

place by the late Government, dealing with the amendment of the Health Act. We propose to bring forward an amendment of the Municipal Institutions Act, of which due notice has been given by my friend the member for East Fremantle. A Machinery Bill on lines that were agreed to by this Chamber during last session of Parliament will be reintroduced. We intend to bring forward an amendment to the Mines Regulation Act; a Bill dealing with the Forests of the State; also a Bill to amend the Electoral law for the purpose of removing certain faults which the experiences of the late election have shown to exist in that measure. We also propose to bring forward an amendment of the Local Registration of Mines Act, to make the measure more effective; also a Bill dealing with a Metropolitan Board of Works; likewise, should time permit, we intend to introduce this session an old-age pension proposal. These are the main measures which the Government will submit. Of course there are a large number of minor measures, mainly of an unimportant character, which from time to time may be necessary. I may say we will welcome to the fullest extent any criticism of the measures we introduce. We do not ask that any of the Bills shall be accepted merely because they are introduced by the present Government; and we trust that, while the Government retain the Treasury benches, the business of the House will be conducted with due dignity and decorum, and that the deliberations of the House may result to the benefit of the State.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): Before we proceed with the Orders of the Day, and seeing that a statement has been made by the Premier which I believe is hardly debatable, I think that the importance of the statement requires that it shall be discussed generally. At all events, it is only courteous for this side of the House to offer some few remarks on a statement of that character. Some features of the statement come to the House somewhat in the nature of a surprise; and seeing that the course I suggest will not materially interfere with the business of the House, I think I shall be best consulting the wishes of members on both sides if I move the

adjournment of the debate, so that I may have an opportunity, or some other member on this side may have an opportunity, of giving some reply to-morrow.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot move that.

MR. RASON: I presume the leader of the House will move the adjournment of the sitting, in order that there may be an opportunity of replying to his statement to-morrow.

THE SPEAKER: There can be no debate. I cannot put that question.

THE PREMIER: As I am anxious to allow the member for Guildford, or any other member, an opportunity of offering remarks—and I am quite prepared to afford every facility for that purpose—I move the adjournment of the House, so that the matter may be reintroduced to-morrow.

Question (adjournment) put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past 4 o'clock, until the next afternoon.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 14th September, 1904.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: Goldfields Water Supply Administration, Supplementary By-laws for general purposes; also Statement of Accounts of payments for half-year ending 30th June, 1904.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Report of Commissioner of Police for year ended June, 1904; Report of Comptroller General of Prisons for year 1903.

By the PREMIER: 1. Victoria Public Library, Report of Committee for 1903-4.

URGENCY MOTION—RAILWAY FENCE, PERTH STATION.

MR. H. BROWN (Perth): I would like, with the permission of the Speaker and the House, to move the adjournment of the House for calling attention to a matter agitating the public mind, at all events the people in Perth. That is the erection of a fence in front of the railway station. It is my intention to move the adjournment, to open up a discussion on that subject.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

MR. H. BROWN: It is well known that for some weeks past an agitation has been affecting the citizens of Perth very much indeed in reference to the erection of proposed railway offices in Wellington Street. I must thank the Government for having come to the assistance of the State by saving the country that needless expenditure on the very extravagant offices the Commissioner of Railways proposed to build. I do not really think the Minister for Railways himself is aware of the extent to which that fence is already in course of erection. I must say I have never seen a work carried on with greater expedition than that fence. It appears to me that Mr. George is doing his very best to flout the citizens of Perth and spend exactly what money he likes without reference to Parliament at all. As mayor of the City Council, I have been in communication with the Minister for Railways with reference to the erection of this fence, and that correspondence has not yet been quite completed; but to-day I find there are 40 or 50 men at work on that particular fence. That fence is being erected, rails

are being put on and as fast as the rails are put on, the pickets are being fixed, and the carpenters are being followed up by painters. Needless expense is incurred by overtime, for which there is no necessity, and it seems Mr. George is determined, if he possibly can, to flout the interests of the citizens of Perth. I am sure there is not a single member who, if he saw that fence, would admit that it is necessary, and I think that in this case the work is unnecessary and the expense entirely uncalled for. The place will be simply a receptacle, as it is now, for waste paper, rubbish and refuse, which will be blown about. I think that in the interests of the city that fence should be removed and a good open space left there. Mr. George himself, while a councillor of the city of Perth, urged when the Government of the day proposed to erect a similar fence ten years ago, that there was not the slightest necessity for it, and that the place should be a broad open space, that those very fine trees—by the cutting down of which he has perpetrated an act of vandalism—served as a shade, and public seats should be erected around them. I do not understand why there has been this change of front. I think the Minister for Railways would be giving great help and assistance to the city of Perth if he would see that this particular fence was stopped and demolished.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): I second the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish): I am somewhat surprised that the hon. member has preferred to introduce this motion to the House without giving me any knowledge of the fact that he intended to do so.

MR. H. BROWN: I would like to explain. I was new to the procedure of the House, and on inquiry was told that the proper procedure was to get the permission of the Speaker before coming into this House, and also to give the necessary notice of motion.

THE PREMIER: My reason for drawing attention to the circumstance is that if I had been seized of the fact that this question was to be brought forward, I should have been able to answer the argument of the hon. member in regard to the expedition with which this work is being carried out. Had I an hour or two ago

known that it was proposed to introduce the matter —

MR. BROWN: I only saw the work an hour ago.

MR. MORAN: Nobody knew it five minutes ago.

THE PREMIER: I think the hon. member is unfair—no doubt unintentionally—to the Commissioner of Railways in his remarks. I am quite willing that the Commissioner should bear any responsibility that properly attaches to his position and to the work he carries out; but I wish the House to distinctly understand that the Government are responsible for this new proceeding in Wellington Street, Perth, and they are quite prepared to take the responsibility of that work. We have no desire to shelter ourselves behind the Commissioner of Railways; and we certainly have no desire to hear a public official unfairly attacked in this House for acts for which he is not responsible.

MR. BROWN: I made no attack.

THE PREMIER: With regard to this particular work the House is well seized, I think, of the fact that before we took office, or immediately thereafter, a start was made to clear this particular area of ground, with a view of erecting certain offices thereon. The work was actually started; the hoarding was erected and excavations for the foundations of these offices were proceeding, when I became aware of the fact by an agitation started by some of the Perth citizens, or by the Perth City Council. I was requested to immediately stop this work going on. I was not prepared to say that the work should stop permanently merely on the demand of the City Council or of some of the citizens of Perth, because I recognised that the Railway Department had to be administered not in the interests solely of the Perth City Council, in accord with their desires, but for the benefit of the whole of the people of this State. I think that in connection with this matter the Perth City Council has tried to arrogate to itself privileges that it has no right to demand or expect, and which the Government are not prepared to concede either to the Perth City Council or any other council. For instance, one argument by the Perth City Council in this connection was that the Government had not submitted a plan of the proposed building to

that body for approval, that had this been done no difficulty would have arisen, no start would have been made with the work had the council been furnished with plans in order that it might pass these buildings. I want definitely to say it is a presumptuous demand for any council to make that the Government, representing the whole of the people of the State, should get the approval of that small body to plans of any undertaking they propose to carry out. The Government are responsible to Parliament, and through Parliament to the people, for whatever they do; they certainly are not responsible to that small body living within the circumscribed limits of Perth. A considerable amount of public outcry was raised within the Perth area because the Government were not prepared to instantly determine that these buildings should not go on. Personally, and I think I am speaking for my colleagues likewise in this matter, I am anxious to do the best for the whole of this State; and before we were prepared to decide that this work should not go on in the particular locality selected, we had to make inquiries, first of all as to the necessity of the buildings at all, and if they were necessary we had to decide what areas were available, and which of them might be suitable. After due inquiry and deliberation the Government concluded that it was not necessary that this particular land should be occupied by public offices, and therefore the work was stopped; but when that decision was come to, a question naturally arose as to whether the city of Perth should have conceded to it the vacant plot of land belonging to the Railway Department. The City Council had requested that it should have control of the vacant block, and made an offer that if the land were handed over the City Council would wood-block the whole width between the railway station buildings and Wellington Street on the other side. The Government decided that they were not prepared to relinquish, on behalf of the Railway Department, the possession of any portion of that land. We farther decided that the best use to which the land could be put was to endeavour to beautify it a little; and for that purpose the re-erection of a fence, of an ornamental rather than substantial nature, was necessary. When

that fence is erected it is proposed that a few trees and ornamental shrubs shall be put in the neighbourhood of the fence, with the object of making an attractive plot in front of the railway station, and with the object, if practicable, of providing a seat or two outside the station for the convenience of the public who have the time or need to resort there. Adequate provision is now made for an approach from Wellington Street to the railway premises for all the traffic that at present exists and which is likely to grow in that direction. The City Council, therefore, has no complaint against the Railway Department or the Government in using their own land for their own purposes. It is necessary that the Railway Department shall make provision for the efficient working of traffic and for the convenience of the public; and every provision that could be regarded as at all essential has already been made. This proposed re-erection of the fence, therefore, cannot interfere with the convenience of the public. We heard nothing of this inconvenience until the proposal was made to build offices; and the fact that for so many years the existence of a fence was not questioned, and that there was no agitation from the public for its removal, shows conclusively that this whole affair is a machine-made agitation by certain individuals, for their own private interests or for their own self-advertisement. I regret that the time of the House should have been wasted—unnecessarily, in my opinion—by bringing forward a motion on this trivial matter; and I hope the House will sustain the decision that the Government have arrived at.

Mr. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): The member for Perth need not feel unduly hurt at the slight castigation he has received at the hands of the Premier, for the hon. member has acted exactly as he was entitled to do, and, in my opinion, exactly as the urgency of the case demanded. Two minutes before the House met to-day, I discovered from the member for Perth that he intended to move in this way. I had drafted a motion on the same matter, of which I intended to give notice, of which I had informed the Premier, and which we expected to discuss to-morrow; and in this I was acting in accord with the

Premier. So the Premier is also taken by surprise. At the same time, I think he was needlessly severe on the member for Perth for doing what he considered his duty; and I do not think the time of the House was wasted in this case, nor is the time of the House wasted in bringing anybody to book for a despotic action. It is strange that on the advent of a democratic Government we should have to deal with the actions of a tyrant over the Railway Department. I consider that the Commissioner acted in an unduly boorish and truculent fashion in dealing with this matter. If any evidence were wanted to prove it, it was the rude, coarse speech he is reported in the *Morning Herald* to have made some time ago when receiving a deputation on some other railway matter at Fenian Crossing. We all know Mr. George; all the old members of this House know him well. He is a very excellent person, and a man who, were he in the place of the member for Perth and were the member for Perth in the place of Mr. George, would make this Chamber ring and would bring to bear all the forms and devices of this House to create a feeling against the harsh actions of the Commissioner of Railways. [Interjection by the PREMIER.] I will give the Government all due credit for their share of the blame, if they want to take it; but at the present time it suffices me to deal with Mr. George, for the present Government had nothing at all to do with the starting of this building, and they have, so far, only stopped it, having decided that, for the time being, funds will not allow of the building being erected. I am glad that the Premier has now gone farther and stated, very sensibly I think, that the building shall not be put on this site at all. The Premier's first letter in dealing with the matter was that he would not stop the building at all. The second move was that the building should be stopped for the time as funds would not allow of its being erected. The third and correct move of the Government is that the building should be stopped because it is not desirable to put it on that block. We cannot expect a Government just coming into office to decide the whole question on five minutes' notice. I desire to vindicate the citizens of Perth. It is no use the Premier saying "some citizens." I ques-

tion if the Premier will find five citizens of Perth supporting Mr. George. At the same time I do not desire to be mixed up with a "machine-made agitation." We have too much "machine-made" politics in Australia now, and I am glad to see the Premier does not approve of them. (General laughter.) If the citizens of Perth had not moved in the matter the building would be on the way to construction. It was authorised by the late Minister for Railways (Mr. Rason), and was only brought under the notice of the Government by the Perth City Council. For that reason it was stopped. Surely the Premier, having had his attention drawn to the matter by this agitation and by the alertness of the people to their own rights (and he admits that the agitation was right), cannot blame the Council for stepping in, before the foundations were laid and before any money was spent, so as to stop the building. If any action by the citizens of any town is justified, this action was amply justified. It is not a statesmanlike view for the Premier to take that it is only the citizens of Perth who are affected. The Premier says it is only the citizens of Perth trying to arrogate to themselves the rights that belong to the whole of the citizens of the State. Will the goldfields members not admit that it is just and proper that there should be a grand approach to the Perth railway station? Do not the residents of the goldfields use the station as much as the citizens of Perth? Is it not the same all over the world? In Sydney, hundreds of thousands of pounds are being spent on buying up old buildings to have air-spaces in the centre of the city; but here in Perth we see this czar of the railways trying to deceive his Minister. Even the late Minister for Railways (Mr. Rason) did not know of the intention of Mr. George to put up this building on that block. I am willing to accept this view of the case. The Commissioner, all through, has shown an undue and boorish desire to flout everybody's opinion except his own. Let us admit that it is part of the Government's duties to defend their officers. Far be it from me to make any unwarranted attack on any officer; but this officer is far beyond other officers in the service, and he must be taught by Parliament that the railways of Western

Australia are not the whole of Western Australia.

MR. DIAMOND: Nor is Perth the whole of Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: Of course there is no question that if one were to introduce a motion to give a road to Derby, we should be told by the hon. member that there is also such a place as Fremantle. I have not forgotten there is such a place, though sometimes in the past one might seem to have forgotten that there was any such place, judging by the actions of certain members in this House. [Interjections.] We have now some live Fremantle members: let us hope they also will not decay. However, I think we have reached a satisfactory stage, for it is now a question whether that reserve, if it were fenced, would look better and be more serviceable to the city and the State. In my opinion there is no occasion for a fence. I think an open esplanade or a reserve in front of the station would add to the dignity of the station building itself, would immensely improve the appearance of the centre of the city, and would give a breathing space or a lung all too desirable in the narrow streets of Perth.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Would you buy the lung?

MR. MORAN: I have not the slightest doubt that the city of Perth would buy the land. What would its purchase secure? It would secure the land for all time to the citizens, in spite of any whim of any Government; but there is now no occasion for that, since the present Government have decided to allow the space to remain open, and to ornament it. I had intended to give notice of a motion for to-morrow; and the member for Perth moved this motion simply because he thought it would be too late to move to-morrow; and there was no time to consult the Premier. I was consulted by the member for Perth in this Chamber at the commencement of to-day's business; and I have been working in complete harmony with the Premier. My intended motion would read:—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is most desirable that the space in front of the Central Railway Station, Perth, should be kept as an open reserve and permanent approach to the central station of our great railway service; and that steps should be taken to permanently ornament and improve it in keeping with such an object.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. B. Holman): That is just what we are doing.

MR. MORAN: Exactly. I say the fence is not at all necessary. If it is the intention to fence in the whole reserve and to leave approaches, I admit you will not, perhaps, transgress; but I do not think that the erection of a fence right along the frontage will go very far towards improving that area. However, I hope the Premier's recently expressed sentiments will not be expressed too often. The Premier flouts the idea of consulting the city of Perth as to buildings in the city. I have never known of any town or any village in Western Australia which had a governing body not consulted by every Government in power in this country in respect of permanent public works in that town or village. To consult the local body is a matter of courtesy and of utility, and creates harmony between what are after all two governing bodies in the same State. Such consultations create harmony and good feeling; and surely harmony and good feeling are essential. I know well that in the past, had any public work of importance been about to be erected in Subiaco, and had the Government not consulted the Subiaco Council, we should have heard the present Premier speak as a private member in a very different tone.

THE PREMIER: The Subiaco Council have never been consulted.

MR. MORAN: Then the Premier makes a grievance out of the fact that his council were not consulted in the past. That is exactly what I say. Let us hope that in such matters the utmost harmony will prevail, and that the various local governing bodies will, when possible, be consulted. I know that the Fremantle municipality was always consulted in matters of this kind; that the East Fremantle Council are in the same position, and will practically own for all time the local dock—an East Fremantle matter. The member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) now interjects, and claims a say in that question for his constituency. Have not the East Fremantle Council approached the Government? Has not the member for East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) given a banquet there last week to the Premier, under the

guise of good fellowship, to draw him out about the dock? In view of these facts, why should the unfortunate Perth City Council be skull-dragged here for doing what other local governing bodies in this State always do on similar occasions? In this matter, anyhow, the Perth City Council are deserving of credit. I trust that the Government will see their way to come to terms with the city of Perth, and make that space in front of the Perth station a reserve for all time; because in Perth we shall ultimately have a large metropolis, and as the years go by that vacant space will be absolutely necessary. If any serious obstruction be put there, we shall have a big alley-way to the present station. I think negotiations should, if possible, be entered into for handing over this space to the citizens of Perth, who I believe are quite willing to pay for it. It is not a question of a very large sum of money; so let us have the land set apart under the Permanent Reserves Act, and beautified for all time, so that it may be worthy of this great metropolis, which, as I firmly believe, will be the second capital city of Australia.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): It appears to me that from the outset the whole of the discussion on this railway question has been carried on from a Perth point of view. The whole of the speeches and the articles in the papers have started from that point of view only. I look at the question from a national point of view. It appears to me that the first party to be consulted in such a matter as building those offices or erecting that fence is the State, the owner of the railways; secondly, that we should consider the convenience of the travelling public, and thirdly the convenience of the management of the railways; and that Perth, its fancies and requirements, should be very low down on the list. But as the newspaper discussion proceeded as to those offices, and as it is now proceeding about that fence, the important factors are put altogether out of sight, namely the people of the State who own the railways, the customers or the travelling public who support the railways, and the officers who manage the railways. However, I think there is every ground for the belief that a solution will shortly be arrived at,

since the authorities are likely to return to their senses and to erect the railway offices in their proper position, at the terminus of the railway system.

MR. MORAN: Which terminus?

[Interjection: Kanowna?]

MR. DIAMOND: The terminus, not one of the termini. If that be done, this agitation will have a very happy result, and the offices will be in their proper place. Plenty of room for them there, and I do not think the Fremantle citizens will raise any objection because the view of a few shop assistants and hotelkeepers in front of the railway station will be shut out. And if that solution be arrived at, Perth will be in a happy position, because it will have an open space in front of its railway station, which space can be utilised as a lawn-tennis ground for the delectation of its citizens. I was pleased to hear the Premier say that the State and the interests of the travelling public had been considerably shut out of the discussion. I am pleased he has arrived at his present decision, and is supporting the officer responsible for the working of the Railway Department.

MR. H. BROWN (in reply): One or two points in the Premier's speech must be noticed. Firstly, I should like to combat any imputation that the Perth City Council made an attempt to run the railways or to direct Mr. George how to run them. This is simply a question of the obstruction of the direct traffic to the Perth railway station. As to the council requiring plans of the building to be submitted, members are aware that had they been submitted to the council acting as the local board of health, the Commissioner of Railways would have found before and not after starting to build that a sewer ran from end to end of the ground; and it was only when he found that sewer that he, like every other citizen in this State, referred his plans to the local authority, namely the board of health. Had such reference been made originally, the subsequent trouble need not have occurred. I may add for the information of the House that the Government are exempt from thus submitting the plans of buildings, and can build as they like without any regard to sanitary requirements. In several municipalities Government buildings, when erected, have been found probably not

quite in order. In this matter I had no intention of attacking the Premier or the Commissioner of Railways. I was acting, as I think every hon. member acts, in the interest of the constituency I represent; and no one can blame me for that. I am sure the Premier and other members have done it often. We know the epithets used by this autocrat of the railways in reference to members of this House, whom I think he is in duty bound to treat with respect. The member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) referred to an article in the *Morning Herald*, containing expressions which were, I think, absolutely unworthy of any gentleman holding the position of Commissioner of Railways. My reason for bringing forward this matter was that even yesterday the Premier kindly told me he would see whether more openings could not be made in the proposed fence; and it was only when I saw the expedition with which the work of fencing was being pushed on that I decided to move in the matter. I should like to hear the Minister for Railways (Hon. J. B. Holman) refute the statement that extra wages were paid to the men for working overtime at the erection of that fence. I say the employment of these men was not at all necessary. The work could have gone on in the ordinary way without any expenditure for overtime. I brought forward the matter because I thought the Commissioner was pushing on the work without reference to the Minister; and I am sure that the Minister did not know of the expedition with which the work has been taken in hand. There was no necessity for that. The work could have been proceeded with by ordinary day labour without overtime. In addition, we have heard the Premier state that he wanted money and wanted it badly; and on that account alone the erection of this fence is wilful waste of the public funds. I beg leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION, POLICY DEBATE.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): Before the ordinary business of the House is proceeded with, I desire by permission to make a statement by way of personal explanation. Yesterday, when the House adjourned I thought most members were of opinion that by some means or other a

debate upon the Premier's statement of yesterday would take place to-day. I thought the only possible means of securing that debate would be to move to-day the adjournment of the House, in order to call attention to some of the Premier's remarks. After the previous motion, I understand that such a course would now be out of order; and therefore I purpose, if the House will allow me, to make by way of explanation some few of the remarks which I should have made had I been allowed to move the adjournment of the House. My only object is to call attention to the absence of anything like an authoritative statement of the Government policy from the Premier; and my anxiety is to impress on the Premier the advisableness, and indeed the necessity, of giving us such a statement at the earliest possible moment.

THE PREMIER: That has been given.

MR. RASON: I will come to that directly, if the caucus will allow me. I hoped we should have had a statement of the kind I have referred to, with an opportunity for debate thereon such as was afforded in the Federal Parliament by Mr. Watson, and still more recently by Mr. Reid.

THE PREMIER: The circumstances were very different.

MR. RASON: I believe the reply of the Premier to that would be that neither of these gentlemen or their colleagues had to seek re-election; and although I accept that, I submit that neither, to a very great extent, had either the hon. gentleman or his colleagues, inasmuch as there was no statement of the Government policy before the country until the dates of nomination had closed. It is true there was a platform, or platforms, of the Labour party before the country, and it is on that platform, or platforms, the hon. gentlemen opposite were returned.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must not go beyond an explanation.

MR. RASON: I only wish, if I am allowed, to give an explanation of what would have been my conduct if the forms of the House would have allowed me to move the adjournment. I shall endeavour not to go beyond the forms of the House, but I submit in a case of this kind a certain amount of latitude might be allowed me. Let me say at once that I

have no desire, nor do I think any member on this side wishes in any way, to harass the Government. I only wish to suggest a course to the Premier which I am sure will be for the better conduct of the business in the House, and will lead to a more speedy despatch of business than will otherwise be the case. I would like, if I am allowed, to say that at present we do not know what is the absolute policy of the Government, and we are entitled to know, I submit, what is the political goal of the Government.

THE SPEAKER: I cannot permit the hon. gentleman, under the guise of a personal explanation, to make an attack on the Government. The forms of the House will not permit it, and I do not propose to go beyond the forms of the House. The hon. gentleman must confine himself to a personal explanation of his position. I will permit that.

MR. RASON: Of course I bow to your ruling, but I find that my position will be this then, that I, at all events, have before me no definite statement of the policy of the Government, and I respectfully advise the Government to take an early opportunity of submitting a statement of that character. I shall not attempt to say anything farther at this moment: an opportunity no doubt will arise. Under the ruling my mouth is now closed, but an opportunity will arise, and we on this side shall know how to make ourselves heard when that opportunity does arise.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS IN CONSTRUCTION, TRAFFIC PROFIT.

DR. ELLIS asked the Minister for Works: Whether any profit was made in the traffic on railways in course of construction during 1902-1903 financial year. If so, on what lines, and how much on each?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Yes. On the Menzies-Leonora line, £15,025; and on the Cue-Nannine line, £2,761.

BILLS, FIRST READING.

RAILWAY TRAFFIC BILL, introduced by the Premier.

METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS ACT AMENDMENT BILL, introduced by the Premier.

INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS ACT AMENDMENT BILL, introduced by the Minister for Mines and Justice.

MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL, introduced by the Minister for Mines.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY BILL, introduced by the Minister for Mines.

TRAMWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL, introduced by the Minister for Works.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL, introduced by the Hon. W. C. Angwin (Minister).

PAPERS—EMPRESS OF COOLGARDIE
G.M. LEASE.

MR. H. GREGORY (Menzies) moved:

That all papers dealing with the forfeiture and reinstatement of the Empress of Coolgardie Gold Mining Lease be laid upon the table of the House.

Some time ago forfeiture was applied for in connection with the Empress of Coolgardie gold mining lease, and the lease was forfeited by the Crown; afterwards the lease was reinstated on the advice of the Crown Law Department. There was some misapprehension about the reinstating of the lease, and it was desirable that the papers should be laid on the table so that members could see what had been done.

Question passed.

MOTION—STATE COAL-MINING.

MR. E. P. HENSHAW (Collie): The motion which I intend to move is—

That, in the opinion of this House, the State should own and work at least one coal mine, in order to secure the greatest possible economic advantage to the Railway and Public Works Departments, the manufacturers, the general consumers, and the workers employed in its production.

In approaching this question I can do so without any accusation of personal interestedness in the industry or in the question involved. I am actuated by the desire to see the greatest benefit obtained from this industry to the fullest advantage of the whole State. Members all know how this industry has been maligned from its inception and placed in the worst possible light by those who, I believe, have the most unreasonable prejudice against the local coal. I am quite

prepared to admit that the quality of the Collie coal is not equal to that of Newcastle coal; it is somewhat inferior to it. Still Collie coal has its value, and its value is a great one if we consider that in England at present some of the coals there have not one-third of the value of the ordinary Welsh coal, and these inferior coals are in general consumption. We must admit that our local coal is equal to about 75 per cent. of Newcastle coal, and is a valuable coal for steaming purposes. Some of the South Staffordshire coal—what is known as Earl Dudley's Himley coal—bears this relation to the Welsh coal: three tons of it are equivalent to only 26cwt. of Welsh coal, yet this inferior coal is in general consumption.

DR. ELLIS: On the railways?

MR. HENSHAW: For all sorts of purposes. Again let us look at the matter from another aspect, that of the possible exclusion of Newcastle coal. All citizens of the State are prepared to admit the high value of our local coal, and the railways of the State have proved conclusively that it is a good steaming coal: it has practically worked the railways for the last four years, which is evidence that it is of some commercial value and of great utility. Not only has the coal been used on the railways, but the tramway system in Perth has been worked by means of the local coal. The coal must give satisfaction to the Tramway Company or they would use Newcastle coal. Again, the local coal is used at the electric lighting works; private manufacturers have used it, and it has given satisfaction to them. At present Collie coal is being used at Subiaco to run the electric lighting plant there, and the management are perfectly satisfied with it. There is another aspect at which we must look in connection with this industry, that is that it has an undoubted influence on the price of Newcastle coal. From the time the local coal came on the market, the price of Newcastle coal has steadily decreased. The local coal has decreased the price of Newcastle coal in three years to the extent of 12s. 6d. per ton. That in itself justifies us in working the local coal while we are getting satisfaction from it. It is possible to arrive at a more determinate value of this coal than by making statements of this

nature. Collie coal has been tested over and over again in the Geological Department, in the Railway Department, and in the Public Works Department, and as a result of these tests we get a fair idea of its value. If we refer to the tests which have been made by the Geological Department, we find that the Collie coal has an average calorific value of 10,340 units. That is the result of 23 tests, ranging from 9,200 up to 11,690 British thermal units. That is the heat producing capacity of the coal. The Newcastle coal has a higher value than that. I believe the average value, according to a number of tests which have been made, is 13,000 British thermal units. I want to make this clear, because by making a comparison of the heat-producing capacity of the coal we get its actual worth. We will then obtain the value of our local coal compared with the value of Newcastle coal, which is admittedly of a high standard. The present Commissioner of Railways is not favourably inclined towards our Collie coal. He has his prejudice against that coal in the same way as many members of this House have. This prejudice is unwarranted. If we take his own statement, where he has been placing our Collie coal at as low a value as he possibly can, we can show clearly that the coal has a considerable value, and is well worth conserving. The Commissioner has stated on several occasions that 26cwt. of Collie coal is equivalent to 20cwt. of Newcastle coal. There we have exactly the same proportion of value as is determined by the tests made in the Geological Department of the various coals—that is as 13 is to 10. If we reduce that to a simpler form, we put it this way—769 is the value of Collie coal as compared with Newcastle coal. In that we have a value which is a constant one. The comparative value of our coal is, I repeat, 769 as to 1·0 of Newcastle coal, and it does not matter where that value is taken, whether at Perth, Niagara, or any other portion of the State, our coal has still that comparative value. This industry was attacked by a member of the House when the Address-in-reply was being discussed, and he quoted quite a volume of figures which were perplexing, which were unreliable, and

which it would be very difficult to substantiate in any way whatever. I just intend to deal with the matter briefly, because some of the statements made by the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis) were absolutely ridiculous. I wish to put them in the plainest possible form, and I ask him to analyse them. [Dr. Ellis: Certainly.] The member for Coolgardie contended that the coal was very expensive—abnormally so—when taken to the goldfields. I wish to just use his own figures and follow him to the goldfields, putting a very different aspect on the matter from what he did. If we take coal to the goldfields, we are not going to take it to Fremantle and then carry it back to Perth. It would be reasonable, in assessing the value of the coal at Niagara, to take Perth as the distributing centre and leave out of the question preferential rates, taking equal freight rates of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per mile, and remembering the comparative value of this coal is 769 of Newcastle coal. In the year 1903, to which the member for Coolgardie referred, he quoted Newcastle coal at a contract price of 18s. per ton. As a matter of fact, in that year it was 17s. 11d. Still, we will take the 18s. as a basis. To get this coal to Perth as a centre of distribution, we would have to add the cost of wharfage, 2s. per ton, and a freight of 1s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton, making the total cost of Newcastle coal at Perth 21s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton. The cost of Collie coal at the pit's mouth during that year was 10s. 6d. per ton; add 6s. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton freight, bringing the cost of Collie coal at Perth to 16s. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton. If we take the comparative value of it as 769 of 21s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., the cost of Newcastle coal we get the comparative value of Collie coal in Perth on those figures at 16s. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Dr. Ellis: You said 16s. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. moment ago.

Mr. HENSHAW: I was speaking of the cost then; now I am talking of the comparative value. The cost was 2d. in excess of the comparative value of the coal. That is the subsidy we would be paying on Dr. Ellis's figures, for Collie coal in Perth, 2d. per ton. If we add the 500 miles of freight to that, we bring the price of Newcastle coal to £2 2s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. at Niagara. Adding the same freight to Collie coal, we would bring the price of it to £1 17s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Its com-

parative value would be £1 12s. 7d. Therefore if you take his figures as a basis, there is at the most a subsidy of 5s. per ton on Collie coal at Niagara. I hope the member for Coolgardie and other members of this House will look into the question, and regard it in that light. By some process of reasoning, the member for Coolgardie tried to convince this House that there was a difference of 24s. per ton. I ask him to review these figures, and I challenge the closest investigation of them, for I say this is the actual position, that under the worst circumstances there was not more than 5s. per ton subsidy paid on our Collie coal, even though taken to Niagara. If it goes outside Perth a few miles the subsidy is proportionate to distance carried. But it is not a fair thing to estimate the value of this coal on one year's operations, and if we adopt a broader view and take the average price ruling for five years, then we find a more pleasing aspect as far as Collie coal is concerned. We have paid as high as 31s. 4d. for Newcastle coal. At present, with the wharfage and freight to Perth, we pay 18s. 10½d. The average price of Newcastle coal in Perth for the last six years has been 24s. 3d., and the average price of Collie coal for the same period 10s. 6d.

DR. ELLIS: In Perth?

MR. HENSHAW: In Perth. No, no—I am making a mistake there—that is without the freight. The average price for Collie coal for six years has been 16s. 8½d. per ton.

MR. HOPKINS: Have you worked out how that 16s. 8½d. is arrived at?

MR. HENSHAW: I have just given it to you—10s. 6d. at the pit's mouth and 124 miles at ½d. per mile, including 1s. 3d. for the first five miles.

DR. ELLIS: And the weight at Collie as against the weight when it gets to Perth?

MR. HENSHAW: We do not want to consider the weight at all—[DR. ELLIS: I do not think you do]—when we consider the comparative value. I say that one ton of Collie coal has that comparative value of 769 as against one ton of Newcastle coal. We do not want to consider the weight at all. The average price is 10s. 6d., and made up as follows:—First contract, 9s. 7d.; second, 10s. 6d.; then again, 9s. 7d.; next, 9s. 7d.; next,

13s.; and the last, 10s. 6d.—[MEMBER: Nine shillings and sevenpence per ton?—] is the contract price now paid for Collie coal. [MEMBER: In what year was 9s. 7d. paid?] From the 1st February, 1900, to the 31st January, 1901, we paid 9s. 7d. to the Westralian Wallsend Colliery Company, and during the same period we bought coal from the Proprietary Company at 9s. 7d. If we take the average price paid for the two coals during the last six years we find that every ton of the local coal has been bought for 2s. less than its actual value. Its comparative value has been 2s. higher than its cost. There is another way of looking at the matter. We all recognise that the present contract price for Newcastle coal is fictitious. It is a manoeuvre on the part of importing companies to knock our native coal out of the market so that they may revert to the price we have had to pay in the past for their coal. In 1901 we paid 27s. 10d. for Newcastle coal; 1902, 20s. 3d.; 1903-4, 17s. 11d.; and now we are paying 15s. 4d. I am quite satisfied that the present price we are paying for Newcastle coal is the result of manoeuvring on the part of importing companies, with a view of shutting these mines, so that they can exploit this country as they have done in the past. If for no other consideration, we should keep our mines going, so that we can keep the price of Newcastle coal down. From the year 1900 to the present time there has been a reduction of 12s. 6d. in the price of Newcastle coal, and I say again that has been brought about by the presence of our local coal, and should not be overlooked. The main argument I have to bring here to-day is that the State is not getting the benefit from this industry which it should do at the present time, and that it is absolutely necessary there should be some change in the methods of management. I intend to show how this industry has been managed in the past, and point out how it can be managed under State control, and to ask members to endorse my action by having a change made in the system of working this industry. I would just like the House to bear in mind the vast amount of consideration which has been given to the companies working this coal in the past; what it has cost this country. In the first place, so that

these fields should be exploited, the Brunswick to Collie railway was built at a cost of something like £50,000. I am not sure of the amount; that is approximate. Then the Wallsend mine was opened out, coal proved, and thousands of pounds spent there in prospecting the fields and locating these seams. After this had been done the measures were leased to these companies for practically nothing. Liberal conditions had been framed under which the leases were to be held. These conditions have not been observed from the time the companies took up the leases. The conditions laid down were that six months from the date of approval there should be one man for every 60 acres of leasehold, 12 months from date of approval one man for every 30 acres, and 18 months from date of approval one man to every 20 acres. Although these mines have been working intermittently for the last five or six years, these conditions have never been once observed.

MR. HOPKINS: Your Government ought to enforce them.

MR. HENSHAW: We have only just come in. You should have done it long ago. I contend that these conditions are very liberal, and that we have given the companies every consideration. I will give an idea of how the companies are complying with the conditions. About a month ago, before this Government came into power, the labour conditions during August were: on the Proprietary mine, one man to every 25 acres; on the Cardiff mine, one man to 52 acres; on the Boulder mine, one man to 470 acres; and on the West Collie mine, one man to 2,880 acres. The labour conditions have never been observed on these mines; and the companies have broken faith with the country. After receiving all the encouragement which past Governments have given them, on their part they have failed to give a fair return. Under the Mineral Lands Act power is given to the Minister to issue what is known as a special license covering labour conditions. This special license was only intended for emergencies. It was never intended that it should become a general condition under which a mine was to be worked; yet from the inception of these mines they have been worked under these special licenses. In round figures the companies hold something like 42 square miles, and they are

entitled, not only to the mineral rights but to the timber rights and the surface rights of that immense area; and if they were to conform to the labour conditions they would be employing 1,350 men.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: They have only timber rights for mining purposes.

MR. HENSHAW: They have a right over the timber for their own use. Instead of employing 1,350 men as they should be they are only employing about 340 men. This valuable asset is held on terms of complying with these conditions and of paying 6d. per acre. They have never complied with the terms, and 6d. per acre is only a nominal rental. Timber hewers are prepared to pay more than that for the timber on the surface which the mining companies hold. They would be prepared to give double the sum. The coal people have not only got 4 square miles, but they have also 20,000 acres of timber country reserved for them alongside their leases.

MR. N. J. MOORE: They cannot sell the timber.

MR. HENSHAW: My point is that the timber is locked up. It is maturing and decaying at the present time, and hewers would be prepared to pay a greater rental. Until September 1904, the companies have produced 637,290 tons of coal, and the greater portion of that has been consumed by the Government. We find that the Railways have consumed 456,041 tons, and the Public Works Department 23,190 tons, or a total of 479,231 tons; thus leaving 158,059 tons apart from the Government orders, being 25 per cent. of the total output. That 25 per cent. embraces the private trade of the various companies; but a greater proportion of this 25 per cent. is a by-product of the Government coal. In cutting this coal there is so much waste, known as nutshells and slack, all by-products of the Government order, which has to be got rid of in some way and cannot be classed as a legitimate private trade. It is sold at varying rates from 6s. 6d. down to 3s. per ton. Then there is dust or waste, slack as it is called, and it has to be destroyed and it is burnt up on the surface of the mine. Therefore I contend that the private trade of these companies is infinitesimal. The companies practically exist to provide the Government orders

and the Government orders alone. In that 25 per cent. there is also coal that is consumed by the mines themselves in providing haulage power, etc. This private trade is becoming a less and less quantity each year; and if the companies go on at the rate at which they are going now, there will be absolutely no private trade at all in twelve months. In 1900 the Government consumption was 60,000 tons, and the total output 118,000 tons. Since then the Government consumption has been increasing until in the present year it is 115,514 tons, while the total output is 186,000 tons; so that we see by these figures the private trade is a diminishing quantity. It practically amounts to this: the mines exist to supply the Government orders, and the Government orders only.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: How is that?

MR. HENSHAW: Because the companies have made no effort to push private trade.

MR. BOLTON: Would the Government, if they owned a mine?

MR. HENSHAW: Yes. The remarkable thing is that, while the number of mines is increasing, the total output is decreasing each year.

MR. HOPKINS: The coal is not a popular commodity.

MR. HENSHAW: The daily output is 450 tons, which is practically the Government order; and five mines exist to supply it. It stands to reason that if we are the only consumers of the coal, we have to pay for the full equipment of the five mines.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Hear, hear.

MR. HENSHAW: I am glad the Minister agrees with me there. In other parts of the world it has been found out that, to work a mine economically, there must be an output averaging 3,000 tons per day; yet we find that five mines at Collie are working intermittently to supply 450 tons per day.

MR. BOLTON: There is no farther demand.

MR. HENSHAW: In 1903 the four mines produced 136,000 tons, or in one year as much as another mine in another part of the world would produce in 44 working days.

MR. HOPKINS: The men do not work more than two days a week at Collie.

MR. HENSHAW: They would if they could. In regard to the production of coal, the amount of the output determines the selling price.

MR. HOPKINS: No; the cost of getting it.

MR. HENSHAW: The output determines the cost of production in the same way as if we were to take the case of a newspaper office sending out a dozen copies which might cost a hundred pounds each, whereas another office might send out 50,000 costing a penny each. It is the same with the coal mines. What I want to ascertain is whether this paltry output of 450 tons a day can maintain four mines.

MR. HOPKINS: No.

MR. HENSHAW: Then can we maintain four London offices? I say these London offices are a tax on this industry, and we pay for their upkeep.

MR. HOPKINS: Therefore you wish to add another mine.

MR. HENSHAW: In addition to these London offices each company has a Perth office with consulting engineers and attorneys, all drawing large salaries and all adding to the cost of production. On the mines there are four certificated managers. Is it necessary to have four certificated managers to supply the Government with coal? The manner in which the coal is being produced at present costs us about 2s. per ton more than it should; and by distributing the order over a large area we are splitting up the towns and dividing the trade due to one town amongst several. We are spending thousands of pounds on railway construction that would otherwise be unnecessary. Besides the certificated managers we have the usual retinue of consulting engineers and attorneys, all carrying large salaries which the State has to pay. Each mine has a separate working staff, most of the officers drawing big salaries. There are accountants, clerks, overmen, deputies, engineers, time-keepers, and others. These are all quadrupled, and can the State pay for them in each instance? It is this which is holding the industry back.

MR. HOPKINS: Would you turn them all out of work?

MR. HENSHAW: This immense staff of London officers, managers, and all the rest of them is supervising 340 miners. Is that a reasonable position? Can we afford to pay for it? Is there any industry that can do so?

MR. HOPKINS: Does it require 340 miners to get out 450 tons a day? That is only work for 60 men.

MR. HENSHAW: It is not the miners that are loafing. If anybody loafs, it is the various sets of managers. Is there any industry that can stand this sort of thing?

MR. HOPKINS: No; I think not.

MR. HENSHAW: I am sure of it. Most of the miners are on piecework, and it is generally contended that there is less supervision necessary for men on piece-work. I agree with that. I cannot see why there should be four sets of officers, such as I have indicated, for this paltry output of 450 tons a day. Again, there are four installations of plant. Every consideration has been shown these companies, but without avail. It will be remembered that the late Government spent something like £20,000 to break up a then existing monopoly by constructing the Cardiff railway; but when that money was spent the town was divided, the business people were brought to a state of bankruptcy, and the workmen were taken away from their established homes, and had to live in the bush under most inconvenient conditions. Such was the result of the expenditure by the late Government of £20,000 to break up the monopoly; and the attempt has failed, and the total output of the field has decreased since its construction. On the 29th August last the morning papers printed statements by the managers of these companies, to the effect that they had by arrangement decided to ask a certain price for their coal, and that they would divide the contract in a certain proportion among their companies. That openly avowed statement of the position bears out my contention that the monopoly was not broken up.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. R. Hastie): The price was reduced.

MR. HENSHAW: The companies are asking 11s. 6d.

THE MINISTER: They were asking 13s. 6d.

MR. HENSHAW: I know that the price was temporarily reduced; but now those companies have practically amalgamated again.

MR. MORAN: As we said they would.

MR. HENSHAW: My contention is that the Government money was absolutely wasted.

MR. A. J. H. WATTS: And that cost the ex-member for Collie (Mr. J. Ewing) his seat.

MR. HENSHAW: It may have cost him his seat. The ex-member often referred to this subject, and on one occasion said he would like to see the price farther reduced and brought down to bedrock, though it was then 10s. 6d. His statement involved the admission that the Government were then paying too much for the coal. Again, on oath in the Arbitration Court the same gentleman, being interested in the Cardiff mine, stated that his mine would supply 80,000 tons at 11s. per ton, and would pay 4s. 6d. per ton as the hewing rate, the present rate being 4s. per ton.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS: That is very interesting, as against 1s. 3d., the hewing rate at Newcastle, without machines.

MR. HENSHAW: The work at Newcastle is altogether different, for the Newcastle miners have not one-third of the work to do that is done here. Mr. Ewing himself said he could supply the Government at 10s. 6d., and make a profit.

MR. HOPKINS: No doubt.

MR. HENSHAW: I agree with the hon. member, and am glad to hear him say that. Yet we now find the companies asking 11s. 6d. per ton. Does not that demand bear out my contention that the £20,000 was thrown away? Another aspect of the matter is that in building those six miles of railway, and giving those companies an order for coal, the State was paying for six miles' extra haulage. This is an item worth considering. We have spent £20,000, and are paying for six miles' extra haulage of what is generally recognised as coal inferior to that produced in Collie. I contend that something will have to be done with this industry. We see strikes and lockouts alternating in the district. The business people are in a desperate condition; the industry has been condemned without warrant; it

has been manipulated by those companies to such an extent that no one has any confidence in the district, and the residents could not sell out their properties if they desired to do so. I contend that the only remedy is that the State should own and work its own mine. Then it could produce the coal at a price considerably lower than it now pays; it could obtain a better quality of coal; and above all, it could keep the town in a state of steady progression, in marked contrast to its existing condition. Those London offices and all the other unnecessary burdens that I have just referred to could be dispensed with. The Government could have one staff; a first-class equipment could be obtained by an expenditure of something like £20,000; coal could be produced at a maximum cost of 9s. per ton, and that without in any way lowering the wages paid to the workers; for even at such a rate they could be paid higher wages than they now receive. With a farther judicious application of machinery the coal could be produced at an even lower cost. The miners are prepared to go behind the coal-cutting machines, provided they get a fair wage. A better quality of coal can be obtained by working it on a better method than the companies now adopt. One of the worst features of our coal is the quantity of moisture it contains. Though I am not a practical mining expert, I contend that if the coal were mined on the shaft system, if a well were sunk below the strata which was being worked, the measures would be drained and the coal would come to the surface somewhat drier than we now find it. If so, the same amount of heating capacity would be found in a smaller quantity—as regards weight—and better still, with the elimination of the moisture the coal would be less liable to disintegrate. As the coal is exposed to the atmosphere the moisture is rapidly drawn out of it, and the coal fractures and goes to pieces. If the measures were mined as I suggest—and my suggestion is one which any practical mining engineer of repute would adopt—we should have coal produced at a cheaper rate and of considerably better keeping quality than we are getting now. As to the cost of management of such a mine, we are now

practically paying what would cover that. We have an Inspector of Mines receiving, I believe, £120 a year. The Minister for Mines says the salary is larger: so much the better for my case. I do not wish to say that this inspector neglects his duty; but I say he performs it in two days per month; that he has any amount of time on his hands which could be devoted towards managing a State mine; and that if it was necessary to inspect the other mines an officer could for that purpose go from the Mines Office at Perth.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): There would not be any mine other than the State mine.

MR. HENSHAW: There might be. The Minister for Mines says the inspector has other work. I know he also holds the position of coal inspector to the Railway Department. For that duty he receives a salary of £240 a year in addition to the £120; or in round figures he gets £7 a week. I say that the office of coal inspector to the railways could be combined with that of manager of a State mine, and then we should not go to the expense of employing an additional man to manage that mine. Send a man from the Mines Department to inspect the coal mines if necessary. On the goldfields we have travelling mine inspectors; what is to prevent their employment at Collie? As to the inspection of coal, that to my mind is a farce. The coal is placed in trucks, and the tops of the loads are trimmed. It goes into the railway yard and is there inspected; hence only a small percentage of that coal is visible to the inspector, and that has been prepared by mine employees for his inspection. This officer has a clerk. I do not know whether the clerk does the more laborious portion of the work; but he assists. These are two officials who could take charge of a mine and manage it for the State; and by adopting this method of working the mine we could dispense with these various officials whom I have described; we could concentrate the Government coal order on one mine, and would naturally produce coal at a cheaper rate. If we turned out 450 to 500 tons per day from one mine, we should produce at a cost considerably less than the present. I have gone very minutely into this question, and challenge

the closest investigation of my statement that this coal can be produced in a State mine in such circumstances as I have indicated—one management, one staff, one set of machinery—for less than 9s. per ton. Another matter, and one worth more consideration than has been given to it, is the manufacture of briquettes. I believe these briquettes can be successfully made. Though a vast sum of money has been spent in attempting their manufacture, still I am satisfied, and am supported by what I consider good authorities, that these briquettes can be made, and made at a cost which would enable them to be put on the market at a reasonable figure, and with all the necessary requirements of storage capacity and the same calorific value as, or perhaps a higher calorific value than, the coal now produced.

MR. HOPKINS: Why has their manufacture failed in Victoria?

MR. HENSHAW: I cannot tell. I am satisfied that they can be made. They could also be made with the minimum of residue. That, I believe, is one of the greatest objections to the coal. I think it is recognised that if waste from the coal can be turned into briquettes the tendency to spontaneous combustion will be removed altogether. I think the member for Sussex will bear me out in that. If this motion is carried, and effect is given to it, I should like to see the State have the same trading powers as private companies have; allowing the State not only to supply coal for its own requirements, but also to push the private trade so that private companies may see there is a possibility in that direction. I am satisfied that there is, and I am equally satisfied that that aspect of the question has not received the consideration from private companies that it should have done. I contend that coal mining in this State is a monopoly; it is essentially a monopoly. The output is small, and to be produced at a reasonable cost every effort should be made to concentrate the trade in one mine. The present companies cannot go on, with the small production distributed amongst them, and for that reason there should be a change made. Then, too, there are other considerations. To my mind the existing companies have a difficulty in maintaining their present bad position; for I believe

they are in difficulties, and they cannot go on as they have been doing, as I have pointed out, and there seems to be an effort to place the burden on the backs of the workers employed in the production of the coal. If a man on the field suggests a way in which disabilities can be removed, he is told that he is not wanted on the field and is informed that he has to go. We have had the spectacle of wealth-producers—men who are of value to the State—being told to leave the country; men who have been working in the mines for years together, and who have proved their abilities, and yet the companies have told them they must go.

MR. FRANK WILSON: What mine?

MR. HENSHAW: We cannot allow such things to go on. We desire to attract population, and we should not allow the best men to be driven out of the country. That is another reason why the State should take on its shoulders the production of our own coal, for there would be better conditions and a greater continuity of employment to the workers than exist at the present time. That concludes my argument. I hope this matter will receive every consideration, and will be looked at from the point of view as it affects the whole State; not as affecting perhaps a few workers or a few mining companies. In the coal-mining industry we have a valuable asset which it is our duty to develop if we possibly can. We have given every encouragement to the various mines, and they have failed to respond: they are producing less coal than they were in 1902, and the private trade has fallen off in the way I have indicated earlier in my speech.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): I second the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND JUSTICE (Hon. R. Hastie): After the very eloquent and interesting speech of the member for Collie, I should like to have discussed with him this subject; but the House will recollect that a Commission has been appointed to inquire into the various economic questions connected with the coal-mining industry, and therefore it would be unwise for us to state our candid opinions on the question at the present time. Until Dr. Jackson gives in his report, we shall be unable to form any really definite opinion on the

matter; and I therefore think it would be wise for the House to agree to a long adjournment of the debate.

MR. MORAN: When do you expect the report, and what is the scope of the inquiry?

THE MINISTER: Dr. Jack has been instructed to inquire into all economic questions in connection with the Collie coal-mining industry. [MEMBER: Only Collie?] That is the only place where coal is known to exist at the present time in Western Australia. I hope the report will be received in two months' time, but it may be three months. I was going to ask the House to agree to an adjournment of the debate until the first week in November, or if members think it wiser until the first week in December, for it is unwise for us to consider seriously this question until we have Dr. Jack's report before us. We shall have that report before the end of the session; and if the member for Collie will lay the valuable information which he has given to the House before the Royal Commission when he has an opportunity, I think it would be wise for him to do so. I move that the debate be adjourned until the first Tuesday in December.

THE SPEAKER: Before I put the question, I wish to point out to the Minister for Mines, for I presume he wishes to take part in the debate, that he has placed himself outside the debate by making a speech on moving the adjournment; but in this case I hope the House will allow the Minister some latitude in the matter. In moving the adjournment of a debate, it must be done without any speech whatever.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

LOCAL COURTS BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND JUSTICE (Hon. R. Hastie), in moving the second reading, said: I thought when the previous motion was being considered that I should not be called upon to move the second reading of this Bill until late in the evening; but the task imposed upon me is a comparatively easy one. This measure was introduced into the House by the late Attorney General. Members will recol-

lect when it was introduced and read a first time. The Bill was proposed by the late Government, and I believe the whole of the draft was agreed to and approved by the late Attorney General. I can assure the House that the present Government have not altered one word in the Bill. I first wish to explain to members the meaning of the measure. It is to regulate, and slightly alter, the law as regards Local Courts. These Local Courts are held chiefly for the purpose of deciding disputes in regard to small debts. All the States in Australia have either a measures similar to this, or a somewhat similar law; and all these Acts are framed on the original law that obtains in England. In the year 1888 that Act was consolidated into the Imperial County Courts Act, and since that time every State in Australia has followed suit and passed a consolidating measure on the lines of the Imperial Act. By this Bill, as I have already said, we intend to consolidate the three Acts under which we are governed in this State. These are the Small Debts Ordinance of 1863, the Small Debts Act of 1887, and the amendment Act of 1894. The principal Act, as I have already pointed out, became law in this State before the English measure was consolidated; and we intend as far as possible to go on the lines of the laws of the other States, and also to take this opportunity of making certain amendments with a view to giving extra facilities to those who have to appear in these courts. I shall ask the House to formally agree to the second reading of the measure, and then I shall move that the Bill be referred to a select committee to consider all the details of the Bill and to report to the House. That select committee, although it will be elected by ballot, I hope will contain the only two legal gentlemen who are members of this House, so that we can get the measure looked at from every standpoint. As I have already explained, we have not made any alteration in the measure, and it appears to me there are some matters in connection with it that the House should seriously consider. One or two of these matters I will mention. I hope members will discuss the points during the second reading of the Bill, so that the select committee may have some indication of the trend of opinion on the points I am about to

mention. The first is the question of jurisdiction. Within this State since 1863 all our Local Courts have had jurisdiction for sums not exceeding £100. It is proposed by this measure to continue that particular limit. The English Act, up to last year, gave jurisdiction up to £50, but by the Act of last year that amount was extended to £100. In New South Wales the limit is £200, in Victoria £500, in South Australia £490, in Queensland £200, and in Tasmania £300. But those courts are presided over by magistrates appointed from the legal profession. In this State the Local Court bench is constituted without exception of lay magistrates, and as their duties are being performed satisfactorily, it has not been considered expedient to extend the jurisdiction beyond £100, at which limit the jurisdiction now stands in the Bill. That is a very satisfactory arrangement so far as Perth, Fremantle, and all the districts in the vicinity of these two places are concerned, because we have close to us the Supreme Court, and people living in the neighbourhood have every opportunity of having their cases tried by that Court even if the amount in dispute exceeds £200 or £300. This is essentially a country of very great distances, and we should not be justified in compelling people to come from, say, North Coolgardie, or Cue, or Nannine and other places and bring their witnesses down to Perth to the Supreme Court over a comparatively small amount such as that mentioned in this measure. That is one point on which I hope some of the members of the House will indicate their opinion. Personally, I am very strongly in favour of extended jurisdiction being given to magistrates who sit outside the capital city. Then it is farther proposed in this measure that the court shall be presided over by a magistrate. At present the magistrate may sit alone or in conjunction with honorary justices, and in case of a difference of opinion the decision of the majority prevails. This system is not deemed desirable, and does not prevail in any other State in Australia. The nearest approach to it is that of New Zealand, where justices may sit on the bench with the stipendiary magistrate, but take no part in the decision of cases.

I am not aware that any magistrates we have in Western Australia are in any way desirous of being simply ornamental men, and I do not see the necessity of justices sitting on the bench unless they are to vote. But I am strongly of opinion that we should follow our own example of last year in one or two measures, when we asked that in some cases the resident or police magistrate should sit alone and without any justices; but we must recognise that in some cases it is obvious the magistrate should not sit. Then we have to do the next best thing, and a provision is made that where a magistrate is unable to sit in the court, two justices may take his turn. Then it is farther proposed to make a very serious innovation, which will be of great importance in many parts, especially on the goldfields. It is proposed to abolish Local Court districts, preserving at the same time the local character of the courts. Members will recollect that at the present time people have to go to the court within their magisterial district. These districts are arranged—well, I do not know very well what kind of scale they are on; but in many cases to carry out the present arrangement is very inconvenient. In the face of that it is intended in the Bill for the case to be heard at the Local Court nearest the place where the persons reside, or nearest to the place in which the action arises. Speaking of local circumstances, I had a case before me the other day that occurred near Bunbury. The magisterial district ends in one direction about seven miles from Collie, and there is a very large sawmill about eight miles from Collie; but these people are outside the magisterial district for Collie, so that any case that arises has to go to Bunbury. If this Bill were passed these people would go straight to Collie and get their case heard. It is proposed to assign magistrates to groups of courts, and, as I say, to provide that the action shall be brought in the court held nearest to the place where the defendant lives or the cause of action arises. Then with regard to jurisdiction as to subject matter, as I have said it is not intended to increase the present limit of £100, but in one or two respects the opportunity has been taken in this Bill to make some sub-

stantial alterations, which I believe the House will agree would add greatly to the facilities of going to these courts. For instance, it is obviously unfair that if I owed a man £100, and had a counterclaim against him for an amount exceeding that sum, he should be able to sue me in the Local Court and get judgment and execution against me, while I was left to the more tardy process of the Supreme Court. This was recognised in England some years ago, and a defendant was enabled to plead in a County Court a counterclaim, although it might be beyond the ordinary jurisdiction of the court, subject only to the right of the plaintiff to remove both claim and counterclaim into the Supreme Court. It has been thought right to introduce these provisions into the Bill. We have also given the court an equitable jurisdiction up to the £100 when the relief sought is the recovery of money or damages; and in dealing with actions for the recovery of land, two amendments have been introduced which it is thought will be beneficial. At present the action only lies when the relation of landlord and tenant exists; and where a right of re-entry is claimed for non-payment of rent it is necessary that six months' rent should be in arrear. That obviously is very inconvenient, and I think has this effect amongst others. Supposing one owned a house and allowed a man to go into that house without making a formal arrangement on letting it to him, one might find it almost impossible, if not quite, to eject that man unless one brought an action in the Supreme Court. It is thought that the six months I have referred to is far too long a period for the rent to be overdue before the rights of the landlord can be exercised. So we propose to follow the New Zealand Act and provide that the lessee may recover when rent is in arrear for ten days in the case of weekly tenancies, for 21 days in the case of monthly tenancies, and for 42 days in the case of quarterly tenancies. Then provision is also made following the law in Victoria, enabling small tenements to be recovered in Local Courts, although the relation of landlord and tenant does not exist where the tenant is wrongfully in possession without any title or claim of right—where he is in fact trespassing on the land. Then with regard to procedure the exist-

ing practice is usually followed, but in placing the practice of default summons for liquidated debts on a more modern footing we have provided not only a means to enable the plaintiff to obtain summary judgment in default of notice of defence, but we have enabled a plaintiff to apply to the magistrate in chambers for summary judgment when notice of defence is given, unless the defendant can satisfy the magistrate that he has some *bona fide* ground of defence. That I may explain is the custom of the Supreme Court generally at the present moment, and it is asked that we should follow the custom of the Supreme Court in this and other instances so far as may be applicable. Then, on the other hand in the interests of defendants, we have enabled a defendant to pay money into court with or without a denial of liability, and have provided that where a sum less than the demand is paid into court it shall remain there until the case is disposed of, unless accepted by the plaintiff in satisfaction. That also is following the custom of the Supreme Court at the present moment. Then another important thing is that in the matter of evidence provisions have been inserted as a means of saving costs to enable a party to require the opposite party to admit facts which in any case are really not in dispute, and which the party should not be put to the expense of proving; also for the recovery and inspection of documents, so far as the magistrate is satisfied that inspection is necessary for the disposal of the case. I may say that if this new arrangement be adopted a very large amount of expense will be saved by litigants, especially those who have to come from distant parts of the country. Provision is inserted from the New South Wales and Queensland Acts enabling the evidence of witnesses at a distance from the court in proper cases to be taken locally where the personal attendance of a witness may not be required, and the expense of the personal attendance of the witness should be avoided. This, if carried out properly, will save people travelling 50, 60, or 100 miles simply to go through a formality. If this arrangement can be made as proposed in the Bill it will save a large amount of inconvenience, and so will the next alteration which I shall speak of.

It is this. The clerk of the court is enabled to deal with cases when the defendant appears and does not dispute the claim; or deal with small disputed cases by leave of the magistrate and with the consent of the parties. Then the important question of costs comes in here, and the measure enacts that these are to be fixed from time to time by regulation, instead of being fixed by law. It is realised that the fees collected in the courts, particularly in small cases, compare unfavourably with those in the other States. It is to be hoped that the Treasurer will see his way clear—I believe he has a great deal to do with the regulation of the fees—to considerably reduce them. But in small cases a remedy will be sought by a Bill that will be introduced as a supplement to the present Bill, giving a civil jurisdiction to Courts of Petty Sessions in all cases of small liquidated debts not exceeding £10. The fees charged are four times as great as in the East. I believe the usual fee in the East is 2s. 6d., and in Western Australia 10s., and we are not sure that the people in Western Australia are four times richer than are the people on the other side. Then the right of appeal has been limited to judgments in actions where the amount claimed exceeds £20, except by leave of the magistrate, but at the same time the procedure on appeal has been brought into accordance with the latest legislation. The provisions as to enforcement of judgments by execution have been recast and simplified, and a means of levying execution against land provided, instead of requiring a plaintiff to remove the judgment into the Supreme Court. Then provisions for the commitment of defendants for nonpayment of judgment debts or instalments on proof of means to pay have been adopted from the Debtors Act, 1871. And, finally, power is given to the Governor to make rules prescribing the practice of the courts in matters not provided for by the Bill. These are the chief matters to which I need call attention, in reference to this Bill. I trust that members of the House will really discuss this measure on the second reading, and give expressions of opinion on the points I have raised. When we have agreed to the second reading of the Bill, I shall move that it be remitted to a select committee, who I

believe will advise this House on at any rate a few improvements that can be made in the measure. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): I move the adjournment of the debate. I think the hon. gentleman has no wish to press the second reading of the Bill to-day.

THE MINISTER: Oh no.

MR. RASON: The Bill has only just been placed before us in print.

Motion passed, and the debate adjourned.

SUPPLY BILL, £500,000 (No. 2).

Message from the Acting Governor received and read, recommending the appropriation out of Consolidated Revenue of a sum of £500,000, for the services of the year ending 30th June, 1905.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. H. Daglish) moved that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply and also Ways and Means for the purpose of considering the Message, and that the Standing Orders be suspended to allow the passage of a Supply Bill through all stages at one sitting.

Question passed.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

MR. BATH in the Chair.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER said: Supplies granted before the House adjourned covered only the period ending on the last day of August. The House was now asked to grant two months' supply.

MR. MORAN: This meant a million.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Yes; the sum was required in order to carry us on to the end of October, before which date it was hoped it would be possible to make the annual Financial Statement, and to have the Estimates under the consideration of the Chamber.

MR. C. J. MORAN: We could not escape from certain startling facts, which were brought under our notice fairly frequently, one being the slipshod manner in which the finances of the country were handled by the House—a million of the country's money voted away each year by members without the slightest idea of what was being done with it. When we considered that other State Parliaments

had their Budgets placed before them hard on the meeting of the House, so that hon. members would know exactly what was being done with the moneys with the whole session before them, the fact was more glaring. The New Zealand Budget for this year had been in his (Mr. Moran's) possession for a fortnight. This could be contrasted with the way in which we did our financing in this country. He was not blaming this Government at all.

MR. RASON: In New Zealand the financial year ended in March.

MR. MORAN: It was impossible to object when the late Treasurer (Mr. Rason) moved in the House for supplies to the amount of £500,000; but the present Treasurer should consider the advisability of changing the financial year ending in this State also. Complaint on this point had been going on year after year. It had even been made in the time of Sir John Forrest, and had been made to every Government. The position was much worse to-day. Our last year's Budget was a complete farce, being brought down late and receiving very little inquiry other than at the hands of a few members. When Parliament took its fingers from the financial pulse or took its eye from the Budget of the country, Parliament then neglected its principal duty, that of inquiring into the finances, which was above any other duty Parliament had to perform, as it meant the taxation of the people and the spending the people's money. We were going to vote away a million of money without the slightest idea of how it was to be expended. He would again draw the attention of the House to the fact that it was something scandalous, or if not scandalous something very grievous and much to be deplored. The Government should go into the question as to whether it was not advisable for Western Australia to close the financial year in March. Anyhow, they should do something to inquire as to whether, in the future, we were not to have our Budget and Financial Statement placed before members earlier than the dog days of each session, when every member was tired of Parliament and large sums of money were expended without any inquiry at all. He (Mr. Moran) should not be considered presumptuous if he asked the late Treasurer (Mr.

Rason) in the interests of the country to inquire into the methods of the present Government, for the opportunity was now presented on a vote of this kind. Such occasions should not go by without inquiry, and it was the duty of the Opposition, when the leading Press of the country was inquiring as to what was the public works policy of the Government, to extract from the Treasurer some statement as to what was intended to be done in connection with public works and the finances of the country. Should it not be done by the Opposition, he (Mr. Moran) would ask the Government for details as to what was proposed to be done in connection with the public works of the State; and he hoped it would result in a satisfactory explanation coming from the Government, that although the financial world at present was in rather a bad way, and although the policy of Western Australia, if she chose to avoid the pitfalls and rocks of the other Australian States, was not to rush ahead without due consideration in a loan policy, the State would be able to avoid any serious jolt in the public works policy of the country by financing within itself or even by paying, if need be, a little more for the money necessary to carry on the works to which it had been committed. There were works to which the country was committed by the past Parliament, and he (Mr. Moran) desired to ask some questions about one work in particular, because one public work had been hurried through the House to which the Government should not hold themselves committed. Touching on this point, the moot question arose as to whether, on great matters of policy of this sort, the Government were going to be bound by the policy of the past Government. If so, why have a change of Government at all? [Several Members: Hear, hear.] There were works to which some of this money would be and ought to be applied, works which ought to be done and ought not to be stopped, even if the country paid one per cent. more for its money temporarily. That was the difference between temporary financing and permanently funded debt. He (Mr. Moran) would not say that he was in favour of raising a loan to-morrow and funding it at four or at four and a half per cent. In speaking of "per cent." he

spoke, of course, about "par." This was different from obligating ourselves to any financial institution for 18 months or two years and paying a half or one per cent. more for that time. This would be no permanent obligation on the country, and in the present condition of Western Australia it was not a matter for serious consideration, for a half or one per cent. for two years on a sum of money raised locally to carry out works at the present time was not a matter that should weigh with the Government and make them stop public works. What, after all, was one per cent. for two years on short-dated credits? It could be raised by increased taxation, and by making the people of the present generation who were now crying out for works, and who belonged to all ranks of the community from the rich down to the poor—though there were not many rich people, being mainly the middle class and the workers—pay a little more temporarily to keep public works going. What was harmful, if it could be avoided, would be raising large sums of money and funding them permanently at a high rate of interest. That would mean a permanent high charge; but in times of distress, what member would consider, if he wanted money badly and could use it advantageously, paying a half per cent. more temporarily for a short obligation? One would need to pay a little higher price. The present was an opportune time to have some little explanation. The sum of £500,000 was not required to carry on the ordinary services of the Government, and it must be used to carry on some of the public works, smaller or greater, now before the country. That being so, one would be in order in discussing the public works of the Government. The Jandakot Railway was a line promised by four Governments, and was a work that might be taken in hand by day labour very advantageously. It was a short work, and had to be built.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order in discussing the matter on a motion for supply.

MR. MORAN: It was being discussed just inferentially in respect to public works. Did the Treasurer intend to apply any of this money to starting the Jandakot Railway? Also with regard to the Fremantle Dock?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order in discussing that matter.

MR. MORAN: The item could be left to the members who represented Fremantle, who no doubt would find some means of getting it in. At the present time there was urgent necessity for Parliament coming to a decision with regard to the financial condition of the country, and the Government should make some pronouncement as to what they intended to do with regard to some of the public works before the country. He said this with every desire to loyally assist the Government through the troublous times which faced them, perhaps through no fault of their own. The late Government could not in this connection be absolved from blame. Recently the present Premier and Treasurer made a financial statement in Subiaco which appeared to create some consternation; but he (Mr. Moran) had not heard any member of Parliament contradict that statement, nor had he read any newspaper contradiction of it. Yet the statement did not tally with the statement of the former Treasurer (Mr. Gardiner) during the general election campaign. The two pictures were entirely different, one being very rosy and the other rather dismal.

MR. H. GREGORY: The present Treasurer had not made any pronouncement.

MR. MORAN: The Subiaco statement revealed a condition of things of which the country was ignorant at the general elections, and which he (Mr. Moran) had tried in vain by direct questions and challenge to get the late Government to place before the country at those elections. He was met with a refusal. The present Treasurer having made an official statement at Subiaco, was that statement denied—was the financial condition such as was then set forth? If not, the facts ought to be pointed out, and the misstatements exposed. If the facts were as stated, then those who found fault with what was called a policy of stagnation ought to point out how a better policy was possible; and in criticising the Government policy objectors were bound to say whether money for a public works policy was obtainable, and if so where and on what terms. He (Mr. Moran) thought that the money was not unobtainable in

Australia to-day. The Treasurer need not issue a prospectus like that of a mining company, to be published throughout Australia. Let him consult the proper financial authorities, and sufficient money could doubtless be obtained in Australia to carry out a fair modicum of public works, so as to avoid any cessation of such works. The Premier said he must find £600,000 this year. If that sum were found, the Premier would raise as much as the former Treasurer (Mr. Gardiner) said was about the amount that should be raised every year for public works; so if the present Premier could raise that sum and expend it on works agreed to by all parties, he would not be doing badly. But even Government supporters were in some doubt as to the works policy of the Government; hence, in voting supply, attention should be drawn to that fact, so that Ministers might briefly tell us what we were entitled to know as to the expenditure of public moneys. True this motion must be passed, as the country could not go on without supply; but the Budget ought to be brought in early in the session, the financial year should close earlier; and as to the public works policy, the Government should now take members more closely into their confidence than had been customary in the past.

Motion for granting supply put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

IN COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS.

THE PREMIER and TREASURER farther moved:

That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year 1904-5, a sum not exceeding £500,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

As to the remarks of the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran), supply was required purely for carrying on ordinary departmental administration, for completing such public works constructed out of revenue as were already under way, also for the purpose of meeting any very urgent but in extent trivial demands which might be made for various sorts of special accommodation. This grant of supply had nothing to do with loan expenditure, but was purely a proposal

to appropriate money from revenue. At the same time, he would say that the present Government had not originated any policy of stagnation, nor did they support such a policy. They proposed simply to follow the policy recommended by a previous Treasurer (Mr. Gardiner), that State borrowing should as far as possible be limited to a sum of from £500,000 to £750,000 per annum; and as already stated in public, the State was committed to the expenditure during this current year of £600,000.

MR. MORAN: Were the contracts let?

THE PREMIER: The works were in progress. Without starting new works the Government were spending at the rate of £600,000 a year at the present moment; in fact, during last month that rate was exceeded, something like £60,000 being spent out of loan funds; hence it could fairly be said that the allegation that the Government were proposing or advocating the stoppage of public works was uncalled for. They proposed fully to carry out the obligations entered into; and when those obligations were met, they were prepared to consider the desirableness of entering on new enterprises.

MR. MORAN: It was well that those allegations should be denied in Parliament.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member was not to blame for drawing attention to the statements made. The Committee should clearly understand that the Government were carrying out the works entered upon. The question of loan flotation had received considerable attention from a preceding Treasurer (Mr. Gardiner), who would doubtless corroborate the public statement made by him (the Premier) as to the condition of the money market with respect to present borrowing. The Government did not desire to adopt an unduly timid policy. As Treasurer he was prepared to advocate strongly a policy of spending loan money, when available, on reproductive public works. But he recognised that even with a sinking fund our borrowing must be kept within reasonable bounds; that the country did not get from most of its works a return sufficient to pay sinking fund and interest; and that hence we must limit somewhat the burden on our taxpayers. Moreover, the Treasurer of

the day had now to consider the possibility of an alteration in our relations with the Federal Government.

MR. GREGORY: The Premier might have told us this yesterday, when making his general statement.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member knew well that the Leake Government, of which he was a member, when it came back to office after facing the electors made no statement whatever. He (the Premier) had the courtesy to announce the Government programme.

MR. HOPKINS: Which was so brief that it might as well have been suppressed.

THE PREMIER: The interjection was hardly fair. He was not called on to move a motion which might have rendered possible a debate of two or three weeks' duration; and had he been justified in so moving he would not have thought it expedient, because in view of the time of the year and the business remaining to be done by the House we were not warranted in having long debates on general policy. If the Opposition wished such a debate they could precipitate one at any moment; and those members who wished to use their opportunity should themselves bring about the debate. He was not prepared to start a debate which would largely result in delaying legislation, and preventing the enactment of many measures of which he believed the country was urgently in need.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

SUPPLY BILL.

Bill introduced for giving effect to the foregoing resolutions; passed through remaining stages without debate, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at nineteen minutes past 6 o'clock, until the next afternoon.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 15th September, 1904.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—AUDIT INSPECTOR, HOW APPOINTED.

MR. MORAN asked the Premier: 1, Whether it is a fact that the Auditor General has recommended that an appointment as Inspector in the Audit Department should be filled by a gentleman who is not a member of the permanent service? 2, Whether there is any special reason for departing in this instance from the accepted rule of promotion within the permanent service? 3, Whether there is no member of the permanent service competent to fill this position by promotion?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, I presume this relates to the appointment of a Chief Audit Inspector. If so, the answer is No. 2, If a suitable officer is available within the Public Service he will be appointed. 3, I am not yet aware.

BILLS, FIRST READING.

DAY DAWN RATES VALIDATION BILL, introduced by the Colonial Secretary.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL, introduced by the Minister for Railways and Labour.

TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY, GUARANTEE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish): I beg to crave the indulgence of the House for the purpose of making a very brief statement in regard to the Trans-Australian Railway. I find that during