

have much pleasure in moving the second reading.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): Though I cannot claim to have any profound knowledge of this subject, I have had some experience of machinery, and therefore think I may congratulate the Government on their bringing in one of the fairest Bills, both to employers and to employees, that has ever been introduced to Parliament. I do not know who were its authors, but I think it a good and sound measure, which in every case recognises not only the responsibilities but the rights of employers. I was pleased to see a clause which I utilised when dealing with the Noxious Weeds Bill. We have had previous legislation which heavily penalised employers of labour; and I am glad to give my strongest support to this Bill, although I think Clause 3 is foreign to its object, and should have found a place in another measure. Still, I think no one objects to the principle of bi-monthly payments, although mine owners, perhaps, will not particularly appreciate the innovation. I understand also that some of the workers are not very anxious for it, as the monthly payments, for certain reasons, sometimes operate to their advantage. It is understood, however, that bi-monthly pays possibly may prevent loafing and malingering, and spending the whole of the money at the end of the month. My own opinion is that the worker should be paid every week, not later than Friday. I believe that method is best for employer and employee alike. I refer to the ordinary worker. Civil servants, of course, expect to be paid once a month, though many would like to be paid oftener; but that I think hardly necessary. In paying twice a month, owners of large mines will probably have to secure additional clerical assistance. I am not sure of this, but have been led to believe it. I do not quite understand one expression in Subclause 1 of Clause 2—"by requisition in writing addressed in general terms to the mining manager." Subsequently the defects and dangers to which the requisition refers are specified; and I do not think there is any need for those words. The general and the specific do not seem to agree well together. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, and congratulate the Minister on its introduction,

because I believe it is a good, sound Bill in all its parts.

On motion by HON. W. KINGSMILL, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS moved:

That the House at its rising do adjourn till Thursday, the 20th October, at 7.30 p.m.

The Royal Agricultural Show would be open on Tuesday and Wednesday next.

DR. HACKETT: Thursday next would be the most important show day.

THE MINISTER: It was necessary to meet on Thursday, as some messages from another place were expected. During the following week he must visit Geraldton to attend the mammoth show, and hoped members could conveniently adjourn over that week.

Question put and passed.

The House accordingly adjourned at 14 minutes past 6 o'clock, until the next Thursday at 7.30.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 13th October, 1904.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Returns under Section 60 of Life Assurance Act. Report

of Perth Public Hospital, 1904. Report of Harbour and Light Department, 1904. Report of Public Works Department, 1903.

QUESTION—COLLIE-NARROGIN RAILWAY, TERMINUS.

MR. RASON (for Mr. Hopkins) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has the Government definitely agreed as to whether the terminus of the railway authorised to be constructed from Narrogin to Collie shall be in Collie or at a point on the Collie-Cardiff Railway? 2, If not, when is it anticipated that this point will be definitely determined?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The Government are of opinion that the terminus should be at Collie.

QUESTION—MARINE BOARD, Etc.

MR. NEEDHAM asked the Premier: 1, Will the Government approach the Home Government with a view to appointing a responsible officer to administer the Merchant Shipping Act? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill to establish a Marine Board for this State?

THE PREMIER replied: The Government intended to introduce a short Bill dealing with these matters.

QUESTION—FIREWOOD TRAMWAY PERMITS.

MR. C. H. RASON (for Mr. Hopkins) asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to refuse all applications for firewood tramway permits on the Eastern Goldfields? 2, If so, what alternative is proposed?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—SOUTH HORSESHOE G.M. COMPANY, EXEMPTION.

MR. T. H. BATH asked the Minister for Mines: What were the circumstances which actuated him in asking the Warden at Kalgoorlie to re-hear the application of the South Horseshoe G.M. Co. for exemption?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Application for three months'

exemption on Leases Nos. 3082E and 3085E, for the purpose of raising capital, was heard by Acting Warden Owen on 23rd August, when he recommended the Minister to refuse exemption on the ground that the leases had only been recently taken up. 2, The Minister at first agreed with the recommendation, but subsequently was interviewed by some persons interested in the leases, who produced correspondence showing that there was a reasonable chance of obtaining farther capital, and pointed out that though the leases had only been taken up a short time they, with the exception of a few acres, included ground previously held by the same people, and surrendered for the purpose of consolidating their ground. It was also shown that a fair sum had been spent in working the ground. 3, The Minister thereupon asked the Acting Warden to farther consider (not necessarily re-hear) the case with the object of seeing if there were not some fresh grounds for exemption, and pointing out that his grounds for recommending the refusal of the application seemed to be technical ones only. 4, The Acting Warden decided to re-hear the case, and after doing so recommended two months' exemption on the grounds that there was a reasonable probability of funds being obtained to work the lease, and that machinery was necessary to unwater the shaft, and he stated that he was under the impression at the first hearing that the ground had not been worked before.

TRAMWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

Amendment (one) made by the Legislative Council considered.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 4—Add the word "exclusively" at the end of the clause:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the amendment be agreed to. The object was to make the clause more definite. In the event of the tramway company using buildings for other than tramway purposes, the buildings would be ratable.

Question passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from the 29th September; the PREMIER in charge of the Bill.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): In approaching this Bill I think we can fairly regard it as a good measure; a measure that will no doubt require some considerable amendments in Committee, but taken as a whole a fairly good, reasonable measure. The Premier in introducing the Bill omitted to say that the skeleton or framework of the Bill was left on the stocks by his predecessors.

THE PREMIER: I was not aware of it.

MR. RASON: Then allow me to say that it is so. I mention it in no captious spirit, but to emphasise my idea that the Bill cannot in any way be regarded as a party measure.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): You did not tell us where you hid it.

MR. RASON: I know you found it; so where we hid it is a matter of no concern so long as it is found. I wish to emphasise the remark that it is a measure we ought not to approach in anything like a party spirit. It is a measure, above all things, in which we may regard what is best for the State, regardless of party or our position in the House, or any antagonistic feeling that may exist between the Government side and the Opposition side of the House.

THE PREMIER: It is all on that (Opposition) side.

MR. RASON: The principle of the Bill rests with the appointment of a Commissioner. That is the alpha and omega of the Bill, the placing of the control of the civil service under the hands of a Commissioner. That is a serious step to take. It is justifiable, I think, but we have to ask ourselves why we take that step. Why place the control of the civil service of the State in the hands of a Commissioner? We know that other States have had to face this difficulty. There is constant agitation. There are civil servants' complaints of favouritism and of political influence being brought to bear. That has happened elsewhere as well as here, and one of the reasons doubtless for placing the civil service under the control of a Commissioner is to get rid of those complaints, whether they be well-founded or ill-founded. In the other

States the step taken has been to appoint civil service boards in some cases, and in others to appoint Commissioners. I do not know that in any of the States either of those steps has given satisfaction, and if we are to regard such a step from a business standpoint, it does seem somewhat strange on the face of it that we should depart from ordinary business methods. What do we find in ordinary commercial experience? That the man who is at the head of a commercial business has full power. If any of his staff do not suit him, he gets rid of them and puts others in their place. If any member of his staff shows exceptional ability he promotes him. One conducts his staff on those lines which he thinks will enable him to get the best service out of his employees. If he is a wise man, he rewards those employees who serve him best. He is the judge of his own affairs, and that is, to a certain extent, what happens to a State department when you have a responsible head of the department, a permanent head, and the Minister. The Minister for the time being is responsible to Parliament for the proper conduct of the affairs of his department. He no doubt acts upon the advice of the permanent head of the branch, and I admit that the permanent head, after being many years in the service, may get into one groove and see things through coloured spectacles; and he may possibly have favourites. I do not say that it is so. On the contrary, I believe we can congratulate ourselves upon the very good class of men we have and have had as permanent heads of the departments; but if it were possible to have them better than they are, and were they ever so good, and were Ministers administering the departments ever so good, we should still have complaints. We should have complaints of favouritism, of patronage, of political influence. Therefore it may be wise—I believe myself it is a step in the right direction—to remove that control from permanent heads and from Ministers; to place it outside of political influence altogether, and appoint Commissioners, or a Commissioner. We find that this suggestion, this suggested Bill, finds favour with the civil service. Taking the civil service throughout, if we may judge from comments we have seen in the

papers, this measure finds favour with them. I do not place too much reliance on that fact, because we know that far fields are always green; something new, something fresh, is always likely to be popular for the time being; and I am afraid that the civil servants themselves will ultimately be disappointed at the results of this Bill, or at least that the expectations they now hold will not be realised. And in striving to get rid of that political influence to which I have referred, or the patronage or favouritism to which I have alluded, and substitute something better for it in the interest of the civil service, we must, if I may use a German proverb, be careful that in throwing the dirty water out of the bath we do not throw the baby with it. We may very possibly, in this measure, be doing something which will ultimately work more hardship on the civil service than the existing circumstances.

MR. MORAN: We should still have the baby, in any case.

MR. RASON: The baby will always be with us. Although we appoint a Commissioner, and place the control of the service under him, and adopt by that step a somewhat unbusiness-like method, a method which is not adopted in ordinary commercial life, we must still be careful to, if we possibly can, retain the same incentive to display ability, to excel, and to progress in the service, as it is competent for one to do in ordinary business life. I doubt very much whether that incentive will remain after the passage of this Bill. I am going to assist the passage of the Bill. Of course there will have to be amendments, but I am going to do all I can on my part to assist in putting this Bill through. But whilst I am prepared to do that on the one hand, I wish to point out what occur to me as probabilities in the future. We intend to appoint a Commissioner. We are told that the "Commissioner shall, as far as practicable, personally inspect each department, and investigate the character of the work performed by every officer therein, and the efficiency, economy, and general working of such department, both separately and in its relation to other departments." That seems to me to be a great deal too much to ask of any one man. Indeed, the whole future of the civil service depends upon this, that

the Commissioner shall make himself acquainted personally with the merits of each individual in the service throughout such a scattered service as ours. If it is impossible for the Commissioner to carry out that expectation, then manifestly an injustice will be done to the civil servants, because all hope of promotion rests entirely with the Commissioner. It is dependent upon the good will, upon the recommendation of the Commissioner. If the Commissioner knows nothing, if he is unable to find out the good work—

MR. MORAN: That would not apply to ordinary automatic promotion.

MR. RASON: I intend to come to that, and show how small the automatic stage is. After a certain stage, all increase depends on the recommendation of the Commissioner. If, therefore, the Commissioner is unable to make himself acquainted with the civil servants throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia, an injustice will be done to the civil servants. Is it reasonably possible that one Commissioner could make himself acquainted with the merits or demerits of every civil servant throughout Western Australia? It is different in regard to the Commonwealth Act, from which this measure is greatly copied. There we have a Commissioner, but also six inspectors. And let us, for the purpose of comparison, once more turn our attention to large commercial institutions.

MR. MORAN: There is only one inspector for Western Australia.

MR. RASON: Quite so. It is a very small Commonwealth staff here. But let us take the comparison. There is a Commissioner, and there is an inspector for Western Australia. [Interjection] Take my argument for what it is worth. If it is worth nothing, discard it. Let us for the purpose of comparison see what has been done in this regard with large commercial institutions. Take a bank for instance. There we have a general manager; we have a staff of directors, and we have inspectors whose duty it is to go round to the branches of the bank and make themselves acquainted with the staff. If that be necessary with such an institution as a bank in Western Australia, surely it is a great deal more necessary in regard to such a large service as the public service. I am afraid we are asking too much of

any one man when we ask him to make himself personally acquainted with the whole civil service of Western Australia. Then what happens, even if the Commissioner can fulfil the expectations we hold out in regard to his appointment? The Commissioner may make recommendations. He recommends to the Governor-in-Council; in other words, to the Ministry of the day. The Ministry may differ from his recommendation. They do not indorse it, and the recommendation is sent back to the Commissioner with a request to make another. But each recommendation of the Commissioner has to be published in the *Government Gazette*. There, it seems to me, is an opportunity for doing great harm to the civil servant. The Commissioner, say, recommends A for promotion. That recommendation is published in the *Gazette*. But the Government of the day do not approve of A's promotion, and send back the recommendation to the Commissioner, who has to recommend someone else. What will the public think of A? What will his friends in the civil service think of A? They will say, "There really must be something very serious against this man, else a recommendation of the Commissioner would be given effect to." But more than that. The Commissioner, having recommended A, and the recommendation not having been accepted, recommends say B. It does not follow that the recommendation of B, either, will be accepted. It rests with the Government to reject that recommendation also. And I should like to know how long this is to go on; whether there is any finality, and what is to happen if the Commissioner refuses to make another recommendation. If he says, "I have honestly recommended a man who in my opinion is the very best: I decline to make another recommendation"—what is to happen? So far as this Bill is concerned, and so far as I can judge, there must be a deadlock. But there is this difference between the Bill, in the matter I have just referred to, and the Commonwealth Act. The Commonwealth Act provides that when the Government of the day differ from the recommendation of the Commissioner, the reasons for not making the appointment recommended by the Commissioner have to be submitted to Parliament. That

seems to be a wise precaution, a salutary provision, and one that, being good in the Commonwealth Act, would be just as good in this Bill; and I cannot understand why it has been omitted from the Bill. We must always bear in mind if we do appoint a Commissioner, if we do, by statute, give the entire control of the service to a Commissioner, we by no means get rid of responsibility. Much as we should like to, much as the present Government, past Governments, or future Governments would like to get rid of responsibility for the appointment of civil servants, yet they cannot get rid of it. In that regard Parliament is omnipotent. If the Commissioner makes mistakes, or whether he makes mistakes or not, depend upon it we shall have complaints in the future as we have had them in the past; and once these complaints are made, the Government of the day will hear of them, and Parliament will hear of them. And rightly so. We cannot by any means get rid of the ultimate responsibility by placing it on the shoulders of someone else. The best we can hope from the appointment of a Commissioner is that he will be a buffer between the service on the one hand and the Government and Parliament on the other. We may not hear very many complaints—I hope we shall not; but depend upon it, complaints will continue and will have to be dealt with. I said that Parliament was omnipotent; but it is not Parliament alone. Parliament is the servant of the public; and it is public opinion that will dominate the civil service as it dominates everything else. Parliament is merely the reflex of public opinion. It is not always that, I admit; but it is generally supposed to be. The Parliament or the Government cannot get rid of responsibility by trying to place the burden on the shoulders of someone else. I should like also, if I could, to find out what effect this Bill will have on officers of Parliament such as the clerks of the Houses and the *Hansard* staff. I see in one of the clauses that the Act is not to apply to them; but I should like to know, and perhaps the Premier when replying will tell me, whether their present positions are prejudiced in any way by the Bill; whether they forfeit any of the rights already accrued to them. Another matter which the Premier will per-

haps refer to in reply is the question of naturalisation. I intend as far as possible to avoid details on the second reading; but I must draw attention to a few points presenting difficulties such as the Premier will doubtless be able satisfactorily to remove from our minds in his reply, so that we may get into Committee knowing exactly what course we are steering. On page 8 of the Bill, in the clause dealing with naturalisation, I notice that a person who is not a natural-born or a naturalised subject of His Majesty may be admitted to the service with the permission of the Governor. But farther on it is provided that "every officer admitted to the public service before the commencement of this Act who is not a natural-born or naturalised subject of His Majesty shall forthwith after the commencement of this Act take out letters of naturalisation." There seems to be here an unwarrantable distinction and difference. It is this. Any one can in future be admitted to the service without being a natural-born subject or without being naturalised, if the Governor consents; which means if the Government in power for the time being consent. But with regard to those aliens now in the service, every one of them has to be naturalised. There is nothing about the consent of the Governor there. Willy-nilly, everyone now in the service must take out letters of naturalisation. If that be compulsory on those now in the service, it should also apply to those admitted hereafter. Why make a distinction between them? Why discriminate in favour of those to be admitted in the future? I should like to call attention to another subject. Clause 69, on page 23, deals with public service holidays. In the marginal note in this case there is no "compare with." From that note one would understand that the clause is an exact copy of the section to which it refers. When a marginal note appears as it appears here, one takes the clause to be an exact copy; and one ought not to have to turn up the parent Act to see whether it is a copy. I notice an important departure here from the principle already laid down. Whereas we have as a public service holiday Proclamation Day, that holiday is struck out, and Eight Hours Day inserted in lieu. [MR. MORAN: Hear,

hear.] No doubt Eight Hours Day may be an anniversary which appeals to some members of this House more than does Proclamation Day. But surely there is something more than that. Surely the opinions of those who fought for Responsible Government in this State are entitled to some respect also. What is the matter with the name, Proclamation Day?

MINISTERIAL MEMBER: What is the matter with Eight Hours Day?

MR. RASON: Proclamation Day exists already. Why strike it out and substitute Eight Hours Day? We all know that Responsible Government was proclaimed in this State in 1890. Since we have had public service holidays, that has been one of those holidays. It is a well-known institution; it has been regarded, and rightly regarded, as a day publicly honoured in Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: The birth of Responsible Government was the birth of our Labour party.

MR. RASON: Undoubtedly. They owe their very existence to that day; and without it, most assuredly there would never have been an Eight Hours Day or a Labour party. Hence, if there is a day that ought to be honoured, not only by those who fought for Responsible Government, but by those who have benefited by its introduction, that is the day. Yet simply to please a few, the Government are prepared to outrage the feelings of a great many. Looking at this measure from the standpoint of the civil servant, I find that the prospects held out to him are not too bright. He may enter the service at 16 years of age after passing an examination; he may receive the perfectly gorgeous salary of £40 a year, and may automatically rise till he receives £60 a year. This is the utmost possibility before him—that he may automatically rise till he receives £60 a year; and if he finds favour with the Commissioner, if he does his work well and the Commissioner can see his work and does recommend him as a fit and proper person to receive a little more, he may, by the time he is 21, receive the enormous salary of £100 a year.

MR. BOLTON: Not a bad salary.

MR. RASON: I have no doubt it is not bad for a civil servant; but what would it be for a labourer? There is a great desire to provide a living wage and

short hours and everything good for one branch of labour; but what about the other branches? Are not civil servants entitled to just as much consideration—I do not say more, but just as much—as any other worker? They do not receive it.

MR. BOLTON: They do, in proportion.

MR. RASON: They do not receive it in this Bill; for while the civil servant may at the age of 21, if fortunate and if the Commissioner favour him, receive a salary of £100 a year, there he must stop, at the top of his grade, until he can get promotion into another grade. Now how is he to get promotion? Only by a vacancy. In other words—it seems almost brutal to say it, but it is true—he must wait for dead men's shoes. There is the vista that we open to the civil servant. Automatically he can get £60 a year. Fortune favouring him, he may get £100 a year. There he absolutely stops until there is some opening for him. Is £100 a year a living wage? I see it is a living wage, for I am not contradicted.

MR. NELSON: A poor living wage.

MR. RASON: I thought the member for Hannans would see my point; because if £100 a year is a living wage—and that is not contradicted—how much more is £200 a year a living wage? The poor civil servant, entering after an examination, starts at £40 a year; and the height of his ambition or the possibility of giving effect to his ambition is that he may get £100 a year; and there he stops. Here again this Bill differs from the Commonwealth Act, because the limit of the first grade in the Commonwealth Act is £160. Why this difference? In the Commonwealth Parliament it was held and argued that almost automatically a civil servant, his behaviour being good, should rise in the service, and that his salary should be increased, until he reached what might be regarded as a living wage, which was estimated, and I think not over-estimated, at £160 a year. We expect of our civil servants that they should keep up a certain amount of appearance and that they should be well dressed and should live decently. Altogether they have to spend in appearance a great deal more, perhaps, than men employed in other branches of labour.

MR. F. F. WILSON: They do not wear out many clothes.

MR. RASON: If it rested on the amount of work done as to the amount of wear taken out of clothes, some so-called workers would wear a suit from the date of their birth to the date of their death, because the amount of work they do would damage no clothes.

MR. F. F. WILSON: Is that your experience?

MR. RASON: It is. Why should the limit be fixed at £100 here, whereas the Commonwealth limit is £160? It seems to me that we have overstepped the mark. The Government have desired to be altogether too moderate in this respect. I should like to see it easily possible for a civil servant, so long as he behaved himself and could obtain the recommendation of the Commissioner, to rise to £150 a year at all events, without having to wait for dead men's shoes. What will be the effect of this upon the civil service itself? What can have a more disastrous effect than the knowledge that £100 a year is the limit? Things are bad enough as it is; but we shall have men entering our civil service—certainly no other class of men—who are of the worst class, men who have no ambition at all, who will be content to be mere automatons just to lick stamps or attend office in time and get away again and draw their £100 a year. There is no incentive to give a man's best for pay like this. We shall have the whole service simply ossified. There will not be ambition, simply because there is no scope for ambition. Men will be simply machines, and poor machines at that. We want in the civil service—what this will not give us, I am afraid—men determined by their energy that they will succeed. What chance will a young fellow of any ability, of energy, and of desire and ambition to succeed, have of doing so under this Bill? He has first of all—always it seems to me—that very remote chance of gaining the recommendation of the Commissioner who has to inspect the civil service throughout Western Australia. Unless a young fellow gets that recommendation he does not even get an increase of salary; and if he does get it—a remote possibility—he may rise to £100 year. After that, he has to wait for someone to die, so that a

vacancy may be created; and then he may have a chance among the many thousand others of stepping into the dead man's place. It seems to me that this does not afford any inducement to a man to put his best into the civil service of Western Australia; and what we want is the best. I do not want to delay the House any longer; but there is one subject to which I should like to refer. I see that at almost every step there is an examination. There is an examination before a man can enter the service; there is an examination before he can pass from one branch to another, or from one grade to another; and before he can make any important step in advance there must be another examination. That may or may not be right; but so much depends on the nature of the examination. If we are to have mere literary examinations they will be so much waste paper. We know of our own experience that some men can write most brilliant essays upon almost any subject, yet as clerks in the civil service they would not be worth their salt. The examination we want and ought to have is as to the fitness and ability of a man to discharge the duties he will be called upon to discharge. That is the class of examination we want; and if that is the examination referred to in this Bill, and which will be set up by this Bill, I shall gladly welcome it. In Committee I hope our objects will be, first of all, to remember that the civil servant has to be the servant of the people of Western Australia; and secondly, if possible to obtain a contented and satisfied service and, in order to obtain that, to give to ability rather than to length of service the chance of succeeding.

MR. E. NEEDHAM (Fremantle): It is not my intention this afternoon to deal in an exhaustive manner with the Bill before the House. I certainly do take this opportunity of welcoming the measure, because it is an honest effort on the part of the Government of the day to grapple with the question of the civil service.

MR. HOPKINS: Good wine wants no bush.

MR. NEEDHAM: It is a question that has occupied the attention of the people in this State for a considerable time; and although the Government are new to office, I certainly think they deserve our

best thanks for the manner in which they have attempted to grapple with this vexed question. In the past the civil service has been somewhat of a political machine, and promotion has not been by ability but has always been through, I may term it, political influence or influential patronage of some sort from outside.

MR. RASON: That is going too far.

MR. NEEDHAM: I say always, and I use the word advisedly. I think the time has arrived when such a pernicious system should be abolished. In the great days when a certain gentleman was in command in this State (I speak of Sir John Forrest, and with all due respect to him as a statesman) this pernicious system was rampant. The James Government made an attempt to cope with it; but I must say they failed.

MR. HOPKINS: Who said so?

MR. NEEDHAM: The Bill before the House to-day, if accepted, will certainly go a long way to do away with this pernicious system of promotion by outside influence. We propose to appoint a Commissioner; and although the leader of the Opposition has doubts as to whether that Commissioner will be able to cope with the onerous duties imposed upon him, yet we must rely upon the Commissioner's ability. The difficulties pointed out by the member for Guildford would arise if there were three or four Commissioners; and I think it will minimise the evil by appointing only one Commissioner. We know that during past years the civil service has been seething with discontent; and from a discontented civil service we cannot expect beneficial results. There is another good item in this Bill which I think ought to receive consideration from this House. Above all and beyond all we have an appeal board, so that in the event of the Commissioner who may be appointed (who, I believe, will be like the rest of us simply human) making a mistake in his appointments and recommendations for salaries and in his decisions on the grievances that may come before him, civil servants may appeal if they still consider that they are aggrieved. Although I welcome the Bill as an honest effort to ameliorate the condition of the civil servant, to treat him with that respect which he deserves and to recognise that he is one of the principal items,

as it were, in conducting the affairs of the State, there may be in Committee room for a certain amount of improvement. I notice that one of the divisions of the Bill refers to the Educational Department, and I am very much afraid there is a tendency to reduce the small privileges enjoyed by that portion of the civil service. The member for North Fremantle interjects "rights." That may be the right word, but in civil service parlance and departmental parlance the word "privilege" is used. Small as the privileges are I am afraid there may be a tendency to reduce them, and in Committee I would like to see us safeguard these small privileges. I think the most important division that is dealt with by the Bill is the educational division. Those to whom we entrust the education of our young and upon the manner in which the young of our State are educated, depends in a great measure the future of this country. [Interjection.] I have not had that misfortune yet. Evidently the member for Hannans is married; he looks like a married man. We cannot overlook the fact, and I defy contradiction of the statement, that the most important part of the Bill is the educational division. I hope whatever rights and privileges the officers of that department enjoy to-day they will not, when the Bill becomes law, be any worse off. Perhaps I am somewhat digressing from a second-reading speech when I say that so far as educating our young is concerned, the men and women who impart the education ought to receive more privileges and rights than they receive to-day; and although I recognise the system of education in Western Australia is a good one, and I believe compares favourably with any State in the Commonwealth, still we may go farther and try to insist on something that would protect our youth in their dangerous years—between the time they leave school and when they reach the age of, say, 17 or 18 years. If we could, we should insist that, whatever their employment may be, they should attend the various technical classes and improve in the sphere of life they intend to follow: then there may be better results. But I contend that as this Bill takes in the protection and administration of the educational division, we should be very careful to see that we

give the teachers the best facilities we can. I do not think I have much farther to add to the remarks already fallen from the leader of the Opposition. Although he made the statement that he was not criticising the Bill in any captious spirit, still he went somewhat out of his way to say that he considered the Bill would not meet all the requirements of the civil service. I presume that this Bill is simply the product of human minds, and we are all liable to err.

MR. HOPKINS: It looks like it.

MR. NEEDHAM: The member for Boulder has erred very often. He says "it looks like it." The Bill before the House is certainly an improvement. I leave the continuation of the debate to more able members than myself, but I wish to add my small mead of praise to the honest attempt on the part of the Government of the day to grapple with this big question. When in Committee on the Bill, the Government who have introduced it with a laudable attempt to ameliorate the conditions of the public service, will not object to slight amendments to make the Bill more perfect than it is at present. I shall certainly vote for the second reading.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder): I do not intend to detain the House long in the remarks I have to make, except to express the hope that the wish of the member for Fremantle will be fully realised, and that the Bill will ultimately be dealt with by abler hands. The hon. member, in the course of his remarks, expressed the opinion that promotion in the civil service of the State has always been by political influence and political patronage, that Sir John Forrest initiated and practised that system, and that the James Government tried to cope with it. I have no desire to laud Sir John Forrest on this occasion, or to defend him. Either course is quite unnecessary. At the same time I wish to say, and I believe I may say with perfect confidence, that as a rule in Australian Parliaments we have few members of a Ministry who have gone into the question of the public service so carefully and with the desire to do them justice to the same extent as was done by the James Government.

MR. MORAN: Yet that Government failed.

MR. HOPKINS: It all depends from what standpoint we view the question. Take the disappointed man—take, for example, such a man as I found in my department who during three years had been doing nothing but moving plans in and out the drawers, and because he did not get an increase in his salary he thought he was badly done by. Ultimately he was retired. That is an instance of viewing the matter from the standpoint of the useless man or the disappointed man, or from the standpoint of the man looking forward to a larger salary than he receives.

MR. MORAN: View it from the standpoint of the large meeting which took place the other day.

MR. HOPKINS: I will come to that directly. If we view the question from an economic standpoint or the standpoint of the interests of the State, I think it will then be conceded, not by any general statement, but by the person who has gone fully into the Estimates of the Government, that there was an honest desire and earnest effort made to concede to the civil servant, in every instance, those rights to which he was entitled. In dealing with this Bill I suppose, seeing that this is the thirteenth effort on the part of the Government they have produced a fully-matured Bill. This is not a Bill to farther amend, and in this regard I may be pardoned for offering the Government my congratulations. As to the merits of the measure—and I am taking an independent stand, uninfluenced by the Government side of the House or those sitting on the Opposition side—in my opinion, speaking from the standpoint of the casual observer outside the arena of politics or the civil service, there are more matters for discussion than congratulation. The members of the House have only recently gone through the ordeal of an election, and during that time they must have been educated as to what salaries are enjoyed by people in other walks of life. That will enable them, in dealing with the question of civil service, to look at it from some standpoint other than that which is solely in the interests of the service or any particular Government. In the service of the country—speaking with a small amount of experience—I do not hesitate to say that there are some

splendid men, excellent men with excellent business aptitude; and as a natural corollary we have a percentage of drones, we have a percentage of men who under these circumstances must of course be not exactly of as high a standard as the others. There is a certain percentage of men in the civil service of the State whose departure, if it took place to-day or to-morrow, would not be a serious loss to the service or the State. I am not influenced at all by any party considerations. I do not approve and never did approve of the civil service being brought into the arena of party politics; and if in the course of my remarks I take strong exception to some of the provisions of the Bill, it must be borne in mind that there is a section of the community, more particularly the agriculturist, the miner, the artisan, and the tradesman, who have already many heavy burdens to bear, and for that reason we may well pause before we enter on another extravagant way of placating any person, whether in the service or in any section of the community. If in the framing of this measure the Premier has been generous, I think I am safe in saying he has conceded to the service every point that the most avaricious officer ever sought for; and if he has been generous in making these concessions, I suppose it is what we, in a measure, must expect from one whose early training was so confined to the elements or confines of red-tape and official routine. No doubt, remembering things that were, there was a generous spirit in the mind of the Premier when he conceded all the points the civil service asked.

THE PREMIER: What are the points?

MR. HOPKINS: I will come to those later on. In the Eastern States we have had ample evidence, as also we have in this State, that whilst every section of our internal administration can with perfect safety be left with the Ministers of the period, there is apparently no satisfaction in a civil service if not controlled by an independent board. No doubt that lies at the root of the Bill providing for the establishment of what, to my mind, must be a purely independent and judicial commissioner. The civil service will be more contented if a Commissioner is appointed. The question arises whether it is to be one commis-

sioner, a board of commissioners, or a commissioner acting as a board of advice to the Government—an advisory commissioner to the Government—or a commissioner who, under the Bill, is I think not a commissioner at all.

MR. MORAN : He is a board of advice.

MR. HOPKINS : He seems to be everything, yet nothing. I think it would be preferable to have a Commissioner entirely removed from the influence of either the service or the State. We should have as far as possible a commercial commissioner, if I may use that phrase.

MR. MORAN : His position is secure : there is no reason why he should be influenced.

MR. HOPKINS : I would make the under secretaries of the department a board of advice to the Commissioner, who could bring the under secretaries in as representing the civil service on the one hand whenever the opportunity served him, and no doubt he will do so. The first duties which are going to devolve upon the Commissioner are to classify and regrade, and to remove anomalies, and I have no doubt he will be expected to consider the claims of every civil servant in the State.

MR. MORAN : He will have a tremendous task for the first twelve months.

MR. HOPKINS : Whilst I desire he shall concede to the civil servant every right, every privilege, every increase of salary he is entitled to, I hope he will bear in mind that the rights of the State are just as liable to invasion as are the rights of any civil servant. Members will have seen upon the Notice Paper that I gave notice of an amendment to increase the salary of the Commissioner from £850 to £1,200 per annum, and my object in doing that was to, as far as possible, put him on a par with the puisne Judges of our Supreme Court, at least the junior puisne Judge. I believe that if the salary were so increased it would make his position stronger and he would be more independent, and I am rather inclined to believe that under those circumstances better results may be expected to accrue. The next essential would be that he should be as far removed from political influence as are those Judges in the Supreme Court of the State. Those are reasons which I think justify me in

asking that the Commissioner should, as far as possible, be removed from the influence of either the service or of the members of this House, in order that his better judgment should not run the risk of, shall I say, being warped like that of the Premier who so generously framed this Bill. I think that the burdens which it is proposed to place on the taxpayers of this country in order to placate the civil service are matters for consideration. We cannot appoint a Commissioner at the outset without contemplating almost the establishment of a new department. He will have his shorthand writers, his typists, his clerks, a suite of offices and office upkeep. All these things, with travelling expenses, printing, and all the subsidiary expenses, will not, I suppose, amount to anything under £5,000 per annum.

MR. NEEDHAM : You are exaggerating.

MR. HOPKINS : I believe that when the figures are brought down—it may not be this year but next or the year after—it will be found that if the Commissioner is paid a proper salary and the necessary convenience is provided, the expenditure will not be much under what I estimate—probably £5,000. If it is done at £3,000 it will be remarkably cheap.

MR. NEEDHAM : You are giving a big margin.

MR. HOPKINS : I believe the figures will run to somewhere about £3,000 or £5,000 a year. But after appointing this independent Commissioner, I think the Bill provides in the appeal board for one of the sorriest farces a person could contemplate. If we appoint a Commissioner, he is to stand as a judicial arbiter between the civil service on the one hand and the State on the other. When we have a court of appeal sitting in connection with our courts of law, both parties to the dispute have the right of appealing to that court. I think that is so, but with the board of appeal established in this Bill there will be only one party that will appeal. And may I ask, what instances can any member cite where the State has appealed against the concessions given by the Commissioner to civil servants in any of the other States of Australia? Is it a reasonable thing to say that the country is going to all this expense to provide an independent and judicial mind to stand between the two

parties to the contract, and that when he has given an independent and judicial opinion, when he has given due weight to the questions placed before him, and has determined that a department is considerably overmanned—for example, the Public Works Department is overmanned and the Lands Department undermanned.

MR. RASON: Put it the other way.

MR. HOPKINS: Put it the other way about as the hon. member suggests. After discussing the matter the Commissioner may say, "I must take 15 or 20 men out of this office and put them where they are needed;" but before he can do it, although we have spent all the money for the purpose of this measure, he not only has to sit down and wait, but he has to give notice in the *Gazette* that that he is going to regrade some in the Lands Department and transfer some from another department, and when he has given notice in the *Gazette* the messenger, the office boy, and a few other clerks at £100 a year give notice of appeal. If the State had some person to watch and to give notice of appeal, if desired, I would not mind; but there is no one to appeal on behalf of the State. The Commissioner is a judicial man between the two parties to the contract. Then why appeal from his decision? If it is right for the civil servant to appeal, it should be equally right for the other party to appeal. So we come to this position, that, after the judicial mind has determined that certain action is desirable, instead of sailing in and doing it as the country would expect, he gives notice; and forsooth the appeals are cited and a new Arbitration Court is established, advocates are introduced one on either side, and we may bet our bottom dollar that the State will get the worst of the deal.

MR. NEEDHAM: You are jumping at conclusions, as usual.

MR. HOPKINS: I am not. I am strongly convinced that having provided an independent mind between the two parties to the contract, that should be sufficient for the civil servant. But the Bill goes farther. Instead of the remedies the Commissioner deems desirable being immediately applied and the State obtaining something for the expense incurred, a court of appeal comes into

existence. The taxpayer struggles on and pays the expense of the whole machinery; he pays for the appeal court to sit, and I suppose he will pay for anything—it does not matter how many supernumeraries there are to carry on the ordinary work of the department whilst the rest of the civil servants are playing ducks and drakes with the recommendation of the Commissioner. It seems to me that such a course is possible, and for that reason I feel perfectly justified in drawing attention to it. There is another phase of this Bill to which I wish to direct attention.

MR. MORAN: The appeal board existing in regard to the Railway Department has not borne out in its working that forecast of yours.

MR. HOPKINS: I am not dealing with the appeal board of the Railway Department, but I would not hesitate to say the same in relation to the appeal board of that department as of this; and remember, in this case the Commissioner is not in the same position as the Commissioner of Railways, because on the Commissioner of Railways we throw the responsibility of those railways paying, but in this case we do not throw that responsibility upon the civil service Commissioner. Practically what is expected from him is an honourable and fair adjustment of the differences which are said to exist, and which to my mind are in many instances imaginary. I know that since I have been a member of the House the questions concerning the civil service to which the most prominence has been given have originated from men whom I would not rank as amongst the first-class officers of the civil service. [Interjection.] Of course it is alleged that there is a degree of disorganisation; and of course it has been alleged in all the States of Australia until a board of Commissioners was appointed. I will concede to the Commissioner willingly a salary in keeping with his position, and would make that position as far above suspicion as practicable; but I do object to say to these people afterwards, "There is your Commissioner, and he has nothing to do but to make recommendations, but you may win, tie, or wrangle."

THE PREMIER: It is possible for him to make mistakes.

MR. HOPKINS: To my mind it would be quite possible for the appeal board to make mistakes; because he would be helped in the first instance by the under secretaries sitting as a board of advice, if he needed them. Seniority as a reason for advancement or promotion in the civil service is one of the disadvantages embodied in this Bill. Speaking of the experience I have had—I do not want to boast of great experience, because in the civil service, as members know, it is limited—I know how difficult it is when a vacancy has to be filled. Take a division where there is a good man at the head of it. He has probably slaved hard early and late and wants someone promoted, but there is some person higher in the service who says, "I cannot recommend this person you have nominated for the position; there is so-and-so who has been in the service for the last 20 years, and so-and-so who has been in the service for 15 years, whereas the man you recommend has only been in the service five or six years." Whatever period of service a man may have to his credit, I would not be influenced a snap of the finger by it. Promotion should be by merit and efficiency.

MR. MORAN: That is the great danger, patronage and preference.

MR. HOPKINS: When the question of seniority is allowed to come into the determination of the Commissioner, the result will not, I feel confident, be satisfactory. I do not care for precedence, either Federal or State, in dealing with that aspect of promotion in the civil service.

THE PREMIER: Seniority is only secondary.

MR. HOPKINS: It is only secondary, but it should be no privilege to a man to say, "I have worked for you for the last 20 years." I want the most competent man to be appointed to the position. Supposing the Commissioner were an exceptionally busy man, would we prevent him from asking the head of the division or under secretary to report to him very fully before he inquired in due course? Why should he not appoint a man most capable of filling the position whether the man has been in the service one year or 50? I think seniority is a consideration which should not enter into the matter. Is it a wise thing to appoint a

Commissioner at a big salary, to give him liberal travelling allowances, as I presume we shall, and then enable him to appoint other persons to act as boards of inquiry in the interior of Western Australia? I do not think it is. If the Commissioner is to give satisfaction, he has to know Western Australia, he has to know the service, and he has to know the work the men are engaged in, and to travel to the places to appreciate the conditions under which the work is performed. If the Commissioner does these things, he will be perfectly capable of expressing a fair and independent opinion of the value of the work which is being performed by each officer. I do not think it is a proper thing for a person to ask for an increased salary because he has been in the service a certain period. I do not think it is a qualification for an increase of salary that he is doing certain work and might be doing something else. The Commissioner should be guided by the value of the work, and should understand the local conditions prevailing.

MR. NEEDHAM: Could the Commissioner do all that?

MR. HOPKINS: I do not see any reason to prevent him. I do not hesitate to say he could. Another principle involved in the Bill is that promotion may be declined. If the Premier were controlling a large business in St. George's Terrace or in Hay Street, and were opening a branch at Cue, Day Dawn, or on the Eastern Goldfields, he would choose the man to be entrusted with the responsibility of opening the branch, and would see that the man opened it; but in this Bill we say that it is our privilege only to pay the servant, that if the servant declines to accept promotion he need not accept it, and that if he will not accept it we have to get a man less capable having regard to merit or (if there is no merit) to seniority. If we decide to allow a man to decline promotion, we are taking away our prerogative to say how and where a servant shall be employed.

MR. HENSHAW: There are two parties to any contract.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, and the Commissioner is to be the umpire. If I thought a Commissioner could not be secured to give a fair deal to everyone in the service, I would support the provision

for an appeal board; but otherwise I cannot support an appeal board in which one party to the contract has no right of appealing. If the State would appeal against a decision it would be well; but we provide that only the other party to the contract has the right of appeal, and I object to that. The member for West Perth has drawn my attention to a public meeting held in St. George's Hall. This meeting afforded me considerable food for reflection at the time, and thinking over it since, I am still of the same opinion. It seemed to me at the time anomalous to find that the civil service on that occasion should have elected as chairman—the man who was, as it were, to elaborate to the country all the ills to which the service was heir—a man who owes the occupancy of his post to-day to neither merit, efficiency, nor seniority. I do not hesitate to say this regarding that chairman.

MR. NEEDHAM: He was not the meeting.

MR. MORAN: They were free subjects to elect whom they liked as chairman.

MR. HOPKINS: Quite so; and I think the person elected as chairman is a perpetual monument to the memory of those people who put him in the position of acquiring the post he occupies to-day. Such anomalies will exist under this Bill, as they exist to-day. The method of entrance of civil servants in the past has in some cases not been what we may have desired, and with a bad start there has been entailed for all time the disadvantages that must accrue to a start of that description. I felt, in reading an account of that meeting held in St. George's Hall, that the service when they chose their chairman had, as it were, indorsed their own humiliation; and I passed the matter by with no farther comments, and I have no desire to deal farther with it now. I just wish to say in conclusion that I am not dealing with this question from the side of the House on which I sit, but I do think there are questions embodied in this Bill that call for very serious and earnest consideration; and whether the views I have expressed will take a business form or be adopted when we go into Committee, is something that lies in the future. I strongly oppose the appeal board system, because I believe it will work hardship

and disadvantage to the State, giving in return no accruing advantages to the State as the other party to the contract. It will be a burden on the country; and if, for example, this Commissioner so highly paid is unable to reorganise and improve departments if they require it, until such time as he has issued a *Gazette* notice and the appeal board sits and deals with these cases, it seems to me that the independent recommendations of our judicial or commercial Commissioner will become so much waste paper before there is any chance of their being brought into practical use. Whether my views meet with the approbation of members on either side of this House or not, I think that they are entitled to some farther consideration. Of course, it is a simple matter to introduce a Bill on the lines of other Bills that have been introduced; but I do not think that after all it is a precedent. It may be a bad one. There is no evidence to prove that it is a good one, except that the services in other States are satisfied. It remains to be seen whether a Commissioner armed with the powers I would give him will satisfy the service; and if he does, it will save the country a considerable amount of money, trouble, and time. If we can reorganise the service of the State in this way, we can rest assured that the Commissioner will get to work and these disabilities will be removed.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): It is well that this House has a vigorous member who can put before it the other view on this great question. We can take the hon. member as a representative of those full-blooded gentlemen who view with dislike the trammels of office preventing a Minister dealing with his servants as he may choose. That is the view which puts the commercial aspect before the House. The hon. member says that a commercial man conducting a business would first and foremost make up his mind as to what he wanted, pay for it, and see that his servants did it. He would have no consideration for length of service, no consideration for anything except the man out of whom he could get the greatest value.

MR. F. F. WILSON: A sweater.

MR. HOPKINS: Would a judicial Commissioner tolerate it?

MR. MORAN: As to the hon. member being a sweater, I think he would be a generous master to work for, and I have known the member for Boulder for years. He represents that commercial aspect which, to a certain extent, typifies the American idea in Australia. He is the commercial pushing man, and would introduce the commercial aspect into the service of the State. I shall welcome his attention to this Bill, and will listen to whatever suggestions he makes when the Bill is in Committee. I have had longer experience of the disabilities of public servants as a public man than the hon. gentleman. It has been my lot to enjoy the confidence of a great many civil servants in the past who have had or imagined they had grievances; and I have ever held it to be a duty to give an attentive ear to the stories of civil servants who honestly imagined they had been badly done by. Consequently, this has brought on me a certain amount of work and trouble in years gone by among cases of civil servants who have not had justice done to them. Therefore, it may be that I imagine, from this long association with civil servants and from having been approached by many of them, that civil servants have more disabilities than they really have; but the great problem that civil Governments have had to overcome, not only in reference to the civil service, but in reference to the army and navy as well, has been to hold the balance between length of service and faithful service, and merit alone, on the other hand. That difficulty is a living one, and never can be overcome as long as government exists. There can be no possible chance of arriving at perfection in dealing with the civil service; and Australia has come to the conclusion that she has tried long and well the system of Ministerial promotion, the system of merit untrammelled and unhampered by any view saving the sweet will of the Minister or Cabinet. That system has been a failure; otherwise Australia would not have abandoned it. She is now about to take up the automatic process more largely than in the past. I am a believer in instituting that system at the present time. On the one hand we must naturally look for a system of Ministerial and political control to America. What do we find there? Are the people of America as a whole less

honest, less capable, or less fair than other branches of the Anglo-Saxon race? Probably not. Yet the system of civil service, tied up with political parties there, is one of the scandals of the world to-day. There is one example of Ministerial predilection, Ministerial patronage and Ministerial favour, typified in America.

MR. BATH: Ministerial party patronage.

MR. MORAN: It is party patronage. We know that Ministerial patronage in Australia may be called the same thing, though not practically to the same extent. In America the system is not automatic. Ins and outs are not played in the civil service generally when parties change in America. We must not overstate the case. In America the permanent head is changed more than the rank and file. When we hear that the whole service is changed in America on a party change, it is overstating the case; but there is a system of political patronage. The different parties in America have a greater belief in certain public servants than in others. That is the whole thing. Ministerial predilection in Australia is typified in the member for Boulder. He would have no trammels to his judgment. The Minister for the time being is to be infallible. He may get there by party intrigue, by one of those political chances to which political life is subject in Australia. We know that the selection of Ministers is often automatic. The Ministry in power to-day in Western Australia is not altogether one of selection. Seniority has entered into the composition of the Ministry. That may not have been the design of the Premier, but five of the Ministers have been in Parliament for the last few years doing the work of the Labour party, and this seems to have been taken into consideration.

MR. F. F. WILSON: Merit and seniority combined.

MR. MORAN: I am glad the hon. member now recognises his position. The Minister gets into office casually and in the ordinary way of party politics, but he is to be the sole judge of the destinies, merits, and fate of a big department. Australia has decided to abandon this system; and I think wisely. I have no charges to level against Parliaments or Ministries. I simply say that the James Government, in dealing with the civil service, created wide-spread dissension.

That public meeting in St. George's Hall was a most remarkable event in the history of Western Australia; and I have a very wide knowledge of the civil service in this State, and a fairly tolerable knowledge of the civil service in other parts of Australia. Inasmuch as we have a great deal of the pick of the Eastern States in other walks of life here, make no mistake the civil service also of West Australia is superior to any other in Australia to-day. [MR. RASON: Hear, hear.] Our service is more modern, and we have a better class of men. Western Australia has been the Mecca for the time being where men had the best chance. When we see such a body of servants for the first time rising up almost unanimously and asking that an automatic system should be adopted more or less, and that they should be removed from Ministerial and political control, depend upon it there are very good reasons for that request. But I am convinced that we ought to have classification. I have been an advocate for classification in the civil service ever since the first session I was in Parliament. Sir John Forrest was always averse, while Premier, to introducing a hard and fast Civil Service Act. He was one of those who dearly loved patronage. There was no characteristic stronger in him than his grip of detail and his desire to keep power in his own hand. He was averse to leaving that Ministerial patronage to others. He was the embodiment of responsible government, and that he loved power there is no mistake. The civil service was never discontented under him: enemies and friends alike will affirm that this was so. No more generous employer ever existed in Australia than Sir John Forrest as Premier of this State, and so the civil service was never discontented under him; but when he saw that his term was drawing to a close in this State, he was not willing to leave the same power to those who were to come after him. Therefore he passed hurriedly a Civil Service Act in which he was not willing to leave to others the power which he himself had exercised as Premier of this State. For one reason or another he wished to place the civil service beyond the influence of his successors in office; and so he passed an Act which

conferred certain rights and privileges, and which was indorsed by Parliament. When Mr. George Leake came into office, he resented the trammels of the Civil Service Act which he had to administer. One of the planks in his political platform was civil service reform with economy of administration; though whether he would have achieved it if he had lived longer is not for me to say. I do not think there was any marked economy, certainly there was no marked success, in his dealing with the civil service during the short time he was in office. The James Government following him introduced an Act shortly after taking office, which took away practically all the privileges and some of the rights of civil servants, and included a section which, as Mr. Justice McMillan stated in dealing with a case in court, left to the civil servants an empty shell without substance; so the civil servants found themselves once more tossed about on the sea of political turmoil. The James Government made some extraordinary appointments. They did not scruple to use their judgment as Ministers; they made perhaps an honest endeavour. They had prejudices, the prejudices of men who had fought for office against a powerful opponent unsuccessfully for 11 years. They had prejudices, as we have heard to-night from the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), against certain members of the civil service who were highly placed. [MEMBER: Names?] I refer particularly to Mr. North. I ask that hon. member who wishes absolute freedom from restraint in dealing with civil servants, when he makes the same kind of attack on one in whom the service generally had every confidence, one of the most cultured and efficient men in the service of the State notwithstanding his little mannerisms—and who is free from them?—why are these attacks repeated? Of course Mr. North was the brother-in-law of Sir John Forrest, and so was made the object of venomous attacks by several prominent members now sitting on the Opposition side of the House; and I am sorry to see that the member for Boulder, by keeping up those unworthy attacks, gives room for doubt whether it is wise to leave the whole service to the tender mercies of a man who can express such

venom against one particular officer. I am confident that many of the results pointed out by the leader of the Opposition this afternoon are going to occur under this Bill. The service will not be content entirely, nor will any body of men be always content. There will be imagined grievances under this Bill; but once and for all it can never be said they were caused by political influence. As the Bill goes through, I hope to make the power of the Commissioner even stronger than is proposed in it. The Bill has been most favourably received by the civil service throughout West Australia; and is not that an augury for the future? Does it not point out that the civil service, no longer disunited but happily united in an association, has expressed satisfaction on the whole with the Bill? That can never be forgotten, if discontent with this measure be expressed in the future. It is an important factor, when you are legislating to deal with the civil servants, that this army is reconciled under a measure proposed by the Government. The civil servants have been consulted, and through their body I have been entrusted with one or two amendments to be moved when the Bill is in Committee; but taking the Bill as a whole, they say the Government have made an honest and comprehensive effort to place the service in a satisfactory position for many years. Some of the objections pointed out by the leader of the Opposition will remain; but if it is felt that the salaries are low, I think it will be unwise to place the civil servants of this State above the ordinary conditions of life. They ought not to be too well off. As civil servants, they have a certainty of employment, there is continuity of office, there is a regular monthly pay, there is a ladder ahead with various steps up which a civil servant may climb, and there is a certainty —

MR. RASON: Yes, a hundred a year at the top of the first division!

MR. MORAN: The hon. member may be mixing the fact that we have several classes. Those are details; but I do not think it is a bad thing for a young man of 16 years of age to be able to climb up to £100 a year, and I think it is good pay for the class of work.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Very few apprentices get that amount.

MR. MORAN: There is too great a tendency in Australia for persons to seek admission to the civil service. I am speaking to members of Parliament, and of course I need not attempt to prove a statement which must be so familiar in their experience. There is therefore a tendency on the part of many people to look on the service as very desirable. Forty pounds a year in starting is not bad pay in Western Australia; and in spite of political parties, in spite of the laws you can make, we will follow the general tendency of new countries, and that is the conditions of life will get easier, the relative value of money will get greater; that though wages will not go up in absolute amount in this State, yet in the main the cost of living will go down; therefore your £40 a year will by and by, with the magnificent development of this State, represent more rather than less to a young man starting his career in the service. If a youth of 16 can get £100 a year at the top of the first grade, it will work in this way, that there will be a steady progression in the service; and I am satisfied it is better to be a little under the mark in fixing the amount than over it. I am willing to discuss the desirability of amending details in Committee, but on the whole I am fairly satisfied with the Bill. There are some things, particularly the provisions relating to the Commissioner and the appeal board, that I take objection to. Our object should be to make this a thoroughly good Bill in a non-party sense. Touching the question of appeal, it may seem that every civil servant who is dealt with in a way that he does not think right will go to the appeal board. I remember some time ago fighting to get an appeal board for the railway men; and one of the present leaders of the Opposition was in favour of the appeal board movement. Still the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we do not hear now nor do we see that much of the time of the country is wasted by that army of railway servants appealing on petty details. This fact shows the very blessing of unionism; it shows also that the officers of that union will not allow petty grievances to be carried before the appeal board, that responsible men connected with the union will not degrade

their institution. It shows that; and there will be the same with the civil servants, there will be a *morale* which will be against wasters and worthless men taking up trivial matters for appeal. If a man feels he has done wrong, he will be wise in not appealing, but rather letting the waters of time pass over his grievance, and trying for another chance; but for a man who has been harshly dealt by, there is no reasonable expense I would not go to so that a man with a genuine grievance should have the fairest trial the country can give him. Though I believe your Commissioner, when appointed, will be of such quality that no occasion should arise for appeals against him on the ground of injustice, while I believe we can get an honourable man, still with all my belief in the impartiality of a Commissioner, and while I believe in paying him well, I have no objection to having the most independent and efficient appeal board constituted; feeling sure that it will not be cumbrous or costly, but will be the last stage for a civil servant to find that justice is done to him. In the Arbitration Court we have given justice to the outside wage-earner. As long as our Empire has existed, we have given justice to the ordinary man in civil and in criminal cases; and now it is proposed to extend the judicial system to our vast army of civil servants, by appointing an appeal board superior even to the general of the brigade. Having done that, I do not see what more we can do. I have said it is impossible to find the true balance between merit and seniority, and always will be; but I say if the Bill provided, as the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) wishes, that promotion should be by merit alone, I should never give it my support. That is exactly the old system. Who is to have the power of selection? If a man well and faithfully serves this State, and does his work efficiently for ten years, he is better entitled to promotion than the man who has done his work equally well for two years; because the work can only be done well, the duty can only be done well and satisfactorily, whether by a genius or by an ordinary man. In all walks of life, long and faithful service must be considered. We do not want a civil service of brilliant, meteoric careers, heaven-born geniuses, flashes in the pan:

we want character and stability in the civil service. The public come into contact with our civil servants at all points, and we all like to meet from time to time men who have a record of long and faithful service. We know how our affections cling to a man who has served us well in any particular district. We like to meet the old faces; we like to see men holding as long as they can positions which they have earned by merit and by faithful administration. We must not overlook seniority. That would never do. I hope seniority will at least stand fully on a level with merit. Having said this in connection with the Bill, the greatest service I can now perform for the civil servants is to do my best to see that this Bill is not tossed about between the two Houses because of differences as to detail, and that it does not meet the fate of the innocents by being slaughtered at the end of the session. We are told that "the mills of the gods grind slowly." We older hands know that the mills of Parliament grind very slowly too; and one never knows, when such a Bill is introduced in a late session like this, what will be its fate. All I hope is that members have already read this Bill through, and those interested in the service have read it; that we are prepared to express our views plainly and briefly in Committee, and to divide without delay on contentious points; feeling confident that since there is no bad blood in the matter, since nobody is trying to secure a point over anybody else, since the discussion is entirely free from any party significance, we can safely pass the Bill, knowing that we are still a deliberative Parliament, and that if some sections do not work as well as we expect, there is a future in which to amend them. I earnestly trust that we shall give the civil service of Western Australia this new system, which I shall maintain to be the best system until its defects are proved; that we shall have loyalty, faithful service, and happiness as far as possible in the service; although we cannot place our civil servants beyond the ordinary lot of mortals, since we do not propose to deprive the Government of power to raise or to decrease salaries in good or in bad times. Yet we cannot fail to remember that the civil servant is not so subject

to the ups and downs of industry as are other workers; and in dealing with his salary, the continuity of service, the regularity of payment, and the fact that he is to a certain extent removed from the disabilities of the axeman, the navy, and similar workers, must be taken into consideration. The ordinary worker has sometimes to go for months without work. In this Bill we shall be acting fairly by the service; and for the future, I hope members of Parliament will be free on the one side from being beset on all hands with requests for political patronage to secure appointments, and on the other, from being made the medium for bringing grievances to this House, when we have a competent tribunal to settle such grievances under the auspices of the Public Service Act.

MR. F. GILL (Balkatta): I desire to say a few words in support of the Bill. I feel pleased at its introduction, and with the member for Fremantle (Mr. Needham) I consider that the Ministry deserve praise for grappling with the subject. I for one have realised for years past that there have been great dissatisfaction and discontent in the service, owing to the lack of classification. Civil servants have held meetings, and have tried by other means to bring their grievances before the public with a view to having them remedied. So far very little good has resulted from their efforts. Various Ministries have come and gone, but the dissatisfaction has ever continued. I hope every member will do his best to make this a really good Bill, a Bill that will give satisfaction throughout the service. There is nothing to my mind more demoralising to the public service than uncertainty. When there is no classification and no means of knowing what the future has in prospect, there is bound to be much dissatisfaction, and we shall not get from the service the good results we might otherwise expect. Consequently, this Bill will meet a long-felt want, and will in my opinion tend to secure better results from the labours of Government employees. I was pleased to hear members' criticisms of the Bill. One thing struck me somewhat forcibly—the display by the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) of solicitude for the ill-paid officials in the service. I do not know what are now the salaries of

those junior officers; but I think they are not much higher than those proposed in the Bill. Moreover, seeing that the hon. member had in years past an opportunity when a Minister of improving the conditions of the service, I am somewhat surprised that he with his fellow Ministers did not rectify those wrongs of which he now complains. However, I suppose that is one of the things that no fellow can understand.

MR. RASON: I am quite content to be judged by the civil servants.

MR. GILL: That is all right. I do not claim that the Bill is perfect. I think a few clauses need slight amendments and improvements. On first reading the Bill I was struck with the clause providing for increases of salary to those juniors mentioned by the leader of the Opposition. I notice that the increases are optional with the Commissioner. Small as they are, it rests with the Commissioner to grant them. The word "may" appears in the clause; and I think it would be advisable in the interests of those concerned that "may" be struck out and "shall" inserted; because in my opinion, if a man on reaching the age prescribed is not worthy of the increase, he is better out of the service. And according to the clause, to grant the increase is optional with the Commissioner. He may grant an increase of £10 a year. I do not like that option; for I have had some experience of that kind of thing, and am therefore somewhat cautious. I realise that the success of this Bill largely depends on the person appointed Commissioner; and if we are successful in getting a man who knows his business and does not indulge in extraordinary freaks, we shall have nothing to complain of. But while such provisions remain in the Bill, there is always a fear of their being abused. My fears may not be realised; but personally, for fear of future complaint, I do not like to leave untouched those clauses dealing with increases. As to the appeal board, I notice that any person with a complaint as to appointment, regrading, or reduction in position, has to apply to the Minister for leave to appeal. That is a point on which the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) spoke pretty strongly. In my opinion, if a person is aggrieved by reduction in position, he

should have a right to go to the appeal board without consent of the Minister. If a person is reduced in grade and applies to the Minister for leave to appeal, naturally the Minister, being a busy man, has not time to go into the matter in all its details, and he as a natural consequence will ask the Commissioner what are the facts of the case, and will be largely guided by the Commissioner's reply. Consequently, the aggrieved servant is appealing to the Commissioner against the Commissioner's decision; and I fear this may mean that the person aggrieved, though his case may be just, will not have an opportunity of approaching the appeal board. If the Commissioner is a just and fair man, this will not occur. However, the fear is in my mind. To hon. members I may appear somewhat suspicious. Generally speaking I am not of a suspicious turn of mind. I like to give every person credit for honesty, at all events until my mind is disabused of the idea that he is honest. In this connection I have had some experience of a Commissioner; and I have cause to fear any man who is placed in the position of a Commissioner, and grave cause to fear the consequences of putting so much power in his hands. I say it is the duty of the House to make our intentions clear and unmistakeable in the Bill. I agree with the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) as to promotions. We have adopted in the Bill a principle which I do not think has been in force previously, of making seniority second to special fitness. As to this I agree there is room for difference of opinion. The proposal will be an experiment; and I hope it will be successful if adopted. However, I do not altogether agree with the proposal. I consider that seniority should be taken into consideration, and should be placed on a par with special fitness. Special ability is to be admired and desired in our public service; but, unfortunately, it is not always special ability which receives promotion.

MR. MORAN: That is where the danger comes in.

MR. GILL: That is the danger, and I could mention the names of officials with whom not ability but plausibility has scored every time. I believe we should not place special fitness superior to seniority. It leaves room for abuse. I

think seniority should be taken into consideration, and where a junior in the service has been placed above a senior, it should be necessary for the Commissioner to point out the reason why the junior received the promotion. The Commissioner may make an appointment, and no exception can be taken to it because he may say the officer had special fitness for the position; but if the senior officer objects, the Commissioner should give reason for the special promotion. There is another clause I am not altogether in favour of, that an officer may decline promotion. When an officer is offered promotion he should take it. Promotion may not be at the most desirable place under the sun. I have known cases in which an officer entitled by seniority or special ability has been offered promotion, but the situation has not been in the most favourable place, and he has declined the position. The consequence has been that some other officer has been forced to take the position against his will. Another reason for objecting to the proposal is that if the man most fitted for the position declines it, that may debar the next man from receiving the promotion. I do not think any officer, if selected by the Commissioner to take a position, should be allowed to decline it. It should be the duty of the officer to take the position and go where he is sent, unless he has some good reasonable excuse forthcoming why he should not take it. I believe in that principle, and I am afraid the clause giving officers the right to decline promotion will lead to a great deal of dissatisfaction. Supposing the Commissioner recommended an officer for certain promotion, and the Minister did not approve, that the Commissioner went on recommending and each officer declining, in the end the Commissioner would not recommend any more. It occurred to me something similar may happen in connection with this clause. Supposing an officer were asked to take take promotion and refused, and the Commissioner continued to offer, and officers to refuse; what would happen in the end? Perhaps some one with not a strong force behind him would have to take the position. That clause should be improved. Another feature of the Bill to which I should like to refer is that heads of departments may punish certain

officers. If we are going to establish an appeal board in connection with the public service, any aggrieved person should have the right of appeal to that board. According to the Bill, the head of a department may fine a person as much as £10, and the officer has no right of appeal.

MR. RASON: Yes, he has.

MR. GILL: Appeal to the Commissioner but not to the appeal board. I consider it is only fair and reasonable that no officer should be punished by the head of a department unless he has the right of appeal to the appeal board. These are two or three of the clauses in the Bill that occur to me as requiring some little alteration. There may be others, and no doubt there are, that appeal to other members, but in regard to the various clauses of the Bill, I hope we shall work in harmony with the desired object of making this the best Bill possible. In connection with the appeal board, I wish to say a few words. Having had some little experience of an appeal board, I claim I can speak with some authority. The member for Boulder stated that the Ministry had conceded everything that had been asked for by the civil servants. I do not know if that is correct or not; but if the Ministry have conceded all that has been asked, then the public servants are an exceedingly mild lot of men, because the appeal board as provided by the Bill would not suit me if I were in the public service. I do not wish to complain of the constitution of the appeal board, because from the reports that have appeared in the newspapers the public servants are satisfied with the constitution of that board. The present arrangement seems to be appealing from Cæsar to Cæsar. My fears are that this Bill will not be all that the public servants desire. I agree with the member for Guildford who stated that he thought a certain amount of disappointment will exist in the public service when it is found how the Bill works. I agree with the hon. member, as far as the appeal board is concerned, that the Bill is not as satisfactory as is desired. The public servants seem to be satisfied with the constitution of the appeal board, therefore I do not wish to criticise it, but at a later date I shall not be sur-

prised if we are asked to amend the Bill in some directions. With reference to the remarks of the member for Boulder as to the appeal board, I was somewhat surprised that he opposed it in such strong terms. I may mention in that connection I do not see that he has any grounds for the fears he expressed as to the board. As members are aware, there is at present an appeal board in connection with the railway service, and as was pointed out by the member for West Perth, we have no trouble in connection with that matter. There has been no great rush of dissatisfied or discontented railway employees to the appeal board; no great expense or delays have occurred to the business of the country; but the railway servants have had an appeal board which has settled the few cases—not many—which have been brought before the board up to the present time, and I am safe in saying that only from three to five cases per month have been brought before the board, showing that the railway employees have not abused the appeal board. We are therefore justified in assuming that equally good results will accrue to the public servants of the State should they have an appeal board appointed. I would like to point out the great advantages of an appeal board. Seeing that such an institution has been so successful in one branch of the service, we are justified in assuming that it will be equally successful in another branch. Throughout the railway service the appeal board has given great satisfaction. Previous to the establishment of an appeal board there were great delays. I was going to say it was almost an impossibility to reach finality in many of the disputes that arose. However, since the establishment of the appeal board that is a thing of the past, and although there are grievances at present which may be of a most serious character, they are settled in a month, and finality is reached and everyone is contented and perfectly willing to abide by the decision of the board.

MR. RASON: That is quite refreshing.

MR. GILL: I say that of the railway appeal board, and in support of an appeal board for the public service. If we have an appeal board for the public service it will do a great amount of good and bring about satisfactory results. Mem-

bers will find, should they support this proposal, that it will be a great advantage to the country, as it will place our public service on a satisfactory basis and place officers in such a position that if they have any wrongs to redress there will be satisfaction throughout the service. I wish to express my sorrow that one other branch of the service has not been included in the Bill. I allude to the salaried officers of the Railway Department.

MR. MORAN: I have an amendment in regard to them.

MR. GILL: It would be conferring a great benefit on a very deserving class of public servants who, up to the present, have been unable to get satisfaction from the present Commissioner. I will not detain the House longer, but express my pleasure that the Bill has been brought forward, and I hope the House will deal liberally with the public servants. I am not one of those who believe in sweating either in the public service or in any other service, but in treating officers generously. Then we have a just right to claim their best attention and best efforts, and by treating them generously we shall get good results.

MR. W. NELSON (Hannans): I need not assure members, being a peace-loving individual, that it has given me very great pleasure to find that on all sides of the House there seems to be, on this subject, considerable unanimity. I find even the leader of the Opposition, who never forgets that it is his primary duty to oppose, opposed this measure in so feeble and even so generous a manner that one may almost take his opposition as a kind of support.

MR. RASON: I thought it was.

MR. W. NELSON: I believe it was. The hon. member had to try to the best of his ability, under exceedingly difficult circumstances, to live up to his position and criticise as far as criticism was permissible. It seems quite evident that the measure is being viewed in an entirely non-party spirit, and I think, with the exception of the member for Boulder, from whom generous criticism as a rule is not anticipated, with the exception of that member this measure has been received by the House in a manner that indicated that members believe it is, on the part of the Government, an honest

and capable attempt to deal with a highly difficult and delicate subject. I quite recognise there is something even to be said for the extreme position taken by the member for Boulder. Personally, I think we should never forget that the public service exists for the State and not the State for the public service. But whilst I recognise that, we should also bear in mind that even in the interests of the State it is a good thing to so treat our public servants that we may attract and retain the services of really good and capable men; in other words, that we best serve our own interests when we consider fairly and justly the legitimate claims of those who give us their services. The fact that we are civil servants ourselves, and that some of us anticipate better treatment from the State than we have received up to the present, may have influenced some of us to consider in a specially generous spirit the claims of those considered under this Bill. I should like to say I consider one of the merits of this measure is that it does recognise two very fundamental principles. I believe it would be an unqualified calamity if all the appointments of the civil service were completely under political control. I believe it would be almost as great a calamity if we permitted the control of that service to be entirely dis severed from the executive power of this country. The Bill, as far as I can understand it—and I can assure members at any rate that I have read it—contrives, I think, to combine those two principles. It contrives in the first place to see to it that the executive power of this country shall have some ultimate control over its civil service; and it also contrives at the same time to prevent that civil service from being completely under the influence of politicians who may be granting favours in order to get some greater favours in return. The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), who according to his own showing was never a Sydney Domain orator, seems, from the fact that he has been accustomed to listen to those orators, to have got into the habit of using occasionally the same kind of language and adopting the same sort of methods. The hon. member objected to the court of appeal on the ground that while the individual aggrieved could appeal to that tribunal, the

State as a rule could not or would not do so. In fact, he seemed to be influenced by the consideration of great care for the State. I want to remind the House that in matters of this kind it is much easier to hurt an individual than it is to hurt the State. For example, supposing a fine of only £10 is inflicted on a civil servant, that fine may be a considerable punishment to him, while the loss of that amount if the fine were not inflicted would be only an infinitesimal loss to the State. What I mean is that the State is everything and it is nothing. You can hurt the individual by inflicting a very small fine, whereas neglect to inflict that fine does not hurt anybody specially. In order that I may convey the idea I wish to, I may mention I remember that on one occasion in the old radical days in England—

MR. MORAN: What, the old radical days!

MR. NELSON: In the old radical days in England, 16 or 17 years ago, I remember entering a very vigorous protest, with other radicals in the town of Sheffield, against the action of the municipal council in spending about £300 or £400 illegally in connection with the visit of Prince Albert Victor to that town. The money was illegally spent, and I remember that the editor of the local paper, Sir Christopher Leng, pointed out that after all I had not very much reason to complain, because although the money in the aggregate amounted to £200 or £300, and although it was illegally spent, yet I as an individual ratepayer had only lost about a farthing, and under the circumstances I had no right to complain.

MR. FOULKES: Were you complaining of the municipality spending money to receive Prince Albert Victor? Was that the cause of your complaint?

MR. NELSON: I beg your pardon?

MR. FOULKES: Were you complaining that the municipality of Sheffield was spending money upon the reception of Prince Albert Victor?

MR. MORAN: Confess.

MR. NELSON: I am glad to find the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) so anxious to get information, because the possession of knowledge is the beginning of wisdom; and in reply to his question I want to say that what I objected to

then, and what I have objected to, I hope, all through my life, is for any body to use its power for the time being to do anything which is not in accordance with the law.

MR. RASON: It is very interesting, but what connection has it with this Bill?

MR. NELSON: The leader of the Opposition is absolutely correct. If he could induce some gentlemen who are supposed to follow him not to make irrelevant interjections, possibly I might not make irrelevant replies.

MR. RASON: "Mark time."

MR. NELSON: What I desire to say is that while the State is not likely to resort to this appeal board, the individual has a right of appeal. I hold that it is a right and just thing that it should be so; but I hold farther that the member for Boulder should bear in mind that the appeal board consists of the Commissioner, who is a civil servant of the State and likely to look after the interests of the State, another representative of the State who is also I presume likely to look after the interests of the State, and the individuals appealing have also one representative. I hold, therefore, that if that board is likely to make a partial and unfair decision, such partiality and unfairness are more likely to be on the side of the State than on the side of the civil servant; and therefore that part of the hon. member's criticism literally falls to the ground, and is unworthy of serious consideration. I now come to deal particularly with the question of seniority, and I entirely endorse the views so finely and so eloquently expressed by my friend the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran). In fact he quite excelled himself on this subject. I listened to his speech with the greatest of pleasure; and I hold that while seniority should not count for everything it should certainly count for something. Supposing two men to be equally honest and equally capable, and that one man has served the State longer than the other, and one of the two is to be appointed to a superior position, seniority should count for something, and the man who has served for the longer period should have a greater claim than the other. I cannot understand how such a simple proposition should not commend itself even to the

intelligence of the member for Boulder. Just one word more and I will sit down. I entirely differ from my friend the member for Boulder in his opposition to the principle that an officer should have the right to decline promotion. I am not exactly sure what motive has induced the Government to incorporate this principle in the Bill, but I presume it was something like this. Supposing that a really capable man, but a man of somewhat delicate health, should be called upon to perform duties of a higher nature, for which he is in every way fitted except upon the grounds of health, it would be a cruel and an unkind thing to compel that man against his will to do the work which might ultimately lead to his loss of health and perhaps to the loss of life. I think as a general rule there will be no difficulty about men refusing promotion, when it is real promotion. The tendency will be not for men to decline these honours, but to seek them with a desire possibly not justified by the facts. If we have a capable man who on the ground of health, or even other considerations if reasonable, wishes to decline the promotion the Government desire to give him, it would be grossly unfair and ungenerous if that man were not allowed to decline that honour. For these reasons I think the objections to that principle are of a character that should not have weight with this House. I believe, as I said at the beginning, that the Bill is an exceedingly fair and capable attempt to deal with a very difficult problem. When the Bill goes into Committee I, like the member for West Perth, will suggest certain amendments. I think, for example, the Bill is not quite so generous to our teachers as it ought to be.

MR. MORAN: There is the danger of their losing their house accommodation.

MR. NELSON: I am not clear, when I read the Bill, as to the intention of the Government in this matter. It struck me at first the idea was, in order to know thoroughly what teachers are receiving, that the value of the house should be added to the salary, that consequently it was not intended to reduce the salaries of teachers possessing houses. Again, at the end of the exceedingly long service of 20 years they are going to get half the holiday that other members of the service get. I presume that this is very largely

consequent on the fact that teachers have a greater number of holidays year by year; but I would remind hon. members that, in the very nature of the thing, a teacher has to devote a great amount of time in passing examinations to enable him to go from grade to grade in the service. I would remind hon. members of another fact, that there is perhaps no profession where a person is less under his own command, and where his time is less his own, so to speak, than that of a teacher. A clerk, for example, if he is an assiduous individual can get through his work more rapidly. So may the teacher; but still a teacher, to be a good teacher, has to put his heart, soul, and life at the service of children, other units, other little souls over which he has to exercise control. I regret to say very few people are capable of being good teachers; and I think there is no branch of the service in this country which we should remunerate more handsomely, in order that we may attract to it men of the highest laurels and intellectual character. I think the Government recognise this; and I believe that, when all the facts are taken into consideration, the Government may see their way ultimately, in Committee, to accept an amendment which will enable a teacher, at the end of a lengthy period of service, to enjoy the same length of holiday as servants in other branches of the civil service. I say once more, in concluding, that I believe the Bill is an honest, capable, and courageous attempt to deal with this great question; and it gives me the greatest possible pleasure to find that on all sides of the House there is an eminent desire to give this measure a fair chance and, in the Committee stage, to make it even better than it is now.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): I feel rather loth to speak on this subject, because it is advantageous for the civil servants that this Bill should be carried as soon as possible; and I think there will be no attempt made to delay the passage of the second reading, because the sooner we get to the Committee stage the better, for it is at that stage where the more important discussion should take place. All members are, I think, agreed on the main principles of the Bill. It is a subject in which no question of party can exist. The last Government, as I know, gave proof and showed a

strong desire to remedy some of the defects and disadvantages under which the civil servants were suffering. We know that about three years ago the Government of the day appointed a Civil Service Commission. Unfortunately, that Commission proved most disappointing in regard to its result, owing, I think, to the feeling of members at the time that they could not have sufficient confidence in the recommendations which the Commission would be likely to give. Now at last we have a fresh Government who have taken the subject in hand; and I, for one, congratulate them in bringing forward this Bill at such an early stage of the session. I can testify, as representing a large number of civil servants, as to the patience they have shown during the last few years under a large amount of grievances. They have refrained from publicly agitating on the question; and in that respect they have set an example to many other classes of public servants. They also refrained to a great extent from bringing political pressure upon Parliament to remedy their grievances. It is quite true that a few months ago a public meeting was held at which they set forth their grievances; but there was no attempt to make any threats to Parliament; there was no idea of a strike being made by the civil service. All the meeting was called to do was to set out grievances so that members of Parliament would understand fully what were the requirements of the service. The main thing, I think, gathered regarding the civil service during the last few years is that there are three items of which they have complained more than anything else. Civil servants realised, for one thing, that their positions were practically insecure under the constant changes of Government we have had during the last few years. They felt there was no security of tenure. Each Minister who came into office had certain ideas which might be different from those of his predecessor; and changes in the service were continually being made, with the result that the civil servants felt their positions were insecure. Another factor complained of was that the plans of the civil servant for recognition as a reward for his services were subject to the will of the particular Minister. If a civil servant had the good

fortune to come into frequent contact with the Minister of his department, there was a better opportunity for the Minister to see his capabilities. If he had not that good fortune the servant felt, to some extent, that he was deprived of giving proof and evidence of his capabilities, and of the due reward for his labour. The civil servants have watched other departments of the public service, and have noticed how other servants in the service are treated. They have noticed that other departments had appeal boards, and that these appeal boards did their work so well that the members of the other branches of the service at all times seemed to receive justice at the hands of the members of the boards. Therefore, the civil servants have, for a long time, felt that a Commissioner of the service should be appointed to take charge of them, not only to see that justice was done to the State, but also to see that justice was done to them. One point that occurred to me in reading through this Bill was that the whole success of the Bill depends upon the officer appointed to act as Commissioner of the public service. It is very easy for us to sit here and discuss this particular Bill, and it is practically very easy for us to carry it; but the whole success of the Bill will depend upon the appointment and capability of this Commissioner. Personally, I do not envy the Government in the difficulty they will have in selecting the right person. They must realise it is a most difficult appointment to make. When the Civil Service Commission was appointed the Government had to send out of the State to get two out of three members; and they took them without any trial or experience. I feel that the present Government will have the same disadvantage in that respect; because, whoever is appointed to act as Commissioner of the public service, he will necessarily be a man who has had no opportunity of showing his capabilities in the office. Great Britain and the Federal Government of Australia are practically the only two Governments I know of who have Commissioners appointed to take charge of the public service; and therefore the Government, if they want to appoint somebody outside the State, will need to apply to the Federal Government or the British Government

to recommend them some individual who has had experience in the controlling of a public service.

At 6-27, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (continuing): I was pointing out the advantages given to the railway servants by the appointment of the appeal board, and the member for Balkatta referred to the great success of that board, and pointing out how few evils were brought before it. It must be borne in mind that the reason for the success of the appeal board is the fact that the Commissioner, ever since he was appointed to the post, has given proof of his strong desire to do justice to the railway officials. The member for Balkatta will agree with me that it is owing to this fact that the appeal board of the Railway Department has been so successful. There has been very little general feeling of dissatisfaction in the railway service since the appointment of Mr. George as Commissioner of Railways, and therefore to some extent it shows how much we shall have to depend for the success of this Bill on the personnel of the officer appointed to act as Commissioner of the public service. Provision is made in the Bill for an appeal board, and some exception is taken by the civil servants as to whether the Commissioner should be one of the three persons appointed to sit on the appeal board. It is difficult to come to a conclusion as to whether he should be entitled to a seat on the board. It depends on the man himself. If he is a thoroughly capable man and sympathetic towards the civil servants, and has a full knowledge of their duties, there will be no fear as to his ability to act impartially and fairly upon that board. If, unfortunately, he should turn out to be unfitted to act as Commissioner, he will not be a fit person to appoint on the appeal board. Under these circumstances it is very hard to say whether he should be allowed to act on that appeal board or not. It is to be borne in mind that the Bill provides that three persons shall act on the board. The civil servants have the right of appointing one member and the Government have the right to appoint

another. If we have these two members agreeing, two out of the three as prescribed by the Bill being a majority, they will decide whether an appeal is to be granted or not. Under that provision the civil servants will be protected to a certain extent. Unless some person is appointed on the appeal board who has a full knowledge of all the departments of the service it will be hard indeed for the board to give satisfaction. In the Railway Department all the members of the appeal board are officials connected with the Railway Department, and the result is that as they have a ripe and full experience of the necessities of the railway service it necessarily follows their decisions carry weight and in most cases give satisfaction; but with the civil service appeal board it will necessarily happen, I take it, that the member selected by the civil servants themselves—if we exclude the civil service Commissioner from the appeal board—will be the only person thoroughly conversant with the necessities of the service. I hope some regard will be paid, whoever is appointed under the Bill to act as Commissioner, to deal with the important question of appointments to the civil service. Up to a few years ago the appointments to the public service were made in a most haphazard fashion. Up to the year 1895 or 1896 they were limited to the few who lived in Perth and Fremantle and who happened to know the Ministers of the Government of the day. I remember very well when I occupied a seat in the Legislative Council, moving a motion in that House that all vacancies in the civil service should be gazetted so that any individual throughout the State should know when a vacancy arose in the service. I remember that although the Legislative Council approved of the motion and sent it to the Assembly, the Government of the day—Sir John Forrest was Premier—bitterly opposed the proposition, and it was thrown out, as the Government felt at that time that all appointments to the civil service should be exclusively held in the hands of the Ministers themselves. We all agree that, we want the best talent available for the service, and if due care be not taken in making these appointments, however good the provisions of the Bill may be,

we shall find we have appointments given to unsuitable servants, and great difficulty will be experienced in carrying on the administration of the Bill. At present one continually meets civil servants who are overburdened with work. The burden appears to be unevenly distributed. I know of several officers who work exceedingly long hours. I know many officers who work up to 10 o'clock at night, and especially is this the case in the Lands Department. We know that there are great arrears of work in that department, and the officers of that department are called on continually to work overtime to cope with the arrears of work. In connection with that I urge strongly on the Government that they should take the necessary steps to cope with the arrears in the Lands Department so that they may be wiped off as speedily as possible. The Commissioner of the public service will have full opportunity of judging of the requirements of that particular department, and I hope one of the first things he will attend to will be to see that the Lands Department is properly and efficiently manned. With regard to the service, one thing all members will try to bear in mind is that they should deal more liberally in relation to the salaries of our civil servants. Hitherto there has been too great a tendency in all our Governments to pay rather too low salaries. In a great measure that has been owing to the fact that up to 1894 or 1895 the majority of people in this State were not so well off as they are at present, and the State was not in a position to afford to pay high salaries. Paying low salaries to the public servants is really most expensive to the State, because we are not likely to induce intelligent and capable men to join the civil service unless they find they are properly remunerated. One sees the disadvantages of that when we compare the British civil service and the Indian civil service with others. We have only to look at the records to see what splendid salaries civil servants receive at home. It has always been a proverb that the British civil servant is the most highly paid civil servant in the world. [MEMBER: Some of them.] I am taking the great majority of them. The British Government have always recognised that fact, and when one considers the salaries

paid in foreign countries, the way in which the public service is carried on, and the great corruption which exists amongst many public servants in countries like Russia, Italy, and France, one can see how necessary and important it is that civil servants should be liberally remunerated. The officers of the Indian civil service have exceedingly high salaries, because the British Government and the Indian Government recognise that if they wish to draw talented and capable men to their service they must remunerate them accordingly. Here frequently, as soon as very many of our civil servants receive offers from the outside public of important appointments either in the business world or in other countries, they attempt to leave the service. Very many men in the civil service are continually on the look-out for more lucrative posts outside, because they feel that they are not sufficiently remunerated in the civil service of this State. Take the present salaries of leading officials in the various departments. Take those of the Under Secretaries. We find that Under Secretaries of various departments only receive a salary of £650 a year. This is really not an adequate salary for the important duties they have to carry out. It has to be borne in mind that these under secretariats are practically the prizes of the civil service, and unless the Government of the day are able to give better prizes and better remuneration to those holding the most important posts in the departments, we are not likely to long keep such men in the service. Another matter the civil servants have complained bitterly about is that of giving appointments to persons outside the civil service. Years ago it was a frequent practice to go outside the ranks of the civil service and give appointments elsewhere. I am glad to notice that during the last two or three years there has been a strong tendency and a desire by the various Governments we have had during that time to limit these appointments as much as possible to members of the civil service; and I hope that will continue. However good these provisions in this Bill may be, I should like to point out to the House that there is a very important clause in the measure, practically the last clause in it, Clause 88, which gives the power to the Crown to dispense with the ser-

vices of any civil servant. The clause reads:—

Nothing in this Act shall be construed or held to abrogate or restrict the right or powers of the Crown to dispense with the services of any person employed in the public service.

If that clause is passed, the result will be that it will wipe out to a considerable extent, if not altogether, the provisions in the rest of the Bill. I think that if the Bill be passed carrying out all the previous clauses contained in it, there will be no necessity for this clause remaining in the Bill. If that clause is passed it will give a feeling of insecurity to the members of the civil service, because they will not know from day to day what time some Minister who is not satisfied perhaps with a particular civil servant may dispense with his services; and I would suggest therefore to the Government that they dispense with that particular clause. However, the whole House is unanimous in its desire to see that at least full justice should be given to the members of the civil service, and I would strongly recommend the House to deal as liberally as possible. We have a civil service of which we have reason to be proud. It has been built up during the last seven or eight years, and in a great measure it has been built up from the ranks of our own people here. The vast majority of the civil servants are West Australians. Their interests are all in the State, and I think it is our duty to see that full justice is given to the members of the civil service.

MR. H. E. BOLTON (North Fremantle): I desire to give my small quota of admiration to the Government for introducing this Bill. I think on the whole it is a good Bill, but in saying that I do not mean to assert I shall support every clause in it, because I think there is one dark blot in the measure, which I shall refer to later on. The satisfactory part of this is that the measure has been long promised. I notice that most of the previous speakers have referred to this measure as a civil service Bill. The peculiarity is that the title is "Public Service Bill," and yet it is really a civil service Bill and not a public service Bill. I maintain that there are as many officers of equal status under the Commissioner of Railways as there are in the civil service. I know it will

be argued against me that it is not necessary to have two Commissioners. If, however, there are officers under the Commissioner of Railways of equal status, why should they not enjoy the same rights as officers in other departments? The provisions laid down in this Bill for officers in the civil service are not, I venture to say, too liberal, but they are far more liberal than those affecting officers under the Commissioner of Railways. However, one thing satisfactory to the civil service—and I venture to say that is the reason why the Bill has been generally accepted by that body—is that at last a Bill has been introduced. I believe that the fact of the Bill being introduced and debated in this House gives in itself satisfaction to that body. I think we have seen in the Press reports that the civil servants have generally accepted the Bill as a good measure; still I think the first ground of satisfaction was the knowledge that the measure was to be introduced. I agree with the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) who spoke about throwing out the dirty water and perhaps throwing the baby out with it, and said there would not be entire satisfaction when this Bill came into operation. I agree with him that there will not be entire satisfaction; neither does the civil service or the House suppose there will be. I remembered that, not very long ago—well, it is a long time since the affair was started, but it is not long since it was completed—there was some such case as this. The Government decided to classify the drivers, firemen, and cleaners in the service. They tried it once and it was a failure. They had another try, and that was quite as successful as the first. They had a third try. They decided to issue a classification that should be subject to amendment, and they arranged under this classification the form of an appeal board. To my mind the usefulness of the appeal board provided for in this Bill will be shown in classifying the civil servants. In regard to classifying the drivers, firemen, and cleaners the appeal board was constituted as follows: the head of the branch was one member of that board, a person elected by the society or union was another, and the chairman of the board was a magistrate. After the issue of the classification, any person

feeling aggrieved by his position in that classification appealed to this board. He was allowed to bring all the evidence he could get, at the department's expense even, and he laid his case before the board, who decided whether to uphold his appeal or to dismiss it. The peculiarity is that about 92 per cent. of the appeals which came before the board were upheld. I confess that the board was rather expensive, but the outcome of the board was an entirely satisfactory classification. I think this is a great recommendation to the Government. That clause should commend itself to members of the House instead of being opposed as it was by the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins). I believe that board could be used to bring evidence before the Commissioner. Possibly the Commissioner could not get the information to classify the service from the heads of the departments so much as he could by formulating a board of this kind, and allowing those dissatisfied with their position to go before the board and explain the matter, the board then deciding. It will be found that the first classification issued by the Commissioner will be entirely upset; but so long as the object of satisfying the service and obtaining a classification on which they can take their stand is achieved, I think the system will pay for all expense of getting satisfaction in the first place. My argument with regard to officers under the Commissioner of Railways coming under this system is strengthened by what was said by the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) about officers coming under the operation of the Bill who are working sometimes till 10 o'clock at night on account of extra work in their department. I am quite satisfied officers under the Commissioner of Railways would not have the injustice of having to work till ten o'clock every night but one in the week without being allowed overtime in any way, and having to work every Sunday in addition to working at night. If it is not possible to bring officers under the Commissioner of Railways under this Bill and to deal with the matter in an equitable way, let us bring the Commissioner under a similar Bill or under the regulations which govern the Commissioner who will be the sole manipulator of this Bill. The member

for Boulder referred to a matter which he is going to bring up in Committee, about increasing the salary. I am hardly in accord with him there. I think the salary proposed by the Government for the time being is sufficient. He quoted some figures which he thought the creation of this new department practically would run into. I do not know whether it was to give flavour to his argument, he said it would cost from £3,000 to £5,000 a year to maintain this department. I do not know whether the reason he would increase the salary of the Commissioner is to make his figures something like accurate. I am inclined to support the salary proposals of the Government. I notice that the Bill provides for six months' probation on entering the service; and if at the end of that time, instead of our dismissing a probationer who has not given satisfaction, his term of probation were extended for another six months, I think the provision would be excellent. It may be that at the end of the first six months he has not had a sufficient trial. There has been some discussion regarding seniority *versus* efficiency. I am a strong advocate for putting seniority on a par with efficiency—I do not say in advance of it, but I mean that of two persons equally efficient, the senior should have an undoubted right to promotion over the junior. There should not be a question of who has the right. The senior man should have it; and if he is not promoted to the vacancy, I contend that it will be the duty of even the Commissioner to give some reason for not promoting the senior. No doubt a gentleman holding the powers supposed to be given the Commissioner will not scruple to give a reason for such an action; so I do not think there will be any hardship in asking him for a reason. Members have discussed whether an officer should have a right to refuse promotion. I confess there are arguments on both sides. Not only public servants, but ordinary employees often find it hard indeed to have to break up their homes when sent away by their employers to far-distant places. The department terms such a removal "promotion," while to the man himself it is a decided reduction. There are cases in which the right to refuse this promotion should be given; although in

the same clause it is explained that the removal is not to interfere with the officer's future promotion, and as I read the clause is not to prevent his being promoted to the very next vacancy. If a man is given the right to refuse promotion, he surely will not object to losing the right to the next vacancy. Possibly he may have an inkling of the next vacancy but one, and may know that it would be far better for him to refuse the first vacancy in order to get the second. One who is thought much of by the head of the department may get an inkling of a farther promotion likely to occur; consequently he will refuse the first vacancy for the sake of the next, and an injustice will be done to the person selected for the first vacancy. Some arrangement should be made that if an officer is allowed to refuse promotion, he shall not be eligible for farther promotion for three months or for the next ensuing six months. In that case, should a vacancy occur, he will seriously consider whether it is not advisable for him to accept it when it is offered by the head of his department. I maintain that under the Bill the first 10 men entitled to a vacancy can refuse that vacancy, and it must then be given to No. 11. Just at this time, when the service is being classified, it naturally follows that it will be for some time in a state of flux. There must be a certain number of promotions; and if a man can learn of the probable occurrence of a vacancy which will suit him, he can continue to refuse all other vacancies till he receives that which he desires. The Commissioner as well as the civil servant should in this respect be given some protection. I do not think the Education Department are treated too liberally in the Bill. I feel safe in saying so, because most members who have spoken are of the same opinion. I hope the department will be treated more liberally than is proposed, for I recognise its importance. There is a proposal to discontinue the lodgings allowance. The argument against teachers receiving the same number of holidays as other civil servants is that teachers receive the school holidays; but it is objected that these are split into sundry sections during the year. The holidays are not given simply to the teachers, nor simply to the school. The teacher gets a holi-

day because the department closes the school. I do not agree with the Commissioner's sitting as chairman of the appeal board. The railway appeal board, with which I was connected, consisted of one nominee of the workers or the workers' union connected with the branch, a nominee of the head of the branch, and a magistrate as chairman. Though the practice now is for the Commissioner of Railways to act as chairman, I think that a bad practice. The aggrieved person may, under this Bill, ask the Minister for leave to appeal. That seems somewhat absurd, and I speak with some feeling on this, because, though the railway union to which I belong had the right under Act of Parliament to appeal against any punishment, members found that when they wanted to appeal they had to obtain leave from the Commissioner. First they were punished, and then had to ask for leave to appeal against the punishment; and in several instances the Commissioner refused leave to appeal when the Railways Act clearly set forth the grounds on which an appeal could be heard. One man asked permission to appeal to the board because he had been fined £1 for an offence. It may seem strange when I tell members that the Commissioner refused the right of appeal because, he said, the man had not been fined £1, but simply had 20s. deducted from his wages. Such things ought not to be; because the Minister might as well say that he did not see any ground for appeal, and that the appeal would therefore be a waste of time and money. An officer should not have to ask for leave to appeal—certainly not before the service is properly classified; for I think the appeal board will do more to classify the service than the Commissioner or any heads of departments can do. The member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) referred to automatic increases, and said that a junior could start at £40, get to the limit of his grade at £100, and then must do what the hon. member accuses the present Government of doing, mark time until somebody died; and unless somebody died or a vacancy otherwise occurred, the poor unfortunate man of 21 must remain in that position for years. It is peculiar that the hon. member himself was head of the Railway Department but a short time ago, when

the Commissioner, who we are led to suppose was under the hon. member's control, introduced the very same principle. It is not possible for an engine-driver of the lowest grade to get into the next grade until somebody dies. The objection was not raised then by the hon. member; and it is somewhat strange that he should raise it now unless he has a decidedly stronger sympathy for the civil servants than for railway servants. I can only tell the hon. member, who interjected some time ago that he was prepared to be judged by the civil servants, that if he had raised as strong an objection then as he raises now, he would be happy in being judged by the railway servants. An objection was taken to the substitution of the term Eight Hours Day for Proclamation Day. I do not see the ground for the member for Guildford's objection. I think the term Eight Hours Day was introduced because Proclamation Day fell on a certain date which made it necessary for the holiday to extend throughout the State. But it is possible to have one Eight Hours Day on the coast coincident with Proclamation Day, and an Eight Hours Day at a different date on the goldfields and in other parts of the State, still making it a public holiday. It has not been found convenient to have an Eight Hours Day on the same date throughout the country; whereas if Proclamation Day were gazetted a public holiday in place of Eight Hours Day, the result would be unfair to certain workers, as the hon. member ought to know as well as anybody. These public and gazetted holidays are to certain people the worst days in the year. Railway men more especially have to work twice as hard on the holiday; so it is far better to have the Eight Hours Day in lieu of Proclamation Day; and I believe that is the opinion of other members.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): As I shall have little opportunity of speaking in Committee on the important provisions of this Bill, I may be excused for offering a few observations on the second reading. After hearing members on both sides of the House urging the necessity for viewing this measure from a non-party standpoint, one receives the impression that all other measures are viewed from a party standpoint; that instead of each measure

being discussed on its merits, "all are for a party and none are for the State." However, I am glad that on this one measure at least we are a happy and united family; and I believe, if discussion in the Committee stage is carried on in that spirit, we shall have at least a workable measure regulating the public service. I do not think, however, that in discussing this measure any danger will arise owing to party spirit in the House, but rather that it will arise from hon. members taking a prejudiced view of the subject. Personally, I must candidly confess that having spent the greater portion of my time in mining districts, where civil servants form but a small proportion of the people, I had become imbued with the views which generally rule in large industrial and mining centres where the bulk of the population, being wage-earners accustomed to fluctuating wages and uncertain employment, view the public service as a sort of heaven in which supercilious individuals move, and practically rob the ratepayers and feed fat upon the taxpayers of the State without giving an adequate return therefor. I think that is an entirely unjust view; but still we must make confession, and I think hon. members must make a similar confession that they have viewed the matter in much the same spirit. On the other hand, we have members representing constituencies which contain a large proportion of civil servants, and they are apt to regard the matter from the civil servants' standpoint and to view the provisions of the Bill from that standpoint alone. I recognise it is all very well for members one after another to get up and say that in this measure we should consider the interest of the State as a whole; but I confess that with these prejudices in our minds our judgments are vitiated, and the result may be possibly that we may not frame a measure in the way we desire. As far as measures regulating the public service are concerned, and as far as the experience of other States which have attempted to regulate the public service is concerned, those States have generally approached the matter with fear and trembling. I think I am only doing justice to the previous Administration when I say that I do not think it was from any lack of desire to adjust the civil

service that they were reluctant to face the situation. It was rather fear that in any attempt to grapple with the problem they would only be involving themselves in confusion worse confounded. While the Government of the day have come in for a good deal of eulogy from members on either side of the House for introducing this measure, the practical experience of the measure, if it be passed into law, may lead them to view the matter six months hence with a chastened spirit and a certain amount of humility. We have heard from members who have spoken a dissertation on the evils of political patronage in regard to appointments in the civil service; and while we must undoubtedly admit that these evils have existed and have resulted from political patronage in the appointments to the service, it does not justify members logically in arguing that therefore we must go the other extreme and appoint a Commissioner who will practically be an autocrat and responsible to no one. I believe, if the proposal were carried into practical effect, we should have the same evils; nay, we should have them greatly increased or heightened if the proposal for an autocratic Commissioner were carried into effect; because while he might be appointed for a certain extended time, say for five or ten years, and while he might be given unlimited control of the service, we could not prevent disaffection in the public service, and could not prevent the matter from being brought up in Parliament; and while Parliament might not be able to exercise any control over the Commissioner, yet the fact that disaffection existed and that it was a matter for frequent discussion in Parliament would most assuredly have a demoralising effect upon the civil service, and must lead to the service being to a certain degree inefficient. I have justification for that statement in the appointment of a Commissioner of the Railway Department in New South Wales. At that time the unions which had been formed by the railway servants in that State had become very powerful, and had made continued demands on the Government of the day for better terms and for greater privileges. It was from that point of view that the Government in power, desiring as far as they possibly could to curb the railway unions and to prac-

tically prevent their demands from being given effect to, appointed a Commissioner. It was continually urged that political patronage was an evil, and that if they wanted an efficient railway service they must appoint a Commissioner who would be absolutely free from political control. They made the appointment, and Commissioner Eddy came out from England imbued with the idea that he was to fight the growing power of trades unions in New South Wales. For some time he continued in that spirit and fought the unions; and while that spirit lasted the evils which had previously existed increased; but afterwards Commissioner Eddy found out it was better to approach the matter in an impartial spirit, and he admitted that there was much to be said in many of the claims; and from the moment he adopted that attitude the railway service in New South Wales gradually became more efficient, until at the time of his death I believe the railway service throughout the length and breadth of New South Wales was in a fairly contented state. We do not hope, and I hope hon. members in considering this measure do not believe, that we can get an absolutely contented civil service, because from my experience—and I have been a wage earner—I know that if concessions are made to employees the fact that those concessions are made will lead them to ask, like *Oliver Twist*, for more. If, under this Bill, we were to increase the emoluments and the privileges of the civil servants, we should not I believe reach that happy stage where the civil servant would say, "Thus far I want to go and no farther;" but I think we can frame a reasonably good measure by which we can have a reasonably efficient service, and in human nature we can expect no more. Reference has been made to the Commonwealth Public Service Act; and it has been stated that as the Commonwealth have an Act under which they have appointed a Commissioner, it will be a good thing for us to adopt the same thing here. The Commonwealth Government had not the same difficulties to meet that the different States had, or that Western Australia has to meet at the present time. We have a civil service already existing. The Commonwealth were taking over a civil service and, from their point of view, were initiating one;

and they could experiment at the initial stages so that the service would grow up accustomed to the terms. It has been stated by the member for West Perth, and I believe to a very large extent it is true, that in Western Australia we have the best service in the Commonwealth; but I should like to point out also that we have the most expensive service in the Commonwealth of Australia, and not only in Australia but throughout the British colonies, that is according to the population. If we take the cost of the civil service of this State per head of the population, we shall find it more expensive than that of any other State in the Commonwealth or of any other British colony. Of course, to a large extent exceptional conditions have obtained in Western Australia to influence this result; but we must also recollect that in Canada there are scattered dominions where the cost of service is necessarily increased, so that this is not the whole factor.

MR. MORAN: The railway services are not included in Canada.

MR. BATH: Well, if we leave out Canada and take the Commonwealth of Australia for a basis of argument, we shall find it is the most expensive in Australia; and in considering the exceptional circumstances of Western Australia, we must also recollect that in New South Wales and Queensland, both very large States, similar circumstances are ruling, though not perhaps to the same degree. I think, taking into account all the circumstances, we must admit that our service is better treated than the services in the other States of the Commonwealth. Therefore, while we must give every credit for efficiency, we must also give credit to the State for treating its servants in a better fashion than any other State. Therefore, while we discuss and view the Bill to a certain extent from the standpoint of the civil servants, we must expect, in return for our fair treatment of them, that the service will accord the same fair treatment to the State. The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) seems enamoured of the principle of Ministerial control. The member for West Perth practically advances a very good reason for that in the desire of the member for Boulder, as head of a department or as one controlling an institution, to run it on commercial lines and be a boss

"panjandrum" of the institution. So far as Ministerial control in the Federal service is concerned, it is run to a certain extent on the military system, rather than on what might be called the Commonwealth system, where not only the heads of the department, but the whole of the service down to even the lowest grades, are imbued with equal zeal and equal desire to serve the Commonwealth. The hon. member made a statement that those who advanced grievances from amongst the civil servants were very often men who are inefficient and not the best servants. This is practically a statement by the hon. member that the very idea of a servant advancing a grievance is practical evidence of his inefficiency. I certainly do not believe in that. I know from my own experience that in the past there were many servants, among the best people of the State, who had grievances, big grievances, and no proper opportunity under Ministerial control to have their grievances remedied. I confess that as far as I am concerned I find a difficulty in seeing how such efficient examinations could be set. You can hardly take a candidate for a position along to the office in which he is to be employed and place before him, in an hour's test, a knowledge of the work he will be called upon to perform from year to year. That would be absolutely impossible; therefore to a certain extent we must rely on an educational test to find out the capabilities of an officer. Provision is also made in the Bill for discrimination as to the examinations; that is to say, while some may be called on to undergo an examination others will be excluded from it or not called on to undergo such examination. I think that provision and that liberty to some will lead to favouritism; the very thing the Bill is designed to avoid. It will largely depend then on the recommendations of ministerial heads of departments and the qualification of a candidate, either for a different position from one department to another or promotion in one particular department. If we are instituting a system of examinations in order to determine whether a candidate shall receive promotion or be shifted from one department to another, that principle of examination should be extended to every

candidate in the service, and by doing that we should avoid the possibility of favouritism which we all, I hope, seek to avoid. In regard to the questions of seniority and efficiency I am certainly fully in accord with the member for West Perth when he states that seniority must have claims, and must have big claims when the qualifications of a candidate for promotion are being considered. I can give a concrete example. I know one civil servant, I will not mention his name, who by the mere fact of being employed in a district where the development of the gold industry suddenly lifted the place into a very prominent position, made such a big advance in the service in a few years that practically he was almost at the top of the tree. On the other hand there may be officers senior to him in the service equally efficient, perhaps in a higher degree, who have not had the opportunity of displaying their efficiency because they have been employed in a limited sphere. When the question is dealt with by the Commissioner, seniority must be considered together with merit if we are to arrive at a just decision and have the respective merits of the various candidates for the positions to receive due consideration. I cannot understand the opposition shown to the appeal board. We know from actual experience, as far as the railway service is concerned, that the appointment of the appeal board has had the effect of removing disaffection. If no opportunity is given of ventilating grievances or appealing against decisions, we are really screwing down the safety valve and not removing the disaffection, and by screwing down the safety valve the disaffection will escape in another channel, and perhaps in an even more flagrant manner. The final question to which I wish to draw attention is in regard to what is known as temporary appointments. In the service we have many officers who have been employed for long years, as long as nine and ten years, but who still are on the staff as temporary hands. I see nothing in the Bill which will give the Minister the right to deal with these.

THE PREMIER: Oh yes.

MR. BATH: I am glad to hear from the Premier there is a provision in regard to these appointments. I cannot find in the Bill any provision that will deal

with those, not on a salary but on wages in the service of the State. There are many of them occupying important positions equal to those occupied by officers called salaried servants or civil servants. Can the Premier tell us whether under the present Bill by which the railway servants are not included, but apart from them, all employees of the State will be dealt with under the measure? Can the Premier assure us that all servants of the State, irrespective of whether they are on the salaried staff or wages staff, will be dealt with by the Commissioner under the Bill?

THE PREMIER: Yes; the Bill covers all these.

MR. BATH: I am glad of that, because if the other case were true it would be a great defect in the Bill and one that should be removed in Committee. I am satisfied with the Premier's assurance, and in conclusion I may state that I think the Bill as laid before the House is a reasonable effort to cope with a difficulty which has crept into the administration of our public service; and I am glad to see the unity of opinion, except in one or two instances, as to the merits of the Bill and the effect it is likely to have. The sooner we get the Bill passed through Committee and the sooner members get an opportunity of having their concrete amendments placed in the different provisions, the sooner we shall have the public servants of the State placed on a satisfactory footing.

THE PREMIER (in reply): I have to express my appreciation of the manner in which the Bill has been received by members on both sides of the House. I particularly appreciate the fact that on the Opposition side the Bill has been treated in a proper manner, or what appears to me to be a proper manner, that is as one of a purely non-party character. It is not necessary therefore for me to make any lengthy remarks in reply to the observations that have been offered by the different members who have spoken. I think, however, it would be wrong if I omitted in passing to compliment the member for West Perth on the very able address he delivered when dealing with the Bill; one of the ablest I have had the pleasure of listening to in this House. In regard to the remarks, first of all, made by the leader of the

Opposition; it was pointed out by him that there would have to be certain amendments in the Bill, and I am quite willing to agree with him that there may be a number of clauses which could with advantage be amended, because in a Bill of this size it is hardly likely that this Government or any other Government would be capable of introducing a Bill which was not in some details easily susceptible of advantageous amendment. In regard to that matter I shall be very glad to welcome any amendment which seems likely, as far as my judgment enables me to decide, to improve the principles on which the Bill has been drawn up, or seems likely to work in the direction of smoothness and effectiveness of administration. The object of the Government is not to secure the adoption of any particular clause, but to secure the object that I think every public man and every private citizen has in view—to secure the most efficient and most contented public service possible. Of course no public service can work at the highest state of efficiency if it be not a contented body, and in this connection personally I am glad to hear the tributes paid by members to the capacity that is to be found in the various departments of the service. I believe we have certainly in the ranks of the public service a very large number, in fact an unduly large proportion, of very able officers. It does not matter how able the individual officers may be, if there be no proper system of organisation the abilities of the individuals cannot be utilised to the highest advantage of the State. That is the trouble under which the civil service of Western Australia is suffering at present, and is impairing to some extent its usefulness. This Bill is an attempt to provide the organisation that is essential to get the best results from the capacity of the individual officers in the service. It has been pointed out by the leader of the Opposition that the Commissioner under the Bill will have a large task. I am quite willing to admit that the Commissioner will take time in becoming acquainted with all the officers of the service; with many of them it will be impossible for him to have direct personal associations, but he will be able to judge from his visits of inspection from time to time to the different departments what officers are rendering satisfactory

service, and he will be able personally, with the assistance of certain officers in different departments, to arrive at fairly correct conclusions. Because of the difficulty of getting into association with all the officers, and because the difficulty must lead to mistakes in some cases and inflict injustice, the appeal board has been provided. In regard to the appeal board, there are two opposite positions taken up by different members. One extreme is represented by the member for Boulder, that there should be no appeal board, but that the Commissioner could be relied on to do justice; inasmuch as the Government are not likely to appeal, therefore the individual officer should have no right of appeal. That is the extreme on one side. The other extreme is that every officer should have the right of appeal, and his appeal of itself should go to the appeal board. The position the Government have taken up is a moderate position between the two extreme views. Our argument is this, that the Commissioner like any other individual who has a large task, a difficult task to undertake, is certain to make a number of mistakes; we believe proportionately there will be a small number of mistakes. We believe mistakes will be due in the first instance to want of time—I am speaking of the first classification of the service, a mammoth task for any individual to undertake, a task which it is not possible to fulfil without errors creeping in. When these errors have crept in, I assume the Commissioner will be as anxious as anyone else, the moment the error is discovered, to undo it, that he will be as anxious not to pose as one possessing any degree whatever of omniscience, as a man who cannot fail to do the right on every occasion; but, I assume the Commissioner will recognise his own liability to err, and when preponderating evidence is brought showing that the Commissioner has erred, he will be willing and anxious to undo and reclassify in order to protect the officer to the fullest degree. The Commissioner will be assisted in arriving at a decision on an appeal by two other officers, one appointed by the Government and the other an elective member of the appeal board elected by the class to which the appellant belongs. In regard to the appeal board, the argu-

ment is by some that every case should go to the appeal board when an officer wishes to appeal. Our reply to that is that an individual is not always the best judge of the merits of his case, that there is a danger that when the first classification is made, at all events, a very large number of appeals will result; that if that large number of appeals results, the time of the officers sitting on the appeal board will be taken up for weeks and possibly months, and the completion of the classification will be delayed while those appeals are being taken. We think those appeals could be effectively reduced without injustice to any officers, if they were first of all submitted to the Minister. [Interjection by MR. MORAN.] You must have an appeal from the first classification. Immediately the first classification is gazetted there will follow appeals. That is an assumption we make, and the assumption is based not only on our own opinion but on the experience in other places. There is bound to be a large number of appeals. If those appeals can be limited without hardship, without keeping back any appeals for which there is good reason, it is better that it should be done, in the interests of the service as a whole, and in the interests of the successful administration of each individual department. What we propose is that it should be done by the officer first of all applying for permission through the ordinary official channel, through his Minister. If the Minister thinks there is a case, he submits it in the ordinary way to the Cabinet. If the Minister thinks there is no case, he simply rules that the officer shall not appeal. It may be alleged there may be some danger of a Minister wrongly ruling against an appellant. As far as I am able to judge, a Minister is always anxious to do the fullest justice to every civil servant. I do not mind what Ministry is in power, I do not think there is ever a Minister who is anxious to do a wrong action or to treat unjustly any individual civil servant. I am quite willing to believe that mistakes have been made by every Ministry probably we have had in this State, and mistakes will be made, so long as the present system and control of administration remains, by every Ministry we shall have;

but I do not think that wilful injustice is perpetrated by any Minister.

MR. MORAN: It is generally a question of violent prejudice.

THE PREMIER: In this question of classification the merits of the appeals will depend upon the value of the work the officer has performed and the amount of salary he has received. It will be a very simple issue indeed, and one on which, with a fair statement of the case by the officer and his permanent head, any Minister ought to be able to arrive at a just conclusion. Even if the officer himself and the permanent head differ, still with a clear statement of the case on both sides it ought to be very easy to judge whether there is a *prima facie* case to go to the board.

MR. RASON: It hardly covers the ground of what someone else is doing and what pay he is getting.

THE PREMIER: I think the great bone of contention at the present time, the great cause of the trouble, is that in one department work is paid for at a certain rate and in another department at a lower rate. But when the classification has been published it will be readily possible by comparison of the classification in the different departments to realise, by a very cursory glance, if injustice is being done. As I have said, a plain statement of the case on both sides will readily enable the Minister to arrive at a conclusion as to the justice or otherwise of the appeal. He will not want to reach a final conclusion on the subject, but will only have to satisfy himself before sending on an appeal that there is a *prima facie* case, which is a very different thing from establishing an appeal. The only alternative to providing for this form of eliminating appeals would be a provision that where an appellant has no proper ground of appeal he should pay the cost of the hearing of the case. I thought that it was far more generous to the public servant who wished to appeal that he should appeal through the Minister, than that he should have possibly to pay a heavy expense in consequence of making an appeal which seemed to him a proper one, but seemed to the board hearing it to be frivolous.

MR. MORAN: That is a departure from the principles of justice. The law courts are open to everyone.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member points out that the courts are open to everybody. A recognised principle is that whoever loses shall pay. If this House decides that is the better principle in regard to this Bill, I am not going to very strongly object to it. Still, it seems to me that the present proposal is one that would work quite as satisfactorily and with equal justice, and at the same time would inflict less hardship on those who might appeal.

MR. RASON: If an appeal is held to be frivolous, make the appellant pay the costs.

THE PREMIER: That would have to be done. That is the only alternative; but I am told that in many cases the costs awarded have been quite out of proportion, quite insufficient to meet the cost of the appeal. That is a point which this Bill would have to provide for adequately. I am not particularly wedded to one method more than another; but I wish the House to understand that, if the present proposal is eliminated from the Bill, it will be necessary to insert this alternative and make an appellant who has no justification for his appeal pay the cost of the hearing of such appeal. That is the only alternative method of checking an undue number of appeals that I am able to suggest. One point the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) referred to was that there was no provision here for placing before Parliament the reasons of any Government for not adopting the recommendation of the Commissioner. As far as I am able to judge, I do not think there is any necessity, in order to get efficient non-political administration, that this information should be furnished to Parliament, because we know that members of Parliament readily get information in regard to any cases that occur, and that any member has the right at any time to call for papers or to require by motion or by question the Ministers to supply information and justification for every act they perform.

MR. RASON: It is not necessary under the Commonwealth Act.

THE PREMIER: I am quite aware that what the hon. member advocates is provided for in the Commonwealth Act; but at the same time I do not think it is essential to the successful administration

of the public service, and it seems to me to adopt an assumption which personally I cannot agree with, that is that if the Government differ from the Commissioner, *prima facie* the Government are wrong and the Commissioner right, and therefore we require the Government to justify themselves every time they hold a different opinion from that of the Commissioner. Personally I do not agree with the contention that whenever the Government differ from the Commissioner the Government are necessarily wrong, and I think that Parliament is amply protected and that the civil servants and Commissioner are amply protected by the power which exists to require the Government to produce papers on any question which is thought to be of sufficient importance to justify this action. The member for Guildford raised the question as to whether the non-inclusion of officers of Parliament in this measure would prejudice their rights in any way. I would point out that this Bill creates no new rights on the part of public servants whatever. It gives to no officer or class of officers any new rights. It retains their existing rights so far as leave of absence is concerned. It also retains their existing rights so far as pensions are concerned, where these rights exist, but it does not create new rights for any class of officers at all. It places upon officers who come within its scope the obligation to obey the regulations made under it, and the obligation to obey likewise legitimate orders by the Commissioner and other officers subordinate to him. But it does not create any new privileges or confer any new rights whatsoever.

MR. RASON: I wanted to know if it took away any.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member was asking whether their exclusion meant the loss of any rights or privileges. My reply is that, seeing that the Bill does not propose to confer any new rights or grant any new privileges, the exclusion of any officers from it cannot rob them of any rights at all. As a matter of fact, the officers to whom the hon. member alluded, officers of this House, were excluded from the provisions of the previous Public Service Act, and in regard to them we simply adopt the law as it is at the present moment.

MR. RASON: There is a special provision in the Commonwealth Act for those very officers.

THE PREMIER: There are two or three other public service Acts in which no special provision has been made. The position of these officers is that they are servants to Parliament and Parliament alone, and Parliament can make its own rules at any time, and vary its own rules with regard to their treatment. It would, I think, be a bad principle to allow any outside body to come between Parliament and the officers who serve it, and I am not prepared to recommend in this measure the principle should be adopted. I do not think there is any reason to fear that the position of these officers is in any way jeopardised or injured by their exclusion. The hon. member raised the point in regard to the admission of unnaturalised persons. The provisions of the Bill are that any person who is unnaturalised and at present is a member of the service shall secure naturalisation as speedily as possible, and the general principle which underlies the measure is that persons who are appointed to positions in the service shall be in every case either natural-born or naturalised subjects of His Majesty. Provision is made for the admission of unnaturalised persons in certain cases. For instance, a technical position in the public service of some considerable importance may fall vacant, and it may become necessary to appoint to that post a qualified person from, say, America or from one of the European States. If he were appointed before he arrived in the State he would be unnaturalised, and would not be qualified to become naturalised until he had lived the necessary period in Australia. In the meantime the clause which the hon. member referred to would enable the State to get the advantage of that officer's services while he was qualifying himself for naturalisation. It is a special clause inserted purely to meet special purposes, and I do not think the hon. member need fear that the service will be deluged either in the term of this Government or any other by a large number of unnaturalised persons, or that persons who are appointed while unnaturalised will be allowed to remain unnaturalised any longer than is necessary to enable them to secure their papers.

The hon. member referred to the proposed examination. I quite agree with him that examinations should as far as possible be practical rather than theoretical or scholastic; and that is the intention of the Bill, and an intention to which I think effect can easily be given. The examination should, as far as possible, be a test of the fitness of the candidate to discharge the duties which he seeks to take up. The principle has of late been introduced to two or three departments. The principle was introduced by a former Treasurer when an Auditor General was appointed; and an examination was held for the purpose of testing the abilities of two or three candidates to do auditorial work. That examination resulted in the appointment of our present Auditor General—a most satisfactory appointment, made after a practical examination had been passed. For two or three positions which have lately fallen vacant, the Government have found it desirable to put the capacity of applicants to a practical test. This has been done with most satisfactory results. The Bill proposes simply to extend that principle, and to require officers, before promotion from a lower to a higher division, as well as before appointment to the service, to pass examinations in order to prove their fitness. It is not proposed in the Bill that either the entrance examination or any subsequent examination shall be competitive in character, for it is recognised that the candidate who is most successful in competitive examinations is not always the one who has the best qualifications for a particular office. I think the hon. member can rely on it that this principle will not be ridden to death. It has been all-ged that some of the few privileges of teachers have been taken from them by this Bill. Here again there is a misapprehension as to the provisions of the measure. In the present Public Service Act teachers are not included, and therefore have none of the rights which that Act confers on other officers of the public service. Any new rights created by this Bill are therefore in addition to any rights and privileges which teachers now possess. There is no proposal in the Bill to take away from teachers anything that they at present enjoy. Concerning one provision, members were somewhat exercised—the provision that an

officer shall be required to pay rent for quarters which he occupies. Our proposal is, and the object of the Bill is, that an officer shall receive a certain salary which shall represent the full value of the service he is rendering the State. If he is now receiving salary *plus* rent or *plus* rent allowance, we propose that the rent or the rent allowance shall be merged in the salary, and that as far as possible we shall abolish unnecessary allowances and unnecessary privileges.

MR. MORAN: In some cases that will mean only a cross entry.

THE PREMIER: Exactly; but it will enable us to understand precisely what we give to each officer. And in the past, a proper system has not always been enforced. I found an instance of this only recently in my own department when an application came to me to authorise some repairs to a Government building. A bill was presented for repairs urgently required. I ascertained that this building was in the occupation of a public servant, that he was paying no rent whatever for it, and that other officers doing work of the same class in other districts, and receiving no higher salaries, did not have free quarters. Those quarters existed when that officer went to that particular town; he was allowed to keep them for 5, 6, or 7 years as the case may be; and other officers performing equally important duties in larger towns were required to pay rent. Now, the Government were either behaving too liberally to this officer, or were not behaving fairly to the other officers; and I wish as far as possible to secure uniformity by paying an officer a salary and a salary only. If an officer is at present enjoying quarters, it would be unfair to require him to pay rent for those quarters without giving him an equivalent addition to his salary; and there is no intention in this Bill to do that injustice to any individual officer. But we wish to provide against the establishment of this precedent in future cases; and that is really the object of the Bill right through. Some attention has been paid to the leave proposed to be given to teachers; and we are told that they should have precisely the same 'leave' as is enjoyed by other officers. I cannot admit the justice of that contention. The teacher has three times a year a fair

vacation. He has a long vacation at Christmas and New Year, a little over a week at Easter, a week at midwinter, and a great number of public holidays; and he is not required to teach on Saturdays. Now I say it is unfair to ask the Government to give to those teachers, in addition to the large number of holidays they yearly enjoy, three months' long-service leave for every seven years of service. In dealing with this question members would do well to bear in mind that the greatest danger the education system of this State is liable to is that it may be allowed to become unduly and unnecessarily expensive. So far as I am concerned, I intend, as a true friend to the cause of State education, to keep down expenses to the lowest sum compatible with the fullest efficiency. This particular length of leave granted to ordinary public servants would if granted to teachers mean that in every school where there were seven teachers one teacher would be away for three months in the year; and that for every 28 teachers one would be away every month of the year. Right through the year there would be one absent. That is the position as to long-service leave. Now I contend that this is not a reasonable privilege for teachers, when we consider the length of leave they already enjoy. Other officers of the public service have no opportunity of being absent from duty for more than a fortnight at any given time during any year. They can never get longer leave than a fortnight, except once in seven years; hence there is a fair justification for long service leave for them at that interval. But a teacher has leave of some weeks once a year, and has in addition two other vacations of at least a week each. I therefore think it unreasonable to ask us to give the teachers, in addition, a long-service leave of three months for every seven years of service. I do not think there are any other points to which I desire to refer at this stage. I am grateful to the House for the very sympathetic manner in which this Bill has been received. I hope members on all sides will help me to secure its speedy passage, so that it may go to another place as early as it can conveniently be sent. There is one clause in it relating to the salary of the Commissioner. I purpose when the Bill goes into Com-

mittee to move to strike out that salary and the proposal to appropriate it, in order that members when dealing with the question of the Commissioner's appointment and pay may have a thoroughly free hand, and in order that I may, after ascertaining the opinion of the Committee, request His Excellency to send down a message in accordance with the will of hon. members. I trust the House will agree to deal with a few of the earlier clauses to-night, so that we may make the first stage of Committee progress without delay.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Resolved on motion by the PREMIER, that the Speaker do leave the Chair for the purpose of going into Committee on the Bill, and that it be an instruction to the Committee to excise from the Bill Subclause 5 of Clause 6.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. BATH in the Chair; the PREMIER in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Commencement:

MR. C. J. MORAN: Were the names of all wages men employed by the Government throughout the country to be gazetted? This would be impossible, especially if day labour were permanently instituted. And it ought to be clear how far we could go in a Bill of this character. It would be impossible to include all Government employees. "Officer" was defined as including all persons employed in any capacity in those branches of the public service to which the Act applied; but there were many men in the Public Works Department who could not be contemplated as permanent servants, and they should not come under the Bill. We could deal with these matters on recommendation.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Interpretation:

MR. N. J. MOORE: Would it not be well to postpone this clause because of what the member for West Perth had just said?

THE PREMIER: Provision was made in another part of the Bill giving the Governor-in-Council power to exempt any officer or class of officer from the operation of the Bill. The matter could be settled on recommendation.

MR. MORAN: It seemed that there was an entire absence of party politics on this Bill, and that members of the House were leaving its passage to those most interested.

THE PREMIER: In Clause 34 the power of the Commissioner or head of the department to employ temporary officers for more than the specified term was limited; but the Governor might cause men employed on temporary work on a scheme to be continued in that employment. A scheme might take any length of time, but the same set of temporary employees would be kept on without becoming officers of the department.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Non-application of Act to certain officers:

MR. MORAN moved an amendment:

That the words "or other than those who are employed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner may classify them as administrative, professional, or clerical divisions" be inserted after "same," in line 1.

It was highly desirable that the permanent staff on the railways should be brought under the exemption.

THE PREMIER: The amendment as moved would not cover officers of the Railway Department.

MR. MORAN: Yes; by excluding them from the non-application, the Commissioner would have to classify them.

THE PREMIER opposed the amendment. It was not possible to have two Commissioners controlling the same department. We could not possibly throw on one Commissioner the management and control of the Railway Department and then allow another Commissioner to step in and usurp his functions. It was desired that the classification of all departments of the public service should be made on a uniform basis, and steps would be taken to see that the officers of the Railway Department should have the same pay as officers doing similar work in other departments. When the classification of the public service would be undertaken, it was proposed that the two Commissioners should meet and endeavour to agree to a uniform scheme.

MR. MORAN: The Public Service Act created the Commissioner and also an obligation; but there was no obligation on the Commissioner of Railways to classify.

THE PREMIER: The Commissioner of Railways was empowered to classify employees.

MR. MORAN: Was he compelled?

THE PREMIER: could not say; but if a Commissioner of Railways was not compelled and if it was thought desirable that he should be compelled to classify Railway officials, the proper way to achieve that purpose would be to amend the Railways Act. It was not desirable, under a Public Service Act, to allow an outsider to work in the Railway Department.

MR. MORAN: The Public Service Commissioner would be no more an outsider the railways than in any other branch of the service.

THE PREMIER: There was already a Commissioner of Railways who was given certain powers in the Railway Department and who was responsible to Parliament for the manner in which he performed his duties. We had no right to interpose another Commissioner of similar rank and give him duties that would fall on the Commissioner of Railways. The Commissioner could not undertake the work of classifying the Railway Department and the other branches of the service, for the work would be too great. The amendment would be destructive of its very purpose aimed at by the hon. member, as the Commissioner could not do so much work. It would create endless trouble by attempting to force the Commissioner to classify the Railway Department.

MR. BOLTON: A classification was now going on in connection with the salaried officers in the Railway Department, which might not satisfy the members for West Perth. It hardly satisfied me (Mr. Bolton), because he thought it would not satisfy those interested. Two gentlemen were travelling throughout the different offices under the control of the Commissioner of Railways collecting information as to the adaptability of the Railway officers to do the work they were performing. One gentleman possessed considerable experience and would have a good grasp of what was being done; the other gentleman, not having long experience, was not regarded by the Railway officers as capable of grasping what was being done by them. The amendment should be supported, because

the object sought to be obtained was good. The officers of the Railway Department should be entitled to the extended leave privilege granted under this Bill. It would be manifestly unfair to prevent the railway officer getting this privilege, because his work extended over longer hours and, under the present Commissioner, was harder than in other branches of the public service. If any man required time for recuperation it was a railway man.

MR. RASON: The amendment was far too important and too far-reaching to be accepted or rejected on a short discussion. He suggested that the clause be postponed, so that the amendment could appear on the Notice Paper, and time given to thresh it out.

MR. MORAN: This was about the most important clause in the whole Bill, and his desire was to get the fullest information and truth about the matter. He would like to know the number of officers in the Railway Department who would be affected by the clause. The railway servants were possibly the hardest-worked officers in the State; there was no limit to their responsibilities, their hours were long, and they had constantly to cope with a rush of work. The Railway Commissioner was appointed primarily for commercial reasons to make the railways pay, but the Public Service Commissioner would not have that as a primary duty. Parliament would instruct him how much money he would have to run the service. There was no objection to withdrawing the amendment, so that it could be placed on the Notice Paper for farther consideration.

MR. HORAN: The salaried officers of the Railway Department were the worst-treated of any officers in the service. They worked longer hours, and although men were supposed to be off duty at times, they were liable to be called on at any hour of the day or night. Some years ago there was a Public Service Act in operation, and railway officers receiving under £200 a year were placed under that Act. That did not cause any friction with the Commissioner of Railways, although the officers were subject to different regulations, and worked different hours. Under the present Act there was an exemption: all officers receiving £400 a year and over could be removed only

by the Governor, not the Commissioner. He appreciated the proposal of the member for West Perth, for the officers of the Railway Department were entitled to early classification. The Bill would give them privileges which he was sure the Railway Commissioner would not give to officers.

Mr. W. NELSON: There was an analogy in the case of the Education Department. The Inspector General practically controlled the Education Department just as the Commissioner controlled the Railway Department. If, in spite of the fact that the Inspector General conducted the Education Department, the officers of that department were brought under the control of the new Public Service Commissioner, and the Bill did not conflict with the Education Department, neither would the Bill conflict with the Railway Department. There were special officers in the Railway Department doing special work, and yet work which was essentially the same as work performed in other branches of the service. The officers might well be classified and treated together without interfering with the functions of the Railway Commissioner.

Amendment withdrawn and the clause postponed.

Clause 6 — Appointment of Public Service Commissioner:

THE PREMIER moved that Sub-clause 5 (salary £850) be struck out.

Amendment passed, and the subclause struck out.

THE PREMIER was not prepared to recommend any change from the provisions contained in the Bill. It was necessary to obtain a Message from the Governor authorising appropriation for the Commissioner's salary, therefore a discussion should take place, as it was possible the opinion of the Committee might differ from the opinion of the Government, even in the direction of a higher or a lower salary proportionate to the office. If he brought up a Message authorising the appropriation of £850 a year, the Committee might not agree with that sum. In creating any new position it was desirable to begin at a minimum, because, as far as his experience went, when a position of any importance in the service was created, or a position of no importance was created,

it was continually found that the occupation from time to time required an increase of salary, and the Commissioner doubt would have the same fail. The highest salary paid outside the Railway Department, except to professional officers, was the salary received by the Auditor General, which was £800 per annum. We had gone a trifle higher than the salary of the Auditor General. Members might urge it was impossible to get the work done at the salary mentioned, but he wished to impress upon members that in a service the size of ours, and a State with a population such as ours, it was impossible to pay the same high salaries as were paid in some of the Eastern States. As a matter of fact there were very few officers getting more than £1,000 a year in any of the public services of Australia, except the railway service. Some few years ago, when he was in Victoria, the Audit Commissioners were fulfilling the functions of the Audit Commissioners and at the same time those of the Public Service Board, and were receiving £1,000 per annum for joint services. In starting at a salary higher than that of any other public servant in the State, the Committee would do all that was necessary. It might be necessary later on as the public service grew, and as the Commissioner's term of service grew likewise, to increase the salary, but at the same time he could not recommend the Committee to give too high an annual payment. This was a matter on which he was willing to accept the recommendation of the Committee, and it should be settled by the combined wisdom of the Committee. He would not in any way seek to press his own opinion on the Committee in this particular instance. However, he wished the Committee to understand that in Victoria a few years ago, the Audit Commissioners were performing the joint duties of Commissioners of Audit and Public Service Commissioners for £1,000 per annum. In New South Wales at present time members of the public service board drew £1,000 per annum each. These were two fairly parallel cases.

Mr. RASON: There was not much in the argument of the Premier about beginning at a minimum, and increasing salary later on. Whatever salary

ed would be for a term of seven years, and it would be impossible to increase the salary without bringing down an amending Bill. We were supposed to fix the salary on which the Commissioner would be engaged for a term of seven years. He doubted very much whether the Government would succeed in finding a Commissioner who would be able to carry out the great duties expected of him. Where so much depended on obtaining a really good man, we should offer a salary reasonably sufficient to induce a capable man to come into the work. When we recognised the importance of the position, the question we had to ask ourselves was whether we were reasonably likely to obtain the services of a man who would fulfil the expectation of the Bill for a sum of £850 a year. In his opinion we should not, and if by giving £1,000 a year or £1,200 a year we secured a better man, it would be money well spent.

MR. NELSON: What would be necessary in order to get the work efficiently done would not be to leave one man to do it and try to make up for that by giving him a big salary, but to give him adequate assistance in order that he might do it well.

MR. RASON: An assistant Commissioner?

MR. NELSON: No. From the very nature of his duties it would be necessary for the Commissioner to incur expense, and to have a staff of assistants. A salary of £850 would be a reasonable one.

MR. A. A. HORAN: The amount should be raised to at least £1,000 a year. As far as he knew, the inspector of the Commonwealth public service received on his appointment £600 a year, and he only exercised control over two departments; whereas under this Bill an inspector would have eight departments to deal with, and the Commissioner would have still greater duties. We should give good salaries to get the services of good men.

MR. E. NEEDHAM: The salary originally mentioned, £850 a year, was no small. It had been pointed out that certain expenditure would be necessary, and the member for Boulder estimated the total at from £3,000 to £5,000; but he did not agree with that estimate. In his opinion when the Commissioner was appointed a reorganisation of the service

would necessarily take place, and a great portion of the assistance necessary to him to competently carry out his duties could probably be found within the ranks of the civil service.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: No matter how much wisdom might be brought to bear in legislation regarding the subject, this was after all a question of experiment. It was possible that someone might be selected who might not be really worth £500 a year; but he felt that to get a good man we should pay him well. In most of the States the work was done by two Commissioners, and in some three. He believed that in Queensland there were three Commissioners, their combined salaries amounting to about £2,400 a year. Before a Commissioner could carry out the work he must have gained some knowledge of the requirements of the State and its conditions, and it would be some time before he would be able to master the whole of the provisions of the Bill. It was to be hoped that a man fairly conversant with the affairs of this country might be secured for the position. If he could be secured, so much the better for the country. But to secure such a man we must offer a more tempting salary than the Bill proposed. It would be well could we take a man on trial, and increase the salary when he deserved it; but we must take the risk, and give from the start a salary of even £1,200.

MR. RASON: A member said the Commonwealth inspectors received £600. The salary of the Commonwealth Commissioner was £1,200, and each of the seven inspectors received £700.

THE PREMIER: The last speaker would hardly urge that we should pay on the same scale as the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth service was far larger than ours. The only distinct parallel we could find was the Victorian State Commissioner, who received £1,000. The three members of the New South Wales public service board received £1,000 each. Did members urge that we should pay a higher salary than Victoria?

MR. MORAN: Adopt the mean salary of £1,000.

THE PREMIER: The Victorian Commissioner had apparently no inspectors. He held a position similar to that of our Commissioner, but with greater powers.

Our Commissioner's powers would be limited, and nothing like the powers and responsibilities of our Commissioner of Railways.

MR. RASON: Our Commissioner for the first few years would have much more to do than the Victorian Commissioner or the New South Wales Commissioners.

THE PREMIER: For the first year he would be busier than in any of the succeeding years. Probably his classification work would be completed during the first year; possibly during the first six or seven months. He (the Premier) saw this done in another State, where the Act was passed at the end of 1883, and the classification published in February, 1885, though the service was much larger than ours. Our Commissioner ought in the first six or seven months to get through all the work except his share of hearing appeals.

MR. MORAN hoped the Committee agreed that the minimum salary should be £1,000. This would surely appear on a division. The Government should fix that sum. A good man was worth £1,200 or £1,500 when he proved to be good; and we took a certain risk in making the appointment. A salary of £850 was not in consonance with the dignity and the importance of this responsible position. If the Commissioner were not a good man, Parliament had power to remove him.

MR. FOULKES: The position of the Premier was not clear. He continually repeated that he desired the opinion of the Committee, but persistently argued in favour of paying only £850. [**THE PREMIER:** No.] We needed the best man available. Living in this State was more expensive than in the East; so a salary of £850 would not be worth £850 in another State, but only about £700. If we wished to secure here a man now drawing £700 a year in another State, he could not be induced to come for £850. This appointment, though made for seven years, was but a temporary appointment; and no one in the practically permanent position of Under Secretary would relinquish that position to come here as our Commissioner. Members seemed to expect a practically perfect Commissioner who would satisfy both service and State. Many men would cheerfully accept the appointment at £250; but the appointment of such would prove very expensive.

We could not decently offer less than £1,000. It was said that the Commonwealth Commissioner received £1,200. What a splendid advertisement for the State if we offered £1,400. This would show the rest of Australia that we paid our officials well, and that the affairs under the control of this Parliament were as important as those controlled by the Federal Parliament. So far, the Federal departments were very small and few in number, and though they were scattered over an area larger than Western Australia, the volume of work done by our departments was much greater.

THE PREMIER: The Committee, understood, were agreed that £1,000 a year should be provided for the Commissioner; therefore a Message to that effect would be brought down. Meanwhile, he moved that progress be reported.

Motion passed.

THE PREMIER: Proposed amendments to the Bill ought to be put on the Notice Paper.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read, assenting to the Industrial Statistics Act Amendment Bill.

PRIVATE BILL—KALGOORLIE TRAMWAYS RACECOURSE EXTENSION.

SECOND READING.

MR. W. NELSON (Hannans): I desire briefly to move the second reading of this Bill. It is purely a form measure, having for its object the grant of the right to the Kalgoorlie Electric Tramway Ltd. the right to run a tramway from the present terminus near the racecourse on to the racecourse itself. The Bill would not have been necessary at all had it not been for the fact that, while the company have the power at the present time to extend their line along a road, they have no power to do so outside the road; and the result is that this Bill deals with a purely technical difficulty and enables the tramway company to run their line right on to the racecourse itself. The select committee which sat on the matter have received proof of the affirmations made in the preamble of the Bill.

therefore beg briefly to move that the Bill be read a second time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish): I have no intention of opposing the second reading of this measure. The select committee appear to have agreed in regard to the Bill, but suggest certain amendments to which I presume the hon. member in charge of the Bill is prepared to assent. At the same time, I think it would be desirable if the House assented only to the second reading this evening and allowed the Committee stage to be postponed till a later sitting.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): The hon. member who is in charge of this Bill might, I think, have given us a little more information as to where the proposed line would start from and where it would finish. I, of course, accept the assurance that it is merely a formal matter. If it were a Bill to authorise the construction of a tramway, the hon. member would be the last person I should think would have introduced it. I should have looked for State or municipal construction of a tramway, rather than that the member for Hannans of all persons should introduce a private Bill to authorise the Kalgoorlie Electric Tramways Ltd. to construct, maintain, and manage a line of tramways. However, I am prepared, seeing that we are only to take the second-reading stage to-night, to accept the assurance of the hon. member that this is merely a formal Bill, and that it is not to give power to construct a tramway.

MR. J. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): If the leader of the Opposition would just take the trouble to turn up the select committee's report he would find all the information he seeks. There is no intention that any company should step in and build a tramway. It is merely an extension of the tramline which is prevented from entering the racecourse. At present people have to get out of the cars and walk 400 yards to the St. Leger enclosure, and it is at the request of the race club that the tramway company want to extend the line on to the racecourse.

MR. RASON: Then it is not merely a formal Bill?

MR. SCADDAN: I do not know whether it is really a formal or an informal Bill. That is a matter for the House to deal with; but in my opinion,

after hearing the evidence given before the committee and laid before the members in the report, I think it will be found there is nothing objectionable. The question was asked whether any objection was raised in any quarter, and there was no evidence of it. It is merely a matter of extending a convenience to the public.

MR. W. NELSON (in reply): I did not enter into any elaborate explanation of the Bill, because the report of the committee had been circulated amongst members, and I took it for granted that the leader of the Opposition, with that diligence to his duties which characterises him, would have read the report. I am sorry to find I paid him a compliment to which, evidently, he was not entitled, and I unconditionally withdraw the compliment. I should like to say the word "formal" which was used was probably not the most accurate; but there is no principle involved in the Bill.

MEMBER: Lack of principle is the trouble.

MR. NELSON: I did my utmost to prevent the existence of the evil of a private company running the tramway; but I was unfortunately defeated. However, now the evil is in existence, I seek to so regulate it that it may be less an evil than it is.

MR. RASON: By making it longer.

MR. GREGORY: By accentuating it.

MR. NELSON: At any rate, I think the House will allow the second reading to be carried, so that any amendments may be dealt with in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 23 minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next Tuesday afternoon.