

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

Since the commencement of the session the State has been honoured by the visit of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (now Prince and Princess of Wales), and it is my pleasing duty to inform you that their Royal Highnesses have graciously expressed themselves as highly gratified with the cordiality of their reception and the undoubted loyalty of the people.

His Excellency the Governor General of the Commonwealth was also pleased to pay an official visit to the State during the Christmas and New Year's holidays, when a fitting and loyal reception was given to him as His Majesty's principal representative in Australia.

You will be pleased, no doubt, to be relieved of your duties, and I now prorogue this Parliament until Wednesday, the 14th day of May next.

The session then closed.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 19th February, 1902.

Petition: Boulder Crown Lessees—Question: Perth Park, Rokeby Drive—Question: Railway Rates, as to Increase—Question: Coronation, State Representation—Question: Mail Steamer, Albany to Esperance—Question: Rabbit Fence—Question: Cunderdin Requirements—Question: Stock Importation, Queensland—Question: Railway Passes, Exhibition Commissioners—Coolgardie Water Scheme Inquiry, to appoint a Commission—Land Act Amendment Bill, Assembly's Amendment—Motion: Firewood Supply on Goldfields, to Construct Railway 25 Miles (out of order)—Return ordered: Land Selection, Cunderdin—Papers ordered: Police Uniforms Contract—Papers ordered: License, Essential Oils—Legal Practitioners Act Amendment Bill (not proceeded with)—Return ordered: State Governors, Emoluments—Friendly Societies Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, Points of Order (unfinished)—Prorogation.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 12 o'clock, noon.

PRAYERS.

PETITION—BOULDER CROWN LESSEES.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS presented a petition, signed by 100 Crown lessees of Boulder, praying Parliament to intercede in order that certain obligations of the Lands Department should be faithfully adhered to. He said there was no time now to make a motion, but he would follow up the matter next session.

Petition received and ordered to be printed.

QUESTION—PERTH PARK, ROKEBY DRIVE.

MR. H. DAGLISH, by leave without notice, asked the Treasurer: 1, Whether his attention had been called to the statement of the Perth Park Board, that there would be no money available for the Rokeby Road Drive in that Park. 2, Would he take steps to see that the £500 voted by Parliament for the making of this drive was expended on the work?

THE TREASURER (Hon. F. Illingworth) replied: Without notice, it was difficult to answer. The board had spent the money before Parliament allocated the vote; and it was not easy to say, at this moment, what course the Government would take—whether they would provide the money or place the item on next year's Estimates. The Government would see that the £500 was made available for the road.

QUESTION—RAILWAY RATES, AS TO INCREASE.

MR. A. E. THOMAS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether it is a fact that, in reply to a deputation this morning, he stated that the expenses of the railway were growing every day, and it would shortly be necessary to increase the rates upon goods, and goods too that were an absolute necessity to the people of the goldfields. 2, Whether it is a fact that at the present time the Eastern railway and its branches are carrying the burden of the other railways of the State. 3, Whether it is a fact that coal and other articles are at the present moment being carried at a loss to the Railway Department. 4, Whether he intends shortly increasing the rates on the Eastern railway. 5, Whether, before increasing these rates, he will raise the rate on coal and the other articles now being carried at a loss. 6, Whether there are differential rates on any of our railways. 7, Whether he intends abolishing these differential rates.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, The opinion of the officers of the department is that the rate is unremunerative. 4, Yes; it is intended to generally revise the rates and raise them to the level of those in force in the Eastern States. 5, Answered by No. 4. 6, Yes. 7, The abolition of these rates is now under consideration.

QUESTION—CORONATION, STATE REPRESENTATION.

MR. THOMAS asked the Premier: In the event of an invitation being received for this State to be represented at the Coronation, and in the event of a Minister not being able to go, whether the Government will give an assurance that the Agent General will be appointed to represent the State.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Agent General had been written to.

MR. THOMAS: Had the Agent General been instructed to represent the State, in the event of a Minister not being sent home?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: He had been written to concerning representation at the Coronation.

MR. THOMAS: Concerning this, a series of questions had been asked, and the

replies could not have been more indefinite had all Ministers combined to make them indefinite.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must accept the answer given.

QUESTION—MAIL STEAMER, ALBANY TO ESPERANCE.

MR. THOMAS asked the Premier: 1, Whether he is aware that the steamer on the south coast ceases running after this month, which will be to the great inconvenience of the residents of Albany, Hopetoun, Ravensthorpe, Esperance, and the other places along that coast. 2, Whether something could not be done by the Government to induce one of the inter-State boats to call during the period when the mail steamer will cease running.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Government is in communication with the Federal authorities on this subject, and has requested that arrangements may be made for the carriage of passengers as well as the mails.

QUESTION—RABBIT FENCE.

MR. THOMAS asked the Premier: Whether steps have been taken to make a start on the subsidiary rabbit-proof fence to be erected for the protection of Esperance, Grass Patch, and Ravenssthorpe.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Inspector White has been sent to examine and report on the country to be enclosed by the proposed fence. On receipt of his report it will be decided whether to erect such a fence, or to assist settlers in the locality to fence their holdings. The main line of fence will pass eastward of Ravenssthorpe.

MR. THOMAS: May I be allowed to ask a farther question?

THE SPEAKER: Only if it relates to this matter.

MR. THOMAS: It relates to this question. When the discussion on the Estimates was taking place in this House, a definite assurance was given by the Premier, in reply to me, that a subsidiary fence would be erected to protect Esperance, Grass Patch, Ravenssthorpe, and Salmon Gums. I would like to know whether the definite promise was given, and whether it would be carried out.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must be satisfied with the answer given.

MR. THOMAS: But I am not satisfied.

THE SPEAKER: But the House must be satisfied.

MR. THOMAS: If I am not satisfied, may I later on move the adjournment of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot do that. The adjournment can be moved only at the commencement of business; not during the business.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I wish to give the hon. member all the information we have. This matter is controlled by the Minister for Lands, and it is the intention of the Government to obtain a report, and if it is favourable to the hon. member's desires, that a certain portion of his electorate shall be helped by a subsidiary fence, that fence will be erected; but if it is found that it cannot be done satisfactorily, the Government proposes to assist the selectors to help themselves.

MR. JACOBY: But you promised the fence.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is useless if we find on receipt of the report that it will not be serviceable.

MR. JACOBY: But you promised it in a hurry; why not carry it out now?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: All promises are made in accordance with conditions, and according to what may appear subsequently. It would be simply nonsense and waste of money to put a fence up, if we know the rabbits are on the other side.

QUESTION—CUNDERDIN REQUIREMENTS.

HON. G. THROSSELL asked the Premier: 1, Whether he will cause inquiries to be made as to the urgent necessity of locating a police constable at Cunderdin, where a public-house has been opened, and where large bodies of men are employed. 2, Whether, with a view of encouraging thrift, he will inquire into the necessity of providing facilities for men living in encampments to deposit money in the Post Office Savings Bank. 3, And, if satisfied of such necessity, will he see that such facilities are provided.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: These inquiries will be made.

QUESTION—STOCK IMPORTATION, QUEENSLAND.

MR. HOPKINS asked the Premier: 1, Why the recommendations of the Chief Inspector of Stock, urging the removal of certain restrictions on the importation of Queensland stock, have not been acceded to. 2, Why tick-infested cattle are permitted to be introduced in this State from Kimberley and the Northern Territory, whilst a plentiful supply from Central Queensland is debarred. 3, Whether it is the intention of the Government to permit the introduction of tick-infested cattle from Queensland, subject to the same restrictions as those imposed against tick-infested cattle coming from East Kimberley and the Northern Territory. 4, Whether the Government will, during recess, cause an exhaustive inquiry to be made into the possibility of either subsidising or establishing a direct steamship service between Fremantle and the Northern ports of the State, as a means towards the better and more economic transport of live stock for our meat supply.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, The Chief Inspector of Stock's original recommendations on the subject were made prior to the present Government taking office, and the Government of the time did not deem it expedient to act on them. 3, Yes. 4, Yes.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PASSES, EXHIBITION COMMISSIONERS.

MR. R. HASTIE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Why his department still allows at least two of the Paris and Glasgow Exhibition Commissioners to travel by rail on free passes. 2, For how long he intends to extend the privilege.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, The renewal of the free passes held by these gentlemen was approved by Cabinet on the 10th December last. 2, The passes expire on the 31st March next, and will not be renewed.

MR. HASTIE: With reference to the last question, I would like to ask the Colonial Secretary why these passes were extended, and can he give us the names of the gentlemen who have them?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: As this was not an action of the present Government, I am not in a position to reply.

MR. GEORGE: But you know.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know.

MR. GEORGE: Well, you ought to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; we ought to know everything.

MOTION—COOLGARDIE WATER
SCHEME INQUIRY.

TO APPOINT A COMMISSION.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (HON. F. ILLINGWORTH): By leave of the House, and for the purpose of allowing members an opportunity of discussing the important report brought up by the Select Committee on the Coolgardie Water Scheme, I move formally that a Royal Commission be appointed to continue the inquiry made by the Select Committee.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): I suppose it is necessary for someone to start this matter, and perhaps a member of the committee should commence, so as to give members a bone to pick. So far as the committee have been able to carry out their investigations, the conclusions arrived at are embodied in the report, and I think there is sufficient in the report to cause the Government, members of Parliament, and the people of the country, to consider whether we have had justice in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme, and whether we are likely to receive anything like justice in its future carrying out. I submit that whoever was responsible for the taking up of machine-caulking business does not appear, at any rate from the evidence, to have given thorough consideration to the matter. [MR. JOHNSON: Hear, hear.] I am aware that the chief engineer has not been examined: that was not the fault of the select committee, and unkind persons might insinuate that possibly the absence of the chief engineer from the State was only a coincidence, possibly a strange one, when the inquiry was being made. As a citizen of Western Australia, and a member of this House, and one whose future is bound up in the country, there are no outside interests for Western Australia that can compare in importance with the investigations connected with the Coolgardie Water Scheme. This scheme starts with an initial expen-

diture of two and a half millions of money, but where it will end we do not know; and when the chief officer in charge of the scheme is absent from the State, there has not been proper consideration given to the interests of the State before leave of absence in that case was granted. I do not intend to make anything like a violent attack on the scheme, but to submit to hon. members what seem to me to be some of the main facts of the case. Firstly there was a proposition for machine caulking; and one machine and one firm only appear to have been tried. There may have been others, but there is no information to show the committee that this was so. There does not appear to have been a general invitation to engineers in this State and throughout Australia or the world, to provide some means of cheaply, economically, and expeditiously doing the caulking. Instead of that, an engineer produced a machine, submitted it to the department, where it underwent a *quasi* trial; and the next thing was that an agreement was signed, by which the Government were to pay £7,500 as a royalty for the use of that machine—not for the machine itself, but a royalty for its use. This means firstly an additional charge on the joints of something like 2s. 6d. per joint. We have seen in the Press a report of a trial made the other day of machine-caulking and hand-caulking. One of the journals, commenting on that, has estimated the cost of the royalty payable for the use of this machine; but it is possible there was some mistake in that estimate, arising from the fact that the person making it had not apparently any means of obtaining a correct idea as to what the cost of the jointing really was. The select committee had evidence put before them showing that it was necessary to have practically three and one-third men to each joint for machine-caulking; also an engine-driver, with two or three other persons not specified, but who appear on the wages sheet; and in addition there has to be practically a little more than two-fifths of a fitter for each machine to keep it in going order. If the wages of all these men were put down, there is absolutely, in my opinion, an excess of cost for machine-caulking over hand-caulking. There is first the half-crown

additional per joint to be put on, then the cost of kerosene for the machine, also lubricants, repairs to cables, and repairs to the machines; so that, as far as I can see, each joint costs from 7s. to 8s. for machine-caulking as compared with half-a-crown to 3s. as the cost per joint for hand-caulking. To make up the 7s. or 8s. we have to allow for expenses in the workshop at Midland Junction, which is supposed to be run under the supervision of a gentleman who occupies a dual position, first as being the inventor of the machine and receiver of the royalty for its use, and secondly as receiving £10 per week in wages for supervising the work on behalf of the Government. The contract lays down that, under certain conditions, those who supply the machines are to be responsible for their upkeep. The conditions are that if the material used in making the machines or if the design be responsible for any breakage that occurs, then the person supplying the machines has to pay for the breakage; but the cost of fair wear and tear is to be borne by the Government. About £1,300 has been spent at the workshop in wages. We have no evidence as to what material has been used there; and there appears to have been no check on the work done in the workshop so as to subdivide the cost between repairs that should be paid for by the inventor of the machine and those to be paid for by the Government, nor any check as to the amount expended on new plant that may be made in the workshop. I contend that in the control of that workshop there should never have arisen any question as to making the gentleman who would have to decide what proportion he had to pay and what the Government had to pay, to be practically the sole judge in the matter. I am not making the slightest insinuation against the personal honour or honesty of Mr. Couston or those concerned with him; but it is a position which cannot be regarded as satisfactory in the interests of either one party or the other. One witness, Mr. Hodgson, in his evidence stated that it was possible to show this; yet the gentleman who has control of the shop stated that it could not be done, or that it could be done only approximately. In my experience I never knew of a workshop in which the work was not properly classified, and at the end of a term,

whether daily or weekly, the time and material spent on any particular job could be dissected without trouble. In engineering works that I have been connected with and am now, every minute of a man's working time has to be accounted for and balanced at the end of the week, and his time has to be apportioned to the particular jobs on which he has been engaged during the week. If a man is paid for 54 hours' work in a week, every hour of his working time is accounted for by the method usually followed in the workshops of private firms. What is the difference between a man's time and a man's money? We take our money and balance it accurately at regular periods; and I submit the time that a man has to be paid for should be as accurately accounted for as a business man accounts for his cash. Apparently nothing of the sort has been done in regard to this workshop. There is another aspect of the matter deserving attention. The appointment of Mr. Couston as supervisor no doubt was made with the idea that it would be very satisfactory to the department and to Mr. Couston as inventor of the machine; but what were the reasons which caused this appointment to be made? No doubt Mr. Couston would be able to direct the work and supervise the jointing and pipe-laying and the caulking in a more favourable manner than could be done if two or three parties were controlling the work; but it will be seen by those who read the evidence taken before the select committee, that the bulk of Mr. Couston's time was not spent along the pipe-track, but that after setting his gangers to work and visiting them from time to time, he spent or wasted most of his time in coming to Perth to get twopenny-halfpenny stores, because the regulations of the Government department did not permit of the stores being issued or obtained without a good deal of trouble. It does appear that if it was necessary for Mr. Couston to waste all this time in that manner, the system of the department in regard to stores is radically wrong, and is not good enough for a country which has such a vast expenditure going on in public works. Another point to which I wish to draw attention is the taking out of the pipe-trenches. Ordinary persons would think

that a pipe-trench, when taken out, would be taken out accurately, so that at any rate very little work would remain to be done after the trench was taken out and before the pipes could be laid; that the men would not take out a portion and leave the rest, so as to give, in a hurry-scurry manner, the fallacious appearance of so many miles of excavation having been made at such and such cost. But we have it in evidence that the trench has to be re-graded and taken out to a greater depth of from five inches to as much as 3ft., and some of this extra excavation has to be taken out in rock. Surely after the accurate survey which has been taken—or rather which we know ought to have been taken—of this pipe-line, there should be no necessity for the navvies to have to double on their tracks to do this work twice. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] And that is not the worst. We have it in evidence that the men doing the pipe-laying and the caulking have actually had to wait for the taking out of the trenches, because the necessary survey, which was to enable the trenching gangs to make the excavation, had not been completed. How can anyone defend that who has had anything whatever to do with such work? In work of this sort, the pioneers must go on ahead and do their work properly; if not, they are stopping the gangs behind them. Who pays for this? The country pays. Can we afford it? I say no. What the Government will do I do not know; what they ought to do I do know. They should at once get together a body of men—they can find them—and let those men be, not merely a committee of inquiry, but men who can probe the whole of this business; and let them be paid for it. Is it right, I ask the House, to call upon private members to give their time to such duties, taking them away from their own vocations and means of livelihood to go into matters for which experts are required? I have felt very strongly on this matter when sitting on the select committee which has just reported. I do not blame the chairman of that committee for the number of meetings held. He has had a difficult task to perform, and he has done it well. But he has had more leisure, or he has made more in connection with this matter, than other

members have been able to secure; and at a number of the examinations of witnesses I have unfortunately been unable to attend, because I simply could not spare the time. I say it is unfair to call upon members of Parliament to take up a matter which is absolutely one for experts, and for experts only. The only necessity, when calling on experts, is to see that there shall be on the board, in addition to the experts, a sufficient number of plain, common-sense men, who will take care that the experts do not blind them and blind the country. There is a homely proverb, "Does dog eat dog?" There is naturally a friendly feeling from engineers towards engineers; and unless personal antipathy be present, engineers will give you an answer in the same manner as doctors will answer a patient at a consultation. A doctor will correct the mistakes of a fellow doctor, but he will not expose those mistakes to the patient. If hon. members will read and think over this report, there is in it quite enough to show that if two and a half millions were the estimate for this work, Western Australia must foot a bill for a much larger figure. I have shown what seems to me has been wrong with regard to the pipe-joints. To start straight off with the Couston machines, without asking whether there were other contrivances—and there are scores of them that could be invented for caulking this pipe—was altogether wrong. I will undertake to say that had an advertisement been inserted and a month's time allowed, we should have had offers of apparatus from all over the place, which apparatus would, I submit, have had probably as many as if not more merits than the machine of Messrs. Couston, Finlayson, and Porritt. Mr. Couston is not by trade an engineer; he has picked up a knowledge of the trade, and more credit to him for it. I say he has done what I and other members would probably have done had we been in his place—the best he could for himself. But the officers we pay to do the best they can for the country—have they done it? [MEMBERS: No!] The report speaks for itself. I hope the Government will take up this matter firmly, and as if they absolutely knew that the country meant it should be firmly taken up. And I do not care whether it be Mr. O'Connor or Mr.

Hodgson who is responsible, there is a day of reckoning coming for, and an explanation required from the man on whom the blame is placed. Of course, the work must go on; in fact, I believe Mr. Couston has been informed that perhaps his absence from the pipe-track might be more desirable than his presence; and we do not know what else has been done. But I would warn the Government that in connection with such a great work it would be most unwise to take drastic measures at once. This situation is not to be saved by a wholesale system of "sack." Before they discharge the men proceeding with the work, first find others better able to take it up; and it is possible, now that this matter has been brought prominently before the country, that there will be a wonderful change on that pipe-track, and a fear of retribution on that pipe-track; and probably the work will be performed a little more cheaply. One other point, and I will sit down. There appears to be, in the mind of Mr. Couston at any rate, almost a fixed idea that unless he carries on the work, the Government practically cannot do so; that there is a contract by which the pipes for the Coolgardie Water Scheme must be caulked by his machine, and his machine only. [MR. TAYLOR: Nonsense!] If it be true that there is such a contract, a fair arrangement may be made to overcome that difficulty; but if it be true—well, if such a contract were made by anyone employed by me, I should deal with the gentleman responsible in a manner at once sharp and quick. The fact, if it be a fact, does not reflect very much credit on those who have had to do with making this contract; but, bearing in mind the objections raised by a certain gentleman to letting out work by contract in this State because it was difficult to draw up specifications and conditions which an experienced contractor could not break through, it shows clearly what are the weaknesses of that contention. And it shows also that it is impossible for any one engineer to cope with every one of the divers public undertakings in this country with the skill of an expert. If it should be decided by whoever has to decide it—I do not know whether by this House or by the Government—that tenders should be invited for the caulking of these pipe-joints,

I think they should be invited from everybody; and I make bold to say I believe, judging from the evidence of Messrs. Couston and Finlayson, and from their demeanour when giving evidence, that if the Government have the right to call for tenders from outside people, Messrs. Couston and Finlayson's tender will be very much lower than the one recommended in the official document laid on the table of the House some time ago. There is now no time for me to analyse that document; but I have seen quite sufficient to make me sure that if the Government do not go thoroughly into this matter, the result will be disastrous. The Treasurer said he did not wish to raise any more loans; yet whether or not he wishes to do so he will have to raise them, or the scheme will "go bung"; because, if we are going to pour out money as it appears it has been poured out, this country cannot stand it; and there need not be any more worry about the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, because the burden of debt will be too big for us to carry, and there will be no more work for people here. I omitted to say, in reference to the man-holes which are dug for the men who are hand-caulking—I have not seen them, but I know of them—that they are rather larger than those required in using the machines; and it is submitted that the greater cost of the former should be added to the cost of hand-caulking. That is correct, I admit; but I do not admit that the difference in the cost is anything like the amount it is made to appear to be; because with the machine-caulking as we have it at present, there is a first charge of half-a-crown, then there is the maintenance of the machines, the cost of which we have not been able to ascertain, and on top of that is the cost of the machines; for when the job is done, what are we to do with them?

MEMBER: Sell them for scrap-iron.

MR. GEORGE: Though I am a purchaser of scrap-iron, I should draw the line at buying those machines. They are of no use for my work, and I should not be likely to purchase them; and if I would not purchase them, who would? The Government must bear in mind that unless they can get someone who is making exactly the same size of pipe as is used here, those machines will be a little

worse than scrap-iron, because scrap-iron could be used; and those machines will cost a little too much to take care of while the Government are trying to sell them; and perhaps they may never be sold at all. (General applause.)

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason): As it is the intention of the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to carry on the work hitherto undertaken by the select committee, I do not think it necessary for me to say very much on this occasion; but I should like to point out that when the proposals of Messrs. Couston, Finlayson, and Porritt were submitted to Parliament, several members twitted the Government, and certainly twitted me as Minister for Works for the time being, with the statement that the want of a sense of responsibility had been shown in this matter—[Mr. JACOB: Hear, hear!—by trying to throw upon Parliament the responsibility of rejecting or accepting those proposals. But I thought at the time that was a somewhat ungenerous attitude. I thought, and I think now, that any Government which had undertaken, whilst Parliament was actually sitting, to determine for itself on a course of such importance to the State as is embraced in those proposals, would have been lacking in a sense of what is due to Parliament and to the country.

I think the result of having submitted this proposal to Parliament, the result even already obtained by the appointment of a select committee, shows to the House that the action of the Government was the right one; for although the select committee had very little time to inquire into the matter, the investigations have been thorough so far as they have gone, and painstaking in the extreme. The result of these inquiries shows that at least it was necessary that the utmost light should be thrown on the Coolgardie Water Scheme. It is the intention of the Government, with the approval of the House, to appoint a commission to carry on the inquiry, to go still farther in the matter. I hope the commission will be comprised of the very best men to be obtained, so that farther investigation will be most thorough and searching, and that the finding of the commission will be in every way reliable. In this respect members must bear in mind that the Royal Commission proposed to be ap-

pointed will have greater power than has been given to any commission in the past, for a commission can now compel the attendance of witnesses and examine them on oath. I trust the inquiry by the commission will be thorough, and will be of immense benefit to the State. Members will realise already that if a Minister of the Crown had no other work on his hands than the great Coolgardie Water Scheme to look after, he would have sufficient to cause him very great anxiety if he determined to do his duty to the country. I can assure hon. members that this work has caused the greatest anxiety to me as the Minister in charge for the time being, and no doubt it has caused anxiety to Ministers in the past; and when I was met, as I was within a few days of taking office, with these proposals, I was convinced—I have no hesitation in saying it—that the working of the scheme in the past had been unsatisfactory. The hon. member for the Murray has made some reference to the absence of the Engineer-in-Chief from the State whilst the committee were inquiring into this matter; and I am sure that if the Engineer-in-Chief had any knowledge, or had the Government any knowledge, that during his absence this matter would have been gone into, then the Engineer-in-Chief would not have left this State. But the inference to be drawn from the remarks of the member for the Murray was that the absence of the Engineer-in-Chief was intentional.

MR. DOHERTY: No.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said it was open to that inference.

MR. DOHERTY: Not at all.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member need not advocate the cause of the member for the Murray. I am sure that hon. member is desirous of doing justice, and in order that I may show that the Engineer-in-Chief was not to blame I propose to give the actual facts. The Government of South Australia applied to the Government of this country to lend them the services of the Engineer-in-Chief, to consult with other engineers as to the outer harbour scheme for South Australia. The South Australian Government had only recently lent us the services of one of their high officers, and although it was recognised

that it would be inconvenient for the State to part with the services of the Engineer-in-Chief while Parliament was sitting—it was not anticipated there would be a select committee appointed here—I say the Government recognised that it would be inconvenient to part with the services of the Engineer-in-Chief when Parliament was in session; but seeing that the Government of South Australia had only recently, at great inconvenience to themselves, lent us an officer, the Government here could not but agree to the Engineer-in-Chief going to the other State. When that agreement was come to, neither the Government nor the Engineer-in-Chief had reason to believe that a select committee would be appointed. I am sure this explanation will be quite as acceptable to members as to the member for the Murray. I do not propose to say more than that. I welcome the appointment of a Royal Commission, and everything that can be done to assist members of the commission will be done, as it is the duty of the Government so to do.

MR. HOPKINS (Boulder): Briefly, I desire to support the proposition for the appointment of a Royal Commission, and to offer a word of appreciation and encouragement to the select committee who sat and have gone into the question so exhaustively during the limited time at their disposal. In doing that I would like to say that it is open to inference, from what the Minister for Works has stated, that a Royal Commission is to be appointed. After the inquiries that the select committee have made, a commission will not start straight off the scratch like a new body would; and I think I shall be voicing the sentiments of the members of the House when I say that if a commission be appointed, those members who have done such good work on the committee should be secured if possible to carry on the work, with such additions to their number as they themselves will best be able to advise the Government are necessary. I congratulate the member for the Murray. In sporting parlance, it is well to keep the run for the finish. The hon. member has made the best remarks of the session on this question. He has retained his vitality and has carried out the best work which he has attempted this session. He has finished in good

style, and I hope when the House meets again the good work which he has finished will be re-started and continued.

MR. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): I would like to say a few words on this question. Mr. Couston seems to have an idea that Mr. Crowder and myself have some personal antagonism to him. With reference to the land deal, Mr. Couston did not complete it, but his father-in-law did, which is pretty close. Although it was not himself, it was his father-in-law. At the time this matter was debated, I stated that this land matter was sufficient to cause an inquiry. Since then all this has come out. I have had a good deal of communication about this water scheme from the workers all along the line, and it goes to show that the work is not being carried out with advantage to the Government. The men who control the work, the patentees, foremen and sub-foremen, object to anything men may do contrary to their interests. To show the House what I mean I will read some correspondence. There is one section of the pipe track, Cunderdin to Merredin, a distance of seven miles. At present the joints along this section are being re-caulked. Had the machine worked effectively, and had it been so cheap and effective as we were led to anticipate, one would naturally think it would not be necessary to go over the work a second time. I have a few documents with reference to a man called Daniel Hishshon, the sub-foreman of that section, and his instructions from the department were that, in the event of joints being re-caulked, the numbers re-caulked should be shown on the daily progress report, and if any joints were re-caulked the date and numbers were to be sent to the office. Those were this man's instructions, and he was a sub-foreman on the line. He went along the line, and found that none of the joints had been properly caulked, and the machines had to go over those joints on the work. The man pointed out that the joint-rings in one instance were not level. There was a leaning to one side, and necessarily the man pointed out this. At the top there was too much lead, at the bottom there did not appear to be any, and as a consequence the machine did not do the work satisfactorily. He found in some instances the joints were uncovered,

and in some places the joint-rings could be shifted: they had no hold at all. He reported this, and from the moment he reported this transaction he was a marked man. I will read this document:—

Merredin, 1st February, 1902.

The bearer, Dan. Hishion, has worked as my assistant foreman for the last five months. He has always proved himself faithful in managing large gangs of men either on earth or rock work, also pipe-laying and jointing.

That is from the Coolgardie Water Scheme office, and is signed by Mr. Ferguson. Here is another, signed by Mr. Cowling:—

Cunderdin, 17th February, 1902.

To whom it may concern. This is to certify that Mr. Dan Hishion has been my sub-foreman on this section. I have always found that he has carried out his duties and my instructions to my entire satisfaction.—(Signed) J. COWLING, Foreman.

What do we find on the 14th February:—

Main Camp, Northam,
14th February, 1902.

Foreman Cowling, Cunderdin.

I wish you to at once dismiss D. Hishion. You will find herewith enclosed a railway ticket order to Northam, where he can be paid.

This document is signed by William Porritt. This man Hishion had carried out the instructions sent to him by the Works Department, and reported that the joint rings had no hold on the pipe, and immediately afterwards this man was marked. This did not occur in one instance, but from the top to the bottom all these men are in collusion—that is how this man puts it to me. This is only one small matter; but I can assure hon. members that the whole thing should be broken down. Couston and Finlayson have their own particular friends on the section. They may have brothers-in-law, sons-in-law, or connections, but from the sub-inspectors to the foremen, anyone who wishes to do his duty to the Government, there is no room for. This should not be the case. A man who is an inspector should report properly to the Government: he should be absolutely independent of the contractor, and give his services loyally to the country. In many instances camps have been shifted from one portion of the work to another. Then it has been found necessary to shift camp back again, and it costs £100 every time to shift camp. These things are going on every day. I have documentary

evidence which shows that one of the contractors did not feel inclined to continue certain of the men, because these men did not think the contractors were working in the interests of the Government. I am also told, although I cannot vouch for this, and it is a serious statement to make, but it is made by one who says he knows, that not alone in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme, but often-times in public works, a man who is a sub-ganger or ganger will be asked by a man, probably in a higher position than himself, for the loan of some money, and naturally to retain his position he finds that money. He subsequently finds that the borrower is not in a position to pay it, and this man says it is often the case that the money is put on the pay-sheet, and the Government pay-sheet is the sheet on which the sum is refunded.

MR. GEORGE: You want to get that proved.

MR. DOHERTY: It is a very serious statement to make. This man told me. I did not ask whether I could use his name: he made the statement, and I only give it for what it is worth. He says that this money is refunded, and it is not necessary for me to say that fictitious names are put on the pay-sheet.

MR. GEORGE: I rise to a point of order. I have no desire in any shape or form to burk these things, but a serious accusation like that should not be made in this House unless the man who made the statement is willing to come forward. It is very easy to give hearsay evidence, but I think the hon. member should satisfy himself the man will come forward and give his evidence, before he states it in this House.

MR. DOHERTY: In introducing the subject I distinctly said I gave the statement for what it was worth.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We will have you before the Royal Commission.

MR. DOHERTY: Personally I have no means of proving the statement. I made one mistake in mentioning a gentleman's name in this House, and I shall not do it again. I will see this gentleman, and if he is prepared to give evidence before the Royal Commission I will see that he comes forward. He made these statements, and I am sure he is quite prepared to give evidence. A

statement was also made—and this must be taken for what it is worth—with reference to the general working of the pipes. I understand the pipes had to be inspected at the various works at which they were manufactured. This man states to me that the first night he got on the work—it was on a night shift—he was met by one of the men in charge and shown a nice comfortable place. It was said, “There is a nice comfortable place, electric light, and a bottle of whisky: make yourself comfortable.” It meant to say that the man was to make himself comfortable there with a bottle of whisky, and not to inspect the pipes. He said he thought this was strange. During the night he heard the machine was not working at the time he thought it should be; that was at the time the pipes should be put in proper order. He went out and he found the pipe which should have been hot perfectly cold. The furnace was absolutely not used, and the man in the workshop said it had not been used.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: There is no furnace required in the manufacture of the pipes until the asphalt comes on.

MR. DOHERTY: I am just giving you exactly what I know. The joint rings—

MR. W. J. GEORGE: They could not weld the joint rings without a fire.

MR. DOHERTY: I am speaking of joint rings. I should have said the joint rings: they are part and parcel of the pipe, or will be. I am giving this—

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Are you starting in opposition to the *Sunday Times*?

MR. DOHERTY: I think the Minister for Mines should welcome any information that will enable this matter to be threshed out. I quite understand I am not in a position to speak in the House as the member for the Murray (Mr. George) did, because that hon. member was on the committee, and the able speech he gave was certainly one of the best I ever heard him make in this House. I merely bring these matters up so that inquiry may be made. I cannot vouch for all the statements, but I vouch for those with documentary evidence that a man who wanted to do his duty was sacked from the contract; and if that is not sufficient for the Government to remove these men from the position of

either contractors or employees, I do not know what evidence is required. I support the motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission.

[Sitting suspended for 40 minutes, at luncheon time.]

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): The last speaker told us some remarkable stories, and if we had plenty of time, these might be multiplied. I do not doubt that most of them have a very strong substratum of truth, so much so that, barring perhaps a slight inaccuracy here and there, we should not have found any one of them which would not stand looking into. Unfortunately, the time is short. Firstly, I wish to say that I and others are particularly well satisfied with the manner in which this select committee has gone about its work. In looking over the report we see that almost every member listened carefully and attentively to all the questions, and apparently tried to “get the hang” of the affair. It is unfortunate that those hon. members will not have an opportunity of finishing their work. I am particularly glad also that every speaker in this debate has complimented the member for the Murray (Mr. George) on the manner in which he presented the report of the select committee to the House. I am one of those who for some time past have been finding fault with the way in which this scheme has been conducted, so perhaps I appreciated a little more than some members the speech with which this debate was opened. It is well that all members have come to the conclusion that there must be a complete change in the conduct of the scheme, and that the Government are now stepping into the breach and are appointing a Royal Commission of inquiry. I hope very considerable powers will be given the commission, and that the Government themselves will act strongly. Hitherto the position of the Government has been that Ministers individually had opposed the initiation of the scheme, that they were simply carrying it on, and they did not perhaps like very well to inquire too closely into it, but preferred to trust the officers who had it in charge. That day has now gone by. The House has practically given into the hands of the Government supreme power, and it asks that whatever

the Government have to do they will do well and quickly, because the importance of this scheme is very great. If it were possible to have the water on the goldfields during the next summer, I believe every one of us would be willing to make a great sacrifice to attain that end; but personally I have grave doubts on the subject. However, it is to be hoped the Government will not spare anyone, but will put the scheme into such working order that no more delay and no more unnecessary expense will be incurred. I repeat, I do not think this scheme exceptional. From my observation, public works all over Australia seem to have, after a while, the effect of demoralising those who supervise them. That, so far as I can recollect, occurs in almost every Australian State, and that continues till a strong hand comes in and makes a change; so that there is an opportunity for a strong hand to completely reorganise this matter. I do not specially wish to single out any particular officer, but I am satisfied of this, and so I believe are many members, that the two men principally responsible are the Engineer-in-Chief and the Engineer for Water Supply; and these officers have shown themselves absolutely incapable of managing a business of this kind. From the manner in which they have managed this scheme they have made it almost impossible to continue departmental work. It must be impossible to continue departmental work on the system under which the works of this country have been conducted. We believe in having departmental work, but we declare that such work shall be conducted almost as quickly and generally as cheaply as any other system of work. We believe this department could be fairly well conducted and give generally a good deal of satisfaction. I have not had an opportunity of going through all the evidence; however, some startling things appear to me to require emphasis. One is a matter which has been referred to by the member for the Murray, in which it was absolutely necessary to have a lot of trenches made, and afterwards it was found that they had to be altered. When it was known that the alterations were going on, the supervisors did not keep the trenches ahead of the caulking, and the machines had to

remain idle for over a week, sometimes longer; but in many cases the work was prevented from being continued. There is one other point I would like to touch on, and then I shall finish. When we started to discuss the question it seemed to be assumed that the Couston contract was sacred. I hope the commission and the Ministry will look into the matter, because I do not believe the contract is sacred. I have never known a contract to be let in any country but the conditions could be altered. If it has been proved that the contract is unsatisfactory, surely it could be ended. I believe the Government have power to stop a contract, and, so far as I can see, it must be stopped. Some arrangements will have to be made, and I hope, and I believe, the Government will put an end to the present state of things, and say they will bring the water scheme to a successful issue.

Question put and passed.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

AMENDMENT RECONSIDERED.

The Legislative Council having disagreed to one amendment made by the Assembly, the Council's reasons for the same were now reconsidered in Committee.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. Illingworth): At this stage of the session it would be unwise to risk losing the Bill for the sake of retaining the longer term of lease desired by the Assembly. He moved that the amendment be not insisted on.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

MOTION—FIREWOOD SUPPLY ON GOLDFIELDS.

TO CONSTRUCT RAILWAY TWENTY-FIVE MILES.

MR. F. REID (Mount Burges) had given notice of the following motion:—

That, in view of the shortage of firewood on the Eastern Goldfields, this House is of opinion that, in order to avoid a disaster to the mining industry, and to make provision for a plentiful and cheap supply, facilities be afforded for increasing the marketable quantity of firewood by constructing 25 miles of railway line (start-

ing from Coolgardie), to tap the timber resources south of Coolgardie.

THE SPEAKER said: I notified last night that I should have to rule this motion out of order, it being substantially the same as one which has been before the House. I have since thought over the matter carefully, and I am still of the same opinion. The facts are these. The hon. member brought forward a motion similar to the one now on the Notice Paper, on 4th February. It was discussed for the two hours during which motions can be dealt with, unless the House agrees that motions shall be continued afterwards. On the House resuming after the refreshment hour, a motion was made that the discussion on the motion should be continued, and that was negatived. I consider this was tantamount to an expression of opinion on the part of the House against the motion. The motion disappeared from the Notice Paper; now it has been renewed; but it is the same question put again, and I have to rule that the motion being essentially the same as one which the House has disposed of, it is out of order.

RETURN—LAND SELECTION, CUNDERDIN.

HON. G. THROSSELL (Northam) moved:

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return of all lands selected under the Lands Act in the neighbourhood of Cunderdin. Such returns to show the dates of selection, the class under which selected, the names of the applicants, and those of the present holders.

Part of the information had been brought out by the select committee on the Coolgardie Water Scheme, but it was necessary that the rest of the information should be supplied.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—POLICE UNIFORMS CONTRACT.

MR. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie) moved:

That all papers in connection with Condit & Launder's contract for supply of police uniforms, together with all correspondence and recommendations of the Commissioner of Police on the subject, be laid upon the table of the House.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—LICENSE, ESSENTIAL OILS.

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

That all papers in connection with the application of Mr. Kirton, chemist, of Bunbury, for a license to erect a still to produce essential oils, be laid upon the table of the House.

The motion was moved on behalf of the member for Wellington. Mr. Kirton thought he had a grievance, and an opportunity should be given to peruse the papers.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no desire to oppose the motion, but what was to become of the papers, as Parliament would prorogue to-day.

THE SPEAKER: The information could not be given during this session.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government would be glad to produce the papers, but they could not be laid on the table. The same remark applied to other motions for papers. The member moving would have an opportunity of seeing the documents.

Question put and passed.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMEND- MENT BILL.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) had given notice to move for leave to introduce a Bill intituled an Act to amend the Legal Practitioners Act, 1893. He asked whether, if the motion were passed, it would further the Bill for next session.

THE SPEAKER: No; it would not.

MR. TAYLOR said he would bring forward the Bill early next session.

RETURN—STATE GOVERNORS, EMOLU- MENTS.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the Government should procure from the Governments of the other Federal States, and lay upon the table a return, showing—1, Population in each State; 2, Revenue in each State; 3, Salary of each State Governor; 4, Detailed account of emoluments of each State Governor; 5, Number of Governor's staff, and whether paid for by the Governor or the State.

The particulars could not be laid on the table this session, but they could be obtained and laid before members next session, when the subject would be sure to come up for discussion.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The words "and lay upon the table" should be struck out.

MR. HARPER: Then the papers might be placed in Ministers' pockets. No harm would be done by placing them so as to be available for members.

Question put and passed.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

MR. DAGLISH moved that the Orders of the Day be proceeded with, in lieu of the remaining motions on the Notice Paper.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	8

Majority	9
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AYES.

Mr. Daglish
Mr. Diamond
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hastie
Mr. Holman
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Oate
Mr. Purkiss
Mr. Rason
Mr. Reid
Mr. Reside
Mr. Wallace (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. George
Mr. Harper
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Nanson
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Yelverton (Teller).

Question thus passed.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Every society or body providing certain benefits, etc., to be registered:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It would be seen by the proviso at the end of the clause that "unless such society, club, or body of persons is registered under the principal Act," they would not obtain the benefit of this amending Bill. It was desirable that a small amendment should be made, so that it should not be compulsory in all cases to register under the Friendly Societies Act, but to allow some means by which persons should be at liberty to pay into a club without the club being registered under that Act.

MR. E. HASTIE: If amendments were to be made in the Bill at this late hour of the session, the effect would be

that the measure could not pass. The main object of the Bill was to put down action that at present was illegal, the Truck Act distinctly forbidding compulsory levies. It would be better to refrain from making amendments, and get the Bill through.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member was not quite right in his reference to the Truck Act. The public feeling in regard to this Bill appeared to be not so much against a levy being made, as against the mode for disposing of the money. If those contributing to the levy were allowed more say in the way it was to be expended, as to the medical advice to be obtained, and what amount should be paid for it, those objections would be met to a large extent by the provisions in this Bill. Even with the limited time at the disposal of the Committee, an effort should be made to make the Bill as good as possible. He had heard strong objections to the Bill both inside and outside this House.

MR. J. RESIDE: The Government had promised to get the Bill through, and now at the last moment they wished to amend it. He had told the Minister for Mines he was willing to accept an amendment, if the Minister could draft one that would meet both cases; but the Government failed to get that amendment drafted; therefore, he was now going to stand to the Bill as printed, rather than lose the whole thing. Certainly opposition to the measure should not come from the Treasury benches.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN: The Bill, as drafted just met the case. In New South Wales a similar measure was introduced about nine years ago, and immediately the Government brought in an Act to compel societies to register under the Friendly Societies Act, the evil which existed was done away with.

DR. HICKS: Notwithstanding anything that might be said to the contrary, there was simply a war to the death between the friendly societies and the medical profession in regard to this Bill. What lay at the bottom was "sweating," and if members representing labour went fully into the question—

MR. JOHNSON: They had been discussing it for the last five years.

DR. HICKS: At one time the doctors were engaged by the friendly societies at

Kalgoorlie, who paid them at the rate of 30s. per member a year. He did not know how the dispute arose, but one did arise, and the friendly societies imported a medical man, paying him 12s. a year per member. He (Dr. Hicks) understood that 30s. a year worked out at 1s. 6d. for each attendance. What would 12s. work out at? Roughly, about 8d. Could people expect to have adequate treatment for 8d.?

MR. HASTIE: Doctors wanted £2 12s.

DR. HICKS: No medical man could do justice to a patient on the first examination under 20 minutes to 30 minutes. It would only work out roughly at 2s. an hour; and was that fair treatment to medical men? In addition to that, a medical man might have to drive two or three miles to see a patient—he believed the limit was three miles. Shortly after he came down from the North and took up his residence at Fremantle, he was asked by the doctors there to meet the friendly societies' representatives.

MR. DAGLISH rose to a point of order. There was nothing in Clause 3 about payment of a doctor.

DR. HICKS said he was using it as an argument to prove that sweating was the essence of the Bill.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member was making a second-reading speech on Clause 3.

DR. HICKS: It was with the levy he was dealing. At a conference between medical men and friendly societies at Fremantle, which he attended, it was arranged that a committee of the medical men should meet delegates from the friendly societies; but the friendly societies, when written to, refused absolutely to confer. On good authority he was informed that the friendly societies' funds were allocated in two ways—for the payment of medical men, and for sick and provident purposes. The sick fund happened to be in an affluent condition, but the medical fund was insufficient to meet requirements; so rather than draw from the larger fund to reinforce the smaller, the friendly societies determined to "sweat" the doctors, and they imported a medical man to do their work at a reduced rate.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The societies could not transfer moneys from one fund to another.

DR. HICKS: They could have altered their rules.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

DR. HICKS: It was this circumstance that gave rise to the belief that the societies were sweating the doctors. The 12s. per year paid by the societies worked out at 3s. per head, whereas in England the rate was 4s. and 4s. 4d. per head, though wages were three times higher here than there. If it were necessary for the working man to have two or three times more than a living wage, the doctor's remuneration should be proportionately increased. What was the result of cutting down rates?

MR. DAGLISH: Was the hon. member in order? The sub-clause enacted that friendly societies providing benefits must be registered, and did not touch the rights of doctors.

THE CHAIRMAN: It was not obvious how the hon. member's remarks applied to the sub-clause.

DR. HICKS: By the clause, every provident society had to register as a friendly society. That gave a monopoly to friendly societies. Labour members, he thought, objected to monopolies.

LABOUR MEMBER: The doctors wanted monopolies.

DR. HICKS: Medical men did not want monopolies. No men were more generous than the medical profession: the working men were well treated. With regard to the levy that he believed was started at Kalgoorlie. It was the custom at the Golden Horseshoe and Lake View Consols mines to exact a shilling from all employees. One of these mines paid the amount of the levy to one medical man; and the other mine paid the money to be divided between the medical men who went in for contract work at Kalgoorlie. There were other mines at Kalgoorlie the management of which allowed men belonging to a friendly society not to pay into the levy. There were 2,000 or 3,000 men employed on the mines, whereas there were belonging to friendly societies something like 1,300 men. It seemed that 2,000 men might belong to friendly societies, but would not join the regular friendly societies. It looked as if the minority wished to bring in a regulation to block everyone else.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Some miners could not join friendly societies.

DR. HICKS: Then he would have to compare the conditions that existed between the men from whom a levy was exacted and the friendly societies. Men who paid the levy were entitled to medical or surgical treatment.

MR. HOLMAN: What had this to do with "levy"?

DR. HICKS: "Levy" was referred to in Sub-clause (b). He wished to show that a workman on entering employment in a mine where a levy was made by the manager was entitled to medical attendance forthwith, whereas friendly societies did not allow their members to enjoy privileges until they had been members for at least six months. The Colonial Secretary had said these societies would not accept as members any persons over 40 years of age, and of course a large number of miners on the goldfields were over 40 years of age. Lastly, he wished to say emphatically that if the system of levy were done away with and a monopoly was granted to the friendly societies, the public purse would suffer to a large extent. Doctors who attended miners where the levy was exacted guaranteed hospital fees to sick members when their cases were sufficiently serious to require treatment in a hospital. During the last twelve months no less than £1,100 were paid in this way to the hospitals at Kalgoorlie; the Government hospital securing £400 and the private hospitals £700. If the Government voted for doing away with the levy, they must be prepared to pay the difference. Were they prepared?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

DR. HICKS: There were considerable advantages accruing to workmen who paid the levy. He did not altogether agree with the system, because every man should be entitled to spend as he pleased the money he earned. But, at the same time, it was not in the workmen's interest that friendly societies should have control.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: They wanted to control the spending of their own money, and they did not get that under the present Act.

DR. HICKS: They wanted to sweat the doctors; they wanted monopoly; and another point against it was the contract system. He thought those members who represented Labour objected to the contract system; yet in this Bill they wanted

sweating; they also asked for a monopoly, and lastly they wanted private contracts.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Not sweating, surely!

DR. HICKS: Yes.

POINTS OF ORDER.

MR. DAGLISH again rose to a point of order. A little while ago the Chairman ruled that the member for Roebourne (Dr. Hicks) was out of order; but now the hon. member was simply proposing to repeat, as he had done several times, those arguments that were ruled out of order.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member had wandered from the subject of levies.

MR. A. E. THOMAS: If a member came in who had not heard some of the arguments of another member, was it competent for that member to repeat the arguments so that the man who had just come in might be fully seised of them. (General laughter.)

THE CHAIRMAN: It was very undesirable.

MR. W. J. GEORGE rose to a point of order. The member who had been speaking used the word "sweating." Surely it was competent for a member, in the exercise of his indignation at the idea of anything like sweating going on, to ask what the hon. member meant; otherwise how could one reasonably give a vote in connection with the matter?

MR. HASTIE: They would sweat the hon. member.

MR. GEORGE said he could sweat the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) out of existence, if that hon. member would work alongside of him for a bit.

MEMBERS: Question!

MR. JACOBY: No. Order!

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should keep to the clause under discussion.

DEBATE RESUMED.

DR. HICKS: Paragraph (b) of Clause 3 spoke of subscriptions or payments of, or levies upon, any person. He did not rise to speak in favour of the medical profession.

MR. TAYLOR: No one would accuse the hon. member of that.

DR. HICKS: Hon. members insinuated it. No doubt members would have ample time to reply. (Laughter.) Why did not members force the Bill on

before, if they had had it under consideration for about five years, as they said?

POINTS OF ORDER.

MR. HASTIE: Was the hon. member in order in encouraging people to do criminal things by making this levy, which was made a crime?

MR. RESIDE: Was the hon. member (Dr. Hicks) in order in deliberately obstructing and stonewalling the business of the House?

MR. JACOBY: How did the hon. member (Mr. Reside) know he was stonewalling?

MR. THOMAS: Was the member for Hannans (Mr. Reside) in order in imputing false motives to another member?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order in imputing improper motives.

MR. THOMAS asked if he would be in order in calling upon the hon. member to withdraw.

MR. DAGLISH moved that the question be now put.

MR. THOMAS asked, could he rise to a point of order?

THE CHAIRMAN: At this stage there could be no discussion.

MR. THOMAS: Might the Chairman's ruling be challenged?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. THOMAS: The Standing Orders laid down that when any member of the House rose to a point of order, the member previously speaking should resume his seat, and that as soon as the point of order was disposed of, the original speaker would be in possession of the floor unless the point of order were upheld. Another Standing Order provided that it was not competent for any member of the House to move "that the question be now put" while another member had possession of the floor.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could move that the Chairman's ruling be not agreed to.

MR. THOMAS: With all due deference to the Chair, he moved accordingly.

THE CHAIRMAN (after consulting with the Speaker): The hon. member must bring up his point of order in writing.

[Pause ensued.]

MR. JOHNSON: Should we be in order in going on with the discussion of the Bill, prior to the decision on the question of order?

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. HOLMAN: Was a member in order in bringing business before the Committee in such a manner that members did not know exactly what they were doing?

THE CHAIRMAN: As there was nothing before the Committee to discuss, hon. members should not make remarks.

MR. HASTIE called the Chairman's attention to the fact that the member for Dundas was wasting the time of the House by turning over the leaves of books. He was unnecessarily wasting the time.

MR. THOMAS [at the table, looking up Standing Orders] said he assumed he was in order in speaking from the table, and he craved the indulgence of members while he repudiated any such accusation as that which the member for Kanowna had just made. When he had concluded these remarks, he would ask whether the hon. member was in order in imputing such motives. He disagreed with the Chairman's ruling, and had moved that the ruling be not agreed to because no member was competent to rise and move "That the question be now put," while another member was in possession of the floor. Standing Order 140 stated—

MR. HASTIE: This question was to be left to the Speaker to decide. The member for Dundas was now deliberately wasting time for the purpose of assisting some of his friends to break the law.

MR. THOMAS: On a point of order and privilege, he asked for the ruling of the Chairman, whether the hon. member was in order in imputing false motives?

MR. HASTIE: As there was no chance of coming to a decision, he begged to move "That the Chairman do leave the Chair."

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would resume his seat.

[Pause ensued, **MR. THOMAS** still looking up the Standing Orders before submitting his point of order in writing.]

SUMMONS TO MEMBERS— PROROGATION.

BLACK ROD appeared at the Bar (five minutes past 3 o'clock), and summoned members of the Legislative Assembly to attend His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber.

MR. SPEAKER and hon. members proceeded accordingly to the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency was pleased to give assent to Bills of the

session; and His Excellency also delivered an address, proroguing Parliament. [*Vide* Council proceedings, *ante*.]
The session then closed.