

**Legislative Assembly,***Thursday, 5th July, 1906.*

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

**PRAYERS.****BILL—POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK ACT AMENDMENT.**

Introduced by the TREASURER, and read a first time.

**PAPERS—TIMBER CUTTING, FLORA AND FAUNA RESERVE.**

MR. H. DAGLISH moved:

That there be laid on the table of the House all papers relating to the permission granted to Messrs. Whittaker Bros. to cut timber upon portion of the Flora and Fauna Reserve.

He said: I desire to state that the reason I have moved for these papers is that certain reflections have been cast upon me.

**POINT OF ORDER.**

MR. G. TAYLOR: I wish to know whether the hon. member is in order in moving a motion before the Address-in-Reply is disposed of. I find that No. 34 of the Standing Orders says:—

No business beyond what is of a formal character shall be entered upon before the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Opening Speech has been adopted.

I desire to have your ruling on that point.

MR. SPEAKER: That portion of the Standing Order is as the hon. member has stated; but I understood it was the feeling of the House that this privilege should be granted to the hon. member; and as I understand this is a personal matter, I think that under Standing Order 116 the hon. member can claim the indulgence of the House. That Standing Order reads:—

By the indulgence of the House, a member may explain matters of a personal nature although there be no question before the House; but such matters may not be debated.

This, I am aware, is a personal matter.

MR. TAYLOR: The motion cannot be debated now. It is a motion on the Notice Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Strictly speaking the motion is entitled to debate, but I think that when members hear the member moving it they will see there is no reason to debate a matter concerning his personal character, and I take it upon myself to give that privilege to the hon. member which I think he or any other member is entitled to. It is a personal matter.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): I may say that the hon. member, in approaching me with regard to this question, desired that he might have an opportunity of perusing these files prior to speaking. I take it that if the files are laid on the table of the House there will be no necessity for debate. I think that all the information he would be able to obtain he might obtain from these papers; and then possibly, if you consider it out of order that any debate should take place, the information he could acquire might be used by him during the course of his speech on the Address-in-Reply.

MR. TAYLOR: Purely in explanation, I may say that my only reason for drawing attention to Standing Order No. 34 was that the House should know exactly where it stood. This motion is to be moved contrary to that Standing Order; and any motion before the House is debatable. I have no desire to prevent the member for Subiaco or any other member from having the utmost freedom of speech in this Chamber; but I wish to know exactly where we are. I think that the Premier has a right to lay the papers on the table without any motion, if he so desires. I wish to explain also that I had a motion on the paper which before I spoke to it was of importance to me; and its object was to ask the Attorney General to lay certain papers on the table. He laid them on the table yesterday or the day before, without any motion, knowing that I was anxious to see them. The same course was open to the Premier with reference to the motion of the member for Subiaco, and then there would have been no need for a procedure which is apparently out of order—a debatable question moved in the House and debate squelched. If any

member wishes to debate the motion of the member for Subiaco, then according to our Standing Orders I do not think there is any power, any machinery, to prevent that debate. I have no desire to muzzle any member; but I think it was open to the Premier to avoid the necessity for the present procedure. I am pleased that the member for Subiaco has an opportunity of vindicating his character.

MR. SPEAKER: Again I say that the hon. member (Mr. Taylor) is perfectly correct in his interpretation of the Standing Order. This being a personal matter, in ordinary circumstances the member for Subiaco must, in order to speak to it, have moved the adjournment of the House. But we know that the papers are here; and there is no need to go so far. The hon. member (Mr. Taylor) is quite right in his statement that any motion before the House can be debated. But I understood, from the feeling of the House yesterday and from the manner in which the proposal was received, that I should be justified in giving such an opportunity to the member for Subiaco or to any other member.

MR. TAYLOR: Sir, this matter affects the Labour Government as a whole.

MR. SPEAKER: I was certainly not aware of whom it affected. All that weighed with me was that the matter concerned the personal character of the member for Subiaco; and such a consideration would weigh with me in regard to anyone either inside or outside the House, in a case where any man wishes to put his position fairly before those people in the State with whom he is concerned. Under the other Standing Order which I have read, the hon. member could by the indulgence of the House have spoken as on a motion for adjournment. Had he desired to move the adjournment, it would have been for the House to decide whether the hon. member should have leave to make that motion. But the hon. member did not seek to go so far; and probably, after hearing him, members will not consider it necessary to debate the subject. But I am unable, under the Standing Orders, to prevent debate.

#### RESUMED.

MR. DAGLISH: In view of the point of order that has been raised, I desire without comment to move my motion.

Although I had intended to comment when submitting the motion, I have decided to abandon that intention; therefore I simply move in a formal manner the motion standing in my name.

MR. G. TAYLOR: I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

#### PAPERS—PIPES MANUFACTURE, CONTRACT WITH MONTEATH & CLEMINGER.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) moved—

That there be laid on the table of the House all papers relating to the first contract for the supply of pipes entered into with Messrs. Monteath & Cleminger, and likewise all papers relating to the payment of advances to that firm upon the raw material to be used in the manufacture of such pipes.

Without debating this question, he would say that though he had been dragged into this matter as the sole person affected, and as if he were individually guilty in connection with it, he had intended to speak in vindication not of himself only, but of the Government of which he had been the head. However, an objection had been raised to his speaking; and in deference to that objection, without comment he moved the motion.

MR. G. TAYLOR seconded.

Question passed.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Fauna and Flora Reserve, papers. Contracts for the supplies of pipes entered into with Messrs. Monteath & Cleminger.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### SIXTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous day.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): In my few remarks on the Address-in-Reply I do not mean to deal so fully as some previous speakers have dealt with the subjects in question; but I intend to confine myself as closely as possible to the business of the country, and mostly to that part of the country which I have the honour to represent. I do not think that the time spent in debating the Address is in any manner thrown away. In my opinion we have in this debate an opportunity of bringing before the House

many matters which we could not ventilate unless we moved motions for discussion; and such motions would take up considerably more time than is occupied by debates on the Address. I do not intend to open by congratulating the whole of the members of the House; but I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your return, and on the general improvement in your health. I am indeed glad to note that your health is so greatly improved, and may say that I also appear this session in much better health than when I left the House on the last occasion when Parliament was prorogued. In the Governor's Speech I did not see anything of very great importance. With the exception of one or two features already touched upon by preceding speakers, there is practically nothing of any moment whatever. But as to the Premier's policy speech, the material it contains would be quite sufficient to keep this House in good going order, and to make sufficient work in the country, for a considerable number of years. His Excellency's Speech, however, is empty of almost any matter of vital importance. If we look back to the time when Mr. Rason delivered a policy speech some few months ago at Guildford, we shall recollect that he made the same gallant attack from the platform as was made by the present Premier; but when he came to the House he acted like the present Premier—brought in an empty policy, and did not carry out even that. I am sorry indeed that Mr. Rason did not have the manliness to appear before this House to answer the charges laid against him of breaking the promises he made to the people when he stood before them a few months ago at the general election. He by leaving his position in this House to accept an appointment as Agent General has absolutely disarmed any comments that can be made on his actions. I am sorry that he has not had the manliness to come here to answer for his actions as they affect the House and the people of the country. The work accomplished by the Rason Government is no credit to the members of that Administration. We can ask: Where is that great restoration of confidence that was to be brought about by the advent of the Rason Government? Just now the condition of affairs is

worse than it has ever been in the history of the State to my knowledge, and that extends over 14 years. I do not think the people who support the Labour party in Western Australia have in any measure to be ashamed of the work accomplished by the Labour Government when it is compared with that accomplished by the Rason Government; in fact it was a great improvement. Last session we were made an absolute promise that we should meet earlier this year and get through the business before the hot weather came on; but owing to the reconstruction, that promise has not been fulfilled. We all know that during last session the Labour party, constituting the Opposition, gave all assistance to the Rason Government to let them get through the session and into recess to carry out some of the administrative reforms we were promised. The promise to meet earlier this year was like every promise made by the Rason Government; they failed to carry it out. There was no opposition offered. In fact I am of this opinion, that not nearly the opposition was shown to the Rason Government as should have been shown by members on this side. We let them get into recess and do things as they liked. We let them carry through Railway Bills and allowed ourselves to be gagged. We let them get into recess to enable Mr. Rason to secure the position he has now secured. Now we are asked to meet this Ministry as an absolutely new Government and not as the remnant of the Rason Government: but I am going to deal with it as the remains of the late Rason Government. In the first place, the reconstruction was carried out under conditions that were no credit to those concerned in it. In this Cabinet is the Treasurer who is absolutely mistrusted by his colleagues, and this is proved by the means they took to forestall him at the time of the reconstruction. The Minister for Mines, who was away on the goldfields, was called back to take part in this great reconstruction, and we had the Premier and the member for Roebourne going out to meet him and to keep him away from the Treasurer. I think it would be an admirable subject for a great poem, "How we beat the Treasurer." The member for Sussex absolutely failed in

the task set him by the Governor, and they had to resort to caucus to select a Premier to carry on the affairs of the country. The policy of the Rason Government was only a policy of reducing wages, dismissing employees, stopping public works and causing in a large measure a great want of employment in Western Australia. While they were willing to stop holiday pay, which had always been paid in Western Australia, they were quite willing to spend £150 for an advertisement in the *Daily News* to show the splendid lot of men contained in the Government and to have copies of it sent about the country. They preferred to see themselves on paper while men were walking about the country starving; and while they were willing to cut off a shilling or sixpence from the wages men in the country, they were paying a high price for this advertisement. [MR. WALKER: It was a misuse of public funds.] It was absolutely unnecessary for them to put their photographs in the *Daily News*. After their disgraceful term of office it would have been better for those gentlemen to have had their photographs in papers like the *Dead Bird*. There is one matter of administration I will touch upon briefly. There was an article published impugning the honour and integrity of a gentleman who should be respected by every person in Western Australia. I refer to the Chief Justice. I am sorry he should be open to an attack such as has been made upon him; but if the Government do not undertake to protect a gentleman occupying such a high and honourable position as he does, it is a disgrace to the Attorney General and to his colleagues in the Ministry. The failure of the Rason Government to carry out their promises has brought about a very severe state of affairs in this State, but we are led to believe quite the opposite in the Governor's Speech. The Speech says:—

It is my pleasant duty to again assure you that the prosperity of the State continues apace.

As the Leader of the Opposition has said, that is misleading. There is no truth in it. We find, however, that the state of affairs in every other State of the Commonwealth is far different. It is estimated that in Victoria the surplus will

amount to some £700,000, while in New South Wales it will be about the same amount. In Queensland there will be a large surplus, and in South Australia they will have the biggest surplus for 15 years, while in Tasmania they will have a large surplus. The financial position of the other States of the Commonwealth is far better than ours. We have about the richest State in the Commonwealth, and it is solely through misgovernment and misapplication of public moneys, as in the instance I have mentioned—and I could mention many others—that this state of affairs has been brought about. There is a paragraph in the Governor's Speech concerning the large amount of money paid away in dividends, amounting to £2,167,639. It is boasted that it is the greatest amount paid away in any one year since the discovery of gold in Australia; but we know that 90 to 95 per cent. of this money goes away from Western Australia; and on this account, I do not think we should boast very greatly about it, especially as a great amount of it is drawn from the blood of the workers in this State. At the present time the workers are being sweated on the goldfields to a very low state. They have to work day and night, and only make about 6s. or 7s. a day in some cases. It would be far better for Ministers to take the matter in hand and see that such a state of affairs does not continue, instead of boasting concerning the dividends taken out of the State. The Minister should devote attention to the interests of the unfortunate workers.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We have no evidence of that sweating.

MR. HOLMAN: If the Minister will refer to police court news he would see that there was a case in Coolgardie a few weeks ago showing that the sweating comes in under the system of freedom of contract, by which men are sweated down to a very low wage at Kalgoorlie. I believe they are also introducing the same system at Day Dawn.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Do you mean the contract system in mines?

MR. HOLMAN: Yes; they call it "freedom of contract." They give a man a contract, and if he makes anything near wages they cut him down next time. The Government are assist-

ing the sweating by bringing so many people into the State and flooding the industrial market. Members opposite are deluded by the fact of so much money being paid away in dividends; but if the Government would look into affairs closely they would find that they could derive a little more revenue from those dividend-producing mines. Owing to the unsatisfactory state of our finances immediate action should be taken to see if such a large amount of money could not be prevented from going out of the country. I think something should be done to retain the greater part of that money in the State. One mine, the Lake View Consols, makes a profit of £120,000 to £130,000 a year. All that money is sent out of the State for investment in other parts of the world, and no duty is retained by the State, which is manifestly unfair. The Government should try to take some immediate action to remedy that state of affairs. We have heard a lot about the administration of the Lands department, and boasts have been made in regard to the administration of that department. I will read a letter which I received from the back country, which shows that the administration of that department is not all that could be desired. A few days ago a letter appeared in the Press from the South-Western district, stating that the Lands Department had done good work in making a number of surveys; but I believe Dr. Hackett was interested in the land that was surveyed quickly. The letter I have is from Peak Hill, and is as follows:—

Peak Hill, 11th June, 1906.

Dear Sir,—Under separate cover I forward you a plan which was forwarded me from the Lands Department. I sent on behalf of Mr. Kearney for an up-to-date plan, and enclosed 2s. 6d. Now, sir, the plan is full of inaccuracies. No trouble has been taken, and if the Lands Department cannot supply anything better than this for 2s. 6d. they had better keep it. We thought that the advent of this Government, or rather were led to suppose that their advent meant administrative reform, and what has been the result? Absolute chaos. Letters left unanswered, papers sent to them for reference and never returned; in fact by their lethargy and want of attention to business Mr. Kearney has lost a very valuable lot of country. You will please see the Minister and see if we out back can't get a little protection. Yours faithfully, for L. Kearney, (sgd.) G. HUNGERFORD.

If this department is so well administered,

I wonder what the administration of other departments is like. I intend to touch on the remarks made by the member for Collie in connection with the coal question. I regret the member is not here, but I intend, although he is not in his place, to explain the action of the Labour Government in connection with the Collie coal question. The hon. member should be here, and my remarks would have been much stronger if he had been in his place. My knowledge of the member for Collie dates from the time when I was returned to the House nearly five years ago. At that time the member for Collie was termed a "rat" by the present whip, the whip who went out in search of the Minister for Mines and failed to find him. The whip of the party referred to Mr. Rason and to the member for Collie as "rats." The member for Collie voted against the Leake Government and assisted in turning it out of office. Afterwards we find that member supporting the Leake Government. That was after a railway line was being constructed from Collie to Collie-Boulder, a district in which the member was personally interested. I will read portion of the report made on that matter by a select committee of this House. The report was not adopted by this Chamber, and I cannot tell the reason why. The member for Collie thought it very ungenerous on my part to make an interjection; but I always believe in being just before being generous, and in looking after the interests of the State before being generous to individuals. I will read this report from the Votes and Proceeding of Parliament for 1902. The last paragraph states:—

The evidence regarding the action taken by Mr. Ewing in promoting the construction of this railway is somewhat conflicting; but there can be no doubt that, as a member of Parliament, he did not exceed his duty in urging forward works which he believed would aid in developing the resources of his district. Opinions may differ as to whether or not his private interests urged him to take undue advantage of his parliamentary position, but our opinion is that had Mr. Ewing held no interest in the Collie-Cardiff leases, he would hardly have done less than he appears to have done if pressed to do so by some of his constituents. It is to be regretted that Mr. Ewing did not, when advocating the railway, take the House into his confidence and explain his personal interests in the leases.

We all remember that disgraceful episode, when the Minister for Works, Mr. Rason, moved the second reading of the Bill in a few words, somewhat in the same manner that the second reading of the Agricultural Railway Bills was moved last session. We then found Mr. Ewing, the member for Collie, supporting the Collie-Boulder Railway Bill, but saying nothing about his own interests in the district. I need make no farther remarks than refer to that portion of the report which says that Mr. Ewing should have taken the House into his confidence. Perhaps it would have disclosed why he turned and ratted from supporting the Morgans Government to support the Leake Government.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The hon. member is not in order in imputing motives.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. member must not impute motives.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I did not impute motives; I only read an extract from the Votes and Proceedings, and if any motives are implied there, that is not my fault. It is not my intention to impute motives to any member if I can possibly help it. When the Bill to which I have referred was brought before the House, a contract had already been let for the construction of the railway line to the company mostly interested, and the line was half constructed. Members were working in the dark. It was wrong for the member for Collie to criticise the Labour Government in connection with the Collie coal matter. The member for Collie stated, when prompted by the member for Subiaco, that the action of the Labour Government in that connection was almost criminal. I am in a position to say that the action of the member for Collie and of the Treasurer in connection with the Collie coal question is more than "almost criminal." These members tried in a very unfair manner to take away from the Government of Western Australia a sum of money every year amounting to thousands and thousands of pounds. The people of Western Australia are deeply interested in the successful working of the collieries at Collie. At the time of which I am speaking there were only the Proprietary and the Collie-Cardiff companies working. The Treasurer was the attorney for the

Proprietary Company, and Mr. Ewing at that time was a largely interested shareholder in the Collie-Cardiff mine. Tenders had been called for the supply of coal in Western Australia just before the Labour Government went into power. The tenders were received, and we found that the amount of the tender was 12s. 9d. per ton, supposing the coal to be of a certain calorific value, and 11s. 6d. per ton if the companies were allowed to supply any kind of coal they liked. When the Labour Government took office this matter was on our hands, a legacy left from the previous Government. The Treasurer and the member for Collie combined together to put in a high price in the tenders. These members came to my office when I was Minister for Railways and assured me—they almost cried—that the coal could not be produced at less than the price stated. I had my suspicions, knowing the gentlemen, and when the matter was brought before me I decided to pay 11s. a ton, so as to give the industry every possible chance for the time being. We then appointed a Commission to deal with the question, and while the Commission was making inquiries into the matter, I found other collieries were willing to start work and supply coal at a much lower rate than 11s. per ton. We heard a boast only the other day by the member for Collie that there were four collieries working at Collie, all doing well. I am glad to know that the Labour Government were responsible for the starting of new collieries which are now doing well.

**THE TREASURER:** What do you call doing well?

**MR. HOLMAN:** I am only using the words of the member for Collie who said these mines were in a flourishing condition, and giving satisfaction all round. I do not know where the satisfaction comes in unless the collieries down there are receiving a bonus of seven or eight thousand pounds a year from the Government; perhaps that is where the satisfaction comes in. We had the member for Collie saying with great glee that the prospects were satisfactory.

**THE TREASURER:** That is absolutely untrue. The companies are not receiving seven or eight thousand pounds a year bonus from the Government.

MR. HOLMAN: I will prove every word which I have said. The Treasurer says I have made an untrue statement. I ask that those words be withdrawn.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member should not use such words. He must withdraw them.

THE TREASURER: I did not intend to apply the words to the hon. member himself.

MR. HOLMAN: Come, out with it like a man.

THE TREASURER: I withdraw.

MR. HOLMAN: The member for Collie stated that there was satisfaction all round at Collie; then why did a deputation from Collie only a few weeks ago ask the Minister for Mines to take steps to prevent the mines being flooded with aliens, enabling the owners of the mines to replace men having homes there and put those aliens on in their places? From the remarks made by that deputation, the member for Collie is the worst sinner, because there are more aliens employed on his mine than anywhere else.

THE TREASURER: How many aliens are there there?

MR. HOLMAN: I do not know; but I know they are down there, and the services of old hands are being dispensed with so that aliens may be taken on in their places. I will show how the Government subsidises the mines at Collie to the extent of £7,000 or £8,000 a year, and I think I shall be able to do so satisfactorily. When the Labour Government first took office, we paid the Collie companies 11s. a ton for the coal. Arrangements were made with the Co-operative Company to supply coal at a lesser rate. I dealt with that matter myself. I told the Commissioner for Railways to take coal from the company at their own price. They supplied coal at 10s. and afterwards at 9s. per ton. I instructed the Commissioner then to double the quantity of coal to be taken from that mine. This shows that the remarks made by the Treasurer in my office were devoid of truth.

THE TREASURER: Is the member in order in saying that statements which I made were devoid of truth?

MR. SPEAKER: I understood the hon. member to say that certain remarks were made in his office.

MR. HOLMAN: A statement was made by the attorney of the Proprietary Mine, and one of the owners of the Collie Cardiff Mine.

THE TREASURER: The hon. member said that the Colonial Treasurer made a statement in his office which was absolutely untrue.

MR. HOLMAN: Then I withdraw the words "Colonial Treasurer."

THE TREASURER: The hon. member said the remarks were untrue.

MR. HOLMAN: I withdraw that remark as well. I may say that the attorney for the Proprietary Company and the present member for Collie came into my office and stated they could not supply coal from Collie under 11s. 6d. per ton.

THE TREASURER: When was that?

MR. HOLMAN: About 20 months ago.

MR. TAYLOR: Who was the attorney?

MR. HOLMAN: Mr. Frank Wilson, the present Treasurer. He and Mr. Ewing, who at that time was not a member of Parliament, informed me they could not supply coal under 11s. 6d. per ton. We found we could get it supplied at 9s.; and the company that supplied us with coal at 9s. paid a higher rate of wages than either the Proprietary or the Collie Cardiff, which tendered at 11s. When the Commissioner's report was returned to the Government, tenders were again called, and we found then the Collie Cardiff, who were receiving about 7s. 9d. for coal supplied to the State, and the other tenders ran up to as high as 8s. 9d. The Labour Government were going to accept one tender, but unfortunately they were deposed about that time, and a new Government took their place. In the new Government Mr. Frank Wilson was Minister for Works.

THE TREASURER: What tender were the Labour Government going to accept?

MR. HOLMAN: I think they were going to accept the tender of the Proprietary Mine, and take the whole of the coal from the one company. [MEMBER: You were not a member of the Government then.] No; I was not a member of the Government at that time. I had been to Nannine, like the Minister for Mines. We find that the Government which comprised as one of its members Mr. Frank Wilson—and Mr. Ewing, the member for Collie, was a strong supporter

of that Government—split up what had been done by the Labour Government. They gave a bonus of 1s. per ton, and knocked off the royalty which amounted to 6d. a ton, and in the case of the Proprietary to I think 3d. A bonus of that amount on 100,000 tons of coal every year will come to £7,000 or £8,000. That was a free gift to the collieries at Collie. [MEMBER: Hear, hear.] I say that if Parliament had been going to give a bonus to the coal industry —

**THE TREASURER:** How much did you say the bonus was, 1s. a ton?

**MR. HOLMAN:** About that.

**THE TREASURER:** What price did the Proprietary tender at?

**MR. HOLMAN:** I do not remember the exact amount. The Treasurer will be able to tell us that; he knows more about it at the present time. [MEMBER: He has made a life study of it.] Had that bonus been given for the benefit of the coal-mining industry I would not protest; but almost the whole of the amount is going into the pockets of those syndicators down in that part of the State. And at the same time they are working the men out in that part to a great extent, and have been employing aliens to the detriment of workers who have resided in that part of the State for a long time. That is the action of the member for Collie, who had the impudence in this House to condemn the Labour Government for the part they took in the Collie coal question when they had an opportunity. The member for Collie also stated that the Labour party opposed the agricultural railways. I opposed them not because I am against the opening up of agricultural areas, but because those lines were sprung upon this House at a moment's notice, and we were asked to pass them without any opportunities being given members for making any inquiry, and without any information at all to the House to show that the lines were warranted. I am of opinion that those lines were forced through this House for the purpose of placating some of the supporters of the Government who were heavily interested in land in those districts through which the lines are to go. I should like to see laid on the table of this House a statement showing the names of those holding land within

10 or 15 miles of those three railways authorised at the tail-end of last session. I say we were justified in opposing those lines. The present Minister for Works (Hon. J. Price) opposed them; Mr. J. J. Holmes, who is at present likely to be unseated for East Fremantle, opposed them; and we have heard that even the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. J. Mitchell) opposed them himself. Then we had a Government supporter standing up in the Chamber last night and stating that the loyalty of the supporters of the Government was strained to breaking point because they were compelled to support the passage of these lines through this House. Members got up and said they opposed these lines, but when it came to a vote they quietly sneaked outside because they had not a will of their own to vote. The member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber)—I am sorry he is not here—spoke of himself as having a tremendous will of his own. If the action taken had depended upon his own will, he would not have been in this Chamber at all, because he is here at the will of Mr. James Gardiner, Mr. Rason, and Mr. Randell. It is by their will he is here. Had he a will of his own he would not have been here, because if those men had willed that Mr. Parker or anyone else should take his place, the member for North Perth would not be in this House. The reason given at the time why he was picked out to contest that seat was that he was the weakest man and would give Mr. Rason the greatest support, because he did not know enough to do anything else but vote when he was told to do it.

**MR. TAYLOR:** Weakness is strength.

**MR. HARDWICK:** The majority of the votes decided.

**MR. HOLMAN:** The reason we opposed these lines was to prevent as far as possible a repetition of the disgraceful state of affairs that existed in connection with the Collie-Boulder line. That was a line that was let by private contract to a big company interested, and let at a very high price; and no doubt the advantage was given to those people because they received support either inside or outside the House from gentlemen highly interested in that part of the State. At the present time we are asked by the



member for Collie to support a reduction of the freights on timber on our railways. They are using, or trying to use, all the employees in an effort to bring about a reduction in freights; but I am pleased indeed to see that the employees are too manly to take advantage of anything like that. They stood opposed to Mr. Teesdale Smith in his attempt to get them to assist him in his effort to bleed the country more than he has done in the past. They stood as men, and refused to allow themselves to be made tools of. It is a great pleasure to read letters like those by Mr. Ferguson, who has exposed the other side of the question, and in my opinion entirely knocked Mr. Teesdale Smith's arguments into bits. We have known Mr. Ferguson in this House, and we always found him an honourable opponent, an honest, straightforward, and conscientious man, and as a business man, one with whom it was a pleasure to do business. We find he is manly enough to come forward and not allow this country to be bled by parasites of the Combine type. We all know that a reduction of timber freights will have the effect of reducing wages on our railways. We see at present the position we are brought into. We have a little bit of surplus from our railways, and they are howling like wolves to get that amount from the working of the railways during the 12 months. It would have been far better to pay the railway men a decent rate of wages and keep men on at what work there is, rather than try to get this surplus, to endeavour to show a better position of affairs, and allow men of the Timber Combine type to wolf the few pounds we have saved as a result of a reduction of the wages and the dismissal of employees on our railways. And now I come to what is to my mind one of the most important points. Had the member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson) been here, I would have dealt more fully with the timber question. I would have shown that during the time I was Minister for Railways efforts were made by the Combine to secure a reduction of the railway freights, which was refused time after time by myself and the Government to which I had the honour to belong. The first application was for a reduction amounting to £3,000 or £4,000. I quote Mr. Teesdale Smith's remarks

at that time. He said, amongst other things:—

The difficulty is not due to over-production nor to the cost of production, but simply to the fact that for the time being people are not using jarrah. As far as that goes, the demand for all timbers has fallen off, and half a dozen mills at Puget Sound have had to close down.

And he went on to say that hardwood blocks were not being used; that people were using softwood blocks in England because they were cheaper. A question was asked him:—

Well, if the workers were to offer their services for a reduced remuneration until the position improved, could you carry on?

He said:—

If the men came to us to-day and said that they would work for nothing, we could not put them on, because we have no work to give them.

These are the remarks of Mr. Teesdale Smith, and a few days afterwards he came to me and asked for a reduction of freights. And he is working the same game now. I hope the Government will have backbone enough to refuse to be domineered over and dictated to by men of the Combine type. If any reduction of freights is brought about at all, it should be to those people in the back country, where people have to carry their goods 600 or 700 miles. Now I come to one of the most important matters we have to deal with in Western Australia, namely mining development and the assistance to be given to prospectors. We all know that much has been said about that in the past. This question can be safely approached by every member of this House as a non-party one, because unless we foster and encourage the mining industry the position of affairs will not improve. We know that mining has gone back a little and the result has been disastrous to the State; the position of affairs is in no way satisfactory at the present time. We are told in the first place that we are to have an amendment of the Mining Act. The Minister for Mines promised an amending Act giving greater security of tenure to leaseholders. I am very sorry that any Minister for Mines has allowed himself to be made a cat's-paw of by the Chamber of Mines to bring forward a proposal like this. I have reason to believe the plan was prompted by he

Chamber of Mines, and knowing as we do that three Ministers hold positions in the Chamber of Mines, nothing less can be expected than that in any legislation brought forward by the present Government the Chamber of Mines will receive the best end of the stick. In looking back through some copies of the *Monthly Journal* of the Chamber of Mines we come to the following remarks :—

Mr. Gregory, during his first term of office as Minister for Mines, gave the matter his careful consideration when framing the Mining Act that came into force on March 1, 1904. In that Act the same provision was made, though not to the full extent deemed advisable and recommended by the chamber.

Does the Minister for Mines represent the Chamber of Mines, or does he represent the interests of this country? According to the Chamber of Mines journal he is representing them, or, if he is not doing it, he should be, in their opinion. Then, after dealing with what was done by the Labour Government when in office, it says :—

The lesson, however, has not been lost upon Mr. Gregory, who now, in his second term of office at the head of the Mines Department, has picked up the threads where he dropped them, and has issued regulations still more in accordance with the views of the chamber.

If Mr. Gregory is there as Minister for the Chamber of Mines instead of Minister for Mines, the mining industry of Western Australia and the whole of Western Australia is going to suffer very severely.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Are you aware that Mr. Hastie was honorary president of the Chamber of Mines, when in office?

**MR. HOLMAN:** I am quite aware of it; but Mr. Hastie during his term in Western Australia has never acted as the representative of the Chamber of Mines, nor as solicitor for the Chamber of Mines, as Mr. Frank Wilson and Mr. Norbert Keenan, the Attorney General, have done. His position is altogether different, because these men are old members of the Chamber of Mines. In that respect I say nothing of the Minister for Mines, because he was appointed to that position in consequence of his holding Ministerial office. I am entirely opposed to the Minister's proposals for improving the condition of the mining industry. His proposals will not

be advantageous to the country. By all means let us protect mining interests; and to do that we should hold as fast as we can to the labour conditions at present obtaining. The prospectors have never yet asked for such greater security of tenure as is now demanded by the Chamber of Mines; and I am sorry that the Minister, instead of noticing the requests of the prospectors, has turned his back on them and given all his attention to the Chamber of Mines. If that increased security of tenure is granted, then as a consequence many mines will be to a great extent idle. The hoodlers who have in years past come to this country, and many of whom we have fishing around at the present time, take up large areas of land, not for mining but for purely speculative purposes. The granting of exemptions has greatly retarded mining in Western Australia; and if greater security of tenure be given in accordance with the Minister's recent proposals, and companies released from labour covenants, even more harm will thus be done to mining than has already been done by exemptions. The development of the Murchison district has for years and years been retarded by exemptions. Even now, at Peak Hill, a place which under proper management would be employing some hundreds of men, mining is at a standstill owing to exemptions. We have mines at Wiluna under exemption for the last three or four years, with never a penny spent on them by the companies. We have at Nannine, the Star of the East, and all over the country, hundreds of acres of the best auriferous land lying idle, and scores of men looking in vain for work because the land is locked up owing to exemptions. I will deal later on with individual instances of the exemption nuisance. As to the development of our goldfields, we all know that we must have goldfields railways as well as agricultural railways. A railway to Black Range is now talked of; but before we decide the point from which it should start, every inquiry should be made and full information gathered, in view of the large expenditure involved. Requests have been made for the construction of a line from Mount Magnet to Black Range. Such a line will serve only those two places; for there is no auriferous ground being worked between those centres.

Another request is that the line should start from Cue, in which event it would serve only one or two centres outside of Cue and Black Range—Barrambie and Errols. The next starting point mooted is from Nannine, in which event it will serve some 9 or 10 flourishing gold-producing centres. Of these, for instance, the Star of the East has turned out over 20,000 ounces, Gabanintha 10,000 ounces, Burnakura nearly 20,000 ounces, Quinn's about 2,000 ounces, Wiluna over 70,000 ounces; and Barrambie, Errols, Montague Ranges, and Gum Creek are all good gold-producing places. If the line starts from Nannine, these places will be brought in close touch with railway communication. If we are to construct a railway, we should take it where it will serve most of the people interested; and in a district that has turned out between 100,000 and 200,000 ounces of gold, it is better to serve 9 or 10 centres than to build a railway through 90 miles of country without serving any centre at all. If the line is built from Nannine it will open up one of the most valuable auriferous belts of country in Western Australia, from Nannine out to Errols, Barrambie, and Black Range. Before the Government decide on the starting point, every inquiry should be made to insure starting from a centre which will serve the greatest number of people. We should have other goldfields railways. Consider Meekatharra, which has turned out between 30,000 and 40,000 ounces of gold. A line should be constructed from Nannine right through to Peak Hill, to open up that part of the country. Very little has been done to open up the Murchison district. The eyes of the Ministry and of many other people in this State are turned on agricultural centres; but these cannot flourish unless something is done to open up the goldfields. Goldfields lines are absolutely necessary, and the inquiry I mention should be made at an early date. The railway will ultimately be extended from Nannine to Meekatharra, will go on to Peak Hill, and will in all probability penetrate the North-West country, which is valuable both for mining and pastoral purposes. I think that the proposed railway to Norseman, though not in my district, should be started at the earliest possible moment. Then we have the proposed

railway in the North-West, of which the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) spoke last night. Some speakers have touched on Ministerial tours throughout the State. As an ex-Minister I say that Ministers should take every possible opportunity of travelling through as much of the country as they can visit. I should like to see a few Ministers come to my district to be convinced of its possibilities; and then I do not think they would treat it as they treat it now, when they absolutely refuse to give us any assistance at all. And more facilities should be given to private members also to see some parts of the country.

**LABOUR MEMBER:** Should they go to Nannine?

**MR. HOLMAN:** I should not like to see them go there, lest they should meet with the fate which befell me. Members who travel are put to great expense, which they are supposed to defray out of their salaries. The men representing the back-country constituencies should be given greater facilities for travelling. Take the constituency of Pilbarra. Had members been better paid and travelling expenses provided, that district would still be represented by a local man; but its member was forced to resign because his salary was not sufficient and he was losing money; and until the representatives of the people are better paid, the State cannot be properly represented in this Parliament. We have heard much about the public battery system in Western Australia; in fact, the Minister for Mines has made it a pet scheme of his, and boasts of his achievements in that regard. I am prepared to say that the public battery system is a disgrace to those who have had control of it, because it is absolutely rotten. We have hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of machinery which should have been valuable but is almost entirely useless. I remember the Minister's boasting some little time ago that before he took charge the loss on public batteries was £7,000 a year. But at that time we had no cyanide plants; and had we now no cyanide plants we should still have a heavy loss in respect of public batteries. The whole of the profit is now derived from cyaniding. Year after year we have profits from the cyaniding, while crushing alone shows a loss.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** There has been a great reduction in the charges for crushing.

**MR. HOLMAN:** Yes; but I say the reduction is not so great as the Minister would lead us to believe; because prior to the reduction which he made the stone carted to the batteries was charged for at per ton of 22 feet; and the officers were not very particular in the measurement. When the Minister took charge he reduced the measurement to 21 feet—a reduction of about 5 per cent.—and issued strict instructions as to measurement, so strict that I have known a charge to be made for a quarter of a foot in a load of stone. That shows the cheeseparing system adopted by the Minister.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The measurements are honest, and customers receive value for their money.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I know that; but I say that the reduction you made is not so great as you would like people to think it is. I say that on cyaniding at 10s. per ton there should at the very least be a profit of from 3s. to 4s. per ton, and that cyaniding should be done for a much lower price than that now charged. Since the Minister took control of the department some 200,000 tons of cyanide sands have been treated; and we should have a profit from that treatment of about £40,000. That would make up for a great many losses which we have had to put up with prior to his taking charge of the department. Since he has been in charge of the batteries he should have made a profit out of them. Ever since he took charge, in 1900, I think, he has had practically full control of the battery system. The intervals during which Labour Ministers were in charge were so short as to be not worth speaking of. They were not long enough, in power to change the system. Therefore, if the public battery system is now a failure, the present Minister is to blame. State batteries should be encouraged; but by the present system thousands of pounds are wasted in scrap-iron—in the purchase of second-hand batteries absolutely useless and thrown aside by mines, and bought up by the Mines Department; and nearly the whole of these were, I think, purchased by the authority of the present Minister.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The statement is quite incorrect. In nearly every instance the second-hand batteries now in use at Randalls, at Yarri, at Pig Well, and at Sandy Creek, were purchased by my predecessor, the Labour Minister.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I have not as good an opportunity as the Minister for looking through the records, but I believe that the departmental reports show the dates when the batteries were purchased, and that we bought 11 or 12 second-hand batteries.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** No. I think you will find there are 7, and I had nothing to do with any of them.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I think that from your reports it will be found there are 11 or 12; and I believe that you were responsible for the purchase of 6 or 7 of these.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The statement is quite untrue.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I say, so far as I know, it is true, and so far as the reports show.

**MR. SPEAKER:** As the Minister says the statement is incorrect, the hon. member must withdraw.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I withdraw.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister himself erred in saying the hon. member's statement was untrue. I hope he will not again use that expression.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I should like to have more correct reports submitted; and I look forward with pleasure to the report which we shall receive, I hope in the near future, from the present inquiry board; and I hope they will have sense enough to inquire into the purchase of the second-hand batteries.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** You will have that report in about a week.

**MR. HOLMAN:** Whether the system at present in force in Western Australia is a success or a failure lies on the shoulders of the present Minister. He has spent thousands, I might say hundreds of thousands, in the purchase of batteries and cyanide plants. Without question no Minister has had so little to contend with. His expenditure has never been criticised by members of this House. But he has not taken advantage of the opportunities he has had. Very little has been done. We have supplied ammunition to the extent of hundreds of

thousands of pounds to the Minister, and it has been fired away thousands at a time, but the Minister has made very few hits. He has advertised all the hits he has made, but not any of the misses. The expenditure to date on public batteries is £217,081. With interest and sinking fund that would amount to over a quarter of a million of money lying in our public batteries. But when we consider that most of these batteries are absolutely useless for treating the prospectors' stone in an economical manner, it is a disgrace for any man to say that he has been in the Mines Department for the last five years. Blame cannot be laid on the officers of the department, because we know that the Minister has had commissions, State mining engineers, and boards appointed, and boiler, mining, and other inspectors travelling over the country reporting time after time. If the responsibility rests on anyone it is on the Minister, and on the Minister alone; because if the officers did not report in a proper manner he should have appointed men who would do so. We find that even now the department is buying a second-hand battery at a cost of a few hundred pounds less than an up-to-date plant would cost. I think the State should lead in the purchase of up-to-date machinery, and not follow behind by purchasing dismantled and out-of-date machinery thrown aside by mining companies. I should like the Minister to take into consideration the question of introducing gas-producing engines used in many of the other States. They are very economical and can be used with either wood or coal, or any other fuel. Tests should be made at the earliest opportunity to prove whether this class of machinery would be a success here or not. I have been informed, and have read the matter up so far as my limited knowledge of machinery will allow me to do in this matter, and find that the reduction in cost of fuel is laid down by the authorities as from 50 to 66 per cent. It would be a great item in the cost of wood in our back country. The Minister should at the earliest opportunity secure one of these plants and send it to the back country to see whether it is any good or not. We find we have the same old promises made by the Minister of assistance to prospectors; but when I

show how my own district has been treated, members will agree that very little has been done to carry out these promises. At Meekatharra, a place that has turned out nearly 30,000ozs. of gold, they have a battery which is breaking down most of the time, and a cyanide plant which has been idle for over six months, while 3,000 tons of stone are waiting to be crushed. Batteries and other machinery are being erected there, but there is no water supply. The Minister has promised to give the district a supply of water in the near future. I hope he will push on with the work and give the people there an opportunity of opening up the industry. The Peak Hill mine has been under exemption for the last six months. I made application to the Minister that no exemption should be granted unless tributing was allowed. The Minister granted the exemption and inserted the tributing clause, but the warden refused to give the information to the people in the district, and the mine has been lying idle. I was absent in the Eastern States owing to ill-health at the time, so could not attend to the matter, but I believe the company are again going to apply for exemption in the near future. I hope the Minister will not grant it, because they have had sufficient exemption already; but if he does I hope it will only be on condition that the mine is thrown open to tribute. Had the warden made the information known when the last exemption was granted there might have been from 70 to 100 men working tributes on the mine. In the case of Ravelstone the Minister, instead of charging the same rate as at other batteries charged 2s. a ton more. I complained of this, and he has now promised to treat the people there the same as people are treated in more favourable localities. We have Nannine and other places not catered for the same as districts in the Menzies electorate, though they should receive the same treatment. No assistance has been granted to the people at Quinn's. The Minister absolutely refused to give assistance to the prospectors at Burnakura. A request was made from Gabanintha for a subsidy on a privately-owned battery, but it was refused by the Minister owing, he said, to the high price charged there. That high charge was fixed by the Minister

for Mines. When I made an application for a subsidy the Minister refused to give it, though he had offered a subsidy previously to the owner of the battery. Refusal to give assistance in these districts means the abandoning of a large number of leases, and the dropping out of work of a lot of miners. If the Minister would only give the same assistance there as is given to some localities, it would encourage the people to develop their mines as they should do. At Gum Creek the prospectors have worked for three years without any return from their leases, and the Minister has treated them most ungenerously. Members who read the newspapers will have read the remarks I made on the subject. The Minister's reply to me was absolutely incorrect. He stated, for instance, that the Mt. Morgaus mine had only been granted 1s. 6d. per ton, but it was 2s. There were several other inaccuracies. When I pointed them out to the Minister he acknowledged them to me personally, but he did not have the manliness to acknowledge them in the papers. I will read some extracts from letters to show the treatment meted out to prospectors in my district, and to show that the Minister has given assistance to a very limited extent. The only assistance he is giving at the present time is to those greatly interested in the Chamber of Mines. One letter from Gum Creek says:—

We have just had a clean up of 228 tons for an average of 11½dwt., which considering the time we have been here has left us a good deal behind as far as our creditors are concerned, let alone our own money and labour put into the concern. The Minister's decision in this case has thrown us back, and we think he should have used a little more discretion as far as the rule is concerned in this case, considering the owners do not wish to participate in the subsidy; and all Gum Creek and district prospectors think the same. We now intend to take out another small parcel, just to try and square our creditors, but it will not pay us anything for our labour, and then we will leave the mine to who wishes to work her, and try and raise enough money on wages to leave West Australia for good. I and mates have been in the country for 11 years and spent the money we brought in and earned, and we are now refused a fair and honest request by what is a so-called good and liberal Government.

That letter is in reference to a request for a subsidy by leaseholders who had

given a quarter interest in their mine to a private syndicate to erect a battery. The Minister refused to give this mine a three-quarter subsidy because they had been unfortunate enough to have to give away a quarter portion of the mine to get a battery. It is a disgrace that such a thing should occur. They write again:—

I may tell you that if we had not given the quarter interest away and they had decided to erect the battery farther north (which they would have done if not receiving the quarter interest) they would have, in my opinion, a great difficulty in obtaining a supply of water. My principal reasons are, viz.:—The Water Supply sent out a boring plant and they put down in all four holes, 140ft., 80ft., 80ft., and 60ft., and could not obtain any except in the 140ft. hole, and that very poor. On this they left a pump and rope. Also most of the shafts are down 100ft. and over, and are not troubled with water. Therefore, had we not parted with a quarter interest the Government would have most probably to shell out a good deal more than a conditional £200 to obtain water, and with a little bad luck in that line the battery may have been far from going yet; and for the amount of the three-quarter subsidy, we would have been far better off if we had to pay the cartage than give the interest away to benefit the place. Anyhow, the amount of the subsidy we are fighting about is not worth the trouble, but only shows what constitutes the present Minister of Mines for what he calls a fair justice dealt out to genuine prospectors in your district.

I also received letters from Mr. Grace, president of the Prospectors and Leaseholders' Association. He wrote as follows:—

I have read your remarks in the *West Australian* of the 11th June. I am pleased you showed some of the disabilities under which the prospectors (and through them the mining industry) suffer. I could cite parallel cases without ending and enlarge the ground for complaint in many instances.

In the back country from end to end the same injustice is seen. The prospectors cannot get facilities for crushing their ore, and they have to give away interests in their holdings in order to do so. No inducement is given to the prospector to open up the industry and to give us mines in place of those that are being worked at present. Also at Wiluna the same dissatisfaction exists. They have no cyanide plant except one owned by a private individual who has given great dissatisfaction. In fact cases had to be taken into court before they could

get satisfaction. I would like to know from the Minister why the cost of cyaniding in the State plants is so much higher now than it was a few years ago. I called for a return in 1903 to show the cost of cyaniding sands. At that time it was 4s. 8d. to 7s. 4d. per ton. Now the costs are 7s. 3d. to 10s. 4d. per ton, or nearly 3s. a ton higher. There must be something radically wrong if that is the cost, and the figures of the Minister show that is so.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** That is for last year, you must remember.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I can quote later figures. Those for the last three months show the same state of affairs, and are in some cases higher. I think the system adopted now is hardly the correct one; because if they could cyanide at 4s. 8d. to 7s. 4d. three years ago, they should be able to do it for less now, instead of the price rising from 7s. 4d. to 10s. 4d. I trust the Minister will do something to encourage prospecting. He is doing very little in the country I represent, but in Menzies he has done wonders. He has spent £70,000 on public batteries there, and they are losing money year after year in crushing stone at those batteries. Had similar treatment been meted out to the prospectors in other parts of the State the mining industry would be in a much better position than it is to-day. Charges should be reduced at the batteries, and I trust the Minister will take steps to see that a reduction is brought about. The Minister should do more than he is doing to encourage local companies. The erection of batteries and the granting of crushing facilities is not sufficient. Prospectors should be encouraged to sink deeper on their properties. The Government might treat leaseholders in the same way as the Government in Victoria treated leaseholders in years gone by. I happened to come across one or two cases the other day. They are old cases, but they give an instance of how leaseholders were treated. There is one mine, the Duke United, at Timor, which was suffering from depression, and a sum of £6,000 was advanced by the Government. This money was paid back with interest, and the mine afterwards paid £40,000 in dividends, and every month for over three years it paid wages to the amount of £2,800. Other grants

were made to other mines; two grants of £10,000 each were made to mines at a place called Rutherglen. Victoria has given better treatment to the industry than Western Australia has. If the Minister will depart from the policy which has been adopted since he has been in the Mines Department and help the prospectors, we will give him all the assistance we can. Although I am opposed to the Minister politically, I can see eye to eye with him in his wish to encourage the prospectors, and unless he gives encouragement to the prospectors the mining industry will suffer, and, as a natural corollary, the whole of the industries of the State will suffer. I would like to deal now with the Railway Department. We find that the department at the present time is run on very different lines from those in vogue when the Labour Government were in power. The number of men employed is considerably less, and the profits this year will be considerably greater than they were last year. The profit no doubt has been brought about by a reduction of wages, retrenchment, and the dismissal of hands, also allowing the permanent way to get into a bad state of repair. What has brought this about? The outcry against the Commissioner of Railways whose term of office is drawing to a close, and the Commissioner would be very foolish if he were to bring the railways of Western Australia up to a high state of efficiency just in time to be kicked out of his position. The Commissioner is retrenching wherever he can to show a good financial position at the end of the year. I maintain the Government should not have allowed that state of affairs to take place. It would have been better to keep the lines in a fair state of efficiency and show a less profit. We have the Combine howling for a reduction of freights which they are not entitled to, and other people are doing the same thing. As regards the railway employees, I say they should never have been forced to go into the Arbitration Court at all, and if I had remained in the position of Minister for Railways a little longer, these men would not have been allowed to go into the Arbitration Court. When I was Minister an agreement was come to with four unions. An industrial agreement was entered into for a term of three years. The only men left out were

those belonging to the West Australian Society of Railway Employees, who were for a great part unskilled men, workers on the permanent way. When that matter first came before me the Commissioner had refused to meet the men. I arranged a meeting on my own responsibility and I instructed the Commissioner to see the men. That course has not been followed since. The policy of the Railway Department should not be framed by the Commissioner but by the Minister for Railways. The present Minister could have stopped the reduction of wages if he had been so disposed. I brought the matter before the Minister last session, when I asked if he would prevent any reduction of wages on the railways, and the Minister declined to give an assurance; therefore, I say the Minister is responsible for any reduction of wages brought about.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** What reduction?

**MR. HOLMAN:** The reduction of wages at Fremantle and Geraldton, and those which are being paid here at the present time.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** You mean the casual hands?

**MR. HOLMAN:** Yes.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Those men are being paid 8s. per day.

**MR. HOLMAN:** They are now; but they were off work some time, and they did not go back to work until a public agitation compelled the Minister to pay the old rate of wages. It has been said that the Commissioner is all-powerful in connection with the railways of Western Australia. I do not think so, because the railways are vested in the Minister and he is responsible for any change of policy, and I say a reduction of wages is part of the policy. The reduction in the wages was made to show a large profit at the end of the year.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** There has not been a large reduction of wages.

**MR. HOLMAN:** There have been reductions, and at the present time men are dismissed and others are called on to do double work. If there has not been an actual reduction of wages the work of the men has been increased, and there has been a reduction in the number of hands employed. Some young men have been put on to replace old

hands. One man who was discharged had to walk about for 10 weeks in search of work. He went from the South-Western district to the goldfields, walking day and night, but he did not get work there. I would like to see a similar agreement between the bulk of the employees on the railways as that made between the four unions mentioned and the Commissioner of Railways, and if I had remained in office for another month that would have been done. The agreement would have been entered into long before, only for a certain circumstance for which neither I nor the Commissioner was responsible. So long as our railways pay and Western Australia is in the same position as now there should be no proposal by the Government for a reduction in wages. I blame the Government for doing nothing on the unemployed question. We hear much about the Fremantle election, which, to my mind, was a disgrace to the Government. Looking at the administration of the Electoral Act from the start, and taking the Geraldton, Coolgardie, and East Fremantle elections, we find that men have committed breaches of the Act and the Government have taken no action against those people. We find at the present time Mr. Holmes, whose seat at East Fremantle is in dispute, is putting his opponent to a great deal of expense. I say, in connection with the East Fremantle dispute that state of affairs was brought about by the maladministration of the Electoral Act, and Mr. Angwin's expenses should be borne by the Government. At present we have one man with money beating another man because he has none. The action of Mr. Price in taking Mr. Kidson on the platform to speak on his behalf was a disgrace. The Minister for Works took an employee from his own department to speak for him during the elections, which I think was disgraceful. Then there was the action of the Minister for Mines in refusing to listen to a Government employee attending on a deputation.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** He should have been at his work.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I think Mr. McCallum should have the same opportunities when he is not being paid by the Government to take up any public position he likes in Western Australia, as Mr. Kidson was.



But the right of freedom was denied Mr. McCallum by the Minister for Mines. Take the action in connection with the police dealing with electoral matters in Fremantle. The police were sent out so as to take an unfair advantage of electors in the district. Promises were made by paid agents or willing tools of the Minister for Works. Take the case of Mr. Beresford going around promising the police an increase of sixpence a day in their pay and a reduction in the hours of labour. The same promises were made by Mr. Rason at North Fremantle, and the same bribery and corruption and inducements were held out by other Ministers. We have heard the Minister for Works condemn those who spoke at street corners for the attitude they took up; but no statements have been made to the House to show that the remarks made at the street corners were anything but the truth. We had to speak at the street corners because we had no money to pay for halls. One statement I made at a street corner, and a statement that I should not be ashamed to make in the House or on any platform, was that had we adopted the same tactics as some of those constituting the Government party we should have been able to speak in halls. What I referred to was that certain members of Parliament have been in a position to buy land and sell it to the Government within a few months at a profit of some thousands of pounds. If we had taken a similar advantage we should have been able perhaps to build halls, let alone rent them for a night. I am sorry there is nothing in the Governor's Speech in regard to education for people out back. Nothing is said in the Speech with regard to industrial matters which are of importance to this country. Nothing is done to cope with the unemployed, although we have thousands of people in Western Australia who are at present in a very bad condition, not having enough to eat or drink, and we have immigrants coming here at the present time taking the place of those who are working; but nothing is being done by the Government to cope with the unemployed difficulty. Then nothing is said about an amendment of the Arbitration Act, which, although it has done a great deal of good

to the State, at the present time is not workable in the best interests of the people. Then we find that instead of the Ministry representing the people of the country, they are representing the Chamber of Mines. The Chamber of Mines at present are manufacturing disputes throughout the State. I will quote one or two; one at Wiluna, where there was entire accord between the employees and employers, but where the Chamber of Mines stepped in and brought about a dispute. They were hundreds of miles away, but, as I say, they brought about a dispute. Now, they have sent their secretary to Peak Hill, and are trying to manufacture a dispute in relation to the Peak Hill company, who are not employing any men at all, but the Chamber of Mines advises and asserts that they are going to state a case for the Arbitration Court. Then we have men at Higginsville whose wages are reduced, and it means practically a lockout. Are the Government going to allow the same state of affairs to exist, or take some measures to administer the laws of the country in the interests of the people and not the Chamber of Mines? Then, with regard to the Workers' Compensation Act, something should be done to allow the employees who are injured at their work to receive accident pay from the day the accident occurs, and also to see that they receive half the wages they were receiving at the time of the accident. At present in the case of a large number of employees, mostly in Fremantle, when they meet with an accident and only happen to have worked three months out of the twelve, the amount they have earned in the three months is divided between the twelve months, and they receive per week half of what that would come to per week. That is a fraud. It is very unfair indeed, and the Compensation Act should be amended so that a person who met with an accident should, from the time of the accident, receive half the wages he was receiving when the accident occurred. Then we have the Factories Act, and I am pleased to know that the inspector of factories, Mr. Vincent, has done really good work in the position he holds. I hope nothing will be done to curtail the power of that officer. The Factories Act should be amended to give him far more

power than he has at present. The working of the Factories Act and the factories department since he has had charge is a credit to himself and every officer under him, and I hope that his efforts in the interests of the factory workers in this State will be recognised by the Government, that he will receive fair recompense for the work he has done, and that an amendment of the Factories Act will be brought about to give him the power which he does not hold at present to farther extend the good work he has accomplished so far. One thing I would like to ask the Government: are they going to bring down that communication received from the home authorities last year in connection with the Factories Act, which we were then promised by the Premier (Mr. Rason)? I trust they will. A promise was made to this House that in all probability we should receive that communication or a statement in connection with it; but like every other promise that was made, it has not been carried out. I hope the present Government will not follow the action of the Rason Government, which allowed Chinese to register under the Factories Act when they were not entitled to be registered. That was done by the Government which has just gone out of office. In connection with several other measures brought forward in the Governor's Speech, there are some which will receive my support, including a tax on unimproved land values, also a Fire Brigades Bill, and several other matters of minor importance. But I trust that the promises set forth in the Governor's Speech in connection with the mining development of the goldfields and the assistance to be given to prospectors will be carried out, and that instead of acting as he has done in the past, the Minister will come forth and fulfil the promises he has been so profuse in giving in the past. I trust that the industry will receive fair treatment, and that he will not close his eyes to every electorate outside his own, but will mete out the same treatment to the whole of the electorates in Western Australia. I can mention a score of places outside my own district which require assistance. Assistance has been asked for at Cue and Day Dawn for crushing facilities, and has always been refused.

Assistance has also been asked for several other parts.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Do not put all the blame on me for that.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I do not put all the blame on the present Minister for Mines, but I say that when he simply refuses a thing because another Minister previously had done so—

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Oh no. From the reports we receive.

**MR. HOLMAN:** I say that when the Minister does that, he shows a weak position, and I hope he will give attention to the reports received from Nannine and erect a State battery, which was definitely promised. The Minister has several times, in replying to my remarks in the Press, referred to the fact that the previous Government had not done so and so. I do not think that is any excuse. It does not matter what Minister refused it. If the assistance is warranted, it should be given, in any part of the State, and it should not be confined to any one part. I conclude these few remarks which I have made for the information of the Minister, and say as I have always said, that although I will oppose him as strongly as I can on political questions on which we differ—and I do not suppose I shall ever sit on the same side as he does—if he will bring forward anything for the benefit of the prospectors in this State he will receive the whole of the support that I can possibly give him.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Mr. H. Gregory):** I consider we should indeed be pleased to think that in regard to some portions at least of the Governor's Speech we are going to get the support of those members who are sitting opposite.

**MR. SCADDAN:** Do you want it?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** I do not know. I am quite satisfied we could do without it. I think we should be able to carry our measures with the support of those sitting behind us. That will, at all events, be the great desire of the present Government, and I feel quite satisfied that what we have forecast in this Speech we shall be able to carry into effect. It has been objected by those sitting opposite that we have not taken members so fully into our confidence as we should have done; that we have not

given them more information in the Governor's Speech; in fact that we should have tied on to the Governor's Speech a copy of every Bill we intended to introduce into Parliament. Members should not forget that the Ministry of the present day consists to a great extent of new members. I am not saying this for one moment because we want to get away from our own responsibility in the past. When we present our Bills before Parliament, we should try to exercise the greatest care to bring down measures which have been carefully thought out and which we are satisfied will carry with them the good opinions of the majority of those who sit on this side of the Chamber. So far as I am concerned, I naturally expected to be very strongly criticised. Nearly the whole of those sitting opposite represent goldfields constituencies, and I suppose, following their rule of party warfare, they think it essential they should say extremely hard and bitter things, and as mining matters are matters which they know most about, I of course come in for their very strong criticism. I think it will be admitted that those criticisms have been particularly harsh. Probably I deserve them, for this reason, that when I feel I have been unfairly attacked, I always like to hit back, and I always intend doing it in exactly the same way. When I see public statements made by any of my opponents, and those statements are not in accordance with the truth, my idea is—though the person making such statement may feel satisfied he is stating facts—that I am justified on all occasions in giving to the Press my opinions in regard to the matter. My experiences have been very hard and very bitter. I said last year that the party deserved to have one motto emblazoned in brass, that was "the win, tie, or wrangle party." For the last ten years I have been bitterly opposed by them, and during nearly the whole of that term I have had to put up with this sort of thing. It has just been a question of a socialist against a democrat. Those on the opposite side will not admit for a moment a contention of that sort.

MR. TAYLOR: The Labour party kept your Government in power for three years.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Did they?

MR. TAYLOR: Yes; when you were in swaddling clothes.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: How many of the Labour party did the hon. member destroy?

MR. TAYLOR: Those who were not Labour men.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Those Labour members whose opinions did not agree with the opinions of the hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: Nor with the Labour people of this State.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member had considerable difficulty in his own electorate with regard to the Labour party in relation to those little elections which were held in connection with the ballot before the election. I do not want to discuss this question.

MR. TAYLOR: Your crowd did that. I defeated them. I went to the people. I won by two to one, and both your people went down.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The reason will be obvious to those who listened to the hon. member's speech to-night.

MR. TAYLOR: It will be obvious to you next year.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I think it was rather amusing to listen to the righteous indignation of the member for Leonora (Mr. Lynch) the other night. From the speech he made here, one would almost imagine he had no desire for anything but that the truth should prevail. There is no doubt in my mind that I have lost the goodwill of those people who sit opposite; but what have I won? I have won the support and sympathy of those men who have been fighting in the back country, and I shall be able to show the House to-night by statements I shall make, the work done in the department whilst I have been there, and the work which was done by those who claimed to help that class of people. I shall be able to show the country to-night that I at least have been their friend, and I know that they themselves think I have been the best friend they have had since we have had a Mines Act in Western Australia. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) made a great number of statements in the long speech he delivered here. Last year he made similar statements, and I went to the hon.

member after he had made his speech and handed him some extracts from the file which showed him that the statements he made were incorrect. The hon. member never rose in the House and explained that the statements were incorrect. He took very great umbrage about the reporting of a speech I recently made in Cue where this incident occurred in relation to Chesson and Heydon.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (continuing): When we adjourned I was talking of the hostility shown me by Labour members; and I should like now to draw attention to the absence from the House of those who, during the last few nights, have been making the strongest attacks upon me.

MR. TAYLOR: I am here to answer the charge.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Oh, I do not count the hon. member. But I did desire to-night to deal with certain remarks of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) and the members for Mt. Leonora (Mr. Lynch) and Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy); and I regret that they are absent.

LABOUR MEMBER: They did not know that you were to speak.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Perhaps they did not; but I think their place is here. I was about to draw attention to a remark made some time ago by the Leader of the Opposition, when he referred to me as a "jackal for the Jews," and said that my department was rotten to the core. I think it would have been fair for the hon. member to be here in his place now that I have a chance of replying to him, and that here on the floor of the House he should have substantiated some of his statements, and shown why the Mines Department or the Railway Department are, to use his own words, rotten to the core. As I pointed out this evening, I have undoubtedly incurred the animosity of those members opposite; and on the other hand—and I am pleased to say it—I have been able to earn the sympathy and support of the battlers in the out-back portions of this country. Those are the men whom I have tried to fight for all the time

I have been in Parliament; and I do not intend to go about the country like the member for Leonora (Mr. Lynch) and ask those men to trust in Loring. The men I have been working for are not all unionists; and I think the members on the Government side of the House are convinced, because I do not wish to convince those opposite—

MR. BOLTON: Why waste words?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We have heard an awful lot of claptrap, but I do not think there will be as much claptrap in what I am about to say as there was in the speeches from the Opposition.

MR. TAYLOR: You seem not to like our remarks.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I wish the hon. member to understand that I treat him with absolute contempt. I wish to deal first with the speech of the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy). That speech occupied 13ft. of *Hansard*, or 156 inches, or over 1,200 lines. It contained 1,200 lines of abuse of me, and about 10 lines regarding the one big question concerning the mining industry in his own district—railway communication between our existing system and Black Range. About a dozen lines contain all that the hon. member had to say on that railway. He did not come here to tell us what were the resources of the district, or what developments justified the construction of the line.

MR. HUDSON: He told you that last session.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Look at *Hansard*. No more than about a dozen lines refer to the railway to Black Range, and there are over 1,200 lines of abuse of the Mines Department. I heard some little time ago that the hon. member (Mr. Troy) was studying for the bar; and I believe that by mistake he got a copy of *Gulliver's Travels* and the works of De Rougemont. I think I shall be able to show that there was much of De Rougemont in the hon. member's statements. He first complains that I did not treat him with proper courtesy. A little while ago an application was made by some prospectors at Maninga Marley, near Black Range, who required a well to be sunk. The application was referred by me to the proper officers for report. Shortly after that, a letter was sent to the

member for the district. The report was obtained, and as it recommended the expenditure of the money, I approved the expenditure. I have been told by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) that I am like an old hen cackling over a new-laid egg in regard to this matter. There is one good thing, however: the egg is worth something, though the hon. member's saucepan in which it is cooked is worth very little. Since I have taken control of the department, knowing that a large sum of money has been placed with me to expend, my rule has been to give to the Press the fullest information. That information was given to the Press before the hon. member got word through the department. This is the letter sent to me by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy):—

I have to complain of your lack of courtesy in dealing with my communication of the 2nd inst., referring to the necessity for providing a domestic water supply for the residents of Maninga Marley, in the Black Range district. Whilst no information has been given me regarding your intention, I note in the *Morning Herald* of to-day that that organ is supplied with the fullest particulars. I attach the extract for your perusal:—"The Minister for Mines intends to make provision on the next Estimates for the sinking of a well at Maninga Marley, in the Black Range district, on the Nungarra-Lawlers road."

This is not the first occasion that my communications have been ignored; and I desire to enter my strongest protest against such tactics.

I wish to explain that if the hon. member or any other hon. member thinks that I intend to spend my time in writing letters to members of Parliament, he is mistaken. In the ordinary course, all correspondence goes through the branch which deals with correspondence; and that has nothing to do with me. Apparently it did not matter to the hon. member for a single moment whether these prospectors got their well or not; but he objected that any information, good or bad, should be given to the public except through himself. And he made a farther complaint, that when he waited upon me with a deputation he was received with a scowl. The hon. member did not take the House into his confidence in regard to the object of that deputation. He called upon me a little time ago with a Mr. Schumann. He rang me up, and asked if I would meet a deputation from

Black Range; and I consented. I should like to inform members that with regard to the battery system, in order to save friction and to prevent favour being shown by the managers, we insist that every man who desires to become a customer shall enter his name in the crushing book, and the manager has to put on the record board the name of the man, the lease the stone is obtained from, and the quantity he expects to crush. These particulars are placed upon the notice board, and every customer can see them, and from the position of his name on the list can form an opinion as to when he can get his stone crushed. The member for Mount Magnet brought this Mr. Schumann to me; and because he said this man had expended a considerable amount of money there, he asked me to send instructions to the manager ordering him to give preference to Mr. Schumann, that he should be permitted to get his stone crushed before those whose names took priority on the notice board; and I declined in such strong language that it made Mr. Troy go out with a scowl. And I will decline again to do such a thing, even at the request of the hon. member. [MR. TAYLOR: You would be justified in refusing.] He (Mr. Troy) made a great noise in regard to a meeting which I held at Cue. The hon. member states that there were 45 people present. Well, that is by the way; but I thought there were from 200 to 250 persons present. What was the reason of the hon. member's objection? Simply because I drew special attention to a statement he had made in the House last year. I think I read it before the House adjourned for tea; so I will not repeat it. But he also drew attention to another matter, a matter of very much moment to the people of the back country; and that was the question of telegraphic extension to out-back places. We have all stated on the public platform our desire to give facilities to the people who live in the out-back districts. We desire to give to the man who is braving all the dangers of the back country, and who is doing his best to develop the resources of this State, some of the advantages of civilisation; and we can give him nothing better than telegraphic communication. The member for Mt. Magnet stated I was

trying to claim the credit in connection with certain extensions. He said that I promised the people of Black Range to do my best to obtain for them telegraphic facilities; that I had done nothing; and that everything had been done by the party (Labour) which sits opposite. I happen to have here some extracts, which are rather important, because in the first place they show upon whom the blame lies for delay in giving telegraphic communication to these people; they show clearly who is responsible. The Federal Government asked whether we would guarantee any loss which might result from any of these out-back telegraph lines. This is a communication from the Prime Minister, in reference to the extension of the telegraph line to Black Range:—

On the 17th May, 1904, the then Postmaster General (Mr. Mahon) directed that the State Government be asked whether they desired its construction, as a State Minister had visited the place and said the line was warranted. The papers were referred to the Deputy Postmaster General, Perth, who reported that the Minister for Mines (Mr. Gregory) considered the construction of the line would be justified; although not at first producing sufficient revenue to more than pay expenses, yet it would do much to assist in opening up the State. The Postmaster General thought this was insufficient to justify the expenditure, and directed (29/7/04) that the matter be placed before the W.A. Government, and their formal approval invited to the proposed expenditure; but through an inadvertence this instruction was not carried out.

Members will see that the statement made by the member for Mount Magnet, that although I had promised at Black Range that I would do my best to get the line constructed I had not done so, is shown by the minute of the Prime Minister to be absolutely incorrect.

MR. BATH: You were there before January, 1904.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I was there in January, 1904. It was Mr. Mahon, the Federal Postmaster General, who insisted that there should be a guarantee; and owing to inadvertence on the part of Federal officials the letter was not sent along. Not then, but shortly afterwards, another suggestion I had made that there should be an extension of the telegraph line from Laverton to Burtville was sent from the Federal Government to the State Government,

saying that if we would guarantee—from memory, it was less than £10 per annum—

MR. BATH: £80.

THE MINISTER: It might have been £8. It was from £8 to £10.

MR. BATH: £80.

THE MINISTER: I say £8; the hon. member can say what he likes—it was between £8 and £10, to make up the estimated loss in connection with this work; but the Labour Government put it on record that they absolutely refused to guarantee any loss in connection with any work that the Commonwealth were responsible for.

MR. BATH: Until the matter had been decided by the Federal Government as to who should be responsible.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member will look at the file he will see that those words are not there. At any rate that Government absolutely refused to give telegraphic communication to these people; and when we got back to power, the first thing we did was to guarantee the Federal Government, not only in connection with the Black Range, but also in connection with Burtville, any loss on these communications.

MR. BATH: After a resolution moved by the member for Leonora.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: What effect had the resolution? What is the use of talking such absurdities? The member for Leonora, who was a member of the previous Government that had just refused to make the guarantee, got up in this House and asked the members—

MR. BATH (explanation): I say the hon. member is incorrect in saying that the Labour Government refused to give a guarantee. They refused until the matter had been decided as to whether the Federal Government or the State Government should construct these works.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Then I ask the hon. member to call for the papers. I promise that I will produce the papers so that members will be able to judge whether my statement is correct or not. In fact, as speedily as possible I will give the extracts to the newspapers, and members will be able to judge whether what I have stated here to-night is correct. I say it was simply

playing to the gallery for a member to get up in his place in this House and move a motion such as the member for Leonora did, when only a short time previously the previous Administration had refused to guarantee any loss that might occur in connection with these matters.

MR. BATH: Oh, say it again.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is just as well for the public to know. They get to know a good deal from the hon. member, and I think it is only right that I—[MR. BATH: Should play to the gallery also]—should put my phase of the question so that the public may judge of the reliability of the hon. member. I promise to give those extracts to the newspapers and then the public can freely judge. The member for Mount Magnet went on to refer to the miserly way in which I had treated the Meekatharra district. It is only a few weeks ago since I visited Nannine and Meekatharra, and it was not long after I returned that the Government endorsed my recommendation to spend over £9,000 in that district for the purpose of giving it a water supply.

MR. BATH: But they were a long time making representations to you without any effect.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I believe the hon. member had the opportunity of doing something for them if he desired.

MR. BATH: I did do so.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I would like the hon. member to show where it is on record.

MR. BATH: Letters on your file will show it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I contradict that statement. There is nothing on the files with regard to the hon. member. The member for Mount Magnet referred to the manner in which I had recently treated the Nannine and Meekatharra districts, and I say that I used all possible energy in connection with the matter. As soon as I returned to Perth, I asked Cabinet to approve of the expenditure of over £9,000. It is a risky thing. It is a new goldfield, and the Government are taking a great amount of risk, yet I was quite prepared to take the risk, and Cabinet agreed to expend the money in connection with a water

supply at Meekatharra. I hope, as soon as I can send an expert to the district and as soon as I get the Battery Board report, to spend £2,000 or £3,000 there to give the district a plant that even the hon. member for the district will feel satisfied with. To show that the hon. member's statements are not correct, although hon. members opposite dillydallied and absolutely refused to put a battery at Nannine—I think one refused and the other asked for a report—I did not waste time when I was there. I am sure the member for Murchison will bear me out. I only stated that I would not proceed with the erection of a battery until I had the report of the Battery Board. The hon. member could not convince his own colleagues to erect a battery there. [MR. HOLMAN: I beg your pardon. The battery was absolutely promised.] The hon. member was a member of the Labour Government that received letters in connection with this battery, but nothing was done. I hope within a few months that something will be done. The member for Mt. Magnet also referred to a battery at Montagu Range, and accused me of refusing to erect a battery there. The erection of a battery there was refused by Mr. Hastie—[MR. HEITMANN: Marvellous!]  
—and a farther application was made to Mr. Johnson, and he promised a farther report; but in the interim I think two other batteries were erected there. It is not that there is no desire to erect batteries at these places, but we depend upon the reports we get from our responsible officers. Unless we see the districts for ourselves and take the responsibility upon ourselves as Ministers, we must be guided by the officers of the department. But in this case, the member for Mt. Magnet must have known that Mr. Hastie refused the erection of the battery; yet he tried to throw the whole of the onus of not doing anything for that district on my shoulders, without making any statement as to what had been done prior to my being in office. The member for Mt. Magnet also stated that I had taken credit for initiating the construction of the railway station at Fremantle. Members must know that is not true. The Rason Government did nothing of the sort. The work was initiated by the James Administration, but the real work,

or the authorisation of the expenditure of £80,000, was made by Mr. Johnson, the Minister for Railways in the Labour Administration.

MR. BATH: There was £40,000 for the purchase of the land. That was the first step.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It was Mr. Johnson who authorised the start of the work. I desire to combat the argument that we went about the country stating that we were responsible for the work. The hon. member said that at Fremantle we claimed credit for starting the work. The hon. member was doing nothing but trying to follow De Rougemont, for all the statements he made were incorrect.

MR. BATH: You were a member of the James Government when the land was purchased at Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I have stated that the first step was taken by the James Government.

MR. BATH: Then what are you growling over?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I want to assure members that the statement made by the member for Mount Magnet, that during the Fremantle election we tried to make people believe that we had authorised the expenditure, was incorrect. We have only carried on work which had been started. There is only one thing I can say. I regret very much that the authority was given, because I think there could have been very large savings for the State had a little more care been taken before the work was commenced.

MR. BATH: There might have been care in the purchase of the land.

MR. DAGLISH: Did you say that at Fremantle?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not want the hon. member to think that I meant any saving in connection with the buildings. What I meant was that valuable ground could have been saved if more care had been taken.

MR. BATH: Who started the erection of the station?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The work was started about two months before I took office; and then for about two months I was doing nothing but electioneering and knew nothing of what was going on, so that the principal work

had been started. The sheds had been erected.

MR. BATH: There was not a stone laid. If you had wanted to do so you could have altered the whole of the plans. You let it go on for months until £20,000 was spent on the foundations before you tumbled to it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I never thought you people were so stupid; and as I was particularly busy in the back country, I had very little chance of being able to find out what was being done down at Fremantle. It appeared to me to be so strange listening to the arguments raised by those opposite. They seem to arrogate to themselves everything that is good and pure. We have the member for Leonora, the member for Cue, the member for Mount Margaret, that beautiful specimen of all that is honest and noble, and the member for Mount Magnet, who has been trying to emulate De Rougemont all the time, also the Leader of the Opposition who out in the back country calls me the jackal of the Jews and says that my department is rotten to the core, but when he gets up in his place in this House there is not one single word about that rottenness.

MR. BATH: Wait until your Bills come down. I told you I shall deal with them when you introduce them.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member said the department was rotten to the core. If the administration was bad, surely it was the hon. member's duty from his place in the House to declaim against it, and not to throw out broadcast statements of this description, and to show to the members here that there was rottenness in connection with the administration of my department.

MR. BATH: There is more than one member sitting in Opposition. You have had a few instances to-night.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Am I to understand for a single moment that the hon. member endorses what they have said?

MR. BATH: Yes; I endorse what the member for Murchison said in reference to the State batteries in your own district.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I shall deal with that directly.



MR. BATH: You had better.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Members opposite seem to arrogate to themselves everything that is good and pure. Their aspirations are noble—[MR. SCADDAN: They are trying to emulate you in that]—we are boodlers. Their actions are imbued with patriotism; ours with greed of spoil every time. [MR. TAYLOR: Judge of the tree by its fruit.] Hon. members opposite stand upon a pedestal with a halo of righteousness around them; we stand in a charnel house, reeking with all that is bad. The member for Leonora the other night in a fit of ecstasy smote his chest and told us that as long as breath existed in his carcase he was going to stick to all those good and noble sentiments. He told us if anyone dared to impute dark operations on their part for the purpose of feathering their own nests, he would call it an unmitigated lie. So would I in reference to the imputations and insinuations that that hon. member has dared to make about the remarks made by me at the time of the Fremantle election. When speaking on behalf of Mr. Price, in answer to an interjection I referred to the proposed purchase of the Midland Railway, and I stated that it was on that account that the Labour Government resigned. The hon. member is trying to convince the public that when I made that statement I tried to make the public believe that the members who constituted the Labour Government were being bribed. I can only repeat the words used by the member for Leonora, and I say it is absolutely untrue. I had not the slightest idea of such an insinuation. Let us get down to bedrock straight away. On October 1st last year we moved a motion of want of confidence in the Government. We refused to allow the question of the purchase of the Midland Railway to come up in that debate; we said it was too big a question. The decision on that motion gave the Government a majority of three members. They then brought forward their proposals. There was a lot of recrimination amongst themselves, and the member for Subiaco must have felt disgusted with those sitting on his side of the House. Even the Leader of the Opposition, who has said some very nasty things about me, or the member for Leonora, or Mr. Drew, a member of another House, or the mem-

ber for Subiaco, does not think I insinuated that the Government were being bribed in that matter. It is too wild and too absurd to think so. If any such idea as that existed it was only in the imagination of a certain section whom the Leader of the Opposition to-night has been so eager to applaud.

MR. DAGLISH: The Government did not resign on account of that at all.

MR. BOLTON: The hon. member knows that, but he makes the statement about every seven days.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I would like to quote what Mr. Moran said at that time.

MR. DAGLISH: Quote what I said; surely that would give the intention of the Government.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not prepared to tell the member what he said to his party because he was particularly harsh on them. I am trying to state my case to-night in my own way, and I want to show what Mr. Moran said about this matter.

MR. DAGLISH: Why introduce that in connection with the resignation of the Government? Mr. Moran could not tell why the Government resigned.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I will deal with that directly. Perhaps some member on the other side might tell us.

MEMBER: Tell what?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Why the Government resigned. Mr. Moran said:—

I can simply say this. I never in my whole life met a more tolerant or more generously disposed Opposition in regard to not aggravating party differences than the Opposition at present sitting on that (Government) side of the House.

MR. HOLMAN: That was when you were approaching him.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member knows when it was. This was after we formed our Administration, and any chance he had then would be very remote. Mr. Moran said:—

I think they conducted themselves in a most eminently fair-minded manner, and on every question showed a most tolerant and generous spirit. In that matter there is not a word of blame attaching to them for the tactics adopted right through the piece.

I want to assure the member for Subiaco more than anyone else, also the Leader

of the Opposition, and the member for Leonora, that I would sooner have cut my tongue out than make such an insinuation as the hon. member has tried to make the public believe I did. It was owing to the Government proposals over the Midland Railway that the Government resigned.

MR. DAGLISH: No.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Give us a reason then. The member for Leonora said he was going to watch with an eagle eye—I hope it will not roll too much—the Mines Regulations Bill, because he would not trust me. He said that in his speech the other night. There was a Mines Regulation Bill introduced by the members opposite when in power. Why did they not attempt to carry that Bill through, which meant so much to the miners on the goldfields?

MR. BATH: Because the members who claimed to be supporting it failed to give any assistance.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That statement is on a par with many other statements. The Bill only reached the second-reading stage; it was not even in Committee. I spoke for an hour or three-quarters of an hour on the second reading of that Bill, but as to any obstruction, such a statement is absolutely inaccurate. The Bill was brought forward by the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member. He claims to be a friend of the miner, and his Government brought forward a Bill in the best interests of the miners on the fields, but why did not the hon. member do his best to have that Bill passed into law?

MR. BATH: Because we did not have sufficient support.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member was in the Government, and the Government resigned while the Bill was before the House.

MR. BATH: Because of lack of support.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: From where?

MR. BATH: From the House.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: From the members the hon. member has just now applauded. The trouble came from the hon. member whom the Leader of the Opposition just now applauded for abuse of myself. The abuse may not have been so great as the abuse of the

previous night, but it was particularly strong.

MR. BATH: What about the Independents and their motion of censure?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: They withdrew it and voted with the Government, which gave them a majority.

MR. BATH: That was because you could not agree as to the division of the spoils.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member had better be careful. I do not know if it is true, but there was a whisper about a coalition.

MR. TAYLOR: A whisper? Did you not have a conference?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member was not in it. There was no room for the hon. member anywhere. He made such a hopeless muddle of everything that he took in hand that he was not wanted by any party. There was a whisper of a coalition. Probably the late member for Kalgoorlie and the member for Leonora might be able to say whether that had anything to do with the resignation of the Government. I am not going to say whether I heard it in the street or not, for I do not know if it is true; but looking for a reason why the Government resigned, and we are told it was not on account of the trouble in connection with the Midland Railway proposals, then I ask again and again why did they resign? There was no obstruction from the Opposition. We moved our motion of want of confidence; that was all.

MR. BOLTON: It took three weeks.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: And we were defeated. The Government were in the majority. I do not want to labour the matter any more, but I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that at no time did I desire to make such a gross insinuation as that imputed to me, and I throw back with all the force of the member for Leonora his insinuation, which is absolutely untrue. I feel in my own heart there is no justification for such a remark. Much as we may disagree, I honour the member for Leonora and the member for Subiaco, and I say that there is not the slightest truth in any insinuation of that sort. The member for Mt. Margaret when sitting here was mild all the time. We never heard a word from him all the

time he was a member of the Government, and they tried to throw him out.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** He made no speech like the one he made last night.

**MR. GORDON:** No; but he drew his cheque all the time.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** I want to disabuse the minds of members of the late Government that I made any imputation, and I refute the insinuation contained in the speech of the member for Mount Margaret. A good deal has been said about Ministers visiting Fremantle at the time of the East Fremantle election, and speaking on the platform there. We had a very good precedent set us at the time of the East Perth election. The member for Leonora gave great praise to the late member for East Perth, Mr. James, and he said we were not half so progressive as Mr. James. The member forgot to tell the people at Menzies that, two years ago when fighting my constituency against me. At the time of the East Perth election, we had the members of the Ministry speaking on the platform, and I remember when Mr. Johnson spoke at East Perth he accused the James Government of conduct bordering on dishonesty. That was the precedent we had, but I do not think we followed on such lines. Great effort has been made to make out that the members of the Opposition have very high aspirations. There is nothing they can do that is wrong. They have no case; there is nothing in the Speech that they can disagree with.

**MR. BATH:** There is nothing in it at all.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** To have satisfied the hon. member we should have had to tack on all the Bills which we intend to bring forward, but we shall give members the information when we think advisable. Members opposite talk much about the purity of elections, and the member for Leonora was particularly strong about this. We heard a great deal of his mock heroics, but we can afford to take them at their true valuation. Let the member remember the incidents in connection with the elections on the fields, and the threatened boycott of business people.

**MR. BATH:** Where was this?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** At Menzies. Let the member remember that he himself rung up business people and asked them to subscribe money to enable Mr. Johnson and himself to go to Menzies to oppose me. These are the tactics that were adopted in connection with those elections. I am sorry the hon. member is not here to-night, as I would like him to explain where he got those 30 odd postal votes to hand in to the returning officer at Mt. Malcolm at the time of the election.

**MR. TAYLOR:** On a point of order; the hon. gentleman knows full well that the member for Leonora has already given an explanation to the House as to how he came into possession of those votes, namely that he merely carried them in an envelope. It is hardly fair for the Minister to make such a statement.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The hon. member may make a speech, if he likes. In regard to purity of election let me draw the attention of members opposite to a statement I made last session. I referred to the hon. member (Mr. Bath) voting at Kalgoorlie, and drew attention to the fact that he had bought land at Subiaco. Will the hon. member ask me to withdraw that statement?

**MR. BATH:** You stated I had bought land and built a house.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Nothing of the sort. I was quite ready for the interjection. What I said was:

And to-day my friend resides in Kalgoorlie! I believe he has recently purchased a piece of land in Subiaco. He did not try to get a lease anywhere, though he says a lot against the alienation of Crown lands.

**MR. BATH (in explanation):** You are wrong. I never bought a piece of land in Subiaco, or erected a house on it.

**The Minister for Mines:** Not a piece of land?

**MR. BATH:** No.

**MR. BATH (in explanation):** I do not know whether the hon. member has edited *Hansard* since. He stated that I bought a piece of land and erected a house on it. I afterwards told him in the corridor, and he brings it up now, that I bought a house already erected on the land. I also told the hon. gentleman that I was unable to secure a lease in Subiaco on which to erect a house, and that if the hon. member would pay me the money I expended on the land I was

prepared to let him take the land from me. He was not prepared to take the offer.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** I charged the hon. member with having voted at Kalgoorlie whilst he was residing down here, and I drew attention to the fact that he had bought a piece of land at Subiaco.

**MR. BATH :** You might have given the whole explanation.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** I have given every word in *Hansard*.

**MR. BATH :** You made a great show about the lease, but you did not accept my offer.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** I am not a land-grabber.

**MR. BATH :** The same offer is open to you or to any of your colleagues to-day.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** We heard them talking here about the purity of elections, and I alleged that the hon. member's name had appeared on the roll for two years at Kalgoorlie and that he had gone up there to vote. I said that to the best of my belief he had bought some land at Subiaco and was living there. I am only quoting *Hansard*.

**MR. BATH :** On a point of explanation, the hon. gentleman has made considerable remarks about this on previous occasions, and at one time he stated that they thought of prosecuting me as one who had voted at Kalgoorlie. I told the hon. gentleman at that time that they were welcome to start the prosecution; and I now say in explanation on this point, that my name was placed on the roll by the electoral authorities without my seeking to have it there. At the time of the election I found my name was on the roll for the Kalgoorlie electorate without my making any application whatever. I immediately wired to the returning officer or electoral registrar for Subiaco to know if my name was on the roll for the Subiaco electorate, and I received a reply that it was not. As my name was only on the Kalgoorlie roll, I voted at the election for which I was enrolled.

**MR. BOLTON :** Quite right.

**MEMBER :** Were you eligible?

**MR. BATH :** Yes; I was resident up there till the day of the election for a month before.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS :** I thought you were residing at Subiaco.

**MR. BATH :** I was living at Kalgoorlie.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** The hon. member had been resident here nearly two years, and he and some 20 or 30 others had been placed on the roll two years as being resident at the Union Club Hotel.

**MR. BATH :** I was living there.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** That is just the sort of thing we want to try to combat. We want to prevent, when we find there is not going to be an election in one constituency, the names of those people who are voters in one electorate from being transferred to another. We have to be particularly careful in connection with our electoral Act, so as to make provision that there can be no such thing as stuffing the rolls. The hon. member came down to Perth. He was here as our Chairman of Committees as I pointed out to the House. I was compelled to withdraw the remark because the hon. member said it was not true. I thought he had bought a piece of land at Subiaco, and he got up and compelled me to withdraw that statement.

**MR. BATH :** You said I had bought a piece of land and erected a house on it.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** Does the hon. member want me to quote *Hansard* again?

**MR. BATH :** You corrected it. You get hold of the weekly edition, and you will find it.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** It is well to quote *Hansard* again.

[Portion of previous extract quoted again.]

**MR. BATH :** You edited that speech; corrected it.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** Does the hon. member wish to impute that *Hansard* would make incorrect reports, or does he really think that next day I went and tried to falsify the report of my speech on this matter?

**MR. BATH :** You correct your speeches.

**MR. TAYLOR :** You know you do it.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** I believe the hon. member would swear he saw me make the correction. The member for Brown Hill said :—

You are wrong. I never bought a piece of land in Subiaco, or erected a house on it.

I want to point out that those people who talk so much about political purity are not so honourable themselves, after all. It is right to tell them this.

MR. TAYLOR: The Supreme Court says we are.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If the Supreme Court gave a proper verdict on the hon. member, I think it would say he is fit for a lunatic asylum.

MR. HEITMANN: Tell us about those 400 votes disallowed at Menzies.

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: With regard to the Speech, members say it is not explicit enough, and that we should give more information in respect to our proposals. Talking from a mining standpoint, we have several railways which we think are well worth inquiring into, and members must not forget that there is a heavy responsibility upon every member of the Government. They must remember that we have five new members out of the eight in the present Cabinet, and it is only right and fair to them that every information should be supplied to them before we dare to bring proposals down to this House; more especially with regard to the expenditure of large sums of money. It would have been quite easy for us to have a statement in the Speech that we intended to build a railway to Ravensthorpe and a railway to Pilbarra. If we had dared to say we intended to build a railway there, what would members opposite have said? What would they have said if we had stated we were going to build a railway to Black Range or Norseman? We know we cannot build these four mining railways this year; probably not more than two; probably not two. We have to consider all these questions. We have enunciated in the Governor's Speech the railways which we thought should take precedence, and the fullest information is being collected, so that when we come to the House with our measures we will be able to give all the information which has convinced us that these railways are the best. It would not be wise for us to place in the Governor's Speech a statement that we thought the Black Range railway should be built and the Pilbarra railway left out. We propose, I say, to bring down the fullest information we can obtain. The Governor's Speech is

not the place for those particulars, but as soon as we possibly can we will bring down all the information at our disposal and take the House fully into our confidence.

MR. BATH: Why not have done that in the recess since last September?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Because, as I pointed out to the hon. member, there are five new members in the Cabinet, and being in the Administration now they are tied by everything we do; therefore it is only wise these things should be seriously considered.

MR. BATH: But you were going to do this during recess.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member can make a speech, if he likes. Anything I say will not make any difference to members on that side of the House, but I want members on this side of the House to understand our position, not only in regard to mining railways, but also in connection with agricultural railways. We want to be able to come down with solid proposals which will meet with the approbation of the members of this House. In connection with the policy, the member for Leonora (Mr. Lynch) says that we have stolen his policy. Then, indeed, he must be very poor, because as far as I can remember there has been only one policy amongst those members opposite, and that is a policy they learn off by heart. They have a platform, I believe, and beyond that I do not know where the policy is. He told us our policy was something like a buck reef. We are quite prepared to give him back the little bit of brass in it, because there would be no gold in the policy we should steal. The policy evidently does not satisfy those hon. members. Why do they oppose us? Because we are going to bring in a tax on unimproved land values.

MR. BATH: Yes; and you opposed it right up to a few months ago.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Will the hon. member only say where and show proof, and not make statements like that, which are incorrect?

MR. BATH: As a member of the Cabinet.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I have always been in favour of a tax on unimproved land values.

**MR. BATH:** Not as a member of the Cabinet.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** It is like the hon. member's statements with regard to my mining legislation. Time after time he told people on the goldfields I was going to take my laws from American laws.

**MR. BATH:** With regard to the system of tenure.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** This hon. member shows he knows nothing about it, because I had no such idea. Time after time I told the hon. member through the Press that I had no such intention.

**MR. SCADDAN:** You quoted it in Cue in support of your proposals. You quoted the Mexican laws.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** I quoted them?

**MR. SCADDAN:** Yes.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** I told people what had resulted from certain legislation in America; and I then went farther and told them what had happened in Queensland and in Tasmania, and then I gave them an idea of what I proposed to do here. Surely that would be a fair thing to argue from. I did propose to take something from America, and the hon. member knew that; not to add to our mining laws, but to add to our criminal code. I desired to have a clause inserted in our criminal code by which we should be able to make the work of the rogue a little more dangerous than it has been in the past. If we can do anything in that way, I shall expect to get the support of the hon. member opposite. Instead of declaiming against it he should say, "Here is one good proposal the hon. gentleman is bringing forward."

**MR. BATH:** I do support you.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** After finding the extract which gave the clause itself, he published a long paragraph in the newspapers declaiming against my desire to bring American legislation here in connection with mining, and then gave this long extract in connection with dishonest mining operations, which of course bears out fully the necessity for the legislation I desire to bring in. As to mining legislation, the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) made last night a rather foolish state-

ment when he said that if I tried to pass amendments to the Mining Act he would stand here hour after hour to stonewall them and prevent their being made law. Why, if I so desired, I could make those alterations without consulting members opposite. According to the existing Mining Act, this is a question of regulations, which I can alter. All I should need to do, if I wished, would be to get the consent of my colleagues, ask the Executive Council to put the alterations on record, and they would have the force of law to-morrow. I refer to the labour covenants.

**MR. BATH:** Yes; if your alterations were in conformity with the Act.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** True; and I could do that to-morrow, provided my colleagues were agreeable. But the alterations which I propose will effect an important change in the past order of things; and I for one, in spite of all party considerations, have no desire to make any mistake in our mining legislation. Whatever happens, I wish the amendments we are bringing in to be in the best interests of the country; and if members opposite can show that any harmful results will accrue from what I propose here, I shall be pleased to give every consideration to their arguments. These amendments should not be made party questions: the subject is too big. It is the same with the Mines Regulation Bill. Members opposite, more especially the member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan), who, I think, is particularly in earnest regarding the Mines Regulation Act, ought to be able to give the Government great assistance in this matter. We are bound to disagree regarding some things, because those members will no doubt ask too much; but I want help; I want those two Bills to be, if possible, good Bills; and instead of captious criticism and a mere desire to score, I hope I shall get helpful criticism, so that the measures may be successful. One thing I can tell the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) and the member for Mount Leonora (Mr. Lynch): I shall be able to bring in a better Mines Regulation Bill than the Labour Government brought in last year—a Bill more in the interests of the people generally, and of those who have to work underground.

MR. TAYLOR: Workers? You will consider the capitalists.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Workers? Was the hon. member ever a worker?

MR. TAYLOR: What do you think yourself, from a casual glance?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Well, from what I have heard, I believe he has spent his time in agitating.

MR. TAYLOR: That is untrue; but I agitated you last night.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Never for the good of anybody did he work. If the hon. member can point out, during all the time he has been in Parliament, one little thing he has done for the people on the goldfields, one single action while he was Colonial Secretary that was creditable to himself, I will take back all I have said.

MR. TAYLOR: Read my speech on the Arbitration Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Speeches, speeches! I have heard many from the hon. member. We heard him speak last night; but when did he do anything? I remember one instance. A man named Clarke dared to insult an officer of the hon. member's department; and the hon. member, because Clarke dared to assert his rights, being only a ticket-of-leave man, a poor wretch whom nobody cared for—

MR. TAYLOR: The man is at liberty now.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: But you did not set him at liberty—because the man dared to summon the Comptroller of Prisons, the hon. member said, "Send him back to gaol"; and not only that, but the hon. member told the Press that the man was a bad lot.

MR. TAYLOR (in explanation): I have already explained this matter to the House, when I was a Minister of the Crown. I have no desire to drag this man's name before the country. I then pointed out that a reporter had printed matter which I had given him privately, as he was about to write. I gave one man the prison records of the person in question, and he betrayed that confidence and published it. I made that clear to the House. I do not now wish to drag in the name of the person in question, nor did I then. I hope that the Minister will not, for the sake of retaliating on

me for some of my utterances last night, say anything that will wound that man whom I set at liberty twice while I was in office.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member takes his gruel very badly. He sent the man back to gaol, and told us all about the man's family, even about his little child.

MR. TAYLOR: I have denied the Minister's statement, and I desire him to withdraw it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister must withdraw. His statement is contradicted by the member referred to.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I shall withdraw the statement. I can only say that I must have imagined that I read those things in the newspapers, and must conclude that the statements in *Hansard*, including the explanations of the hon. member, are absolutely untrue. I must think that now, because the hon. member says they are untrue. The hon. member takes his gruel very badly. We heard him last night tell the House that the Attorney General was a vice-president of the Chamber of Mines. [MR. TAYLOR: And I proved it.] I am used to this sort of thing. I know that the hon. member, as the representative of Mt. Margaret, went through my electorate and told the people that Mr. Gregory was the vice-president of the Chamber of Mines. I was not; but that did not matter. I was the honorary president, by virtue of my position as Minister. And he said: "How can you expect Mr. Gregory to attend to the requirements of the Chamber of Mines and do his duty to the miner and the prospector on these fields?" A similar thing occurred last night. There was a grave insinuation that on account of a certain purchase of a smelter, on account of certain things having been done—

MR. TAYLOR (in explanation): Last night the Attorney General denied certain statements which I made, and I withdrew them. I made a farther statement that, in the record of the Monthly Journal of the Chamber of Mines, Kalgoorlie, his name appeared in two places; in one as vice-president of that chamber, and in another as representative of the Lake View Consols mine, as I am reminded, until the 31st May of this year. And when I proved that to

the Attorney General, I established that he had tried to contradict what was absolutely true; and I have no hesitation in saying that the Minister knew it. I say that I proved he was an officer, was vice-president, and was also a representative of the chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not make a speech. He knows that very well.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member, who is becoming a gouty martyr for Labour—

MR. SPEAKER: Let me give the Minister a little advice. I think it would be much better if he would set an example, as a Minister of the Crown, by refraining from personalities.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I bow to your decision, sir; but the treatment I received last night for nearly two hours was, I think, quite sufficient to justify my utterances. I promise that I will have nothing more to say regarding the hon. member. Various statements have been made here as to certain expenditure in connection with my department. The leader of the Opposition, the member for Mt. Leonora, and several other members opposite have said that the Mines Department has been starved; that the expenditure this year has been less than in previous years. That statement is incorrect.

MR. BATH: Then your Statistical Abstract is incorrect, and I have it here.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The expenditure of the Mines Department from loan, for the year 1904-5, was £49,875; and for 11 months of the year 1905-6 it was £57,377. I am dealing with the mining development votes. From revenue the expenditure on the development of mining was, for 1904-5 £166,239; and for the 11 months of this year it was £146,169; though I wish to draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that in the latter period we were spending very little on the smelter or on the erection of batteries. Thus the expenditure from revenue this year will just about equal the revenue expenditure of last year.

MR. BATH: The expenditure to the end of May is £24,000 less this year than it was last year, according to your Statistical Register.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is of course including the sum of £20,800 for the Cue-Day Dawn water scheme, which sum was charged to revenue and recouped at once from the Savings Bank. It was not in any sense expended from revenue.

MR. BATH: It was; and it shows in your accounts.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member must admit that this money is not from loan, and is not charged against the Crown, but against the Cue-Day Dawn water board. If we take that money to-day from the Savings Bank, and the money is recouped to the revenue, he cannot assume that it has been expended from revenue.

MR. BATH: It was; because it had to be found out of revenue.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member calculates on that basis he can do a large amount of private work, spend the money from revenue, get a refund from some other vote, and then make the expenditure a charge to that vote.

MR. BATH (in explanation): The Minister is incorrect. This book is the Monthly Statistical Abstract published by the Government, and shows the expenditure of the Mines Department till the end of May, 1906, and for the corresponding term in the previous year; and it shows, as I stated, that the expenditure this year was £24,000 less than for the corresponding term of last year.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I was telling the hon. member the amount spent in the development of mining; that is, from all votes for batteries, the smelter, and mining development generally. The figures I have given him are departmental figures. Surely the hon. member does not think that the figures I am reading to-night are taken out of my own head.

MR. BATH: Is this Statistical Abstract incorrect?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member will show it to me, I shall be pleased to peruse it and answer him. The hon. member is trying to take credit for the sum of £20,800, which was certainly expended from revenue on one day, but was borrowed from the Savings Bank the next day. [MR. BATH: No.]



I say it was borrowed from the Savings Bank, and was made a charge against the Cue-Day Dawn water scheme. Of course the hon. member knows that.

MR. BATH: The hon. member knows that if the money was voted, it was expended.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member, when framing his Estimates, put it both on the debit and on the credit side of his ledger. Let him look up his Estimates and see if such is not the case. I do not wish to bandy words with the hon. member.

MR. BATH: You ought to be accurate.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I only desire to point out that there was greater expenditure in connection with the development of mining this year than last year. I can give the hon. member the full figures. In connection with water supply, what was done last year? The first item was in connection with Menzies No. 2 Tank. Imputations have been thrown out in connection with the large sums of money expended, more especially in my own electorate. Let me tell the member for Mount Margaret that this work was authorised by the Government of which he was a member. The authority for £23,000 spent in this construction was given by Mr. Hastie.

MR. HOLMAN: A good work, is it not?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; but the imputation was thrown out that I was getting a large amount of work done in my electorate. [MR. TAYLOR: I said nothing about dams.] I know the hon. member spoke of batteries. We will deal with them directly. This particular work was authorised by Mr. Hastie on the 24th February, 1905. At Higginsville we spent £3,200 on water supply, and the results are going to be particularly good in connection with that district. At Nannine we spent about £1,900 and got a good supply of water. We have constructed a large dam at Norseman, and we also spent a lot of money last year, owing to the water famine there, on a condenser. At Black Range we spent £1,900 in connection with a water supply, and we also spent money on water supplies at Lennonville and many other places. I think there is no better asset we can have than a good water supply, and no better way in which to assist mining

people in the back country. The water supply works in hand are: Leonora, Mertondale, Meekatharra, Carbine, and Ravensthorpe. The first has not yet been authorised, but all the others have been authorised. I would like to mention that the Davyhurst scheme has been a wonderful success. We have been able to keep from 40 to 50 head of stamps going and 1,000 people on one well. We have spent £2,500 to give a supply to Bulong from the Goldfields Water Scheme. At Mount Monger, for the purpose of opening up that district, we have provided on time payment nine miles of rails. There are special conditions in connection with that work, because they have to carry ore for people into Kalgoorlie at a rate which is approved in the agreement with the Minister for Mines; and I am very hopeful that we will be able to do a great deal by this work for the opening up of that district. In order to at once quieten any qualms that may exist in connection with this work—for some people may think that by allowing the tramway to be constructed it may interfere with the construction of the Norseman Railway—I may point out that it is in an entirely different direction and that in no sense can it be held to interfere in the slightest degree with any intention the Government may have in connection with the Norseman Railway. [MR. HUDSON: Will the Minister produce a map in connection with that scheme?] I will be happy to show the hon. member the plans at my office. In Kalgoorlie we are offering £2,000 for deep sinking at the north end, and we also offer special inducements to provide for boring at the south end. Some members say I have not done anything to assist local companies. I do not think any member has done more than I have to promote local companies. I spent a large sum of money in trying to encourage the formation of local companies. At Mount Malcolm, a poor community, we have induced people to subscribe £700, the Government advancing £1,050 at the rate of 30s. to the pound, to reopen the North Star mine, which years ago crushed thousands of tons of stone for several ounces to the ton; and the chances are particularly good that the efforts of the local people will result in success. The conditions are, that

any work put in hand must be approved by the officers of the department before any assistance is given. They started a company at Menzies and I told them I would help the same. It is the same at Greenbushes, and in fact at every district I have visited. The member for Murchison will bear me out that I did all in my power to encourage people in the back country in this direction. The money is to be repaid to the Crown before these companies distribute any profits. By these means I have done a good deal to try to induce people to start local companies in this State. Local companies have done so much in Bendigo and Ballarat that surely we should be able to do something in that direction. I am getting rather tired of assisting prospectors for the purpose of deep sinking unless there is some special object to be attained. I do not think it is in the best interests to assist prospectors in the ordinary development work; but I do think it is in the best interests of the State that prospectors should be assisted in the purchase of machinery.

**MR. BATH:** You are speaking of assistance under the Mines Development Vote.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Yes.

**MR. BATH:** Very little of that seems to come back. It all seems to be given away.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Perhaps we have not been too lucky in the past; but we have a better chance of getting it back by assisting in the purchase of machinery. Everything depends on being able to work a mine cheaply and on getting the stone out at the lowest cost. If we provide machinery such as a winding engine, or a pumping engine, or even a battery, we may be helping the prospector a great deal more than by giving assistance for development work.

**MR. HUDSON:** How long have they to wait until the inspector reports to you?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Sometimes it takes rather long.

**MR. HUDSON:** I know a case where it took twelve months.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Perhaps it was refused eleven months ago, and the hon. member did not hear of it.

**MR. HUDSON:** I heard yesterday.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Then the hon. member has not told me of it.

**MR. HUDSON:** Yes, I did.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** We had a trial made at Coolgardie of a unit stamp mill. I thought it would be a success and that we could do a lot by sending out unit stamp mills with oil engines to the back country. This mill treated 13 tons of soft earth one day and nine tons another, but it was not put together too well, and I cannot get a favourable report from my officers yet. We are making further investigations, and I am quite satisfied that if we have a small mill and an oil engine—we must insist on good material and we are not going to throw them about indiscriminately—which we could send out to the back country where there is great trouble in getting stone to the ordinary mills, we might help the prospectors.

**MR. TAYLOR:** What is the price of that mill?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The hon. member can ask the question in the ordinary course. I wish to ignore him just now. I have been taken to task in connection with the battery system. I respect the complaints made by the member for Murchison to-night, but the hon. member knows that I have not been satisfied with the way the department has been administered. If I were satisfied, would hon. members think that I would expend £800, which will be the cost to the State, on a Battery Commission? I was going to appoint it before I left office. [**MR. TAYLOR:** To inquire into your own administration for three years?] Even if it did, I am quite satisfied to give the report to members as soon as it is in my hands. If I have made blunders, the sooner they are remedied the better. It is not a matter of the department; it is a matter of giving to the people in the back country that which Parliament has desired to give them. We have spent large sums of money, which Parliament has always freely given, and we want to give to the prospector the most we can get for the money voted. I have appointed the board, and I hope that the result will be such that it will bring about a big improvement. The member for Murchison complained of the number of old rattle-trap batteries and of my having bought a number of second-hand batteries. I think the hon. member will now with-

draw his remark, because, although I speak from memory, I can assure the hon. member that what I say is correct. The Norseman battery was second-hand, and was purchased when Sir Edward Wittenoom was Minister. The Darlôt battery, also second-hand, was purchased when Mr. Lefroy was Minister. The Burtville battery was second-hand and was purchased when I was Minister; but the Randalls, Pig Well, Yerilla, Twenty-Mile, Sandy, and Yarri batteries, all second-hand, were purchased by the Labour Government. Also there was the Bulong battery purchased when either Mr. Lefroy or Sir Edward Wittenoom was Minister. These are the whole of the second-hand batteries so far as my knowledge goes. The Bulong battery was dismantled, and half went to Yerilla and half to Widgemooltha. Only one of the second-hand batteries was purchased by me, and five were purchased by the Labour Government. [MR. TAYLOR: We will have the files.] My one great desire is to try to give facilities for men trying to do something for themselves, for the prospector who is game to go out and develop country, wanting to be something more than a wages man. Statements have been made in this House in connection with the number of batteries in my own electorate, but nearly 30 per cent. of the mines revenue comes from my district. How many batteries were authorised by me, although I was three years in office? The Menzies battery is the only battery I authorised and erected in my district. The Mulline, Mullarrie, Mount Ida, and Niagara batteries were all erected previous to my going into office. The Yerilla, in fact all these others were approved and erected by the Administration following my term of office. I am thankful; they were particularly kind. An hon. member talks of different works being promised just prior to an election, but he should tell of some public work approved by me with a view to buying my election. In connection with the battery charges, the member for Mount Leonora said that there was no increase in the battery charges by the Labour Administration. Not only was there an increase, but when the Leaseholders and Prospectors' Association wired to Mr. Johnson and asked him to reconsider his decision, that gentleman wrote

on the back of the telegram:—"I decline to reconsider my decision."

MR. SCADDAN: You are not game to put those files on the table of the House.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I will do so, if the member will ask for them to be made public.

MR. SCADDAN: Not half the file, but the whole of it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think the hon. member has a right to make an insinuation of that kind.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must know that the remark is not a proper one.

MR. SCADDAN: I would like to point out, in explanation, that when I said not half the file, I meant the whole of the files in connection with this matter, for there is more than one file concerned, and if the files are to be laid on the table I ask the Minister to lay the whole of them on the table, not half.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member has perhaps more intimate knowledge of my department than I have myself. I will go farther in that matter if the member likes, and it is just as well to let the House know how truthful these members were when in my electorate. It is placed on record that there was to be an increased charge for crushing high-grade stone, from 17s. 6d. to £1 per ton. As soon as this was made public, the Leaseholders' Association wired to the Minister, who declined to reconsider his decision. When I got into the department I refused to allow these increased charges to come into operation. On the public platform Mr. Johnson told the people that it was a departmental mistake, and if he had known it he would have altered it as soon as it had been brought under his notice. I published his statement on the back of the telegram, and then he told the public that he never intended it to apply to the Eastern Goldfields; only to Nullagine.

MR. SCADDAN: Let us have the papers, and we will see for ourselves.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member does not want the files now. Why should the people at Nullagine be compelled to pay an extra charge? I wondered why that was so; and I asked for the charges at Nullagine and found they were considerably more than the

increased charges proposed. There was no sliding scale there at all, and it was absolutely impossible for the increased charges to apply to the Nullagine people. There was an effort made by the late Administration to increase the charges, and I think that will not be forgotten by the people on the goldfields. I should like to state, in connection with the battery system, that it is estimated this year we shall have a profit of £4,412 in connection with their working.

MR. HOLMAN: What about the cyanide plant?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot give the member full returns. A lot has been said about the sale of the smelter, and I thought when the matter was made public there would be a lot of adverse criticism. One can quite understand that when the State embarks on a work of this sort and then withdraws from it, the action is bound to be criticised very severely. It was agreed in the House in September, 1902, that the Government should be empowered to erect a smelter. They were not authorised to do so, because I pointed out to the House that the work of smelting was extremely dangerous from a financial point of view. I had no knowledge of it, and the departmental officers had never been connected with it. There might have been grave results. Therefore the House agreed to this action, and by a motion moved by Mr. Thomas, which was opposed by Mr. Johnson, it was decided that the Government should, if they thought fit on the reports of their officers, erect a smelter. We had a good deal of expert advice, and after nearly two years we started the smelter. Knowing there would be extreme delays, we framed regulations and made advances to prospectors to purchase their ore subject to certain conditions. Up to the time of the failure of the old smelter we treated 7,696 tons of ore, of the approximate value of £42,000; that is the amount we distributed amongst the prospectors of that field. During the early period of 1904 it became apparent that the smelter was unfitted for the work it had to do. The cost of working the smelter averaged £3 12s. 6d. per ton, and we were only getting £3 a ton for the smelting. In June of last year a new manager (Mr. Dunstan) was

appointed by the late Government, and it was a particularly happy appointment. I want to give credit where it is due. The new manager said at once that the new plant was unfitted for the work, but that he would make an effort to get through the quantity of ore there. He had extreme difficulty in getting the stone through. In October he had to close down, but was able to turn out and send away as copper matte a small proportion of copper from the stone treated. It was impossible to carry out the work by the old smelter. On the recommendation of the manager, the Government approved of the erection of an entirely new plant, the approximate cost of which was to be £5,400. The work was put in hand, but the manager was told that he must continue the old system of buying copper ore although he was not able to smelt it. Provision was made on the Estimates, and money was allowed to the manager to buy ore. He did so, but up to the present time from October last he has received at the smelter only 1,000 tons of ore, and nearly every ton of it is oxidised. There are no sulphides, and without we have sulphides the manager says he cannot smelt the oxidised ore.

MR. HUDSON: Where did you get it before?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: From the mines bought by the copper company.

MR. HUDSON: Nonsense! There is just the same proportion of sulphide ore amongst that 1,000 tons as before.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If there was one vestige of truth in the statement, why then, when we are continuing the system of making advances to prospectors, are we not receiving as much ore as we did previously? The small tonnage is due to the fact that the copper company have purchased nearly all the producing mines, and have options over nearly all the others.

MR. HUDSON: I did not say the company had taken all the mines. What I wished to convey was that in the 1,000 tons of ore now in the hands of the Government at the smelter there is the same proportion of sulphide ore as in the stone delivered before the demolition of the old smelter.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I say the manager has assured me that the 1,000 tons he has at the smelter is oxi-

dised ore. Will the member tell the House the capacity of the new plant? He has been down there, and knows something about it.

MR. HUDSON: The new plant was not completed when I was there.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The new plant is supposed to treat 60 tons a day, 1,500 to 1,800 tons a month, and in eight months we have received 1000 tons of ore. I say the principal producing mines have been secured by the Phillips River Copper Company; therefore, I do not know why I should be contradicted.

MR. HUDSON: You have not been contradicted.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In eight months only 1,000 tons of stone have been received. All the producing mines have been taken from us, and the manager of the company said, "We are prepared, if you like, to buy your smelter." The old smelter was gone; it had cost about £8,000. We lost a good deal of money in connection with the old smelter, about £2,000. I do not want members to think that we should have made the same loss if we had had the stone at the smelter. We might not only have made a profit, but have been able to reduce the charges. Without the stone being available, it is impossible for us to carry on. I want members not to forget that we were buyers of ore, and from October last year to the present time we have only received 1,000 tons of stone, and the manager must have sulphide stone to enable him to treat the ore. All the sulphide producing mines are in the hands of the company.

MR. HUDSON: Did you say "all?"

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member knows there are dozens of little mines from which you might get a ton to-day and a few tons to-morrow; but when we can only get 1,000 tons from the mines in eight months, then I say the principal producing mines have gone from us. If we carried on, the company might say, "We do not want your smelter; we will not pay your price." The company wanted some other concessions. They wanted to build a railway, and I told them that if a railway was to be built the Government should build it. If the member for Mt. Margaret had desired, he could have read my report

which appeared in the newspapers. I dealt with the matter, and the member could have found out that I refused to give the slightest consideration to the idea of this railway being constructed by private enterprise. I consider it a work that should be carried out by the Government. I told the Press that months ago. The company also wanted the right to construct tramways to bring ore to a central depôt. With the idea of assisting the industry, I told them there would be no objection to that; but when it came to the question of the smelter, they said it would not suit them to smelt ore at the Government smelter. They are appointing their own manager; I think they are giving him £3,000 a year. They made an offer of £4,000 for the Government plant. I said "no;" but that if they would make an offer for the plant at five per cent. below the cost—the expenses have been a little more of late—I would be prepared to sell the smelter at 5 per cent. less than it cost. This they refused. I think Mr. Kaufman left on the Monday, and on the previous Saturday his partner came to the Mines Department, and I had with me the manager looking after the interests of the Government. At last he came to an offer of £5,000. I agreed to submit his offer to the Government, and said, "If you will not give me more, I will recommend that it be accepted." I found myself in this position, that if we were left with that smelter we certainly would be left with a "white elephant," at least for years. Can the hon. member show me one good producing mine there at the present time which these people have not taken? It is all very well for the member for Mount Margaret to say the money has been spent and that these people have gone there to reap the benefit. Have we anything to do with the purchase of these leases? Could we say to any man who had developed his property, "You shall not sell your lease to that company"? On the other hand, is it not a good thing to know that those people are coming there prepared, I believe, to spend £200,000 in the development of that property? Up to the present time they have spent £50,000. Even if we had lost £20,000, the smelter has done its work, for it has shown to the outside world that this area is worth

attention. The selling of the smelter is justified by this fact, that the producing mines are gone to the company holding them. For eight months we received only a thousand tons of stone, and the smelter could treat 1,500 to 1,800 tons a month. What does it mean? We had our manager there, and what was to follow to keep an expensive staff on the work and utilise all that plant? I put this condition in, that the company were to provide for the leaseholders of that district for a period of two years. The reason I stipulated two years was that I thought within two years we would have a railway to the coast.

MR. HUDSON: What is the good of that?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I knew the hon. member was too stupid to understand the difference. The cost of cartage being 37s. a ton, the leaseholders would not, without a railway, have facilities to send their stuff to Adelaide, Sydney, or other places, if the company did not treat with them. The whole position was changed. For the two years the company have to carry out the regulations in force at the present day. We handed over to the company the quarry which we possessed. There is only one quarry there of ironstone, and we are prepared to transfer that quarry to the company and also to lease them the ground it is on. The lease of that quarry is only for a period of two years. If the company do not comply with the agreement, we can take from them the flux that is necessary for the smelting of the ore.

MR. HUDSON: Do you mean to say that is the only place where flux can be obtained?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: They can go farther?

MR. HUDSON: Was the smelter erected before or after Kaufman bought the mines there?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I will give the hon. member the dates when we started operations. The work was started in October, 1904.

MR. HUDSON: On the new smelter?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: On the new smelter.

MR. HUDSON: I am bound by parliamentary privilege and practice to accept your word, so I accept it.

MR. TAYLOR: We only passed the money last session, £7,000.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We do not always wait till the House passes money. The House knows that very well. If the Government were desirous of carrying out a work they did so, feeling satisfied that the House would pass the Estimates.

MR. HUDSON: Will the Minister tell us how much was spent on it in October last year, when the Mt. Cattlin mine was sold?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If the member has information, surely he will tell the House. I have information as to when we started and the time of approval. I say we have an agreement with the company that for a period of two years they shall carry out the existing regulations, that is the regulations that are in force to-day will have full force for two years. I think, therefore, we are protected. I want to let members know the liability we were taking. These figures are approximate. The loss on the old smelter and upon smelting operations amounted to £9,000. The loss in regard to depreciation in stores is principally in connection with coke, which got badly damaged by sea water, and an amount has to be taken off the valuation. There will be a loss of about £1,000 in stores. The loss on the new smelter is about £1,000, actually about £960. The expenditure in connection with this place up to the present has been £90,000, the receipts amount to £63,000 odd, and we expect to receive something like £16,500 in connection with the advances we have made on ore and on the various matters which should be taken over by the company at a valuation. I think these figures show the evident danger that would have resulted if we had been trying to carry on this work. I felt that without stone produced for us it would be simply a white elephant. I laid the matter very carefully before the Government. I stated what we were losing in connection with this work, and the danger of heavy losses in the near future. Of course I cannot say much in regard to the railway at the present moment, but so far as I can judge the leaseholders will be amply protected by a railway before those two years have elapsed. Some statements were made in the House in

connection with the railway. Members wanted to know whether that railway was going to Hopetoun or Starvation Boat Harbour. We do not know. Investigations are being made, but the very moment I thought there was a reasonable probability of that railway being built to Starvation Bay I, for the protection of the State, asked my colleague, the then Minister for Lands, to reserve all the foreshore, so that no person would be able to come in and buy land, and so as to give the State the increment which would belong to it. For that I have been condemned by members opposite.

MR. HUDSON: I did not condemn you. I suggested that it should be done.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I would like to mention another matter. We have heard a great deal of self-glorification in connection with the rental for gold-mining leases. In the mining leases the rent is supposed to be 5s. for the first year, and under the regulations which were framed by the Government which was to do so much for the protection of the prospector, the provision was made to apply to the calendar year and not to the period of 12 months. So we had this extraordinary spectacle, that men whose leases were approved in October, November, and in December received in January an intimation from the Mines Department that they owed one pound per acre as rent for the ensuing year. Here is a copy of a letter that I have received, and I have received hundreds of them:—

We, the registered holders of Lease 656 G, The Treasury, beg to bring under your notice the action taken by the Mines Department re the above lease. We applied for this lease on September, 1905, under the regulation then in force, which stated in Regulation 82 that the rent for gold-mining leases for the first year of the tenancy was 5s. per acre per annum. We paid the first year's rent and survey fees, and naturally assumed that the ground was ours for one year from that date. The Mines Department now demand rent at the rate of £1 per acre from January 1st, 1906, together with fines for non-payment, in default the lease to be forfeited. We consider this action on behalf of the Mines Department unjust and unfair, as we have paid one year's rent, and we are entitled to one year's tenancy according to the regulations in force at the time of our application for the ground. We would ask you, as Minister, to take this matter into consideration. We originally took this ground up as a prospecting area, and have been con-

tinually working since February, 1905. We have done a lot of development work, all of which is under water level. The crushings we have had have not, up to the present, paid working expenses. If the department enforces its claim, we will have to vacate the ground and lose all the development that we have done on the claim. We are unable to pay the rent demanded at present, and although we are willing to go on working in the hope of finding something payable until the end of our year's tenancy, we are not willing and not financial enough to pay over again for what we are justly entitled to, viz. one year's tenancy from September, 1905. Trusting that you will give this matter your careful consideration, we have, etc., DUGALD KENNEDY, GEORGE ROUTLEY, JAMES WALKER.

As soon as I found out the effect of this regulation I amended it, and I am giving to these people what the Legislature intended when it passed that Act, namely that they should get a tenancy for 12 months without farther payment at 5s. per acre. That is the difference between the way the department is being administered to-day and the way it was administered by the former occupants of the Treasury benches. Then in connection with the prospecting areas—perhaps to some of those opposite it is an old story—I want again to point out to members the difference between the way in which the miners of the fields were treated by the Government that consisted of members now sitting opposite, and the way they have been treated by myself as Minister. I instituted the practice of enabling any prospecting miner, simply on payment of the registration fee, to take up 18 acres. I thought that instead of the money being paid to the Crown in rent and survey fees it was far better for it to be put into the ground by means of the prospector. I know of a good many instances in the old days where prospectors had to go to others who were better placed financially and let them have big interests in their mines. I instituted the principle to which I have referred. At the prospectors' conference held last year a resolution was passed that this period of six months was too short, and that it should be extended to 12 months. What was I told by hon. members opposite? That by my action something like £7,000 had been lost to the State and that I had gone too far. I extended the period to 12 months. I want to give to men prepared to deal with the ground the greatest help possible.

MR. HUDSON: Do you claim that you originated the idea with regard to prospecting areas?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: One could take nothing beyond a few paltry feet. If the hon. member will look at the regulations he will find that such is the case. It is now provided that a man can take up 18 acres of land. Eight months' work in the year will enable him to go to the warden's office, make a declaration, and not ask but demand that the ground shall be exempted; an opportunity thus being given him, if he so desires, to earn money sufficient to enable him to still farther develop his area. I think that is a proposal which should be generally approved by members opposite. I wish also to refer to Greenbushes. Some little time ago I drew attention to an action of the late Government, who did not wish to see a permanent but a shifting population in the State. They want a shifting population, because with such people they find favour. In Greenbushes we had a very permanent class of workmen—miners with quartz or mineral claims 100 yards by 100 yards in area. The late Labour Administration altered that area to 25 yards by 25, no notice of the alteration being given. Thus every piece of ground held required 16 men where formerly one man could have complied with the covenants; and every area held by the original workers was forfeitable. In deference to representations made, the Government altered the area to 70 yards by 70. When I again took office, I promptly reverted to the original regulation; and now we have at Greenbushes a permanent and contented population. The working miner there knows that when he takes up a piece of ground with his miner's right, he can work there for a few months or perhaps for a year, according to the value of his property, instead of for only a month or two, as he could under the regulation of members opposite. I do not think I need say much more about the stock route than that we have sent out one of the finest and best-equipped parties that ever went into the interior of this State. From the expedition I expect very good results. We hope to open up a route which will enable the people of the Kimberleys to send their cattle overland, and to supply the goldfields not only with

meat but with store cattle, for the purpose of stocking the large goldfields pastoral areas. I should like, before concluding, to refer to one matter frequently spoken of in this debate—to the action of my colleagues the Premier (Hon. N. J. Moore) and the Treasurer (Hon. F. Wilson) on my return from Nannine. I should like to take the House thus far into my confidence, and to say that I received a telegram from Mr. Wilson asking me to meet him, and wired in reply that I would meet him on the following morning. I wired to the present Premier, and asked him to meet me that evening. We had a conversation, and then, finding that the Treasurer had been waiting for me, we immediately proceeded to his House. It is very well to talk about intriguing. As between the Premier, the Treasurer and me, there was no intriguing. To my mind the question was simply which of those members would command the greatest confidence from the members of our party. We wanted—at least I did—to have somebody who would be able to blend the very composite party on the Government benches—a party as composite as that on the other side. We have extremists and conservatives on this side, and there are extremists and conservatives on the other. It is all very well for members opposite to try to prove that there is some semblance of a caucus in meetings of Government supporters. There is not any. Every member here is absolutely free to go to the other side if he chooses.

MR. BOLTON: And here also.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No; but I do not wish to discuss the question on party lines. I and my friends are here simply because the majority of the members on this side have agreed that we shall be the leaders of our party. That was all we Ministers wished to know. There was not the slightest friction, not one unkind word from any of the three connected with the formation of this Ministry. We only wished to be able to give expression to the desires of the party, and if the party did not want me tomorrow, I think they would promptly let me know; and I presume I should then have the good grace to retire quickly. All we desired was to get as leader somebody able to bring the party together, and get it to work with cohesion. Since



I have been connected with the Treasurer, I can have nothing but good to say of him. He has done his work well and honestly, and I am sure to the satisfaction of the Premier and every other member of this party. The hints from the other side to the effect that the Treasurer is to be thrown out are of course unworthy of notice. However, they cut not me, but the Treasurer; and I wish to impress on members on both sides of the House that there is the utmost harmony amongst the members of the present Cabinet. Regarding my trip to Nannine, at the time of the election of a member opposite, the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) used expressions last night which I think, sir, with all respect, warranted me in making use of almost any expression to-night; because he accused me of having made, in defamation of the character of my friends, statements which were absolutely incorrect in every detail. The hon. member, when he returned, took to himself all the glory of that victory. He spoke in the most insulting terms of the hon. member who now sits opposite to me. During all these years—and this occurred some five or six years ago—the hon. member has never brought these supposed facts before this House; but last night he came forward with the wicked and vindictive statement which he said I had made in connection with my friends of to-day. I do not wish to say any more of that; but I think that is my excuse and my justification—although I regret it very much—for the interjection I made last night and for the language I used here to-night. As to the railways, I think it wiser to defer a full explanation until we are dealing with the Estimates. At the present time the railways are in a fairly good position. The statements made as to the reduction of wages, so far as the Government are concerned, are quite incorrect. As to the matter of the casual hands, I can assure members that was a departmental blunder; and I think the delay in putting it right was due more to the Commissioner's loyalty to his own officers than to any desire to run counter to the wishes of the Government. If we pay a fettler 8s. a day, a casual hand is also surely worth 8s. These are being paid at that rate to-day; and moreover, we have not made any reduction at all of the wages affected by the recent arbitra-

tion award, other than this. I wish to impress on the House that the Government were not responsible for that citation. It originated with Mr. Casson, acting on behalf of the employees, and was responded to by the Commissioner, Mr. George, when I was Minister. I had no knowledge of it; for I was then on the goldfields contesting my election.

MR. HORAN: It did me good.

THE MINISTER: Yes. Your party took that list of wages all through my district, and said: "Here are the wages that Gregory is about to give the railway men. If he will reduce the railway men's wages, he will reduce yours also when he gets a chance." The arbitration award went against the workmen; but the Cabinet unanimously sent an instruction to the Commissioner of Railways that no advantage was to be taken of that award.

MR. BOLTON: That instruction has not been carried out.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If we had chosen, we could have saved £14,000 a year in respect of the fettlers, only by giving effect to that award. We decided not to do so. We said to the Commissioner; "All new men appointed you can put on at the minimum rate, and then, as you think fit, bring them up to the standard or existing rate." Some members say that is wrong; but suppose we put on a few new men, how long will one man work at 7s. a day when he knows the man beside him is receiving 8s.? If the new comer is a good man, he will be kept there; if he is bad he will be put off and another engaged. We want no wasters in the Railway Department. And we wish, as I have done ever since taking office, to keep as far as we can from any illegitimate influence, either from this side of the House or from that, in connection with the appointment of a single man in the Railway Department.

MR. HOLMAN: Was there any prior to your period?

THE MINISTER: I wish only to say what I have done. The member for Yilgarn (Mr. Horan), for instance, thinks that we should have Ministerial control instead of control by a Commissioner; but even if we have three Commissioners, I think it wiser, in respect of the workmen, to keep away as far as possible from all political influences. I have done so. The present Government, any-

how, have had no desire to alter the wages of the men. We want them to get a fair wage. Now and then, however, little mistakes occur. For instance, at Fremantle certain instructions were sent out, and the stationmaster fixed his own roster, providing that the men had to work on Sundays, and were to be allowed to work only  $6\frac{1}{2}$  hours each day.

MR. SCADDAN: he was not the only stationmaster who did that.

THE MINISTER: That was the only instance brought under my notice; and when the Commissioner knew of it, the fault was rectified. The member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) pointed that out last night. I ask members opposite not to think, when they make public statements and then find that the statements are not borne out by facts, that we are making the statements for the sake of winning public support. We desire to see our statements given effect to; and if our promises are not being carried out, let us know, so that we may either refuse to take notice of the complaint—and then members will know how to treat us when they meet us here—or may inquire into it and have it remedied. If they will do that, they may be able to help us considerably in carrying out the reforms desired. The railways are not at the present time in a bad position. The percentage of surplus to our loan capital was in 1903, 4.71; in 1903-4, 5.33; and in 1904-5, 5.19—that is, 5.19 per cent. over working expenses.

MR. HORAN: Your working expenses are continually increasing.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: They have been considerably reduced. The working expenses of the Railway Department are considerably less this year than they were last year. I fancy that I am rather wearying the House to-night, and as the figures that I have are rather dry I do not propose to-night to deal with them to any great extent. [MR. HORAN: You do not understand them.] I would only like to point out that the profit to the State, after paying working expenses and interest on loan and revenue capital for last year was £100,957; and we also pay interest on work provided for on our Estimates.

MR. HOLMAN: Can you tell us how much less was spent in wages last year?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I am speaking about interest.

MR. HOLMAN: Yes; but you are talking of profit over and above working expenses.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I can only tell the hon. member that the amount paid in wages last year was something like £35,000 less than in the previous year.

MR. HOLMAN: Can you tell me the amount less paid for material, and for sleepers?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: There is a considerable difference—

MR. HOLMAN: Will it nearly amount to the profit of £100,000?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I think I will give these figures to the Press. That will be about the best way—to get them published. [MR. HORAN: To get out of an entanglement.] Not in the least; but I feel somewhat exhausted, and I do not think I shall deal with these railway matters except to assure the country that at the present time the position of our railways is as good as it has ever been at any time. Some remarks were made in connection with Collie coal. I think it would be best to reserve any remarks on that subject until the motion, notice of which has been given by the member for Collie, is being discussed in the House, when we will be able to give the fullest attention to the action of the Government in connection with that matter. I do not think there are any other matters to which I need draw attention. I should have liked to have dealt to some farther extent with certain insinuations which were made last night; but, as requested by you, sir, I refrain from doing so. So far as the policy of this Government is concerned, our great desire is to try to do all we possibly can to promote the development of the country, independent of any class. We do not want it to be understood for a single moment that even for a miners' union or a chamber of mines, or for employee or employer, we are going to try to give any advantages. We want on the one hand to induce investors to come here, because we recognise the necessity for capital in order to develop our resources and provide employment for our people; and while not giving them any

great advantage, we want them to feel quite satisfied that they will receive honest and fair treatment from us. So far as the workmen are concerned, they will be able to judge from the legislation brought forward by us whether we, on our part, are prepared to give them the same, or even better, consideration than those sitting opposite.

On motion by MR. SCADDAN, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.50 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

### Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 10th July, 1906.

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THE SPEAKER (Hon. T. F. Quinlan) took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### QUESTION—COPPER SMELTER PURCHASE.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: Were the negotiations between the Government and Mr. Chas. Kaufman for the purchase of the Government smelter at Ravensthorpe opened verbally or in writing?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Verbally.

#### QUESTION—COPPER LEASES, MR. GRANT'S.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: When were the negotiations opened between Mr. Grant and Mr. Chas. Kaufman for the purchase of Grant's copper leases at Ravensthorpe?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The hon. gentleman has asked for information as to some transaction between two private individuals. There is nothing in the records of the Mines Department to enable me to reply to a question of that sort; but I am trying to obtain the information which is asked for, and as soon as I get it I will give it to the House.

MR. TAYLOR: I asked the question because the Minister interjected, when I was speaking, that the leases were sold before the smelter; so I thought he knew.

#### QUESTION—GOLD BUYERS' LICENSES.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: How many gold buyers' licenses have been issued in Perth since the passage of that Act, and to whom?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Presuming the hon. member means "The Mining Act, 1904," which came into operation on the 1st March, 1904, the following licenses have been granted:—1904, fifteen, one being temporary. 1905, sixteen, one of which was cancelled a few months after issue. 1906, sixteen. During the early part of 1904, prior to the coming into operation of the Act, seven other licenses were granted under the provisions of "The Goldfields Act, 1895," and amendments. Full particulars as to date of issue, to whom issued, etc., are shown on a Return which I have pleasure in handing to the hon. member.

#### BILL, FIRST READING.

Permanent Reserves Rededication, introduced by the PREMIER.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet): I desire to make a personal explanation in connection with remarks during the course of his speech by the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) on Thursday last. I was not present when that speech was delivered, because at half-past five I was compelled to take a train in order to visit my constituency. I can assure the House that had I been present I would have taken the strongest possible exception to the remarks and insinuations of