

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 17th December, 1908.

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

QUESTION — PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER'S REPORT.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (without notice) asked the Premier why the Public Service Commissioner's report had not been laid on the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied: It has just arrived and I am laying it on the Table now.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. Underwood and Land Selection.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: On a matter of privilege I would like to make an explanation with regard to a remark of mine last night. I made a statement that I obtained my land through being a member of Parliament, and by my having a railway pass. I wish to say that statement in my opinion is a very foolish one and is absolutely untrue, and with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall withdraw it.

QUESTION—MINING ACCIDENTS. MOUNT MAGNET.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1. Has the attention of the Minister been drawn to the alarming frequency with which fatal and other accidents occur at the St. George Mine (Great Boulder No. 1), Mt. Magnet? 2. Will the Minister institute a special inquiry to determine whether the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act have been strictly complied with?

The MINISTER replied: 1. Yes. 2. I deeply deplore the fact of so many accidents occurring in this mine, but the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act appear to have been fully complied with, and each accident other than the last has

been fully reported on; however, I have instructed the State Mining Engineer to make full inquiry into the matter.

RETURN—RAILWAY COAL SUPPLY, COLLIE.

On motion by Mr. A. A. Wilson ordered: That there be laid upon the Table of the House a return showing the amount of tonnage order given by the Railway Department weekly to each (separately) of the local coal companies:—Collie Proprietary Co., Scottish Collieries Co., Cardiff Coal Co., Co-operative Collieries Co., for the eleven (11) months ending 30th November, 1908, and the amount supplied weekly by each (separately) of the companies named for the period mentioned.

MOTION—ABORIGINE MURDERS, LAVERTON.

On motion by Mr. Nanson ordered: That the papers connected with the murder of eight aborigines in the vicinity of the Ida H. Mine, near Laverton, be laid upon the Table of the House.

BILL—FINES AND PENALTIES APPROPRIATION.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and the Annual Estimates: Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Vote—His Excellency the Governor, £1,145:

Mr. A. A. WILSON (Collie): It is with a certain amount of diffidence that I rise to speak on the Estimates as placed before members, because I feel, as a young member, that perhaps I may not be able to do justice to them. The jumble of figures put forth in connection with the Estimates, to a young member especially is very conflicting; but there is certain food for reflection among the many items, that is, from the princely sum of £5,516 given by this

country to keep the Governor upon to the beggarly allowance of 15s. a week given to messengers in this House. The difference is too great and I protest against this £5,516 allowed to keep the Governor. I am as loyal a subject as any member, but my loyalty stops at the importation of governors. I think it is an item we could well do without; I think the Chief Justice could do the work. I believe the sum paid to messengers in this House, 15s. and 17s. a week to boys who work from 9 o'clock in the morning to 11 o'clock at night, is sweating of the highest order, and when we come to the item we should have the common decency to alter it, because it is a disgrace to Parliament. I say this in all good faith, because I feel sure that no employer should work a man or boy from 9 o'clock in the morning till 11 o'clock at night. I think a certain amount of unfairness has crept in in regard to the matter of roads board grants. Collie last year got £800, but every item this year has been cut off. This should not be, because in a district like Collie where there are roads made every year, it is essential that money should be provided to keep them going. An overhead bridge was definitely promised for Collie, but I see nothing in the Estimates about it. I consider that if a promise is given it should be kept. I perceive with a certain amount of dissatisfaction that the cost of immigration was last year £5,384. The system is bad. An immigration agent named Dolley who came from Bunbury side went Home and told the people in the old country about the splendid field for coal miners in the Collie district, and that there was plenty of good land in the district for them to clear after their day's work. This information was given at Newcastle, but the agent did not know that among his audience were some people who had been practically driven out of Collie through want of work. I know of men who came from that part of the world, that when they landed here could not get land nor work in the coal mines. This is a matter that I think the Government should take special care to remedy. There is also the

matter of the Austrians, the question I brought up in the House. To my knowledge these two men have got rations from the Government at the Collie court. They landed about a fortnight ago from the s.s. "Roon," and they are practically penniless and starving. I think encouraging men like this to come here should be put a stop to at once. It is pleasing to know that the matter of Collie coal has at last been dealt with with an open mind, and the expressions of the Treasurer were very pleasing to me, as also are the remarks of the Railway Department. For the first time in the history of the Railway Department they have decided that Collie coal is worth burning. But in regard to this matter the bunkering trade will need to be handled carefully. Instead of taking everything we read as truth, we need to be careful in analysing statements. We must take into consideration the need for facilities for shipping and for quicker transit from the mines to Bunbury. At present it takes something like 12 trains a day to supply 1,000 tons of coal to a ship, and if a ship needed 3,000 tons it would be impossible to coal under three days. The trouble is because of the very steep gradient between Hamilton and Worsley, and I think that a better grade could be obtained, so that we should give quicker transit for the coal, and so that the engines could haul 250-ton loads instead of 80-ton loads. Not only would it be a great saving to the Railway Department, but it would be a great facility for the coal mines and the ships. If we want to establish the bunkering trade we must give the companies every facility to get the coal into the ships as quickly as possible. A short loop from Cardiff to the Donnybrook-Preston line would meet requirements. Another question is that of the exclusive use of Collie coal on our railways. The article is good enough, and I think the Government should take the matter into consideration. Mr. Hume, the Chief Mechanical Engineer, on page 17 of the railway report says that the consumption of Collie coal was 101,312 tons or 68.3 per cent., while the consumption

of Newcastle coal was 47,016 tons, or 31.7 per cent. Now, this consumption shows a difference from the issue. Mr. Gallagher, the Chief Railway Storekeeper, says that the coal issued was: Collie 102,756 tons and Newcastle 50,564 tons; the coal received was: Collie 102,756 tons, Newcastle 60,890 tons. By these figures it will be seen that we received 22,874 tons of Newcastle more than was actually consumed. Now where is the difference between the coal issued and the coal consumed? Is that coal in stock or where is it? I can find nothing in the report to show where the balance of 22,874 tons is. If 22,874 tons have been got more than was burned we want to know where it is, whether in stock or given away without any record being kept. With regard to the price of coal, I find that the average price last year was 18s. 11d. Now I find that the average price to be paid next February is £1 0s. 3½d. per ton; this means an increase of 1s. 4½d. in the price of Newcastle coal, and I trust the Government will see the necessity for increasing the price of Collie coal. Tenders were called for Bunbury, Albany, Fremantle and Geraldton. Previously the prices were the same for the four places, but for some reason I do not understand the Government decided to call for separate tenders with the result that the price at Fremantle is 19s. per ton for 23,000 tons; while at Geraldton the price is 24s. a ton for 8,000 tons. The result is that there is an average increase of 1s. 4½d. per ton, but here is the point I want to get at. The price of Collie coal is based on the price of Newcastle coal at Fremantle. The present price of Newcastle coal at Fremantle is 18s. 11d. Next year the price will be 19s. according to the tender; that means only an advance of 1d. per ton. But taking the Geraldton price and the Fremantle price together it means an average advance of 1s. 4½d. per ton for imported coal.

The Minister for Railways: We have not given any advance on the price of Collie coal on account of next year's contract, because it is not worth while altering the price for the sake of a penny.

Mr. A. A. WILSON: That is not what I want to get at. On the average the price has risen 1s. 4½d. per ton, and the workers and the coal companies at Collie have a right to get an average proportional increase. I am fighting for the workers. According to the arrangement between the Commissioner and the companies, for every increase given to the companies the men get an advance, and as the average price has increased there is reason that the price of Collie coal should be increased, and that the workers should get the benefit of it. A deputation waited on the Government expressing the opinion that it was desirable that before any alteration be made in the allocation of the coal supplies among the different companies, the position of the men should be recognised. Under the last contracts the Proprietary Company got 45 per cent., and the Scottish Company, the Cardiff Company and the Co-operative Company each get 18½ per cent. of the supply to the Government. It was suggested by some of the companies that each company should get 25 per cent. of the trade, but I think that before the Government consider the question of making a redistribution they should take into consideration the matter of the workers. I consider that a man who has built his home in Collie has as much right to be protected as a company that has put its plant there, and I think the Government should insist on the workers' rights being protected before any alteration is made.

The Minister for Railways: I think the allocation at the time was a fair one.

Mr. A. A. WILSON: Yes, I have nothing to say about the allocation; I do not care how the trade is allotted, but I do care how they deal with the men. If the Government decide to distribute the trade in equal proportions of 25 per cent. to each company, the result would be that the Proprietary Company would necessarily have to discharge a large proportion of their men, and these men would have no chance of getting other employment except at the sweet will of the companies. I trust that when this question comes before the Government they will

see their way clear to treat the workers with justice as well as the companies, and that they will insist on companies giving a guarantee to that effect. With regard to certain remarks about the Nallan Wood Company and the comparison made between it and the Collie concession, I desire to say at this stage, that I think the comparison was unfair; because the men at the Collie concession were hewers and were banded together with the main object of keeping the whole product of their labour to themselves, and in doing away with the middle man altogether. Some of the material sent to these people was scandalous. They paid first-class prices for second-class articles, and it was found that tins of kerosene had to be used in order to let the bolts be screwed out of the fishplates, etc. The concession is now nearly cut out, and I hope the Government will keep this splendid batch of men in the country by giving them another grant of land, so that they can go on with their work. There are 300 men there and they have contributed during the past few years more towards the revenue per man than many of the so-called timber companies have per one hundred men. The Treasurer made a few sarcastic remarks as to the business acumen of the men on the concession. If he would read an article which appeared in the *Morning Herald* on the 8th inst., he would find an interesting lesson there. If he takes that lesson to heart it will save him from again making remarks which in my opinion were most unfair to a splendid lot of men.

The Treasurer : What did I say?

Mr. A. A. WILSON : I interjected that these men had received no profits and you said that if not there was little to be said for their management. That remark was most uncalled for, as the profits have been put into the concession by the men increasing the plant, etcetera, so as to enable them to carry out their work.

The Treasurer : They did make profits, then?

Mr. A. A. WILSON : They increased their holdings by buying rails.

The Treasurer : Well, I am very glad to hear it.

Mr. A. A. WILSON : You insinuated that it was a badly managed institution. A word or two as to the taxation proposals of the Government. In my opinion they are too petty and vexatious for Parliament even to consider. The stamp duties will bear most heavily on the workers, and I hope the Government will withdraw them. I thank hon. members for their courtesy in listening to me, although the speech has been a bit Scotch.

Mr. TAYLOR : (Mount Margaret) : I have very few remarks to make in connection with the consideration of the first line of the Estimates. There is one matter, however, I desire to emphasise and that bears upon the vote which we are discussing, namely, His Excellency the Governor's. The Governor will be leaving this State shortly and therefore a fitting opportunity will be provided to alter the conditions under which the Government House ballroom, which was erected at very great cost, is controlled. In the past it has always been under the control of the Governor but it would be wise to allow the successor to His Excellency know that the control of the ballroom is vested in the Government. I have no desire to cast any reflections on His Excellency, nor do I want to suggest anything other than what in my opinion is the best course for the Government to adopt before a new appointment to the position is made. The Government should retain the right to grant the use of the premises for any charitable purpose they might think fit.

Mr. Bath : What about the home-grown article for a Governor, instead of an imported one?

Mr. TAYLOR : I have advocated that for years, and other members have done the same, but the advocacy has not been very fruitful so far. The principle of appointing one of our own men is an excellent one, for there is no necessity to go out of the boundaries even of Western Australia to obtain the services of a gentleman able to fill that position admirably. I hope the Government will take into consideration that aspect of the question, and if they decide to adopt the

course suggested they will receive my hearty assistance. An argument in favour of this course is that a considerable expenditure would be saved. It would make the people of the State happy if there were economies in that direction rather than that there should be an increase in taxation. The people would be pleased to know that the Treasurer had made such a suggestion to his colleagues with the object of relieving the burden of taxation. While the Government are increasing the taxes of the people they are now removing many privileges which have existed for years and, in fact, ever since there have been communities in different parts of the State. I refer more particularly to the hospital question. There is hardly a member from the goldfields constituencies who has not received letters from his district referring to the injustice of the Government in their treatment of the hospital question. I have been in communication with the Colonial Secretary and have ascertained that it is the enforcement of the reorganisation scheme, recently drawn up in connection with the hospitals, that has pressed so hardly on many districts in Western Australia. In many of the places where the hospitals have been shut up it is absolutely essential that there should be institutions where men badly maimed by accidents in mines can be taken and attended to. Of all industries that of mining is associated with the most danger and it is a dreadful state of affairs that in many districts there are no hospitals to which injured men can be taken. This afternoon I presented a petition signed by 500 residents of Kookynie, protesting against the Government closing the hospital there. The Government are increasing the taxation and yet, instead of giving greater facilities to the people who pay the taxes, they are removing privileges from them. The people naturally resent this. The Government must be more liberal in dealing with hospitals in goldfields localities. I cannot speak with any absolute knowledge of the agricultural areas, or as to how those districts are treated, but there are many members here who know the actual state of affairs, and I hope that, no matter

what side of the House they are on, they will urge upon the Government the necessity to give the people that assistance in the way of hospital facilities to which they are absolutely entitled. One could speak on this question for an hour or so, but I am not going to do that now. All I want to say on the question is that there is a crying necessity for an alteration in some way to the proposed hospital reorganisation scheme, at all events as far as the back country is concerned. I hope the Treasurer will impress on his colleague the Colonial Secretary, who controls the Medical Department, the necessity for giving to the people some medical attention and keeping open the hospitals. Shocking cases of accidents on the goldfields are heard of every day and the closing of the hospitals means that these poor mangled people have to be carried miles and miles in order to receive proper attention. That is not wise administration, nor do the people of this State desire that form of economy. I have yet to hear a cry from the people for economies in the direction of hospital administration. Then again, with regard to the Education Department, which is controlled by the Treasurer. I hope greater facilities will be given to the people in the outlying districts for the education of their children. In many of the squatting and mining areas married people are now settled and are rearing families, but there are no schools in many centres. When applications are made to the Chief Inspector of Schools he points out that owing to the state of the vote for the department it is impossible to accede to the requests. He always recognises the necessity for new schools and expresses anxiety to meet the wishes of the deputationists, but invariably explains that Parliament does not put sufficient money at the disposal of the department to meet all the requirements. I believe Parliament is prepared to vote money on these two points—for the medical fund and for education. I believe Parliament would be prepared to vote generously to the Minister for Education in order that our growing people might be thoroughly well educated. Let us not have our children running about in small centres on the

goldfields and in agricultural districts; running about at 12 and 14 years of age without having seen the inside of a school. That is not the economy the people of Western Australia desire. I hope the Government, whatever other faults they may have—these are faults they can remedy, and by remedying will not only satisfy their own side of the House but the people of the State as a whole—will look at the matter in a fair light. It is a question one can speak on without any party feeling; it is a question that affects every person in the State. It should be the privilege of every man, woman, and child in this country to know that there is a strong probability of our rising generation being properly educated; and that in no portion of the State where there are 12 or 14 children running about will the provision of a school be refused. The Minister for Education should immediately and promptly make provision for a school at any place where a handful of kiddies are gathered together. I know that other hon. members hold the same views on this matter, and I hope the Minister for Education will not be too niggardly in the direction I have indicated. I am saying this with the full knowledge that the Treasurer knows I am not speaking from a party point of view.

The Treasurer: We are doing our best.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes; but I think you might economise in some other direction, and not in this. There are two departments, one dealing with health and the other with intellect and culture; one with the physical side and the other with intellectual. These are two important questions, and questions that the people in this State are anxious should be well considered. I am sure the Treasurer, as the Minister controlling the Education Department, is capable of doing it every justice if he would only set himself out to that end, and go into this question as fully as he should do. Possibly the Treasurer has what seems to him more important functions to fill than worrying about a few people who require a school for their children.

The Treasurer: I am always thinking about them.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think the Minister should not wait until there are a certain number of children in a district before he provides a school. It is this lack of schools in districts which keeps districts back. The husband employed in a small district in which there is no school has to send his wife and family away to some centre where a school is provided; thus he has to keep two homes going. And those who are unable to do this have either to leave the district in which there is no school or allow their children to run about without schooling.

The Treasurer: Would you build a school for six children?

Mr. TAYLOR: Perhaps not; but there were 12 at Burtville some years ago, and they could not get a school.

The Treasurer: Did not they get a school?

Mr. TAYLOR: They got a school much later, but even then things were not satisfactory; the regulations were really bad. The salary of the teacher was a certain amount, and as they had only 12 children there and the requisite number was 15, the parents had to pay for the other three. I forget now what it was they had to pay; it was a couple of years ago?

The Minister for Works: They paid three-fifteenths of £65 a year.

Mr. TAYLOR: I know they were very much against the whole business. The teacher was being removed and they had to do this to keep him there. However, I believe they have a full complement of children now and things are going on all right. I do not know whether there is a school at Ida H.; there they are 11 miles nearer to Laverton than to Burtville, and the children round about there cannot go to either Burtville or Laverton. The regulation number of children were not there to compel the Government to provide a school, and so instead of the numbers of the community increasing they decreased. That is what happens under this policy. Instead of making small communities grow up and increase the Government are making them decrease.

The Treasurer: No, no.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is so. There was some promise of a school at Ida H. If the school is not yet provided I hope it soon will be. I do not know whether there is any necessity for me to make further remarks on the general vote, because I will have a chance later. I do hope the Government will attend to one or two of the points I have mentioned; that they will do something in respect to the Government ballroom, and the Medical and Education Departments.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue): In speaking of the education question as far as it is affected by these Estimates, I think the members of this Chamber will admit that in Western Australia we have a system of education equal if not superior to that of any of the other States of Australia. and I think that any Government that endeavours to keep up that standard deserves the thanks of the community. I am surprised that the Treasurer, in his anxiety to make both ends meet, has struck upon an idea of his own—or rather it is not his own; because throughout Australia almost every Government have come to the conclusion that in times of financial stress the first man to be struck at is the civil servant. The Minister has notified that he intends to cut off the annual increment of the teachers of the Education Department. I do not know in what way the Treasurer can justify his action when he endeavours to square the finances by taxing one particular portion of the community.

The Treasurer: I am not taxing them; I am not taking anything away from them.

Mr. HEITMANN: You are taxing them to this extent: You are disallowing what is really their due. So your denial is not altogether correct. On going into the public service the teachers are told that they shall receive certain increments. Now, I would not take so much exception if the Treasurer would only do that fairly; but in this as in the whole of his taxation proposals we find that he does not base his tax upon the ability of the individual to pay, but rather is he inclined to tax the smaller man the heavier. This is clearly shown in his taxation proposals in respect of the school teachers. We

find that instead of taxing those who receive the larger salaries—and I would like to say in passing that last year, or the year before, the Treasurer said he did not intend to give any increase to any public servant receiving over £200 a year.

The Treasurer: When was that?

Mr. HEITMANN: I think it was the year before last. It was when speaking to your Budget.

The Treasurer: I think you are wrong.

Mr. HEITMANN: If so I am prepared to be corrected. But we find this time that instead of taxing only those receiving a fair living wage, and making them pay according to what they receive, the Treasurer is taxing heaviest those who are receiving less than a fair living wage. If the Treasurer had gone into this question he would have found that by his taxation proposals with respect to school teachers—this disallowing of the annual increment—it is possible to tax some of these unfortunate teachers to the extent of £40 or £50. I do not think the Treasurer anticipated this: nevertheless it is true. We find that a man receiving £320 a year pays, by way of this novel tax, 3 1-3rd per cent of his salary. The man receiving £150 a year will be called upon to pay 7 per cent., while another in receipt of £120 a year will be mulcted to the extent of 8½ per cent. Then in respect of a man who is receiving only £110 a year, the Treasurer proposes to tax him up to 10 per cent. of his salary. Therefore, if a man on the unclassified staff is receiving £110 a year with a maximum of £150 it is possible, by taking away his increment this year to tax him to the extent of £40 before he receives his maximum. I cannot say why we should deem it necessary on occasions of financial stringency to pick out the civil servant for taxation. We have no right to tax him more than any other individual. But it seems to be a prevailing idea with the Treasurer that the first man to be taxed is the civil servant. I think the last man to tax is the school teacher enjoying, if I may so phrase it, a salary of less than £150 a year. The proposal of the Treasurer may be set out in this way. The whole of the salaries of the Education Department amount to £131,100. By

disallowing the annual increment the Treasurer will withhold £2,800. There are 200 teachers receiving not more than £150 a year, and these are taxed to the extent of not less than £2,000 of this total amount of £2,800. Forty teachers receiving from £150 to £200 are to be called upon to make up £400 of the balance of £800, while 14 teachers in receipt of over £200 per annum are to be taxed to the extent of the remaining £400. This shows that either the Treasurer has no sympathy with the teachers—no desire to promote a feeling of security among them—or he really did not understand the question when he brought it forward. Last evening a statement was made by the member for Swan, taking exception to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, and the member said he thought it an awful statement to go forth to the world, creating an impression that dishonest methods had been used by the Treasurer. I do not know if the member for Swan has read the report of the Auditor General. If he has I feel sure that he must have come to the same conclusion as the member for Brown Hill did, and if it is not dishonest methods, the Treasurer's administration, then it is absolute want of business ability. We find right through the Auditor General's report some striking cases showing that the Treasurer has absolutely no regard for the administration of the various departments, and one case can be pointed to very clearly in this respect. I refer to the defalcations of a servant of the Tender Board.

The Treasurer: That affects the honesty of the officer concerned.

Mr. HEITMANN: At all events it is your duty to prevent these people being dishonest if you can. I think the Treasurer will admit that if he had taken the precautions advised by the Auditor General, there would have been no stealing of this £1,000 or £2,000. For two years running the Auditor General had pointed out to the Treasurer that the state of affairs in his office was very bad, and last year he pointed out to the Treasurer that the position was "absolutely dangerous." These are the words of the Auditor General, and if anything more is required

by the Treasurer I really do not know what the Auditor General can give him.

The Treasurer: Action was taken on that.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Auditor General states very clearly that no action was taken.

The Treasurer: Action was taken.

Mr. HEITMANN: This is only one of many cases, showing the loose methods adopted by the Treasurer in his department.

The Treasurer: Had you not better wait until you see the evidence. There has been an inquiry.

Mr. HEITMANN: Here is a servant of the State, whom we are supposed to regard as an expert in these matters, a man appointed by Parliament, and I am happy to say beyond the reach of Ministers and of members of this House, and he points out in many cases where the business methods of the Treasurer and the various departments were bad.

The Treasurer: No, he does not. He does not refer to the Treasurer at all. Be accurate.

Mr. HEITMANN: He points out in connection with the Railway institute that a certain sum of money was granted for a specific purpose, and although it was not all spent, the full amount was used, and a certain sum was paid over without any statement as to how the money was spent. In connection with the defalcations of the Tender Board, this is what the Auditor General said—

"A shortage, as far as can be ascertained from the imperfect records, amounting to £1,062 17s. 4d., less doubtful items (see Appendix 'J'), has taken place in connection with the contractors' deposits controlled by this office. The accounts have been audited yearly, and adverse reports forwarded to the Treasury."

Do we want anything more than that? He says yearly; it may have gone back four or five years. The report goes on to say—

"The report for the inspecting officer for the year 1906-7 stated that the position was most dangerous, and in forwarding this report to the Treasury the Auditor General pointed out that

the law had not been complied with as regards paying all moneys received into the public account daily, and that no responsibility as to the correctness of the accounts could be taken by him, owing to the want of primary records to enable the debits for moneys received by the Tender Board officials being located. The Auditor General was notified in reply to this report that the money had already been paid to the public account, and that some of the other matters requiring attention were in hand. On the occasion of the next yearly audit (June, 1908), the inspecting officer found the same state of affairs to that previously reported, and owing to what is considered the faulty system considerable work was thrown upon the audit in endeavouring to ascertain the true position. It is evident that the reports of the Auditor General, which are made by law to the Treasury, should receive more attention. If definite action had been taken in this instance there is no reason to believe that a shortage would have occurred. The hon. Treasurer is aware of the position, and has directed that an inquiry be held.

This is after the money had gone.

The Treasurer : Exactly so.

Mr. HEITMANN: In 1908, after attention had been drawn to the matter for three or four years—it may have been half a dozen years that attention had been called to it.

The Treasurer : You are exaggerating now. I have not been there for half a dozen years.

Mr. HEITMANN: He says for years past. You do not put any reliance on the Auditor General's report.

The Treasurer : He says I did. I ordered an inquiry.

Mr. HEITMANN: He says in the report in 1906-7 that the position was absolutely dangerous. These are the words of the Auditor General. One might go right through the Auditor General's report, and it is the same from beginning to end. We find complaint after complaint made: last year he draws attention to a matter and this year he says no

remedy has been effected, and still it goes on. I want to know if the Treasurer is going to take on himself the work of the Auditor General and to take no notice of that officer. If so it would be as well if Parliament dispensed with that officer's services, giving the Treasurer a free hand, and I am sure he could not do more than he is doing now. As stated by the Leader of the Opposition the Treasurer appears to be right out of his depth, and I feel sure he has told his officers, "I am beaten; make the best job you can of it." This appears to be the case according to the Auditor General's report. Take another case showing the business methods and acumen of the Treasurer. Take the loan advanced to the Murchison Firewood Supply Company. Only the other day I asked some questions in the House in reference to this matter. I asked what amount of rent had been paid by the Murchison Firewood Supply Company on this loan. I gave notice of the question to be asked on the 27th of last month and strange to say on the 27th I was asked by the Premier to allow the question to remain until the following Tuesday. When he replied to the question I found that on the 27th, the day the question should have been answered, the firewood company had paid in a certain sum. As far as I can see this is the only sum that has been paid, £400, on the loan of £20,000 which was carrying interest at 10 per cent. for 12 months. The Treasurer tells us what good work this company has been doing. Is that business, to lend out £20,000 to a company, charging them 10 per cent. interest, and to get £400 for 12 months interest? It seems to be characteristic of the Treasurer. I want to say a few words on the item we are discussing. It appears to me we in Australia are paying altogether too much for our Governors. It is all very fine for jingoism to run riot at times, all very well to say that we must have a connecting link between the State and the mother country, but at present Australia is paying something like £100,000 a year for Governors. With all due respect to the gentlemen, I think the time has arrived when

we in Australia should say that there is no position in Australia beyond an Australian. That is speaking from one standpoint. But as a matter of expense at such a time as this, when the Treasurer is cutting down the salaries of men who are not receiving a living wage, it is time for us to take into consideration a few democratic methods.

The Treasurer: What salaries have I cut down?

Mr. HEITMANN: The Treasurer cannot get away from the fact that he is reducing the salaries of the school teachers of the State.

The Treasurer: No I am not.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Treasurer cannot get away from the fact that these teachers went into the service, being told they were to receive certain increments. This year the Treasurer has told the teachers that they cannot receive them. On the one hand we are paying some £10,000 or £12,000 in this State for a Governor, and on the other hand, perhaps just as useful an individual to the State, the school teacher, is having his salary reduced. We have men in the State service receiving from £110 to £150 training our children. Can the Treasurer say he is treating these servants fairly. At the same time we find on looking at the Estimates, one individual at all events is receiving an increase and he gets a salary of between £300 and £400 a year. We cannot expect much less from the Treasurer. He has shown right through his administration that he has very little sympathy with the men on the bottom rung of the ladder. For those on top he has every consideration and when the time for taxing comes round he takes particular care these officers are the people who are not to be taxed. It is time in this State that we took into consideration the question of decreasing the cost of the link between this State and the mother country. It is all very fine to have a good deal of frill, to have somebody to preside at social functions, but the Treasurer could perform at those functions just as successfully as a gentleman imported from over the sea.

The Treasurer: You had better appoint me.

Mr. HEITMANN: We would appoint you. We could get rid of you then. You could do not much harm there and you could not do much good. We are paying in Australia something like £100,000 for Governors. The States have federated and it is high time we decided to cut down these expenses considerably. I think the Governor General is sufficient, for me at all events, and I think for Australia. I do not intend to go further into this matter. I am reserving the little matters I have to say on the various departments until we get to the items. I shall have something to say on the Mines Department and the inspection of mines and I sincerely hope the gentleman who has charge of this department will come to this House fully prepared to answer everything asked in reference to his department.

The TREASURER (in reply): If no other member wishes to speak I desire to reply. The member who has just spoken has endeavoured to make a great point out of the matter of the increases being refused in the Education Department, and has endeavoured to point out that it amounts to taxation of a specific class of our Government employees, and he has gone further and used the term, that I have been guilty of cutting down the salaries of these underpaid civil servants. I deny it entirely. I want the Committee to clearly understand that the action has been taken not only in connection with the Education Department, but in connection with all other departments of the service. It is idle to argue for one moment that employees in the Education Department should receive consideration different from that of other members of the civil service. We have decided that at the present juncture it is not advisable—we would be loth indeed to make a general reduction in salaries. That has taken place on previous occasions in other States when the necessity occurred. It is the last resort; it is a thing that no one cares about doing, interfering with the standard that a man has lived up to and to make him reduce that method of liv-

ing. We went into the matter carefully and on my recommendation—and I take the entire responsibility for it—it was decided that this year we would not be justified in giving increases. I think at the present time we could not have granted increments and then made reductions all round, as a deputation which interviewed me asked should be done. It would have inflicted an undue hardship on the very class of employees that the member for Cue professes to stand up for. To grant increments and then take them away would have created a hardship which I think we were justified in avoiding if we possibly could. I claim here, being in charge of the finances of the country, and being the member of the Government who has to control the finances, if the necessity arose, we would be justified in asking the civil servants to assist in bearing the burden of hard times by submitting to a reduction. We do not intend to ask Parliament to endorse any reduction this year; we intend asking the Committee to endorse the action taken that we will not disturb the salaries; and we asked the civil servants to refrain from demanding increases this year in order that we might see if we can next year, if there is more revenue, grant these increases. That is the course taken in all commercial houses. Notwithstanding the sarcastic references of my friend opposite, I venture to say it is just the action he would take in his private business at all times. He would say to his employees "I am sorry I cannot give you an advance; you have done good work; I ask you to be satisfied with the wages you are getting for another 12 months, and to see then whether there is an improvement." The hon. member would say that, if he would not go further and say that he would make a 20 per cent. reduction all round. We have only given to officers those statutory increases that are provided for. We have asked all civil servants to remain as they are until we see what next year will bring forth. I think that is a fair attitude to take up. These increases are not mandatory; they are discretionary and subject to certain progress, good be-

haviour, and other things; and then subject to the will of the Governor-in-Council. The hon. member should understand that. Notwithstanding that it is set down in regulations that increments may be given, there is nothing mandatory about it. It is all subject to the exigencies of the finances of the State, and I venture to say that there is no hon. member of the house who would say that we would be justified in increasing taxation in times of a somewhat slight depression for the sake of granting increases, even to civil servants. Let me say in regard to the Education Department that our teachers are paid as well in this State, or even better than in most of the States of the Commonwealth. I have comparative figures before me, but I am not going to worry the Committee by quoting them. If I am challenged later on I shall give them. The fact remains that our teachers as a whole are better paid than the bulk of the teachers in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Scaddan : That is why they are leaving us.

The TREASURER: My friend the Leader of the Opposition in his usual airy fashion often accuses me of being very airy. He comes here and accuses me of being responsible for all the past sins of finance that may have occurred, and he declares he wants an honest Treasurer. But he cannot prove by the logic or debate at his command that any dishonest methods have been instilled by my agency. Of course he must also descend to personal abuse, and he says that I am slovenly and incompetent, and he goes so far as to say that I am adopting dishonest methods. He makes charges against the present administration, and he makes them knowing the methods he is complaining about belong to previous administrations and cannot be laid at the door of the present Government.

Mr. Bath : What about the sale of Government property?

The TREASURER: That was a method introduced into this House and legalised by this House and yet the hon. member accuses me of dishonest practices. How can it be a dishonest prac-

tice when it has been sanctioned by the Legislature? The hon. member may disagree with the method and he is entitled to his opinion. That, however, is no justification for applying such terms to my conduct. Is it any justification whatever for applying the offensive term of dishonesty to me? It appears to me he is going beyond the limits of Parliamentary etiquette and he knows it, and this sort of thing is not going to elucidate the complex question of finance; it will not help us to set right matters of finance if we deem them to be wrong; it will not enable me to adjust things. The hon. member tried to saddle me with the sins of his own administration, some of which I will refer to later on. Take this one item here that he blames me for. He says I have adopted a new departure of even providing a portion of the railway estimates out of general loan funds, and he quoted a sum of £10,000 which appears on the estimates. That system has been in vogue for all time. It is true that in some revenue estimates it has not been shown, but it has always been shown in the public accounts, and it has always been entered up against loan, and has been credited to revenue at the end of the financial year. If we take the Loan Estimates for the year 1904-5 the hon. member will find there was an expenditure on those estimates, the same as on the present estimates. A lump sum of £7,530 was set down as expenditure for wages and salaries the very year when the hon. gentleman and you yourself, Mr. Chairman, and your colleagues were in power.

Mr. Bath : Over and above that reduction you will have another amount on the Loan Estimates.

The TREASURER : Why, of course, if you construct new railways. The difference is this, that in the years I am referring to, although he showed the lump sum for such wages and salaries, no corresponding reduction was made on the revenue Estimates that year. A transfer of this £7,000 however is shown in the public accounts to have been duly made. It amounts to this, that anyone who likes to spend a little time digging

into these figures can always find something to criticise, upon which they can hang a charge of incompetency or dishonesty. But it goes without saying that they cannot bring proof to bear to sustain such a charge. In the following year, recognising that the conduct of the hon. member and his colleagues in 1904-5 was improper, Mr. Rason determined that Parliament should know exactly what was being done, and a deduction was made on the revenue estimates of 1905-6 of £10,709 on account of the salaries chargeable to loan. That was in the following year. Then in the 1906-7 Estimates a reduction of £5,000 was made by me on this account, the expenditure of the previous year in connection with this account having been £4,777, the estimate in round figures, £5,000, was deducted. In 1907-8 £10,000 was provided for salaries chargeable to Loan and Stores administration?

Mr. Bath : With an additional amount on the loan estimates.

The TREASURER : Certainly not. And is it not right that you should charge whatever salaries are incurred in connection with the expenditure of loan moneys in carrying out loan works. There is nothing wrong about it. I have not given any instructions about these entries. I have never bothered my head about them. It is a system adopted ever since we have had a Treasurer. I have never given instructions as to what had to be done. The hon. member tries to hoodwink the Committee when he makes charges against me in connection with these matters. It only shows his own weakness and his own incapacity to fill the position he occupies. Last year the amount charged to loan expenditure and provided on the revenue estimates was £10,000. This was to cover wages and salaries on loan expenditure and in connection with the stores branch. It is the first time that we have put in the stores branch. The amount charged to loan expenditure was £4,085, and to stores £5,043, a total of £9,128 actual expenditure. The amount charged to stores is a proper charge and although it might appear that it is to some extent loan expenditure it is not all loan expenditure. It means this, that the cost of

handling and running the stores department is debited up in this way, and the price is added to the cost of the goods. If you take rails and fastenings out of stores for the construction of new railways; that is loan expenditure, and of course those rails and fastenings bear their due proportion of this charge of salaries and wages. If an officer takes oil waste out of the store for the purpose of the maintenance of the railway system or for the running of it, a proportion of wages and salaries is charged on those goods and it comes out of revenue; so members will see the system is absolutely correct. Whenever loan expenditure has salaries and wages that can be fairly charged to it, the charge is made in this manner; and when revenue expenditure has salaries and wages that can be fairly charged to it, then it appears on the goods as they are sent out. To my mind it affords a very correct system of keeping accounts, and a system the hon. member should not quibble at. We endeavour to give all the information in the public accounts. They show all the details and every item in connection with this expenditure, and the hon. member should not endeavour to hoodwink members into believing that something underhand is going on. Of course, I cannot go into all the details of the Treasury; they do not come before me. These bookkeeping and technical matters of this description lie with the officers who are experts, and I will venture to say that they are above trying to fake any figures and make them appear to be what they are not. The member for Cue charged me with responsibility for the Tender Board defalcations. I do not wish to say much about that this evening. As soon as I knew of the defalcations I ordered an inquiry. The inquiry went against a certain officer and that officer appealed, as he had a perfect right to do under the Public Service Act. The appeal, I am sorry for his sake to say, has gone against him also; and it would be wrong for me now, until the matter is absolutely public property, until it is dealt with, to go into the details of the evidence; but I will say that the hon. member will find, when the evidence is published, that he has no ground for

making the charge he did the other night, a charge that the member for Cue has endorsed.

Mr. Heitmann: Then why do you not refute the Auditor General's report?

The TREASURER: I have explained that there has been an inquiry, and everything in regard to that case will be in the evidence. The papers can be called for when we meet after the new year, and then members can see the absolute facts. Does the member for Cue mean to tell me that I am to accept as absolute gospel the Auditor General's report? Surely to goodness the Auditor General's Department was implicated to some extent in this inquiry? The question of audit had to crop up; it had to be ascertained whether the fault lay with the audit, or with the officer of the Tender Board, or with the Treasury; and the hon. member must not expect me to refute the charge in the Auditor General's report. The result of the inquiry will show where the fault lay, that certain action was taken by the Treasurer, and that there was neglect in obeying the orders given. That is the matter briefly. I cannot go into any further details, and I hope members will await the evidence. Then they can come to a decision themselves. The next thing we have is the point raised by the member for Kanowna; and the hon. member, as is his wont on occasions of this description, made use of the most eloquent language, and with outstretched hands, and eyes uplifted in horror to Heaven above called down the wrath of angels and devils on the Treasurer because he had exceeded his authorisations. He said—

“They have escaped scot free so long that they imagine they are entirely immune, but no Government. I take it other than the one in office, could rest satisfied under the charges that are made by the Auditor General. Let us take one instance of the way they are dealing with public matters.” Then he quotes the Auditor General, that we have actually raised £287,290 in excess of authorisations by Parliament. Then the hon. member waxed very eloquent. To use a vulgarism, he wiped the floor with me, I did not know

where I was, and the Leader of the Opposition chipped in with a very weak voice, "They have exceeded their authorisations." The Government having exceeded authorisations stood utterly condemned. I could not see where it came in, but on looking it up, I found that the present Government have had nothing to do with this excess of authorisations, if it be an excess. The member for Kanowna did not mention the year, but fastened the blame on to the present Treasurer and to the present Government in his eloquent and forcible language; but he forgot to point out that the excess, if it be an excess, took place in 1903-4 in the first instance, when Mr. Gardiner was Treasurer, and later in 1904-5, when Mr. Daglish was Treasurer. In the first instance Mr. Gardiner cancelled local inscribed stock to the extent of £44,025, and re-issued it locally. Next Mr. Daglish cancelled £262,800 of local inscribed stock, and re-issued it in London. That is the charge the member makes against the Government. Local inscribed stock to the extent of £306,825 was held by our Savings Bank, and as soon as the Treasurer of the day had an opportunity of floating a loan, he included a sum that would cover the stock held by the Savings Bank; then he cancelled the stock held by the Savings Bank and re-issued it. How can there be an excess of authorisation when you cancel one stock and re-issue another? I do not mean to say for one moment that if we issued that stock to outside holders the thing would not be different, but here we have two Government departments under the Treasurer. The Treasurer says, "I will borrow temporarily from this department under my control, namely, the Savings Bank, the sum of £100,000, and when I float a loan I will include that £100,000 in it, cancel the stock, and repay the money to the Savings Bank."

Mr. Bath: You spoke differently in 1905.

The TREASURER: I did not. If the hon. member turns up *Hansard* he will find that I took no exception to it; in fact, I defended the then Premier on that score. I remember distinctly saying

that I did not care twopence whether he had exceeded his authorisations; it was a technical breach, if any, and was made in good faith, and in the interests of the State. I do not object to the transaction now; I am merely trying to defend the then Premier. I believe there was correspondence with the Crown Solicitor, who took exception to it, and could not see the difference between a transaction of this sort and the cancelling of inscribed stock held by people outside and re-issuing it as a new loan; and he advised at that time that in his opinion it was illegal. However, I do not wish to debate that point to-night so much as to touch on the fact that the member for Kanowna tried to saddle me and the present Administration with the offences of the Administration which included the Leader of the Opposition, and of the Administration preceding.

Mr. Bath: You claim it is not an offence.

The TREASURER: Well, if it be an offence. So far as I am concerned I have not cancelled any local inscribed stock during my term of office. Perhaps I might have done so if necessity had arisen. I intend to cancel Treasury bills, but, fortunately, the Crown Law authorities say it is perfectly legal. If I have power to cancel Treasury Bills held by the Savings Bank, I do not see why I should not have power to cancel local inscribed stock held by the same institution. There may be a legal difference, but I protest against it being set forth to the people of this State that the Government are dishonest in their methods of finance, slovenly in their control of the Treasury, and I protest against having an instance of this description quoted as being a serious crime and charged against us. If it be a crime it is one with which I have had nothing to do, and for which my friends opposite are to some extent responsible. I have dealt fully with this question, and it is on a par with other charges made across the floor of the House. We have the old complaint of the misuse of loan moneys, the old complaint trotted out again with regard to sales of Government property and in regard to works being carried

out from loan funds. I can briefly dismiss all these charges with the one reply, that whatever has been done by the Government—and members must admit at once that circumstances alter year by year, and different methods have to be adopted occasionally to carry out and fulfil the requirements of the people of the State—whatever method has been adopted by us has been done in the light of day, and with the sanction of members of this House.

Mr. Bath: Such as burying a man on the rabbit-proof fence with loan money.

The TREASURER: The Auditor General does not say that it is an illegal charge, yet the hon. member trots it out. When we are busy building a fence out of loan moneys, using loan moneys rightly or wrongly—and we are not the only people who have built rabbit-proof fences out of loan moneys—we employ a number of men with certain plant; and if we smash an engine, a motor car or buggy in the construction of the work, the cost of replacing the plant is charged against the capital cost of the work. If a man is injured during the course of the construction of the work, compensation for the injury is charged up to the cost of the work. If a man is killed, and if we pay a compassionate allowance, or go to any expenditure in connection with the death, it is a legitimate charge to set against the cost of the job on which the man was working. I do not care what members may say to the contrary, it is the proper financial method, and a business-like method as adopted by contractors and all those who have carried out works of this description.

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

[*Mr. Taylor took the Chair.*]

The TREASURER: I have dealt with the charges of the Leader of the Opposition in connection with certain statements that appeared in the Auditor General's report, also with the charge made by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) as to excess authorisations of loan borrowings. I have shown that that action was taken by my predecessors as far back as

1903, and that the present Government had nothing whatever to do with the statement in the Auditor General's report that the loan authorisations had been exceeded. I have proved conclusively, beyond the shadow of doubt, that at any rate the statement that we were responsible for such an excess was unfounded and should not have been made. In doing that I did not desire for one moment to say that I, as Treasurer, would not have acted similarly under similar conditions. I realise that the Treasurer of that day found it was necessary to replenish the Savings Bank reserve, and he took a businesslike method of doing so—whether legally or illegally is of no moment at the present juncture—by disposing of and cancelling certain inscribed stock held by the Savings Bank and including it in a loan flotation in London, so that the proceeds might be put to the credit of the institution. I have taken similar steps and have included in the flotation of Treasury bills now being arranged in London to redeem half a million pounds maturing on the 1st January, the amount of £150,000, as referred to when delivering my Budget speech, for the purpose of retiring a like amount held by the Savings Bank. Therefore I hope within a few months to have £150,000 to the credit of that institution in order to increase its cash reserve and of course for the purpose of lending it out to the different institutions, such as the Agricultural Bank and the Metropolitan and Goldfields Water Supply Administrations, which we are financing from that institution. The one idea of the Leader of the Opposition when speaking seemed to be that any assets which might have been disposed of under the Sale of Government Property Act should have been reinvested in exactly the same manner as the original capital was invested; that is to say that if in the Railway Department, we sold some old locomotives or waggons, we should earmark the proceeds of those sales for the purpose of paying something towards the purchase of new locomotives or new waggons. The idea of this was, according to the Leader of the Opposition,

that the capital value of that asset should remain intact. It matters not to me whether the asset is in the Railway Department or any other department belonging to the Government, for the whole of the assets of the departments belong to the State as a whole. If I reinvest the proceeds of the sale of any asset belonging to one department in an asset in another department, the total assets of the State remain intact. If for instance I sell old rails—which I am doing and which is done every year—take the proceeds of the sale and build a school with them, the assets of the State have not in any way depreciated. I have the same value, and in many instances better value, in the total assets than previously. To argue that we are doing something wrong under that Bill, which has received the sanction of Parliament, is absurd and childish and, I may say, absolutely unfair. The capital of the department is not interfered with in any way, that is, it does not stand as extra capital without the asset being there, for every department credits itself in the capital account for the proceeds of its sales, whether the money is actually spent again in the department or elsewhere. If I sell rails, the capital account of the Railway Department is credited with the sale and is reduced by that amount, and if the money is used in building a school, the capital account of school buildings is increased by that amount. We have by that a perfect system of accountancy and one which can in no wise be quibbled at by anyone who understands ordinary commercial methods as adopted by private institutions. The Leader of the Opposition went further than this and told us with very great earnestness—and I commend him for his earnestness, realising as I do that he believes what he says on every occasion—that he was not going to be destructive in his criticisms but wished to be constructive. Then in scathing language he denounced the Treasurer and all concerned for their methods of spending loan moneys on what he terms unproductive propositions. He went further still and denounced the system of borrowing money

altogether. In his desire to give constructive assistance in connection with the financing of the State he said that if we had had the courage in 1897 or 1898 to set aside half a million pounds for public works out of revenue, and each year had made a moderate increase on that amount—that is I presume according to population—to-day we would have had 10 millions of money and would be able to do without borrowing. A brief review of a statement of this description must show how absurd the proposition is. I might carry the simile further and say that if the hon. member had had the courage, or in other words the means, when a child of tender years, to put by, say, 2s. 6d. a week, and had gone on increasing the amount for every week of his existence, that, with compound interest, would have made him absolutely independent to-day and he would not have been compelled to work for a living. The position is this. In 1898 there was no earthly chance of getting half a million pounds from revenue to put on one side as suggested. In that year Sir John Forrest had a deficit of over half a million, to say nothing of a huge expenditure from loan money. He spent something like £2,900,000 from General Loan Fund in that year, the sum including the purchase of the Great Southern railway at a cost of £1,100,000. It must be seen at once that it would have been absolutely impossible for him to carry out the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition, who endeavours in this way to be constructive in his advice to the Administration. There was no hope that year, and what hope has there been in subsequent years? What hope had I with £500,000 less revenue than when we entered Federation, to put aside £800,000 from the revenue for loan purposes? The proposition seems to me to be one that the member might have brought before a debating society as a theory, to raise discussion, but it could not go further. It would not do, for a Chamber like this, a House of responsible people and responsible members, who have not to indulge in theories but who are dealing with hard facts, who must not pose as amateur financiers, but

must honestly try to carry out the public works of this State in the best interests of the people, to attempt to carry such a theory into practice. The hon. member is no financier; his speeches are very pleasant to listen to, but if anyone tried to follow them out and to rule the finances on the lines indicated by him, he would court disaster. We do not want men with no heart, men with the heart of mice, who are afraid of their own shadows and who are not going to borrow money. Such men would bring the country to a standstill. We want men who have confidence in the country, and who will not be afraid even of the deficit we have to face to-day. Speaking with regard to the economies that had been effected in the Railway Department, the Leader of the Opposition said that if there were any economies at all, they had been brought about by the officials by not maintaining the efficiency of the system. He forgot to consult the authorities when he made this statement, or if he did so he cast those authorities to one side in a light-hearted manner. When I suggested that the engineers had spoken very differently with regard to the conduct of our railway system, when I pointed out that Mr. Light, the Chief Engineer for Existing Lines, had stated in reporting on the railways, that the permanent way and works on the various railways of the State had been maintained efficiently for the last twelve months, when I went further and asked him to read the report which showed that the road was in a better condition now than it had been for some time and at all events for the past few years, that the road generally was improving considerably and that the waterways had been kept in better order throughout, the hon. member retorted that those gentlemen who were responsible for the railways were not likely to tell the public of Western Australia that they had gone beyond the margin of safety in the maintenance of the permanent way. The hon. member not only made that statement but he exceeded it for he said he was satisfied that the railways had not been maintained in an efficient manner.

[*Mr. Daughish resumed the Chair.*]

That remark coming from a gentleman who occupies the responsible position of Leader of His Majesty's Opposition in this Parliament was a very wrong statement to make. It is unmanly to accuse responsible railway officials of concocting their reports, it is unmanly to charge those gentlemen with making a report knowing it to be false. That is what the hon. member did and I hope he will take the first opportunity of removing the bad impression that his statement as to the railway system has undoubtedly made throughout the country. The next matter that the hon. member points out—and it is one for which I commend him, and one which I will be very glad to see thoroughly debated—is that of a committee of finance. It appeals to me very strongly, although I did not intend to go into it any great length at the present time. I have making inquiries in two of the Eastern States where this system exists, in order to see the extent to which they go; what powers these committees have, and what good has resulted from their efforts. But the State's finances are so complex and are of so technical a character, that unless we have experts in control of them and experts to criticise them we are apt to get on the wrong track. It seems to me that the Auditor General and the Under Treasurer, who are both experts in finance—it seems to me that if they would agree to come together and discuss their differences amicably in an endeavour to find a solution of each of those difficulties as it arises, it would be better for the interests of the State and we would not require any committee of finance.

Mr. Scaddan: You would remove the independence of the Auditor General at once.

The TREASURER: Is the independence of the Auditor General being attacked at all? The Auditor General has no control over the accounts of the Treasury. The accountancy system of the Treasury has been built up by the Under Treasurer for the last 13 years. It is recognised to be a first-class system; indeed it has been pronounced by ex-

perts of the Eastern States to be the best in the Commonwealth, and in many respects it has been copied by the Commonwealth Treasury itself. That being so, the Auditor General comes along under another Act. All he has to do is to audit the accounts and see that the proper appropriations have been made and that the expenditure is under the proper appropriations. He has not to deal with the system of accountancy. He may suggest alterations which to his thinking may be convenient; but he cannot go beyond that. And I must say there is a rigidity about the Auditor General which I am afraid goes towards preventing that friendly feeling which ought to exist between the two departments. The Auditor General is young, he is energetic and fired with zeal in carrying out the responsible duties of his office. For all that I sincerely commend him. But he hangs to the letter of the law, and is as rigid as the statute itself; and in many instances the interests of the State in my opinion demand that he should be less rigid in that respect. The member for Guildford shakes his head. He was in power in charge of the Works Department when he committed an act not in accordance with either the letter or the spirit of the Audit Act—when he supplied rails and fastenings to the timber hewers in the Collie district. It was distinctly an illegal advance. Yet he made it notwithstanding that the Solicitor General wrote a minute warning him that he was doing something illegal and contrary to the Audit Act. But now the hon. member will not bear me out when I say that there are times when in the interests of the State the Auditor General should put off a little of the rigidity which is his most striking characteristic.

Mr. Johnson: My action had nothing whatever to do with the Auditor General. Moreover, Parliament endorsed my action.

The TREASURER: I say the hon. member flew in the face of the Audit Act, yet he will not support me now when I express the opinion that there are times when the spirit rather than the letter of that Act should be adhered to. Our advances have all been legitimately made;

yet what my friend once regarded as legitimate is, when we are responsible for it, illegal and unpardonable. As I say, I think the Auditor General is too rigid and too severe, and in some instances has touched upon trifling matters which might just as well have been left out of his report. Yet I frankly confess that I commend him for being watchful. On the other hand I believe that the Under Treasurer, having spent a life-time in his office, having initiated a system of accountancy which has been commended by experts here and elsewhere, naturally feels that nothing can be wrong with that system—that it is absolutely perfect. And he resents any attempt at interference therewith. Thus we have on one hand the Under Treasurer who believes his system is not capable of a mistake, and on the other hand the Auditor General, cast-iron in his acts, and declining to take a broad view.

Mr. Johnson: It is watching the Treasurer that we want the Auditor General for.

The TREASURER: I think the hon. member had watched the hon. member in his time, and had hauled him over the coals.

Mr. Johnson: He did report me, and you did your best to have me censured.

The TREASURER: I think the hon. member is mistaken. However, let me say this: The Auditor General should report what he likes to Parliament; yet at the same time I think hon. members ought to see that the Under Treasurer has a chance of putting his side of the question before Parliament also. One cannot take *ex parte* statements of the kind contained in the Auditor General's report without hearing the reasons for the debit or for the credit, or the reasons for the error committed, if error it be. Members of Parliament ought not to rise up in their wrath and condemn unheard people who are not aware of having done anything wrong. It was Mr. Gardiner, I think, who introduced the Audit Act in 1904; and when speaking before this House on that occasion he made it clear that his intention was that in the event of the Auditor General taking exception to individual transactions of the Treasury his report should form a special report

on the subject and be transmitted to the Treasurer in order that the Under Treasurer and his staff might be able to put their side of the case also before Parliament in answer to the Auditor General's report; and that both documents should come before Parliament. Anyone can sit down and criticise the methods of another person in accountancy; but it is a much more difficult thing to take charge of the office and make alterations which will obviate such criticism in the future. I wish to say that both these officers are officers to be proud of—both the Auditor General and the Under Treasurer. And I think we ought to give them credit for doing, and advising their responsible Ministers to do, what in their estimation is in the best interests of the country. Every action taken in the Treasury since I have been in it has been taken in the best interests of the country, and I care not what may have been reported to Parliament to the contrary. The advance account, the Government sales of property, the stores accounts—they are all in the best interests of this State, notwithstanding the fact that in the opinion of the Auditor General they are not in accordance with his Audit Act. Exception has been taken to the stores account. From time immemorial this account has been treated as a cash account advanced out of general cash of the State. And as the goods are sent out to the different works they are charged up to loan or to revenue as the case may be. Surely that is a proper system. It is a system that acts well, and one that other States have had to follow. In Victoria they started many years ago to place votes on their estimates for the purchase of stores—on the revenue estimates, perhaps £100,000 for stores, and another £100,000 for stores on the loan estimates. This went on year after year until they got so tangled up that literally they knew not where they were. Then they had to do away with the system and adopt the system we have in this State. Yet that is the very system which the Auditor General condemns. I shall be pleased indeed to have any committee—whether it be a special committee from this House or a committee of experts from outside

the House—to investigate all these matters, and to recommend to Parliament what is the best system to adopt. But in the meantime I do object to being saddled with the responsibility of having initiated this system, when as a matter of fact I am simply carrying on the system I found in vogue. I suppose no explanation will satisfy those who are determined to be opposed to me.

Mr. Johnson: We do not like you talking around the question.

THE TREASURER: Unfortunately I am talking somewhat at the hon. member and he does not like that. The next item which struck me in the speech of the Leader of the Opposition the other evening was his peculiar attitude in saying I have no right to blame the Commonwealth for our shortage in revenue to-day. Well I do not know whether I have any right or not. I suppose I have the freedom and right of a representative of this State to take any view I think proper on this point, and I think I have on many occasions successfully proved that our shortage in revenue to-day is very largely attributable to our having joined Federation. The hon. member seems to think to-day—and from his remarks one would naturally suppose he is shortly to be an aspirant for Federal honours—he seems to think no blame can be attributed to the Federal Parliament; that nothing they do can possibly be wrong, and that we ought not to take any exception to the attitude of the Federal Treasurer towards the States. But I cannot reconcile that with the action of the hon. gentleman when two years ago he accompanied me to Melbourne to attend a conference of State Treasurers. At that time one could not have had a more loyal supporter of the interests of Western Australia. He took the initiative I think, in moving the continuation of the Braddon Clause and the book-keeping system in perpetuity. He realised that the States were likely to have a bad time—

Mr. Bath: But that was against the proposals of the other States, not of the Federal Parliament.

The TREASURER: It was to adjust the financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the States.

Mr. Bath: My objection was taken to the proposals of the other States as against Western Australia.

The TREASURER: But does that alter the position? The hon. member, realising at that time that the Braddon Clause and the book-keeping system in perpetuity were essential to the financial stability of Western Australia, took a manly stand and advocated that they should be retained.

Mr. Troy: Due to bad company.

The TREASURER: I hope so.

Mr. Johnson: Is he advocating anything different to-day?

The TREASURER: To-day he says the Federal Government can do no harm, they have the right to take this money, the Surplus Revenue Act is all right, and they have the right to take the money that legitimately belongs to Western Australia.

Mr. Bath: They are entitled under the Braddon Clause to the surplus revenue.

The TREASURER: They are entitled under the Braddon Clause to the extent of a quarter of the customs and excise revenue, if they expend it they are entitled to expend it; if they do not expend it under that clause they are entitled to return it to the States, and they do not expend it; to that extent they have taken something they were not entitled to, and which the framers of the Constitution never intended that they should be entitled to take. Surely the State legislators are representative of the interests of the State, and it is our duty to see that we get a proper financial settlement between the Commonwealth and the State; if not, where are we going to land? Unification is standing out prominently before us, and members opposite, apparently, will support this drifting into Unification. In other words, they say that we should reduce the franchise of the Upper House, or do away with the Upper House altogether.

Mr. Troy: Yes, do away with the Upper House.

The TREASURER: He is prepared to hand over the control of Western Aus-

tralia to the favourable care of members of the Federal Parliament.

Mr. Walker: I do not think one member on this side of the House says that.

The TREASURER: The hon. member says it. The hon. member has plenty of sins to answer for, let him answer for himself.

Mr. Johnson: Which member said it?

The TREASURER: The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Bath: No.

The TREASURER: Turn up his speeches and see; the Leader of the Opposition certainly said so. It amounts to this. He says that if you do not reduce the franchise of the Upper House, he for one was prepared to let the State go into the hands of the Federal Government. If that is a patriotic view to take of Western Australia, then I say the sooner the hon. member gets out of his position the better, and let someone else take charge of the Opposition benches. (Interruption.) Members are just endorsing the statement I have made, they are all thinking that way; the people are going that way, and they are assisting the people to get their desire.

Mr. Hudson: If you want the admission straight out I will make it.

The TREASURER: Then I say those hon. members are not true to the State of Western Australia, they are absolutely untrue to the State which they are supposed to represent.

Mr. Troy: Members who support the Upper House are not true to Western Australia.

The TREASURER: After dealing with this matter I have to sit still and listen to some comments on the increase in the deficit, which, unfortunately, during the first three or four months of this financial year had shown very badly; that is, our revenue had not come in owing to various causes which I have made public since. And I have had to sit still and listen with all the patience which I have at my command, and it is vast, and listen to the criticisms, because the deficit had increased during the first four months to the tune of £140,000. The Leader of the Opposition, in his anxiety to dub me as being incapable of con-

trolling the Treasury, and I suppose also of dishonesty in my methods, quoted South Australia as a shining example of finance. He condemns me utterly when I mention any of the Eastern States, to show that the position of Western Australia is more favourable than our sister States of the Commonwealth; but he does not, however, object to quote South Australia if he may do so to belittle my position, and endeavour to show that I am at sea in connection with the finances. What is the position as to South Australia? And what is our position compared to it? South Australia in 1887 debited to sinking fund and credited to revenue £730,000; in 1892-5 South Australia debited the sum of £261,000, and in 1902 that State issued some Treasury bills to cover a deficit amounting to £239,000, a total of £1,230,000; £91,000 has been repaid to the sinking fund up to the 30th June, 1907, that is to go against the £991,000; £91,000 has been repaid, and in regard to the second item the Treasury bills of £239,000, the sum of £222,000 has been repaid, so even at the present time, at any rate at the end of the financial year 1906-7 there was still a debit balance account in South Australia of £911,000. Yet the member has the audacity—

Mr. Bath: It has been decreased by £1,300,000.

The TREASURER: I doubt if South Australia could put away a million from her revenue in one year. If that is the total they have nearly wiped it out. Still they have as large a deficit as we have, yet this member has the audacity to twit me with our sinking fund and with my gross incapacity; he held up South Australia as a shining example, when they have had a deficit accumulating over 20 years.

Mr. Bath: I was only making a comparison between the last two years, since the Labour Government in South Australia—that they reduced it by £1,300,000.

The TREASURER: We have, unfortunately, not only as I have shown, misstatements by members in their anxiety to condemn the Government, not only have we ungentlemanly language and offensive terms cast at us by the Leader

of the Opposition who ought to know better; he looks so gentlemanly that one might doubt whether we could use such terms.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member should impute offensive terms to another member.

The TREASURER: I only repeated the terms which the hon. member used. He said I was guilty of dishonest finance, during the debate.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not an expression a leader should use.

The TREASURER: I will pass away from that; I am glad to leave the terms in the background; I am not accustomed to use these words. The hon. member attacks the Government on every possible occasion of being incapable in connection with their methods of finance. He is not generous enough to admit that economies have been effected in the various departments, but continually denies that economies have been effected, and when he is faced with figures and facts to prove such is the case then he says it is sweating, or we have not maintained our railway system, or are not dealing fairly with the worker, the man who is entitled to a rise of wages on every occasion, and a shortening of hours. I want to show to the Committee to-night, quietly and calmly, that these charges are absolutely unfair, that they are absolutely inaccurate, and that very great strides and great economies have been effected by the Government during their present term of office. We have been three years in office, not under the Premiership of the member for Bunbury, but two years under the Premiership of the member for Bunbury, and one year under the Premiership of the present Agent General, Mr. Rason. And if we look at that great department, the Lands Department, which undoubtedly is responsible for a very great expenditure in connection with the State's finances, we cannot but be struck with the fact that—perhaps many more improvements can be made there yet—great work has been done, especially by the Premier during his term in charge of that department. The first year, the year prior to our taking office, that is the year the hon.

gentleman so ably filled the post of Minister for Lands for a short time, the Lands Department, including the Woods and Forests Department, cost the State £136,000, and three years later the expenditure was £111,000, or a saving of £25,000, and this notwithstanding the fact that the work had almost doubled, and that the revenue had increased in the same period by £76,000, and that revenue had proved conclusively that the work of the department has also increased.

Mr. Bath: And the saving effected in 1905 by us was claimed by the present Minister because he happened to introduce the Estimates.

The TREASURER: I am not saying the hon. member did not save something between the previous year and his year of office, I am repelling his attack that this Administration made no economies. Here are the figures standing out patent to anyone who likes to read them, that in the three years of the present Premier's occupancy of the office of Minister for Lands he reduced the expenditure by £25,000 per annum and increased the revenue by £76,000, that is, he did 50 per cent. more work with £25,000 less expenditure; is that not economy?

Mr. Bath: He did not make the saving.

The TREASURER: He made the saving.

Mr. Bath: It was made by us; he happened to have to introduce the Estimates.

The TREASURER: No, I am comparing the first year prior to the hon. gentleman taking charge of the department with last year. It is no use going six months ahead or 12 months ahead when some of the economies made have been effected in his predecessor's time. I am taking the term of four years when the hon. gentleman filled the office—he only filled it for four months.

Mr. Bath: Six weeks you mean.

The TREASURER: I know full well that he had no time to get a grasp of the department, it took him all his time to keep out of the clutches of the department. The present Minister has made that saving and it is idle for members to detract from it. We have the

same thing in regard to railways. In the year 1904-5, the year I have referred to, the year prior to our taking office, the expenditure on the railways was £1,295,000, last year it was £1,023,000, showing a saving of £272,000. Will members tell me that is all due to sweating and to neglect of the permanent way? The thing is preposterous, and practical men would not listen to such arguments for a moment.

Mr. Hudson: Your observations are artistic.

The TREASURER: They are true; they are artistic no doubt, they always are, but what is more, they are also true, which is better still. It is true the revenue of the department decreased from £1,628,000 to £1,518,000, showing a decrease of £110,000, but the economies are there, standing out right above for anyone to see in the broad daylight. There are economies in administration, and I defy any member to show that the economies are due to the neglect of the permanent way, after the reports I have read from the engineers.

Mr. Johnson: It has been neglected, the maintenance, the rolling stock, and the permanent way.

The TREASURER: I am prepared to take the reports of the practical engineers of the department before the statement of the member for Guildford. The hon. member knows very little about railways and rolling stock. In 1904-5 we spent on replacement of rolling stock £40,000 and we spent on vacuum brakes £14,000 and on new works and improvements £14,000 as against £30,000 for replacement of rolling stock and £2,375 for new works and improvements this year. Notwithstanding this difference in favour of 1904-5 of £35,000, and there is a large saving in the way of economy in the administration of that great commercial undertaking. Royal Commissions in 1904-5 cost £8,239. I know it was said on many occasions that the Government ruled the country by Royal Commissions in that year. Last year the cost was £1,985, an immense saving of something like £6,500.

Mr. Johnson: You got your railway policy from Royal Commissions.

The TREASURER: Did we? I do not think we effected any economies through the Royal Commissions. Economies were effected against the opposition of the hon. member who just interjected. Parks and reserves cost £7,700 in 1904-5, while last year the amount was £4,510, a reduction of £3,190. The Printing Office, to which I will refer later, cost the State £38,782 in 1904-5, whereas last year it cost only £29,023, a reduction of £9,759 and in addition 50 per cent. more work was done, as well as £4,000 worth of Commonwealth work.

Mr. Bath: You let more printing out to private firms.

The TREASURER: We did nothing of the sort; in fact there is less printing being done now for the Government by private firms than was ever done before. I challenge the hon. members to prove the contrary. You can see at once economies have been effected everywhere. There are numerous smaller economies, but they amount to a good round sum in the aggregate. In the Treasury and Premier's Departments there was a decrease of £1,685. The Tender Board shows a saving of £1,710. There were increases in two items in the Treasury, the embossing department which cost £309 and liquor department which cost £564. The Lands Titles expenditure was decreased from £10,195 in 1904-5 to £8,602 last year. And notwithstanding all this our population has gone on increasing. In every department there has been an absolute decrease in expenditure. The Supreme Court shows a decrease of £1,265. The revenue has also decreased there by £845. This department is one which hon. members are apt to throw in the teeth of the Government when the opportunity arises. Notwithstanding that our population increased from 242,000 on the 31st December, 1904, to 263,000 on the 31st December, 1907, yet the police department has been able to effect some slight reduction in the cost of administration, amounting to £2,099. The registry department shows a decrease from £9,137 to £6,568; and so on until we come to the Agricultural and Education Departments, where decreases cannot take place owing to the expansion of population and

agricultural pursuits. There is not a member who for one moment would countenance a decrease in the expenditure in either of these departments, unless by way of effecting economies. It is essential, that having embarked upon a great land settlement policy of developing the agricultural resources, we should give every assistance to the department in furtherance of that policy. The future of this country depends upon the rapid development and settlement of the agricultural lands, and notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary there is an expansion.

Mr. Bath: How is it that the figures in the *Statistical Abstract* differ from yours?

The TREASURER: I do not know, but the hon. member can submit them to me and I will be glad to look into them. These figures of mine have been taken out for me by experts in the Treasury and checked, and I am prepared to stand by them, and whether the hon. member has got on the wrong track or not I do not know, but I venture to believe that he has. To finish up let me refer to some serious charges which the member for Balkatta made in connection with the Government Printing Office. I have never had the opportunity of referring to these charges before. The hon. member made some very erroneous remarks and explanations with regard to that establishment, the conduct of which I must say I am very proud of. The management I think is excellent, but of course notwithstanding good management numbers of groundless complaints will always come in. The hon. member said we were sweating employees and that we were employing boys and girls where men should be employed under an Arbitration Court award.

Mr. Gill: I feel positive I did not mention girls.

The TREASURER: Yet we are employing a number of girls.

Mr. Gill: Not in connection with machinery.

The TREASURER: Sitting behind machinery, some of them.

Mr. Gill: I said nothing about girls.

The TREASURER: Well then we will say boys. I think it was the member for Kanowna who emphasised girls. He said we were working boys where men should be employed, and that there was an Arbitration Court award which we were committing a breach of.

Mr. Gill: I admit it does not apply to the Government Printing Office.

The TREASURER: Then what was the charge?

Mr. Gill: That the award applied outside and that you did not apply the same conditions in the Government Printing Office.

The TREASURER: But the award does not apply outside, except to bookbinders and paper-rulers. The award of the Arbitration Court was given in connection with the Bookbinders and Paper-rulers' Association, and there is no printers' award in existence at the present time. That award as far as it applies to outside firms also applies to the Government Printing Office. In every case where there is an award of the Arbitration Court it is observed by the Government Printer in dealing with his hands. There is no award limiting the number of men to be employed on machines in the printing department and obviously that would be unfair. There is an award limiting one man to one machine in the ruling department, because that is necessary. Where you are dealing with colours you must have a man standing over the machine all the time. When you are doing work of this description even in the Printing Office you must have one man in charge of one machine. He must be there in constant attendance to see that the colours do not run. When you are working a printing machine which may be turning out telegraph forms, say by the tens of thousands, the machine may run four or five days a week without requiring constant attention.

Mr. Gill: When accidents happen deductions are made from the pay of those in charge.

The TREASURER: I will come to that. A man is placed in charge of perhaps one or two, and sometimes three machines. If he sets a machine which

is going to run 48 hours it is not necessary for him to stand looking at that machine. In no part of the Commonwealth is such a thing done. I have wires from several States and I have the award given in New Zealand in which there is no limitation as to the number of machines to one man. I find throughout the Commonwealth in no case does one man look after only one machine. It goes without saying that it would be unwise and certainly would not be economical and not in the interests of the men themselves. When men are engaged on a particular work they naturally have to adopt particular means and the officer in charge of the work sees that no man is put on to more machines than he can supervise. And although there is a rule that a man must be responsible for mistakes which are made in his department, that is, if he through his own neglect allows some injury to be done or work to be spoilt, or if through his own wrongdoing the work is spoilt, he is charged, but not otherwise. To show that the statements that the hon. member has heard from the man in the street are not correct—and I am sorry to think that hon. members are too fond of listening to the man in the street—let me tell him that during the two and a-half years the present Government Printer has been in charge, a total sum of £7 7s. 9d. has been deducted by way of fines or compensation for spoilt work from the whole of the employees. In only one instance has it reached anything like a figure worth mentioning. In one case it was 25s. and in all the other cases 16s. down to 6d. and 9d. Let me also inform the Committee that the Government Printer inquires personally into every charge of this description. He does not leave anything of that kind to his foremen, and in no case has a man ever had to pay for an error of the boy who is feeding the machines in his absence.

Mr. Gill: It sounds nice, but I have had experience myself in the Government departments.

The TREASURER: I want the Committee to understand that what I have said is absolutely correct, and that there is nothing wrong in that department. I

would like the hon. member to go to the department and see everything for himself. I would be pleased to make an arrangement for the hon. member to visit the Government Printing Office and ask the Government Printer to take him round. I took the opportunity of going round the other day after the statements the hon. member made, and especially after the statements of the member for Kanowna. It is most interesting to contrast the statements of the member for Kanowna when speaking on this question a few years ago with the statements he made the other evening. No one could be stronger on the Government Printing Office than the member for Kanowna. He had not language which was strong enough to condemn that institution in July, 1906. In *Hansard* he is reported to have said:—

"The men in the Printing Office were not up-to-date. Some of them were loafers who could not get a day's work in any private office. One drunken man was paid for looking after another drunken man in this thoroughly disorganised establishment, where men in the lower ranks bossed those supposed to be their superiors, and told them what should be done and what neglected. The office was run by the old loafers, who were there practically as pensioners. He was glad to see that the Premier had instituted inquiries into the department, and that steps were being taken to remodel it. It was an Augean stable, and required cleansing from top to bottom. Though not in favour of increasing the supply of unemployed labour, for he rather believed in giving as much employment as possible, he did not believe in the State or anyone keeping on a lot of loafers at the cost of the State."

That was the hon. member's exposition of the Government Printing Office two and a-half years ago. On the next evening he went on to say:—

"I still repeat that it is the duty of the Government to see that the Printing Office is kept clean. All that I said the other night has been justified by what the Treasurer has told us to-night. This establishment does need

reorganisation. This establishment does need reform. This establishment has not been conducted as it ought to have been in the past. It has been extravagant, and there is need for economy there."

Then he went on to say that he did not think a select committee would be of any use; that he had perfect confidence in the Treasurer to sweep out the department—to clean the Augean stable, and to make the necessary reform. Now I have made these reforms and the hon. member the other night said—

"We have heard to-night from the member for Balkatta, and he has not been answered by the Minister for Works, how they are doing in the Printing Office, putting girls to work there. The father of a family, the husband, the man who has to keep the house together—in past times he earned proper wages and was able to keep his children respectable."

That was the loafer of two years ago. The hon. member continued—

"Now what do we find? We find one man in charge of two, three, or four machines, and lads working them. We find the men themselves who are thus working compelled to sacrifice their wages to the extent that if any of these boys spoil the work that is being done upon these machines the man's wages will be cut down. Girls are employed where men were once employed."

That is the indictment of the hon. member to-day. I could go into very much fuller details. But surely it is sufficient to point out that when the case was before the Arbitration Court—I am referring to the case of the book-binders, who were represented in court by Mr. McCallum, then an employee in the Government Printing Office—Mr. McCallum was asked if the employees in that department had decreased considerably. He said that they had. His words were—

"I do not think that there are fifty per cent. of the book-binders there that there were. I should like to explain that a lot of unskilled work which used to be done at the Government Printing

Office by journeymen is now done by unskilled hands."

So hon. members will see it is not that we are employing boys and girls to do men's work to-day; but that men were employed some years ago to do the work of boys and girls instead of the work being left to boys and girls as it is to-day. We have altered that position and we have brought about an enormous saving. Two and a-half years ago Mr. Simpson, the Government Printer, took charge of the department. In his first year, without any additional machinery he effected a reduction of £6,000; and in the year 1907-8 he effected a further reduction of £7,000, as compared with the year 1905-6, in addition to which he is now paying for power and lighting, previously provided by the Public Works Department, and has added some £1,200 worth of new machinery out of his revenue vote. All this represents a cash saving effected during two and a-half years of about £18,000, in addition to which Mr. Simpson has turned out about 50 per cent. more work. In other words, had the old regime of 1905-6 remained; had the boys and girls not been employed upon the legitimate work to which they were entitled, and had the loafers been kept on, our printing bill would have cost us this year £45,000 instead of £30,000. I trust I need not dilate any further upon this department at the present juncture. Some very severe strictures have been passed in another place upon this printing department and its work; passed, too, by an hon. member who ought to have been more conversant with the true state of affairs. I ask the hon. member in another place to compare the £29,000 cost of the department with the £19,000 cost of the Commonwealth Printing Office. That member forgot the numerous items given out departmentally in the Federal Parliament; and he failed to look into the figures to see what they really were. The Federal printing and stationery bills amount to £96,484. The amount of £19,000 which the hon. member used in his comparison was for the Commonwealth Parliamentary printing alone, and not for that of other Commonwealth departments which go to make up a huge

expenditure. For instance, the cost of printing for the Commonwealth Postal department is £52,285; for Defence, £5,036; Trade and Customs, £10,651; the Treasury, £799; Home Affairs, £5,677; the Attorney General, £340; Executive Council, £3; and the department of External Affairs, £2,277. Now I do not want to go any deeper into this matter at the present juncture. If necessary I shall be prepared to go into it more fully later on; but I would like to say the Printing Office is worthy of inspection by members. The Government Printer has faithfully carried out his duties, and rather than be led by the man in the street hon. members should take an opportunity of going down and inspecting the place for themselves. It is a privilege to which they are entitled, and I shall be only too glad to afford them the opportunity.

(General debate concluded : Votes and Items discussed as follows).

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £1,148.

Item, Clerk in Governor's Office, £300 :

Mr. NANSON: The present was a particularly convenient time for dealing with the matter of His Excellency's salary, seeing that the tenure of office of the present occupier of the position would shortly expire. Some six years ago when a similar opportunity arose he (Mr. Nanson) had brought up this matter and urged that the salary of the Governor should be materially reduced. He had then pointed out that in Canada the salaries paid to Governors were very much lower than those obtaining in the Australian States. For instance, in a State like Ontario with a population of nearly three millions the Governor was paid a salary of £2,000 a year.

The Attorney General: He is Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. NANSON: By whatever name the official was called he fulfilled all the functions of Governor. The Governor of Quebec was paid a similar amount. In fact in none of the Canadian provinces were the Governors paid more than £2,000 a year, while in some the amount was only £1,400. Six years ago he (Mr. Nanson) had been of the opinion that the

Governor's salary should be reduced; and in the time that had since elapsed the case in favour of reducing the cost of the Governor's establishment had been very much strengthened. The condition of the finances were not so good as they had been six years ago, and under Federation the conditions of the State had altered very considerably. The State was confronted with the unification movement, which was not to be treated with contempt. The best way of combating that movement was by setting our house in order. Unless Parliament showed that it was prepared to establish radical economies the people would be found declaring in favour of the functions of the State Government and Parliament being performed by the Government and Parliament of the Commonwealth. It might be said that it would be difficult to get a suitable gentleman for the position at a salary of £2,000. That contention could hardly be supported. He (Mr. Nanson) was in accordance with the view that the position should be open to persons resident in the State or in the Commonwealth, or anywhere within the Empire. The service of the Empire should be as much open to a distinguished Australian as though he were resident in the mother country. Nothing but good could result from an interchange of distinguished persons among the different States forming part of the Empire. When first the position of Governor of the Transvaal had been established it was mooted that the late Mr. Seddon—the then Premier of New Zealand—should be appointed to the position. Had a course of that kind been taken no doubt it would have been an advantage to South Africa, and a high compliment to New Zealand and to that distinguished statesman now dead. While suggesting that the salary should not be more than £2,000 a year, he made no suggestion as to limiting the area of choice, though he thought it possible that within the Commonwealth there could be found a number of men who had worked so well for the State that we could feel sure if they were appointed Governors they would adorn the positions and give the utmost satisfaction to the community at large. It was to be hoped the Pre-

mier would be able to give some assurance that the Government would, during the interval between the retirement of the present Governor and the appointment of the next see whether it was possible to make the innovation suggested; because it would be a good thing for a Government chosen from members on this side of the House to initiate a reform of this character rather than to leave it to a later date and have it carried out by a Government chosen from members on the Opposition side of the House. With regard to the attitude of the Imperial Parliament on this matter, so far back as nearly half a century Mr. Gladstone, speaking in a representative capacity, expressed the opinion in the House of Commons that if the colonies wished to appoint their own Governors there could be no objection to the course. Mr. Gladstone speaking on March 22, 1867, on the subject of Canada Loan Bill, said:—

“We have for a quarter of a century acknowledged absolutely the right of self government in the colonies. We do not expect the laws of Canada or of Australia to be modelled according to our own ideas. We grant them a greater freedom from interference than, as amongst the three kingdoms, the Legislatures grants to the peculiar ideas that may happen to prevail in one of those three. We have carried it to this point, that as far as regards the Administration, I believe that it may be said that the only officer appointed by the Colonial Secretary is the Governor; and I believe there cannot be a doubt that if it were the well-ascertained desire of the colonies to have the appointment of their own Governor, the Imperial Parliament would at once make over to them that power.”

There was to-day a feeling in favour of exercising some kind of voice in the choice of Governor. Certainly Parliament had the power in regard to the amount of the salary, and probably if the salary were brought to the smaller amount the Home Government would be glad to allow the State Parliament to exercise a certain amount of nomination. It is quite possible that they might wel-

come some sort of hint as to a suitable candidate drawn from Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: Before this matter proceeded further, the discussion was not altogether relevant to the item. The hon. member had drawn his attention to his desire to get an assurance from the Premier, and had been allowed that latitude; but now the attention of members must be drawn to the fact that the proper procedure in bringing forward a question of this importance was to do it by motion given after the ordinary notice.

Mr. NANSON: In speaking on this item he had taken the view if the Government decided to decrease the salary of the Governor in future, it would probably not be necessary for this particular item of £300 for the clerk to appear on the Estimates.

Mr. Bath: Do I understand it will not be within my province to discuss this question?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not be prevented from discussing the remarks any member had been allowed to make, but at the same time he would be glad if members in their remarks would bear in mind the discussion was irrelevant, and would confine their observations, if he might suggest it, within reasonable limits.

Mr. BATH: If a member gave notice of motion to test the opinion of the House on this question it was improbable we would have the opportunity of really securing the opinion of the House. The opportunity for discussion might be secured, but it was improbable there would be sufficient time to secure an expression of opinion, which, after all, was the essential feature of a discussion of this sort. The item under discussion was no doubt altogether out of the province of this Assembly, because it was on the civil list and therefore not on the Estimates to be discussed by the Committee, but it was necessary that members should have an opportunity of referring to it briefly, because it was a particularly favourable opportunity for an expression of opinion. If a majority of members favoured the idea of securing a less expensive establishment the reform could be made during the forthcoming inter-

regnum between the retirement of the present Governor and the appointment of his successor. There was a general expression of opinion that after Federation and the establishment of a Governor-General for the whole of Australia, there should be reform in this direction. In fact in 1904 a motion had been carried in favour of a change being made, and in favour of a local appointment. That motion was practically an instruction to the Government then existing, and now the opportunity arose for the present Government to carry out the reform; and if it was the opinion of members of the House that there should be a local appointment, that opinion could be taken by the Premier and conveyed to the proper authorities at Home. No doubt one of the inducements held out by men of all shades of opinion to bring about Federation was that there would be opportunity for economising in the State Government House establishments. Sir Josiah Symon, at Kalgoorlie, had advocated that we should effect this saving. Of course the difference of opinion was as to how the appointment should be made. The thorough-going democrat said there should be an election of the Governor or Lieutenant Governor, but he (Mr. Bath) was not in favour of constituting in Western Australia what would be practically another legislative authority, because we could not elect a Governor without vesting in him certain legislative or executive powers. Certainly the position would be other than merely registering the opinions of, or resolutions carried by, Cabinet. Circumstances did not demand that we should go to all the trouble and expense of choosing the Governor in such an elaborate way. We could adopt something on the lines adopted in America, and have some person vested with executive powers so far as Parliament was concerned, and we could have the functions now carried out by the State Governor delegated to him; and as the gentleman chosen would be a resident of Western Australia, the duties could be fulfilled with as much dignity and credit to the State as under the present system. Since the establishment of the Federal Government House

the necessity for the State establishments on the same scale no longer existed. The member for Greenough, to test the feeling of the Committee, should move a reduction of this item as an instruction to the Government.

The PREMIER : As intimated already this was an opportune moment for members to discuss this question. No doubt since Federation, as the hon. member said, the responsibilities of State Governors were not so great as they were prior to Federation, but it was expressly provided in the Federal Constitution that we, as a sovereign State, should take no steps to in any way lessen the powers we possessed at the time of Federation. So far as the appointment of State Governors was concerned, in utter contradistinction to the procedure adopted in Canada, His Majesty appointed them, and it did not necessarily follow that he should not appoint a citizen of the Commonwealth, whereas, so far as the Canadian States were concerned, the position of State Governor was really an official position, the appointment being made by the central executive of Canada. If the same course were followed here it would mean that the Federal Government would appoint the Governors for the various States. This question was recently raised by the Premier of South Australia, and a despatch was forwarded to the Colonial Office suggesting that a citizen of the Commonwealth should be appointed Governor of that State. It was said in the reply despatch from Lord Crewe that a stipulation was expressly provided in the Constitution in regard thereto, and that unless the various States asked for an alteration the same procedure as hitherto would be followed. The objection to the system of a State appointment was that it would come down to a recommendation from the Government of the day ; therefore, it would be a purely political appointment to be made by the Ministry on the expiration of the Governor's term of office. It was questionable whether that would be wise.

Mr. Nanson : The Government now appoint the Judges.

The PREMIER : The Judges were entirely distinct from politics, but it might be that in connection with a political appointment such as that of Governor, the position would be offered to one whom the Government would be very glad to get rid of. As to the remuneration for the position, members must be aware there were many calls on the gentleman holding the position of Governor, and the present salary was none too large. Hospitality had to be extended by the representative of the King to distinguished visitors who called here, and as pointed out by Sir Walter James, when Premier, many obligations in this respect devolved on His Excellency. At the time that statement was made the population was just over 210,000, while now it was 280,000, and the obligations naturally increased with an increase in population.

Mr. Johnson : Not necessarily so.

The PREMIER : The salary of the Governor of New South Wales was very much greater than that of the Governor here.

Mr. Scaddan : The general taxpayers pay for the entertainment of the élité.

The PREMIER : Under the Federal Constitution the right was expressly reserved to the sovereign States to continue the same method of appointment, in contradistinction of the Canadian system, where the positions of Governors were Executive appointments made by the Government.

Mr. JACOBY : The time had arrived for an alteration to be made. The position of Governor should be retained as that official dealt direct with the Colonial Office, while the Lieutenant Governor had to put all documents he handled through the Governor-General, and, necessarily, they came under the view of the Federal Ministry. If that were done it would be robbing the State of its status. There was no objection to the appointment of a local gentleman as Governor. There was no justification for the large staff maintained at Government House, and he could not help expressing the hope that we would find a man with the necessary capacity to carry out the duties, and who would accept the position at the salary

of £1,000 a year. He could be supplied with one clerk instead of the rather elaborate system now obtaining at Government House. There would shortly be an opportunity to make an alteration in the system of appointing a Governor.

Mr. HOPKINS: The first issue to be determined was whether, if the appointment was to be made within the State, the post would be filled with the same capacity as under existing conditions. Repeatedly it had happened that the various State Governors had applied for extended leave and returned to the old country, and the office had been filled during their absence by the Lieutenant-Governors. They had been filled with ability quite as conspicuous as that which characterised the permanent appointees. In this State a few months ago, the Lieutenant-Governor filled the position for about six months, and if he was capable of doing so, and as no outcry had been raised in the country, it was obvious he would be just as capable of filling it for six years. The weakness of the South Australian Executive, in connection with their protest against the appointment of a Governor, was in connection with the salary. Had they reduced the salary, more courtesy would have been received when the matter was dealt with by the Colonial Office. Mention had been made of political bias. If a gentleman was in possession of a judicial mind, with such qualities as were looked for more particularly in the Chief Justice of the State, who controlled one of our courts where the lives of our fellow subjects were at stake, surely he would be qualified to determine the various issues that might arise between parties on either side of this House. If he failed to do so, as it was asserted a Governor of Queensland had failed, the people were capable of rectifying any blunders. In every instance an appeal to the country showed whether a decision arrived at by the Governor in dealing with a political situation had been correct or not. Owing to the service rendered by our Lieutenant-Governor to the State when filling the position of a judge he was retired on a good pension, and if he were appointed

to the position of Governor that pension would be saved for some years. Doubtless, also, the gentleman holding the position would be very glad to fill the office of Governor in his declining years.

The Attorney General: That would not save the pension.

Mr. HOPKINS: While Sir John Forrest was in the Ministry he did not take the pension he received for his exploration services to the country. At any rate, a further reduction to the salary of Governor would be possible. If the Chief Justice declined office at a salary of £1,000 a year, doubtless even in this Chamber one or two members would be found who would not decline the position. The State, through Parliament, would be easily capable of assisting the Colonial Office in making an appointment satisfactory, not only to Parliament, but also satisfactory and economical to the State. As to the extension of hospitality, it was well known that lavish hospitality had been extended by men holding office other than that of Governor. For his own part he disapproved of a large expenditure in connection with Government House. If the State desired to introduce economies it was quite unnecessary to maintain the elaborate ballroom which formed part of Government House, and which was apparently a white elephant. It was hardly, if ever, used. That room might be well turned to much better account. He would support the suggestion of the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson), and without desiring to make any reflection on the present Governor or his predecessors, he was of opinion now as many thought when Federation was introduced, that the Governor General would be quite adequate to represent his Majesty in the Commonwealth.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Two views could be taken on the question, and it all depended on the one adopted as to whether one arrived at the conclusion some hon. members held that it was desirable to abolish the present system of the appointment of Governors, or whether, on the other hand, one adhered to the maintenance of the office, but on a more economical scale. If he

rightly interpreted the sentiment of the Leader of the Opposition, that gentleman belonged to the school who thought that, as Federation had resulted in the appointment of a Governor General, the same necessity did not exist now as previously for the appointment of State Governors. We all knew that the appointment was made by the King. It was necessary to maintain the avenue of communication between the State and the Imperial Parliament. There were to-day questions of the gravest importance that our views in connection with which we desired should be taken into account by the Imperial authorities. If we allowed for one moment the position of the direct representative of the King to be abolished, we should have no avenue for sending home our views.

Members: Why?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: We should have to send them through the Governor General. What happened when the Governor General received a despatch? He sent it through his Ministers to the State and when the State made an answer to that despatch, the Governor General again submitted that answer to his Ministers and it went home not in the light of the views we held, but in the light of the views of the Federal Ministers.

Members: Oh!

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was no use members saying "oh"; they had no knowledge of the circumstances.

Mr. Scaddan: What about the separation petition that the goldfields got up?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was encouraged by one single Minister of the British Crown, and he went out of his way to create an avenue for that petition to be entertained. That did not alter what he was pointing out to the Committee. There were two schools, one school believed that now having Federation we did not want to keep the State life intact, and that everything should go through the Governor General. Hon. members opposite were honest enough to say that. It was of the greatest importance that we should maintain our own avenue of direct communication and that we should not take

the views of the Ministers of the Federal Government. The proposal was that at a considerably reduced salary we should obtain the service of some person whom the King would appoint as his representative. In the first place it was necessary to recognise that in making the appointment, naturally the Home Government would require that the person holding the office should be provided with sufficient salary to maintain the dignity of the office or that he should be a man capable of doing this out of his own private means. He (the Attorney General) would refuse to agree to any person coming here with private means and spending them in the interests of the State.

Mr. Bath: There was no need for it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: We were forced back to the position that it would be possible to obtain the services of some person who would carry out all the duties of the office at a much reduced salary. It was perfectly true that during the absence of the Governor from the State some person had acted as Deputy Governor, not as Lieutenant Governor as some hon. members imagined, but as Governor's Deputy, as such was entitled to half the Governor's salary. He would venture to say that during the term that another person had occupied the position of Governor's Deputy, and had conducted the establishment of Government House, he had also conducted his own personal expenses on the most economical possible lines. It was a duty which every Governor should discharge, and which perhaps had not been discharged so adequately as they might wish, that he should go over every part of the State, to learn its possibilities, and be in a measure a person who would interest himself and interest others in the development that was in progress, and if the Governor did that on a scale which we had a right to expect, the salary the State provided would be in no sense excessive. He would hesitate very much before he would undertake upon the salary provided for the Governor's establishment in this State to discharge all those duties which one might well say were associated with

the office. If it were possible as hon. members thought it was, to discharge the duties at a reduced remuneration, he would be at one with them in bringing about such reduction, but he could not believe that these duties could be discharged by an occupant of the office at a salary lower than that which appeared at present on the Estimates. There was one other matter he would ask the Committee to take into consideration. Admittedly if we got the right local man for the office, it would be the best appointment to make, and also admittedly, if the suggestion was made to the Home Government by the Governor of the State, the Home Government must take that suggestion seriously into consideration. That had never been disputed since the days of the appointment of the Governor in Queensland, to which exception was taken by the Queensland Government that the Governments of the States should have a voice in the appointment of the person to represent His Majesty the King. Therefore, if a local appointment was one that was desirable, there would be no difficulty in the way as things stood today. It was only necessary for representations to be made to the Imperial Government; and he had no reason to doubt from the experience of the past, that that representation if possible would be given effect to.

Mr. Johnson: Why did not the Attorney General make that statement at the beginning of his speech?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was somewhat unfortunate that the member for Guildford misunderstood him.

Mr. Johnson: Every hon. member round here had misunderstood the Attorney General.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL wished to emphasise the fact that in considering this particular item on the Estimates the Committee should not do so in a niggardly spirit.

Mr. FOULKES: It had been argued that a suitable man should be selected at a lower salary and the amount had been suggested as £1,000. He was surprised that the hon. member who made that suggestion should have limited himself

to that amount. If the hon. member took very little trouble he would be able to get a man even at £50 a year to fill the position. It was suggested that Parliament would be able to appoint a suitable man, but Parliament was the last body that would be capable of appointing a man who would be free from party bias. In Canada it was a well-known fact that the Constitution provided that the Governor should be appointed by the Federal Government and invariably the appointment was given to a member of the Government's own party.

Member: It answered very well.

Mr. FOULKES: He did not know that it did. Care was taken to appoint a member of the party, or in some cases a capable Minister who happened to be a member of the Cabinet then in office. If any appointment were made by the Federal Government in Australia, if one of their Cabinet Ministers for instance were selected to act, he would come here permeated with his own political views and the result would be he would not be able to deal so dispassionately and so impartially with matters as we would expect. Anyone reading the works, dealing with the Constitution of Canada would see it was clearly established that any Government could appoint a man from their own party. He would hold the position for 5 or 6 years and the moment he retired he resumed his position with his party.

Mr. Heilmann: Was there anything wrong with that?

Mr. FOULKES: It was not a good example to follow. It had been suggested that one of the Judges should be selected to act as Lieutenant-Governor. Everyone must admit this fact that during the last few years since there had been an Arbitration Court in the State, our Judges had been subjected to severe criticism. He had heard severe criticism cast against the integrity of the occupants of the Supreme Court bench by members. He did not say from which side of the House, the criticism had come from both sides. The Chief Justice particularly had been criticised, in fact every Judge had been criticised for the decisions that had been given in connection with disputes brought forward. They had been assailed in the

strongest possible language, and he was sure if the Chief Justice were to be appointed to act as Lieutenant-Governor or as Governor, the same criticism would be levelled against him. Frequently the important question arose of whether there should be a dissolution or not. In such event it might so happen that the Governor would be closely connected by ties of friendship or of relationship with some particular member of the Ministry, if not with the Premier himself. How then, in the circumstances, could any confidence be reposed in the decision of the Governor? It would be always difficult to get a local man quite free from ties of friendship or relationship. As for bringing a man from the Eastern States he (Mr. Foulkes) was strongly opposed to thus making Western Australia subservient to any of her sister States. Again, if that course were to be adopted a position might easily arise in which Western Australia would be in dispute with perhaps the very State from which the Governor had been brought. In such circumstances it would be a matter of difficulty for the Governor to hold the balance equally between the two States. Then, supposing a man like Sir William Lyne were to be appointed. Some in Western Australia would be pleased at the appointment while others would be utterly opposed to it. In his (Mr. Foulkes') opinion the appointment of Governor should be acceptable to all parties in the State. Each of the recent Governors of Western Australia sent from the mother country had been singularly free from any political influences. Again, a man who perhaps would be distinctly popular when appointed might be held in bad odour long before his term of office had expired. He (Mr. Foulkes) clearly remembered a case of a former Mayor of Perth who had been returned to office with acclamation. Indeed had that gentleman come forward as a candidate for the position of Governor of the State he would have been returned by an overwhelming majority. He could have had almost any position in the State.

Mr. Hopkins: It was a good job he did not stand for Claremont.

Mr. FOULKES: Yet only a few years later that same gentleman, had he offered himself as a candidate for any public position whatever in Western Australia would have lost his deposit. Regarded from a business point of view nothing he thought would damage this State quite so much as to have it go forth that it was desired to appoint a local man to the position of Governor rather than to receive another from England. The appointment of Governor was a most important one. It was the great link between the State and the mother country. He hoped there would be no serious proposal for an alteration in the system of appointment.

Mr. JOHNSON desired to endorse the view that the present opportunity might well be availed of for reducing the salary paid to the Governor. In order to impress this upon the notice of the Government, he moved—

That the item be reduced by £1.

If, as the Attorney General had said, the Committee could fix the salary of the Governor, the matter of his appointment was in the hands of hon. members; because they had but to fix a small sum and it would be taken in England that they desired a local man for the position. There was no wish to sever the link between Western Australia and the Home land. It was merely that he and other hon. members wished to have a local man in the position at a smaller salary than had been paid in the past. It had been pointed out that the Governor had to entertain. He with others wanted to appoint a Governor who would not regard it as absolutely necessary to entertain, or at all events not to entertain a select few time after time and accept them as being representative of the whole of the people from whose pockets his salary was drawn. The appointment of a local man need not be permitted to make any difference whatever in the relations of the State to the old country. All communications could go direct as they did at the present time. He (Mr. Johnson) wished to remind hon. members that they had no means whatever of arriving at the actual expenditure incurred at Govern-

ment House; for the full amount was not shown on the Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: An amendment could be taken to reduce the total of the vote, but an amendment to make a nominal reduction to one of the items could not be taken.

Mr. Johnson: Could not one move the reduction of any particular officer's salary?

The CHAIRMAN: An item could not be reduced by a purely nominal amount; but to allow an expression of opinion, an amendment to reduce the total of the vote by a nominal amount could be accepted.

Mr. Johnson: That ruling would be taken as a precedent. There were other officers' salaries he desired to have reduced.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member misunderstood. The hon. member could move to reduce any salary on the Estimates, but could not make a merely nominal reduction of an item. The hon. member's object was not to affect the salary of any officer, and the convenient way of effecting the purpose the hon. member sought was to move a purely nominal reduction in the vote.

Amendment altered to read—

That the vote be reduced by £1.

Mr. HEITMANN: We should have heard something as to the functions of a Governor. All that we heard was that it was a glorious link between the motherland and the State, while the Attorney General apparently looked upon the Governor as a kind of advertising agent. There were men in Australia, and in Western Australia, fully qualified to occupy the position, but one could not accept the suggestion to bring about the alteration by a reduction in salary. Surely men chosen from Australia were as good as the imported men. If we wanted an alteration we should go about it in a straightforward manner. One would conclude from the remarks of the members for Greenough and Beverley, that the local man was not worth as much as the imported man.

Mr. Nanson: That is not so.

Mr. Hopkins: I think he is worth more.

Mr. HEITMANN: A gentleman connected with the Federal Parliament whose name had been mentioned was more qualified than some of those appointed by the Home Government. We did not know that serving a long period in one of the war departments of the British Government was a qualification to fill the position. The State was not now receiving a fair return for the £10,000 a year. We in Australia with four and a-half million people paid about £100,000 a year for these glorious links between the Commonwealth and the old country, and the time had arrived when we should get a fair return in the shape of labour for the money spent.

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

Ayes	26
Noes	20
			—
Majority for	..		6
			—

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Bolton	Mr. O'Loghien
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Carson	Mr. Swan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gill	Mr. Troy
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Ware
Mr. Horan	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Jacoby	(Teller).
Mr. Johnson	

NOES.

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

Amendment thus passed.

Vote, as reduced to £1,147, put and passed.

Vote—Executive Council, £30—agreed to.

Note—*Legislative Council*, £1,815:

Mr. SCADDAN: The item "Usher of the Black Rod and Clerk Assistant" was missing from the Estimates for the first time. It was understood the gentleman holding the position was now paid from the civil list as Clerk of the Executive Council. The appointment of the Usher of the Black Rod was before the Committee in 1906, and we were then told by the Treasurer that the gentleman was also fulfilling the position of Clerk of the Executive Council, and thereby economy was being effected, because the officer was receiving no salary for the work in the Executive Council; yet we found that immediately after the gentleman's appointment he was struck off the list as Usher of the Black Rod and Clerk Assistant and was transferred from the General Estimates to the civil list, the transfer carrying with it an increase in salary of £100 a year. Was that economy? The appointment should be explained. Was it on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner? The Public Service Commissioner in his classification in 1906 said—

"Executive Council clerk, A. H. Williams, fixed at present salary, £425; position unnecessary; officer available for transfer. Work of this office should be done by the chief clerk, Colonial Secretary's office."

The Treasurer carried out that recommendation and disposed of the services of Mr. Williams. Mr. Hickling then filled the position without an increase of salary. Mr. Parker was appointed Usher of the Black Rod at a salary of £250, and carried on without additional salary for some time, but eventually, when Parliament went into recess, he was transferred from the general Estimates to the civil list with a salary of £350 a year as Clerk of the Executive Council. How did that come about?

The PREMIER: The Public Service Commissioner drew attention to this matter, but before the minute was penned the Government had been in communication with both the Commissioner and the President of the Legislative Council, suggesting that an officer of Parliament should be appointed to the position. It

was ruled however that the appointment of Usher of the Black Rod was in the gift of the President. The officer appointed had had considerable legal knowledge and was eminently fitted for the position, and it was thought by the Government that it would be possible to combine the position of Usher of the Black Rod and clerk of the Executive Council. Mr. Hickling, when Usher of the Black Rod, took over the position of clerk of the Executive Council on the retirement of Mr. Williams, and was granted an additional remuneration, possibly in the shape of a bonus. When Mr. Hickling retired from the position, the gentleman now holding the office was appointed. It was considered that one officer could carry out the duties of both positions. An economy was effected by the alteration.

Mr. SCADDAN: How was Mr. Parker appointed clerk of the Executive Council with a salary of £350 a year without there being a recommendation from the Public Service Commissioner?

The PREMIER: The position now was exactly the same as last year when the Estimates were under consideration.

Mr. SCADDAN: The position was abolished by the Public Service Commissioner as far as the receipt of salary was concerned. Was Mr. Parker recommended to the position by the Commissioner?

The TREASURER: The clerk was appointed by the Executive Council, and the appointment was made prior to last year's Estimates. A considerable saving had been effected, for in the past Mr. Williams received a salary of £425 as clerk of the Executive Council, while the Usher of the Black Rod was drawing £250 a year; there was, therefore, a total of £675, whereas the dual position was now carried out by one gentleman for £350.

Mr. Foulkes: Is not Mr. Williams now receiving a pension of £250 a year?

The TREASURER: He was receiving a pension, but that did not come into the matter at all. Prior to the appointment of Mr. Parker two officers were doing the work which one was now undertaking.

Mr. Johnson: You forget the point that the Public Service Commissioner said the position was unnecessary.

The TREASURER: I am inclined to think he did not convey that impression.

Mr. SCADDAN: He said the work should be done by the chief clerk of the Colonial Secretary's Office.

The TREASURER: The work was now being carried out by the Usher of the Black Rod. Surely it did not matter to members whether it was done by him or by the chief clerk of the Colonial Secretary's office, so long as one man filled the two positions.

Mr. SCADDAN: The present officer received £100 a year more for the work, while the Public Service Commissioner said that the chief clerk to the Colonial Secretary should do the work without additional remuneration.

The TREASURER: Did the hon. member think that the officer should receive less money for the work he was carrying out?

Mr. SCADDAN: He took the position at £250 a year.

The TREASURER: Members opposite talked of sweating, but it was evident they wanted to sweat this officer. His salary was little enough for the position, and there was a considerable saving on the previous arrangements.

Mr. JOHNSON: This seemed to be a remarkable case of scheming, and the facts had not been clearly laid before the House. Mr. Hickling had filled the dual position for some time, and according to the Treasurer, that officer received £250 a year. When he resigned, Mr. Parker was appointed Usher of the Black Rod, accepting the position at £250 a year. Exception was taken to the fact that the Government went outside the service to make this appointment, but it was said that the matter was in the hands of the President, who had power to make the appointment. Although the Public Service Commissioner stated that a clerk of the Executive Council was unnecessary, and although Mr. Williams was got rid of because there was not work enough to occupy him more than one hour a week, another man was appointed to the position.

The Treasurer: What nonsense.

Mr. JOHNSON: Let the officer's duties be outlined. The Executive Council met

once a week and sat sometimes for an hour and a half or two hours.

The Treasurer: How long does it take to prepare for it?

Mr. JOHNSON: The papers were prepared by the under secretaries of the different departments, the minutes to the Executive Council were signed by the Minister; all the clerk had to do was to put them in order and place them on the table, and hand them over to the Governor to sign. The Public Service Commissioner said there was no work done by the officer. The services of Mr. Williams were dispensed with, and that gentleman was now drawing a pension. Although the position had been abolished, Mr. Parker was appointed to the office at £350 a year. It was an absolute scandal. The officer had accepted the position of Usher of the Black Rod at £250 a year, and members were led to believe that economies were effected by the abolition of the position of clerk to the Executive Council.

The PREMIER: The member was free in his expressions as to an absolute scandal, but the position now was exactly as it was when the last Estimates were before members. Mr. Williams, who had been drawing a salary of £425, was retrenched, and Mr. Hickling occupied the position for a short time and received a bonus for the services he rendered. When he retired, the present Usher of the Black Rod was appointed to the dual position. It was on the recommendation of the Government that he received the dual appointment, and it was made prior to the Public Service Commissioner writing to the President. At the present time the officer was carrying out the duties of both positions for £350 a year, whereas, the previous cost was £675.

Mr. SCADDAN: Mr. Williams prior to being retired received £425 apparently on the Public Service Commissioner's recommendation. He was retired on a pension of £191 per annum. Had the Government carried out the Commissioner's recommendation and appointed the chief clerk in the Colonial Secretary's Department, there would have been a saving of £334 15s. That would have been termed economy. For some

reason however the Government appointed Mr. Parker to the position of clerk of the Executive Council, gave him an additional £100 per annum by placing him on the Civil list, which meant a saving of only £133. The result of this economy is that we are losing over £200. Members should be informed of the method of Mr. Parker's appointment.

Mr. JOHNSON: Surely members should get this reply from the Ministry. The member for Ivanhoe asked how the appointment was made without reference to the Public Service Commissioner. If no reply was forthcoming the matter would have to be discussed at greater length.

Mr. NANSON: Members were entitled to an explanation on the point. It was true the Government had made a saving, but it was shown that that saving might have been much larger. At the present time it was necessary that they should make all the saving they possibly could.

The PREMIER: In the first instance the appointment of Usher of the Black Rod was made by the President of the Legislative Council, and Mr. Parker was appointed at a salary of £250 per annum. The officer who had preceded the present occupant drew a salary as Usher of the Black Rod, and when Mr. Williams retired from the position of clerk of the Executive Council the Usher of the Black Rod discharged the additional duties of clerk of the Executive Council for which he was paid a bonus, pending the appointment of an officer to carry out both duties. Consequently when Mr. Parker was appointed, he was given an extra £100 per annum.

Mr. Johnson: Why was it not done through the Public Service Commissioner?

Mr. Collier: The statement of the Premier showed that there was not that saving made that it was possible to make.

The PREMIER: If the chief clerk to the Colonial Secretary had been appointed as suggested, some other officer would have had to carry out his duties in the time that he would have had to devote to the duties of the Executive Council.

Mr. Collier: The Public Service Commissioner said this chief clerk had enough

time to discharge the duties of both offices.

The PREMIER: The clerk of the Executive Council had a considerable amount of work to do, and very responsible and confidential work, the most confidential work in the State, and if it was not worth £100 extra, he was very much surprised.

Mr. BATH: While we were inclined to pay the best wages even in time of financial stress, when it was a question of economising, surely we had some grounds for demanding that with regard to what might be termed purely ornamental offices, the pruning knife should be used with advantage. In the recommendation made by the Public Service Commissioner in 1906, there was a good deal of common sense in the suggestion, that the offices of the clerk of the Executive Council and the chief clerk in Colonial Secretary's office should be amalgamated. During the discussion which took place before, members were assured that a master stroke of economy had been effected by the appointment of this gentleman. Now it was found that by transferring the item to the Civil list £100 had been added as salary. Thus to a large extent the saving had been dissipated, simply because by dispensing with the services of the gentleman who previously occupied the position we had rendered ourselves liable to pay that gentleman a pension.

Mr. WALKER: The appointment had been made and the question was whether the Committee could undo that appointment, and if not, was the salary too much. If the salary were too much, then he could understand what members were asking for. There had been a protest against the way this appointment was brought about. No one on that side of the House could conscientiously say that £350 a year was too much for a gentleman occupying a responsible position. Having made that protest we were doing ourselves an injustice if we tried to belittle the services that the gentleman rendered. If there had been one curse more marked than another in Western Australia, it had been the underpaying of men in responsible positions. The gentle-

man under discussion was fulfilling a position of trust and confidence. In fact to occupy that position he must have exceptional qualities of mind and character. It was a position requiring integrity and ability, where a mistake made might be of vast concern to the State.

Mr. Bath : The responsibility rests upon others in the department. He merely rubber-stamps the work.

Mr. WALKER : It was well known that the gentleman had often to exercise a large degree of knowledge and procedure where difficult questions occurred. It might almost be said that the legality of the conduct of Ministers had to be considered by him. It was not the light, easy task one might imagine.

Mr. Scaddan : Apparently he ought to be getting £2,000 a year.

Mr. WALKER : Possibly that was so ; still the question before the Committee was as to whether the gentleman was worth £350.

Mr. Scaddan : No. It has been suggested that the work might be done by another according to the recommendations of the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. WALKER : The Public Service Commissioner was the greatest public sweater in the State. What were the members of the Committee discussing if not economy ? It had been said that they could save, by getting the chief clerk to do the work as recommended by Mr. Jull ; but surely they would not expect that the chief clerk, in receipt of £400 a year, and with good prospects of rising in the service, of enjoying a good salary, and of ultimately retiring on a good pension—it was not to be expected that he would agree to be taken away from his own duties and accept this additional service without additional pay. He (Mr. Walker) could endorse the remarks made as to the way in which the appointment had been brought about ; but now that the gentleman was in the position he thought they ought to say that the salary was not too high.

Mr. NANSON : There was no item down in the Estimates for the Usher of the Black Rod, and it was understood that the duties of that officer were being

fulfilled by a gentleman who filled the position of clerk of the Executive Council ; and that the salary of £350 which he drew was paid to him as from the Executive Council. Section 35 of the Constitution Act declared that the salary of the President of the Legislative Council should be at least equal to the salary of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly ; and that the salaries and allowances of the officers of the Legislative Council should be the same as those of the corresponding officers of the Legislative Assembly. That being so, a rather interesting point arose as to whether that section of the Constitution Act was being carried out. Apparently nothing was being paid to the Usher of the Black Rod. It seemed that the item should be equalised in the case of both Houses. But to turn to the point more immediately under consideration, it seemed that the Government, if they had carried out the recommendations of Mr. Jull, would be saving £100 a year. The clerk of the Executive Council was getting £350, while the gentleman who had previously occupied the position was drawing a pension of £150. Had the Government carried out the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner the position would have been : The functions of the clerk of the Executive Council would be fulfilled by the Under Secretary and the Usher of the Black Rod would get £250 a year. If we added to that the pension paid to Mr. Williams, it would be £441, as against the present expenditure of £541. It was not a question of the capacity of the gentleman, it was a question of whether economy could be effected ; and at the same time we would continue to pay to the Usher of the Black Rod the salary always regarded as ample for the office. It was unpleasant no doubt, to run counter to the Government, but the suggestion of the Public Service Commissioner seemed perfectly feasible. At the end of the Estimates we would be astonished at the total of the various economies that could be effected. In the aggregate they might amount to as much as would probably be brought in by the new taxation proposals.

Mr. DRAPER : It would be refreshing to know whether Mr. Parker occupied

a position in the Legislative Council relative to the position of Clerk Assistant in the Assembly, or the position of Sergeant-at-Arms. As Clerk of the Executive Council Mr. Parker certainly had an advantage over the Clerk Assistant of the Assembly through being the possessor of a free railway pass. If Mr. Parker, as Clerk Assistant of the Legislative Council, was to have a free pass there was no reason why the Clerk Assistant of the Assembly should not have a free pass.

The TREASURER: The clerk of the Executive Council received £350. A footnote showed that he also acted as Clerk Assistant and Usher of the Black Rod. So it was clearly set forth. The hon. member contended that officers of both Houses were to be paid at a similar rate. The Clerk Assistant of the Assembly received £300 and also £50 as sub-librarian, making his salary £350. If Mr. Parker were not clerk of the Executive Council he would have to draw £350 as Usher of the Black Rod and Clerk Assistant of the Council to follow the hon. member's argument to its logical conclusion.

Mr. Nanson: Make him Usher of the Black Rod and he would only draw £250.

The TREASURER: Then we would make the Usher of the Black Rod do the work of Clerk Assistant without additional salary. With the pension paid to Mr. Williams, in addition to the £350 Mr. Parker would be entitled to draw as equivalent to the Clerk Assistant of this Chamber, we would have exactly the same expenditure as there was to-day. However, the Government had made the best appointment they, in their judgment, were capable of making, and they believed they had an excellent officer as clerk of the Executive Council. One did not wish to make invidious comparisons.

Mr. Scaddan: Has anyone made them?

The TREASURER: The hon. member was not accused of doing so. Mr. Parker was already in the position in the Legislative Council by appointment of the President, and we got, as clerk of the Executive Council, the best man we could at the time. Economy was being effected because we were not spending any more

money. If we had to take the Under Secretary from his duties we would probably have to provide some temporary employee to fill his position in his department.

Mr. Johnson: There is a mighty lot of work to do.

The TREASURER: There was a lot of work, and the hon. member should know it. There was a lot of responsible work in preparing, beforehand, for meetings and in dealing with the papers afterwards.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Legislative Assembly*, £3,099 ;
Item, Messengers, £377.

The TREASURER: The wish was expressed by members last year that an increase should be given to the messengers but in drafting the Estimates a clerical error had crept in, inasmuch as the same amount had been fixed as last year. The chief messenger, instead of receiving a salary of £175, should be receiving £200, and the second messenger, instead of receiving £100, should receive £125. A promise was made to members last year that increases would be given to these officers of the House. There was also the position of hall porter, and it was intended to increase his wages by 6d. a day. This also had been omitted in the present Estimates. The recommendations for the increases had been made by Mr. Speaker. The amount could not be increased now on the Estimates, but it was intended to pay the increased salary as from the 1st July last. For instance, the chief messenger would receive at the rate of £200 a year, the second messenger at the rate of £125, and the hall porter at the rate of 9s. 6d. a day.

Mr. SCADDAN: The predecessor to the present second messenger received £150 a year, but it was proposed only to pay the present officer £125.

The Treasurer: There would be a gradual increase.

Mr. SCADDAN: What the House said last session was that if the men were qualified for the positions, they should receive the salaries paid to their predecessors in those positions.

The TREASURER: The increases were the result of recommendations from Mr. Speaker; they had been sent down to the Treasurer, and as was usually the case, were adopted, the servants of the House being under Mr. Speaker's control. Consequently, he proposed to pay the increases which had been recommended.

Mr. BOLTON: Last session the House did not discuss the individuals, but the salaries pertaining to the positions no matter who filled them, so long as the men were qualified. On the present occasion it could not be argued that the officers filling the positions were not qualified to do the work. Probably Mr. Speaker had only provided for increases in the usual way, instead of taking into consideration the fact that the House desired that individuals filling certain positions should receive the salaries pertaining to those positions.

Hon. T. F. QUINLAN: The impression gained from the discussion of the Estimates last year was that the salaries of certain officers of the House should be increased, and especially the salary of the chief messenger. The present chief messenger formerly received £150 a year, and he had previously recommended that there should be an increase to £175. The Committee, however, thought he should receive the salary obtained by the previous occupant of the office, and, therefore, he had recommended the increase to £200. The assistant messenger was a very much younger man, and the year before last was only receiving £75 a year. It was thought that last year it was a reasonable increase to make his salary £100. Now, it was to be raised another £25, so that an increase of £50 in two years was fair treatment for a young man not long in the service of the House and who had not received the education—that was not his fault, many people were equally unfortunate—possessed by the senior messenger. The latter official had to do a quantity of clerical work and held a responsible position, for he was responsible for the staff of messengers.

Mr. SCADDAN: If Mr. Speaker had read the *Hansard* reports for last year he would have found that remarks were made upon the messenger's salary, when

the item, "Clerk Assistant," was being discussed. The debate was not in reference to the individuals filling the position, but was on the lines that if the position was worth a certain salary then that salary should be paid to the officer holding it. It was contended then that if the office of chief messenger was worth £200 a year, the officer holding the position should receive that salary, and the same remarks were also made in regard to the salary of the second messenger.

Mr. SCADDAN: Some justice should be extended to that officer. The salary of £125 was totally inadequate, irrespective of whether he contemplated matrimony or not. In view of the fact that the position previously carried a salary of £125 a year, the Treasurer might well yield on this occasion and grant justice to that officer. The Speaker might recommend the Treasurer to pay the salary which the position carried in former years.

Mr. JOHNSON: The arguments advanced were not concerning one individual, but if they permitted it to go on it would be a bad precedent. It would be the introduction of sweating. They had placed an officer to fill a position and he had had to suffer a reduction in salary for doing so. It was because of that a protest was entered. The Speaker should realise that he would be carrying out the promise he made last session if he acceded to the wishes of members.

Mr. WALKER: If he consulted his feelings he would not draw attention to a matter in this vote, the Clerk of the Assembly. He took occasion to protest against the conduct of the Clerks drawing up the form for his Honour the Speaker to sign, giving an account of what took place in the House and which was utterly misleading and utterly wrong. It was done in the first instance and attention was drawn to it when a point was discussed at a subsequent sitting of the House. A report was made of that in the *Votes and Proceedings*, and that too was inaccurate, absolutely inaccurate. The *Votes and Proceedings* were supposed to be almost infallible records, as near infallibility as we could get. They were of such a nature that they should be almost indisputable when referred to on a sub-

sequent occasion; supposed to be so accurate that they carried their own testimony. And it could not be denied by any member of the Assembly, while the debates were going on last week and the beginning of this week—it could not be denied that those *Votes and Proceedings* were not in accordance strictly with the truth. If members could not rely on the *Votes and Proceedings*, he questioned whether the Clerks were performing their duties. Whilst he was not disposed to move for a reduction of the item—because the salaries they were receiving were only what they were entitled to—it was a matter of extreme regret that members should have to complain as he was complaining at the present time. He could not help making another remark, and it was that when points of order were raised in the House and the judgment of Mr. Speaker was requested, too frequently they discovered the Clerks or one of them assisting Mr. Speaker, he ventured to think not to arriving at a wise decision—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not discuss the position of the Clerks in relation to the Speaker.

Mr. WALKER was not discussing his conduct—

Mr. JACOBY: On a point of order, if any objection had to be taken to the *Votes and Proceedings*, the proper person to whom that objection had to be taken was the Speaker. He submitted that if any exception was to be taken, it should be mentioned to the person responsible, the Speaker of the House.

The CHAIRMAN: What he had to decide was whether the discussion was relevant to the particular vote or item under discussion. As far as the hon. member had gone he thought that his remarks were relevant.

Mr. WALKER: His only wish was to enter a protest. He was in sincere hopes that never again a complaint such as he had made now would have to be repeated. He had no desire to hurt anyone's feelings, but it was absolutely necessary that the protest should be made.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had drawn attention to what he considered to be an inaccurate report of the proceedings. The Speaker had given the House

an assurance that he proposed to examine the reports of the proceedings with the view of rectifying any error that might occur. He understood that a report had been received which the Speaker was prepared to give to the House. At the same time he believed the report of the proceedings had been in substance practically correct, although the wording was somewhat different.

Hon. T. F. QUINLAN: As the Premier had said, he (Mr. Quinlan) had a report which he intended to read to the House in respect of the first matter drawn attention to by the Leader of the Opposition. As to the second complaint—that made by the member for Kanowna—he (Mr. Quinlan) had inquired into it. All he could say was that the officials were not shorthand writers. He for his part considered that the Minutes were the essence of what had taken place. If it were thought advisable to have shorthand writers it would be necessary to enlarge the staff, when they could have the minutes in greater detail. However he felt sure that when he read the report in respect of the first complaint hon. members would be satisfied that the paragraph in the Minutes was in substance a correct resume of the proceedings.

Mr. SCADDAN would be pleased if the Treasurer would make a definite statement on the question raised by him (Mr. Scaddan). If it were found to be too great a strain on the Treasury to pay £150 to the second messenger as from 1st July, would the Treasurer give a promise to make the salary apply as from 1st January next?

The TREASURER: As he had previously explained, these particular Estimates were framed by the Speaker. If members believed that what had been intended last year was that the salary should be increased to £150, he was sure that the Speaker would take it as a recommendation. It was not his (the Treasurer's) province to move to increase the Estimates of the Assembly except the Speaker thought fit to approach him on the subject. He (the Treasurer) had been looking through the debates of last

year, but could see nothing confirming the suggestion that a fixed promise had been given in respect of this item. However, the Speaker had heard what had been said that evening, and no doubt he would act upon it.

Mr. Scaddan : I am prepared to leave it to the Speaker.

Mr. TROY : Ever since the Federal Government had taken over the Postal Department, it had been the custom for members of the House to pay their own postage.

Mr. Gordon : It had been the custom for the last twelve years.

Mr. TROY : It was a custom which did not obtain in any other Parliament in Australia. It was unreasonable to ask members to pay postage for correspondence on public affairs which they were compelled to carry on with their constituents. If a member's constituency happened to be a large one with a widely scattered community, his stamp bill was apt to run into a considerable amount. In his (Mr. Troy's) own electorate were some 15 or 16 different mining centres, and dozens of other centres in respect of other industries. The stamps alone used by him in his correspondence amounted to a pound per month. It was most unfair that an hon. member should be called upon to pay this. He was quite prepared to hand over his correspondence to the clerk, in order that the clerk might see that it was all on public business. Some little allowance he thought should be made to hon. members to recoup them.

THE TREASURER was not aware that the postage on the correspondence of members with their constituents was borne by the Governments in the other States. However, he would be glad to make inquiries with a view to putting members on the same footing as those in the Eastern Parliaments. He understood that at the present time public papers or documents such as *Hansard* and copies of Bills would be franked by the Clerk of the Assembly for hon. members. However, he would make inquiries and see what the practice was elsewhere. Of course,

if anything were done in the matter the correspondence so treated would have to be strictly on public business.

Mr. TROY : He felt sure members would not abuse any privilege of the sort. In proof of this, he might point to the allowance for coach fares, of which he thought, very few members had availed themselves of.

The Treasurer : They all have, I think.

Mr. TROY : He himself had to go 100 miles by coach, yet he had never applied for his allowance for coach fare.

Mr. BATH : Although not certain about South Australia, he knew that in the other States the usual practice was for members to place their correspondence in a tray, leaving it open in order that if desired, it might be inspected. The messenger closed the envelopes and stamped them.

Mr. JOHNSON : He was able to say that the same practice obtained in South Australia. Members of the Parliament of that State brought their stamps to Western Australia with them and used them for telegrams and postages. The Eastern Parliaments provided members with stamps during the session, but not during recess. The Federal Parliament provided them throughout the year. When he (Mr. Johnson) was member for Kalgoorlie it cost him on an average of 7s. 3d. a week for postages and telegrams.

The Attorney General : You got off lightly.

Mr. JOHNSON : Possibly. The local bodies were informed by him to pre-pay if they wanted replies by wire. It was a big item of expense to country members.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

REPORT—SPEAKER'S RULING ON MONEY BILLS.

Mr. SPEAKER : I have a short report in connection with the complaint made by the Leader of the Opposition. It is brief, and it is due to the House to have

it read. This is a letter addressed to myself :

" 16th December, 1908.

The Honourable the Speaker :

Sir,—

In reply to your instructions to furnish an explanation as to some discrepancy between the ruling given in the *Votes and Proceedings* of Friday, 11th December, on the point of order raised with regard to the Land and Income Tax Bill, and the *Hansard* report of your words in giving that ruling, I have the honour to report as follows :—

Where the Speaker gives his ruling in writing his actual words are entered in the Minutes. In other cases the substance of the ruling is given. In this case the paragraph of the Minutes was written without the *Hansard* account having been seen. As to any discrepancy, I submit that the only possible objection is to the words "expressed his opinion that the question of adopting it (the procedure mentioned) in future was worthy of consideration." Your words in *Hansard* on this point are "I have already intimated to Ministers that the procedure adopted in other Parliaments should, in the future, be adopted here." I would respectfully point out that these words are not part of your ruling, which is conveyed in the words "I am of opinion that I cannot alter my ruling at this stage." The substance of that ruling is sufficiently expressed by the words "Mr. Speaker stated that he saw no reason to depart from the decision which he had already given." It will not be disputed that the first part of the paragraph is a correct summary of the new point raised by Mr. Bath ; the only other part not touched upon—"as the fact remained that there were many examples to show that such procedure had not been considered necessary in the past"—is equally indisputable. It remains therefore, that your expression of opinion in giving your ruling is stated with somewhat less force in

the Minutes than in the words you actually used.

(Signed) C. Lee Steere,
Clerk of the Assembly."

Mr. Bath : Will I have the opportunity of referring to that to-morrow ?

Mr. SPEAKER : I do not think it is actually a question for the House to debate.

Mr. Bath : I do not wish to delay members now by referring to it.

Mr. SPEAKER : I do not see how you can do so except by a direct motion.

Mr. Walker : It can be done by a motion for adjournment to-morrow.

Mr. SPEAKER : At any rate it was due to the hon. member to have this said. The hon. member made a complaint, and I had to make inquiries and get a report.

The PREMIER : I take it then this is a report by the clerk, and the incident should be closed.

Mr. BATH : Out of deference to Mr. Speaker and the Clerk of the House I made no further reference to it in view of the intention stated by Mr. Speaker that a report would be furnished, and that the matter would be gone into. I wished to make no reference to it while such report was pending, but I do not think those difficulties are in the way now the report is furnished. I think the courtesy should be extended to members to make further reference to it, and I desired to know whether I would have the opportunity to-morrow.

The PREMIER : It is not a question for discussion. Mr. Speaker simply gave a promise that he would inquire into the matter, to ascertain whether the record in the *Votes and Proceedings* was a correct one, and if not, where it varied.

Mr. WALKER : I do not know whether I am in error in saying that the report itself is scarcely accurate. I admit it amends the position considerably, but it is not accurate, and is not a true reflex on your ruling to place on record. We should place on record the report and a correction. Undoubtedly that is our duty.

Mr. BATH : I would point out that the reason I rose to mention this point was, that while it is stated that the portion ap-

pearing in *Hansard* differs from what appears in the *Votes and Proceedings* is not part of the actual ruling, still, in the report in the *Votes and Proceedings*, a reference is also made which is not part of the ruling of Mr. Speaker. If anything apart from the actual ruling of Mr. Speaker has to be inserted in the *Votes and Proceedings*, it should be the accurate report of the ruling as disclosed by *Hansard*, and not something differing from it entirely. Reference was made by Mr. Speaker to Ministers, and all I ask is that the reference should be in the words given in the verbatim report of *Hansard*, and not something altogether different as is in the *Votes and Proceedings*. I do not wish to delay the House now, but I would like Mr. Speaker to tell us what will be the procedure to-morrow.

The PREMIER: I understand Mr. Speaker will give us an idea to-morrow as to what he considers the proper procedure.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: May I ask that before Mr. Speaker makes any alteration in the procedure thought to be desirable, he should consider whether it is practicable to have anything in the way of verbatim reports from the clerks. This question has often arisen in my profession. The judge takes the notes which represent the substance of the evidence. Frequently parties employ shorthand-writers to take verbatim notes, but one is never allowed to vary the substance as shown in the judge's notes, which represent the general expression of opinion, or the general effect, better than the verbatim notes. The latter are misleading because one sentence is put down accurately, and part of another is left out.

Mr. Bath: Then they are not verbatim.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The shorthand writer takes down all he can consistent with the interruptions in the Court, or in this House, as the case might be. We achieve all that is necessary when the clerks record the substance of what is said, and the substance of the resolutions moved or the discussions that take place in this Chamber. To haggle about the mere terms of the record seems to me to be going too far. I would sug-

gest a limit be placed on the debate on the subject, for we have thrashed it out *ad nauseam*. Is it all to come up again?

Mr. Bath: We want to be accurate, as it is a very important point.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Walker: There is no opinion about it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I gave you credit for having an opinion about it, and I have one.

Mr. Walker: There can be no two opinions.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The man who thinks there are no two opinions is too dogmatic. He assumes that because he thinks a certain version is correct it must be correct. Let me submit, with all deference, that is not the case. Other people have other opinions, and although the member may think the record is not accurate, there are those who think it represents substantially what Mr. Speaker decided. I do for one, and I think other members do also. If we are going to discuss what we individually think should have been recorded, where are we going to end? The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) might have a third version—he usually has—and another member a fourth, and we each say what we think of the matter? Further discussion is wholly unnecessary.

Mr. WALKER: After what the Attorney General has said it is absolutely necessary to have the matter further dealt with. Has a report been received from the clerk as to the second matter I drew Mr. Speaker's attention to?

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand the hon. member merely wished to draw attention to that matter. I have drawn the officer's attention to it.

House adjourned at 11.35 p.m.