

THE TREASURER: It was impossible to state offhand what record was made of the depreciation of the securities; but he would make careful inquiries. If without great cost a return could be published with the balance-sheet, showing securities and their value, that would be done at the next annual balance.

MR. BATH: In England, the securities had depreciated by 10 millions on 150 millions.

THE TREASURER: The British Savings Bank invested its funds in consols, which fluctuated greatly. A portion of our Savings Bank funds was invested in our own inscribed stock, which fluctuated somewhat; but whether we should take much notice of such small fluctuations was questionable.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 39—Power to make regulations:

MR. HORAN: Would the regulations made under Subclause (c) govern clauses 10 and 17? If not, he must ask for a recommitment.

THE TREASURER: Those clauses had been passed. Any regulations made must be in accordance with the powers conferred by the Bill, and could not override a clause.

MR. BATH: They ought not, but they frequently did.

THE TREASURER: If so, they were *ultra vires*, and could be upset.

Clause passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

PRISONS ACT AMENDMENT, received from the Legislative Council.

FREMANTLE JOCKEY CLUB TRUST FUNDS, received from the Legislative Council.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:42 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 25th July, 1906.

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THE SPEAKER (Hon. T. F. Quinlan) took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

NOTICE OF QUESTION, IRREGULAR.

MR. JOHNSON gave notice of a question which he purposed to ask Mr. H. Brown.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in asking such a question.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, PRIVILEGES AND CLERKS' HOURS.

MR. H. BROWN asked the Treasurer: 1, Have instructions been issued to the Government Printer to abolish the privileges of the permanent hands in the Government Printing Office? 2, The hours of work for the clerical staff in the Government Printing Office?

THE TREASURER replied: 1, No. The Public Service Commissioner has been requested to ascertain what rights and privileges, if any, appertain to the staff of the Government Printing Office. 2, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with three-quarters of an hour for dinner; Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

QUESTION—CATTLE TICK REGULATION.

MR. GORDON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has the regulation that all tick cattle must be conveyed to the gold-fields in zinc-lined trucks been withdrawn? 2, If not, why were ticked cattle allowed to be trucked away lately in ordinary cattle trucks?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: 1, Zinc-lined trucks were not specified in the regulation published on the 15th June last. 2, As there was an in-

sufficient supply of specially constructed trucks, provision has been made to set apart a certain number of trucks to be used exclusively for the conveyance of tick cattle to the fields.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the **TREASURER**: Return showing amounts paid to sundry newspapers for advertising, moved for by Mr. Holman.

By the **MINISTER FOR MINES**: Sons of Gwalia mine boiler explosion, additional papers.

BILLS—FIRST READING.

Fremantle Reserves (sale), introduced by the **PREMIER**.

Nelson Agricultural Society Lands Sale, introduced by the **PREMIER**.

Employment Brokers Act Amendment, introduced by Mr. A. J. WILSON.

RETURN—RAILWAYS CONSTRUCTION, COMPARATIVE COST.

MR. J. EWING (Collie) moved—

That a return be laid upon the table, showing the cost of the following railways:—1, Fremantle-Jandakot; 2, Northam-Goomalling; 3, Collie-Narrogin (50-mile section from Narrogin).

These railways had been constructed by day labour. He was not necessarily in opposition to the principle, but it would be satisfactory to know the cost of these railways for the sake of comparison.

THE PREMIER: Did the hon. member require merely the total cost of the construction?

MR. EWING: Unnecessary details were not required. He only desired the cost per mile, so that a fair comparison could be made.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison) moved an amendment—

That the words "and the mileage" be inserted after "cost of construction," also that the following words be added to the motion:—"4, Collie-Collie-Boulder; 5, Timber Hovors' Co-operative Society's Railway at Collie."

The Collie to Collie-Boulder line had been constructed by contract. It was advisable to have a return as to the cost of a railway constructed by contract for the purpose of comparison.

THE PREMIER: The Co-operative Society's line was a private railway.

MR. HOLMAN: Yes; but the Government having given assistance towards its construction, should be able to get the information required.

THE PREMIER: To get the information would delay the return.

MR. HOLMAN: The information in regard to the other lines could be supplied at once. We could wait for the information in regard to the co-operative line.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning): A return such as was asked for would be useless unless details were given in regard to mileage, the cost of construction of each mile, and the different valuations. To divide a lump sum by the number of miles to arrive at the cost per mile would be misleading in some directions, because of the difference in the cost of cuttings and other expensive works. One railway could not be compared with another.

MR. HOLMAN: All the lines were somewhat similar.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: A proper return would entail a great deal of labour.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): There was a difference in the cost of constructing different railways because of engineering difficulties, but members had sufficient intelligence to consider that aspect of the question when dealing with a return. The Collie lines were somewhat similar to those mentioned in the motion; and by a comparison we could see as close as possible the cost of constructing lines by contract as against departmental construction. It would be idle to deal in this way with the whole railway system, but the lines mentioned in the motion and amendment were short railways that had been recently constructed, and the work involved in preparing the return would not be so great as anticipated by the member for Katanning.

MR. EWING accepted the amendment. So far as the Co-operative line was concerned much inquiry and work would be entailed, but there was no reason why the successful building of that railway should not be placed before the public. He considered members should endeavour as far as possible, in regard to these returns, to minimise the work put on departmental officers, but this information asked for would be of great value in showing whether the depart-

mental construction of railways was preferable to the contract system. He hoped the Premier would see his way to give the fullest information, so that there might be no misunderstanding in the future as to the better system to adopt.

Question stated; the amendment of the member for Murchison having been accepted by the mover, became embodied in the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): Inquiries would have to be made from the Co-operative Society to obtain the information asked for. It would be preferable if we were going into the whole question that the quantities should be given, so that we could arrive at the cost per yard of forming and earthworks, and of culverts. There was a vast difference between the lines mentioned and the light agricultural railways now being constructed; and if it was sought to obtain a comparison in regard to the agricultural railways the object would not be achieved. The agricultural railways were being constructed under different specifications. There was not a foot of bank or cutting on any of the agricultural railways being constructed, except at crossings or gullies, so for the purpose of comparison the return would be of no value. At the same time he was prepared to meet the wishes of members and to give as much information as possible.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): The inclusion of the Co-operative line was unfortunate, because no railway had been constructed under similar conditions. The members of the society got certain ground made available for their operations, and the miners in Collie and the timber hewers in the vicinity all rolled up and put their labour into the construction of the line for nothing. They gave their labour for practically nothing, and it was quite impossible, seeing that the work was done in this way, all co-operating for the benefit of one another, that we could get any definite information. The earthworks were carried out under these conditions, and the labour was paid for by so many shares in the concern; therefore it was impossible to get a fair, accurate, or reasonable comparison. Was it fair to ask the Government to put these people to the trouble and expense of making out

a return? Even if it were possible to get the information, it was very doubtful whether it would be of any possible utility. If members required a comparison, it would be fairer to take some of the timber companies' lines and ask the companies to give a return of the cost. If that were done, we would have a chance of getting a fair and accurate comparison of lines constructed by private enterprise and those constructed under departmental supervision. This motion asked the co-operative people to give information which would be a great trouble and expense to them to supply. Personally he knew these people could not afford to go to the trouble and expense of preparing the return. A number of these men to whom the society owed money had been able to get only 75 per cent. of the money due to them for work done in connection with the concern, and it was not fair to ask them to supply the information. He moved an amendment—

That the word, "5, Timber Hewers' Co-operative Society's railway at Collie," be struck out.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): In regard to this return, accepting the object of the member for Collie in moving it, he agreed with the Premier that the member would fail in securing anything like an equitable comparison between the rival systems. Even if we obtained the cost per yard of the material shifted, that would not be a fair comparison, because in some places the cost of shifting the material might be 2s. 6d. a yard, and in another place it might only cost 1s. a yard. The only possible way in which we could arrive at any fair comparison between the rival systems was to take one railway where the country traversed was of a uniform nature, and cut it up into different sections, allowing one section to be done on the contract system and the other by day labour. As far as the proposal to include the Co-operative Hewers' Association line was concerned, he believed that at the outset they did intend to secure particulars to know exactly what the line had cost them, and if they did that, there would be no difficulty or expense in supplying the information as desired by the member for Murchison. But it must be borne in mind that a resolution of the House could not compel

these people to give the information if it involved them in expense. It would only involve a note from the Premier asking them to supply certain information. If they could give the information it would be supplied, but the Premier was not in a position to insist that they should go to the expense of supplying the return. The fact remained that if they could supply the information without trouble or expense, they would be willing to supply it, and there was no reason why the proposal should not be embodied in the motion.

MR. H. BROWN (Perth) seconded the amendment.

MR. JOHNSON (Guildford): If opposition to the motion would not be interpreted as a desire to stop inquiry into the cost of the railways he would oppose the whole motion, for, as members knew, he had paid considerable attention to the cost of two of these railways, and if, by inquiring into the cost of these railways, information could be obtained, he knew that it would be found that departmental labour was cheaper than contract. The hon. member would not get any information as the result of the motion. He asked for information regarding the Fremantle-Jandakot line and the Collie-Narrogin railway. Both these railways were constructed by day labour, but one could not draw any comparison between the two railways. Take the Fremantle-Jandakot line: along that line there were large cuttings, he believed one cutting was through limestone 27 feet; while on the Collie-Narrogin line, there were practically no cuttings at all; consequently the Collie-Narrogin railway was built at a considerably cheaper cost than the Fremantle-Jandakot line. At the same time, he was of opinion, comparing the work, that the Jandakot railway was the cheaper; there was better value for the money. Members must realise they would not get any information if the motion were passed, and he opposed it because he did not think it right for members to move motions which would cost the country a considerable sum of money when we would get no benefit. It was desirable to try and put a stop to these motions. If the motion would assist members in arriving at a conclusion as to the value of departmental work *versus* contract work, no one

would support this motion more heartily than he would. He had appealed to the Government to appoint an expert board to go into this question. There had been railways built by contract, and when he was Minister for Works he had railways built by day labour; and he was anxious to get a definite decision as to which system was the cheaper and better, in the interests of the country. The Government would not make the inquiry, and no information could be obtained by a motion of this description. The Government should endeavour to stop motions of this kind, unless members when moving them could give some definite assurance that the information gained would be of some value to the House.

MR. EWING (unover): The member for Guildford, who had had considerable experience in the Works Department, assured the House that the information sought to be obtained would be worthless. Then how were members to tell which was the cheaper system, if we did not get the papers placed before members? He did not want to put the country to unnecessary expense, but he desired as a public man to know which system was better in the interests of the State. The member assured the House that we could not get the information in this way. He (Mr. Ewing) hoped to get it. Although he agreed to the Co-operative Society at Collie being included in the motion, he could not ask this society to go to the expense of getting out the return. If they were willing to give the information, it would be all right. He would like the motion passed, to see if the information would be of some advantage to members.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont) agreed with the protest against the country being put to the expense of supplying information of this character. When he read the motion tabled by the member for Collie (Mr. Ewing) he thought at first there could be no objection to it, but gathering from the hon. member's remarks just now that he sought the information with the object of trying to find out the cheaper system of building railways, whether departmentally or by contract, one was strongly of opinion that the information asked for here would not give us any definite proof. The only way to find out the cheapest system was to follow the procedure

started in regard to the three railways lately approved, the Government calling for tenders from contractors and also telling the department that they were to tender.

MR. TAYLOR: Alterations and extras made a lot of difference at times.

MR. FOULKES: That could be ascertained. Taking the line from Fremantle to Jandakot, it all depended on what cuttings had to be made and what particular expenses had to be incurred in connection with that work.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): If it would meet the wishes of members, he would arrange that information should be supplied under four headings, namely: survey and resumption, water supply, rails and fastenings, and construction. As he had pointed out before, for purposes of comparison it was absolutely ridiculous to compare the specifications of standard lines which had been constructed with specifications in force in connection with the lines now to be made. In connection with these new lines, in the first place with regard to sleepers, instead of using ordinary hewn sleepers they were using half round sleepers made from the local timber; in the other case the timber had to be conveyed a considerable distance. In regard to the question asked by the hon. member's motion, he happened to have information in relation to the cost of construction of the Collie-Narrogin Railway. The two sections were not kept distinct, but the portion from Narrogin to Darkan had been kept as one section. The cost of that amounted to £2,450 per mile, made up as follows: Survey and resumption, £28; water supply, £87; rails and fastenings, £714; construction, £1,621. So it would be apparent to members that in this case the cost of construction was something like 50 per cent. more than the total cost per mile of the light lines, including rails and fastenings. He wished to mention that if the return were supplied it would not give members very much information that would be of value for the purpose of comparison.

MR. HOLMAN hoped that the Co-operative line would not be struck out of the motion. His reason for moving the inclusion of the two lines was that the conditions there were somewhat similar. The country was somewhat similar,

and the provisions for obtaining the sleepers were somewhat similar. There had been no cost for carriage of sleepers, and all he desired to show was that the system existing in the days when the Collie coal line was constructed was altogether different from the system of constructing lines at the present time. He understood fairly well when the member for Collie was moving his motion, that we could not, by the return he asked for, get a comparative statement showing the difference in the cost, and one object in moving the amendment was to draw attention to that. The fact that the Premier had information in connection with some of these lines, and the manner in which the member for Collie moved his motion without giving any information, made one wonder whether the motion was moved at the instigation of the member for Collie or not.

THE PREMIER had absolutely had no knowledge of it at all.

MR. HOLMAN said he did not desire to see the Collie Co-operative Company put to any expense at all; far from it. If the information would be of any benefit it would be obtained, and as to the expense he hoped the Government would see that it did not fall upon the company.

Amendment (to strike out the Co-operative railway) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	25
Noes	...	...	...	14
Majority for ...				11

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brown	Mr. Bathj
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Collier
Mr. Davies	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Eddy	Mr. Holman
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Lynch
Mr. Gull	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Troy
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Walker
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Ware;
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Heitmann (Teller).
Mr. Male	
Mr. N. J. Moore	
Mr. S. F. Moore	
Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Price	
Mr. Smith	
Mr. Stone	
Mr. Varyard	
Mr. A. J. Wilson	
Mr. F. Wilson	
Mr. Hardwick (Teller).	

Amendment thus passed.

MR. JOHNSON: That portion of the motion which had been negatived was equally as desirable and useful as the other portion; consequently now the House had decided that one portion was undesirable, it was his intention to vote against the lot.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member had already spoken on that, and had no right to speak again on the same question.

Main question put, and a division called for.

MR. BATH: There was only one "aye."

MEMBERS: Three or four.

MR. SPEAKER: They were very low, but he certainly heard more than one.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	14
Noes	...	...	24

Majority against ... 10

AYES.
 Mr. Brown
 Mr. Butcher
 Mr. Eddy
 Mr. Ewing
 Mr. Gregory
 Mr. Hayward
 Mr. Keenan
 Mr. McLarty
 Mr. N. J. Moore
 Mr. S. F. Moore
 Mr. Price
 Mr. Varyard
 Mr. F. Wilson
 Mr. Hardwick (Teller).

NOES.
 Mr. Barnett
 Mr. Bath
 Mr. Bolton
 Mr. Collier
 Mr. Cowcher
 Mr. Davies
 Mr. Foulkes
 Mr. Gordon
 Mr. Gull
 Mr. Hicks
 Mr. Holman
 Mr. Hudson
 Mr. Illingworth
 Mr. Johnson
 Mr. Lynch
 Mr. Male
 Mr. Scaddan
 Mr. Smith
 Mr. Taylor
 Mr. Troy
 Mr. Walker
 Mr. Ware
 Mr. A. J. Wilson
 Mr. Heitmann (Teller).

Question thus negatived.

MOTION—GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, TO INQUIRE.

AMENDMENT. DIVISIONS.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest) moved:

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the administration and general efficiency of the Government Printing Office. He said: It will be remembered that when discussing the Supply Bill the other evening, on the item "Printing" I deemed it necessary to make some comments regarding the position of the Government Printing Office. I was particularly careful to avoid reflecting in any manner whatever on the character of any person connected with that office. I started by giving utterance to what is a

commonly-received opinion as to the Government Printing Office; namely, that it is generally regarded by the public, or at all events by a very considerable portion of the public, as an establishment where certain employees were enabled to do practically just as they liked. I reiterate the statement that such has been the common conception of the Government Printing Office, practically ever since it has been a Government Printing Office at all. The expenditure of this department has been the subject of repeated references whenever the Estimates were under review; and on several such occasions when I have been present I have personally drawn attention to the fact that this was a branch which might, with considerable advantage to the State, be placed on a higher basis, or brought up to a higher standard of efficiency, which efficiency might be attained with a considerable saving to the Government. Speaking on the Supply Bill, I went so far as to say that the department has been generally regarded as a sort of old men's depot for people who, by some means or other, have got behind the ordinary up-to-date methods of printing. That is my own personal opinion, and my opinion has been formed largely from the common knowledge which one gains by hearing similar statements repeated by people who are supposed to know something about the department. Another statement which I made on that occasion was to the effect that the establishment contained too many hand operators—implying, of course, that when the time arrived that the department should be brought up to date, some of those hand operators might have to be dispensed with and their places taken by the latest machines, such as linotypes, which are used in all modern printing establishments for the setting up of continuous work like the reports of the proceedings of this House recorded in *Hansard*. We find—I do not know whether in consequence of remarks of mine, or remarks made by a member who sits immediately behind me (Mr. Horan), or by a member who sits on this front Opposition cross-bench (Mr. Walker)—that a howl of indignation seemed to sweep through the ranks of the Government Printing Office employees; and

they held a meeting at which they indulged in some very extravagant language, and expressed their intention of doing almost anything and everything to deal with what they were pleased to term the scurrilous and scandalous attack made upon them in this House. I wish to say that I made no attack whatever on the men employed in the Printing Office, although I am accused by some of them of having made such attack. I said at the very outset of my remarks: "No one could gainsay the fact that in connection with the Government Printing Office a condition of affairs existed which was not creditable to the administration." And I said that on well-founded information. It is common knowledge in this Parliament that the administration of the Government Printing Office has not by a long way been what it ought to have been. I happen to know that recent changes have taken place in the administration; and the proof of what I said here on the Supply Bill lies in the fact that the new Government Printer has deemed it necessary to write, I was about to say an almost innumerable number of minutes to his assistant officers regarding the administration of his department. The Government know very well that what I say in this connection is perfectly true.

THE TREASURER: How do you know anything about "minutes"?

MR. WILSON: I will ask the Treasurer to give me notice of that question. I am quite satisfied that my statement must have been fairly near the mark, or he would not have been so anxious to know the source of my information. But the fact remains that already the infusion of new blood at the head of this department has been responsible for recommendations which will make for its greater efficiency. And because I know that circumstance, and know that departmental employees have complained of certain statements made by me, I want a select committee to investigate the Printing Office, so that the committee may be enabled in all probability, if circumstances warrant it, to strengthen the hands of the recently-appointed Government Printer. There are certain officials connected with the public service whose hands need strengthening if we want efficiency and effective administra-

tion—such men, for instance, as the Public Service Commissioner, the Auditor General, and perhaps in a slightly less degree the Government Printer. And the reason why the Government Printer's hands need strengthening is because the employees of the Government Printing Office have for too long in this country been a more powerful factor in politics than they have had any right to be.

MR. SCADDAN: Repeat.

MR. WILSON: I do not wish to repeat the inane interjection of somebody behind me. But it is well known that the Government Printing Office employees have been able to use their power and exert on politics an influence out of all proportion to that exercised by any other portion of the public service of this State. [MEMBER: In the metropolitan area.] I admit, in the metropolitan area. And the probabilities are that if they did not exercise such influence in the metropolitan area, we should have heard more from metropolitan members of the maladministration of this department in the past.

MR. SCADDAN: The Printing Office employees have only one vote each.

MR. WILSON: If they had a few votes in the hon. member's electorate, perhaps he would not be here. The hon. member is very good at making inane interjections, quite in keeping with the general character of people who have a habit of sailing under false colours and assumed names, at times. I have been attacked, and certain statements have been made—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not read from any report of this session's debates.

MR. WILSON: I am only refreshing my memory from the extracts, and am not quoting them at all. I wish here to enter my protest against the power and influence which these people can exercise in the counsels of this State; and I wish them distinctly to understand that I at all events will not allow the employees of the Government Printing Office or of any other department to browbeat me because of my public actions. I wish them distinctly to understand that if I think a certain position is right, I will take that position in what I believe to be the best interests of the whole of the State. What do we find these employees doing? In the first place, they are distinctly

unfair. They make no distinction whatever between the utterances of members here; and they virtually imply that I reflected upon their characters because of certain references which were made, or seem to have been made, by another member of this House. The least we could expect them to do was to be fair in their criticisms. Not that I object to their criticisms in the main; but I believe in fair play always. I believe in always giving fair play, and I expect it always from anybody else. When I found these gentlemen taking such strong exception to the statements made here in regard to the general efficiency of the department, I felt it was right to give them an inquiry—an opportunity at all events to prove whether my statements were wrong, or whether their statements were absolutely correct. Consequently, I took the first opportunity of giving notice in this Chamber that I would move for the appointment of a select committee to make this investigation. I am quite satisfied that when the investigation is made, should the House agree to it, the effect will be to substantiate right to the hilt every statement I have made in this House in regard to the administration and general efficiency of the Government Printing Office. I am not asking for any inquiry into the moral character of these gentlemen; but when we find a big department like this responsible for so much extravagance and for the expenditure of so large an amount of money, I consider the House is entitled to know whether or not it is possible to effect economies, and at the same time to improve the general efficiency of the department. I am not worrying personally about delays that may have occurred with regard to the production of periodical papers, reports, or returns from the Government Printing Office, because I do not think that the Printing Office is responsible for that sort of thing. I think it lies on those who are responsible for supplying the information that is set up in cold type in the Government Printing Office itself. That the statement I made in regard to the general efficiency of the department is true, is proved by these very gentlemen themselves who made such a great song, and rose to more or less righteous indignation; because they admit that, while they

have a good plant and good machinery, perhaps the latest in the bookbinding department and the latest paper-ruling machinery, the bringing in of linotype printers—and there is not a linotype in the department, as there ought to be, to handle copy such as we have in *Hansard* and other works of that nature, which is all set up by hand operators—would affect the hand operators. I can understand naturally enough that there would be objection on the part of the employees. There is objection on the part of all industrial employees every time it is proposed to adopt more modern methods. I am quite sure that if the system which obtains in the composing room of the Government Printing Office in regard to the setting up of works like *Hansard* and similar periodicals, such as the *Year Book*, responsible for the employment of a considerable number of men, be the most economical and best system, it seems hard to realise how in all other printing establishments of any size or reputation at all more modern methods are adopted, and machinery is brought in to obtain the greatest volume of returns at the minimum of expense. If we are to follow out the line of philosophy that we should not have machinery because it would throw men out of work, we would very soon be left far in the rear in regard to our position in the world as a nation. Our ability to keep up in the race of civilisation depends on our attitude towards the adoption of the most modern methods in every department of life. We want to find out whether the most up-to-date, the most modern and most efficient machinery is being used in the Government Printing Office, or to see whether or not by the adoption of the most modern machinery we may not be able to economise in the expenditure of the department while increasing its general efficiency. Before I resume my seat I want to take strong exception to a statement made by a gentleman named Bolt. This gentleman seems to me as if, like others, he had bolted and did not know exactly what he said. These gentlemen were making irresponsible statements with all the fire, enthusiasm, and determination of, and even excelling, the member for Mt. Margaret, concerning the member for Kanowna, and then swearing by all that is right or

good or true that they would not withdraw, or retract, or apologise for one thing; and yet so very reliable was their truth, and so very positive and sure were these irresponsible gentlemen about the statements they made, that we find they have to retract and withdraw and apologise for the statements they made. This is the statement I take particular exception to. This Mr. Bolt is reported to have made use of these words:—

They were not in favour of a select committee, seeing that Mr. A. J. Wilson would be on it, and would be against them from the first.

MR. SCADDAN: Hear, hear.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I do not know whether the member for Ivanhoe endorses that statement; but if he does, I think it is a most improper innuendo for any member to make in this Chamber against any other member; because it implies that a member cannot take a position on a select committee appointed by this House, because he is supposed to be biased or prejudiced against people interested in the particular inquiry. I repudiate so far as I am personally concerned any accusation of bias or prejudice against any person in the Government Printing Office at all. I have not the slightest prejudice or bias one way or the other in this matter. I recognise clearly that there is a condition of affairs in regard to this big spending department which is not satisfactory or creditable to the Government, or to the State; and I say that we want to find out where the shoe pinches, or where the mistake is, and that we want to do justice and to deal fairly—as far as I am concerned I do—to every person interested in the Government Printing Office. I do not think it is fair for hon. members to suggest, nor do I think it is fair for anyone outside the Chamber to suggest, that when a member goes on a select committee he is not prepared to hear everything to be said for or against, all the pros and cons, and to give his verdict on the evidence fairly and squarely without bias at all. [MR. SCADDAN: What do we have a ballot for?] I do not think that has anything to do with the question. These gentlemen in the Government Printing Office seem to think they have been so long in the habit of bossing members of Parliament that they

can boss this House itself; and as soon as a proposal is mooted for an inquiry, because it does not happen to be the particular form of inquiry they want, they say "We will not have it; we refuse to have a select committee; we will have a Royal Commission or nothing." I have no objection to anybody outside this House expressing opinions, but I have a distinct objection to any body of men outside the House, whether workers or capitalists, attempting to dictate to this House and to override what we in our better judgment and wisdom may think necessary to be done in this connection. That is what I object to, and I am not getting this inquiry for the sake of the men. The House is not called upon to consider these men. It is called upon, I take it, to consider the best interests of the people of the country; and when any member of this Chamber thinks that there is a big spending department which is being extravagantly administered, and where the general state of efficiency is not what it ought to be, that member has a right to place his views before the House, and if they meet with the approval of the majority of members, an inquiry on investigation should be held, not in the interests of employees nor in the interests of employers—in this case the Government—but in the interests of the general taxpayer. We have no right to talk of introducing new schemes of taxation until we have cut down and pared down where we can, as long as we do, so without interfering with the general efficiency or administration of our public departments. We should economise as much as possible before we attempt to extract fresh taxation from the pockets of the people. I do not wish to deal with any other drivel talked at that meeting. With these few remarks I beg to move: "That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the administration and general efficiency of the Government Printing Office."

MR. A. C. GULL seconded.

AMENDMENT, ROYAL COMMISSION.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): I move an amendment—

That the words "select committee" be struck out and "Royal Commission" inserted in lieu.

I desire to make this change because I

consider that in the speech we have just listened to, the member for Forrest has justified the remarks to which he took exception—the remarks of Mr. Bolt. By the unjustifiable attack he (Mr. Wilson) has made on the employees of the Government Printing Office, he has proved to the full the justice of the remarks to which he has taken exception.

MR. A. J. WILSON: On a point of order, the hon. member is accusing me of bias. I deny that I have any bias whatever, and I ask the hon. member to withdraw his remark.

MR. BATH: I have not accused the hon. member of bias in any shape or form. What I have said is that by his attack on the employees of the Government Printing Office he has justified the remarks which Mr. Bolt made in the course of the meeting alluded to. In the first place, if we are going to inquire into the administration of this department, surely a member proposing a select committee, which should exercise judicial functions, is not going to prejudge the case by deciding that these people are guilty or that they have been guilty of doing all sorts of objectionable things, and then move that a select committee be appointed to inquire as to whether they have or not. If the member for Forrest is so sure that the Government Printing Office is a sort of old men's depot, or if he is sure that out-of-date methods are employed, and that only out-of-date employees can find employment there—[MR. A. J. WILSON: Have I said so?]-then the necessity for a select committee is gone by, and what the hon. member should do is to ask that these employees should be cleared out of that office root and branch, and others placed in their positions. So far as this question is concerned, I at least can dissociate myself from any charge of special pleading on behalf of constituents when I get up to defend the character and capacity of at least a great number of the men. So far as my constituency is concerned, I have no Government Printing Office employees in it, and I can speak on the question without any special pleading on their behalf. In the first place I want to take strong exception to the admission that the Government Printing Office employees or the Government employees, because

they happen to be employed by the Government, have no right to political opinions or to participate in political affairs. If the member for Forrest wishes to introduce that sort of thing, it will be a long time before he becomes dictator of affairs in Western Australia. These men are just as much entitled to exercise their political opinions in whatever electorate they are situated as any member of this House or any elector in the country; and I hope it will be a long time before we are asked to deprive them of their political rights and powers. I presume the member for Forrest desires to introduce something on the lines of the Irvine Act in Victoria, giving separate representation to those individuals; but we have seen the futility of such a proceeding as that, in that the present Premier of Victoria, Mr. Bent, has introduced a Bill for the abolition of that law, and for a reinstatement of the old condition of affairs. So far as the Government Printing Office is concerned, it is true that it has been fashionable for members of Parliament to get up and make a special attack on this department, and in connection with this matter I desire to say that when the matter was dealt with the other evening I did not take the remarks of the member for Kanowna to have that general application that has been accepted by the employees in the Government Printing Office. But it cannot be gainsaid that the way in which the member was reported in the Press and the way it appears in *Hansard*, it is not sufficiently explicit to dissociate it from a great number of the employees in the department. While I do not countenance in any way their aspersions on the character of members; as workers having a pride in themselves and believing they are as good citizens as other members of the community they had a right to resent what appeared to be an aspersion against their capability as workmen or against their characters. As far as the Government Printing Office is concerned, it is true, as pointed out by the member for Subiaco, that great expense is entailed in many of the reports; but that is not due to the employees in the printing office itself, but it is due to the fact that officers in other departments do not seem to know exactly what they want printed.

They send along certain matters they want printed in the shape of reports and returns, and they have them sent back time and again for correction; and any one who has had any experience of a printing office, not of a technical nature, must know that these emendations and corrections mean considerable expense and considerable additional cost in the printing of the returns. Where there is need for economy to be exercised and greater care to be taken is that the departmental officers and heads of departments should send the returns to the printing office in the first place as accurate as possible and as near the correct return as they desire it to be. It may be true so far as the Government Printing Office is concerned that there are some out-of-date methods; but the fact remains that in some departments there is up-to-date machinery, better machinery than is to be found in private printing offices; and it must also be borne in mind that if they have the monotype machine there, the monotype machine is not regarded by practical printers as of the same value or as good a machine as the linotype or monoline machine; yet that is not a fault that can be attributed to the employees, but rather to the administration, to the person who was in charge of the Government Printing Office when the machinery was introduced. The fact remains that in the past there has been that method in the appointment of the Government Printers who have held the position in the office that has not resulted in the best brains or skill being made available for running that concern. It has been more a question of someone stepping up, irrespective of fitness for the office. I am glad to see that in the present appointment the desire was—I do not know how far the desire will be successfully carried out—to appoint someone of experience who would be able to bring practical ability and administrative ability to the control of that department. That has yet to be shown in the result of the work of the gentleman who now holds the position of Government Printer. It has also to be borne in mind that in the past, while extravagant methods have characterised the administration of the Government Printers, while in many instances they have not been up to their work, instead of having that

practical skill that would enable them to point out where economies could be effected and where different methods could be adopted for the saving of money in the Printing Office, they have always concentrated their efforts, not in this laudable direction, but in paring down the wages of the men as far as possible, sweating the Government employees in the Printing Office. Wherever departments are run in that way, where those in charge think that economy can only be effected either by reducing the wages or lengthening the hours, or in some other detrimental way affecting the condition of the men employed, it is just in such instances where they fail to effect any economy. We find this to be the case if we compare the conditions ruling in America with those in England. In England where they think only of economy being effected by a reduction of wages, they are far behind their contemporaries or their opponents in a commercial sense in the United States, where employers pay for skill and good work, and effect economies by mechanical and scientific inventions. The member for Forrester stated that in appointing this select committee it is not necessary, or we should not have in mind the necessity, to consider the position of the men concerned. I say we should consider their interests just as much as we should consider any other point which affects the administration of this Government Printing Office. We have to bear in mind that the public, practically the State, is employing these people, and so long as we pass measures such as the Factories Act, the Early Closing Act, and such measures limiting the powers of private employers to sweat their employees, we should also take care that the employees in the Government Printing Office are not working under unfair conditions. It is just as essential that we should also see that the State, as an employer, should also be called upon to see that fair conditions are given to its employees. It is just as essential in one instance as in the other. In the appointment of a select committee or Royal Commission we should consider the employees' interests, and see that the State gives them a fair deal and assures to them fair conditions, while at the same time we ask that on their part they

should give a fair deal to the State as their employer. It should be borne in mind that the employees in the Government Printing Office are not so advantageously placed as the employees in other departments of the State. Their's is a longer day than in the case of the Lands or the Works or other departments, and they have not the same privileges as far as holidays are concerned. The only holidays they receive, I believe, are Good Friday, Christmas Day or Boxing Day, and New Year's Day, while in other departments other holidays are granted. We have also to bear in mind that private employers set a better example. Firms such as Boan Bros. and Foy and Gibson give their employees a fortnight's holiday on full pay each year. Surely the employees in the Government Printing Office are entitled to the same consideration.

MR. H. BROWN: Rubbish!

MR. BATH: The member for Perth says "rubbish," but the hon. member usually talks rubbish.

MR. BROWN: Are you sure Boan Bros. give their employees a fortnight?

MR. SCADDAN: The Economic does.

MR. BATH: I have been informed by employees that such is the case, but I am not sure about Boan Bros. I do know firms in Perth who give their employees a fortnight's holiday on full pay, because I know employees who have received this consideration. I believe so far as this motion is concerned that it would be more satisfactory if a Royal Commission were appointed. So desirous are the employees of the department that an inquiry should be instituted, and instituted on a fair basis, that they have expressed their willingness to pay the cost of someone representing their interests on that Royal Commission. I think there should be either an impartial person appointed to act with a master printer, and a representative of the employees to be present to examine witnesses, or a master printer or representative of the printing office employees appointed, and these should be allowed to select an independent person as chairman of the commission. I do not know that the inquiry would take a very great time or entail any great expense, considering the proposal that the employees will pay the cost of one

representative. I feel it would be infinitely more satisfactory to have a Royal Commission, as far as the State is concerned and the employees themselves, whose capabilities have been impugned during the last week or two.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): I second the amendment.

MR. FOULKES (Claremont): Before one decides whether one can vote in favour of having a Royal Commission appointed, one would like to know, if the Government propose appointing this commission, what would be the personnel of the commission. Everything depends upon the personnel of the commission. I have heard it stated that a member of Parliament should be selected as one of the members of the commission.

MR. BATH: I did not suggest that in my proposal.

MR. FOULKES: I should object to that unless the member of Parliament had full experience of the printing trade; and this commission will not have the slightest weight unless members of it have full experience of the printing trade. The report these Commissioners may give us will not be of use in forming opinions as to how the Printing Office is managed unless they have full experience. One would like to know if the Government will select the members of the commission from men who have had experience of the printing trade. If they do not do that, I do not think the inquiry will be of much assistance.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): I may say at the outset that the Government desire an inquiry should be made, and they are prepared to be guided by the House as to whether that inquiry should take the form of a select committee or a Royal Commission. I think the question raised by the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) as to the personnel may be very well left to the Government to decide a little later on. It has been suggested that the commission should, if appointed, consist of a member of Parliament, a representative of the employees, and a master printer.

MR. BATH: I did not make that suggestion.

THE PREMIER: You did not make it, but it has been suggested. It is well known to members that such a proposal has been made. The Government are

desirous that every inquiry should be made into the work of the Government Printing Office, not so much through the strictures passed on the men and the grievance of members who have been subjected to criticism, as to be able to satisfy the people in the State in regard to the conditions and the work carried out by that department. And under these circumstances, it is not the intention of the Government to oppose the proposal for a Royal Commission. At the same time, we desire to stipulate that the commission shall bring their report in promptly. We are desirous to, as far as possible, keep down expenses in this connection, and the employees have gone so far as to state that they would be prepared to pay the expense of one member appointed. Although we have a deficit at the present time and desire to keep down expenditure, I do not consider it would be becoming of the Government to accept such a proposal. I think we can safely bear the expenditure of the few pounds which would be entailed in the case of this commission, providing the report is presented within 14 days, and I have it on the best authority that such a report could be brought down in 13 days. With regard to the proposal that one of the employees should be a member of the commission, that is a matter which requires some consideration. In a matter of this kind, whilst members composing that commission should have some technical knowledge, it is well that they should be outsiders. That matter should receive full consideration, and if the proposal for a Royal Commission is adopted, the House may well leave it to the Government to decide what the personnel of the commission should be.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): I am pleased to hear from the Premier that there is no desire on the part of the Government to oppose the fullest investigation into the Government Printing Office. Members know full well that for many years the same feeling has existed as exists to-day in reference to that department. Every year some member rises in his place in this House and condemns the wilful expenditure, and as a testimony in that direction he holds up a volume of papers printed by the department as a waste of time and money. We well remember that the then member for

Albany (Mr. Gardiner), when Colonial Treasurer, specially took over that department and controlled it from the Treasury for I think the first time—I am speaking from memory—with the object of cleaning up that department. But with all his administrative ability he failed to clean it up as it perhaps should have been done, and as in my humble opinion it requires. I am very sorry to hear any member in this House, especially a member who claims to have democratic tendencies, who is representing a working men's constituency, a Labour constituency, find fault with any section of the community for exercising its political power and influence. What I object to is members who represent constituencies being of such a soft and pliable character that they will allow their politics to be moulded by any small sections of their constituents. I know full well that in the metropolitan area the Government employees, and not alone the Government printers but the civil servants as a whole, exercise a very strong influence over the members of that area.

MR. H. BROWN: Speak for yourself.

MR. TAYLOR: That is beyond doubt. I am not accusing the member for Perth when I say the metropolitan area, because it is well known that in Perth there are very few civil servants; but in the suburbs of the coast, from Claremont or Cottesloe to Perth, members will find a very large number of civil servants, and they have much influence over members representing them. Not that members think those civil servants will be able to put them out of politics, but they wish to avoid tugging up against a section of the electors. We remember there was a meeting of the members of the Civil Service Association in the Queen's Hall, when Ministers raised their voices against civil servants taking up that attitude with reference to their various departments. And I think some Ministers of that day went so far as to say that if the heads of those departments were in their office they would see into the matter. Fortunately for the heads of those departments, the gentlemen did not control the particular departments concerned. I am sorry that what was said in this Parliament caused so much anxiety in the minds of the Government printers. I read with surprise the report of the indignation meeting held

in the Bohemia Hall. I am sure that had those printers heard the remarks made in this House with reference to the Printing Department, they would not have seen fit to call an indignation meeting and make wild statements such as they did about members. They centred their attack particularly on the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) and the member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson). The attack of the printers was very strong, and I suppose, as was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, they took their cue from Press reports. It did look, in cold print, as though an attack had been made upon the Government printers, the employees; but I listened with interest to the speakers during the debate on the Government Printing Department, and the attack was centred mostly upon the management, upon the head of the department; and the member for Kanowna emphasised that—he emphasised it largely. I took particular notice of what the hon. member said. He said that one drunken man was paid to look after another drunken man in a thoroughly disorganised department—[MR. BROWN: You pensioned him off]—and that men in inferior positions were bossing men in superior positions. That is one of the statements the hon. member made, and it was about the strongest assertion he did make in connection with it. It is clearly indicated by that whom the hon. member was aiming at. It is well known far and wide, as interjected by the member for Perth, that we—I suppose he meant the Labour Government of which I was a member—pensioned that gentleman off. I am rather sorry that the Printing Department was not controlled by the Colonial Secretary's office, for there might have been something more drastic so far as that gentleman was concerned. I can illustrate to this House the necessity for that gentleman's removal. I am sorry he was able to receive remuneration from the State under the Pensions Act, for I am sure that, had he been competent and capable of controlling that department, there would have been no necessity for the motion moved to-day by the member for Forrest, nor for the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. H. BROWN: That is the reason of the Government Printing Office being in bad odour to-day, through that man.

MR. TAYLOR: I say he was incompetent. I assert that he neglected his duty. I have no hesitation in saying so, and I know that the member for Kanowna had that man in his mind's eye when he spoke about drunken men. I am positive about that. I have been in Perth for six years, and I do not go about with my eyes shut. I had opportunities for trying to find that gentleman at various times when I was a Minister, and it was very difficult to find him there. The man in charge, Mr. Curtis, was the second in command. He was generally at the helm. I am sorry that the discussion outside this House was of such a strong character. After the strong language used by those whose feelings were so outraged by the utterances of members in this House, and the strong terms in which they condemned Parliament and its members, they readily climbed down when the time came. I think that wiser counsels prevailed, and they have been somewhat more accurately informed about the position taken up by members in this House on that particular occasion. But dealing with the Royal Commission, I think that the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) touched the kernel when he desired some information as to the personnel of the commission. It is recognised on all sides of the House that Royal Commissions do not, on all occasions, do as they are desired. I suppose that they have been more frequently termed a whitewashing machine than any other form of inquiry that could take place. I hope that when this Royal Commission is appointed to investigate the department, men will be appointed who will go thoroughly into the matter. I am in accord with the Premier that it will only take a very short time to investigate the department, and the report should be laid on the table within 14 days after the commission sits. I am more than satisfied that the statements made in this House from time to time since I have been a member of it, six years, will be borne out by that commission. I am positive about that, if the investigation takes place. I want to emphasise the point that I have no objection to any section of the community, whether they be Government employees or any other people, exercising in the fullest degree their

franchise; but I do object to members who are afraid to voice what is proper in the best interests of the State coming and protecting some small section of their electors. Why was the Government Printing Office first put into the Colonial Treasurer's Department? The then member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner) was to clean it up at one fell swoop; but did he not get into a similar position with the Government printers as members are in to-day, practically? They were up in arms against the Colonial Treasurer because he desired to do something in the way of cleaning it up, and he failed.

MR. GULL: He failed because he left.

MR. TAYLOR: He was there some two years before he left, and I think that if the cleaning up of the department had been only a simple matter, the member for Albany would have made some show. I believe that he did largely clean up certain discrepancies in the Government Printing Office; but it was too large an order for him to execute, or he could not get the necessary support. I do not know whether that was so; but by that gentleman's language in connection with the department when he took it over, and judging by the result he has shown, one is led to believe that he did not get from his colleagues or from other members that support which was necessary to clean up the department. I feel positive that the department badly needs cleaning up, more so than any other department in the State; and I hope that whatever form this inquiry takes—whether a select committee or a Royal Commission—we shall have laid on the table a report which we can deal with before the Estimates are brought in, and which will help the present Treasurer to put that department once and for all on a footing that will be creditable to him and beneficial to the State.

MR. A. C. GULL (Swan): I wish only to say that I shall oppose the proposal for a Royal Commission. I object to a Royal Commission, which is a universal and sovereign means of shifting responsibility. If there be anything wrong in the Printing Office, the responsibility lies with the Treasurer; and I am perfectly sure that, with the opinion of this House behind him, with the guaranteed support of members of both sides of the House in his righting anything

wrong and making any necessary reforms, that the Treasurer is in a strong enough position. Therefore the proposal to shift the responsibility to the shoulders of a Royal Commission is beside the question.

MR. BOLTON: You do not understand it at all.

MR. GULL: Do I not? The duty lies entirely on the head of the department; and it is for him to see if there be any scandal in the department, and if there is, to remove that scandal.

THE TREASURER (Hon. F. Wilson): I think it is somewhat ungenerous in the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) to reflect on one of my predecessors (Mr. Gardiner) in connection with the Printing Office. Mr. Gardiner doubtless took charge of the department with the full intention of reorganising it and making in it all sorts of amendments; and I have no doubt he took certain steps with that object. But the House must remember that there has since been another Administration; and if the Printing Department is so bad as some members seem to think, why was not the cleaning up taken in hand by our immediate predecessors in office? They had the opportunity.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I can tell you why.

THE TREASURER: I dare say the hon. member can. I wish it to be clearly understood that although I personally am not opposing either proposal for a select committee or a Royal Commission, if the House in its wisdom thinks it desirable to appoint one or other, at the same time I do not ask for either. I am prepared to reorganise the Printing Office with the assistance of the new manager, and to put it on a sound business footing. I do not want the assistance of either a Royal Commission or a select committee. I think I am quite capable of doing the work. But I shall welcome the assistance of either body, should it be appointed by the House. It seems to me that I have sufficient information to warrant me in saying that the whole office does need reorganisation. It needs inquiring into, and it needs many alterations, the chief amongst which is the dispensing to a large extent with hand labour, and the introduction of machines to do the setting. I am quite satisfied of

that. At the same time, I do not wish to say for a moment that the employees as a whole are men devoid of all conscience or honesty of purpose in their work. I believe we have good, bad, and indifferent men in that institution, as we have in almost every other department and in any private workshop. But it is necessary that the manager—and the new manager is, I believe, a man of determination—shall have full power to dispense with those whom he finds to be inefficient or unnecessary. I may say I have given him a free hand in that respect. Those who are not required in that department will be dispensed with; those who are inefficient and incapable of satisfactorily doing their work must be replaced by others. That stands to reason. But as to the personnel of the commission, should the House decide to appoint a commission I wish to say it is impossible for the Government to declare off-hand who shall form that commission. It is within the right of the Government—it is a part of their duty—to select men who are in the opinion of Ministers capable, and to recommend these men to His Excellency as the men to carry out the inquiry which the House may ask for and authorise. Certainly gentlemen so appointed—at all events one of them, if not more—ought to have some actual knowledge of the business into which they will inquire. It is no use, for instance, putting a draper on a commission of this sort; no use, I take it, appointing a stockbroker. We naturally go to the trade.

MR. BATH: But it would not be fair to appoint a private printer, who is interested in preventing the Government Printing Office from getting work.

THE TREASURER: Then I do not know whom to appoint. Would you not appoint a man conversant with the printing trade, who has probably been at the trade all his life? We must appoint a man who has some knowledge of the trade.

MR. BATH: He would be interested in making out a case against the Government Printing Office, for the benefit of private printers.

THE TREASURER: Surely not.

MR. TAYLOR: There is a strong desire to do away with the Printing Office.

THE TREASURER: I do not think that question has arisen. The question is simply how to put the Printing Office on a sound business footing, so that it shall be worked economically and run on business lines, like a private establishment. I do not think the hon. member need fear that there is any notion of abolishing the Printing Office.

MR. BATH: What about the board of inquiry into the Fremantle pipe works? There you had an instance of what I mean.

THE TREASURER: I beg the hon. member's pardon. The pipe works inquiry was simply as to cost—the cost at which the pipes could be produced. The inquiry board did not go so far as to say that the pipe works should be abolished. They did not inquire into that aspect of the question.

MR. BATH: The inquiry had that effect. Such a board might say that the Government institution was more costly than a private office.

THE TREASURER: That matter did not crop up at all. The inquiry board were never asked to report on it. The question of the abolition of the Printing Office does not arise in this inquiry, which is simply as to how the office can be economically run on a sound basis. And if that investigation is to be made, if we are to get a satisfactory suggestion from the Royal Commission, we must have on it, to advise us, men who are conversant with the trade. What would be the use, for instance, of my going through that Printing Office with the idea of recommending certain machines? I could not do that. I dare say I could act very well on a Royal Commission, by investigating the commercial aspect of the office, the labour question, the number of hands employed, and whether those employed were of the right class. I could probably investigate the question of cost; but I could not advise as to what class of machines should be used.

MR. FOULKES: I asked just now whether the Government intended to select the members of the commission from men who had a knowledge of the printing trade; but the Premier would not give any satisfactory reply.

THE TREASURER: The Premier could not give an immediate reply as to the personnel of the commission. I am

pointing out that, should the commission be appointed, naturally the Government will consider who are best adapted to hold the inquiry and to advise the Government. We must have on that commission at least one member who is thoroughly conversant with the trade.

MR. FOULKES: Only one?

THE TREASURER: It is proposed to appoint a commission of three.

MR. FOULKES: And only one who has a knowledge of the trade?

THE TREASURER: I have pointed out—perhaps the hon. member does not understand me—that although a man may not be actually a printer, he may be capable of advising the House with regard to certain operations in the Government Printing Office.

MR. FOULKES: Unless he has a knowledge of the printing trade, his advice will be worth nothing.

THE TREASURER: His advice may be valuable, whether or not he has a knowledge of the printing trade. I have stated my opinion that I could hold a certain position on the proposed commission, and could get valuable information and probably make a valuable recommendation. But I could not go so far as to say what class of machinery it was best to employ in that establishment. If we appoint a commission consisting of one man with a thorough practical knowledge of the plant, buildings, and stock required, in addition to his commercial knowledge, and another man who has a good commercial knowledge, who can investigate the question of cost of production and the hands required, also someone who represents fairly well the opinions held by the various workers in that establishment, I think we shall have a commission that will give good results.

MR. H. BROWN: Why not give the new Government Printer a show? You have not yet given him a chance to do anything.

THE TREASURER: Exactly. I have just pointed out, probably in the hon. member's absence, that I am not asking for a Royal Commission or a select committee. I am prepared, with the new manager, to take the whole responsibility of reorganising that department. But if the House in its wisdom thinks that a Royal Commission or a select committee

will assist me in that duty, I am bound to accept that assistance.

MR. P. J. LYNCH (Mount Leonora): I feel that although the present situation does warrant discussion and anxious thought, yet we are sometimes liable to drift into the current of an inquiry craze. Let it first of all be remembered that the Government holding office in 1904-5 were the first who made a really serious attempt to put this institution on a proper working basis.

THE TREASURER: What did the attempt amount to?

MR. LYNCH: The Government made an effort to get the very best man available to take charge of the institution. That was certainly a step which previous Governments neglected or were not "game" to take; so we should not lose sight of the fact that the Government whom I supported at that time did really take the first practical step to put the Printing Office on a sound basis. My reasons for opposing both Royal Commission and select committee are that, just as we have appointed a Government Printer, it seems almost ridiculous to send in a committee or a commission hotfoot after him, to find out what is the matter. Surely the Government of the day have chosen that man out of respect for his merits. If we send in a commission after him, that will be almost equivalent to saying that he is not capable of taking charge of the institution; or if that construction cannot be put on our action, it means that he needs some special form of advice, to be gained at the expense of a Royal Commission. It is quite plain that a reform is needed in the Printing Office, and I am not opposed to reform; but since the present Government have taken the course of placing a new manager in charge, at I believe an increased salary, it is only fair to give that man a chance of showing how he can acquit himself in the capacity of an up-to-date Government Printer. Briefly, I say it really seems ridiculous to think that we have appointed this official, and then must start an inquiry into the whole institution. I advise that we should wait for at least six months, till we find out how the Government Printer acquits himself; and if he is found wanting in effecting reforms, then let us send in either a

commission or a select committee; but not till then, so far as my vote is concerned.

Two hours having expired,—

The House resolved that the debate be continued.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. J. BREBBER (North Perth): In regard to the motion and the amendment before the Chamber, I think there are two matters for inquiry. One matter I am prepared to leave to the Government for settlement, and that is the question of the management and better organisation of the department. But when it comes to the assertions made by the members for Kanowna and Forrest, then I think it is a different matter altogether. Then I think it only a matter of fairness that any body of employees, whether in a Government department or outside, should have the opportunity of relieving themselves of the stigma of the accusations made against them. For that reason I will support the amendment by the Leader of the Opposition, that a Royal Commission be appointed to investigate the assertions made in this House by those hon. members. It is within the recollection of members of this House that the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) said that the employees in the Printing Department were practically a lot of loafers. At any rate, that is the construction I placed on his words. An assertion of that nature should not be made in this House or outside without some sufficient reason for making it. The member for Forrest made the assertion that the employees in the Government Printing Department were only such as were fit for the Old Men's Dépôt.

MR. A. J. WILSON: That is scarcely correct. I said that was the common impression.

MR. BREBBER: We must place our own construction on the speech of the member for Forrest. The only thing we can go upon is the construction we place on remarks made, and the construction I have put on the hon. member's speech bears the reading I have put on it; and seeing that is so, I think the only thing

left for me is to support the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition, that a Royal Commission be appointed to go into this matter to see whether there is any foundation in fact for the assertions made by the members for Kanowna and Forrest.

MR. TAYLOR: You are putting a wrong construction on their remarks.

MR. BREBBER: With regard to the management and reorganisation of the department, I would be willing to leave that matter in the hands of the Treasurer and the new Government Printer; but with reference to the assertions made and the charges brought against the employees by those hon. members, I think I must, in fairness to the employees, support the amendment.

MR. J. E. HARDWICK (East Perth): Whilst not altogether in sympathy with the appointment of royal commissions, in this case my views are very much in accord with those of the member for North Perth. There have been some very sweeping assertions and charges against the men by hon. gentlemen opposite; but I feel sure that the only desire of the employees — and I think they should be commended for their action — is that an inquiry should be held in order to find out the true state of affairs. They are anxious that a Royal Commission should be appointed, and they have gone so far as to say that they would be prepared amongst themselves to pay the cost of that Commission. The Premier has intimated to the House that he would not be prepared to accept any such offer from the men; but it only shows that they are sincere in their desire that the true state of affairs should be made known to the country. I am of opinion that there would be no move in the direction of trying to secure a Royal Commission if it had not been for the strong assertions made by some members on the opposite side of the House, under the cloak of parliamentary privilege.

MR. TAYLOR: Oh, nonsense! No.

MR. HARDWICK: Members say that is not so; but there is the assertion in *Hansard* of one member that the employees of the Government Printing Office are a number of loafers. From my knowledge of the Government Printing Office, while I am prepared to admit that there may be a certain number of

drones in that department as opposed to the genuine workers, I say now that we have some of the best tradesmen in Australia in that department; and they are anxious that the true position of affairs should be given to the country. I feel sure that the commission would not be a very costly one, because a matter of two or three days would suffice to clear up the whole affair. [MEMBER: I will give it a month.] It is my intention to support the amendment.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan): Before this debate closes I should like the privilege of saying a few words on a matter which hitherto has wholly escaped attention; that while we have dealt with the grievances, or the supposed grievances, that have arisen in consequence of certain language used in this House, no member so far has ventured to say a single word in deprecation of the attitude of those who have piled abuse on members of this House while doing what they perhaps in a mistaken way did, but what I feel they nevertheless considered was their duty. It is necessary, on whatever side of the House members sit, that we should present an absolutely united front in the face of any wild and unreasonable abuse directed against us as members of Parliament attempting to do our duty. I hope that sentiment will find some echo in the breast of each member, and that he will feel that this debate should not close without that being given due prominence and without its being fully recognised. What are the facts on which this debate is founded? Certain members of this House, on another occasion, perhaps somewhat intemperately, criticised a certain Government department and pointed out that it was the source of a large expenditure to the State. The member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) reminds us—and he is practically a Nestor amongst us to-day—that this is a very old sore; that for years past it has been the subject of comment and complaint on the part of this House that the work carried out by the Printing Department was far less than the amount voted for it justified. Then it appears that certain members of the staff of the Government Printing Office met and formulated a demand for a Royal Commission to inquire into what?—because after all we

must know what is to be inquired into. To inquire, not into the working of this department really, but into the truth of these specific charges or supposed charges. Is it for a moment to be considered that, because any group of men, no matter to what section of the population they belong, and no matter what numbers they may comprise, feel aggrieved at something which has been said in this House, this in itself justifies us in appointing a Royal Commission? I do not see that it does. The position taken up by the Leader of the House in this matter is a perfectly open one, and one that he has very properly taken up. Having regard to the fact that these men have put forward a complaint of harsh and unjust treatment at the hands of members of this House, the Premier has left himself in the hands of the House. Therefore this matter now under discussion fortunately being one that is not adapted to a party construction and is wholly removed from party influences, I welcome thoroughly the attitude of the member for Leonora (Mr. Lynch), who has pointed out to the House what I consider the right path to pursue, and that is to refuse at the present stage any inquiry into the working of a department which has just been put under the hands of a new manager; reserving to ourselves the right, if the new manager proves a failure in the position, to call upon him to justify the work he has done; and if he fails to justify it, and if it is then felt necessary to appoint a Royal Commission, to do so. But at the present stage, immediately after his entering into the control of the department, of what possible use can an inquiry be? Now the debate has wandered over some other ground. The question has been raised as to the political rights of civil servants, and the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) has apparently twitted some members of this House with being more or less under the thumbs of civil servants who live in their electorates. Surely there can be a broad line drawn so that every man in the community may vote just as his conscience dictates. That is the right of every man; but when any man, or any number of men, attempt to dictate to other men as to what they should do—

MR. A. J. WILSON: Or to Parliament.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Or certainly above all to the House that is rightly supposed to have the only real power in the land; it might be said—if it were at all to be said—that the only person in the House who would bear the brunt of the aspersion by the member for Mt. Margaret is the Leader of the Opposition; because although he was present when the debate took place which was the whole origin of these proceedings and of this debate, and although those expressions to which objection has been taken came particularly and in fact wholly from his own side of the House, he nevertheless was a silent spectator, and although he spoke, he in no way reproved anything that was said. Therefore, if there is any man in the House—and I do not say there is—who would appear to be under the thumb of some party outside the House, that peculiar honour must rest on the member who remained silent on one occasion, and who to-night comes here merely as the mouth-piece apparently of the aggrieved employees, and in no sense a defender of the position taken up by members of this House, or a defender of the honour of the House or of the right of criticism of this House.

MR. BATH: But these people are not in my constituency.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: All the less reason why the hon. member should be so pliant in the matter. If they were in his constituency it would be a poor excuse. Being outside his constituency, he has no excuse whatever. However, let me conclude in this matter by saying that I am heartily glad the division will not be on party lines. And when the House does divide, each member should ask himself, not on what side he shall vote according to party predilection, but whether it is the right thing to grant a demand of this character on the very flimsy grounds put forward in support of it to-night.

MR. T. WALKER (Kanowna): I do not know whether I shall be misunderstood again if I say a few words on the subject. It almost makes one timid lest he be misrepresented, and in fact I only speak to-night unless it may be interpreted that silence might be suspected as something of that kind. No one could be more surprised than I was when read-

ing the report of the printers' indignation meeting, or whatever it was called, the other night. It was so far an attack on me or on anyone else for what we have said. One almost imagined that every person who took part in that demonstration had suddenly lost his senses, had become demented. I do not think there was a member in the House who heard me speak the other night who imagined for a moment that I was tabooing every Dick, Tom, and Harry, every workman or every other person—whether workmen in the strict sense of the word or the manager—wholesale by my remarks. Whatever may have gone into the Press, and I think it was a fairly correct report of what I said, there could be, I am sure, no interpretation from listening to what I said, or from reading the reports, that could lead anyone to imagine that we had without reservation designated all these people as drunkards and loafers. I distinctly said there were some. I used the words, there were some loafers in that establishment, and I did distinctly say, always throughout that speech referring to the management, that there had been—I forget the exact way I introduced it, but I gave the House to understand that there had been men who had been paid, one drunken man for looking after another; and I was referring to no imaginary instance, but to what had actually occurred, a literal fact. Reference has been made to that to-night in this Chamber. That one, one of two I was alluding to, had his services dispensed with in this State in a manner which to me was altogether too light a punishment for the sins he had committed whilst in charge of the management of an important institution like that. And I cannot understand, unless these men have lost their senses, how they could have gone mad over such an affair as that. I am not going to say more on that point, because it might be looked upon as revenge if I did say more; but this I do say now, it is an extraordinary event, notwithstanding what has fallen—as we can well understand it might from his large heart towards workers of every kind—from the leader of the Opposition, it was an outrage for that body of men to try and intimidate the members of the House from doing their duty. I quite agree with every member who has spoken from this or the

other side of the House, that everyone in the State ought to have the right to criticise their representatives in Parliament. They ought to have the right to meet and debate; but whether they are civil servants, or any other class of the community, they have no right to misrepresent facts. They have no right to intimidate members of this Chamber from doing their duty. They have no right to slander or scandalise members of this House. They have no right to threaten the members of the House. If that kind of thing is to continue, no member in this Chamber, unless very brave, would care to do his duty. No man's character or position would be safe in those circumstances. So far as the motion is concerned, I for one do not see the necessity for either a select committee or a Royal Commission, and—we have had the assurance it will be done—if the Treasurer does his duty, and I am convinced from what he has said to-night he means to do his duty, the matter should be left to the Government.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The Government Printer is already doing his duty, very well too.

MR. HEITMANN: Why move for a select committee, then?

MR. WALKER: What have we Ministers for but to take charge of these departments, and to accept the responsibility one way or the other for the conduct of these departments. It is their duty to do it. That is what they are there for; and to allow select committees or to allow even Royal Commissions to do the work which is entrusted to them is humiliating to the Government of this country.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not at all.

MR. WALKER: Why not at all? The member is such a young fledgling that no doubt he imagines that he can accept help from everywhere, and imagine he is doing his duty. [THE MINISTER FOR WORKS interjected.] Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings issues forth milk. I cannot accept the dictum of the young aspiring Minister for Works as an authority. He knows very little yet of the responsibilities of his own office, notwithstanding that of the Government in general. If the member is not too young too learn, let him show the

attitude of a learner and shut up when he is not sure of his facts. I still repeat that it is the duty of the Government to see that the Printing Office is kept clean. All that I said the other night has been justified by what the Treasurer has told us to-night. This establishment does need reorganisation. This establishment does need reform. This establishment has not been conducted as it ought to have been in the past. It has been extravagant, and there is need for economy there. That was practically my speech the other night. It has been made by the Treasurer this evening. In that respect, therefore, I am justified. If there is to be either one or the other, either a select committee or a Royal Commission, I sincerely trust it will be a Royal Commission. A number of members of this House examining matter of such importance would be futile. They could not possibly do the work. If there is anything in the rumours and charges flying about, an expert is absolutely necessary for conducting an inquiry of this kind. If there is to be an investigation it should be by some one or two who know what they are looking for, who know how to judge such evidence as may be tendered to them.

MR. HEITMANN: They will appoint their managers.

MR. WALKER: I scarcely think the Government will have the temerity to do that. The managers are accused in this matter. It is the management, I do not say the new manager, but the management, as it has been up to date, or a day or two ago, that is the subject to be inquired into. It should be a practical printer, a man who knows the ins and outs of the trade and of the whole work from the printer's devil, so to speak, to the least machinist; a man who knows every feature of the Printing Office. Unless that be done the inquiry will be a sheer farce, and we may as well leave things as they are. We neither want an accusing committee nor a whitewashing committee. We want a fearless investigation, if the matter is to be touched at all. If it comes to a division, I shall vote for a Royal Commission in preference, decidedly, to a select committee, for a select committee, I repeat and emphasise, would be nothing more than a failure.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price): I am not prepared at present to say what is the reason for the dissatisfaction that undoubtedly exists in connection with the Government Printing Department. It may be the employees are to blame, it may be the management is to blame; it may be that different Governments have to take their share of the public odium. I do not think at present a sufficient case has been made out for the appointment of a Royal Commission into this particular question. As a general rule, I find myself opposed to the appointment of Royal Commissions. In this instance we have a Minister who is undoubtedly capable of dealing with the subject. We have a new manager just appointed, one who during the very short time he has been in that position has already given undoubted evidence of his fitness for it. Under these circumstances, I think it would be just as well if matters for the present were allowed to take their course. The member for Kanowna has thought fit to cast a certain amount of, what shall I say—[**MR. WALKER: Eloquence**—has thought fit to waste his eloquence on my inexperience; but one thing to-night in this debate has interested me, and it must have been interesting to everyone sitting in this House, to find the member for once in a penitential mood, to find him explaining away his utterances.

MR. WALKER: Not one bit.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not permitted to quote from *Hansard*, but if I were permitted to do so we should find those utterances to be substantially the same as were quoted from Press reports by certain individuals at the meeting in the Bohemia Hall. The utterances then dealt with were pretty much the same as those delivered in this House. If a Royal Commission is to be appointed every time some one is attacked, then I am inclined to think that nearly every one sitting on the Treasury bench would need half a dozen Royal Commissions sitting on him. [Interjection.] The hon. member is speaking from his own experience. As far as the Treasury bench is concerned, there is not one occupant who would not be willing to face half a dozen commissions.

MR. BOLTON: Are you speaking of the bench or the chairs?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am speaking of individuals sitting on the Treasury bench. There is nothing that we have done that we dare not face; but because we do not happen to be connected with the particular party with which the member for Kanowna is connected, we do have justice denied us, and do not see this gentleman in his moments of generosity standing up in a penitential mood, in so far as his attacks on us are concerned.

MR. WALKER: No penitence about me.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Explaining away statements which he has made. I trust for the future the hon. member will practise what he preaches and deal out to us that justice which for the present moment he is inclined to deal out to the men he attacked the other night. It is no use trying to get away from the question. He did attack those men, and attack them most violently.

MR. WALKER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I think I made a statement which is now given a flat contradiction. I was dealing with the management, and everybody in this House but the hon. member so understood me.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course I am bound to accept the explanation of the hon. member, but certainly at the time that was not the sense in which I understood his words. As to the position of the Government in this matter, the hon. member seems to think that the Government, on this question, should take up a decided attitude and say we either refuse or grant select committee or a Royal Commission. But he seems to forget that in this connection a number of men—decent, respectable working men, and others who are managing this concern—have been attacked, and far be it from this Government to use its majority to prevent these men from obtaining anything they believe to be right as to the method in which they should obtain justice. I honour the Premier because he has left this an open question, so that members can deal with it as they choose. Had the Premier thought fit to use his majority, undoubtedly without any trouble he could have defeated either of these propositions. I am speaking now with a perfectly open mind. I

think that no case has been made out at the present moment for a Royal Commission or for any inquiry whatever. I think, rather, that the present situation is so hopeful in this particular department that the House may very fairly leave matters as they are, at least for two or three months, and see if any improvement is effected.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I quite agree with the Minister who has just sat down, in the opinion that members of this House should not themselves be dictated to by public servants; but at the same time we have no right to abuse our privilege by unfairly attacking employees of the State, and if these employees are attacked, if they are denounced as a lot of loafers—and I am quoting words which I believe the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) used—from top to bottom—

MR. WALKER: That is not what I said. If I may be permitted to do so I will read what I said.

MR. DAGLISH: I hope the hon. member will, because if the hon. member will read what he said it will confirm my statement. I am compelled to speak from memory, but if I were able to read, my words would be the same as those I have uttered from memory. What we have to do is this: we have, whilst speaking under the cloak of privilege, to above all things show our respect for that privilege by speaking with accuracy, and while dealing with servants of the State we should show, as masters, our desire to do them justice at all times and to treat them, if possible, with generosity. The unfortunate thing—

MR. WALKER: Will the Speaker let me read?

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member, I believe, desires to quote his remarks.

MR. WALKER: Would I be permitted to read, as a point of setting myself right from misrepresentation?

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry that I cannot give the hon. member that privilege. I find in the Standing Orders—

No member shall read from a printed newspaper or book the report of any speech made in Parliament during the same session. No member shall read extracts from newspapers or other documents referring to debates in the House during the same session.

I am therefore bound by the Standing Orders. I should like to give the hon. member the privilege, but I cannot.

MR. DAGLISH: I have refreshed my memory just now, and I can say now that the hon. member stated, referring to the Government Printing Office, that it was an "Augean stable" and required cleaning from top to bottom. The hon. member said also that he did not believe in the State or anyone keeping on a lot of loafers at the cost of the State.

MR. WALKER: That is right too. That is different from saying they are all loafers. Now come to where I said some of them are loafers.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member is somewhat unfair to me in alleging or implying that I said he asserted they were all loafers. There may have been individual exceptions made in the remarks of the member for Kanowna; but my contention is that in dealing with public servants, and speaking as we do under the cloak of privilege, we should be very careful in any remarks we make. We have to bear in mind that these men have reputations to sustain just as we have, and I have noticed that some of those members who, in the Press or on public platforms or in Parliament, are most careless in the way in which they attack others, are most tender themselves when they happen to be attacked. I say that we ourselves should show the same regard for the feelings of others as we expect others to show in regard to our own feelings; and as members of a body speaking on behalf of the public in this State, when we are dealing even with public servants we should show a certain regard for truth and accuracy, and should, in my opinion at all events, be very careful to err on the side of leniency rather than in the other direction. This body of men has been rightly or wrongly accused of being a body of loafers, and I believe of being drunkards. *Hansard*, however, has been somewhat lenient in the record of the speech delivered by the member for Kanowna; therefore what appeared in the Press does not appear in *Hansard*. The member for Forrest has submitted a proposition that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the allegations made against employees in the Government Printing Office. The hon. member

alleges that I am not using altogether the words of his motion, but the effect of the motion is that a select committee should be appointed to inquire into the management of the Government Printing Office, and, if that motion be carried, what will be the result? The result will be that the member for Forrest will be chairman of the committee elected by ballot, and, if the usual procedure of this House be followed, members nominated by the hon. member will be selected for inquiry into the management of the Government Printing Office. The member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson) has made certain statements which may or may not be true. I say they may be true, knowing the member for Forrest. Other members who do not know him will possibly say they may not be true. But the unfortunate thing is that any select committee in this House is usually a committee nominated by the member who submits a motion. And in passing, I may remark that I hope that before long the practice of allowing any member who proposes a committee to nominate its members will be abandoned, because it is a bad principle. But we have to deal with things as they are, and I here commend the member for Kanowna for the stand he has taken. The member for Kanowna says that if there is to be an inquiry, the only satisfactory inquiry would be one made by a Royal Commission, by an independent body of men. I am glad to find that the hon. member is willing to submit the statements he has made—because I presume he will be a witness—before either a select committee or a Royal Commission. I am glad he is prepared to submit his evidence to an independent body; but I trust that the House will not agree to the proposal that a select committee be appointed of which the member for Forrest would be chairman, which would consider certain charges made by the member for Kanowna and the member for Forrest. Surely it would be altogether absurd to appoint the principal accuser—I do not know whether the member for Forrest or the member for Kanowna was the principal accuser—but one of the principal accusers of the Government Printing Office as chairman, as chief judge of that establishment. [MR. HOLMAN interjected.] The member for Yilgarn and the member

for Kanowna are, I understand, to be members of this select committee. I am speaking on the authority of the member for Murchison. I would not for a moment make a statement like that on my own authority, but I believe from what I have seen in Parliament this session that the member for Murchison is entirely in the confidence of the member for Forrest, and that before the member for Forrest submits a motion to this House he refers it to the member for Murchison, and that there is a sort of sub-caucus held between them; therefore we may take it that this motion of the member for Forrest has the concurrence of the member for Murchison, and that it has already been arranged between those two members and the member for Kanowna—[MR. TAYLOR: And Yilgarn]—and the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Horan) in the background, he having a vote but no voice. I believe the hon. member has no voice to-night. I do not desire to labour this question, but I ask that if there be an inquiry it shall be impartial; and I rejoice in the fact that the member for Kanowna supports me in this demand. I rejoice also that the Premier has given the supporters of the Government a free hand in this matter, and I hope that they will exercise it as they should do, that is in favour of the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SCADDAN: You were not in the lobby.

MR. DAGLISH: I do not know what the hon. member refers to. I do not know what transpired in the lobby, but I feel satisfied that when the Premier expressed his willingness to agree to a fair, full, and independent inquiry, he meant what he said. I think, too, that when we attack public servants in this House we ought to be prepared to support our assertions, not in a casual sort of fashion with a mere statement before a select committee, but by sworn evidence before a Royal Commission. One of the reasons why I object to this select committee is that, as a rule, select committees take evidence purely on the statement of witnesses, whereas Royal Commissions can, and do, demand that evidence shall be sworn to.

MR. TAYLOR: So can a select committee.

MR. DAGLISH : I want the member for Kanowna, the member for Forrest, and the member for Yilgarn to not only swear to their evidence, but to submit to cross-examination. I want to hear them or see them prove the truth of what they have stated. I am not speaking as an advocate either of the men employed in the Government Printing Office or of any other division of the public service ; but I am speaking as an advocate of justice, and as one who believes in extending justice even to those who have the misfortune to be employees of the Government in Western Australia ; and I hope that we shall extend to them the same justice that we demand for ourselves. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

MR. A. A. HORAN (Yilgarn) : In view of the fact that the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) said that I had no voice in to-night's proceedings, I wish to contradict him by rising to have a few words on this subject. I was absent during the earlier portion of the debate, and am to a great extent in the dark as to what has transpired. But I have read the newspapers, and find that I am included with certain other members as having stigmatised the Government Printing Office as obsolete. The member for Subiaco suggests that if a Royal Commission were appointed, each member who made those statements in the House should be sworn and called upon to prove the statements he made. If I were a member of that commission, the first witness I should call would be the ex-Premier, the member for Subiaco, who gave me his word in this House that the machinery used in the Printing Office is obsolete. And it seems to me most extraordinary that the attitude of the Government Printing Office employees should have been, during the last few days, enough to make one wonder whether this country is not to become as chaotic as Russia. If our Government servants dictate to Parliament and criticise their superiors here, certainly it is time that the Minister rose in his place and took some action.

MR. DAGLISH : Why should they not criticise, as citizens ?

MR. HORAN : I do not object to their criticising as citizens, but to their criticis-

ing our attitude when dealing with our own work. My desire was to allow the Printing Office to have up-to-date machinery, to give the men a fair chance ; but they have been idiotic enough to misunderstand the action I proposed to take, or that any other sensible person would have taken, to give them up-to-date machinery. I have it on the advice of the member for Subiaco that they are working obsolete machinery.

MR. DAGLISH : Quote from *Hansard*.

MR. HORAN : I will quote your words, or the sense of your words. I cannot now turn up *Hansard*. I think that the attitude of the Printing Office employees justifies, to a great extent, the criticism showered on the administration. I do not know a single person working there ; and they were good enough to say that I do not know a nangle from a printing machine. That may or may not be correct. My desire was to give them a fair opportunity to do their work at a reasonable cost. In discussing the Estimates, I have mentioned time after time the incongruous costs submitted for different returns laid on the table. Sometimes the cost of probably 250 copies of a document of about 250 pages is quoted at about half the cost of 100 copies of another document containing 100 pages. There is no sense or reason about that ; and I understand that the practice is to divide, by a sort of bush arithmetic, the general cost of the week's work, and to stick it down anyhow against the jobs done. Everybody recognises--and strangely enough the statements that the Government Printing Office employees have recently published in the newspapers seem to indicate--that they hold high social positions in different parts of the metropolis. I have heard of a Minister said to be game enough to tackle almost anything. The late Colonial Secretary, the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor), was able to tackle anything ; but he was not game to reorganise the Government Printing Office.

MR. TAYLOR : I had nothing to do with it. It was controlled by the Treasurer.

MR. HORAN : Its control was removed from your shoulders, to relieve you of temptation. An ex-Colonial Secretary, Mr. Kingsmill, stated that he would be

game to reorganise it; but there was too much social influence surrounding the office, and he was afraid to tackle the proposition. If reorganisation is needed, let it be done. I do not see the necessity for either a select committee or a Royal Commission. We have appointed a manager—who he is I do not know; but it should certainly be the business of that gentleman, and I presume he is competent, to do the work for which he was appointed. I do not intend to vote for either proposition:

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford): I regret that so much time has been wasted over this motion, and must say I am astounded to hear that the Premier has decided to support the appointment of a Royal Commission. I should have thought that he, more than anyone else, would have realised that the present Government have appointed a new manager to reorganise that department. I think that Parliament has realised for some considerable time that the Government Printing Office needs reorganisation, needs better supervision, and above everything else better machinery. And while I sincerely regret that members did, in their desire to condemn the general supervision of that office, perhaps cast aspersions on the men working there, still I think that those members desired rather to reflect on the general supervision than on the employees. However, we are now agreed that in the past we have had bad supervision. The Labour Government took action to remove one who was in charge of that office. I was particularly pleased when that was done; because I knew well that in the past the office did not receive from that gentleman the attention which should be given to a big department such as our Government Printing Office. We now have a new manager. Suppose we appoint a Royal Commission, as the Premier desires; that commission, after making inquiry, will simply come to Parliament and tell us what we already know—that in the past the supervision has been an absolute disgrace to Western Australia. What else can be done?

MR. DAGLISH: A charge has been made.

MR. JOHNSON: There has been no definite charge. Members made certain

statements in this House. Those members' statements have been misconstrued—misunderstood if you like; and consequently, if we have a Royal Commission to investigate that phase of the question, those members will put themselves straight before the Royal Commission. But they can put themselves straight here to-night. If we have an inquiry into the general supervision, the commission will tell Parliament what we already know. Consequently I am absolutely astounded that the Premier, realising the great responsibility that rests on his shoulders in view of the position of this State to-day, should say that he will waste the revenue of this country on a Royal Commission to inquire into what is already known by Parliament and the people. There is no need for inquiry into matters of that sort. We wish the Government to devote attention to the present management, to assist the present manager to reorganise the department and make it what we all desire it to be—a profit-making concern. I wish to emphasise the fact that I regret the aspersions cast on the employees of the Printing Office. I know well that the men can do the work. I know also that almost anything said of the past management was justified; and certain action was taken to improve that management. And now I say there is nothing to be gained by an inquiry. We cannot afford the necessary funds for a Royal Commission; and consequently I will oppose both Royal Commission and select committee.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (West Perth): It seems to me that our parliamentary procedure is getting somewhat out of order. Are we to make it a precedent in this State that every time an hon. member, even unintentionally, casts an aspersion on a public servant or a number of public servants, and a public meeting is held to criticise that aspersion, we are to have a Royal Commission to investigate the case? Are we to occupy the time of the House and the country, as we have occupied it to-night, in three or four hours' discussion over a public meeting held in this State? Is this the position we are to take up? Because, if so, it seems to me to be against all constitutional practice. All our past history, throughout the ages, has been adverse to

any such proceeding. Surely Parliament is above criticism. Surely, if it is doing its duty, it is above the criticism of a public meeting. And members should proceed with the work of the session, without stopping to consider what a newspaper or a public meeting may say. Of course, if any injustice has been done, the gentlemen concerned have their remedy. They can lay their case before the Minister, and he can defend them in this House. It is the duty of the Minister to defend his officers—all of them. If any wrong has been done or any injustice, the proper course for an officer of the State is to make his complaint to the head of his department, and request him to send on the statement to the Minister controlling that department. Instead of that, those officers called a public meeting, criticising from the public platform, and necessarily in the Press, the actions for the members of this House. I say it is a degradation to members of this House to have either to grant or to refuse requests of those officers. The House ought to have taken no notice whatever of such criticism. Two proposals are before the House—one, for a Royal Commission to examine into the statements of certain members as they affect certain civil servants—

THE PREMIER: That is not the wording.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is the effect. That is what has been stated in the speeches delivered. The other proposal is that we have a committee to deal with this public department—to report. I should have no objection whatever to having a committee appointed to report, if necessary, on any department of the State; but in this case I do not think it is necessary. I think that the Minister is quite capable of attending to the matter; and especially as we have now a newly appointed manager, I have no hesitation in saying that the proper course is to see what that manager can do before we take any farther action. So the whole discussion seems to me a degradation, and a departure from that constitutional practice for which our fathers have fought in ages past. And I am surprised that members should spend so much of the valuable time of the State in dealing with the side-issue

which has been raised. In regard to the main question, I think there is no necessity for either a Royal Commission or a select committee; consequently, I shall vote against both.

MR. J. EWING (Collie): I think that the position has been somewhat misunderstood by the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson), when he stated that the Premier is in favour of a Royal Commission. I understood the Premier to say that he did not wish this to be made a party question, and that he was in the hands of the House.

LABOUR MEMBER: He was personally in favour of a Royal Commission.

MR. EWING: My idea is that every member of the House should simply speak as his heart dictates. If hon. members think the expressions they used were right and just, I commend them for having the courage to give utterance to them. I have myself taken up the position of criticising Government servants, and I am prepared to stand or fall by those criticisms. The time will come when members will need to answer to the electors for every utterance they make use of in this Chamber, and that is the time when it can be said whether they are right or wrong. The position was very ably put by the member for West Perth. This House at this juncture cannot pay attention to matters which really are of a trivial nature. It cannot be supposed that we can appoint Royal Commissions for every part of the public service with a grievance, and from that point of view I am opposed to the appointment of either a select committee or a Royal Commission, especially as the Treasurer has said that he is prepared to take responsibility with the new manager of the institution to put the Government Printing Office on a thoroughly efficient basis. I am prepared to give him that opportunity; and if, as the member for Leonora has said, in the course of six or eight months' time the Government Printing Office is not thoroughly reorganised or efficient, then it will be time for the House to say whether a Royal Commission is necessary or not.

MR. A. J. WILSON (in reply as mover): I would not have risen to reply but for the unwarranted statements made by the Leader of the Opposition. I think that

he was extravagantly—[MR. SCADDAN: Mild]—I think he was most extravagant in his exaggeration and misrepresentation of my action in bringing this matter forward, and in his interpretation of the language I used when moving the motion this evening. In fact we find the Leader of the Opposition indulging in what I was going to say were hysterical heroics about the prospect, going almost into hysterics about the evil prospect of the member for Forrest trying to bring down a law on the lines of the Irvine suppression or coercion Act of Victoria, and wanting the civil servants to be given separate representation. While I give all due deference to the remarks of the member for West Perth in regard to this matter, I still think there is a constitutional right to be protected, and that is our right to tell people like these that they cannot be permitted to dictate to the supreme power in this country, Parliament itself. In this connection I ask the Leader of the Opposition, what would have been his attitude as Leader of the Labour party if the Chamber of Commerce had held a meeting in the Queen's Hall and said that the Government had to do something or to leave something undone, or if the Chamber of Commerce had attempted to take the same attitude as was adopted by the Printing Office employees, or if the Chamber of Mines on the goldfields had attempted to dictate to this Parliament in the same way as these employees have done? What would the hon. gentleman have done? We would have had him coming here and moving the adjournment of the House; but on a matter of this kind, because one happens to have the temerity to take exception to a certain practice on the part of a body of workers, one is looked upon as being prejudiced and biased, and actuated by spleen and bias towards individuals. The hon. member is so accustomed to that sort of thing that personally he knows all about it. I suppose the member for Subiaco only intended to be humorous when he was making reference to the choice of select committees, and so I can entirely overlook anything of that kind. I want members to distinctly understand that the Leader of the Opposition entirely misrepresented me when he suggested that I had any objection to these people or to any portion of

the community giving expression to political opinions. I do not object to that in the slightest degree, but I do object to any political party in this country—whether workers, or capitalists, or the National League, or the people's party, or an independent party—outside this House trying to browbeat members because they feel it to be their duty to call attention to a state of things in connection with the Government Printing Office, a state of things which has been admitted ever since the establishment has been in existence. I am speaking only so far as my own criticisms are concerned in regard to the efficiency and general administration of the department.

MR. DAGLISH: What about the remarks of the member for Kanowna?

MR. A. J. WILSON: I am not for one moment concerned with what the member for Kanowna said, any more than I am concerned with what comes from the member for Subiaco. I am glad that I have not to father anything that comes from the member for Subiaco, or anybody else. I have quite enough to look after of my own. [Laughter among Labour Members.] When the time comes I have no doubt I shall be able to hold up my end of the stick, perhaps a little too well for some members sitting on this side of the House. [MR. HEITMANN: Do you want the light on?] In bringing this matter forward I was actuated by a desire to protect and conserve the constitutional rights of this House, and to emphasise in the strongest possible way my protest against any political party, whether they be workers, or capitalists, or National Political Leaguers, or anybody else, endeavouring to coerce or browbeat this Parliament to do anything.

THE PREMIER: That is not the wording of the motion. The motion is to inquire into the administration and general efficiency of the Government Printing Office.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I recognise that; but my object in the first place was to emphasise in the strongest possible way my antipathy to the action of those gentlemen doing this sort of thing. If they think they have some legitimate grievance I will not be one to stand in the way of their getting

it recognised. I may not have taken the proper way, but I thought it was the right way. I did not think that the present Government, in their desire for economy, would incur the expenditure incidental to a Royal Commission. It is all very well to say that if we appoint a Royal Commission, we can limit the expenditure; but how can we?

MR. DAGLISH: Is expense your only objection?

MR. A. J. WILSON: How can we limit the expense? How can we limit the time the commission will take in their investigations? We know from the experience we have had of Royal Commissions in the past that they have not been as expeditious in many cases as they might have been, and as they ought to have been in the best interests of the State. So far as I am concerned, if there is any way of getting over the difficulty, I am not anxious to be on the select committee, nor am I anxious to nominate the members of the select committee. If I had the opportunity of doing so, certainly one of the first gentlemen I should put upon that committee would be the member for Subiaco.

MR. DAGLISH: That is the first sign of good judgment I have heard from you.

MR. A. J. WILSON: And why would I do so? Because there are many of these Government printers living at Subiaco; and of course necessarily the member for Subiaco would know a good deal about the personality of these gentlemen and a good deal about their practicality. I am sure they will have already given him abundant details that would be of excellent use to a select committee of this kind. I simply leave my proposal in the hands of the House, to do with it as members deem meet.

First question (to strike out "select committee") passed; the words struck out.

Question (to insert "Royal Commission") put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	16
Noes	...	...	...	27
				—
Majority against	...	...	...	11

AYES.
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Brebber
Mr. Collier
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Holman
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Walker
Mr. Ware
Mr. Troy (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Davies
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gull
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Heilmann
Mr. Horan
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Lynch
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Male
Mr. Monger
Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Plesse
Mr. Price
Mr. Smith
Mr. Stone
Mr. Veryard
Mr. A. J. Wilson
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Barnett (Teller).

Amendment (Mr. Bath's) thus negatived.

MR. SPEAKER: The question now is that the motion be agreed to. I desire to point out to members that it will be necessary to vote "No," for as the motion stands it is not sense; it has been mutilated.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Would I be in order in withdrawing the motion?

MR. SPEAKER: Not at this stage.

Final question (the remaining words) put, and negatived.

PAPER PRESENTED.

ACCIDENT, SONS OF GWALIA MINE.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Some time ago the member for Leonora called for the papers in connection with an explosion which occurred at the Sons of Gwalia mine. Since those papers were laid on the table a farther report had been received, and he now placed the farther report on the table.

ELECTORAL—GERALDTON SEAT, EXPLANATION.

THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): I desire, with the permission of the House, to make a personal explanation, and to trespass on the indulgence of the House in order to clear a fellow member of this Chamber from any misconception as to his conduct. Mr. Carson, the member for Geraldton, has invited from me an expression of opinion as to whether he should take his seat in this House, or whether he should continue to refrain from doing so, as he has done up to the

present. The position may be briefly summed up as follows. First, Mr. Carson is the member for Geraldton, and is entitled, until the return of the writ has been set aside by some competent jurisdiction, to sit as member for that constituency. As such member, it is his duty to attend the sittings of this House unless lawfully excused from doing so. Under the Standing Orders of the House, it would be necessary for some member to move for leave for the hon. member to absent himself from his duties; otherwise, if he were absent for more than two months, his seat would be declared vacant. The leave of absence would have to be based on some valid excuse. Moreover, the interests of the constituency of Geraldton cannot be sacrificed to any sentiment of a private character. I understand that Mr. Carson's constituents have taken up this attitude, especially in view of the fact that no decision will in all probability be pronounced until next October, in the matter of the election petition.

MR. BOLTON: The Court is to be moved next week.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member apparently has better information than I have on that point. I do not know its source.

MR. BOLTON: An ex-Attorney General.

THE PREMIER: At any rate, in the circumstances I have advised Mr. Carson to attend in his place in this House and discharge those duties from which, so far, he has not been discharged or released.

PAPERS—MINING LEASE, BULONG.

On motion by **MR. P. J. LYNCH**, ordered: That all papers dealing with the Queen Margaret South Lease, Bulong, be laid upon the table of the House.

MOTION—MINES DEVELOPMENT, HOW TO ASSIST.

MR. P. J. LYNCH (Leonora) moved:

That in the opinion of this House the Government should consider the advisability of providing on the next Loan Estimates for a substantial allocation of money to give assistance to owners of approved mining properties on the erection of winding, pumping, and reduction plants.

He said: I feel sure the House will bear with me while I explain the motives

which have prompted me in bringing forward this motion for the consideration of the House. In the first place, it has special reference to the mining industry, and the mining industry stands at the present time, in common with other industries, in what may be described as a state of stagnation. It has occurred to me and to others with whom I have come into contact that something should be done in order to, if possible, remove that feeling of stagnation which is so evident on several of the mining centres of the goldfields. This would have the consequent effect of creating some activity in the other industries of the State. So this motion has at least a twofold if not a threefold motive. First of all, if it is agreed to by the House in its present form, it will have the first effect of putting the industry on a footing somewhat different from that which it occupied previously; secondly, and consequently, it will have the effect of stimulating the other industries of the State, and as a result the State as a whole must be materially benefited. I may be asked by those who may be inclined to question my statement as to the stagnant condition of the industry, in what way it is stagnant. True, if we look at the industry from the standpoint of dividends, of profits distributed, it is certainly prosperous; but if we look at it from the standpoint of its employing capacity, the fact is forced home to us that the industry, in that respect, is not now so prosperous as it was five or six years ago. I find, on referring to statistics, that at that time there were something like 19,000 persons directly employed in the industry, working above and below ground, and the population in the ten magisterial districts comprising the goldfields numbered 56,450. I may correct myself by stating that I have taken the number directly employed above and below ground only for that particular year to which I am referring, in order to arrive at as true a comparison as is possible. In that year there were 19,000 persons employed above and below ground, and in the same year the census returns showed that the total population of the goldfields was 56,450. In other words, one-third of the population of the goldfields—leaving out the Kimberleys—was directly employed in the industry,

and, consequently, directly supporting the other two-thirds of the people living on the spot. When it is remembered that the timber industry, the carrying industry, the pastoral industry, and several other of the subsidiary industries of this State rely for their existence upon the prosperity of the goldfields, it naturally occurs to us to see if we cannot devise some means of placing this industry on a more progressive basis than that on which it is found to-day.

POINT OF ORDER.

MR. BUTCHER: On a point of order, I ask for a ruling as to whether the motion is in order in accordance with the Standing Orders. I think a similar question was raised in this House last session, and the Speaker ruled the motion out of order.

MR. SPEAKER: I looked up this matter when the Notice of Motion was given, and I had it corrected to conform to the rules, by making it an abstract motion. As the hon. member gave notice, the motion was not admissible; but as it is worded now it is admissible. I am following a precedent which has been laid down on former occasions in the House.

RESUMED.

MR. LYNCH (continuing): I was speaking on the employing capacity of the industry as we found it during the past five years; and the records of the Mines Department show that the industry as an employing one is not progressing, in fact there are three hundred or four hundred men less employed now than there were five years ago. As I have said, as far as dividends the direct profits from the mines are concerned, the industry is prospering; but the people are more interested in seeing the advance of the industry from an employment point of view, as that would have the effect of circulating more money, which certainly is a needful quantity in the State to-day, as it has been in the past. Turning to the question of dividends, the total amount distributed in dividends up to the present is £14,712,000. And taking the calculation that has been used by the Minister for Mines, when we recall the nominal capital employed in the industry of the State, a fraction over

30 millions, it is clear that in a very few years the industry, although looked upon as being unprofitable in some quarters, will have repaid its total nominal capital. If the rate of the dividends of the present year continues during the next six or seven years, the total nominal capital of this State will have been repaid. And it is certainly not a severe stretch of imagination to say, as has been said in several quarters, that the industry is only in its infancy. So from the point of view of the investor abroad, the industry has paid handsomely, I venture to submit. Taking the dividends of the present year, amounting to £2,100,000, that sum is equivalent to seven per cent. on the nominal capital, which is not bad interest on the money invested.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is only nominal.

MR. LYNCH: I quite believe that no such sum as 30 million pounds in solid cash ever reached these shores for actual investment. But assuming that it has reached these shores in solid cash, it has earned during the currency of this year about 7 per cent., which after all speaks very well on the part of the industry as to repaying the investors who have sent their money here, either as paper or solid cash. In this connection of dividends I may be permitted to say that although the investors in this State have had very reasonable rewards for their investments, they are not treating the State in the way they certainly should do, and in the way it is entitled to be treated, especially when we remember that at least two of the companies, the Fingal and the Ivanhoe, have already by resolution—one in a very specific form—allowed their directors to let the profits made in this State be taken beyond its borders and invested in foreign countries, even China perhaps. I simply draw the attention of the House to the fact that although it is very necessary to take into consideration the interests of the investors, yet when a fact like this is brought home to our minds we are justified in saying that after all this State is not so handsomely treated by these investors and these two companies as it is entitled to be. I only hope that the other companies will not think of following the lead set by the Ivanhoe shareholders and the shareholders of the

Fingal in empowering the directors to seek fresh fields for the gold found in this State. This motion is directly intended to supply a remedy for the present trouble, which is plain enough in connection with the industry, that is to apply capital so much needed in its exploitation. Capital is shy in coming forward to aid in the indispensable work of combining with labour to make profitable some of our mines at present unprofitable. And it is for devising some means of applying capital in this State to push forward the industry that this motion is found on the Notice Paper to-night. It is worthy of reflection that this shyness on the part of capital to come forward and invest in the mining industry is no new trouble. It is no new affliction as far as the industry is concerned. The Minister for Mines was obliged to recognise that in the year 1904. He gave interviews to the Press during that time, saying in effect that he regretted that local capital was tardy in coming forward to assist in the exploitation of the industry. I mention this to show that the backwardness of local capital being invested in our mines was an actuality long before the Labour Government came into power. There is rather a regrettable feature in relation to the investors of this State. We notice in our chief city of Perth there is an evident readiness on the part of investors to invest in blocks of land and buildings, whereas if we compare what has taken place in other lands, notably Queensland, we find there is a readiness to invest in mining, which certainly forms a marked and creditable contrast to that which is noticeable in this State. A block of land in Perth lately changed hands for £60,000 odd. Every citizen is free, or ought to be so, to engage in speculating in the most profitable business; but at the same time action is necessary which will place that form of speculation in the category of those that will not be quite so profitable, and which will force the investors to go farther afield and invest in what is and has proved itself to be the primary industry in this State, namely mining. I am forced to reflect upon the tardiness shown by investors to invest in mining. On the Croydon goldfield in North Queensland for 20 years almost every second mine has been practically owned

by Brisbane or Sydney shareholders; whereas if we travel from one end of the goldfields of Western Australia to the other we shall find hardly an instance where local capital is invested in our mines, save and except perhaps the one notable instance of the Lady Shenton mine. This justifies me in stating that there is an unfortunate and regrettable unwillingness on the part of the local speculators here to invest their money in the mining industry of this State. And in order to make up for these shortcomings this motion is introduced. As far as foreign investors are concerned, there has been a noticeable falling off; and it is very hard to trace what it has been due to. It may be a combination of causes, or one particular cause; but certainly the one popularly alleged, the labour conditions and the conditions of working the mines here, cannot be held to be the main reason keeping foreign capital from being invested in our mines. I may refer to what has happened in Colorado, and I am forced to the conclusion that the conditions here are infinitely preferable for the investor to the conditions to be found at Colorado.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In what sense?

MR. LYNCH: As far as employing labour is concerned, and the encouragement given by railway companies, transport companies, in operations there. I have had the opportunity of studying lately the rates and conditions which obtain in the State of Colorado, a State responsible only a couple of years ago for one-tenth of the gold output of the world, and a State which in a number of respects resembles our own Boulder Belt. The arrangement come to there between the employees and the mine-owners provides for an eight-hours day. It is true that there are days of longer duration, but taking in this instance eight hours a day, the lowest wage was 12s. 6d. for truckers and shovellers, and the wage reached as high as 18s. 9d. for wet shaft sinkers. We see that the conditions as far as the wages and hours of labour are concerned are far more severe in Colorado to-day than they are in Western Australia. So the unwillingness on the part of investors to come to this country cannot be due to the fact that they are

subject to more arbitrary conditions here than in that State. Even as far as the investment of English capital in Colorado is concerned, there are five or six leading companies there owned exclusively by English shareholders. There is the Stratton's Independence, a Liverpool company, which bears the same relation to the mining industry there as the Fingal or Boulder Perseverance bears to the industry in this State. There are also the Campbird, Moon and Anchor, and a few more owned exclusively by English shareholders, which prove that the English shareholder or investor at the present time is not afraid of high rates and conditions, when he sends money so far afield to be employed in the exploitation of an industry in which higher rates obtain than have ever been dreamt of in this State. The Minister for Mines asked me how they are favoured. In "The Gold Mines of the World," the author of the book, Mr. Curle, records that with all their improved means of transit and treatment in Colorado to-day it would take 15 dollars a ton to provide a payable margin. In this State at the present time we can make a proposition payable at something like 16s. or 18s. a ton. We may well consider that Western Australia shows far greater inducement for investment of capital than does Colorado. I do not wish to detain the House. My proposal is certainly not new in one respect, because we find that under the Mines Development Act a sum of £11,000 was spent last year for the purpose of developing the mines of the State; but what I propose in this motion is that the State should stand in the same relation to the mining industry as it stands at present in regard to the agricultural industry of the State. Already through the agency of the Agricultural Bank close upon £400,000 has been either advanced or authorised to be advanced to settlers of this State; and I may say that the operations of that Bank have proved highly creditable as far as the investment of the moneys entrusted to its care is concerned. By means of that institution real material assistance has been given to many settlers, and the transactions have been carried out so satisfactorily that there was only an amount of £7 10s. to be

written off during the course of the existence of the Bank, I believe. The terms of the motion are very expansive in its present abstract form. I am not asking for £400,000 to assist the mining industry. I would be quite satisfied with half that amount if the Government in its wisdom, after taking the sense of the House, saw fit to place that sum to the credit of this project on the next Loan Estimates. I will not go so far as the Colonial Treasurer, who, when introducing the three agricultural lines, said that although they might cost £160,000, that was a mere bagatelle, and if the whole thing were lost what would it matter? My intention in moving this motion is, that should the £200,000 be set apart it should be used for the purpose of advancing to the owners of approved propositions money for the erection of winding, pumping, and reduction plants; and feeling that the Government would follow the practice which has been in vogue in the past, of introducing their Loan Estimates at a very late hour of the session, I thought it was best to introduce this proposal at the present early stage in order that the Government might have the benefit of whatever discussion was indulged in on the subject. The practice in the past has been to introduce Loan Estimates in the dying hours of Parliament, on the eve of Christmas, when members are either fatigued by the arduous struggles of a long session, or anxious to get to their homes, and consequently are not in a position to indulge in that free criticism which should certainly be directed to any project of a financial character. Therefore, in making this proposal at an early stage of the session, I feel that I am doing my duty, so that the Government may have the benefit of whatever discussion ensues. It is well known that those whom this proposal is intended to relieve—the struggling prospectors and owners of shows in the several goldfields centres—are very much at the mercy of machinery agents and persons who are prepared to come to the assistance of prospectors for the sake of a very high recompense by way of a controlling share. I have personal knowledge of several shows in that helpless state, because the owners cannot find an easy

means of getting them locally floated, and are obliged to go to the machinery agent in order to put the proposition to the best possible use, and have to part with the better share of the proposition so as to get the necessary assistance. I hope that the Government will see the wisdom of adopting this proposal, thus helping, say, those shows situated around Burtville, that are down to water level, the owners having exhausted all their means in the dry zone, and being brought up against a dead wall in a helpless condition, face to face with vanishing profits, and minus the capital for farther exploitation. The Black Range district is somewhat similarly situated, and so is Meekatharra. And as a sample of the helplessness of the owners of such propositions I may instance one in my own electorate, that was lately proposed to be traded off for £5,000 to the representative of an English company, who in turn would float it elsewhere, and the profits would go beyond the boundaries of this State. Five thousand pounds for a show that has proved undeniably to be highly payable! If the Government were in a position to offer the owners of this proposition, say £3,000 or £5,000, to equip the mine with either a five or a ten-head battery, and all the necessary accessories in the way of cyanide treatment plant and pumping machinery, such a mine would possibly be saved to this State and its profits retained here. At present the owners prefer to offer it for a paltry £5,000 because there is no spirit of enterprise abroad in this State, because there is, for some unaccountable reason, no desire to assist local syndicates to keep in their possession highly payable properties. That is a concrete illustration of one out of many shows now in that helpless condition in the back country. It may be suggested the Government batteries are in close proximity to such propositions, and are consequently fulfilling the functions for which they were intended, namely to accommodate such prospectors by treating their stuff. It is true that a Government battery is in close proximity to this and to other propositions in many goldfields centres; but the present high cost of Government battery treatment absorbs much of what should be left to carry on legitimate operations in the prospectors' properties.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Would a company treat the stuff much more cheaply?

MR. LYNCH: Very much more cheaply. The expenses of the Government batteries for the years 1903 to 1905 have been as follow:—In 1903, milling, 13s. 4d.; cyaniding, 7s. 7d.; total, 20s. 11d. per ton. In 1904, 22s.; 1905, 19s. 7d. The average for those three years has been 20s. 10d. for crushing and cyanide treatment only. While we compare that record with what has been done by some of the privately-owned batteries, we find that their expenses are very much smaller. The cost at the Belleview property for treatment alone was 7s. 10d.; at the Cosmopolitan, 5s. 6d.; Golden Pole, 9s. 2d.; Golden Ridge, 5s. 10d. This return shows that out of nine companies, some local and some owned at a distance, operating in this State, the average cost of crushing and cyaniding has been 7s. 8d., as compared with 20s. 10d. for the Government batteries. And I may point out that this average of 20s. 10d. for crushing and cyaniding may not be the actual charge to the prospectors. I am merely stating what it costs the department to crush and cyanide; and that cost may be different from the charge that has afterwards to be paid by the prospectors themselves. So we see the vast difference between the treatment in private concerns and the treatment for which prospectors have to pay under the Government battery system, showing that every mine that is known to have consistent values and to be easily worked is certainly called upon to shoulder a very unnecessary load if it has to pay 20s. 10d., instead of an average cost of 7s. 8d. for treatment by a private company.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. Mitchell): Private enterprise.

MR. LYNCH: The Honorary Minister knows well that if the Government batteries were run full time, with three shifts, the average cost would closely approximate to that of private companies. But owing to the intermittent running, and to several batteries being hung up for weeks, the cost is forced up in spite of any circumspection or economy practised by the Minister or his subordinates.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Many State batteries work five head of stamps as against the private battery's 60-head.

MR. LYNCH : That does not necessarily affect the cost. The Golden Pole has a 10-head mill, and its cost is 9s. 2d.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : It has 20 head.

MR. LYNCH : The Craiggie more has 10-head mill, and its average cost is 8s. 10d. The Great Tower Hill has a 40-head, at 8s. 5d. Nevertheless, the number of stamps has some slight bearing, but no important bearing, on the results.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : Our costs must be high in the circumstances.

MR. LYNCH : I do not wish to drift into an argument about the law of diminishing returns, by virtue of which it may be argued that at one stage the expenses, instead of reaching a vanishing point, will actually start to increase, no matter what economy is practised. But I simply give the figures to show that the prospector, even in the vicinity of Government batteries and in spite of all that has been said in favour of Government batteries, is at present loaded with a cost for treatment far in excess of that incurred by local companies such as the Golden Ridge or the Golden Pole. What I wished to propose to the House, though the Standing Orders will not permit me to do so, was that the Government should set aside a sum of at least £200,000 on the forthcoming Loan Estimates, and should follow the practice of the Agricultural Bank, which now lends to settlers money for the purchase of machinery, cattle, manure, and other things of that nature, the loans having a five-years' currency. Certainly we might have to make the term seven years, to permit of returns coming to hand ; but a calculation of that sort would give at least £20,000 or £30,000 to be annually devoted towards the erection of winding, pumping, and reduction plants. If the present opportunity is not availed of, if we continue to drift slowly along and at the same time ineffectually as we are now drifting by allotting a small sum like £11,000, we shall make no real material progress. My intention is, therefore, to take the sense of the House on this proposal, so that a sum of £20,000 or £30,000 may be annually set aside, and can be relied on by owners of proved propositions for assistance when they can show to a responsible officer of

the department that they possess such a proposition and that it is worthy of encouragement. The main purpose to be served by this motion will be the absorption of some of the surplus labour now roaming about the goldfields, and the increase of the number at present to be found employed either above or below ground. The second object will be, I submit, very estimable—the releasing of some of these struggling prospectors and syndicates from the necessity of going to machinery agents to trade off their propositions at great expense, and in many cases at a loss. The owners will be able to go to the Minister for Mines, and on showing that they are possessed of such properties, will get assistance of the kind I have indicated. And the last and most important object to be secured is to keep in the State some of the profits at present drifting away to foreign lands ; and for this reason alone I can scarcely imagine that one member of the House will seriously oppose the motion. When we reflect that we have allowed to drift from these shores something like 15 millions during the last ten years, I think that a change is called for ; a change which will mean that those who have money here will be either compelled to invest it, or failing that, the Government will act as it acts through the Agricultural Bank, and will help the prospectors to erect their own plants, thus forming the nucleus of local companies, which will have the effect of keeping within the boundaries of this State whatever profit is made in the mining industry. If no other object is achieved, other than to create our own companies and to keep the profits that arise from this industry to ourselves, it is sufficient reason to commend this motion to the House. There are details in regard to the proposal that could be worked out at the Minister's will. The Minister could have the advice of his responsible officers as to the value of whatever propositions were offered, and he could appoint a board, if he thought it necessary, to look after the allocation of this sum, which would be a recurring expenditure each year. But those are details of the proposals. My object is lastly to place such a substantial sum on the Estimates that we can say to the owners of approved properties that we will assist them without insisting

upon any great share, such as machinery owners at present insist on, being given up, and at the same time requiring that very little profit will come our way. The rate of interest could be placed at 5 per cent. It is now borrowed, I believe, at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and loaned at 5 per cent., on similar advances. A loan of £3,000 to £5,000 on the erection of a ten-head battery at 5 per cent. would be nothing short of a perfect boon to many companies struggling in the back country; and it would have the effect of absorbing the labour now wandering around aimlessly, and would promote local companies and prevent that money which is now drifting to foreign countries going out of the country.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAILWAY PROJECT, PINJARRAH-MARRADONG.

MR. J. P. McLARTY (Murray) moved:

That in the opinion of this House, in order to open up the agricultural and timber lands lying between Pinjarrah and Marradong, the Government should consider the advisability of proceeding with the construction of a railway at an early date.

He said: I am not bringing forward any new thing. The Pinjarrah-Marradong Railway has been heard of for the last ten years. It has been before the public and before Parliament, and it has been favourably commented on by the Press. In 1898 Sir John Forrest had it in the very forefront of his policy. He had it brought before Parliament, and had a sum of £4,000 passed on the Estimates for a survey, and a permanent survey was made for 56 miles. The matter was afterwards brought before Parliament and passed by the Assembly; but I believe it was talked out in another place, there being some difference of opinion as to whether the line should be carried out by the Government or by contract. It was well supported at that time by the Press, and the whole of the timber land along the route where Sir John Forrest proposed to run the railway was taken up for 30 miles to the east and north and south. I maintain that if a line was warranted in those days, there is much more warrant for it now. The timber is still there, and there is far more settlement. I shall first of all deal with the

timber. When the Timber Combine was formed, it failed at first to engage the services of Mr. Teesdale Smith, and that gentleman started in the timber trade in opposition to the Combine and had a railway surveyed from Pinjarrah towards Marradong. Some clearing was done, a considerable amount of earthworks was thrown up; but subsequently Mr. Teesdale Smith agreed with the Combine and threw in part of his leases with it, and this work was stopped. I merely mention this to show that if a shrewd business-man like Mr. Teesdale Smith thought it worth his while to start in the jarrah forest to the east of Pinjarrah, that forest must be pretty good. Mr. J. M. Ferguson has stated for years that if he were given the privilege of cutting the timber in those forests, he would construct a railway into the forests; and he is still willing to do so. But I think it would be far better for the Government to construct the railway than to let it go into private hands. I may say parenthetically that, no matter whether this railway is built or not, whoever holds these timber leases should be compelled to work them. I do not think any company should hold such a large extent of country and do nothing with it. The Royal Commission on Forestry sent in a very able report about twelve months ago, recommending that a railway should be built from Pinjarrah to the forests; and this should commend itself to the gentlemen sitting in Opposition, because the idea of the commission in opening up this country was to open up fresh avenues for labour and to give a wider field to the timber hewers. What we are asking for is the first section of a railway running as far as Marradong, or perhaps not so far. At a distance of 38 miles from Pinjarrah, one leaves the timber country and reaches the fertile valley of Marradong, and from there one passes along the rich agricultural lands leading to Williams or farther north to Pingelly, as Sir John Forrest proposed. The farmers there do not grow much now, because it is so far to cart their produce; but what they do cart they have to bring to Pinjarrah, a distance of 40 miles; and all their supplies are taken out the same distance. Marradong is a big place. Wilkie Bros. have about 50 to 80 men working on poison leases there,

and other syndicates have poison leases. Also the whole valley is taken up for miles. It is rich agricultural country, and a glance at the map will show how thickly it is settled. It is a mistake to suppose that the railway I ask for would be only for timber purposes. It would benefit a number of settlers, and railway communication would lead to increased cultivation. There are settlers along the Murray; and when the forests are cut out, no doubt there will be a great deal more cultivation, because the land is rich and well watered, and there are numerous brooks and springs, making the country fit for orchards. There are some splendid orchards there even now within reach of the railway. Mr. McKay has 50 acres of splendid orchard. I also desire to point out that it is the wish of my constituents that the railway should start from Pinjarrah. Some people think that North Dandalup should be the starting point, but I do not agree with them. If the line started from North Dandalup it would cross numerous streams, and it would be costly and difficult to construct, while it would not serve a single settler. Sir John Forrest proposed to start it from Pinjarrah. Moreover, it would be very mortifying to the people of Pinjarrah to know there was a line passing a few miles from their doors and taking away this valuable asset—millions of pounds worth of timber and the whole of the agricultural produce that might come down—without their getting any benefit from it. The settlers at Marradong held a meeting some time ago, and they were unanimously of opinion that the starting point should be Pinjarrah. So we would be meeting their wishes. If the junction were made at Pinjarrah, it would be about equally distant to Fremantle and Bunbury. If the railway be continued from Jandakot to the South-Western Railway, the whole of the timber now shipped at Rockingham would go by the Jandakot route, because it is quite certain that when that railway is completed, Rockingham is doomed as a port. There is very little shipping done there now. As I have said, Sir John Forrest always considered that Pinjarrah should be the starting point. If Pinjarrah were made the starting point, it would give an impetus to the town which is, I am sorry to say, at present in a state of stagna-

tion; and it would open up markets and would open up the fishing industry at Mandurah. It would also give prosperity to the settlers at East and West Coolup as far out as Drakesbrook. It would, in fact, completely revolutionise the trade in that district. The money spent at the timber mills is very beneficial to the small farmer. Jarrahdale is a case in point. I know farmers at Jarrahdale who were in very poor circumstances a few years ago, but they are now comfortable. We hope that if the railway now proposed is constructed, we will receive equal prosperity for the farmers about Pinjarrah. Some people argue that the railway would be simply a timber line. I deny that the only benefit would be for the timber trade. As I have pointed out, there is rich agricultural land at Marradong and towards Williams. It is said that there is a depression in the timber trade just now. I hope and believe that the depression is only a temporary one. I would farther say on this question of the railway being only a timber line, that in regard to the railways projected from Donnybrook up the Preston Valley and from Blackwood to Lower Blackwood at Nannup—against which I have nothing to say—a strong argument for their construction is that they pass through timber country, and that the timber alone would justify their construction. Yet here near Pinjarrah, within 50 miles of the metropolis, we have magnificent timber forests that would take many years to cut out. Strange to say, this country is almost a *terra incognita*. A few days since, I had the pleasure of meeting some members of Parliament out in the forests. We were honoured by the presence of two Cabinet Ministers, and there were some 20 settlers. Yet in that gathering of thirty or forty, only about eight had ever been on the Marradong route before. Consequently the country must be very little known. I may say that the Jarrahdale timber concession has been cut over for the last 35 years, and is not yet cut out; so I see no reason why the splendid forests to the east of Pinjarrah should not employ a number of men for the next 60 or 70 years, or perhaps longer. Although there may be some doubts about these agricultural railways paying at the start, there is no doubt that a line constructed towards Marradong would from the start pay work-

ing expenses, interest, and sinking fund. I have endeavoured to show that the arguments in favour of the line, though I am afraid rather imperfectly, will benefit a large agricultural community. Sir John Forrest, far-seeing and patriotic statesman, took up this line some years ago, and went so far as to have it surveyed and tried to have it constructed. I have shown that a keen business man like Mr. Smith thought the timber there sufficient to start a mill; I have shown that Mr. Ferguson is willing to construct a line into the forest. I have shown that the Timber Commission recommended a line there. If we had only 20 miles of line it would be a great benefit to the farmers there. According to figures it would be much shorter to construct a line from Marradong to Pinjarrah and then to Perth, a distance of 94 miles, than to go to Narrogin; for if the line goes to Narrogin it means 60 miles, and there will be an additional 120 miles to reach Fremantle, so that the distance is much shorter to go by way of Pinjarrah. This line I am proposing, after a few miles enters the electorate of the member for Forrest and shortly afterwards enters the electorate of the member for Williams, who no doubt will have something to say on the matter. In conclusion I would like to say we want this railway badly for the benefit of the farming community. We want to see an army of men employed in the timber forests, with their wives and families domiciled there, happy and contented. We want the silent forests to become active centres of industry; we want, instead of the parrot's screech, to hear the sound of the woodman's axe. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): I beg to second the motion.

On motion by the PREMIER, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 12 minutes to 10 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday 26th July, 1906.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—GOLD BUYING, THE MINT METHOD.

MR. EWING (without notice) asked the Treasurer: Will he, in view of the statements appearing in to day's *West Australian* as having been made by a mine manager in Kalgoorlie, re the methods of gold-buying practised at the Perth Mint, obtain from the Deputy Master of that institution a statement showing the procedure followed, and lay the same upon the table of the House?

THE TREASURER replied: Yes.

CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES (TEMPORARY).

MR. SPEAKER informed the House that he had appointed the members for Perth (Mr. H. Brown), Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), and Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) as temporary Chairmen of Committees.

ELECTORAL—GERALDTON SEAT, MR. CARSON.

MR. H. CARSON (Geraldton): I desire to make a personal explanation. As members are aware, I have for some considerable time absented myself from my seat; and I wish briefly to state my reasons for so doing. Members doubtless know that I am placed in a very unsatisfactory and to my mind a very