

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 18th December, 1908.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Report of Royal Commission on Meat Supply.

By the Minister for Agriculture: Annual Report of Department of Agriculture, 1907-08.

By the Minister for Works: By-laws of the Kalgoorlie Roads Board.

By the Minister for Mines: Amended Regulations under the Mines Regulation Act.

QUESTION—LANDS ADJACENT TO RAILWAYS.

Mr. BATH asked the Premier: 1, What area of first-class Crown lands situated within 12 miles of our existing railways is available for selection in W.A.? 2, Where are such areas available?

The PREMIER replied: I think the hon. member will recognise that this question is rather a large order considering the short notice. The answers I have here are:—1, About 652,000 acres. 2, Chiefly on the Eastern line. East of Cunderdin, and in the Bridgetown district.

QUESTION—RAILWAY COAL SUPPLIES, COLLIE.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1. When did the last contract between the Collie coal mines and the Railway Department for the supply of coal expire? 2. Under this contract did the Collie Proprietary Co.

supply 45 per cent. of the orders? 3, What was the average amount paid monthly to this company? 4, What was the average amount paid monthly to the company supplying the second highest quantity? 5. Why did the Collie Coal Proprietary Co. receive this special consideration? 6. Why were new tenders not called at expiration of last contract? 7. When will fresh tenders be called? 8. Does the Government not consider that encouragement should be given to those who have struggled to pioneer an export trade? 9. If so, will they endeavour to arrange a more equitable distribution of orders?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, 31st August, 1908. 2, Yes. 3, £2,164 2s. 4d. (exclusive of "nuts"). 4, £899 13s. 4d. (exclusive of "nuts"). 5, When the contracts were in course of preparation during the latter part of 1905, the Proprietary coal was recognised as being the best in the market, in fact that company's tender for the whole supply was accepted, subject to certain conditions as to an industrial agreement, which, however, the company did not complete. Prior to the present distribution, the proportions were: Proprietary 50 per cent., Co-Operative 20 per cent., Scottish 15 per cent., Cardiff 15 per cent. In revising the distribution, and settling the present basis of Proprietary 45 per cent., and 55 per cent. equally between the other three companies, these circumstances were considered. 6, As the Government have fixed the price of Collie coal on its relative value to Newcastle coal it was not considered necessary to call for tenders. 7, It is hoped that tenders will be called for supplies from the 1st February, 1910. 8, Yes. 9, It is intended that the present basis of distribution should be revised.

QUESTIONS—TUBERCULOSIS IN COWS.

Commission.

Mr. HOPKINS asked the Premier,—1, Will the Government agree to the appointment of a commission of practical men to supervise the slaughter of a reasonable number of cows condemned by

the Central Board as being unfit for dairying purposes? 2, If so, will the Government place at the disposal of the commission the services of all the certificated veterinary surgeons in the State to enable such commission to take evidence and report upon—(a.) The rectitude or otherwise of the slaughter of the condemned animals. (b.) What compensation, if any, should be paid to owners. (c.) To submit the Government cattle at Brunswick State Farm to the same test as has been applied to the local dairies, and to advise in a similar manner as to their retention or disposal?

The PREMIER replied: The Government have already offered to slaughter a number of cows, if requested to do so by the owners, in the presence of any person appointed by the dairymen, and of the Government veterinary surgeon. It is considered therefore, that it would be unnecessary to appoint a commission for this purpose. It is intended to test the cows at the Brunswick State Farm.

Tests.

Mr. JACOBY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Did Mr. Devine purchase nine cows from the Department of Agriculture? 2, Do the records of the Stock Department show that these cows were tested by the Central Board of Health last June, with the result that six were condemned and ordered to be isolated? 3, Were they again tested in July, and did they again react, and was the temperature of one cow so far above normal that it was decided that the animal was badly affected with tuberculosis? 4, Did this cow die from impaction of the stomach, and was the carcass examined by an officer of the Stock Department? 5, If so, who was the officer, and is it true that he reported that he failed to discover the slightest trace of tubercular disease?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: Mr. Devine purchased 9 head of cows from the Department of Agriculture during the period of August, 1907, to January, 1908. The Stock Department have no records that these were tested by the Central Board of Health in June, but it is stated that they were so tested,

and that 6 were isolated on account of having re-acted to the tuberculin test. Five of these animals were again re-tested in July, and two only re-acted to the test. The sixth cow, owing to its having a temperature above normal, was not re-tested. This animal has since died, and the post mortem which was made by Veterinary Surgeon Syrett, an officer of the Agriculture Department, goes to show that death was due to an accumulation of foreign matter in the digestive tract, and he also pointed out that no trace of tuberculosis could be discovered. In connection with the infected cows which had been in the herd for several months, it is possible that if they are affected with the disease, it may have been contracted since they have been in contact with the general herd, as it is known that one at least of Mr. Devine's cattle has been destroyed for tuberculosis since he purchased cows from the Department of Agriculture.

QUESTION—SHEEP IMPORTATION.

Mr. HOPKINS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, In view of the congested nature of the sheep market in the South-Western Division, which must become more emphasised as the season advances, will he refrain from the importation of additional sheep, at least for the rest of this year? 2, Does the Minister not deem it a more prudent course to induce beginners to purchase local lambs from local breeders at the present reduced rates in preference to incurring the greater risks attendant on the handling of imported ewes? 3, If he is of that opinion will he instruct that necessary action be taken with a view to relieving the present glut of lambs and young sheep offering on the local markets?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, I am not aware that the store sheep market is congested, although pastoralists have had difficulty in disposing of their fat stock. We have practically filled all requests for sheep now on our books and shall not, in consequence, be importing sheep during the present year. None have been imported since April

last. 2, I do not deem it prudent to purchase local lambs for distribution among small holders who desire to make a profit from their purchases during the coming year. There would be far greater risk in breeding from local lambs than in handling imported ewes. As a matter of fact the last 4,000 ewes distributed were purchased within the State. 3, Answered by 1 and 2.

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY, PINGELLY.

Mr. HOPKINS asked the Minister for Works: 1, What scheme does the Works Department propose to adopt in regard to a water supply for the town of Pingelly? 2, What is the estimated cost of the proposed extension from York? 3, What is the estimated cost in connection with the local scheme proposed? Will the action proposed to be taken be of service during the present summer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, A survey has been completed and plans are being prepared for a gravitation scheme from catchment; its practicability depends upon the rateable value of the district served. 2, A supply of 24,000 gallons daily would cost £26,000. Pumping would be necessary and would add materially to the annual cost. 3, Completed scheme £10,000, modified scheme £6,000. 4, The proposition with its obligations will be placed before the district in January.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERY, MESSENGER'S PATCH.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has the Minister decided upon the class of public battery to be erected at Messenger's Patch? 2, When will a start be made to erect the plant?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, No. 2, About the end of January.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Introduced by the Attorney General and read a first time.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day, Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Vote—Joint Houses of Parliament, £7,169:

Mr. JACOBY: It was desirable that members should be given some information as to the cost of functions incidental to the opening and closing of Parliament. He had come to the conclusion that a much simpler form of proceeding would be more in accordance with the ideas of the people and certainly more in accordance with the financial position of the State.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was raising a question under the wrong division: it should be raised when the Estimates dealing with State ceremonials were before the Committee.

Mr. JACOBY: It was his intention right through the discussion on the Estimates to give his vote in the direction of economy wherever it could be reasonably effected. He wished to refer to the cost of printing the reports of debates in Parliament. In South Australia the reporting of the debates and the printing of those reports cost £2,400 per annum, whereas in Western Australia according to the Estimates before the Committee it ran into £3,808, or in other words £1,408 more than in South Australia. The Printing Committee he thought ought to look into this matter with the view to seeing if they could not save this sum. There were some advantages in the system in vogue in South Australia, where the newspapers by contract reported the Parliamentary debates. One advantage gained under the South Australian system, and one which appealed to him was that no matter on which side of the House an argument was raised it was reported to the people of the State verbatim; so the people there had an opportunity of reading not only the arguments used on the Ministerial side but those used by the members of the Opposition. The newspapers took verbatim reports of the proceedings, and these were published daily in the Press. Proof copies of speeches were supplied.

to members for correction just as they were here: so too a similar number of weekly volumes were distributed, and later on the completed volumes were bound and distributed. These were the two advantages that appealed to him in the system as against that obtaining in Western Australia: First, a considerable saving, and secondly an impartial report of the proceedings of the House daily given to the people of the State. Possibly as a result of that system the people of South Australia were particularly well informed on all political questions. Under the system in vogue in Western Australia Ministers got excellent reports in the daily papers, but the instructions issued in the newspaper offices were that except in the case of Ministerial speeches only short reports were to be given. He had no complaints to make on this score, because he himself had always been well treated by the newspapers.

The TREASURER: While quite agreeing with the hon. member that the cost of *Hansard* might be decreased, it seemed to him that the better way of bringing about that desirable result would be by shortening the speeches made. For instance, a ten minutes' limit in the House would materially reduce the cost of *Hansard*. The system adopted in South Australia, he understood, was not considered so satisfactory as the member for Swan appeared to think. He (the Treasurer) desired to point out to the Committee that the cost of *Hansard* had come down from 12s. 1d. per page in 1905-6 to 6s. 10d. per page in 1907-8, while the total cost had been reduced from £1,994 in 1906-7 to £1,240 in 1907-8. In these two years the actual volume of reporting had been pretty well the same, so the comparison in cost was very much in favour of the last year. In respect to the suggestion made by the member for Swan the question was, would hon. members be satisfied with the newspaper reports? Again, what would be the cost of reporting under the South Australian system as applied to Western Australia? Personally, he would like to see the cost of *Hansard* reduced by one-half; but he felt sure that no report

outside our own staff would be satisfactory to members. Some steps might be taken in the direction of curtailing the cost by curtailing the time of speaking.

Mr. SCADDAN: There was a Printing Committee in existence, and if the member for Swan could make any suggestion to that Committee in the direction of reducing the cost of *Hansard* he could rely upon his suggestion being fully considered.

The PREMIER: Some 12 months ago the Printing Committee had had prepared a report on this very subject of the cost of *Hansard*; and the clerk of the House when in the Eastern States had obtained the fullest information in regard to the method in vogue in South Australia. To the best of his (the Premier's) recollection the report had not been at all favourable to the adoption of the South Australian system. As a result of their investigations the Printing Committee had made certain recommendations, but they were more in respect to the advisability of curtailing the numbers of *Hansard* distributed. As a result of a motion moved in the House of Commons recently, a return had been prepared dealing with the possible limitation of speeches made in Parliament. The Colonial Office had sent out to Western Australia a copy of that return and he (the Premier) had forwarded it on to the Printing Committee for their information. In New South Wales the Standing Orders provided that on motions for the adjournment of the House the mover and the Minister first speaking were limited to 30 minutes each, while any other member had only 15 minutes. In New Zealand Standing Order 108 provided that no member could speak for more than half-an-hour at a time, except in debates on the Address-in-Reply, the Financial Statement, or motions of want of confidence.

Mr. WALKER: The member for Swan in drawing attention to the cost of the *Hansard* staff had not made sufficient inquiries. A return published in 1903-4 by Mr. Rason gave the cost of the *Hansard* staff in the various States of the Commonwealth. In this State the cost was £1,850; in Queensland it was

£2,441; in New South Wales, £5,613; in South Australia, the State referred to, £1,919; and in Victoria, £2,825.

Mr. Jacoby: I was quoting last year's figures.

Mr. WALKER: Another point was that the payment of our *Hansard* staff included the payment for the reporting of select committees. In all other States that did not show in the cost of *Hansard* but was paid for as an extra and amounted to a considerable sum during the course of a long session. We were running our *Hansard* cheaper than any other State in the Commonwealth, and our *Hansard* staff was underpaid if we compared the figures paid to the leaders and other members of the staffs in other States. But apart from that, it would be very serious to recommend to the Printing Committee that they should even consider the proposition of having the debates published by a newspaper. One had only to take up a copy of the debates published by a newspaper in South Australia to see that the method was unsatisfactory. Not only was the South Australian *Hansard* printed in wretched type not conducive to the eyesight, but the condensation was extraordinary and most disappointing, and sometimes not too accurate. It was said that Sir Edmund Barton, after being reported by some of the staffs of the Adelaide papers, complained that he could not recognise his speech. In these circumstances, we should not make any recommendation whatever. We ought to be proud of our *Hansard* staff, and of all the advantages we had at such a slight cost compared with the other States, and there was no advantage in cavilling or talking as had been done.

Mr. BATH: The arrangement made in South Australia would not be suitable here. If we contracted with the metropolitan journals to print the *Hansard* reports, it would not be a suitable arrangement, because the metropolitan morning papers had little or no circulation on the goldfields, and we would have to make another contract with a daily paper circulating on the goldfields.

Mr. Jacoby: They would still get their usual reports.

Mr. BATH: But there would be injustice. If the contract was made with the metropolitan morning papers, and it was the only available *Hansard* report, it would practically deny it to the Eastern Goldfields, and the same remarks would apply to the Murchison Goldfields where the metropolitan papers had a comparatively small circulation. So, while in Adelaide the centralisation of newspaper enterprise might provide some workable arrangement there, he would not like to see in Western Australia any provision that would give a monopoly to the metropolitan dailies, and give them an advantage over the rest of the State, and so destroy the advantage we had in Western Australia of an independent daily or tri-weekly Press in the country and goldfields districts. We would be taking a retrograde step in encouraging that principle of centralisation to which many members of the House naturally and rightly took objection.

Mr. NANSON: The first question we should ask ourselves was, by whom were the *Hansard* reports demanded? It would be interesting if some officer could tell us how many copies of *Hansard* were bought by the public. Was there a strong demand for this deeply interesting publication? He ventured to say that if it were possible to take a referendum of the people of Western Australia, it would be doubtful whether we would get 25 per cent. of the voters to say they were in favour of having *Hansard* continued in its present form, if they had put before them the cost of Parliamentary establishments in this State, and if they realised that in order to reduce that cost they must not only cut down in one direction, but in every possible direction. One grew familiar with the sort of reply that was made when any member demanded any further economy. A Minister in dulcet tones would say that the Government were doing their best, that they had already effected considerable economies, and that everything was for the best in this best of all possible Parliaments. The Government had not exhausted all sources of economy, and the taxpayer was not convinced there had been sufficient economy in administra-

tion. The Treasurer asked whether we would be satisfied with newspaper reports. To whom did the Treasurer refer? To members in this House, or the electors or taxpayers? If the Treasurer referred to hon. members, then one unhesitatingly said it had nothing to do with members. *Hansard* was not published for the convenience of members, or to flatter their vanities, or to magnify their importance. If there was any justification for it at all, *Hansard* was published, the contention was, to supply a public need. He was not satisfied there was that public need, or that if *Hansard* had to rely on its merits the Treasurer would get any sum amounting to three figures in the course of the year. *Hansard*, if we looked back upon its history, was a sort of parasitical growth upon an old system. *Hansard* was adopted in Australia because a century or a half ago it became necessary in order to secure adequate reports of the proceedings of the House of Commons and the House of Lords to make arrangements for the reporting of debates, but when starting a brand new parliamentary institution where we could throw out of our minds altogether what had been done by previous generations, and look at the matter as the plain business man looked at it, did anyone suppose there would be long and elaborate reports taken of every word members chose to utter? If there was justification for reporting the proceedings of Parliament, was there not also justification for reporting the proceedings of a municipal council? If we took the administrative and very largely legislative functions of bodies like the London County Council, representing the interests of a population transcending that of the Commonwealth, or if we took the work done by the large corporations of Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham, and half a dozen other cities of the United Kingdom, could anyone seriously dispute it was not equally important, supposing it be important, that there should be an elaborate *Hansard* report of the proceedings of those bodies? But the difference between the method employed by those bodies and the method employed in Parliament, was the difference between

the method of the politician and the method of the business man. If we were to fight the rapidly approaching menace of Unification, we would need to deal with our public establishments in a business-like way, and as business men not politicians, would deal with them. We were told the Printing Committee had reported against the curtailing of *Hansard*. He did not care if half a dozen Printing Committees had reported in this way, nor did he care if the member for Kanowna could produce columns of statistics showing that in the Eastern States expenditure of this kind was more than it was in Western Australia. If those States set us a pernicious example, it was obviously no argument that we should follow that example. If there was a good precedent to be set, then let Western Australia have the credit and the glory that would attach to setting it.

Mr. Walker : Would you have no reports, no record?

Mr. NANSON would come to that directly. It was not a matter as to what the House or the Printing Committee thought, it was what the general public thought. If the general public did not want reports they perhaps need not trouble to have any sort of official report beyond the ordinary *Votes and Proceedings*. He did not wish to go to extremes, and was not yet persuaded that the public would welcome a change of so drastic a character as one that would involve the abolition of any sort of official report. Considerable economy could be made, however, by entering into a contract with one or other of the newspapers, or with several newspapers acting together, to prepare and publish reasonable reports of the proceedings of Parliament. Whether that could be done at a less cost than the present *Hansard* was a matter for inquiry, and he was not sure that it could be. But supposing a method of that kind were practicable, it had the merit, whether the reports were published in one paper or two, or whether an arrangement were made by an inset supplement whereby they could be published in the majority of papers, of bringing *Hansard* to the people. He knew of no method, how-

ever, by which people could be compelled to read the columns and pages of that publication. His own experience of that was that when an election was on, one or two ardent politicians attended a meeting armed with *Hansard*, took out a bit here and a bit there, and heckled the candidate. This added a good deal to the amusement of the proceedings, and to that extent should be welcomed; but whether that amount of amusement justified the expenditure to secure it there were very grave doubts. To come to the larger question of the cost of Parliament, he found that in this State Parliament was costing, exclusive of the salaries of members, about £12,000 a year, equal to £240 for each week. Or if one took the average period of a session at 12 weeks, the cost for each week of Parliament would be £1,000. If to that total were added the cost of members' salaries, the amount would be increased to £26,000, or £500 for each week of the year. Estimating the session at 12 weeks the sum would be equal to £2,170 for each week. If the cost of Parliament in a State like New South Wales were estimated on the same basis, considering that State had a population of one and a half millions, the total would be £150,000 a year; while if on the same basis we gauged the cost of Parliament in the United Kingdom, the amount would be about four million pounds a year. He was quite prepared to be told that was an unfair comparison, as the cost of Parliament in a country like Western Australia, with a very small population, must necessarily be very much larger proportionately than New South Wales, and immensely larger than a country like the United Kingdom. That was admitted. But if members took the figures he had quoted, when they went to their constituents, and pointed out that the running of Parliament cost £2,000 a week for every week Parliament was in session, or £500 for every week of the year, year in and year out, then, if a referendum were taken, there would be an overwhelming majority in favour of a drastic reduction in the expenditure. The trouble

was not one merely of to-day, for it went back a large number of years. However, the trouble loomed large ahead to-day, because we had the danger of Unification threatening us, and soon members would be put on their defence to justify every item of State expenditure, and the jury before whom they would have to go would be the State electors of the Commonwealth Parliament. Unless we could make out a case as clear as crystal that we had reduced our State expenditure to bed-rock, there was very grave danger that the privileges of the State would be curtailed immensely, by the return to the Federal Parliament of a solid body pledged to reduce the importance of State establishments. If that happened it would be useless for this State Parliament to pass lengthy resolutions. On the Notice Paper there was a long string of resolutions to be moved by the Premier dealing with the question of finance. None could object to those resolutions, for they should be passed, but when it came to the point as to whether more attention would be paid to the expression of opinion of the State members assembled in Parliament or the opinion of members of the Commonwealth Parliament from this State if, on the one hand, we found members of this State belonging to the Commonwealth Parliament advocating one line and members of the State Parliament advocating another, the latter would go down every time. In the past we had too slavishly followed the example of the Motherland as to Parliamentary establishments, forgetting that after all we were a small country, and that our conditions were not precisely the same as those of the large and wealthy civilisations of the older parts of the world. Take the Parliamentary buildings and the conveniences provided here. They had been allowed to develop into a club, carried on at the expense of the taxpayer, on such a scale that the wages of the persons employed in cleaning the premises, and as kitchen hands and dining room attendants, amounted to something like £1,000 a year. Last night there was the spectacle of some members urging that, in addition to all

these conveniences—a billiard room, refreshment rooms, comforts of various kinds—members should be provided with free postage stamps. He had been told—although he had not heard it himself and was therefore open to contradiction—that the Treasurer actually promised that if it should be found that a similar practice prevailed in the Parliaments of the other States and of the Commonwealth, he would be prepared to make a similar concession here.

The Treasurer: I said I would cause inquiries to be made.

Mr. NANSON: That was diplomatic and did not commit the Minister. He would have been better pleased if the Treasurer had said that if members wished it he would cause inquiries to be made, but that they could be perfectly easy in their minds that the Government of this State would not find one penny for postage stamps for members. We must institute economies, possibly in the salaries of public servants, or at any rate in the reduction of the number of civil servants. Certainly there would have to be economies in the general administration. In the country districts we had already felt the heavy heel of the retrencher in roads board grants and the general expenditure on roads. In the present condition of the finances members should recognise that although they might not be paid on what might be termed a liberal scale, and although if times were prosperous they might be entitled to an increase in the honorarium received, they should now set an example to the community by denying themselves of any additional cost in the public expenditure, such as was involved in the small item of postage stamps. It was doubtful whether any economies could be effected on these Estimates, and he would not have taken up the time of the Committee in speaking at length had he been looking at the question merely from the point of view of this session. He was looking farther afield, recognising that it was very possible and almost probable that there would be a very serious falling off in the revenue to be received from the

Federal Government. As the Treasurer knew, there had already been a large falling off, and there was no security that it would not be much larger still. In drawing attention to this matter and also to other matters, as he would do during the progress of the Estimates, he desired to urge on the Government that between this and the time they introduced the next Estimates they should make a resolute endeavour to institute economies wherever possible in the public service, not merely of a small nature but, where luxuries were concerned, of a drastic nature. No Government would have an easy job in taking in hand matters of this description and it would need a strong Government to do it. If they did not do it on their own initiative it was to be hoped that a strong enough body would arise to compel the Government to undertake the work. It was to be hoped the present Government, with the experience they had gained of several years' administration, would undertake the task, and probably there was no body better fitted to do so, provided they made up their minds to grapple with the subject. If the Government would not undertake that task he did not altogether despair of seeing a group of members formed in the House, strong in conviction, and strong enough in numbers to make impossible the existence of any Government that would not tackle this question of retrenchment, whether the Government be drawn from members of one side of the House or members of the other side of the House. He did not doubt for a moment that if in the exercise of power of that kind, if in the exercise of a possibility of that extreme nature, it should be necessary for members to go to their constituents, he did not doubt that the members of that group, who would make economy of administration their guiding star all through, those members would be returned by their constituents and returned with the acclamation of the whole country.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Hon. members were indebted to the member for Greenough for the admirable manner in which he placed before the Committee

the necessity for economy. It was not a popular role to figure in, and he would go farther and say that the more unpopular role still would be that of the unfortunate person who had to carry the economies into effect. At the same time there was no doubt that to a large extent it would be necessary to bear in mind every proposal it was possible to bring into operation that would lead to greater and more effective economy. But we must be wise, prudent, and we must be tactful in attempting to arrive at that result. The particular item that led to this debate was the justification of continuing the publication of *Hansard*. The hon. member had asked how many of the general public wanted *Hansard*, and who would buy it if it were for sale. It was easy to ask a question of that character, because it pre-supposed a condition on the part of the public of apathy in public matters. If, as we knew was the case, a large majority of citizens were apathetic in regard to politics, the demand for *Hansard*, if offered for circulation, would be limited. Let members assume that a keen interest was being taken in the politics of the State, a keen interest in the doings of the House, and then we should have a different demand altogether. Why should we devote ourselves to a course of action which would continue in perpetuity, or why should we not lend ourselves to a course that would educate the public to know something of the politics of our State, to take an interest in the politics, and watch keenly the course of those to whom they had entrusted the duty of legislating for the country. If we believed that to be the wiser course to pursue, surely we would not talk lightly of terminating an official record such as *Hansard*. It seemed to him, although members wished to effect a slight economy by substituting some publication in the newspapers for our official records, he would never arrive at the same degree of accuracy or authenticity. We knew that the Press discharged a valuable duty in reporting the speeches made at public meetings; but how often were they challenged, and how often too were they successfully challenged about the accuracy of those reports? After all,

a reporter on a newspaper had numerous duties to perform.

Mr. Bath: He must always bear in mind also the party politics of the journal that he is reporting for.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member unfortunately had a jaundiced mind on some matters in regard to newspapers generally. He (the Attorney General) would never venture to insinuate that any mistake that may have happened was other than a mistake that ordinary human nature would lead one occasionally to drop into.

Mr. Troy: Take your own paper, the *Sun*.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not happen to own any paper. The only paper I have known to deliberately repeat something which I do not think one member of the staff thought was true was a paper published in the interests of the hon. members opposite; in order to secure some reputation for veracity it called itself *Truth*, but it was far from the real article. However, he did not want to depart from the question before the House. It was really a serious one, but should not be discussed at great length. Did we wish to educate the public, to interest them in our politics, or did we desire to allow them to continue, not only in the apathetic attitude which they occupied, but to think further still? The member for Greenough did not believe in the possibility of inducing the public to take an interest in our politics. It might not be that to-day we would find many people reading *Hansard*, but as a result of those who did read the publication it was possible for the circulation to gradually increase, and members would find that every increase would lead to a larger circulation, and as that larger number increased the increase might be one which members would scarcely appreciate. To return to the general cost of Parliament, the hon. member worked it out at £26,000, and he admitted that a comparison of that cost with the cost of similar Parliaments in New South Wales or the United Kingdom, on the basis of a per capita comparison, was not fair; nevertheless he indulged in it. The hon. member, who

essentially possessed a fair mind, should recognise the unfairness of such a comparison, and the unfairness of putting it before the House. Here every year as our population increased so would the cost per capita be materially decreased.

Mr. Hopkins : Unless you increase salaries.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Unless we increased the general expenditure. But assuming we did not increase the general expenditure, it followed that by an increase of population so would there be a decrease per capita of the cost of the maintenance of our institutions. And if one was to be logical, he should come to the conclusion that true economy meant the cutting down of the cost of Parliament. The hon. member would be forced to advocate a large reduction in the number of members, and not merely that large reduction, but a large reduction in the general expenditure that we incurred in the maintenance of our Houses. Was he prepared to go that far? Would he advocate the separate existence of the State as opposed to any general principle of merging into the Parliament of the Commonwealth? Was he prepared to advocate that Parliament should in effect reduce its own importance?

Mr. Nanson : A substantial reduction in expenditure could be made without reducing the number of members.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If there were any means that a member could put his finger on by which a reduction of expenditure could be easily achieved he would like to hear of them, but in his opinion the reduction of expenditure could only be brought about by a reduction of members. There were many who advocated that course, but those who wanted to preserve the State entity should be the last to say that the number of members should be reduced. If we proposed to minimise our own importance should we wonder that others believed our importance to be exaggerated. The hon. member desired to exercise economy in every particular that it was legitimately possible to do, but it might become a desire, if a member allowed it to carry him to extreme lengths, that

every time expenditure was proposed he would ask that that expenditure should be disallowed. He would add one word. Let economy be exercised in all those paths in which economy might be safely exercised, and in which we would not do anything in the way of restricting the development of the State.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : Having given the question of *Hansard* fair consideration he had come to the conclusion that if members were to be reported it would be better to have the reporting done as at present. Of course if members did not require such reports at all, then *Hansard* should be abolished. But if we were going to have it it should be done properly. The Premier, speaking on this matter, seemed to go wide of the mark in discussing whether we should have the speeches printed. Of course that was altogether out of the question, and was a matter that would require far more consideration than could be given at present. No doubt some of the members could, with advantage, reduce the volume of their speeches, but at the same time, in his opinion, that would not have any great effect on the cost of *Hansard*. A matter that the Government could have saved something on last year, was in connection with the session which was held in the middle of the year which could easily have been avoided. It was a session that resulted in nothing and proved very costly. With regard to the South Australian *Hansard* he knew while living in South Australia there were many complaints about the reports in *Hansard*. It was a usual thing to read of some member rising in his place in the House and complaining that he had not been correctly reported, and then the Press would come along in their usual Press style and threaten to report that member verbatim. There were none, however, who could report verbatim; they would give an imaginary speech, with distorted English. The ordinary member of Parliament could speak just as well as the ordinary pressman. Although very deficient in grammar and not possessed of a clear, running diction, he was quite prepared to take on any pressman on the public platform. There was also to be con-

sidered the undue influence exercised by the Press, of which so much had been seen in Australia. They had had the Press threatening to write men and parties out of Parliament. The only check against this sort of thing was *Hansard*; *Hansard* could at all times be referred to as the correct record and the standard of truth. He knew that even the Press of this State would suppress a man for party questions. As a matter of fact he himself had felt what the Press could do in that regard. The member for Greenough had said that the people of Western Australia would not read *Hansard*. The trouble he (Mr. Underwood) had experienced was to secure sufficient copies for his constituents. He honestly believed that 75 per cent. of the people in the bush would read *Hansard* from cover to cover whenever they could get it. The member for Greenough had said that *Hansard* tended to fill Parliament with politicians rather than with the men of business capacity to be found in municipal councils. When one came to consider the number of mayors and councillors one had known, it really seemed that Parliament was better without the business capacity idolised by the member for Greenough. The same hon. member had said that if a referendum were taken it would be found that the people desired to cut down the expenses of Parliament. He (Mr. Underwood) felt that if a referendum were taken there would be a large majority in favour of increasing the salaries of members. In regard to the question of reducing the cost of Parliament generally, he agreed with the Attorney General that to effect any considerable reduction it would be necessary to reduce the number of members. He (Mr. Underwood) was in favour of reducing the number of members; he would reduce the aggregate by exactly one House. He intended to support the vote for the printing of *Hansard*, for in his opinion it was quite necessary. He did not think any reduction was justified, because it seemed to him that the members of the staff were not overpaid; moreover, he was thoroughly satisfied with the manner in which they did their work.

Mr. JACOBY: It has been said that the South Australian system of reporting debates in Parliament had frequently given rise to discontent on the score of inaccuracies in the reports in the daily papers. If that were so the fault lay with the members; because proof copies of members' speeches were supplied, and 24 hours were given for correction; therefore, if these inaccuracies occurred it was due entirely to the laziness of members in neglecting to correct their proof copies. The reason why newspaper reports were read while *Hansard* was not read, lay in the fact that the newspapers were printed daily, whereas *Hansard* was printed only once a week. If the *Hansard* reports were to be published in the daily papers they would be read. The Leader of the Opposition had referred to the disadvantageous position in which country newspapers would be placed under the suggested reform; but, clearly these country papers would be in no worse position than they were to-day. As for the *Hansard* staff, he could say from investigations he had himself made that, the South Australian system apart, the Western Australian *Hansard* was the cheapest staff in Australia; moreover, although he had had no experience of the work of the staffs in the Eastern States he felt sure that in no sense was the Western Australian *Hansard* staff inferior in efficiency. We had a good staff but he could not shut his eyes to the fact that economies could be made if members dared to make them.

Mr. TROY: The proposition made by the member for Swan was one which in no sense appealed to him. He could not understand this hostility to *Hansard*; he could understand a natural resentment on the part of certain hon. members whose utterances were so unreliable as to make them fearful of seeing them in print, but he could not understand any hon. member whose utterances were sincere being afraid of *Hansard*. As for *Hansard* not being read, he for one could not get a sufficient number of copies for those of his constituents who appealed to him for them. He did not think the system suggested by the member for Swan would commend itself very much to certain hon. members

who were following a course of conduct which, if their constituents knew of it, would not serve to further their re-election. He was referring in particular to those hon. members who decried the land tax when before their constituents, and even spoke against it in the Chamber, but voted for it at division time. This was the sort of conduct that was made known only through *Hansard*. Many members would object to having the *Hansard* work done by the Press. Time after time in the House had complaints been made against the Press, and on more than one occasion had an hon. member risen in his place and demanded that certain statements in the Press should be withdrawn. There was sometimes a sinister influence exercised by the Press. Hon. members had only to cast their minds back to that period when the *Age* was endeavouring to kill Trenwith in Victoria. He knew of a journal in this State which had published an absolute untruth regarding the Hon. J. M. Drew during his term as Minister for Lands, and which had neglected to give publication to that hon. member's denial until so late a period that the political value of that denial was annulled. With all due respect to the Press, we must have *Hansard* if we were to have the records of the House correctly reported. Members could effect economies in a different direction, and the State would advantage to a considerable extent, when we came to the large departments. The Government might have shown greater economy in the purchase of the Oakabella Estate. It was in the large departments we could make economies, not on the tiddley-winking lines suggested by hon. members, such as the reduction of *Hansard*. In fact in advocating the reduction of *Hansard* members did not seem to be sincere. If they were sincere in regard to economies and attacked the larger departments, they would have every assistance from the Opposition. If the member for Greenough desired to form a party to carry out drastic economy, he would get every assistance from the Opposition. No apology was needed for making reference to the request for members' postages to be paid. Only a jaundiced man would refuse to accede to such

a fair request. The system obtained in other Parliaments. Why should it not obtain here? His expenditure on postage and stamps was on his constituents' business, so that no apology was needed for putting forward the request in this direction. The member for Greenough, if he were sincere, might draw attention to the large amount of money spent in advertising. That was a line on which economy could be effected with advantage. This attack on what were the privileges of members of the House should not be for one moment countenanced.

Mr. FOULKES: The hon. member took care to impress the fact that we should not effect any economies likely to inconvenience any member of the House. No one could have been more insincere than the hon. member. His argument was, "Let members suffer no inconvenience, but let every one else suffer." When members contested seats in Parliament, they fully realised, especially after serving a term in Parliament, what expense they would have to bear in regard to postages.

Mr. Troy: But my electors have given me a certain mandate.

Mr. FOULKES: One could understand the interpretation the hon. member placed upon any mandate he considered had been expressed to him, but one could be certain the hon. member's electors had not given him a mandate to insist upon continuing the expense of running Parliament. There was a general complaint at the cost of Parliaments being excessive, and particularly in States where the finances were not in a flourishing condition. It was incumbent upon us to set an example, and give some evidence to the Government that it was our sincere wish there should be economical administration, evidencing our sincerity by reforming our own household. There was an item of £1,000 for cleaners, kitchen and dining room wages for Parliament House. During recess Parliament House was kept going on the same scale practically as when Parliament was sitting. He had on various occasions during recess come to the House and noticed that we had an expensive dining room maintained for three or four members. There were always the same three

or four members for whose benefit this large and expensive establishment was kept up, and the State contributed £1,000 towards the establishment. There was no reason why during recess the establishment should not be closed down. The place could then easily be kept up by two or three officials.

Mr. Gordon: You might be generous enough to point out the decrease shown.

Mr. FOULKES: In regard to *Hansard*, there were some people with a curious literary taste who indulged in reading *Hansard*, but it must be admitted they were few. People knew what was going on by reading the public Press; and now we had such a large number of newspapers in the State, if a man thought full justice was not done to his views or to the publication of his opinions by one newspaper, he would be at no inconvenience to find another newspaper with a warmer appreciation of his views to publish them. It was essential to reduce the cost of Parliament. It was an advantage if we could reduce the cost by a few hundred pounds a year, but it was of far greater importance to show the people of the State that, while we were screaming out for more economical administration, we recognised we should give some evidence of sincerity by beginning at home.

(*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*)

Mr. BUTCHER: On many occasions he had signified his intention of doing what he could to obtain economies throughout the State and therefor the Treasurer could not take exception to the opposition he intended to show towards many items on the Estimates. As to the cost of *Hansard* he was in accord with many members who had spoken to the effect that considerable reduction could be made in this department. The member for Swan (*Mr. Jacoby*) had referred to the system in vogue in South Australia, and it appeared that if that were adopted here the cost of printing and publishing *Hansard* would be greatly reduced, while in addition, through the medium of the Press, there would be conveyed in a direct manner to the people reports of the doings of Parliament. Certain members had advocated the circulation of *Hansard*

as a means of educating the people and of informing them of the doings of Parliament. He was safe in saying that not 10 per cent. of the population ever saw *Hansard*; but if the information were circulated in the Press a large majority of the people would be brought directly into touch with the doings of their members. With regard to the question of economy generally, unless steps were taken soon the people would demand that the Government should take in hand at once economies. It was the public service that should be attacked. He did not mean to advocate that the salaries should be reduced, nor did he believe that by reducing the smaller salaried officers reasonable economies would be effected. The public service was at present overmanned and underpaid. It had been thought that matters would have been improved considerably with the introduction of the Public Service Act and the appointment of the Public Service Commissioner but that was not so.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was wandering somewhat far from the vote.

Mr. BUTCHER: On the introduction of Federation it was understood by people that the cost of Parliament would be reduced proportionately to the extent of the services taken away from the State and controlled by the Commonwealth. That has not been effected and if Parliament did not make a start in bringing about a remedy to the present state of affairs, they could not expect that it would be done in other branches of the service. The expenses at present in connection with administration were almost equal to what they were before Federation.

Mr. ANGWIN: It had surprised him to hear the remarks made by certain members on the Government side of the House with regard to the state of the finances, and as to economies that should be effected. Members of the Opposition had frequently been accused of doing great harm to the country as a whole owing to the nature of their utterances on financial and other questions. It was to be hoped that the Press would not take much notice of what had been said by members on the

Ministerial side that afternoon, because undoubtedly much more harm to the State as a whole would be done by the publication of their statements than had ever been done by the reporting of remarks made by members of the Opposition. As to the dignity of Parliament of which so much had been heard from certain members, it was not long ago that certain gentlemen who held high positions they did not hold to-day kept servants of the House to wait on themselves. Those servants were paid for out of the vote now under discussion. It was well-known that their position was considered to be so dignified that trains were stopped for them, and it was even said that the mail boats had been asked to remain behind to meet their convenience.

Mr. Taylor: They have been in recess since then.

Mr. ANGWIN: When members knew this they would compare actions with words, and could come to but one conclusion, that the words uttered that afternoon were merely spoken with the idea of being reported in *Hansard*, in order to make the electors think they desired to reduce expenses in connection with Parliament.

Item, Telephone Attendant, £42:

Mr. SCADDAN: There was reason to complain, as he had done the previous year, of sweating in connection with the officers of Parliament. Two of the attendants had been notified that their services would be disposed of after this session. One had been in the service of Parliament for three and a half years, and he was now to be displaced to permit another who had only been here for five months as a sessional attendant to take his position. The second lad to be dismissed had been here for three years and his position as telephone attendant was to be occupied by one who had only been for a short time in the service. If there were complaints about these youths not having done their duty properly the reason for their dismissal might be understood, but none could say the boys had not done their work well. Had these lads thought they would not become permanent hands at Parliament House they might, during the time they had spent

here, have been serving in a trade. He was a constant attendant at Parliament himself and he knew they did their work well. Personally he could see no economy, because the other lad taking the place would receive exactly the same salary. The fact should be remembered that these lads had given some years of service to the House so as to qualify for higher positions. It seemed that immediately the lads became due for an increase they were dismissed. That was a form of sweating. He had heard a rumour with regard to pushing other lads forward. If that were true he hoped the system would not be continued.

The TREASURER: The Government did not control this portion of the Estimates. He had no personal knowledge of any intention to dispense with the services of the boys because they were due for an increase in salary; he could hardly credit that such was the case. He understood one boy was being discharged because he had been proved to be incompetent. Probably some members of the House Committee could explain.

Mr. TAYLOR: As a member of the House Committee he was not in a position to give the Committee much information about the removal of this lad. If the Speaker were present he might be able to show that he had a closer knowledge of what had been done. Complaints had been made to the House Committee about this boy by members of Parliament.

Mr. SCADDAN: These boys were under the control of the House Committee, and the members of that committee should be able to explain the nature of the charges made against them. If complaints were lodged the House Committee should take steps to find out what was in them. It seemed to him a crude way of doing things. He had never heard of any complaints about the telephone attendants. It was not so much that the boys had not done their duty as it was that there seemed to be a desire to advance someone who was more favoured.

Mr. TAYLOR: It would be only fair to the House Committee, if the member

for Ivanhoe were in possession of certain information that he should disclose it, so that the House Committee might deal with the subject on its merits. If the hon. member gave the information he, as a member of the House Committee, would guarantee that it would be sifted to the bottom. It seemed rather anomalous that the time of the House should be taken up with the case of a junior messenger boy. Yet if there was anything at all in what the member for Ivanhoe had said, it was only right that attention should be given to the matter.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: As a member of the House Committee he could say that the case had never been brought before that committee. He was of opinion that these boys should be under the charge of the head messenger.

The Treasurer: So they are.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The question of finding employment for these boys as they grew up in the service was a very difficult one indeed. It was a pity that some system could not be introduced of drafting the older boys from the House to some other branch of the civil service.

Mr. BOLTON: Some injury might be done to the lad in question by the discussion. The complaint made by the member for Ivanhoe that the boy had been dismissed without any reason being offered was a very serious one; it was one that had been very prevalent in the Railway Department. The suggestion made by the member for Pilbara that as these boys advanced in years they should be transferred to another branch of the service was a very good one.

Mr. JACOBY: It would be better in the interests of the boys to leave them to the supervision of those responsible for them, rather than to have their affairs discussed in the House.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was surprising how loth some members were to take an interest in officers receiving only small salaries. Had it been Mr. North who had been dismissed there would have been a great outcry, and many defenders of the victim would have sprung up from all parts of the House. But because it was only a lad that had received unfair treatment—

The Treasurer: Has he received unfair treatment?

The Premier: Why not bring the matter under the notice of the House Committee?

Mr. SCADDAN had thought it better to bring the matter under the notice of the people generally. He understood that one lad who had been in the service for only one month or thereabouts was going to get the senior position. For his part, he (Mr. Scaddan) was determined to defend the lower grade officers as well as the higher. That was the reason why he had brought the matter under the notice of hon. members.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Premier's Office*, £900:

Item, Secretary, £400:

Mr. JACOBY desired the Premier to explain why an increase of £50 had been made in this item. Two years ago this officer had been receiving £50 extra for instructing railway officers in shorthand. That was found to be unnecessary, and so the service was discontinued. This year there was an increase of £50.

The PREMIER: The officer had received an honorarium of £75 per annum as instructor to the shorthand classes in the railways. However, that honorarium had ceased at short notice, the Commissioner having decided that it was possible to do without the service. At the same time Mr. Kessell had been doing a great deal of work in connection with the Agent General's office in London, and Sir Walter James had pointed out that it was only reasonable that he should get some extra remuneration for the work done. Mr. Kessell sent home to the Agent General every week a summary of all matters of interest in order that the officer in London might be well posted in current events. Mr. Rason had also eulogised Mr. Kessell's work in this direction and in view of these commendations £50 had been paid to the officer; that £50 covered some four years' work in connection with the Agent General's office. Mr. Kessell did a good deal of work outside the ordinary routine. For instance, he attended to all the correspondence in connection with the Franco-British Exhibition, whereas

in the other States this had been done by a special officer. Mr. Kessell was practically on tap at any hour of the day or night, and the duties he carried out were really well worthy of special remuneration. He had attended to the ever-growing correspondence in connection with the Commonwealth. This was fast increasing as further departments were taken over, and the correspondence between the Prime Minister and the Premier had increased enormously; as a matter of fact it had more than doubled during his (the Premier's) term of office and there seemed to be every likelihood of it continuing to increase.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was not surprising to hear the Premier say the work performed by this officer had increased twofold since he had been Premier. The Premier's Department was formerly a large one and the Premier's secretary received £600, but Parliament dealt so roughly with the officer and the department that Mr. Leake, when Premier, abolished the department altogether. It was reinstated to a certain extent by Sir Walter James, but that gentleman merely had a secretary at £300. If Parliament did not put its foot down there was a possibility of another big Premier's department with a big staff springing up. Now we found there were at least two more clerks in addition to the secretary.

The Premier: Only one more.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was costing us £900 to run the department. If we allowed the department to grow, this officer would demand a higher salary. It was the duty of the Premier to prevent departments from growing. There was no need for anybody in the Premier's Office beyond the secretary. The correspondence work could be done by the correspondence branch of the Colonial Secretary's Department, and there would be the advantage of having it put on the records in the Colonial Secretary's Department. At present there was no chance of having records kept in the Premier's Office unless it had already been created a department. It was not the officer's salary one objected to; it was the crea-

tion of a big department to which objection must be taken.

The Premier: The office has not altered within the last two years.

Mr. TAYLOR had spoken of this before.

The Premier: It is an annual thing with you.

Mr. TAYLOR: We would soon be paying the officer £600 if we allowed a big department to be built up.

Mr. Heitmann: There is no necessity for this officer to have all the pickings.

Mr. TAYLOR had no word to say against the officer. Mr. Kessell was a painstaking and energetic officer, and members wanting information could always get it from him. He merely spoke against the creation of such a big department.

The PREMIER: Members need not take his word for the necessity for this office and the additional clerk. Here was the testimony given by Mr. Daglish when leaving office—

"During my term I found Mr. Kessell willing to make any sacrifice in order to perform any duties that might be asked of him. The work of the office has rendered it necessary that he should repeatedly work overtime, and he has received no remuneration whatever for that special work. The importance and responsibility of the duties he has discharged fully entitle him to the receipt of a considerably larger salary than that which he at present draws. The confidential nature of the duties adds to their responsibility, and should add to the salary they carry. In fact, the work is more arduous, irregular, and important than that discharged by most chief clerks, who have the advantage of a permanent head to resort to for advice or guidance."

Mr. Taylor: That is right. I say the same thing now.

The PREMIER: Members should allow him to know whether there was sufficient work to keep two men going. He could not do in that department what he had done in other departments, pay men who had worked overtime out of his own pocket. In the Premier's office

the men had to work all day and late hours and very often at the week end.

Mr. Heitmann: The officer seems to have a good deal of time on his hands when he can take these other billets.

The PREMIER: What other billets?

Mr. Heitmann: Doing this work for the Agent General, and getting £75 as shorthand instructor.

The PREMIER: The officer had given up that work twelve months ago. It was absolutely necessary to have two men in the office, and they were kept going longer hours than other public servants. One failed to see how their duties could be transferred to another department unless the Premier happened to be controlling the other department. If the Premier happened to be Colonial Secretary the work might be done in the Colonial Secretary's Department; but there would be no economy effected, because the same number of men would need to be employed. Members knew the duties of this officer very well. It was to make appointments, get the files together, awaiting deputations—

Mr. Bolton: And to keep callers away from you.

The PREMIER: And to an extent to protect the Premier. It was essential to have an officer there with a certain amount of tact and the present officer filled the position creditably.

Mr. JACOBY: The Public Service Commissioner had referred to the fact that the officers who came into close contact with Ministers secured an advantage over other officers. This officer had not the same amount of responsibility as an Under Secretary of a department. Evidently the correspondence had grown.

The Premier: I have given you the opinion of an ex-Premier.

Mr. JACOBY: What did the Public Service Commissioner say? The duties of this officer were carried out by other officers at smaller salaries. No doubt the correspondence had increased, but there were two more clerks.

The Premier: Only one.

Mr. JACOBY: There was provision for extra clerical provision. This officer, if fully employed, could have no time

to undertake other work. There might be other officers in the service earning less than £400 a year whom this £50 extra for doing work for the London Agency could be given. He regretted that to be consistent in the principles he held he must move—

That the item be reduced by £50.

Mr. Bolton: That amendment will not effect the object.

Mr. JACOBY: Could one move to strike out the proviso dealing with the £50 extra for the London Agency work?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could achieve the purpose apparently aimed at by moving to reduce the vote for the London Agency.

Amendment withdrawn.

Mr. BATH: There was a great deal in the contention advanced by the member for Mt. Margaret in regard to the building up of a department. Since the growth of work in the departments following on the development of the gold mining industry in the State, there had been an inevitable tendency to build up departments and sub-departments and imperceptibly increase the cost of administration. With the growth of the sub-departments extra officials were engaged, and consequently there was an increase in cost without a perceptible increase in the work done. By his remarks with regard to the Premier's office, the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) had touched a vital spot in connection with the increase of the cost of the Civil Service.

Mr. JOHNSON: At one time some years ago the Premier's office was hugely out of proportion to the work done, and he had taken an active part in reducing it. With the new system matters worked smoothly for some years, and it might be said at this stage that no more work was done in the department now than when the late Mr. George Leake and Sir Walter James were Premiers. The Premier had gone into heroics about paying money out of his own pocket. Members did not want him to do that, but the fact remained that if his office were properly organised, there would be no necessity for it. In the early part of 1905 there was only a secretary in the

office, but towards the end of the year there was a reconstruction, for Mr. Treadgold was taken in there merely temporarily with the object of helping to get up back work. He had previously been attached to the Mines Department as secretary to the Minister for Railways, but when that office was combined with that of Minister for Mines, it was unnecessary for him to continue that work. It was only intended that he should go into the Premier's office for a short time, but he became a permanent officer there, and now in addition to the secretary and him, extra clerical assistance had to be obtained. While the Treasurer was practically sweating the school teachers, money was being found for this department where no extra labour was being performed. The Government preached economy and it was for this House to cause it to be practised. There was only one way and that was to strike an item out. Where general economies had to take place, care should be taken that the man should not be let off because he happened to be in touch with the Premier himself. In a year or two the department, if care was not taken, would grow still more out of proportion to the work done. He would support a motion to strike out the extra amount received through the London Agency by this officer.

Mr. WALKER: It appeared that some time ago this was a very large and expensive department. Parliament abolished it, and since then there had merely been an office with a private secretary to the Premier and clerical assistance. It had been said that there had been no increase in this office for the past three years. What was expected of the Committee at this stage. Was it desired to abolish the office as well as the department? The lessening of the salary of one officer would not prevent a further growth of the office. Of all the officers with whom members had to come in contact, there was none more obliging than Mr. Kessell; that was his experience for if he wanted business transacted speedily, he could always get it done by putting it through that gentleman. His wishes were attended to, and replies

were returned quickly. That was more than could be said of other departments.

Mr. Johnson: He hustles the Premier a bit.

Mr. WALKER: And a good thing too. However, he had never been in the office when Mr. Kessell was not very busy. Surely it was not desired to penalise Mr. Kessell in order to warn the Premier that his department was growing too rapidly. The protest of members would effect that purpose. Last year he had been the cause indirectly of Mr. Kessell losing £75 a year, for he drew attention to the fact that that officer was receiving from the Railway Department £75 a year for teaching shorthand. The officer had not received that sum since then but he was now paid £50 a year for extra work. Was the extra work worth the £50 paid for it? If it were then the amount should be paid, but if not, the officer should not get it. There should be a fair, frank estimate of a man's worth published in the Estimates. If the officer were worth £450 a year, he should receive it and it should cover all his duties. But if the extra sum—in this case £50—was merely allowed in order to make up his salary, there was strong objection to the system. Mr. Kessell was now receiving £25 a year less than when he (Mr. Walker) entered Parliament. If members wanted to deal with the department as a whole, they should do so directly, and not indirectly by cutting down the salary of one of the officers. It might be said in all justice, that during the next few years much extra work would fall upon the Premier. We were now passing through changes of a trying character, and we were bound to have closer relationship with the neighbouring States and the Commonwealth, with the result that much additional work would be necessary in certain branches of the service. In our desire to economise we must not shear the service of its capacity for the work, but should enable the officers to keep pace with the growth of duties. This officer was working quite as hard as any Under Secretary. He knew some Under Secretaries who were doing less work

and received larger salaries. On that score the officer should not be victimised.

Mr. NANSON: The Committee should be told what was this officer's classification under the Public Service Act, and what was the recommendation of the Commissioner in regard to the increase. It seemed to him the discussion was in danger of drifting into an undesirable channel. If members were to discuss the individual merits of officers it was utterly impossible for the Committee to do justice to each individual officer in the service. The member for Kanowna had said that no one was more obliging than the Premier's secretary; as if that had anything to do with it. It was merely a question of what the office was worth, and it was undesirable that the individual merits of officers should be brought forward. To say that an officer was obliging seemed to suggest that a member had some personal feeling in the matter. The member for Kanowna had said that if extra work was done by this officer he should receive extra pay. It was not for the Committee to deal with that, it was a duty for the Public Service Commissioner, and he repeated he would like to know what the Commissioner's classification was.

Mr. HOPKINS sympathised with members who desired to introduce necessary economies where possible, but in dealing with this question it was necessary that we should view it entirely on its merits, and it was doubtful whether that had been done. As far as the department under review was concerned the position was very different from that existing in the late Mr. Leake's time. Mr. Leake was Attorney General and he had all the clerical aid in the Crown Law Department. The gentleman who was then the permanent head of the Premier's Department was in receipt of a salary of £600. He might have been intensely ornamental, but he was not useful to any person who might have been Premier at that time. It was hardly likely that this gentleman would take on the duties of shorthand writer and typist; then what use would he be if he were placed in the position of departmental head of the Premier's Depart-

ment to-day. The position in the late Mr. Leake's time was precisely the same as the position in the Agent-General's office was to-day. The departmental head there was ornamental. He (Mr. Hopkins) had come into contact with many people who had been to England and he had heard the unanimous expression of opinion on every hand that the wrong man was at the head of the permanent staff in the London office. To-day the Premier's department was the hardest and most arduous to be administered. The Lands Department was a department which the Premier had had to give close attention to, and if he determined to concentrate the large amount of his departmental work in the Premier's office instead of the Lands office, was it worth the while of the Committee to spend the evening in discussing the matter of an expenditure of £50 on behalf of the Premier? He would leave the position in the hands of the Premier and would accept his good sense and judgment as to whether the present secretary was capable of carrying out the work in connection with the department, and if so whether he should be given remuneration on the same lines as other officers in the public service. He did not hold that the Public Service Commissioner was capable of adjusting the salaries of everyone in the service. He expressed that view when the measure was before the House, when he gave it his strong opposition, and if he got the opportunity again he would oppose it again. With regard to the expenditure of the sum in question, it was purely a clerical matter controlled by the amount of energy which was imparted in the Premier's Department, and the Committee could leave it to the good sense and judgment of the Premier.

Mr. HUDSON: Members' principal task should be directed towards making a protest against magnifying the importance of this particular office. He agreed with the member for Greenough that we should not discuss the observations or merits of any particular officer, because it brought him too much in the lime light and that was not fair to other officers in the service. He had a com-

plaint to make, and it was directed against the officer in question. The Premier took this officer with him whenever he went electioneering, and the officer performed the duty of reporting the Premier's speeches and sending those reports to the newspapers in Perth. That gave the Premier an undue advantage in some remote places by having his speeches reported in the metropolitan Press. Whether the metropolitan Press paid the officer or not he could not say. If the officer did not do the work gratuitously the Premier should inquire into it, and see that the reporters of the State had an opportunity afforded them of sending in this matter to the Press and getting paid for it; if the officer did it for nothing he should not be permitted to do it, because of his other onerous duties. If he was paid for it it was a most improper thing, because there were others capable of doing that work and who were entitled to be employed on the work.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for Greenough very properly deprecated the introduction of personal element into a debate of this character, but he did not put forward what was the real issue. The real issue was small and narrow, and it was this: what was the work that the Premier's Department was called upon to carry out? If we were going to blindly worship everything that Public Service Commissioner gave expression to then members would not know where they were. As far as he knew the Commissioner's opinion was that this officer, as long as he was secretary to the Premier, did not come under the Public Service Act, and, therefore, the Commissioner was not called upon to classify him. When he ceased to be the Premier's secretary, he became again a clerk and shorthand writer, and the Commissioner would classify him at the amount of £300. The real issue was as to the amount of work the Premier's office was called upon to discharge. It was common knowledge that that work had grown considerably during recent years. The office was the only channel of communication between the Commonwealth and the State, be-

tween the State and the other States, and between the State and the Imperial authorities.

Mr. Johnson: Other Premiers have had to do the same work.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Federal machine was growing and it meant a large growth in the correspondence through the Premier's Office. It seemed to him that unless hon. members were prepared to challenge the Premier, the Premier was the best authority as to the justification of the item. Surely no member was going to challenge the Premier's assurance that the staff was not too large. The discussion amounted to something little short of a censure on the Premier.

Mr. BUTCHER: Holding with those members who were opposed to these constant increases he believed that proper economy would never be instituted in the departments until all the officers were under the Public Service Commissioner. Salaries amounting in the aggregate to four hundred odd thousand pounds were being paid to officers not under the control of the Commissioner. He (Mr. Butcher) quite realised that the officer under discussion was being worked to his full capacity. Perhaps no other officer in the service was called upon to do more than was Mr. Kessel. It would be absurd to ask him to perform his manifold duties at a low salary. Hon. members would not effect real economies by striking off £50 from one officer's salary.

Mr. TAYLOR desired it to be clearly understood that he was not attacking either of the officers concerned. He knew both of them to be painstaking, attentive, and prompt. His only desire was to attack the growth of the Premier's Department. For years the only item in the Premier's Department had been one salary of £500, whereas to-day the department was costing £900. It might well be said that the office was growing, if only in the matter of cost. If three preceding Premiers had been able to do with no more assistance than that rendered by a private secretary at £300 a year, there was no reason why the office expenses should be £900 to-day.

The Premier: I say there is three times the correspondence to-day there was when I first went in.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was perfectly easy to make correspondence. Much of the work done in the Premier's Office could be carried out in the office of the Colonial Secretary. He had no desire to attack the officers themselves. The clerk at £220 was an officer well capable of filling a much higher position.

Mr. NANSON: The task of the Committee would be made much easier by following some definite system in considering the salaries of officers. Such definite principle would be found laid down in the report of the Public Service Commissioner for 1906-7. In that report, dealing with the question of re-classification, the Commissioner had said:

"From the evidence adduced at the hearing of the appeals against the classification of the clerical division, it is clear that officers do not understand that the Public Service Act permits from time to time a re-classification of the service. When time places Western Australia in the same position as New South Wales as regards population and revenue, the salaries paid in Western Australia will doubtless rival the salaries paid in the mother State. The connection between salaries paid in the public service to leading officials, and the population of the State is a very intimate one, and the older members of the service will remember the time when the population of the State was 50,000 and the salary paid to an under secretary was but little more than half what it is at present. The slightest reflection will reveal the fact that the State has a staff of principal officers sufficient to deal with the wants of a population four times that of Western Australia. It is clear that the individual salary of any one principal position spread over one million people is a very different thing to spreading it over a quarter of a million, and that the million can afford to pay at a higher rate and yet be better off than the quarter of a million

who are by force of circumstances compelled to fix a lower rate of remuneration. Officers should not blame the State nor the Commissioner for an economic fact due to the State's present stage of development, but accept the saying that 'pioneers rarely reap the full reward of their labours.'

We always discussed these questions from the point of view of the officer, but we should, as the Commissioner recommended, discuss them from the point of view of the taxpayer. With a population of a quarter of a million, we could not afford to pay what a country with a population of a million could afford to pay, and officers of the service should look at it in this light. Half the troubles arose because we did not recognise this principle laid down so ably by the Public Service Commissioner.

Vote put and passed.

Lands Department (Hon. N. J. Moore, Minister).

Vote—*Lands and Surveys*, £105,167:

The PREMIER and MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. N. J. Moore) said: In presenting the Estimates for the Lands and Surveys Department, as well as for the Woods and Forests Department, for the fourth occasion, I can assure members that it has given me a considerable amount of pleasure to be able to intimate that there is a continued and growing demand for the land throughout the State, and that this demand is reflected by the work of this busy department which, as most members know, is now going at high pressure. I do not propose to go into much detail in regard to the revenue of the department: that was dealt with by the Treasurer last night; but the fact that it is growing rapidly is an especially gratifying feature at this particular juncture. For the year ending 30th June last the income of the department was £262,147, as compared with £237,852 for the previous year. It is estimated that the revenue this year will be £282,700, an increase of £20,000 on last year's income; and there is every prospect that this forecast will be more than reached

if we are to go by the increased revenue that has accrued during the five months already passed of this year. During this five months there has been an increase of something like £12,013 as compared with the revenue for the corresponding period of last year, so that it will be seen that my estimate of a £20,000 increase gives every prospect of being more than realised. The increasing appreciation of the agricultural resources of the State, together with the increased facilities for selection, is having a marked effect on the selection of our rural lands. In 1907-8 there were 4,362 new selections, covering 1,142,505 acres taken up under conditional purchase, free homestead farms, and kindred forms of tenure, as against 3,573 selections in the previous year, covering 764,203 acres. Taking the first five months already passed of this year, and comparing them with the same period in last year, we find that during last year, for the first five months, there was a total of 1,564 applications approved covering 336,569 acres as against 2,598 applications covering 766,437 acres for the first five months of this year. It is hard in dissecting the selections to make a complete record of the new selectors included in these selections, but we can form a very good idea from the number of homestead farms taken up, inasmuch as no person is qualified to take up a homestead farm if he is in possession of over 100 acres of freehold or conditional purchase land. We find, glancing at these figures, that for the first five months of this year there have been no less than 813 new selectors who have taken up homestead farms. The fact that a large number of the new settlers are men with capital, who have had experience both in the Eastern States and in the old country, is very gratifying indeed. It is pleasing to note that some of the men who have come to Western Australia from the old country have been so successful during the last year. One English selector, who has been settled in the neighbourhood of the Eastern Goldfields Railway, and who only took up his land 18 months ago, this year had no less than 200 acres under crop, and

was the first man to send his chaff to market this season.

Mr. Walker: In what district is he?

The PREMIER: North of Doodlakine. A remarkably good sign and an evidence of the genuine character of the selection is the all-round anxiety of these people to get on the land at the earliest possible moment. From all portions of the State there are returns showing the rapidity with which the country is being transformed by these selectors. Exclusive of the Midland concessions, there are now in this State no less than 32,000 holdings, covering some seven and a half million acres held under conditional improvement leases, homestead leases, and similar forms of tenure, that is, maturing freeholds. In addition, there are 160 million acres held under pastoral lease, and close on one million acres held under timber lease. In connection with the timber leases, as members are aware, it is possible for the Government, when the ground is denuded of marketable timber, to resume the land. I see there is a notice of motion on the Notice Paper by a member who desires to obtain that information, and I am giving instructions to have a return prepared so that the hon. member will be in a position to know exactly the area resumed last year. I have issued instructions, so far as those timber leases are concerned, to various contract surveyors to make inspections of timber leases and to survey before selection those areas which they consider are suitable for agricultural settlement, but as I have stated before in this House, and as most members are aware, as a rule where the best jarrah is found it is not very good land: it is only in isolated patches along valleys and creeks in various pockets that there is any good soil, and that is generally timbered with red gum or blackbutt. By the classification and survey of new country and the provision of railway and other facilities, it is intended, as far as our resources will allow, to continue to open up paths for the advancement of the great primary industries. This involves a considerable outlay, but economy has not been lost sight of in this depart-

ment. The fact that while the work is growing so rapidly our estimate of expenditure this year will be only some £4,000 in excess of last year, will give members some idea that notwithstanding the increasing selection going on, which entails a considerable amount of extra expense, we anticipate to be able to cover the whole cost of this department this year with £114,000 as against £110,948 last year. The result of judicious economy is remarkably exemplified by the fact that in 1904, with a revenue of nearly £80,000 less than last year's, the expenditure was some £28,000 more than last year's. To give members some idea of the cost to the country of taking up a selection, I have taken one typical instance, in order that members may be in a position to realise that, while it is desirable to assist as far as possible the settlement of the land, at the same time they must recognise that it entails a considerable cost to the State for the first year to put a man on the land. I have taken a particular instance of a new selector in the Beverley district to give some idea of the cost. The selector takes up a homestead farm for which he pays £1. He takes up a grazing lease of 1,000 acres at 6s. 3d. per acre, and the first year's rent and the instalment of the survey fee are £12 7s. 4d. He takes up five 100-acre blocks of first-class land on which the rent is £12 10s. That makes a total paid to the revenue branch of the Lands Department of £25 17s. 4d. As against that, in the first year there is a refund of railway fare up to two-thirds of the deposit, say £1; we supply a land guide, which, as a rule does not cost less than £3; the inspection of the grazing lease costs £1 10s., and the survey of the whole costs £40, while the freight order for furniture and effects amounts to say, £12; so the actual cost totals £57 10s. incurred by the State in the first year, while the return to the revenue branch of the Lands Department is £25 17s. 4d. Apart from the actual work of attending to selectors, receiving and passing applications, the departmental work all round has increased by the activity in land selection. Last year the department received and

despatched 135,000 letters, exclusive of circulars and notifications. The conveying branch dealt with 11,747 transfers, mortgages, etcetera, an increase of 2,400 over the previous year's figures, while the deeds branch issued 6,430 grants, leases, and licenses. The accountancy branch naturally, in view of the increasing selection, has an ever increasing business. In addition to new holdings daily being granted, this branch has on its books all the holdings granted during past years which are being converted to freeholds, and there are now on the books of the Lands Department over 40,000 different accounts, and with the preparation of land lists twice a year, unpaid lists several times during the year, the reception of numerous payments, the continued adjustments consequent on amendments, transfers, etcetera, the work in this branch is at a very high pitch from the 1st January to the end of December. Originally the receipts in this branch were recorded in a simple form of registers; but owing to the requirements from an audit point of view, a committee of accountants was appointed consisting of the accountants of several branches with a view to making a recommendation. This they did on a more elaborate system of accountancy, embracing the use of card ledgers. The initiation of this has been delayed, but practically everything is now in hand, and the whole system should be completed within the next two months. During last year a new system has been introduced into the Lands Department which has considerably expedited the methods of dealing with applications. It is known as the straightforward application system. I have already given the number of selections in the last five months amounting to 2,718, and out of that total no less than a half of these applications were approved within eight days of the application. Provided there is only one application for any particular block and it is not necessary to make any inspection of it, or, in the event of it not being in a timber lease, we can guarantee that these applications will be passed without any unnecessary delay, in some cases within three days.

The policy of survey before selection has been a pronounced success, and is responsible to a very great extent for the expedition with which we are able to deal with selections now. As a matter of fact something like 20 subdivisions have been made, comprising 715,000 acres, of which no less than 500,000 acres have been selected. This has entailed considerable expenditure in the cost of survey. I am looking well ahead as far as future requirements are concerned, and can assure members that although it is a simple matter to talk glibly of the necessity to encourage people to come here, it is a great work to fix these selectors satisfactorily on the land. It is by no means an easy task in the case of a man who comes to a new country and new conditions to satisfy him completely with the selection he has taken up. The officers of the department, however, are generally to be congratulated on the efficiency with which they have carried out their work in this connection. Many of them take a very keen interest in the question of land settlement, and are always prepared to do everything possible to assist the selectors when they arrive in the State, and are anxious to take up land. With a view of expediting the approval of selections as far as possible, we took the precaution last year to give notice of resumption to all the pastoral lessees in the South-Western division, so that next year we will be in a position, when the survey has been completed before selection, to take possession without unnecessary delay, and we shall not have to wait, as in the past, for twelve months to give pastoral lessees notice of resumption for closer settlement. Further classifications have been and are still being made in the neighbourhood of Cowewing with an eye to further subdivision. Good country has been found to exist stretching from Watheroo on the Midland line eastward to Lake Moore. During the course of my speech on the Upper Chapman railway I referred to the subdivision at Yuna where the land has been surveyed and thrown open. When making that speech I referred to the system adopted whereby a true valua-

tion of the land is made by the officers of the Lands Department and Agricultural Bank in conjunction, and it is unnecessary for me to repeat that statement now. A splendid area of land to the south of Nangeenan was lately classified by Mr. Surveyor Terry and it shows a preponderance of first class forest country. This will be subdivided without delay. Portion of the Denmark property purchased last March has been surveyed. The total area surveyed is 3,500 acres, and it is anticipated that we shall be able to throw it open for selection about February when we have put a fire through the forest there. Although some complaints have been made as to delay, we have thought it advisable that the land should be properly cleared before being thrown open for selection, so that men on going there will know what they have to face.

Mr. Bath: Are you clearing out the stumps?

The PREMIER: Not the big stumps. That is not necessary for grazing. The timber is all cut down, but most of the men have now been knocked off work, for it is dangerous at this time of the year for them to work there as they might drop matches about. There is such a mass of tropical undergrowth there that if a man were to drop a match the fire would sweep through the country and lives might be lost.

Mr. Hopkins: Have you introduced grass seeds there?

The PREMIER: I propose to do so. We are arranging to buy grass seeds in the Eastern States. My colleague, the Honorary Minister, has taken the matter of planting grass seeds in hand. There is a splendid rainfall in the district, the average being something like 50 inches, and the areas should be eminently suitable for closer settlement.

Mr. Bath: The bulk of the rain comes all at once.

The PREMIER: It is spread over a fairly long period. The Oakabella property purchased last session by the Government is now being surveyed. Three parties are at work, and possession will be

taken by the Government next month, and the land will be made available as early as possible. Another branch of the department, the Melbourne office, is giving the greatest possible satisfaction. The success which has attended the establishment of the office is largely due to the fact that we were fortunate enough to secure the services of an officer of the Lands Department who is possessed of a great desire to see our lands settled and who has shown by his work that he has the best interests of Western Australia at heart. The classification of the Public Service was recently discussed here. Under that classification this officer was reduced £20, yet I considered that he was of such value that when the opportunity arose I placed him in the position of our representative in Melbourne, although as a matter of fact it was a very great loss to me.

Mr. Johnson: That is the advantage of an officer coming directly under the notice of a Minister.

The PREMIER: Anyone who has had experience of Mr. Gilbert, whether a Minister or a member, will recognise that he is one of the smartest officers we ever had in the department. A good many members will bear me out in that respect.

Mr. Johnson: I agree, but there are many in the back offices who do not get a chance.

Mr. Collier: He is one of the smartest men in the public service.

The PREMIER: Mr. Ranford, a very old officer in the department, who was appointed lecturer in the Eastern States, and worked with considerable success there, has been sent to England with a view of encouraging the right class of settlers to come here. He has had the most emphatic instructions as to the class of settlers required, and it has been pointed out to him that we are relying on his judgment in making a selection. I have told him my views are that I would prefer he should discourage rather than encourage, when he considers a man would not make a suitable settler, even although he had the necessary qualifica-

tion of the possession of £200 or £300. I realise that very frequently a man comes out here without any money at all, and is often better fitted to go on the land, and more likely to be successful, than a man with £200 or £300, who is not adapted to the hard pioneering work incidental to the settlement of the land of Western Australia. While carefully studying expenditure whenever possible I have not neglected, when the occasion arose, to spend money in connection with the water supplies in the drier agricultural districts of Western Australia, and where representations have been made by representative bodies, we have endeavoured as far as possible to meet the requirements promptly. Quite recently splendid water has been struck on the Kunjinn area, hitherto considered one of the driest of our subdivisions, and judging from the numerous requests from the country in the neighbourhood of Lake Cowewong, a large sum for water supply will have to be expended in that region. In regard to other centres immediately outside the agricultural areas, as the result of a recent visit to Kalgoorlie, I have arranged for a complete reorganisation of that office. I found that the plans in that office were obsolete and that, generally, the branch was not up to date. I have arranged for plans, showing the whole of the country between Northam and the goldfields, to be available there, and these will be exchanged with the working plans in the head office every month, so that the goldfields people will get the most up-to-date information as to the country on the goldfields line. This will do away with the necessity for people to make a visit to the head office as the information to be obtained at Kalgoorlie will be as up to date as that in Perth. An innovation has been introduced during the year in regard to subdivisions surveyed before selection. There was a provision that no man who at the time of his application held more than 160 acres was eligible to apply for this country; but it was found that inflicted a considerable hardship, as in many instances settlers adjoining a subdivision would have 200 or 300 acres and,

therefore, would be debarred from taking up any additional area. Provision has now been made that no person shall hold more than 1,000 acres. If a person has 500 acres we allow him to take up 500 acres more of the subdivision as surveyed. We recognise it is absolutely necessary, if a person is to make a success in the district I refer to, that he shall have a minimum of from 640 to 1,000 acres. This has been borne out by a recent report from the Agricultural Bank in which the trustees lay emphasis on this fact. They say that in the interests of the Bank, we should do all we can to encourage people to hold a minimum of at least 600 acres. As far as the question of establishing further agencies in the Eastern States is concerned, attention is being paid to that matter. It has been suggested that we should establish a branch office in Adelaide and another in Sydney. As far as Adelaide is concerned, there is no doubt there is splendid scope there, judging by recent reports. From the Surveyor General's report it is ascertained that there is practically no land available in South Australia now.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They are breaking up large estates there.

The PREMIER: I read recently a clipping from Mr. Peak's speech as to the Land Values Bill, introduced into the South Australian Parliament, and it showed there is very little land available. The speech gave instance of the large number of applications made for one or two blocks thrown open there.

Mr. Bath: It is one of their biggest difficulties in that State.

The PREMIER: In regard to the suggestion of establishing an office in Sydney, I understand the Government of that State are now offering liberal conditions so that before actually deciding on an agency in that State I desire to make further inquiries. At the present time the Lands Department is working at very high pressure to cope with the number of people who are arriving in the State. I do not know that I need go into the details which I have already referred to in the Press regarding the

success attending the straightforward issue of applications. We have adopted a system of decentralisation in the office itself which tends to the smoother working of the department. Previously applications for grazing leases and other lands went forward through the ordinary routine and passed on. We have made provision now that as the applications come in they are referred to the eight or ten officers who are detailed for the separate districts. If an application comes in say from Avon district, it is passed on to the officer dealing with that locality. He has lithographs of that district and the consequence is that the officer will have a knowledge of the particular district which they otherwise would not have if the applications were treated in the ordinary routine. We find thus that the applications are much more expeditiously dealt with. If a man goes for information to an officer who has been assigned any particular district, this officer having a knowledge of the district and having the plans, the result is that delay which was prevalent before the system was introduced is entirely done away with. With regard to the survey branch of the department, I may say during the last year rural blocks surveyed numbered 3,316, representing an area of 910,366 acres. The number of town lots was 2,029, representing an acreage of 4,276, while 1,024,560 acres were classified, chiefly in the Avon district, North and South of Doodlakine. 90,000 acres have been inspected with a view to repurchase for closer settlement. Twelve new townsites have been laid out. The cost of surveying the rural land by contract was 5½d. per acre. Five latitude stations have been established and three base lines measured, namely, Lennard, Irwin, and Rockingham. £837 has been spent on clearing roads within the subdivisions prior to selection; £10,500 has been spent on ringbarking, scrub-cutting, etcetera, chiefly at Doodlakine, Baandee, Dinninup, Balbarrup, Ludlow, and Denmark; £1,900 has been spent on providing water supplies in agricultural districts; £615 has been spent on clearing poison off main roads within agricul-

tural districts: 21 standard plans have been drawn: 8 partially drawn: 53 drawn for photo-lithography; 178 new 20-scale compilations and 20 80-chain scale; 71 new public plans; 404 new office plans for agencies; 510 amended and coloured for land guides, etcetera: 407 surveyors' plans and diagrams drawn from field notes, etcetera; 4,297 diagrams charted on standard plans and 3,874 on working plans; 4,246 charted on compilations and 1,866 on duplicates. A map of the State to a scale of 15 miles to the inch was compiled for the Anglo-French Exhibition, 55,537 lithos were received from the Litho. Department, 51,379 of which were issued. In addition to that we have now made provision that the date of approval of the applications shall be marked upon them. This entails additional work but places the selector in the position that with one of the lithos. he is able to become an amateur inspector, inasmuch as having the date there, he is in a position to judge whether the conditions of improvement are being complied with. If they are not being complied with the selector is then able to make an application for the forfeiture of the land. Other work in hand is the subdivision of the Oakabella and Denmark Estates and the temporary reserves North of Doodlakine. The other department which comes under the Minister for Lands is the Woods and Forests. Hon. members will have an opportunity of perusing the report which was laid on the table of the House. From that they will see that the revenue last year was £22,783, while for this year it amounts to £23,458. The value of the exports has been already set out in that report. During the year six saw-milling permit applications were granted, aggregating 46,000 acres. These were applied for during the year ended 30th June, 1908. During that time one and a half million sleepers have been inspected prior to export. This has been done, at the request of the Governments of India and South Africa, who asked that the sleepers should be inspected here. We have received in fees for this work the sum of £1,513. I do not know that I need detain members

any further with the figures with regard to this branch. We are very glad to know that there seems to be every probability that the trouble which was pending in connection with the timber industry is practically over. As one who has taken a great interest in this industry I can assure members it has removed a great weight from my mind. I realise that the prosperity, more especially of the south-western portion of the State depends largely on industrial peace as far as the timber industry is concerned. It is a matter for congratulation that both employers and employees have been able to come to an amicable understanding and I trust that as far as that industry is concerned industrial peace will reign for the next few years.

Mr. HOPKINS: The Minister for Lands deserved to be congratulated on the announcement he had been able to make to the House. The continued record of settlement that was taking place was eminently satisfactory, as far as our expenditure on classification and surveys had gone. What we had done in this connection exemplified the urgent necessity for the immediate classification and subdivision—he would put it the other way, the subdivision and classification by officers, of the land which they had subdivided, and when that was done he would like to see the limit of money which could be advanced by the Agricultural Department increased to £1,000. He would venture the opinion then that Mr. Gilbert, the efficient officer who was in charge of the Melbourne Agency, with anything up to 1,000 blocks for disposal, would have no difficulty in finding the best class of settlers to take up these blocks, a class who would not be equalled in any part of the world. In dealing with the work of the Lands Department one was of necessity compelled to go back a little in its history. As evidencing the remarkable prosperity that had taken place, he had previously mentioned that in 1839 the land revenue for the quarter appeared in the *Government Gazette* under the heading "Casual," and the amount was £7 13s. 9d. The land revenue for last year was approximately £280,000.

The Premier: They gave away an acre of land in those days for every eighteen pence that was brought to the country.

Mr. HOPKINS: Even in some instances at the present time it would be found that we were too liberal and in some cases we were not liberal enough. We were not too liberal in dealing with that class of the community we desired to see settled, that was the man with very limited means. It was preferable to have a good settler with limited means rather than one who was entirely a novice and who might have some two or three hundred pounds with which to make a commencement. The man who had no knowledge of farming would soon lose that amount of money; whereas a man accustomed to Australia, its climate and conditions and all its disabilities, the man who would pioneer a home in the back country, he was the class of man that we particularly desired. He was sorry to find that to-day, as in his (Mr. Hopkins') time, the question of delays was one of paramount anxiety in the administration of the affairs of the Lands Department. The Premier had told the Committee that there were 40,000 accounts contained in the office of the Lands Department, and 21,348 conditional purchase holdings current. When one mentioned those huge numbers and realised that the accounts were not current for to-day or this year but would be current in all probability for the next 20 or 30 years, and that they would not stop at 40,000 but would be quadrupled inside the next few years, it was an indication of the absurdity of endeavouring to continue the present system of centralising everything in Perth. That had been a subject of anxiety to every Minister from the time of Mr. Throssell downwards. Every succeeding Minister had found considerable difficulty in grappling with that question. The settlement of the land originated in the time of Mr. Throssell. Following him was the late Dr. Jameson, and he, because of his conspicuous ability, was subsequently offered and accepted an Imperial appointment in South Africa. After months of grave study, Dr. Jameson, for whom he

had the highest admiration, initiated and endeavoured to perfect a scheme of decentralisation, having for its object the division of the State into land districts, which would enable the various questions to be dealt with by the local lands officers resident on the spot. The advantage could be exemplified in many ways. Take for example the land agency in centres such as Narrogin, Northam, and other districts, not forgetting Beverley; probably the most important of all. With a district surveyor in charge he would be able to survey land and classify vacant land and send in his reports with the greatest expedition possible. He remembered one time getting out of the train at Mt. Barker—and that was the first time when it came under his notice forcibly that there was an urgent necessity for a re-arrangement—he struck about half a dozen officers on the little platform, each one engaged in checking the work of the other in that district and ultimately sending his report in to Perth. He had found there a conditional purchase inspector, an Agricultural Bank inspector, a contract surveyor, an inspecting surveyor, a stock inspector, and an insect pests inspector—in fact the list was so long that the titles had almost passed from his memory. However, he had just mentioned this by way of illustration. To his mind there was ample evidence as to the need of immediate action in decentralising the work in the Lands Department. Following on the late Dr. Jameson, each succeeding Minister had left the department fully imbued with a desire for reform and regretting only that his term of office had not afforded him opportunity of seeing that the work of the department was decentralised. Whilst he believed the present Premier was desirous of seeing this work initiated, not one step forward seemed to have been made during the last three years. He was forced to the conclusion that no step had been possible, simply because of passive indifference on the part of the Public Service Commissioner. As evidencing the utter incapacity of that gentleman to deal with a question of this kind he (Mr. Hopkins) felt he was justi-

hed in saying that the Commissioner knew nothing whatever of the inner working of the department or of the requirements of settlers in the back country. It looked almost as though on a recent stormy occasion the Public Service Commissioner had found himself blown into the Lands Department, and before having time to get the dust out of his eyes had escaped into the street and set about getting out his report. The following was a sample of that report:—

“Mr. Withers, of the Land Selection Division, whilst temporarily acting as its head, inaugurated a new departure in handling the applications for land, which enables the work to proceed more rapidly than hitherto. The departure consisted in the simple device of sorting out the applications into two batches, viz., those that foreshadow no complications into one, and those that seem likely to be complicated into another. The applications put into the first batch went through immediately, and were not delayed by those which presented difficulties. Mr. Withers is to be commended for applying so simple a remedy.”

Unfortunately both for Mr. Withers and Mr. Jull, Mr. Withers was not the gentleman who had initiated the process at all. Subsequently a deputation had waited on the Minister for Lands urging upon him the desirability, in the interests of the various trading firms they represented—one of the deputationists represented Messrs. Foy & Gibson—the absolute necessity of not proceeding any further with this question of decentralisation. It was not quite clear what these city tradesmen knew about the Lands Department and about a work, with the necessity for which, as he had said each succeeding Minister since Dr. Jamieson had been fully imbued. The Premier had referred to this innovation as the “straight-forward classification.” When in charge of the Lands Department he (Mr. Hopkins) had desired a large sum of money for the purpose of surveys; however, his colleagues had not seen fit to place at his disposal an adequate sum. The position was different to-day; because the Minister for Lands was Premier also, and

as Premier he would not be dictated to. He (Mr. Hopkins) would like to see an unlimited sum of money made available for the Minister for Lands in order that all vacant areas in the wheat districts should be surveyed and classified by the surveyor who surveyed them. There was no reason at all why a man who was called a lands inspector should be more highly qualified to classify 1,000 acres of wheat country than was another man known as a surveyor. When a settler went to the Lands Office, only too frequently he returned and said “It is all very well; what they have told me sounds alluring, but there is no land subdivided available for selection.” That was the difference between the methods of the Government and those of the Midland Railway Company. The Midland Railway Company had been very successful in their land operations and were able to boast that at an expenditure of only 7 per cent. they had parted with a quarter of a million acres of their country. This had been rendered possible by the process of survey and subdivision before selection. If that policy were adopted by the Government and enlarged upon it would enable them to throw down a plan on the counter of the Lands Department and say to the selector “These blocks are vacant; you can make your application and take your approval away with you.” He (Mr. Hopkins) had been very pleased to hear of the work done in the Denmark district. He had gone through there same four years ago on horseback with a view to seeing as much as possible of the country. He could say that in Gippsland, which he knew well, there was a large area of forest country which was perhaps the richest portion of Victoria, and which was indistinguishable from the country at Denmark. A Gippslander blindfolded and set down in the Denmark country would not be able to distinguish it from South Gippsland. That was the reason why he (Mr. Hopkins) had interjected with a view to ascertaining from the Premier whether, after the bush-fire had been put through the country, it was proposed to introduce the English grasses. If these grasses were to be sown broadcast immediately after a fire in that dis-

trict he was confident that there would result in the ensuing spring magnificent fields of English grasses. For, notwithstanding the heat of the summer the dews were very heavy and certain showers fell periodically even in the dry season. If it were possible to establish the dairying industry in any part of Western Australia it would be in the karri and hazel scrub country around Denmark and between Denmark and Bridgetown. While the ordinary English grasses would in themselves be successful he thought it would be well to add to them grasses which thrive throughout the gravelly portions of New South Wales and Queensland. He was referring to the trefoils and even to some of the fodder thistles that had developed in New South Wales. These seeds mixed with English grasses would save the situation in the event of a particularly dry summer.

Mr. Troy: What about paspalum.

Mr. HOPKINS: Paspalum was undoubtedly a splendid fodder grass but he was not at all certain that it would thrive in the Denmark district. Strange as it might seem, he had seen along the banks of the Swan river at Guildford, cattle turn from paspalum to couch grass. The Hamel district was one in which paspalum could be successfully introduced and grown; and in light of experience he was not sure but that the endeavour made to settle that country would have been more successful had grasses been plentifully introduced as soon as the country was broken up. The requirements of the country and the future need of the State and of the Lands Department was decentralisation; and after that, survey and classification by the surveyor which would enable the department to give prompt approvals immediately the settler presented himself at the Lands Office. He would like to see an increase in the capital of the Agricultural Bank, and he would like to see that institution well advertised in the Eastern States. He desired to give his unqualified approval to the remarks of the Premier as to the value of the services being rendered by Mr. Gilbert at the Melbourne agency. Whilst there were some first-class men to be found in the Lands Department, as in each of

the other big departments, he held that Mr. Gilbert was a man of conspicuous ability.

The Premier: Yet he was reduced by £20.

Mr. HOPKINS: As the Premier had said, here was an officer whom the Public Service Commissioner had reduced by £20. The value of the services rendered to a Minister by an officer like Mr. Gilbert it was decidedly very hard to estimate.

Mr. Angwin: Also his services to the general public.

Mr. HOPKINS: One's enthusiasm for this officer was due particularly to the courtesy and consideration extended to visitors to the Minister's office. . . .

Mr. Underwood: Then it is a pity to waste his efforts in Melbourne.

Mr. HOPKINS: If we had the country surveyed and classified, and forwarded to Mr. Gilbert schedules of every place open for settlement, showing the prices and giving particulars as to the money, we were prepared to advance to assist settlers we could absorb thousands of successful settlers with money to back them up from the Eastern States. And if we did that we would introduce a fresh impetus to our slowly increasing population, and would help to strengthen some of the weakening bonds of sympathy between this State and the people of the Eastern States. If we were able to do that and place at the disposal of the younger generation of the Eastern States facilities to settle in this country, we would be doing well towards establishing ourselves as a worthy part of Federation, and doing a great deal towards the construction of the trans-Australian railway we all hoped to see at no distant date. No matter what class of man it was who presented himself at the office of the Minister, Mr. Gilbert always courteously attended to his business and expedited it. At a time when there was trouble on the goldfields with regard to the tenure of freeholds, the whole of the time of the shorthand writers of the office was occupied in taking statements of cases of persons visiting the Minister, and he (Mr. Hopkins) at that time took the opportunity of telling Mr. Tupper, the land agent at Kalgoorlie, that it was

his duty as responsible land officer, when a holder came to his office with a difficulty, to make out a statement of the case and help the man out of the difficulty, instead of leaving it to members of Parliament to attend to. That was the principle he tried to imbue in every officer of the department, and it tended to increase the efficiency of every officer, and at one time on the public counter of the department, he could say that every officer realised and recognised that it was his duty to make up a statement for a selector. The men who went into the back country, the average selectors, were not much accustomed to writing leading articles or statements of their difficulties. If a toiler came into the Lands Office unaccustomed to penning a statement, we did not want the officer at the counter to be discourteous and turn the man adrift to seek the services of a member of Parliament. It was the duty of the officer of the department to render the help. These were difficulties that should be overcome. Other phases of land settlement he (Mr. Hopkins) would deal with later on, but he wished to express his appreciation of the great work done by the Premier. When the Premier was forming his Cabinet, he (Mr. Hopkins) advised him that the portfolio of Minister for Lands could be reasonably entrusted to the hardest worker the Premier could find in Parliament. Perhaps, acting on that suggestion, the Premier had determined to take the portfolio himself, and could rest satisfied to-day with his creditable record in the Lands Department. It was no economy to send people coming from England to subdue the virgin bush, work to which they were unaccustomed; and he (Mr. Hopkins) would like to see every improved estate the Crown was able to purchase, more particularly by the issue of debentures, purchased and made available for these English settlers who were accustomed to intense farming and were not accustomed to the pioneering work of developing the outback areas.

• Mr. UNDERWOOD: We could not finish this vote to-night. He moved—

That progress be reported.

The PREMIER hoped the hon. member would withdraw the motion. We could

go on at least for an hour or two, especially in view of the adjournment over the holidays.

Motion withdrawn.

[*Mr. Taylor took the Chair.*]

Mr. JOHNSON said he was surprised at so much attention being always devoted by members to the extension of the advertising of Western Australia outside the State, and to the settlement of those from overseas on the lands of the State, and at the fact that immigrants from the Eastern States and the old country were immediately settled on the land, while he (Mr. Johnson) on making application to the department for particulars as to where friends, who had applied to him, could secure an area of 1,000 acres within a reasonable distance of a railway line, could only get from the officers of the department the reply, "It is hard to get just now," accompanied by a shake of the head.

Mr. Hopkins: That is for want of survey.

Mr. JOHNSON: It showed the difficulty that existed, and if the land was not here for our own people, how was it that we could settle immigrants sent here from the Eastern States by Mr. Gilbert, or from the old country by the Agent General? As a matter of fact, we knew to a large extent the immigrants from the old country were not taking up land. No doubt Mr. Gilbert was doing good work and those he sent here were bona fide settlers. It was agreed that Mr. Gilbert was a very capable and competent officer. His special ability was recognised on all sides. He (Mr. Johnson) recognised it, and had said before that Mr. Gilbert was particularly attentive to his duty and was an officer who deserved the special eulogies paid to him; but it only showed that when an officer came distinctly under the gaze of the Minister, promotion was very rapid. It was often the case that an officer was taken from an obscure corner of the department, and immediately he came under the notice of the Under Secretary or the Minister, the officer shot up straight away. It was particularly unfortunate that Ministers did not come

into contact with all their officers, otherwise they would have an opportunity of picking men out and pushing them ahead the same as Mr. Gilbert was pushed ahead. No doubt Mr. Gilbert was not the only bright officer in the departments of the State. There were others quite as capable and as bright, but they were in the background, because they did not get an opportunity to show their ability. Mr. Gilbert had the opportunity to show that he possessed ability, consequently his advancement was rapid ; but there were others equally as capable who could show that they possessed special ability if the opportunity presented itself. While prepared to admit that this officer was doing good work, and that he sent us the required stamp of land settlers from the Eastern States, settlers we needed, considering the vast amount of land we had in our State and the necessity for settling it as fast as possible, still, one could not admit the same conditions prevailed in connection with those sent from the old country. In nine cases out of 10 the men sent out here as agricultural labourers knew absolutely nothing about agriculture, and were totally unfit to take up land. In Beverley recently he had come across an immigrant. This immigrant had been assisted to the State through the Agent General's office, and said that he had come from an agricultural family, and had been brought up on the land and possessed vast knowledge of it. This man had little money, only sufficient to take up 1,000 acres 30 miles from Beverley. He was sent to see him (Mr. Johnson) to find out what steps he would take to get assistance from the Agricultural Bank. This man's statement was that he went into the Lands Office and was shown a plan of land available, and that he took up 1,000 acres ; he had not even seen it. When asked what the land was like, this immigrant replied that the officers in the department had told him it was good white sand. He (Mr. Johnson) could only inform the man that if it was that kind of land he would not get very much assistance from the Agricultural Bank. Cases had occurred where selectors had been taken out by a land agent to a

certain district and advised to take up property at 10s. an acre. These men had gone to the expense of fencing the property, but when they made application to the Agricultural Bank for assistance their land was valued at only 3s. 6d. an acre. There was a case of an engine driver at the Boulder, which was very similar to that. On one occasion when driving in the Wickiepin area he (Mr. Johnson) came across a selection and on inquiring as to the owner of it, learned that he had been an engine driver at Boulder, whom he knew. There was no doubt that the land was of little value so he advised the settler to apply for assistance to the Agricultural Bank, so that he would get the actual value. The value placed upon the land by the Bank was 5s. an acre.

Mr. Heilmann : They would not advance anything on the land.

Mr. JOHNSON : This engine driver was encouraged to go on that land by the land agent.

Mr. Hopkins : That is a point you want to be very sure about.

Mr. JOHNSON : That man spent money on fencing, but when he made an application to the bank, was not granted an advance, and the land was abandoned. That was the sort of treatment meted out to our own people.

Mr. Hopkins : There are some settlers who should be protected against themselves, and the trustees have placed that view on record.

Mr. JOHNSON : To go back to the immigrant. It was easy to see that that man knew nothing about Australian farming, and it was doubtful whether he knew anything about any kind of farming. After throwing up his block he worked at a livery and bait stable. He was not much good at that for he broke one or two vehicles, and eventually he was told by the manager that he must go. This man was really no good for the conditions of Australia, as he refused even to get up early in the morning to feed the horses. When he was given his discharge he burst into tears, and said that he had lost all his money through being encouraged to take up land that was no good ; that he was thousands of miles

from home, and he appealed for sympathy. That was a description of the sort of immigrant sent out from England. At the same time we were endeavouring to lead people to believe these men were genuine settlers. There were hundreds of men in our midst, men of Australian experience who would make ideal settlers, but yet they were unable to secure suitable land.

Mr. Hopkins : If the land is surveyed and classified those men will soon be supplied with land.

Mr. JOHNSON : The class of settlers to which he had referred would never do anything towards the future prosperity of the State. They took up land and abandoned it, and subsequently someone else would come along and take it up again. Certainly there was a percentage of good men being obtained from the Eastern States, but he would like to see the endeavour to secure settlers from the old country absolutely abandoned. Had he the power he would withdraw every lecturer that was in the old country, even including Mr. Wallace Nelson.

Mr. Scaddan : Leave him there, do not bring him back to us ; be kind to us.

Mr. JOHNSON : The Agent General should be instructed to discontinue the endeavour to secure land settlers from over-sea. The special advantages of Western Australia as compared with Canada and other places could be advertised in England, but the Government should not go to the extent of sending round lecturers to paint pictures of the State which were found to be quite untrue when the people arrived here. Such an expenditure was an absolute waste, and should be discontinued. If the Premier would say to members that there was such and such a quantity of land in a given locality, settlers could be secured for that land immediately. Personally he could get a couple of hundred men to take up land to-morrow if he could tell them where it was available. He would like a block himself. It was to be admitted that he was pretty hard to please, for he wanted good land, but he could not find it. He had been trying for five years to find a good block within reasonable distance of a railway, and he had come to the conclusion that he had better save

his money, so that when someone was tired of farming he would be able to purchase a property close to a railway system. It was no use trying to get land near a railway. He desired to speak plainly about the general administration of the department. There was no more unpleasant task than to criticise the administration of a department, and he wanted members to believe that when dealing with this question, he was doing so in the public interest. He had no personal animus against anyone in the Lands Department, but his desire was to speak plainly about the gentlemen who administered it. The Premier led the Committee to believe that he was satisfied with the administration. Members knew however, that there was no department that received more criticism at the hands of the general public than the Lands Department. Members knew well also that there was no department in the State that wanted a stronger governing hand. The Public Service Commissioner in his report had drawn special attention to the lax administration there. He wished to cross swords with the member for Beverley in connection with the Commissioner. He (Mr. Johnson) was one of those who championed the appointment of this officer and he had every confidence in the Act. He believed in the Commissioner because it was possible to get a fairer deal from him for the civil servant than from Ministers, who were subject to political influence. Members had an illustration only on the previous night of an appointment made behind the back of the Commissioner. The Commissioner had had vast experience of one of the largest departments, if not the largest department, in the State. Mr. Jull was Under Secretary for Works when the Works Department was a huge concern and was spending large sums of money, and was also controlling the working railways, and it was because of his experience that he was specially selected by the Government of the day to fill the position of Commissioner. It was regrettable that the present Government was not working with that officer as members would like to see. Members were found going to the goldfields and other parts of the State

complaining that the Commissioner in his duties was hampered by the Government and that the Government gave him no encouragement because he would not agree to their anxiety to use 'political influence in connection with appointments of officers to the public service.

[*Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.*]

The Minister for Works : Could the hon. member quote an instance where political influence had been used ?

Mr. JOHNSON : He could give one striking illustration where an officer last year was appointed to a position under the Factories Act after a strict examination ; his services were dispensed with and an immigrant was put in his place without the Public Service Commissioner being consulted. There were other illustrations also. But with regard to the Lands Department the great difficulty in connection with the administration was the fact that the department was too large for the member who was charged with its administration, because he also had to fill the office of Premier. The combination of Premier and Minister for Lands was too much for one man to handle. The Premier was often called away from his office and in his absence a system has been introduced by which papers were signed with a rubber stamp. In fact it seemed to be a "come-day-god-day-God-send-Saturday" arrangement, and it was absolutely impossible for the public to get that attention and consideration that they were entitled to. The time had arrived when they should have a stronger man to act as Under Secretary for Lands. Mr. Clifton was a very estimable gentleman and a gentleman for whom he had the highest respect, but Mr. Clifton was not the man to administer such a huge concern as the Lands Department. And the general public were also of the opinion that the time had arrived when an alteration should be made in that particular office. Again he wished to say—and he regretted having to do so—that too much time was spent by the various officers of the Lands Department in St. George's Terrace. There was too much going out for refreshments, and there was too

little attention given to work and to Government duty. This was due to the fact that there were three or four gentlemen filling offices in the Lands Department, who were practically independent of their Government salaries. There were several officers there who were in receipt of large incomes outside their official salaries, and consequently these men were indifferent to their duties, and when it was found that the heads of the departments were indifferent, it would also be found that there was want of discipline on the part of the subordinates. In connection with the subordinate officers too many of them were to be found running up and down the corridors executing commissions possibly on the Perth and other cups, running books in the corridors, and generally a state of disorganisation which was due to the fact that the superior officers were men who were indifferent to their duties, and who did not command that respect from their subordinates which was essential to good administration. He had no hesitation in saying that an honest inquiry into the general administration of the Lands Department would disclose evidence that would startle the people of Western Australia, so lax was the general organisation of the department. One blunder which had been made was in connection with some conditional purchase land at the terminus of an agricultural railway. The son of an officer of the Lands Department, apparently in possession of some inside information, had secured the freehold to five acres of conditional purchase land in close proximity to the terminus of a railway. . . .

The Honorary Minister : Why should he not ? . . .

Mr. JOHNSON : One question was as to how he obtained the information which would lead to his picking upon that particular piece of land. Again, how had he managed to secure the freehold to conditional purchase land ? He (Mr. Johnson) was referring of course to the Wickiepin railway. Right at the terminus of the line this son of an officer of the Lands Department was building an hotel on the five acres of land which he had secured. The whole thing seemed to be absolutely

wrong, and could have been made possible only through collusion between officers of the department and those outside.

Mr. Collier : That man's relatives were opposed to his obtaining a licence.

Mr. JOHNSON : The matter had been referred to as a public scandal. If any explanation were possible it surely was the duty of the Premier to give it to the Committee. Another instance of the bungling of the department was to be found at Narrogin, where certain selectors had held more land than they were entitled to. In the fulness of time they had sold the land, and the purchaser made an application for transfer. It was then discovered that the man selling had been holding too much land. Notwithstanding this the transfer was put through. It had then become a precedent, and other persons on hearing of it made application for more land than they were really entitled to. And on the strength of this precedent their applications had been granted. He (Mr. Johnson) was going to ask for the papers in connection with these transactions. He thought he had said sufficient to justify the general accusation of lax administration of the department. The heads of the department did not give that attention to their different branches which was necessary to secure the discipline of those immediately under them. The superior officers were running about the streets after refreshments, and the subordinates, trading on the liberty taken by the superiors, were in turn trotting along the corridors and down the street. He would be glad if the Premier would tell them why temporary hands were put on at a reduced salary to perform work hitherto done by permanent hands. This system was not confined to the Lands Department. He (Mr. Johnson) could give numerous instances of people complaining of the dealings of the Lands Department—dealings that reflected anything but credit on the officers. He would recommend that the Premier should work in better amity with the Public Service Commissioner. The Public Service Commissioner was continually referring to the disorganised and unsatisfactory condition of affairs in the Lands Department.

The Premier : Has he been inside the department within the last twelve months?

Mr. JOHNSON : We had the Commissioner's report to go by.

The Premier : He has written a report and given credit to an officer who knew absolutely nothing about the reform.

Mr. JOHNSON would rather take the information from Mr. Jull in regard to this matter, than from the officers of the department.

The Premier : You will get it from him; he has acknowledged it.

Mr. JOHNSON : Then one must accept it; but the Public Service Commissioner was an officer of the House; and while he (Mr. Johnson) was a member of the Assembly, he would protect the Public Service Commissioner as the servant of the House, and would not allow Ministers to browbeat him. Ministers tried to cover up their own incapacity by attacking the Public Service Commissioner.

The Premier : You ought to talk about incapacity.

Mr. JOHNSON : It was the duty of members of Parliament to protect the servants of Parliament, and the Public Service Commissioner was as much a servant of Parliament as was the Auditor General. He (Mr. Johnson) was prepared to take Mr. Jull's report as gospel until Mr. Jull was prepared to admit having made a mistake. Sufficient illustrations had already been given to-night from those who came into contact with the Lands Department to show that the department was not administered as satisfactorily or as economically as it might be; and while this condition of affairs existed, it was essential that members of Parliament should raise their voices in stronger protest, than we had been doing year by year simply asking the Premier to devote special attention to the department, and being told year by year that a few thousands were being saved. Members should raise their voices to see that proper economy was effected; and thousands could be saved if the Premier would only devote sufficient attention to the department. No doubt the Premier

was overworked. It was absolutely impossible for him to do justice to the two portfolios, and while we had the combination we would not have close administration in the Lands Department, that close administration that was essential to give satisfaction to the people of the State. He challenged the Premier to hold an inquiry, and was satisfied he could convince the country that the department was not being administered as the Premier would like us to believe.

Mr. Hopkins: It will never be until we have decentralisation.

Mr. BATH: The member for Guildford had brought forward matters that called for investigation by the Premier at the earliest moment. He (Mr. Bath) had known of matters that had caused a great deal of trouble and criticism of the department, but these matters mentioned by the member for Guildford were a great deal more serious, and should be investigated, and should have light thrown on them at the earliest possible moment. The chief cause of complaint against the Lands Department was, that while a specially quick method had been adopted to deal with a certain class of applications, this very fact of special attention being shown to the one class retarded dealing with applications in other directions, and caused those annoying delays that aroused criticism and had the worst effect in discouraging the land selection we desired to encourage in Western Australia. Whatever lines of conduct were adopted to encourage settlement, we should not give better or preferential treatment to selectors from outside the State over those seeking land from within our own boundaries; for encouragement, if encouragement be given, should be given equally to all. People in our midst who had been here for years, taxpayers and good citizens, were at least entitled to the treatment meted out to settlers from over the sea, or from the Eastern States. The member for Pilbara on a previous occasion had brought forward the instance of settlers being shown a plan upon which blocks taken up a month previously were not marked. Those selectors had visited country to the North of Tammin, and inspected

blocks, but had found on going to the Lands Office that the blocks had been taken up months before and, in some instances, surveyed. So all their efforts and expenditure had gone for nothing. He (Mr. Bath) had received several letters from the goldfields, asking for information as to where land was available so as to save the inquirers the expense and loss of time occasioned by visiting the different parts of the State in search of land; and he had gone to the department and been told in a general sort of a way that there was land in this district or land in that district. Some of these people had left their work, and had come down at a considerable expense and loss of time to visit the districts indicated, only to find that the land was not available. He had met them at Tammin making inquiries, where the only land now available was sandplain or scrub country, only useful to hold in combination with first-class land and of no use when taken by itself. We should save these people this annoyance of going from place to place in search of land, and of being told in a general way that land was available, and we should save them the disappointment. One or two of those settlers referred to had evidently got land, but it was not from the knowledge of the land agent supposed to be there to give them first-hand local information and to take them without loss of time or delay to the places where land was available. He (Mr. Bath) was present with the member for Pilbara on the occasion men in search of land found blocks shown as vacant on the plan, but these men on applying at Northam were told that it was no use applying for the land as it was not available. Afterwards another gentleman arrived, made the application for, and received, the land. He had been informed that in one instance the Lands Department granted a conditional purchase of an area of land upon which an agricultural hall had been erected.

The Premier: Where was that?

Mr. BATH: He could not state the exact locality. The grant took in one wall of the agricultural hall. If inquiries were made it would be found that this

statement was correct and a thorough inquiry should be made. In another instance, where the holders of certain areas had forfeited their land for not fulfilling the conditions, they sold the land, and by doing so made themselves liable to an action at law. The department were approached on the matter, and although the land had been granted to another individual, it was reinstated in the original holders, although they had forfeited. They were again given possession of the land. Instead of this firm laying themselves open to an action at law, the Government took over the liability. Such matters called for investigation. He agreed with other members that the department was too big for a Minister who was also Premier to control. The Premier should take over some other department of less responsibility, and a Minister should be appointed to control the Lands Department who could devote the whole of his time to administration and supervision. That afternoon he asked a question as to what areas of land within a reasonable distance of a railway were available. It would be in the interests of many of our own citizens for this information to be made available, so that they could be absolutely certain that in specified localities first-class land, within a reasonable distance of a railway, was available for them. There were many on the fields to-day who, if they continued in their present mining employment for a few years, were faced with a certainty of being attacked by the disease known as miner's plague. Many of them were not 40 years of age, but they would be absolutely useless in a few years so far as manual labour was concerned. To them the possibility was terrible, and to-day many who had saved a little money would be only too glad, if they could get suitable land in a locality near a railway, to become settlers, and so, to a large extent, minimise the terror of the complaint from which they suffered. In order that these men should not be put to unnecessary expense, loss of time and trouble, reliable particulars should be made available as to the localities where suitable land could be taken up. This would be a boon to many miners. The

Premier, as all knew, was honestly desirous to secure land settlement, and in fact, he would not be worthy to be called a son of the soil if he were not, but unless he could give personal control the work would not be carried out effectively and without annoyance to the general public.

The Treasurer: He is doing much better work than any of his predecessors.

Mr. BATH: The Treasurer did nothing but assert, assert, assert, and if a question were awkward he dodged it. His criticism, made in a friendly fashion so far as the Premier was concerned, could be accepted with ten times the advantage by the Treasurer—advantage not only to himself, but also to the public.

The Treasurer: Always whining.

Mr. BATH: The extent of the Treasurer's capacity seemed to be to sneer, and this country wanted something better than a Minister sneering at members, whichever side of the House they occupied. The instance mentioned by the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) called for investigation at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Premier, in his desire to settle people on the land, seemed to forget that the most desirable class of settlers he could get were the people who had resided in the State for some time and were anxious to get blocks of land. It might be news to the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture, who was interested in the question of land settlement, that he (Mr. Heitmann) could take up 10,000 acres of land to-morrow if he could secure suitable areas, for the people on the fields. Whenever he made inquiries with regard to land he had received the best possible treatment from the departmental officers, but he was always met with the story that there was no suitable land available within a reasonable distance of a railway. If the Premier were to send an agent to the Murchison with the information that people there could obtain land within a reasonable distance of a railway, there would be no need to go out of the State for settlers, for in a week there would be 100 applicants for land. He could say this with certainty, on account of the number of applications he had received.

ed in Day Dawn and Cue from people desirous of taking up land. This class of man was much better than the one now being brought from the old country. Recently, when travelling through the Murchison, he met two of the English immigrants. They had been advised by the Labour Bureau to go to the Murchison, and were endeavouring to make a living by cutting firewood. They could not cut sufficient to "boil a billy," as the expression was, and the Australians and Italians who were working near them were forced to assist them to earn sufficient to keep them alive.

The Treasurer: It does not take a long time to learn to cut firewood.

Mr. HEITMANN: These men were useless, and they could not earn tucker. A shipload of immigrants came here some time ago, and of the number one had been employed in a pawnbroker's shop, another was a carpenter, and another a labourer, and all the experience of the whole shipload of immigrants as to agriculture was possessed by one man, who had been buying grain in some parts of England for a master. These men were met at Fremantle with an elaborate letter of welcome, and were advised to call at the Labour Bureau; when going there, the superintendent advised them to seek work and not to go on the land at first. Perhaps in that advice he was right.

The Treasurer: Were they not advised to go on farms as labourers?

Mr. HEITMANN: One man had determined to go on the land, and despite the advice he received from the officers of the Immigration Department, he took up a selection. Another man came with £10, and another with £2 10s., and both said they were going on the land. It was useless to bring this class of man to the country. It was cruel to bring the labouring class here to compete with an already over-stocked market. He had searched for some land and had been advised to go to different parts of the State. Recently he went out 40 miles from the railway, and in this connection he desired to refer to the work done by the Lands Department at Lockyer's estate. There he noticed the immense amount of work

which had been carried out by the department in connection with surveying blocks and clearing roads in every direction. The idea was good, but when spending money in this direction the department should also endeavour to locate water. Money would be well spent if the Government sent a boring party out there, because it would be very convenient for the settlers to know where it was possible to find water. Boring parties were sent to the goldfields, and while surveying blocks in agricultural areas, the same thing should be done by the Lands Department for the settlers. Drills should be lent to the settlers who could use them. He agreed with the reference that had been made to decentralisation; instead of the whole business being forced through the Perth office it should be distributed in the various centres. The same thing applied to the Mines Department. The system could be adopted there with advantage. A good deal more work was being created by having to do it in Perth. The system adopted in New Zealand of cutting the State up into registration districts was one that could well be adopted here. The settler would then have less trouble to get his land, and there would be less work for the department. He had met many disappointed applicants for land. He knew of one man who had applied for a block of land outside the Geraldton district, and after six or nine months humbugging in the department had made no advance. He (Mr. Heitmann) inquired into the case for him, and was informed by the Lands Department that the surrender of the land in question by the previous holder was out of form, and, therefore, the man could not get the land until the surrender was put into proper order. This man was not able to get such simple information until a member of Parliament went to his assistance. From his experience, it was very difficult for a man to get good land in Western Australia. He knew of four or five people who were anxious at the present time to become settlers, and he knew that they would make good settlers. These people should be encouraged in every possible way to go on the land.

He never lost an opportunity of advising a miner to settle upon the land. If we offered sufficient facilities to enable this class of the community to take up agricultural land, there would be no need to go to the old country for immigrants.

Mr. ANGWIN moved—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	18

Majority for 1

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Bath	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Troy
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Ware
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Nanson	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Barnett	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Davies	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Gordon	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Price
Mr. Hayward	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Layman
Mr. Keenan	(Teller).
Mr. Male	

Motion thus passed.

Progress reported.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Land and Income Tax Bill.

ADJOURNMENT—CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

On motion by *the Premier*, ordered: That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 5th January, at 4.30 p.m.

House adjourned at 11.33 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 5th January, 1909.

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Bills: Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act Amend- ment, Com.	1195
Workers' Compensation Act Amendment, 2a., Com.	1196
Fines and Penalties Appropriation, 2a., Com.	1196
Fremantle Disused Cemetery, Com.	1201
Victoria Park Municipal Boundaries, Dis- charged	1201

The President took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Roads Act, 1902—By-laws under Parks and Reserves Act, 1895, of the Kalgoorlie Roads Board. 2, Department of Agriculture—Annual Report for 1908. 3, Public Service Commissioner—Third Annual Report, 1908.

BILL—WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress had been reported after consideration of Clause 10, and on a new clause moved by the Hon. M. L. Moss as follows:—“(1.) Every packet licence granted before or after the passing of this Act shall authorise the master of the vessel therein mentioned, being a vessel licensed to carry passengers within the State of Western Australia, to sell and dispose of any liquor to any passenger on board of such vessel while such vessel is on her passage. Provided that the provisions of Section sixty-one of the principal Act shall not apply to a packet licence. Provided also that no licence shall be necessary to authorise the granting of allowances of liquor to the crew of any vessel. (2.) Section six of the principal Act is hereby repealed.”

New clause agreed to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

That the Bill be returned to the Legislative Assembly requesting them to make the amendments agreed to in Committee, and that the Committee have power to sit again on receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly.