve to introduce to you Mr. Clemenger, of Clemenger Brothers, who are applicants for a piece of land on which to erect a steel foundry. This matter has already been before Mr. Clifton, who is conversant with all details. I shall be pleased to note that as few obstacles as possible are placed in

the way of the proposed enterprise. The claimants are well known to me, and I feel assured that such confidence as you may, in your discretion, place in Mr. Clemenger will be faithfully respected.

The hon. member concludes :—

I hope the matter will receive your favourable and prompt consideration.

In the file which came before me as Minister there is absolutely no mention of the fact that people were squatting on this land, as I suppose was the case, or that they were in any way using the lease. Apparently the Kalgoorlie Roads Board were either in ignorance of the fact that anyone was on the land, or if they knew the fact, they did not mention it. Apparently the member for Boulder also, who spoke to me on the subject—and he followed up his conversation by writing to me—was unaware of the fact.

MR. HOPKINS: No. Excuse me. I wrote first, and afterwards asked you if Mr. Clemenger had seen you; and you said "yes."

MR. NANSON: Well, the point is not of importance whether the letter or conversation came first. One followed the other; and apparently the member for Boulder was not aware of the fact that there were people on the land. [MR. HOPKINS: True.] And the Lands Department were not aware of the fact that people were on the land. If people were on it, I presume they were there illegally. They knew, or ought to have known, that the lease had been forfeited. All the usual forms had been complied with; notice of the forfeiture had been given and gazetted; and although I very much regret that anyone should have been dispossessed or put to inconvenience in this matter, I submit that the ordinary channels of information were not placed at the disposal of the department by a local member when they were asked for in the first instance, nor by a local body in the other instance. It was also pointed out or contended by the member for the Murray (Mr. George) that there was something exceptional in this application, as if it were a bonus to the firm for establishing some manufactory on the goldfields. Whilst personally I have every sympathy with any effort to establish manufactories in any part of the State, I particularly disclaim the idea that there was anything in the nature of

a bonus in granting this application. It was granted by me as a Minister under Section 152 of the Land Act; and if the Minister in charge of the Lands Department refuse to administer the Act, for which he is responsible, he is showing a grave neglect of duty. The Act is there to guide the Minister, and in dealing with this application I followed the Act and took all reasonable precautions; and although there may be more than one opinion as to the expediency of the action taken by me, yet I venture to say that not one tittle of evidence has been brought forward to show that, in dealing with this matter, I dealt with it in an improper or corrupt manner. I consider that it would save the time of this House and prevent considerable bitterness of feeling if, when matters like this are brought forward, attempts were not made to impute improper motives to the Minister concerned in the matter, and that until full information is forthcoming, judgment on the matter should be suspended.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): My name having been brought up in connection with this matter, I should like to make a short statement. The hon. member stated that I agreed to this lease being granted. I should like to explain what I did. In regard to this lease, it is one of those leases which the owners desired to surrender conditionally to the Crown; but owing to my action in refusing to accept any conditional surrenders, apparently there must have been some collusion. In saying this I want to let the late Minister for Lands (Mr. Nanson) understand that I am not dealing with any member of this House in regard to the application for forfeiture. I could not possibly think he would do any action as a Minister that would be corrupt. When this application for forfeiture came before the Court it was unopposed, and it was certainly not made in the name of Clemenger, though I do not know in what name it was made; still the application was unopposed, and forfeiture was recommended by the Warden. In due course it was sent to me, and I approved of the forfeiture. That is the only time this matter ever came before me; therefore I would like to know on what evidence the hon. member bases his

accusation that I consented to the granting of this lease.

MR. NANSON: I made that remark on a statement contained in a letter from the solicitors.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member did not read out that letter to the House, and I thought he was referring to the records of the department. Amongst those papers there is not a record from the department to show that I did anything in regard to the lease except to approve of the forfeiture. When the lease was forfeited, it should still have been under the control of the Minister for Mines. I would like to know the date of the letter from the Under Secretary for Mines to the Under Secretary for Lands, because I feel sure it could not have been at a time when I was controlling the Mines Department. So far as I am concerned I know nothing of this matter, and I do not think it was fair for the hon. member to make a statement that I approved of the lease being granted. A statement made in a letter from a legal firm is quite a different thing from a record of the department. I can assure the House I had no knowledge of the circumstances connected with this matter, and knew nothing at all until the question was raised in the House. I do not agree with any statement that has been made imputing corrupt motives on the part of the late Minister for Lands. I believe the late Minister was actuated by the belief that he was doing his duty in the interest of the department. I still say that I do not agree that the Lands Department should control this gold-mining lease.

MR. NANSON: The Lands Department controls only $2\frac{1}{4}$ acres of the original lease.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: This land was under the control of the Minister for Mines. The lease was forfeited, and nothing else was done by the Mines Department in regard to it; so that as far as the Mines Department are concerned up to the time I left office, the last thing done was to approve of the forfeiture of the lease.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder): I also wish to make a short explanation. I was laid up at the time when Mr. Clemenger called at my house and asked if I would introduce him to the Minister

for Lands. I had known Mr. Clemenger for some time, and as I could not accompany him to the Minister, I wrote a letter introducing him, and that is the letter which has been read. That is all I know of the matter. I knew nothing of the conditions of the lease. I do say the proper course would have been for the Lands Department to have communicated with their responsible representative at Kalgoorlie, the land agent, instead of communicating with the Kalgoorlie Roads Board—a body which does not represent any party concerned in the matter.

MIDLAND RAILWAY INQUIRY.

JOINT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

DR. O'CONNOR brought up the report of the Joint Select Committee which had inquired into the agreements made between the Midland Railway Company and the Government.

Report received and read.

DR. O'CONNOR moved that the report be printed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Remember the cost of printing.

MR. J. GARDINER: Would it not be wise to make a start in the way of economising the cost of printing? If the evidence taken by the joint committee was only for information of members of the House, he presumed the type-written copies could be perused, and that this would save the cost of printing.

MR. M. H. JACOBY: The subject of this report was of considerable importance, and might probably affect the expenditure of a large amount of money in this State. It would be well to have the evidence printed, together with the report, in order that members might take time in forming their opinion before deciding whether or not to support the recommendations in the report. In the case of committees of less importance, he would be inclined to approve of the idea of using type-written notes of evidence rather than incur the expense of printing the evidence.

MR. C. HARPER: It had long been a grievance that a large area of country held by the Midland Railway Company had been locked up against settlement; and people who were desirous of settling in the State and on this particular land should be enabled to peruse the evidence taken by the joint committee.

MR. F. WALLACE: As to economy in the cost of printing, some objection would arise in connection with every select committee which reported to the House, as the members of that committee would naturally regard the evidence taken by them as being of great public importance. He did not agree with this mode of economising, because it was necessary in many instances that not only should members see the evidence in print, but should be able to send copies to friends who were interested in the subject. One type-written copy of the evidence would be of little or no use amongst 50 members of Parliament.

MR. HOPKINS: Five duplicate copies could be taken as easily as one.

MR. F. QUINLAN hoped the House would not demur to the cost of printing the evidence in this important matter. There was not a member representing an agricultural district who was not interested more or less in the question involved in this report. His own district (Toodyay) was particularly interested, and it was desirable that printed copies of the report should be available for general use, as it dealt with a burning question of general interest.

MR. J. GARDINER: If the evidence was to be printed, the number of copies might be limited instead of having so many as 750 printed.

MR. JACOBY: This being a joint-committee the Legislative Council could order the evidence to be printed.

Question put and passed.

Ordered: The report to be considered on the next Tuesday.

TRADING STAMPS ABOLITION BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by Mr. F. MACDONALD, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

RETURN—RAILWAY SIDINGS, SOUTHWESTERN LINE.

Ordered, on motion by Mr. HAYWARD, that there be laid on the table of the House a return showing—1, The cost of the railway sidings for the use of the mill-owners at Waroona, Wagerup, Yarloop, Wokalup, Worsley, Newlands, Upper Capel, and Greenbushes. 2, The amount contributed by the Mill Company at each of these stations. 3, The sidings at which

a station-master is employed, and, where none is employed, the reasons for this course.

RETURN—FREMANTLE PRISON, HOURS OF OFFICERS.

MR. F. MACDONALD moved:

That a return be laid upon the table of the House, showing the number of hours that warders and other officers work daily in Fremantle Prison.

A lot of dissatisfaction occurred among the officers of the Fremantle Gaol as to the hours they worked. By making inquiries he found that in other departments officers generally worked eight or under eight hours, whereas in the Fremantle Gaol officers worked from 10 to 14 hours a day. They also worked 25 Sundays out of the 52 in the year. The officers of the Fremantle Gaol sent a petition to the Inspector of Prisons asking for extra holidays, one at Christmas time and one at Easter, but the inspector refused the request. When men worked long hours and gave up so many Sundays in the year, an extra holiday should have been granted to them. The night division worked from 12 to 14 hours, and those who worked in the day-time served 10 hours; the guards in the day-time worked 10 hours, and at night from 12 to 13½ hours; the gatekeepers worked 14 hours in the day-time and 10 hours at night. A return should be laid on the table showing the time these men worked, and what work they were engaged on. The duties of the officers were not laborious, but the officers had to be attentive, especially the warders.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. Illingworth): There was no intention to oppose this motion. He would have much pleasure in laying the return on the table, but he asked members to suspend their judgment on the statements that had been made, as members would find when the return was before them the facts had been much exaggerated.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—EXPERIMENTAL ORCHARD.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the establishment of an experimental orchard is necessary.

Reference had frequently been made in the House to the great possibilities of the

fruit industry, and the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), when speaking on the Address-in-reply, quoted some interesting figures on this subject. He stated that California, which was previously a gold producing country, turning out something like 17,000,000 sterling of gold per annum, had gradually decreased in its gold producing capabilities, and the country being eminently suited for horticulture, had stimulated that industry, and to-day the output of fruit from that country represented eight millions sterling, whilst the production of gold had gone down to three millions. He hoped that it would be a long time before the output of gold in this country would decrease, that within our time the present output would be maintained, and the gold industry remain in its present magnificent condition. As the condition of this country somewhat resembled the condition of California some years ago, so our country resembled California in regard to the possibilities of fruit culture. We had a magnificent climate, suitable for fruit growing, we had magnificent soil, all that could possibly be hoped for, and our geographical position, as far as the European markets were concerned, gave us the command of those markets. The quality of the fruit produced in this State had been examined critically by visitors from all parts of the world interested in the industry, and it was gratifying for him (Mr. Jacoby) to hear from a gentleman who had been through the whole of the American States with a view especially of studying the progress of the fruit industry that the fruit produced in Western Australia was better in flavour than any that gentleman had tasted during the whole of his travels. This proved that the natural condition of the State was suitable for the industry. There were a great many things which could be provided to help such an industry, and one of these was the establishment of an experimental orchard. When men come to this country it was hard to decide what particular line to take up in fruit growing. At present we were largely in an experimental stage, and a great amount of energy was being wasted in experimental work which ought to be confined to some Government institution. A valuable aid to the industry and to anybody commencing in

any district was the accumulated experience of the district. It was unfortunate that people had not the benefit of the accumulated experience of a district, as there was no model institution or experimental orchard from which to obtain the results of experimental work. In other countries of the world where fruit growing had become a large industry, experimental orchards had been established. These institutions were to be found in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand, and the economic value of these orchards to the States named could be gathered from the fact that a great deal of attention was given to these experimental institutions, and the Government provided the assistance necessary. At present there was scope for the work of an experimental orchard, and it was our endeavour to produce sufficient fruit for export to the European markets. It was necessary to settle what fruits were suited to our conditions, the methods of pruning, the soils and manures. All matters of that description were to a great extent unsettled in the country, and would remain unsettled until experience was gained through a long number of years or experimental orchards were established. This State could, and must, take a foremost place amongst the fruit-producing countries of Australia and the world. It was known to anybody who had studied the fruit industry that prices were governed by the condition in which the fruit reached Europe. In Europe people were willing to pay the highest prices for the best article, and no State in Australia was in such a position for landing the fruit in good condition in the London market as Western Australia was. There was no doubt that Western Australia must always command the highest prices in the London market, and this industry must become one of the best, if not the best, paying rural industries we possessed. He asked the House to help bring about this consummation and render assistance to the industry by agreeing to the motion.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH (Welling-ton) seconded the motion. Western Australia was admirably adapted for fruit growing, and we had an area almost as large as England suitable for the cultivation of fruits which were required in the

old country. It was not without a great deal of trouble and expense and years of waiting that the grower was able to come to the conclusion as to what were the best fruits to be grown. The Government should assist the growers by establishing a fruit farm in some part of the State, to overcome the difficulties that the fruit growers laboured under at present. To carry on a successful farm, the farmer must have the latest appliances; and unless some knowledge were imparted to him, he would work in the dark, and the industry would languish. The Treasurer should place on the Estimates a sum sufficient to establish in this State two or three orchards.

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth) opposed the motion on the ground that such an orchard was unnecessary, and would involve a large expenditure with probably little or no result. The basis of the motion was that we had a climate and a soil unrivalled for the production of fruit. Presumably this orchard would grow apples and pears. For a number of years there had been such experimental orchards, some of them, such as that of the Hon. F. H. Piesse, being models and object lessons to anyone desiring to embark in the industry. Moreover, there was our Department of Agriculture, also our experts and Government literature on the subject; and if he (Mr. Purkiss) intended to embark on this industry to-morrow, he could easily put his hand on the best possible information obtainable on the subject.

MR. JACOBY: Try.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: The hon. member would make a mistake.

MR. PURKISS: Such literature was disseminated at the public expense, and was supplemented by Government assistance. [Several interjections.] The experimental orchard would be another expensive white elephant. Other States had tried experimental farms, notably Victoria, where, after spending a large sum of money for years, they had only one student. The mover had instanced New Zealand. Though he had lived there, he (Mr. Purkiss), had not heard of an experimental farm there. In Tasmania, the great apple-producing country, there was not and never had been an experimental orchard. The mover had properly referred to the extent to which our local industry

might grow; and no doubt in California, fruit-growing had overtaken the declining gold-mining industry. In referring to that, Mr. Jacoby had mentioned the remarks of Mr. Harper when speaking some time ago against the removal of the prohibition on imported apples. The last-mentioned hon. member wished to show that it was essential to prevent the introduction of the codlin moth. Now the codlin moth, as could be proved, was an absolute bogey which had been raised in this colony as soon as it was a colony; and the agitation had arisen not from fear of the codlin moth, but simply from a desire to push protectionist theories to their logical conclusion. The real wish was to shut out all imported apples, in order to fill the pockets of orchardists at the expense of the consumer. California had raised an apple and pear industry to the extent of eight million dollars. Why? Because California shut out the codlin moth? No. It was in spite of the codlin moth. California was the birthplace and home of the codlin moth; and from that country it had been introduced into Australia. In New Zealand, he had seen cases and whole cargoes of apples imported from California destroyed on account of the codlin moth. To Tasmania also the codlin moth had been introduced from California, and California was at present riddled with the codlin moth, but had taken means to modify and reduce the pest, and in spite of it had built up a great fruit industry. The first Australian colony ever attacked by the codlin moth was Tasmania, which had also been riddled by the pest.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: And ruined.

MR. PURKISS: Ruined? Tasmania supplied herself at 4d. per lb. with apples.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: Yes; ruined.

MR. PURKISS: And was able to can thousands of tons of apples, which were being consumed here and elsewhere. Tasmania sent every year to London 200,000 cases at a profit, and this in spite of the codlin moth. The codlin moth was a pest like hail or a high wind. All industries and all men were troubled with pests. The codlin moth involved simply a little more care and trouble to keep it in check. He had been in Tasmania when the moth was introduced.

Everyone was up in arms about the pest or the curse.

MR. JACOBY: It was a curse.

MR. PURKISS: And yet there was a country in which the best apples to be found anywhere could be bought at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. Tasmania could supply her own demands, and export tinned apples at a price lower than that for which the local article was sold here.

MR. NANSON: Had the codlin moth made apples cheaper?

MR. PURKISS: No; but a country with the soil and the climate that the mover claimed for Western Australia, and that were claimed by our Year Book and other publications, need not fear the codlin moth. In spite of the moth, apples could be grown here with a little trouble, just as well as in Tasmania.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: On starvation wages.

MR. PURKISS: Both California and Tasmania had the codlin moth. In West Australia we had an unrivalled soil and climate, and any quantity of land suitable for orchards; yet it was maintained that we should prohibit the importation of apples, although countries which had that pest were able to supply the world with cheap fruit. Coming back to the object of the motion, why should we embark on an expensive speculation?

MR. JACOBY: How much would it cost?

MR. PURKISS: What did we want with such an orchard, when we had Government literature, Government experts, and private orchards brought to successful fruition? If he wanted to embark in fruit growing, he could obtain a sample of the soil and have it analysed. He had only to open his eyes to form a sound opinion on his prospects.

MR. HARPER: And to open his pocket also.

MR. JACOBY: An analysis of the soil was useless.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder): Some more tangible reasons would be required before he could support the motion. It would be better to engage more experts, giving them free railway passes, and letting them visit every orchard in the country, to instruct growers as to what kind of trees should be cultivated, and as to their treatment. If an experimental orchard were established at Katanning, there must be one in

the Victoria District, and others elsewhere. The member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) shook his head; yet this morning, the manager of the Agricultural Bank had said that some people in Katanning tried to grow oranges and lemons, which attempt was absurd, and that the bank would not advance money on such ventures. Moreover, the manager had stated he had visited a young farmer in that district who, although starting with a splendid stock of trees, had nearly allowed them to go to ruin for want of pruning. Experts should be appointed to give instruction in such matters, as had been done with the Victorian butter industry. Send the experts to the people rather than try to bring the people to the experts.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mount Magnet): While sympathising with the motion, yet after hearing the members for Perth and Boulder he must vote against it. The motion advocated an orchard, not orchards. There were already experimental orchards privately owned. Why not profit by their owners' outlay and experience, or have analyses made of the soil from different parts of the country?

MR. JACOBY: That was useless.

MR. WALLACE: What! Were there then fruits which could be grown in certain parts only of the State?

MR. JACOBY: Yes.

MR. WALLACE: Then how could all such fruits be grown in one experimental orchard? With the fruit industry he sympathised.

MR. JACOBY: The experimental orchard would give it the best possible help.

MR. WALLACE: If certain fruits could be grown in certain parts only, it was not obvious what help one orchard would give.

MR. JACOBY: Have several orchards.

MR. WALLACE: The House would hardly agree to a number of orchards; therefore he must oppose the motion. If the mover would recast it, so as to apply it to the various fruits and soils in the State, more support would be forthcoming.

MR. JACOBY: The cost would be too great.

MR. WALLACE: If it was going to cost too much, the State should not undertake it, because we had the experi-

ence of members of this House and others interested in fruit growing, which should be a sufficient guide. With regard to pruning, he understood that in the various districts prizes were given at the proper season for pruning contests.

MR. PURKISS: Under the auspices of an expert.

MR. WALLACE: Yes; consequently that kind of education was already being given to the community without the cost of an experimental orchard. He could not directly support the proposal.

MR. JACOBY: If the hon. member wanted to help this State, he should adopt this motion. The effect of establishing an experimental orchard would bring in £1,000 for every penny expended on it.

MR. WALLACE: One could not see how that could be done.

MR. JACOBY: Fruit growers knew, anyhow.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. Illingworth): Could the mover indicate the locality most suitable for an experimental orchard?

MR. JACOBY: It should be selected by a board.

MR. HOPKINS: Half a dozen experimental orchards would be required.

MR. JACOBY: One would be good enough, to start.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Having fixed on a suitable locality, the fruit which might be grown successfully in that locality might be altogether unfit for some other locality, and the experimental orchard could not be of much use from that point of view. If the mover wanted to have experimental orchards in different parts of the State to test the whole country, the difficulty he had just suggested would disappear; but the hon. member did not indicate what amount of expenditure would be desirable. If an experimental orchard was started next season, many years must elapse before any practical good could result to orchardists in this State; and it was not as if the industry was practically new, for experiments in fruit growing had been made in various districts of this State, extending back some 40 years. His own experience in fruit growing was very limited. He had one apricot tree which prospered while two other fruit trees planted alongside of it

and receiving the same care and watchfulness utterly failed. This kind of experiment showed to him that it was not every kind of fruit tree that would grow on the same soil. He had been greatly impressed by the magnitude of some figures presented to the House by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), in speaking on the fruit industry on a previous occasion; and hon. members must admit that this State had immense prospective resources in fruit growing, and therefore every facility should be given to promote it. We must, at the same time, be careful not to start something that would be useless, and thereby prevent farther experiments. The planting of an orchard in any particular district would give very imperfect results. He did not know whether it would be possible to test, except by failure, what kind of trees might suit a particular district. We might also find what kind would succeed in a particular soil or locality; but the benefit from such knowledge would be very limited. It occurred to him that we had men in this State who had been very successful in fruit growing, and if we could make their experience available to others in some way, we might help the industry to a considerable extent. He would be glad to receive suggestions in this direction. He really thought the mover of the motion was not on the best track, but might be on a track that was useful.

MR. JACOBY: The best available track.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The suggestions made in the course of this debate did not impress him as showing that an experimental orchard would be of practical value. If he wanted to grow apples, for instance, he would not go to an experimental orchard to find out how to do it, but would rather go to a successful orchardist to see how he did it. He would go to Kataning, for instance, or to the orchard of the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) at Woodbridge. He would not go to an immature and infant orchard. In future, such an orchard might be of some use, but its use would be limited by really testing the soil in that particular district. Could the mover say what locality he would select for the proposed orchard, and what amount of money it would be desirable to expend? There were mem-

bers of this House capable of dealing with this question in a practical way. For himself, he was only suggesting difficulties that occurred to him, as he did not understand the fruit-growing business.

MR. H. J. YELVERTON (Sussex) supported the motion. Nothing could be more conducive to the success of the fruit-growing industry than the establishment of an experimental orchard. The member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) had evidently spoken from a theoretical point of view; and one would imagine, from what he had said, that the best thing to be done in this country would be to immediately import the codlin moth. It should be remembered that in Tasmania wages were very low as compared with wages in this State, and this difference accounts for the success of the fruit industry in Tasmania. He regretted to observe that when a motion which tended to promote a large industry was advocated by members on this (Opposition) side of the House, every member who spoke from the Ministerial side thought it necessary to oppose the proposal, while at the same time admitting they had no practical knowledge of the subject. If the Colonial Secretary, with his limited experience in fruit-growing, had had an experimental orchard to go to, he might have learnt what kind of fruit trees were best for planting in the particular soil or locality, and his experiments would not then have been so unsuccessful. The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), who had spoken on the subject, probably had some experience in fruit-growing. Members on this (Opposition) side had in several notable instances acquired experience in fruit growing. He had himself obtained some experience, and if he had had the advantage of being able to go to some experimental orchard, his experiments would have been more successful, and he would have saved money in the cost of his orchard.

MR. QUINLAN supported the motion for the reason that, from an educational point of view, it was necessary the Government should look ahead, and be more progressive than was indicated in the remarks of the Colonial Secretary.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was only seeking for information, and did not know anything about fruit-growing.

MR. QUINLAN: It was requisite that an experimental orchard should be established by the State. He was interested in a small way in fruit-growing, and if he could have obtained information in an experimental orchard, he would not have suffered some losses which he had had to endure. So far as the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) was concerned, it was to be regretted that he, representing the premier constituency of the State, had so little regard to the importance of keeping out the codlin moth. We knew how Tasmania had suffered in particular, and the member for Wellington (Mr. Smith) was justified in saying that Tasmania had been ruined through this pest. Having himself visited Tasmania and seen the expensive system which was enforced by law for the protection of orchards against certain pests, he did hope that such a system would not become necessary in this State. In regard to New Zealand also, while visiting there he had tested the local fruits by purchasing at various shops, and found it was possible to get perhaps one or two sound apples out of two pounds. That was the result of not keeping out fruit pests. The member for Boulder made a good suggestion, and there was no doubt, as the Colonial Secretary had stated, one orchard would not give the information required. There must be orchards in different parts of the State to prove the capabilities of the different soils. Still, the proposal of the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) was to make a beginning. The land at Whitby Falls, which had been purchased for a lunatic asylum, should be turned to a different account. This site was formerly an orchard, and the Government might start an experimental orchard there, as the place had been condemned for an asylum. He suggested that the motion might be amended by including experimental farms as well as orchards. He hoped the Government would accept the proposal, as it did not force them to start an experimental orchard at once, but the Government could obtain information from other places. This was a progressive movement emanating from the progressive side of the House.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): Codlin moth had been credited with a good many things, but to-night it could be

credited with bringing the member for Perth out of his shell. That hon. member had made certain statements which one did not intend to pay attention to. He did not know where the hon. member learnt that California was the home of the codlin moth. Such a statement was not correct. The hon. member also stated that Tasmania had made most wonderful progress in the fruit industry. The reason the Tasmanian people succeeded was that a portion of the country was free from codlin moth, and in this portion the fruit thrived enormously. If Tasmania had not the codlin moth, that country would be exporting three times as much fruit as it was to-day. The cheap apples received from Tasmania were those affected by the codlin moth. A gentleman in this industry in Tasmania, who had spent some years and a considerable amount of money in trying to establish an orchard there, found that the disease was to be seen in 25 per cent. of the apples. Growing apples under these conditions was ruinous. Last year Tasmania passed a law prohibiting the landing of any fruit or any plant, which showed what that country had learnt. Tasmania had suffered so severely that the Parliament there had passed the most drastic law in the universe.

MR. PURKISS: Yet they could still sell the best apples at 10s. a case in London.

MR. HARPER: And South Australia got 14s. a case for the same class of apples. With regard to the question before the House, there was a good deal of truth in what several members as well as the Colonial Secretary had said, that one experimental orchard would only be of partial value. His experience was that the tree which would be suitable in and around the range would not be profitable ten miles away. It had cost him a considerable amount to work out the varieties of trees which were of no use to him. It would be of great assistance if the Government obtained varieties and allowed private people to experiment, and the result could be published by the Government. What had been done in California in experiments was partially of a private character. The Government gathered the experience of the fruit growers as to the specific trees which were of the greatest value, but that was

after 30 years' experience. We were not in that position, and we wanted to give our people as soon as possible knowledge which would be of value to them. The principle advocated was admirable, but it hardly went far enough. At the present time it would be more advantageous if the sum of money which would be required to establish one of these farms was given towards the establishment of experimental plots throughout the State, and furthermore to collating, from all parts of the State where fruit was grown, the experience of the fruit-growers as to specific varieties. But that did not get over the difficulty, because there might be a variety which was a profitable one to-day, but in five years that fruit would be replaced in the public estimation. If we wished to keep to the front, we must always go on experimenting in new varieties, and that was not what private people could do. It meant a large expenditure in cash for years before the knowledge which was requisite to show whether the fruit would suit the locality or not. The State should assist in establishing experimental plots so as to keep the people supplied with the fruits coming to the front. In that way we should be kept fairly up to date, which could not be done by having one experimental orchard. If members agreed to a suggestion of that kind, we might ask the Government to consider the point, and say whether during recess they would make some exhaustive inquiries into what was the best method of achieving the object the hon. member had in view. If that were done, good might result.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): The member for the Swan was entitled to the thanks of the House for bringing the motion forward, but he must confess he was not surprised at the kind of reception the proposition had met on the Government side. In nine cases out of ten, when any motion was brought forward that tended to encourage an industry or its development, and thus add to the wealth of the country, members on the Government side exhausted all their energies in throwing cold water on the proposal.

MR. HOPKINS: That was not fair.

MR. NANSON: Members might consider it was not fair; at least it was true.

THE PREMIER: Cold water acted as a fertiliser.

MR. NANSON: Talking about orchards, he was reminded of a saying which no doubt the Premier would recollect: "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Government and the members who supported the Government would be known by their fruits. When a member brought forward a motion which was to do good, it should not meet with such a reception from the Colonial Secretary, who had tried to show that the proposal would do very little practical good. The Colonial Secretary was preceded by the member for Perth, to whom we were obliged for an interesting disquisition on the codlin moth, and although interesting it was hardly instructive. It reminded him of a contribution which Mark Twain once sent to an agricultural journal in California. The question of the codlin moth had nothing whatever to do with the motion. We found in other countries much more advanced in fruit-growing than Western Australia, that experimental plots were of the utmost benefit, and it was a singularly suggestive circumstance that among members supporting the proposal were found those who had had practical experience in fruit-growing.

MR. PURKISS: The member for Beverley did not support the motion.

MR. NANSON: The member for Beverley supported it in its broad sense. The motion did not attempt to deal with details: it urged on the Government that in the opinion of the House an experimental orchard was necessary. No one supposed, like the member for Yalgoo, that one experimental orchard would be sufficient. The conditions prevailing in Blackwood were different from those existing in the extreme north-western portion of the State.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The mover of the motion only asked for one orchard.

MR. NANSON: The mover of the motion was convinced that if we got one experimental orchard started, it would serve such an admirable purpose and be so useful that it would be found to the interests of the State to have more than one. It was our business to do one thing at a time as practical people, and not come down and ask for six experimental orchards to be established. If we saw

the result of one orchard, we would soon come to the House and ask the Government to allow farther experimental orchards to be established. One had reason to protest against the way in which the Government were afraid to give any sympathetic reception to a motion of this kind; and if a word of advice from this side of the House was worth anything, unless the Government reformed in that particular and showed a desire to push the country ahead and advance the great interests on which it depended, before very many years had passed the country might find that we had a Government which talked a great deal but did very little.

MR. J. EWING (South-West Mining): As a Government supporter, he objected to the remarks of the member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton) and of the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nanson); for although a Government supporter, he represented a portion of the State agriculturists, and was prepared to give any such motion fair-play, whatever its source.

MR. YELVERTON: The reference was to previous speakers.

MR. EWING: What exception could be taken to the remarks of the Treasurer, who had simply counselled caution? It had been tacitly understood that at this particular time there was to be no acrimonious debate; but if that were not so, Government supporters were well able to hold their own. The remarks of the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) were astonishing. He seemed to think the codlin moth a most desirable thing. [MR. PURKISS: No.] The Government should take every possible precaution to protect the country against it. Its appearance here might have far worse effects than those which followed the prohibition of imported fruit. Having had experience in New South Wales, he (Mr. Ewing) would support the motion. Tacitly it had been supported by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), who, however, perceived that its present form required amendment. After the suggestions made, the Government would probably make inquiries during the recess, and submit a tangible proposal next session.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) protested against the remarks of the leader

of the Opposition. Such a motion should not be made a party question. Who could deny that members on both sides wished the State to prosper and its every industry to be built up? There must be differences of opinion as to how they could most successfully be built up; but although members differed as to methods, they were united in aim. The motion, if it were less definite, would have his support. It should emphasise the necessity of inquiry as to the desirableness of establishing an experimental orchard or orchards. A large annual expenditure was hardly justified, in the absence of irrefutable evidence. If such inquiry warranted the orchard, he would support its establishment.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kauowna): One was compelled to look at this question from a financial point of view. On the Estimates we found an Agricultural Bureau, which last year cost the State £11,000. There was also a loud demand for an agricultural college, and now members wanted an experimental orchard. With the present Department of Agriculture he was not conversant, but apparently one of its objects was to assist fruit-growers, and particularly new orchardists. That such duty had not been performed was not maintained; and instead of making this new departure, would it not be possible farther to utilise the existing staff? Members said that other countries had experimental orchards; but surely, in proportion to population, we spent far more money on such objects than was spent elsewhere. And with what result? Apparently all members conversant with the industry stated, not publicly, but openly in private, that they were dissatisfied with the department, that they did not get value for the money. Then what assurance could they give the House that a new branch of the department would be successful? An inquiry would be preferable to the motion. Supporters of the proposal should not think he and his friends wished to prevent the expenditure of money in agricultural districts. He would gladly do all he could to foster agriculture, but there must be some assurance that the money would be well and usefully spent.

THE PREMIER: Better withdraw the motion. The mover had not stated how

much this orchard would cost; therefore nothing could at present be done.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams) moved that all words after "that" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:

The Government should, during the recess, make inquiries as to the advisability of establishing an experimental orchard.

Amendment put and passed, and the motion as amended agreed to.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MO'ION—SMELTER AT GREENBUSHES, TO PAY BONUS.

MR. J. EWING (South-West Mining) moved:

That in view of the bonus originally offered by the Government, and which practically led to the erection of a smelter at Greenbushes, the amount of the said bonus be paid over to the person or persons who erected the said smelter.

Although this notice had been on the paper practically since the beginning of the session, yet it had been postponed from time to time. After consulting with the present Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory), who had requested that the motion be postponed till the matter could be considered by Cabinet, the latest phase of the question was his being requested by that Minister to bring the motion before the House, with the object of obtaining the opinion of members on it. The motion had the sympathy of the Government to a certain extent. The necessity for erecting a smelter at Greenbushes tinfield was recognised by the Government as far back as 1895, when a considerable number of miners were on the tinfield. Those miners were working the tin under great disabilities, through want of water and not being able to sell their tin at a payable price, but having almost to give it away to local buyers. The then Government, recognising the difficulty and desiring to give an impetus to the tin-mining industry, issued a proclamation in 1895 offering a bonus of £1,000 for the erection of a smelter, and the smelting of not less than 100 tons of tin ore; the amount of money to be expended to be not less than £3,000 in the erection of buildings, plant, and machinery; or, if a less sum were expended, then the bonus to be in pro-

portion. The erection and smelting were to be subject to the approval of the Government before the money would be paid, and the proclamation was signed by Mr. Wittenoom, then Minister for Mines. Unfortunately, the conditions under which the proclamation was issued were not fulfilled. A smelter was not erected at that time; and owing to the want of water and the low price of tin, the field became practically abandoned for a period. It would be within the knowledge of the hon. the Speaker, who represented the district, that in 1899 a revival took place in the tin industry owing to the sudden increase in the price, and a rush to the tinfield followed. The miners going there were anxious and willing to work tin, but he was sorry to say that although the population rapidly increased to about 2,000 persons, they soon found it was necessary that, for the successful working of the industry, they must have a smelter erected on the field. With that end in view, the residents formed a deputation, which waited on the then acting Premier (Hon. F. H. Piessé) in December, 1899, and stated that the requirements were for a water scheme and the erection of a smelter. The answer of the acting Premier was favourable to assistance being given in the erection of a smelter; and he said that if the miners could induce private enterprise to undertake the work, the Government would be willing to subsidise it or provide some of the money, and that it was desirable no time should be lost in making an effort to get a smelter erected.

MR. GEORGE: Did he promise any specific sum?

MR. EWING: No; he did not. That was the extent to which the acting Premier committed himself. The total output of the field to the present had been 2,584 tons of tin, of the value of £133,997; therefore, members would understand that this was an important industry, one that was worked practically by the alluvial miners, therefore of importance to the State. The building of the smelter meant the salvation of the field. In good faith, certain gentlemen living at Fremantle found the money and erected the smelter. The Government were aware that the money had been expended, and it was thoroughly understood as the outcome of the deputation that in the event

of the money being expended, the bonus would be paid.

MR. GEORGE: How much did they spend?

MR. EWING: The original amount specified by the Government was £3,000 but the company had expended £4,000 up to the early part of last year. The works consisted of two 16-h.p. engines and various other machinery, office premises and other things. The company at all times had been prepared to purchase, and had purchased, tin from the alluvial miners on a reasonable and fair assay; and he believed the assay had given satisfaction to the alluvial miners on the field. The works had never been closed since the 20th March, 1900, and the company had exported, to the present time, 272 tons of metallic tin; and there had been sold to colonial consumers 130 tons, making an output of 400 tons, valued at £50,000. By smelting the tin and consigning it to Fremantle for export to London, the company paid the Railway Department at the rate of 45s. per ton for carrying the ore. If the ore had been sent in the raw state, it would have been carried by the Railway Department for 10s. 7d. a ton, therefore the Railway Department had benefited by the establishment of this smelter to the extent of not less than £500.

MR. GEORGE: Was the smelter in operation now?

MR. EWING: Yes; it had never been closed. The smelter had been a great advantage to the State. Not only did it enable the miners to sell their ore at a reasonable price, but it disillusioned the London people and the people of the State, because it must be within the knowledge of everyone that most of the products of the State, from time to time, were not held to be as good as they really were. The company had manufactured tin and sent it to London, and had proved by competition on the London market that it was equal to any tin produced in the world. The enterprise and pluck shown by the company deserved fair and reasonable consideration at the hands of members. The late Minister for Mines (Mr. Lefroy) in 1900, when the company approached him and asked him to carry out the undertaking, offered to pay £500 for the first 100 tons of tin smelted during the first six months. But

their reply was that the original understanding was that the company should receive £1,000 for this work, and that the £500 offered by the Government was not sufficient to carry them over the dry season. Rather than compromise themselves in that way, the company were prepared to wait for an opportunity to fight the matter out, so as to receive fair justice. That time had arrived, and members were asked to decide what was fair and reasonable. Sir John Forrest, when Premier of the State, promised that £500 should be paid over, and that the other £500 should be considered. This was 12 months ago, at the last Bridgetown Show. These numerous promises had never been fulfilled, and there had been no attempt on the part of the Government to do what was right and fair. It had been proposed that part of the bonus should be paid to these people. If there was any bonus due, it was the whole and nothing less.

MR. GEORGE: Would they not take anything less?

MR. EWING: That was not what he said; he had no idea what the company would take; but if the document was construed to apply to these people, they should receive the whole of the amount. He regretted the policy that had been pursued on the goldfields in regard to the erection of public batteries for the benefit of the smaller men had not been extended to the Greenbushes tinfield earlier. A plant had been erected there, but that only during the last few months. This tinfield was a great benefit to the State. He did not stand here as an advocate of private enterprise.

MR. TAYLOR: The hon. member was on the wrong side of the House to do that.

MR. EWING: Then, no doubt, the hon. member had changed his views, and would now advocate private enterprise. The sooner the hon. member changed to the Government side of the House the better. He appealed to the House to give the company the reward they were entitled to.

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth) seconded the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): The facts of the case had been fairly stated by the hon. member. In 1895 an advertisement appeared in the

Government Gazette offering a bonus of £1,000 to any person who would erect a smelter at Greenbushes, under certain conditions. No one made application for that bonus; but some time afterwards a deputation waited on the acting Premier (Hon. F. H. Piesse) who, without making any definite promise, told the deputation that he felt satisfied that if a smelter was erected some assistance would be given. Farther application was made to the then Minister for Mines (Mr. Iefroy), and the Under-Secretary for Mines wrote to the company stating that the Government were prepared to offer a bonus of £500 for the first hundred tons of ore smelted during the first six months, on condition that the works were kept open to the public during that period. That offer had not been accepted, and nothing had been accepted prior to the time of his (the Minister's) coming into office. He had been asked to recommend that a subsidy be granted, and had had several interviews with the company; but the main fact which had influenced him was the treatment the company had received from the Railway Department. The freight on manufactured tin from Greenbushes to Fremantle was £2 4s. 7d. per ton, and on tin ore only 10s. 1d. per ton. The latter contained 65 per cent. of metallic tin. [MR. EWING: Not always.] That was the average. [MR. GEORGE: There was a considerable difference.] Well, surely the department would much sooner carry manufactured tin than tin ore.

MR. GEORGE: There was a loss with tin, but not with tin ore.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The result was, it cost 14s. a ton less to import tin from London than to get it from Greenbushes; and, moreover, tin ore could be sent from Greenbushes to a smelter in Sydney, and a saving of 19s. 6d. per ton effected. A former Government, desiring to assist the industry, had offered a bonus, which bonus had not been accepted. Yet the Railway Department had arranged the freights so that the Greenbushes leaseholders could deliver their tin in Sydney for 19s. 6d. per ton less than the rate for which the smelting company could send it from Greenbushes to Fremantle. The company had paid something like £380 more than they would have had to pay if freight on

metallic tin had been charged on the same basis as freight on tin ore. That being so, the House would be justified in granting the company some reward. A bonus of £1,000 he would not recommend; but he would recommend £500. The offer of £1,000 had not been accepted by anyone. Then the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse), when acting Premier, had made a sort of promise that some assistance should be given; that if the company would erect a smelter and would apply to the Minister for Mines, assistance would doubtless be granted. The Minister, Mr. Lefroy, had promised that if the company would keep a smelter going for six months, he would give them £5 per ton bonus, which would amount to £500. Considering the excess charge the company had to pay on the carriage of their product to Fremantle, the request for some bonus was reasonable. He (Mr. Gregory) had told the deputation he would recommend Cabinet to grant a bonus of £500; but the deputation thought they should have £1,000; hence this motion. Cabinet then decided that as the matter had previously been before the House, it should be decided by the House alone. He would move an amendment to strike out "the said bonus" and insert in lieu "the amount of £500."

THE SPEAKER: The House could not agree to any particular amount being paid without a recommendation from the Governor-in-Council.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: At all events, the matter was clearly before hon. members, who would understand why the Government had not moved farther.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: There had not been a definite promise by him when dealing with the affair.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: True. The hon. member had made no definite promise. Some bonus should be granted, but there was no justification for recommending £1,000.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): Even at the risk of offending the susceptibilities of some so-called gentlemen of the Press, he must say a few words regarding this smelting company. In 1895, Sir John Forrest stated in the House that the company would have to produce 100 tons of smelted tin, and

that the Government would provide £1,000 if the company would furnish £5,000 or £6,000. The statements of the mover of this motion were not doubted; but there was no evidence that anything like £5,000 had been spent. It was said that there had been an expenditure of £4,600; but that did not mean that such a sum had been spent on the erection of plant.

MR. EWING: It had.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The *Government Gazette* notice stated £3,000, not £5,000.

MR. GEORGE: Sir John Forrest had said £5,000 or £6,000; and subsequently the then Attorney General (Mr. Burt) said the tin workers were trying to find someone with £6,000 to erect a plant. The whole offer had fallen to the ground for want of acceptance. In 1895 there were comparatively few industries in the colony, and it was considered desirable to stimulate new industries such as this. Nothing farther was done till about 1899, and then a sort of informal proposition had been made that someone was about to erect a plant at Greenbushes and would like a bonus. Would the granting of this bonus be quite fair to the country? The original offer of a bonus had fallen through. Many industries had been started within the last few years and had not asked for any bonus. A bonus had recently been given in a most shameful manner with regard to some land; but that subject could be threshed out. At present, the Chamber of Manufactures numbered about 300 members, whereas when the smelting industry started there were not more than half a dozen industries in the colony. Did the hon. member wish this industry to be spoon-fed?

MR. EWING: That was not the question at all.

MR. GEORGE: The company well knew they had to go "on their own." [**MR. CONNOR:** No.] They knew a bonus had been offered and had not been accepted; and they came here to put up their smelter and get a bonus if they could.

MR. EWING: Something had been offered them by Mr. Piesse, when acting Premier.

MR. DOHERTY: The hon. member was now "acting."

MR. GEORGE: It was said that in 1899 there was a revival at Greenbushes, and a "rush" of over 2,000 people. The English race were remarkably good drinkers of beer; yet a brewery started at Greenbushes was a financial failure in spite of the 2,000 people.

MR. EWING: Yet the people were there.

MR. GEORGE: Their collective thirst ought to have supported a local brewery.

MR. EWING: The hon. member did not know the people of Greenbushes.

MR. GEORGE: To his cost, he knew them too well for comfort of either mind or pocket. The hon. member said there had been 400 tons of metallic tin produced, valued at £50,000. Was that correct?

MR. EWING: If worked out, the value would probably be higher.

MR. GEORGE: That was surprising. If one examined the returns for the period over which that 400 tons was spread, the result would be astonishing. Sometimes tin was quoted as low as £70, and sometimes it was not more than £50. But the average during that period had not been £120. [MR. EWING: Yes.] He would oppose the motion. He acquitted the mover of improper motives; but in justice to the State, this and any other application for a bonus, whether of land or money, should be rejected.

THE SPEAKER offered a suggestion. The Minister for Mines was of opinion that a certain promise should be made to this smelting company, and presumably would recommend the Governor to send down a Message. The mover might be satisfied with that assurance, and withdraw his motion now. Discussion could take place when the Message was received from His Excellency.

MR. EWING: With that assurance he would be satisfied to withdraw. With reference to the remarks of the member for the Murray, who asserted that he knew the people of Greenbushes to his sorrow—

MR. GEORGE: Some of them, anyhow.

MR. EWING: As they were his (Mr. Ewing's) constituents, he strongly resented the insinuation.

MR. GEORGE: Would the hon. member pay his constituents' debts?

MR. EWING: The hon. member had no right to bring his private affairs into the House; and if the hon. member reflected on the Greenbushes people, he (Mr. Ewing)

would fight the matter to the bitter end.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member should take a dose of cooling medicine. He (Mr. George) had stated he knew the people of Greenbushes, and that he knew some of them to his sorrow.

MR. EWING: That was not a nice statement.

MR. GEORGE: Anyhow, it was a fact. Motion by leave withdrawn.

MOTION—COOLGARDIE WATER PIPES (CAULKING AND LAYING), TO ACCEPT CONTRACT.

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. C. H. Kason) moved:

That the proposals (as laid upon the table of the House) of Messrs. Couston, Finlayson, and Porritt, to complete by contract the caulking and laying of the pipes in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme, be taken into consideration, and that the Minister be authorised to accept the same subject to the modifications suggested in the Engineer-in-Chief's report.

He said: Yesterday I laid on the table of the House certain proposals made to the Government by Messrs. Couston, Finlayson, and Porritt, in connection with the laying and joining of pipes for the Coolgardie Water Scheme. They are most important proposals, involving, as is said, a great saving to this State; and Parliament being in session, the Government have considered it to be their duty to submit these proposals to Parliament, in order that hon. members may give expression to their opinions on the subject, as to whether this important work should be allowed to be completed by contract or shall continue to be done departmentally by day labour. In order that members may understand the facts of the case, I propose to put the position before them briefly. Some time ago a contract was entered into with the persons who have made this proposal, which contract provided that:

The contractor at all times during the maintenance period shall provide and maintain at each of the six installations an experienced and suitable mechanic (who shall have the principal charge of the machinery thereat) respectively during the same period, and also a suitable staff of employees for working each such installation; and the Minister (subject to the provisions of this contract) will pay to the contractor, once every month, such a sum as shall be certified by the Engineer-in-Chief to be equal to all the wages and cost of fuel and

other stores paid by the contractor for or in respect of stoking, working, or cleaning the machinery of such installation.

It is therefore argued, with some force, that these gentlemen already hold a contract and already have the control of all the caulking machines in connection with the work. To a great extent that is the case, in my opinion. They now propose to take in hand the completion of the work. Some 20,000 pipes will have been laid by the date, say a week hence, when this contract, if entered into, will come into operation, and will leave 41,664 pipes still to be laid and jointed. The proposals of these gentlemen practically amount to this, that they will undertake, under heavy penalties for failure and with provisions such as occur to the Government to protect the interests of the State, that they will lay the balance of these pipes at one-third less cost than the cost to the State for laying the 20,000 pipes previously laid, and at a considerably less cost, in the opinion of the Engineer-in-Chief, than the remaining pipes can be laid for departmentally by day labour. The saving is estimated at one-third, and will amount to a very large sum on the whole contract. In addition to this, they will undertake to maintain the 20,000 pipes already laid; that is, they will go over the whole of those pipes that have been laid, and if it is necessary to recaulk any of them, they will do this at their own expense instead of at the expense of the Government. In fact, they guarantee that all the pipes laid throughout the contract shall withstand a strain of 25 per cent. pressure additional to the strain they will be required to bear in actual work. This is a very important proposal, involving a question of policy and presenting features which a Minister for Works, if he has the interests of his office at heart, can hardly submit to this House with any degree of pleasure, at all events; because to my mind it is somewhat humiliating that I should have to appear here to-night and admit, as I have to admit on the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief, that it is possible for these gentlemen to do work for themselves at less than the department can do it for, and at less than the same people are doing it for at the present moment as paid servants of the State. I trust hon. members will realise that I am putting the actual facts

before them in order that they may arrive at a judgment. I am enlarging nothing and withholding nothing. The Engineer-in-Chief is quite definite on the point. He says:—

The price for which the tenderers now offer to lay these pipes, namely 20s. each, is only about two-thirds of what the work has hitherto been costing, and is, I believe, considerably less than we could do it for by day labour; and besides that, as already mentioned, the tenderers offer to become responsible for the jointing of the 20,000 pipes which will be laid before they obtain the contract, and to maintain the jointing of the whole of the pipe-line until it is satisfactorily completed. I may also mention that the price for which the tenderers now offer to do the work, by aid of machines, is considerably less than I believe it could be done for by hand labour, even if it were let by contract. I would also wish to mention that the original estimate for doing this work will be more than ample to cover it.

That is the proposal which these gentlemen make, under substantial guarantees, to complete the work for one-third less than the amount it has been costing the Government in the past, and for considerably less than we can hope to do it for in the future. They also guarantee to complete the work by the 30th September next; that is some months earlier than I am given to understand we can hope to complete it by day labour. They are prepared to complete the work as far as Cunderdin by the 30th March; that is a somewhat earlier date than we can hope to do it by, departmentally.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: What is the supervision going to cost?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The supervision will be comparatively trifling, because those gentlemen, if given the contract, have to submit to a test—that is the supervision—a test of a strain of 25 per cent. in advance of the working pressure the pipes will be required to bear. The same supervision would exist whether by contract or by day labour. If this work be let by contract and let to these gentlemen, they guarantee that every one of these pipes shall bear a strain of 25 per cent. more than the pipes will be called on to bear in ordinary work; and that, I think, is the question which is exercising the minds of the public to-day. If any doubt exists, it is whether these pipes will withstand the pressure or not. If

these proposals are accepted, that responsibility will be taken from the Government and placed on the shoulders of the contractors. In order that every interest should be protected as far as possible, in the little time I have had to study these proposals I have considered the position the workers will be in if this undertaking is given to the contractors. Part of the contract these tenderers will enter into will be that provision shall be made for an eight-hours working day, and that the men employed on the work shall not be paid a less rate of wages than hitherto paid by the Government. The contractors are ready to submit to that proposal. They give me to understand that the services of none of the men now employed will be dispensed with, and that on the contrary more men will be employed. The argument is reasonable, because the gentlemen have practically had the engaging and discharging of the men already; so that it can be taken as a fair basis for argument that the majority of the men they have now are men they are well satisfied with. There is of course a feature of an objectionable kind, particularly to the present Government, that this would be letting a contract without advertising for public tenders. That point has been gone into, and the Engineer-in-Chief assures me that he would not be prepared to advise the letting of a contract to anyone else but this firm; and for this reason, in the first place, that to call for public tenders would necessarily entail a great amount of delay and complications might arise, as this is a work in which the conditions cannot well be specifically laid down as to what the contractors should be required to do. If these gentlemen undertake the contract they can never come forward with any claim for extras or contingencies which may arise, because if they do enter into the contract, they do so with their eyes open. They have been doing the work in the past, and they know what they will be called upon to do in the future. Therefore, although perhaps under other circumstances it would have been advisable — and certainly the Government would have preferred if the work was to be done by contract to call for tenders — still, with the advice of our officers, I could not recommend that course in this instance. The question for the House to

decide, briefly, is this: whether the completion of the work shall be let by contract or be done departmentally. If departmentally, I can only say the work will be done as speedily as possible, and at as low a price as possible. I am told by the officers of the department, on whose knowledge I must rely, that we cannot hope to do the work as speedily or as economically as Messrs. Couston, Finlayson, and Porritt.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Before the hon. member sits down, will he say whether these pipes are to be placed in position by the contractors, and the sinking of the holes for making the joints to be done by them also?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; the proposal is and the prices stipulated for are as follow:—

Laying and jointing pipes, 15s. 6d. each; excavation of manholes, 4s. 6d.; total, 20s. for each pipe; refilling trenches, 25s. per chain; fixing air valves, scour valves, and reflux valves, 25 each.

To all the proposed charges, except the last one, the Engineer-in-Chief gives his approval; but in regard to the last, the fixing of the air valves, scour valves, and reflux valves, he says a fair price would be £4 each, instead of £5. I have put before the House, as briefly as possible, the facts in the possession of the Government. It is merely for Parliament to say what shall or shall not be done; therefore in order to test the feeling of the House, I move the motion standing in my name.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): As this is a very important matter, seeming to strike a vital blow at the Government policy of day labour, it would be well if the debate were adjourned until Tuesday next. I move therefore to that effect.

THE PREMIER: Could not we take it to-morrow?

MR. NANSON: I understand there are certain papers on the table which members wish to make themselves acquainted with. We prefer Tuesday.

THE PREMIER: Hon. members might require farther information to-morrow; therefore, if the motion is put on the Notice Paper for to-morrow, it can be adjourned farther then. We do not wish to rush the matter.

MR. NANSON: I move that the debate be adjourned till Thursday, on

the distinct understanding that we can adjourn it farther.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS: I suggest that these papers be printed immediately, so that members can read them.

MR. H. DAGLISH: I should like to suggest that the Premier agree to an adjournment till Tuesday. This is a big question, and we cannot possibly master the facts in a day or so. Tuesday will be little enough time to acquire a knowledge of the case.

THE PREMIER: We have agreed not to force the matter on.

MR. HOPKINS: Shall I be in order in moving that the papers be printed?

THE SPEAKER: The question now is that the debate be adjourned.

MR. NANSON: I think it is the wish of the House that the debate be adjourned till Tuesday; therefore I move to that effect.

THE PREMIER: We will print the papers and give all the information we can.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned accordingly.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from the previous sitting.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT
(Hon. F. Illingworth).

Photo-lithographic Department, £6,546:

MR. J. GARDINER: This department might be inquired into closely, as it seemed to be an extremely expensive one. The Colonial Secretary might get the assistance of some practical man, representative of the trade; and he suggested the manager for Messrs. Sands and McDougall, who would give some idea of the cost of the work turned out by this department. The chief lithographic establishment in Melbourne would not pay more wages than this department did. Several increases had been given. One officer had been increased from £158 to £200, and several other officers had received increases. The department was too expensive for the work it turned out, and he asked the Colonial Secretary to give an assurance that the branch would be inquired into.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member had made a mistake in

regard to the increases. The £158 was only paid for a portion of the year; the salary being £190. The officer had now received a £10 increase. The same impression was in his mind when he took office in regard to this department as existed in the mind of the hon. member, and he did go into the matter. He obtained prices for the work which was done, and he found that the cost of producing the work was in favour of the Government department, in comparison with the prices charged outside.

MR. GARDINER: All illustrations were done by one office in Perth, both for Perth and Fremantle; very little was done outside the firm of Sands and McDougall.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the Government had to depend on Sands and McDougall, they would have to pay that firm's prices. The department did the work cheaper than the firm named.

MR. GARDINER: If so many plans and documents were not printed in the reports presented to the House, the cost of this department would be considerably lessened. When we considered that one little report cost £1, while the plan attached cost £15, members would see that the cost of this department very quickly mounted up.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A considerable amount of work was done by this department for other departments, the Railways in particular.

MR. GEORGE: Was the work not charged against the departments?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was not. He had thought that both the printing department and the lithographic department ought to charge the work to the different departments. If that were done, we should find in the end that the printing departments were self-supporting and made a profit for the State.

MR. H. DAGLISH: The Colonial Secretary might give an assurance that he would introduce the system of charging the various departments for the printing done, also the lithographic work. That was a principle which the Government ought to introduce. He hoped the Colonial Secretary would not take the advice of the member for Albany and get the opinion of a rival lithographic printer on the work done at this office.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government had considered the question

of charging the departments for the work done, and they were met with the objection that after all it would be simply a book entry which involved considerable cost; and there would be an increase of cost in both printing and lithographic departments if separate accounts, as between the two departments, were kept. To do this throughout the service, many new clerks would be required. However, a start had been made; and if the House approved of the suggestion, the system would be as far as possible extended. The whole of the work done by this department was scheduled, and the cost of each job known; and a comparison of the cost of production in the Government office with the lowest prices quoted by Sands and McDougall was much in favour of the department.

MR. GEORGE: Though that fact was in one way satisfactory, we spent for printing £32,000, and nearly £7,000 for lithography—equal to £40,000 worth of wages and material for doing printing for other departments. The Railways had much work done for them for which nothing was charged; therefore the published percentage of working expenses to receipts in the Railway Department was inaccurate.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That was so.

MR. GEORGE: The House was often told, when the railways were attacked, that the profits compared well with those of other railway systems; yet here was a huge item for which the department was not charged. Printing and lithography should be apportioned to each department, if only approximately.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That could be done.

MR. GEORGE: Was there any other department doing work for the Railway Department free of charge?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was much in what the hon. member said. The Government had started the new system, and would extend it, though every department could not be included. Regarding the railways, it could be carried out.

MR. JACOBY: Any department which found that it cost too much to get its work done at the Government Printing Office should have the power to get it done elsewhere.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That power existed.

MR. JACOBY: The bookkeeping system would give a better check on the accounts.

Vote put and passed.

Electoral, £4,633 18s. 4d.:

MR. GEORGE: By what rule were allowances made to electoral registrars? Some received £190 and others as little as £15.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Some of these officers were civil servants. The registrar at Albany was clerk of courts, while at Beverley the resident magistrate did the work; therefore their remuneration was small. But there was one special registrar for Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and Hannans, who gave his whole time to the work, and must be specially remunerated. Sometimes the work was done by a postmaster or a mining registrar.

MR. HOPKINS: Attention should be directed to the division of districts and of work among these officers. A registrar had to receive and record claims for enrolment, and within a period of say two or three months visit the address of the claimant, and not finding him there, ascertain where he was living, and in default summon him to court to show why his name should not be struck off. The resident magistrate at Beverley was supposed to do this, but members could rest assured it was not done, nor could it be done by the one registrar who served Boulder, Kalgoorlie, and Hannans, which had a population of 26,100.

MR. JOHNSON: He worked 14 hours a day.

MR. HOPKINS: If he worked 24 hours, he could not check the claims made. The purity of the rolls was of great importance, more particularly on the goldfields.

MR. F. McDONALD: Registrars received municipal rolls from officers of municipalities or of roads boards, and if an elector had not paid his rates, struck him off.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member's statement was possibly correct, but that practice was not legal. The Act demanded that the names of persons liable to be rated should be sent

to the registrar by clerks of municipalities or secretaries of roads boards; but in many cases the municipal roll was sent, which did not include the names of those who had not paid rates. The matter would be looked into, because the Government paid 4d. a folio for such lists, and had a right to demand that they should be in accordance with the Act. This defect, however, could not be laid to the charge of the registrars, who could take only the rolls sent to them.

MR. HOPKINS: Let the Colonial Secretary demand from town clerks and roads board secretaries copies of the names registered in the rate-books, and not the printed rolls.

MR. HASTIE: As it was evidently understood there would soon be an abolition of plural voting, there would be no more trouble with municipal rolls, as the only qualification would be residence.

MR. DAGLISH: There was no hope of having a satisfactory electoral roll while the use of the municipal rolls was continued. The discussion should lead to the alteration of the system. Many of the town clerks had not time to attend to these duties.

MR. HOPKINS: They were paid.

MR. DAGLISH: From municipal rolls the names of many persons who had paid rates were often omitted. In regard to the electoral department, it was doing fairly well if due allowance were made for the initial difficulties. He must object to the appointment of an inspector of Parliamentary rolls, and the farther appointment of chief electoral officer. The latter officer received £100 a year as salary for this work, in addition to his salary as Sheriff and Inspector of Prisons. This item of £100 for chief electoral officer was formerly on the temporary list, while now it was transferred to the fixed salary list, which brought it under the pension system. The appointment of a chief electoral officer was unnecessary. The officer filling that position (**Mr. Oct. Burt**) could not attend to his duties as Sheriff and as Inspector of Prisons, and perform this work also. This arrangement involved dual control, which was often inconvenient and produced some ridiculous results, as in the case of a person who had been doing electoral work, earning perhaps a few shillings, and when paid for it by cheque signed

by one officer, he found the cheque was valueless until he could succeed in catching the other electoral officer to obtain his signature also. The present system was so unsatisfactory that he moved, as an amendment, that the item, "Chief electoral officer, £100," be struck out.

MR. F. WALLACE supported the amendment. The chief electoral officer drew altogether £800 per annum. To show the difference in the treatment between one officer and another, it would be observed that while this officer (**Mr. Oct. Burt**) received £100 as a gratuity for conducting the referendum and £100 as a gratuity for attending to the federal elections, the other officer associated with him in the work got a gratuity of £25 in one instance and £5 in the other. This other officer, the inspector of Parliamentary rolls, had the requisite qualifications for the position, and he should have a salary proportionate to his responsibilities. It was to be hoped the Government intended to amend the Electoral Act, which was causing general dissatisfaction.

MR. R. HASTIE supported the amendment, and objected to the item of £100 for the chief electoral officer being transferred from the temporary to the permanent list. The chief electoral officer had made some appointments which were not satisfactory, and was not sufficiently in touch with the work to know the qualifications of those engaged in the work.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake): Members should not assume that this officer (**Mr. Oct. Burt**) was getting an increase of salary by reason of this item of £100 in the Estimates for the chief electoral officer. He had been principal Under Secretary for many years past, drawing £800 a year, and when the Sheriff (**Mr. Roe**) resigned, this officer was offered the position of Sheriff, Sir John Forrest being then the Premier. **Mr. Oct. Burt** undertook the duties of Sheriff, and was allowed to retain the position of chief electoral officer, which he had held many years. While he was the principal Under Secretary he controlled the electoral department. Latterly there was an additional staff taken on. It would be most unfair to reduce the officer's salary without some adequate reason. In face of the distinct under-

standing made when this officer was appointed Sheriff, he (the Premier) must tell the House plainly that it would be a gross and unmanly act to deprive this officer of the £100 as chief electoral registrar, by striking out the item.

MR. DOHERTY: This officer was one of the best organisers in the service. He had special knowledge and qualifications for the work, and his services were paid for by the paltry sum of £100 a year. Should this department be placed under the control of persons who had no experience?

MR. JACOBY: If this officer was directly responsible for the actual working of the department, one would feel it a duty, knowing the circumstances in connection with the preparation of the rolls at the last election, to vote for the amendment.

THE PREMIER: This officer had not prepared the rolls, but he appointed the electoral officers.

MR. JACOBY: It was the appointments of the electoral officers about which he had to complain. In the Swan district last year, when the rolls were being prepared for the election, the returning officer spent two days in the Mundaring district and struck off the roll every permanent settler in the district. Men who had been living in the district nearly 20 years had been struck off the roll, while 50 or 60 persons who had left the district were allowed to remain on the roll. If the responsibility for the appointments were placed upon the shoulders of this officer, then the item should be struck out. On the day of election, 28 men rolled up at the booth at Chittering, but only eight found their names on the roll. Most of these men had lived in the district all their lives. New-comers might find a difficulty in getting on the roll, but these persons had lived in the district for years. The officer of the Swan district was reported against by the Inspector of Parliamentary Rolls, but in spite of his recommendation the officer was appointed.

MR. DOHERTY: This officer was an organiser.

MR. JACOBY: He had organised everybody off the rolls. People were unduly harassed by some electoral officers. Men had to lose a day's work and go to the expense of attending the revision court when there was no need for them

to be summoned at all. Men who had been living on blocks of ground for years were summoned to appear at the revision court so as to keep their names on the roll, and some of these persons, rather than go to the expense and trouble of attending the court, allowed their names to be struck off. If we were to take some of the rolls as the voting power on which to base a Redistribution of Seats Bill, then an injustice would be done to some districts. He hardly felt justified in voting for the amendment, but he made his protest in consequence of the undesirable condition of the Swan roll.

MR. QUINLAN: There had been a lot of condemnation of the officers of this department, whereas it was the Act which was at fault. Members should not complain of the defects of the various rolls when the law was to blame. He was in favour of adopting the principle in vogue in New Zealand, and strike out the names of those who did not exercise the franchise or did not give a sufficient reason within a reasonable time why they did not do so. That would save a vast amount of money and place the onus of the omission of the name on the elector. One had only to look at the last North Perth and West Perth elections to see that although we heard a great deal about people being disfranchised, it was the fault of the Act. This particular officer was one of the best in the Government service, and one was pleased to have an opportunity of expressing appreciation of this officer's services.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: This officer was a good man, but one did not like to see the item placed amongst the fixed salaries. A number of rather wild statements had been made about the rolls, but if one looked through the previous Estimates one would see the paltry sums placed at the disposal of this department. Look at items No. 6 to No. 44, sums ranging from £15 to £20. Take the district of the Murray, comprising an area of several thousand square miles: £20 was allowed for the registrar, who had to live at Pinjarra. Jarrahdale was 30 miles away, and must a person go to Pinjarra to register his vote?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A considerable amount of matter had been prepared for the amendment of the Electoral Act, but he had not been able

to digest it properly to bring it before the Cabinet. This was sufficient to show that the Government were looking in that direction. Amongst the suggestions was that the new roll should be compiled from the census taken in March last; the necessary particulars could be obtained from the householders' schedules. These were to be sent to the registrars to correct any errors caused by death or change of residence. For this purpose it was recommended that the registrar should utilise the services of the police officers, postmasters, and other Government officials, and supply them with claim forms. This suggestion was mentioned to the officer before the census was taken, and the officer was desirous of having a column put on the census papers which would have given a correct return of the electoral districts to which individuals belonged. Then there would have been an accurate roll. Once we got an accurate roll, we could not do better than adopt the New Zealand system, which would save an immense amount of money, friction, and bad feeling amongst the electors themselves. If an elector did not record his vote, his name would be struck off the roll, and he would have to make application to get on again. It threw the responsibility on the individual to keep on the roll. Regarding this officer, there was practically a covenant between him and the State that he should receive £800 a year. This was a case in point in which the Government had given the Committee too much information. If this item had been included under incidentals as formerly, there would have been no discussion.

MR. GEORGE: The £100 had previously been paid, and was specially itemised on page 68.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: True; the officer had had the money, but this was neither an increase nor a fresh payment, he having been transferred to this position with the understanding that he would not suffer by the change. To reduce his salary would be improper. There was not in the service a man with similar experience of the same kind; consequently the former Government acted wisely in making the appointment. The bulk of the complaints arose in consequence of the Act. The member for the Murray had spoken regarding an

officer in his district; but the papers showed that not one complaint had reached the department against that officer, nor was there any record of the alleged protest by another officer against his appointment. By Section 31 of the Act, secretaries of roads boards or clerks of municipalities must furnish the names of every person liable to be rated.

MR. GEORGE: That was practically a dead letter.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: But the fault was not with the department.

MR. HOPKINS: The fault was with the registrars.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was not the registrar's duty to obtain the information.

MR. HOPKINS: They should see the Government got value for the money.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The discussion would doubtless call the attention of the proper officers to the importance of the work.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN: Did this officer appoint returning officers? Such appointments were not satisfactory. One man outside the civil service had been appointed, when there were several Government officials capable of doing the work, and the appointee did not know enough to get a ballot paper with two names correctly printed. This grave mistake might have cost the country a large sum.

MR. J. L. NANSON: This officer had been appointed by the previous Government, and was supported by the present Ministry. The item should not be struck out, but it might well be made temporary.

MR. TAYLOR: Was it this officer's province to regulate the dispatch of ballot-boxes from the polling booths to the head office?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. It was the duty of the returning officer.

MR. TAYLOR: Had not the Colonial Secretary papers compiled by this officer setting forth the necessity for new rolls? A section of the Act provided that new rolls should be compiled from the census returns after every census, and it was reported that this officer had set his face against such provision.

MR. HASTIE: With this officer one had not found fault, but had said he drew a salary of £100 for which there was practically no return, the only work done being the appointment of subordinate

officers, some of whom were not satisfactory. A man should not be put in control of a department at a salary of only £100. It had been stated that the second officer did all the work.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That was not so.

MR. HASTIE: A member had said this gentleman was a good organiser; but was the department well organised? A few years ago, another officer specially selected for his experience had been appointed to inspect the rolls, and had apparently done the work. Then surely it was not necessary to give this chief inspector £100, with nominal control. It could hardly be against the interest of the country to strike out the item. The work of the department would be better done if it were controlled by one man.

MR. F. CONNOR: Though he had intended to vote against the item, yet he would vote for it after the last speaker's explanation.

MR. HOPKINS: On good authority, he had heard this £100 was easily earned. If Mr. Burt were entitled to £800 a year, let him get it; but he should not receive this £100 if, when wanted to sign cheques issued by the department, he had to be sought in the streets. The Colonial Secretary said 4d. per folio was paid for copies of the municipal rolls. If these were unsatisfactory, this officer or the department should have the matter rectified. It was evident the officer did not give an adequate return for the amount on the Estimates.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Daly, the inspector of electoral rolls, attended to matters connected with the rolls. The various town clerks and secretaries of roads boards were required to send to him their lists of ratepayers for purposes of electoral registration; and how could he, as inspector of rolls, know whether any particular list sent to him was accurate or not?

MR. HOPKINS: Did he ever ask for a copy of the rate-book?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The inspector of rolls was not entitled to ask for that, under the Act, and if Parliament had not provided for this being done, he should not be expected to do it. The Act did provide for divided control. Mr. Oct. Burt's duties were entirely

different from those of the inspector of rolls. Mr. Burt had to take charge of all the elections in the country, and had to appoint the returning officers, receiving and sending out the whole of the electoral business. He had been doing this work from the very beginning of the electoral system; and simply because the amount of the salary to which he was entitled was allocated in this way in the Estimates, these objections were raised. There was no objection raised to the amount of the salary, apparently, but only to the mode of allocating it. If the Committee desired that the work should be separated, there was no man in the country who would do that work separately and effectively for £300 a year. To expect the Government to prepare Estimates at the fancy of members, who differed in their ideas as to what should be done, was an impossibility. The present question was whether this officer was a good officer, whether he was receiving too much, and whether he was doing the work. Speaking as Colonial Secretary, he was in a position to say the electoral work of this officer was well done, and was worth £300 a year. Any blame in regard to the imperfections of the rolls did not lie with Mr. Burt.

MR. HOPKINS: He was the head of the Electoral Department.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, there was also a Ministerial head; and in that capacity he, as Minister, was prepared to take any blame attaching to him. He was doing his duty as well as he could, and he thought these officers were doing the same. When he had occasion to make inquiries at the electoral office, the officers appointed to carry out the Act had made it clear to him that they were acting strictly in accordance with the requirements of the statute. Therefore, to blame the officers was wrong. The blame, if any, should attach to Parliament, which directed the officers to do certain things in a certain way. As sensible men, hon. members must not blame the officers, who were doing their duty and carrying out the Act.

MR. JACOBY: Having made a distinct charge against one officer, he asked the Colonial Secretary to make an inquiry and ascertain whether the chief electoral officer had obtained any report in reference to the officer against whom complaint

had been made, as to whether he was qualified for the position.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member had mentioned this to him in conversation, and he had consequently looked up the papers. He did not find any such information in them.

MR. GARDINER: The underlying principle was that members did not want to have officers holding several responsible positions in different departments. The controlling officer should be the actual head, and be in immediate touch with the work. Until that was done, effective amendment could not be expected.

MR. DAGLISH, in explanation, said he did not know Mr. Oct. Burt personally and had no feeling in respect to him. He made no charges against him in respect of the rolls, nor had he reflected on that officer's ability as a public servant. If Mr. Burt were entrusted solely with the work of the prisons, which was one of the branches of work under his control, he would find ample scope for all his organising and supervising ability. The same might be said in regard to the duties of Sheriff, which were also entrusted to the same officer. He (Mr. Daglish) protested against this plurality of offices. He protested against public officers being given additional small offices for the purpose of increasing their salaries. It was a bad principle, leading to bad work, causing inefficient organisation and inefficient service. He would divide the Committee on this amendment, if necessary. Members on the Opposition side of the House were unanimously supporting the Government on this question, because they regarded it as a personal question.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No.

MR. DAGLISH: Then the position was that members on the Opposition side were in favour of a plurality of offices.

MR. GEORGE: No; members liked to support a good man in the service.

MR. DAGLISH: The salary of £100 paid to Mr. Oct. Burt for this electoral work was a perquisite received by him when he was Under Secretary; the same perquisite attached to him now that he was Sheriff, and did not attach to Mr. Burt's successor in the under secretaryship. As to any binding contract made between Sir John Forrest and Mr. Burt

for the continuance of this salary, he (Mr. Daglish) denied that such a contract could be binding, because this sum of £100 had been hitherto paid under the heading of provisional and temporary salaries, and therefore could be terminated at any time, as was done in the case of provisional and temporary officers whose services were no longer required. The argument as to the binding contract could not be brought forward. He would be prepared to vote Mr. Burt £800 a year as Sheriff only.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member said he intended to divide the Committee in order to test the principle as to whether or not the system of plurality of office should prevail. The hon. member could have his (the Premier's) opinion without a division. The object the Government had in bringing down the return was to show how many cases there were in which the system of plurality prevailed. The hon. member was right in his objection to plurality of offices, and the Government opposed it. In the reform contemplated, the Government wished to prevent one officer holding four or five offices and drawing salaries from these sources. The Government thanked the Committee for the criticism, but it was no assistance to the Government in bringing about reorganisation to aim a blow at an individual officer and deprive him of a salary which he had enjoyed for years past, and when he had not been led to believe in the slightest degree that his services were not valued, or that there was any intention to disrate him. The work appertaining to the office was of the greatest importance. This officer had the organising of the electoral system, and had done his work well. When in the Crown Law Department he (the Premier) was constantly in touch with this officer. When the elections were pending, it was to this officer that telegrams and questions came from all parts of the State as to how the elections would be conducted and carried out. He had the whole control, and it was no fault of the officer but the defect in the Act. Had this officer's opinion been followed when the Electoral Act was passed by Parliament, the chances were there would not have been so many blunders made as now appeared. Let any member ask for a personal interview with this officer, and they would find out

whether he understood the business about which reflections were cast on him.

MR. HASTIE: No; not cast on him.

THE PREMIER: No; not cast on him, but thrown on him and heaped on him. Really an injustice was being done.

MR. NANSON: It was due to the Opposition to utterly repudiate the suggestion of the member for Subiaco that in voting against this amendment members were in favour of the principle of plurality of salaries. The amendment had nothing to do with the principle. What the Opposition were supporting the Government on was to assure the greatest possible efficiency in carrying out the elections in the State, and the member for Subiaco was not right in twitting members with voting for plurality. When the principle was attacked, no one would be more willing to aid the Government than the members on the Opposition side.

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

Ayes 12

Noes 19

Majority against ... 7

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Doherty
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Hastie	Mr. George
Mr. Holman	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. McWilliams	Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Reid	Mr. Leake
Mr. Reside	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Taylor	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Wallace (Teller).	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Pigott
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. Yelverton
	Mr. Connor (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the item, "chief electoral officer," be transferred to salaries provisional and temporary.

Amendment put and passed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved, as a consequential amendment, that the total for salaries provisional and temporary be increased from £2,283 18s. 4d. to £2,383 18s. 4d.

Amendment put and passed.

Item—Extra Assistance in the preparation of electoral rolls, fees, etc., £1,500:

MR. F. McDONALD: The electoral registrars should be the returning officers for their respective districts. The registrar at North Fremantle received only £190 for the electoral work of five constituencies, and apparently of Cockburn Sound as well. These fees should be added to the registrars' salaries.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: As already explained, that had been done when possible.

Item—Referendum:

MR. HOPKINS: Why this item?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was for the balance of the work.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

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

MR. D. J. DOHERTY moved that progress be reported.

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

Ayes 7

Noes 25

Majority against ... 18

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Connor
Mr. George	Mr. Ewing
Mr. O'Connor	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Piesse	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Reid	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Doherty (Teller).	Mr. Holman
	Mr. Hopkins
	Mr. Hutchinson
	Mr. Illingworth
	Mr. Jacoby
	Mr. Johnson
	Mr. Leake
	Mr. McDonald
	Mr. McWilliams
	Mr. Nanson
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Pigott
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Reside
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. Taylor
	Mr. Wallace
	Mr. Yelverton
	Mr. Smith (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

THE PREMIER: Would hon. members prefer to postpone the Works Estimates, and take the Lands?

MR. GEORGE: Where was the report of the Works Department?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: A statement should be made by the Minister for Works.

THE PREMIER: The gentleman who had been Minister for Works when the Esti-

mates were introduced was not able to take his seat in the House to-night.

MR. GEORGE : Where was the departmental report?

THE PREMIER : It had been prepared ; but, like other expensive items of printing, disregarded.

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

General Division, £25,853 :

MR. TEESDALE SMITH : The Minister should give a distinct undertaking that he would go exhaustively through these items. The cost of administration was altogether excessive, and it should be the Minister's one aim to reduce the expenditure by at least 25 or 30 per cent. That £167,928 should be spent to manage and to carry on the small public works now in progress was monstrous. Unless the Minister gave a promise that the expenditure would be reduced, he (Mr. Smith) would move to reduce each item on the departmental estimates.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason) : It was the intention of the Government and of every Minister to go exhaustively into all the items on the Estimates in the endeavour to effect reforms. But the expenditure of this department for the year was £27,961 less than last year. In considering this expenditure, regard must surely be had to the Loan Estimates also. If loan expenditure and revenue expenditure were taken together, a fair idea could be formed of the ratio between the cost of administration and the cost of work done by the department.

HON. F. H. PIESSE : No. The revenue and the loan expenditure were quite distinct.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : If one compared the total salaries of all officers with the total cost of the revenue and the loan works, surely one could arrive at the ratio of the cost of administration to the cost of the works ; and if that test were applied, the cost of administration would be seen to be under 5 per cent. Bearing in mind also that the works throughout the State which the Works Department was called upon to do, and for which no item appeared on the Estimates, works especially for roads boards and other bodies, also for the

Federal Government, entailing a large amount of labour on the department and for which no vote appeared on the Estimates, it would be seen that the cost of administration was not really so large as some members appeared to think. In saying this, he did not intend it to be inferred that no reforms could be effected ; for in fact there was room for reforms, by which a considerable saving in cost could be effected, and it was the intention of the Government to effect reforms.

MR. JACOBY : It was futile for the Committee to expect any reform in the Public Works Department until the Ministerial head was not one of the accommodating kind of Ministers. The Engineer-in-Chief, who practically ruled the department, was a man of strong will, and it became the more necessary that the Ministerial head should be one with a particularly strong will. Members might accept the assurance of the present Minister as to his intentions to effect reforms ; but members would also know that his efforts would be futile unless the Engineer-in-Chief was willing to fall in with them. There were opportunities throughout the country for reforms to be effected in the carrying out of public works, as he had seen in numerous instances : many extravagances could be prevented if proper care were taken. If works carried out by private enterprise were carried out in the same extravagant manner, the effect would be ruinous to those engaged in them. The amount of money wasted in the Coolgardie Water Scheme alone, by the system of day labour, might mean a waste of perhaps £100,000. The time had arrived when we should put the public works of this country under a better system. Hundreds of thousands of pounds were spent annually in excess of actual requirements, in carrying out public works. The motion proposed by the Minister for Public Works this evening, in relation to accepting a tender for the laying and caulking of pipes for the Coolgardie Water Scheme, would probably settle the policy of the country in regard to carrying out public works by day labour or by contract. If by contract, then let proper regulations be made in regard to the wages to be paid and the hours to be worked. But he did hope that something would be done to check the whole-

sale waste of money now going on in connection with the public works system in this State.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: The Premier had referred to the annual report issued by the Public Works Department as affording the necessary information to members in dealing with these votes; but on looking at the report, it was made up to the end of December, 1900, and was practically twelve months behind date. A report so old as that was of little use to members in dealing with these Estimates. There had never been placed before this House such a damning reflection on the Works Department as that given this evening by the Minister for Works in reference to the proposed acceptance of a contract for the laying and caulking of water pipes. The Minister's statements, especially his admissions, afforded the most convincing proof of the inability of the Works Department to carry on the works of this country in an economical manner. For here was a proposed contract based on a price estimated to be two-thirds that which the Government had been paying for the same work up to the present; and if these contractors could do the work at that reduced price, it really meant that they would be working at about half the cost which the Government were now paying, because these contractors must provide for their profit.

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was expenditure in connection with the Loan Estimates, but the Estimates before the House were for works to be undertaken out of revenue.

MR. GEORGE: It did not matter whether the proposed contract was in connection with loan expenditure or revenue expenditure. It was so much bosh to ask the Committee to put the expenditure out of revenue and the expenditure out of loan together, and then strike an average for the purpose of ascertaining the proportionate cost of administration. The Minister knew that the expenditure from both classes of estimates would go into this big contract for the Coolgardie Water Scheme. All the present Ministers had assured the House that they intended to retrench in their several departments; but why did they not retrench, instead of giving us homilies such as that which the Committee had listened to this evening?

If the annual report of the Works Department was to be of use to members in dealing with estimates of expenditure, the report might have been brought up to the end of June last. He would like to see a special commission appointed to investigate the Public Works Department, say a Royal Commission if necessary, and experts from outside might be obtained for the purpose, as was done in the case of the Railway Department. He felt sure it would be possible to formulate accusations against the chief men in the Works Department as serious as those which were formulated recently in regard to chief officers in the Railway Department. He objected to the Works vote being pushed through too hastily; therefore he moved that progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

HON. F. H. FLESSE: The member for Wellington (Mr. Teesdale Smith), in referring to the expenditure as compared with the cost of administration in the carrying out of public works, though he did not state the proportion correctly, intended to draw attention to the large cost for administering this department. Due allowance should be made for the Minister now controlling this department, on account of the short time he had been in office. It was noticeable that during the past two years there had been a reduction in the amount expended by the department for roads and bridges and other works of that character, although the cost of administering the department seemed to be as great now as it was two or three years ago, when the expenditure was much larger. As to the remarks of the Minister to-night about taking the loan expenditure into account, as well as the expenditure from revenue, in regard to proportionate cost of administration, members would find that in every case provision had been made in the loan votes for the cost of administering the loan expenditure. Therefore the argument used by the Minister did not apply. About £40,000 was provided for salaries and contingencies, being about the same amount as was provided three years ago; yet while there had been a great reduction in the amount expended during that period, there was no diminution in the cost of administration. Although £50,000 less was expended now on roads

and bridges, and £30,000 less for special votes, yet the cost of administering the lesser amount was the same now as it was three years ago for the greater amount. This meant that the cost of administration was about 50 per cent. of the amount expended. This proportion was abnormal, and needed reduction. Since he left office three years ago, there had been no reduction in the cost of administration, although, as he had said, the amount spent on works was less now than previously. At one time it was only 6 per cent. of the expenditure; to-day it had risen to 15 per cent., and if the amount for roads and bridges were taken off it would be nearly 40 per cent. That was too much, and called for the gravest attention on the part of the Minister.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS: The cost of administration in this department was most excessive, and whilst hoping the Minister would see his way clear to make certain reductions during the next year, he desired to draw attention to the salaries paid to engineers. This class of professional gentlemen in Western Australia was disgracefully underpaid.

HON. F. H. PIERSSE: Nonsense.

MR. HOPKINS: Men who were bachelors of engineering, and had as big a course to go through as a medical officer, received poor salaries, while resident magistrates received up to £1,150 a year.

HON. F. H. PIERSSE: There was not a resident magistrate on the list receiving that amount.

MR. HOPKINS: There was one resident magistrate who drew up to a fraction of £1,150 a year, while we had bachelors of engineering drawing from £200 to £400 a year. The Engineer-in-Chief received £1,500. This country thought nothing of paying £8,000 a year to a consulting engineer in London, when any of the bachelors of engineering who were paid £200 a year in this country could do the work much better if sent to London. While we paid a consulting engineer £8,000 a year in London, the work was done by under-strappers: it would be better to send our own officers home. It was a disgraceful thing to find an officer who had gone through a five years' course in a university engaged in public works at £200, whilst clerks of courts drew up to £600 a year

and resident magistrates up to £1,150. Even a shorthand-writer and typist, appointed clerk to the Colonial Secretary, drew a salary of £200 a year, placing him on a par with bachelors of civil engineering. This was a class of professional man who deserved well of any country. Such officers were indispensable, and should be paid higher salaries, as the present salaries were not an inducement to these officers to give their best services to the State.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: If members added up the figures, they would find that there was £22,000 paid in salaries to officers to do £65,000 worth of work. There was £50,000 in one fell swoop to be taken off the amount for this department. In previous years members were enabled to have a blue-book to see how many officers were engaged in this department, but this year it was not available. One found few officers discharged, whereas the work had become less. If there was not the work to do, the country could not afford to employ these officers. Members had to discuss the vote with practically no information. He was not a believer in paying low salaries, but men who had gone through a university course were governed by the law of supply and demand; and these officers would not remain in the service if they had an opportunity of better employment elsewhere. However brilliant an officer's attainments might be, he got the market value for services rendered. At the present time one knew of a number of men who had received a university education walking the streets of Perth who would be only too glad to receive a salary of £3 a week. At one time this country had the pick of the whole of the engineering staff of Australia, and if a boom came again the same chance would arise.

Item—Under Secretary Public Works, £600:

MR. H. DAGLISH: This officer had received twelve months' leave on full pay. A year or two back the same officer had a lengthened leave of absence of three or four months, on the occasion of his marriage. It seemed unreasonable that members of the public service in high positions got such lengthy leave so frequently. Every head of a department

within a recent date had been on long leave of absence, and in some cases half-a-dozen officers had been away at one time.

THE PREMIER: This officer was unfortunately an invalid; at the present time he was threatened with serious illness. He had taken the best medical advice, and was told that unless he took a prolonged rest he would incur a fatal illness.

MR. TAYLOR: Had the officer received twelve months' leave on full pay?

THE PREMIER said he did not know the length of the leave, but he knew it was on full pay.

MR. NANSON: Was there a board before whom these officers went?

THE PREMIER: The names of the medical men who had certified to Mr. Jull's illness could be given. The officer was seriously ill, and had either to take a long leave, retire from the service, or die. There was power under the Public Service Act to grant long leave in exceptional cases. This officer did not work eight hours a day; he worked all day and nearly all night. The Government considered that this officer had honestly earned his leave, and it was given to him in the full hope and belief that he would be restored to health.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: This officer was entitled to the holiday. During the four and a half years he (Mr. Piesse) had the administration of the Works Department, and when so much public money was being expended and so many works carried out, this officer had rendered great assistance. One could indorse the words of the Premier as to the long hours this officer worked. He had a great deal to do, and he worked conscientiously. Although the officer was not entitled to any leave, no doubt this was a special case, and if the officer was restored to health, the State would benefit by his experience. He was looked upon as one of the most efficient officers in the service; he was a good, hard-working, thorough man, and one could speak in every way in his favour. It was hoped the officer would be restored to health again, and that we should see him taking up his position, because he had a thorough knowledge of the working of the Works Department.

MR. TAYLOR: While not wishing to make any personal attack upon the

officer, he wished to take this opportunity of entering his protest against civil servants receiving high salaries being granted privileges which were denied to officers just as earnest and honest in their work who did not receive such high pay.

THE PREMIER: Where was the justification for that statement?

MR. TAYLOR: It was never found that officers receiving poor salaries got six months' leave.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Five applications had been approved by him this week for officers who were only drawing small salaries.

MR. TAYLOR: That was not the general opinion, and the officers receiving small salaries generally cried out about it. If a man was unwell and not fit to continue his work, the Government should give him an opportunity of having his health restored. He was not saying anything about this officer, but he objected to the principle that the high officers received more consideration and more privileges than those who were poorly paid.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Applications for sick leave were dealt with entirely on their merits, and regardless of the position filled. If an officer had rendered good service, he was entitled to leave, and received it just the same as an officer who drew a high salary. If an officer drew a salary of £100 or £150 a year, so long as he had rendered good service he was entitled to the leave.

MR. DAGLISH: Mr. Jull should have received leave of absence for six months with the understanding that if it was necessary in the interests of his health at the end of the six months, a renewal of the term should be granted. It was not reasonable to give 12 months' leave of absence on full pay. The principle should not be adopted with any class of public servant, high or low.

Items—Harbour and River Works:

MR. F. CONNOR: There was enormous waste of money on the Fremantle Harbour Works. Hopper barges built at great cost were lying useless, and deteriorating in value. These would make excellent lighters or coal hulks, and should be sold for their market value. Wooden barges built for the river were

also lying idle, and would soon become worm-eaten. After he had mentioned in the House about the s.s. "Emu," he found next morning that the boat had been removed to a place known as Rotten Row. A special dredge built at Fremantle with machinery mostly made in the colony at great cost was also going to ruin. All these vessels should be sold. There was not sufficient reduction in the item for insurance on public buildings. High premiums were being paid on absolutely fireproof stone buildings in the North.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In reference to the s.s. "Emu" action had been taken, and a return asked for of all plant now idle in connection with the Harbour Works. The hon. member's suggestion would be followed.

Item—Caretaker, Coolgardie Exhibition Building, £104:

MEMBER: What was this?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The building, or what remained of it, was of considerable value, which would disappear unless there were a caretaker.

Item—Roads and Bridges throughout the State, £50,000:

MR. HOPKINS: This money should be paid on a subsidy basis, *pro rata*, to roads boards who taxed themselves, and next year he would move to this effect. The municipal boundaries should be extended, so as to rate the neighbouring landholders for whose benefit the roads were made. The principle worked admirably in the sister States. Our recent census showed that out of the total population, 96,810 persons resided in municipalities, while 87,289 resided outside and paid practically no rates. The *Statistical Register* for 1899 showed that out of 85 roads boards only 11 struck rates. In Victoria, the shires were classified into first, second, and third class. This should be done here. Every local governing body should be compelled to strike a rate not exceeding 1s. 6d. in the £.

DR. McWILLIAMS: Had any provision been made for the widening of the Beaufort Street bridge approach, or for an overhead bridge at the William Street crossing?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. For such works a special vote would be

required. This was for roads boards generally. In reply to the member for the Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), the Government indorsed his argument, and to encourage roads boards to strike rates we had placed on the Estimates a farther sum of £5,000 to be divided amongst those boards who had struck rates, thus helping those who helped themselves.

Item—Williams: Camballing Bridge over Hotham River, £400:

By request of the **MINISTER FOR WORKS**, £600 in the total liability column altered to £860.

Item—Gooseberry Hill Road, £400:

MR. JACOBY: The railway in this district was absolutely useless to settlers, and the total grant of £800 was required to repair the road by which the fruit-growers brought their products to Perth. The whole of the strawberries now consumed in the city came from Gooseberry Hill; and at least £200 should immediately be provided to repair a sandy patch on the road, the traffic being exceedingly heavy.

MR. McDONALD moved that progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

BREAD BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on motion by the Premier, read a first time.

DOG ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on motion by the Premier, read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 19 minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next day.