

ADJOURNMENT.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson): As one of the writs for the re-election of Ministers was not returnable until the 17th instant, he moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until the 21st instant.

Put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly until Tuesday, 21st January.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 14th January, 1902.

Ministerial Re-elections (four seats)—Petition: Hospital (Central), Kalgoorlie and Boulder—Papers presented—Question: Education, Teacher at Boulder—Question: Coolgardie Water Scheme, Testing and Reticulation—Question: Judges' Pension Act, to amend—Sanitary Site, North Perth—Annual Estimates, in Committee of Supply (resumed), Attorney-General's Votes to Audit; progress—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MINISTERIAL RE-ELECTIONS.

(FOUR SEATS.)

THE SPEAKER announced the return of writs issued for elections to seats for West Perth, Cue, Menzies, and Guildford, by which it appeared the following had been re-elected:—West Perth, Hon. G. Leake; Cue, Hon. F. Illingworth; Menzies, Hon. H. Gregory; Guildford, Hon. C. H. Rason.

The re-elected members took the oath of allegiance, signed the members' roll, and took their seats as Ministers.

PETITION—HOSPITAL (CENTRAL),
KALGOORLIE AND BOULDER.

MR. HOPKINS presented a petition from residents of the districts of Kalgoorlie and Boulder, praying for the erection of a central hospital.

Petition received, read, and ordered to be printed.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. Illingworth): 1, Emoluments Return, based on Annual Estimates 1901-2 (on motion by Mr. Hopkins); 2, Census of Population and Habitations, 1901; 3, Statistical Abstract for December, 1901.

By the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason): Regulations for preventing pollution of water near Wyndham.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): Amended Regulations 4 and 128, under Goldfields Acts.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—EDUCATION, TEACHER AT
BOULDER.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS asked the Premier: 1, What was the date of the official appointment of Mr. Wm. Hill (late of Boulder Mines School) to the Education Department. 2, Whether his salary was paid from the date of engagement. If not, why. 3, Whether he was entitled by amended Regulation No. 64, as published on folio 6 of July Circular, 1900, to receive a *pro rata* portion of a special £10 increment for the period January to July, 1901. If so, whether the amount was paid. If not, why. 4, Whether subsequent to his taking charge of the Boulder Mines School he was entitled to any increment under Regulation 67. If so, to what amount. Whether it was paid. If not, why.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake) replied: 1, April 1, 1901. 2, Paid from April 2. April 1 was a Sunday, and in such cases pay has always begun on the day on which the teacher takes up his work. 3, He was entitled to this special increment. The amount was paid. 4, As acting head master he might have received half the head master's salary and half his own, subject to a favourable report of his conduct of the school, and at the discretion of the Minister. It was not paid because his conduct of the school was not satisfactory.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE WATER
SCHEME, TESTING AND RETICULATION.

MR. HOPKINS asked the Minister for Public Works: 1, Whether it is the

opinion of the Engineer-in-Chief that the progress effected on the Coolgardie Waterworks Scheme is adequate to insure a test being made between Pumping Stations No. 1 and No. 2 within the period of five months from the 4th day of last September, as was promised by the contractors, through the then Minister for Works, on the date specified; 2, Whether the test will be extended to Station No. 3 within an additional period of four weeks; 3, By what date it is anticipated that the present scheme will be completed; 4, What arrangements, if any, are being made for the continuation of the scheme to the centres of consumption; 5, What period is likely to elapse from the signing of the second, or reticulation, contract to the time of its completion; 6, Whether it is the intention of the Government to give immediate consideration to the methods of carrying out the second or reticulation contracts with a view to ascertaining by what course they can be dealt with the more expeditiously, whilst insuring to the State the conservation of its best interests.

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason) replied: 1, The date on which the hon. Mr. Kingsmill made the statement alluded to appears to be the 3rd October, not 4th September. Five months from the 3rd October would be 3rd March next. It is not anticipated that pumping from No. 1 to No. 2 Stations can take place until end of March next, by which time it is hoped that the test will be made. 2, Yes, it is expected that pumping to No. 3 Station (Cunderdin) will be in operation by the end of April, or possibly sooner. Every effort is being made with this view. 3, By the end of December next. 4, 5, and 6 involve a question of policy, and will receive the early attention of the Government.

QUESTION—JUDGES' PENSION ACT, TO AMEND.

MR. W. J. GEORGE asked the Premier: Whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce, during the present session, a Bill to amend the Judges' Pension Act.

THE PREMIER replied: Yes; if the Bill providing for the appointment of a fourth Judge is passed. This undertaking has already been given.

SANITARY SITE, NORTH PERTH.

SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

DR. McWILLIAMS brought up the report of the Select Committee.

Received, read, and ordered to be printed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from 24th October, at page 24; Mr. HARPER in the Chair.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT (Hon. G. Leake).

Supreme Court, £12,932 4s. 6d. (partly discussed):

MR. W. J. GEORGE asked for explanation of item, "Travelling expenses, £20."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This was previously paid from "Incidental expenses."

MR. GEORGE: No guide was apparent as to what were travelling expenses. Was the sum provided on the Estimates sufficient, or had the amount been cut down to make the estimate appear as low as possible? The latter course was to be deprecated.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Travelling expenses came under the head of "Supreme Court," which body seldom travelled. There was an item, "Circuit Courts travelling expenses," for which a sum of £300 was set down, and that would meet what the hon. member pointed out. Up to now there had been no Circuit Courts, and when a Judge did go into the country, it had been on a Commission to try a special case which had been instituted in Perth.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Stipendiary Magistracy, £31,163 13s. 7d.:

MR. R. HASTIE: Stipendiary magistrates were all over the country, and an examination would show that many of them were not required. There were three or four magistrates where one could do the work. Such places as York, Newcastle, and probably Northam, might be combined, with one stipendiary magistrate to attend to the work. Members might express an opinion on this matter, and the Attorney General might promise to make arrangements by which the

expenses would be considerably cut down.

MR. HOPKINS : As far as the district of Boulder was concerned, it was without a resident magistrate. The district had been badly treated. There was a revenue from the Boulder Police Court of over £2,000 last year, and over 750 cases had been dealt with by justices of the peace in that court during the past 12 months. The time had come when some alteration should be brought about.

MR. WALLACE : For years past an attempt had been made by him to remove some of the stipendiary magistrates from the list, but he had always failed. Was it the desire of members that certain alterations should be made by a redistribution of what might be called the magisterial seats? The amalgamation of two or three districts would enable them to be attended to by one stipendiary magistrate. There was a necessity not only for removing some of the stipendiary magistrates to reduce the expenditure, but also for a close investigation as to the ability of some who held the positions. Many stipendiary magistrates were totally unable and unfitted for the positions they occupied. Some had served as long as 30 years and upwards; they had been good and loyal servants, and were still expected to carry on their duties, and perhaps die in harness. Gross cases of injustice had occurred in consequence of these gentlemen occupying seats on the bench. It was not the fault of these stipendiary magistrates, as they had no desire to mete out undue punishment; still in some cases the punishment had been too severe, particularly in one case in which the public had to petition for remission of the heavy sentence. Among the resident magistrates were aged and infirm men, totally unfit for the positions; and he asked the Attorney General to remove from these officials the power which they held. The members for Kanowna and Boulder had a good grievance, but there were many districts 20 or 30 miles apart, each having a separate stipendiary magistrate.

MR. W. J. GEORGE : Such districts as Boulder stood in a better position than many country districts did, for in populated places there was a large number of

magistrates who could be called upon to deal with cases in the courts.

MR. HOPKINS : Not in Boulder.

MR. GEORGE : That was a matter the Attorney-General could rectify, or a stipendiary magistrate could be appointed for that town; but in the country districts, in many instances, the position was held jointly with that of resident medical officer, and he believed these joint positions were brought about for a good reason. Unless some emolument more than was likely to result from the position of medical officer could be guaranteed, it would be difficult to get medical men to settle in sparsely populated districts; and it was by adding the position of resident magistrate to that of resident medical officer that these districts were enabled to offer sufficient inducement. Because a place might not be thickly populated, that was no reason why it should be deprived of a stipendiary magistrate coupled with the position of resident medical officer. He knew districts in the country where, if the position of stipendiary magistrate were taken away, no resident medical practitioner could be obtained. It was the duty of large centres to help the smaller ones in matters of this kind; and the same principle had been introduced into many measures which had been passed. Especially was it so in regard to water-works. However, there were some stipendiary magistrates who might be abolished, while others were necessary.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : Discussion on these items could do nothing but good, and he hoped hon. members would assist him in bringing about some necessary reforms. He felt it his duty to express his opinion on the general question of the stipendiary magistracy; and he would say at once that while there were about 30 resident magistrates in the State, there had been very little alteration in the *personnel* or the salaries. In certain parts of the State the work of the resident magistrates had undoubtedly increased enormously, whilst in other parts it had decreased; nevertheless reference to the annual estimates showed that the provision for the various districts had not varied. In many cases magistrates were called upon to perform a plurality of duties; some medical duties, others the duties of mining wardens.

During his previous short term of office he experienced considerable difficulty in dealing with applications for leave by resident magistrates. Item 27 provided for the appointment of a relieving officer, who would take up the duties of a magistrate going on leave, and who would at the same time be a man capable of reporting on the conduct of the work of resident magistrates in the various districts. Undoubtedly there was plenty of room for reform. Occasionally, though not often, a resident magistrate was found to be overburdened with work: more frequently it was found that three men were doing work which one man might readily discharge. With the increased facilities of railway communication, a magistrate might be placed at a centre and asked to do the work throughout the districts radiating, as it were, from that centre. It was desirable to fill magisterial appointments, or at any rate the more important appointments, with men of professional training. There had been a good deal of outcry in connection with the discharge of magisterial functions. One hon. member had made use of the word "incompetency" in this connection, though not in an offensive sense, still by way of a just criticism of the actions of certain magistrates. It could not be expected that a man untrained to the professional part of the work should give all-round satisfaction. If from the ranks of the civil service professional men could be obtained for the discharge of these professional duties, it would be a decided advantage. Men of middle age rather than old men should be selected. The work required men who could get about the country quickly, and who would not only be in touch with the people of their districts, but would understand the requirements of their districts. The subject of the resident magistracy was one into which his department was now inquiring, but it was unfortunately a matter he did not feel himself competent to deal with whilst Parliament was in session. If hon. members would let him get into recess, he would undertake to introduce reforms which would remedy the existing evils and deficiencies. In dealing with the matter, however, many conflicting interests had to be considered. He was alive to the many weaknesses of the present position, and his endeavour

would be to reduce the number of magistrates by making them, so to speak, cover more ground and do more and he hoped better work.

MR. HOPKINS : An application had been made by the people of Boulder to have a resident magistrate appointed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : The question of appointing a special resident magistrate to act at Boulder independently of the Kalgoorlie Warden had already engaged his attention, and had been discussed by himself and the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), who would no doubt admit that it was not one that could be settled easily. Boulder offered a fairly good instance of cases where the work of a warden might be separated from that of a resident magistrate, the former taking in a larger area than customary hitherto. Of course, when the progress of a goldfield diminished, there was not the same amount of work for a warden as during a rush. He was glad the member for Boulder had drawn attention to that constituency. Perhaps the hon. member would take advantage of this opportunity to point out what he considered discrepancies.

MR. HOPKINS : Members would no doubt remember that some time ago he moved for a return in connection with magisterial districts. That return was prepared by the Crown Law Department, at a cost of £9 16s.; and, in passing, he wished to express his surprise that an ordinary statistical return furnished by a department of that kind should be so costly. The attention of the Committee should be drawn to the anomalies which the return disclosed. In quoting from it, he would omit in every instance the district of East Coolgardie, which was set down as having a population of 25,724, because Boulder was included as a portion of the East Coolgardie District. According to the return, Boulder had a population of 15,700 persons; and if magisterial districts were allocated on a population basis, say of the magnitude of the Boulder population, the whole State would have only 11 magisterial districts, whereas the actual number was 37, Boulder not forming one. On a population basis, a total of 37 resident magistrates would mean that the average population of each magisterial district

was 4,864, or about one-fourth the population of Boulder. On this basis his constituency would be entitled to four magistrates, whereas under existing conditions it had not any resident magistrate. The return showed that the Ashburton district with a population of 229, Esperance with a population of 505, Gascoyne with a population of 819, the Kimberley goldfield with a population of 133, West Kimberley with a population of 244, East Kimberley with a population of 84, Phillips River with a population of 501, and Williams River with a population of 490, had each a resident magistrate. Thus there were eight magisterial districts with a total population of 3,005; and on the basis of those eight districts, Boulder was equivalent to 42 magisterial districts, yet Boulder had not a resident magistrate. Perth and Fremantle were the only districts having a population exceeding that of Boulder; and in both these places there were two or three stipendiary magistrates, besides a number of honorary justices. Moreover, Perth and Fremantle had the benefit of the services of the Judges and other officers connected with the administration of justice. Viewing the matter from another aspect, he found the total number of licensed public-houses in the State, from which a large amount of revenue was derived, was 1,132. Of these, 119 were in Boulder. His constituency thus had about 10 per cent. of the licensed houses of Western Australia. Of course he did not argue that resident magistrates should be allotted on a basis of the number of licensed houses: if it were so, Boulder would have four resident magistrates. The total revenue obtained under head of licensed houses was £25,723, and of this amount Boulder contributed £1,526. The Williams district had three licensed houses producing a revenue of £28; Sussex three, revenue £92; Phillips River two, revenue £80; Kimberley goldfield three, revenue £32; Ashburton district three, revenue £90. The whole revenue from these magisterial districts for licensed public-houses amounted to only £323, whilst Boulder produced £1,526. The return showed that the annual revenue from the Boulder Local Court was £1,400, which amount was exceeded in the case of only

three magisterial districts in the State; and the revenue of Boulder district under this heading thus exceeded that of 34 other magisterial districts. This consideration was important. From August in 1900, to October in 1901, a period of 14 months, the revenue from the Boulder Court totalled £1,086 5s. 10d., annual average £931 2s. This with the revenue derived from the licensed public-houses gave a total annual revenue of £2,457. Obviously a district producing such a large revenue was entitled to consideration. Everyone would recognise that the signing of summonses, issuing warrants, granting bail, and adjudication on cases in the Local Court for such a population as that of Boulder were of considerable importance. The lack of a resident magistrate in Boulder resulted in many cases being taken to the Kalgoorlie Court; and this meant the taking of people four miles from their homes and business, frequently at heavy expense and great inconvenience. Of the 1,152 cases dealt with in the Boulder Court during 12 months, 674 were intrusted to honorary justices. This was not fair; for if many hon. members were to have justice administered to them in that manner, they would say it was time a resident magistrate should be appointed with ability sufficient to deal effectively with questions coming before him. Following the appointment of a resident magistrate would be the establishment of a police district. In the East, more particularly in Victoria, they had what was known as shire councils, and when a resident medical officer was required he was subsidised, not by the Government, but by the local governing body, which in turn drew a subsidy from the Government.

MEMBER: That was a rich country.

MR. HOPKINS: There was a lot of rich country in Western Australia: take more particularly the districts of Northam and Katanning. There was no reason why these should not come within the scope of local government, and, if they did, it would be an easy matter for the district medical officer to be subsidised by the local body, which would draw a subsidy from Government.

MR. H. DAGLISH: It was desirable for the Premier to classify the various magistrates in proportion to the import-

ance of their duties. It often happened that a magistrate in the less important district had the larger salary and the greater emoluments. For instance, at Albany the magistrate had altogether salary and allowances amounting to £750 per annum, whilst on the other hand in Perth and Fremantle magistrates got a total of £700 a year each. He objected to the principle that any one class inside or outside the public service contained within its ranks alone the sole persons fit to be magistrates. For a magisterial position, a man of judgment, intelligence, common-sense, and justice was required. A man who had spent the major portion of his life as an advocate was often far from being possessed of the mind that ought to characterise a judge or a magistrate. In his opinion the best men in every part of the public service should be utilised to fill positions, and he would like the Government to introduce examinations to qualify either clerks of court or other public servants for appointments to the bench—an examination that would possess sufficient technical difficulty, but not more than sufficient. That system was in force in Victoria, where it proved very successful and enabled the Government, when appointing professional gentlemen, to find competent men in the ranks of the public service, and to give them the advantage to which their abilities entitled them.

Item—Blackwood, £350 :

MR. JACOBY : In some districts there were three magistrates where the work might be carried out by one. One was the Bunbury district, close to which were Blackwood and Vasse. There might easily be a resident magistrate at Bunbury to control the three. Newcastle, Northam, and York could be amalgamated and managed by one magistrate. In order to test the feeling of the House, he moved that item 2, "Blackwood £350," be struck out. The member for the Murray (Mr. George) asserted that these positions of magistrates were often held by doctors. If it was necessary in the interests of a country district to have a doctor, and not necessary to have a magistrate at the same place where a doctor was required, the expense of keeping the doctor should be charged to

the Medical vote, and then we should know exactly how much we spent in each department. That would be a far better system than charging to the Attorney General's Department what might more rightly be charged to the Medical Department.

MR. YELVERTON : The item proposed was one above all others that should be retained. The constituency was not his, but that of Mr. Speaker. From his personal knowledge the resident magistrate at Blackwood was the hardest worked magistrate in the State. He was not only resident magistrate at Blackwood, but warden of the Donnybrook goldfield and the Greenbushes tinfield.

MR. GEORGE : He got paid for that.

MR. YELVERTON : No ; as far as one was aware the officer had no increase of pay when these increased duties were put on his shoulders.

THE PREMIER : The £350 covered everything.

MR. YELVERTON : The officer attended to Blackwood one week, and Greenbushes the next.

MR. GEORGE : He got £110 a year for that.

MR. YELVERTON : He also had to attend the court at Donnybrook. He was really attending to three districts instead of one.

SIR JAMES G. LEE STEERE : Before the member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton) rose he was about to rise to object to the amendment. As the member for Sussex had said, this magistrate had duties to discharge for Donnybrook and Greenbushes. He was one of the hardest worked officers in Western Australia, and was nearly always travelling from Monday morning till Saturday night, going very long distances. It was unfortunate that the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) had picked out this particular magistrate.

MR. JACOBY : He happened to be first on the list.

SIR JAMES G. LEE STEERE : Whilst saying this with regard to the resident magistrate at Blackwood, he quite agreed that some districts should be combined together. With railways in many of the districts one magistrate could do the work where three were appointed. Therefore he would gladly support any proposal to amalgamate those districts,

but one of them should certainly not be the Blackwood.

MR. J. EWING: The magistrate for the Blackwood had duties in two portions of his (Mr. Ewing's) constituency, Donnybrook and Greenbushes. In the early part of his parliamentary experience he thought it right to apply for an increase of the salary of that gentleman; therefore they would understand he would oppose the amendment moved. He agreed with the Speaker and the member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton) that in Western Australia there was not a better, more conscientious, or harder-worked magistrate than the magistrate for the Blackwood.

THE PREMIER: The Government were unable to support the amendment of the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby).

MR. HASTIE: All agreed with the general sentiment that we should economise, but when it came to particular constituencies the officers referred to were represented as being particularly well qualified. He did not know the particular officer referred to in this instance, but he had an idea that the population of the district was very small. The Attorney General should tell us the exact population of the place, and give an idea of the number of cases that came before the magistrate. If that officer was a particularly good and able man, he could do far more work than he did at present.

MR. EWING: The magistrate for the Blackwood had really more work than he could do, and if any additional duties were imposed upon him he must neglect some of his work.

MR. JOHNSON: Whilst agreeing that members should protest against reduction or striking out of items connected with their electorates, it would be only fair for members to inform the Committee as to the exact population and as to the work the resident magistrates were doing. It was useless to say this or that magistrate was always travelling. The real question was one of population and revenue. At present, the magistrate and warden of Kalgoorlie was doing the work of Boulder also. Compare his duties with those of a magistrate at the Blackwood. Members protesting against the striking out of any magistrate's salary should convince the

Committee that the officer was doing adequate work. State the population and the revenue derived from the courts administered by him; otherwise let the item be struck out.

MR. J. GARDINER: The question was neither one of revenue nor of population. Apart from the population of a district, its people must be provided with means of getting justice. In the absence of information when dealing with these stipendiary magistrates, the Committee might strike out many good men. Better obtain from the Attorney General a promise that, when in recess, he would carefully investigate the matter and give the House during next session a concise statement of the duties of each magistrate, so that the Estimates next year might be decreased without impairing the efficiency of the magistracy. Otherwise there would be no finality, as each member would oppose any reduction in his own district.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): In the absence of necessary information, it was no use striking out the item. This officer was a good man, with plenty of work to do. Nevertheless, reductions must be made in these magisterial votes. In the Mines Department, owing to increased railway facilities, the number of wardens could be reduced; and during the recess the same could be done with resident magistrates.

MR. HOPKINS: The population of the Blackwood was 2,291; the revenue derived from police court fines was, in 1898 £16 5s., in 1900 £48 15s., in 1901 £16 9s. 6d., the revenue from licensed houses in 1898 was £113, in 1899 £596, and in 1900 £201. The average revenue from licensed houses for these three years was £303 10s. If the Boulder district were taken as a basis, there ought not to be more than four resident magistrates in the State. He admitted it would not be advisable for him to adopt that attitude in urging the claims of Boulder. A district should have a resident magistrate if the revenue derived therefrom was sufficient to pay his salary; for people should not have to travel long distances to obtain justice.

MR. GEORGE: This magistrate attended to Donnybrook and Greenbushes also.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This discussion showed how difficult it was for the House to reorganise this department.

What would be the result if magisterial salaries were based upon court revenues? In 1900 the local court plaints at Boulder were 58, and the police court cases 465; in Bridgetown and Greenbushes these were 47 and 85 respectively, and the police court cases 27 and 62 respectively. Perth in 1900 had 2,194 local court plaints and 4,380 police court cases, while in Coolgardie the returns were 381 and 775 respectively. It would be impossible to pay magistrates' salaries according to the number of cases they tried; for if this were attempted many magistrates must be dismissed. The discussion showed the necessity for what he had promised, namely reorganisation during the recess and fresh proposals to Parliament next session to remedy the incongruities in these magisterial appointments. The Committee could not do more than discuss the general principles which should guide the Attorney General in framing fresh Estimates.

MR. JACOBY: When moving the striking out of this item, he had not been aware that this officer undertook duties at Greenbushes. He therefore withdrew the amendment. Considering that the Premier had promised the immediate abolition of the Premier's Department, which department continued to flourish, one could not but distrust his promise to reorganise the Attorney General's Department.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Neither could be done till next recess, when the amount of money available would be known.

MR. JACOBY: What would be the position in case the Government should decide during recess to abolish certain of these magisterial offices? Would it be necessary to pension the officers? Or if the Committee struck out certain items, what was the position?

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Item—Esperance, £250:

MR. A. E. THOMAS asked why this reduction, seeing that last year's vote was £302 15s. 7d. If it were passed, he would move that all the other magistrates be similarly reduced.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Why was such small sum as £50 put on the Estimates for a magistrate at Collie?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The officer received also £300 from the Mines Department.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The officer at Collie, who belonged to the Mines Department, had a lot of Crown law work to do, and had asked for an increase from the Mines Department; but that department thought the officer received sufficient remuneration for the work done for the Mines, and £50 was allowed by the Crown Law Department.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The resident magistrate at Esperance received £591, and was also medical officer. The item of £250 [referred to by Mr. Thomas] was only the magistrate's allowance. The officer there was to get exactly the same salary as he received last year.

MR. GEORGE: What district did this officer have to attend to, for one noticed a forage allowance and a lodging allowance for this officer, although a residence was provided. It had been said that Esperance was absolutely ruined. He believed the member who represented the district stated so.

MR. THOMAS: Temporarily ruined.

MR. GEORGE: Then if that district was absolutely temporarily ruined, why pay £500 for an officer to look after ruined people? Was Esperance the centre of a large magisterial district?

MR. THOMAS: Esperance magisterial district was rather scattered, and the officer had to do a large amount of travelling as resident medical officer of the district.

MR. H. DAGLISH: Were the two amounts, £50 for lodging and £60 for quarters, in addition to quarters being provided?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That was so.

MR. DAGLISH: That seemed improper, and he would take opportunity later to see if the allowance could be struck out.

Item—Magistrate, Northampton, £100:

MR. WALLACE: The magistrate at Northampton received a salary from the State of £300 a year, £200 as resident medical officer and £100 as magistrate. This was one of those cases in which it was necessary to have an officer holding two positions to secure a resident medical man for the district. The present Gov-

erument made this appointment, and he was going to prove there was no necessity for such an officer at Northampton. The doctor in charge of the hospital at Geraldton in past years had received £60 a year for visiting Northampton at stated periods. For years that was sufficient, and there was now no urgent necessity for the location of a magistrate at Northampton. Mr. Maitland Brown, the magistrate at Geraldton, could easily visit the place, as there was a train service which enabled him to do so. One noticed that about a dozen justices of the peace had recently been appointed in the district, during the change of Governments. Therefore, a resident magistrate seemed more unnecessary now than previously. The district was healthy; there was no sickness, and a resident medical officer was not necessary. He moved that the item, "Magistrate, Northampton, £100," be struck out. If economy were exercised in this direction, the Government could afford to provide assistance for the police magistrate in Perth. Mr. Roe, at the present time, sat five days a week in the police court, from 9 to 3 o'clock, and he had no relief, although surrounded by a number of justices of the peace, who were too lazy or too bashful to take their seats on the bench. The sum of £12 a year was allowed for drugs for the Northampton district; and that sum would have to be voted if the doctor from Geraldton visited Northampton. For years past he (Mr. Wallace) endeavoured to have the amount for the itinerant magistrate for the Murchison and the Gascoyne districts struck out; but having failed, he now allowed that item to remain.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: The argument of the hon. member (Mr. Wallace) was one he could not follow, particularly as the hon. member drew attention to the fact that this resident magistrate would perform also the duties of medical officer. The Northampton district being a sparsely populated one, the amount paid in respect of the resident magistracy might be regarded as in the nature of a retaining fee to secure the services of a medical man; and from that aspect, the money would be properly spent. Accidents requiring immediate aid happened, as a rule, in the more sparsely populated districts. Although there might be good

reason for doubting the necessity for a resident magistrate at Northampton, there appeared to be no reason for doubting the necessity for a medical officer. In the Murray district some years ago, there would have been no medical man had it not been for the assistance given by the Government; and thus the medical fees required from patients would have been prohibitive in most cases.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The reason for this item was that facilities for obtaining medical aid might be afforded to the considerable number of residents in Northampton district. The officer to be appointed would serve not only Northampton and its immediate neighbourhood, but also what is known as the Upper Chapman district, and the country round about as far as the Murchison. The difficulty which residents of this locality now experienced was that the Geraldton medical officer could get up to Northampton only about twice a week by train. Thus, if the medical officer's visiting days to Northampton were say Mondays and Thursdays, and an accident happened on a Friday, the probabilities were that death would ensue before the sufferer could obtain medical aid. Representations to this effect having been made to him—for which representations he desired to give credit to the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson)—he thought it his duty to see that a medical officer and resident magistrate was appointed. Accordingly the item was placed on the Estimates; and he would support the item. In coming to this decision he had been influenced more particularly by the knowledge that the Geraldton medical officer and resident magistrate had his hands very full, seeing that he attended also to the people eastward from Geraldton. Indeed, that officer's duty frequently took him to the Greenough. Thus the inmates of the Geraldton hospital and patients in the Geraldton district might suffer greatly while their medical officer was away at Northampton hunting for medical cases, as it were. It was to be particularly noted that, apart from the railway, there was no reasonable means of communication between Geraldton and Northampton. The distance between the two places, although only 30 miles, meant practically

a day's journey, as the road lay through a terrible sand plain. He would ask the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Wallace) not to press his amendment.

MR. R. HASTIE: Had the Committee been discussing the salaries of medical officers, the explanation of the Premier would have been a particularly good one; but the hon. gentleman, if he proposed to adhere consistently to the principle just laid down, would have to assist a large number of districts to obtain medical officers.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was being done now.

MR. R. HASTIE: Within his own knowledge there were 20 or 30 places with larger populations than that of Northampton needing the assistance of the Government to provide them with medical officers. This, however, was not the question before us now: it was a question of the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate. There was already a highly-paid medical officer and resident magistrate at Geraldton, and that gentleman could easily attend to all the legal business of Northampton. It was impossible to rid one's self of the suspicion that this was a political appointment. If an item for providing a medical officer for Northampton were put on the Estimates, we should no doubt all be prepared to consider it favourably; but Northampton did not want a resident magistrate, who would be purely an ornamental officer. It was to be hoped that the present discussion would prevent such appointments in the future.

MR. J. L. NANSON: It was somewhat singular that the one appointment on these Estimates which was characterised by economy should be made the subject of attack by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Wallace). The present appointment carried a salary of only £100 a year, without lodging or travelling allowance, and without quarters. For a sum of £300 a year the Northampton district would be provided with a medical officer and a resident magistrate. That district, notwithstanding anything said by the member for Mt. Magnet, did badly require a resident magistrate and medical officer. The gentleman occupying the dual position would serve a population of about two thousand people. Hon. members spoke as though the town of Northampton

were the only place concerned in the appointment, whereas the district to be served extended from the Murchison River to the Chapman River. This was a portion of the country in which it was very difficult to get about, and which had no telegraphic communication outside Northampton. When contesting his re-election in the district recently, he had seen cases of sickness in the back country in which the services of a doctor were urgently needed. Indeed in the absence of a doctor, loss of life might have resulted. He could not understand the conduct of the member for Mt. Magnet, who represented a country district and therefore should know, if he did not know, the disabilities under which people in the back country laboured, in being the first to condemn an appointment which would act as an inducement to people to go into the back country and put up with the hardships incidental to settling there. The Government had recently declared three agricultural areas in the Northampton and Chapman districts, and there was a possibility of more of these areas being declared as the land was taken up. He believed from present indications that it would be very quickly taken up, provided reasonable facilities and conveniences were afforded; but what inducement was there to people to take up land in the district and settle on it with their families, if they knew that in the event of sickness there would be no possibility of getting medical aid?

MR. JACOBY: The present proposal was to appoint a resident magistrate.

MR. NANSON: Perfectly true; but we were not discussing merely the question of appointing a magistrate. It was impossible to separate one office from the other. It was impossible to induce a doctor to go into these poor districts for a salary of a couple of hundred a year. In order to obtain his services it was necessary to give him additional duties which he might perform in any leisure time at his disposal. It would be possible for the officer to perform the duties of magistrate while travelling in the performance of his duties as medical officer. Certainly the item should not be on the Estimates if the proposal were simply to appoint a resident magistrate at Northampton. It was the duty of the Committee, without indulging in extrava-

gance, to do everything possible to induce people to settle in the outlying districts. To oppose this item was simply straining at one gnat while swallowing many camels. Scattered all through the Estimates were appointments of resident magistrates carrying large salaries and liberal allowances, as well as houses to live in. In the face of this the present small item was singled out for attack. Certainly great economies could be effected, not only in regard to the stipendiary magistracy, but also in the Medical vote; and no member of the Committee would be more ready than himself to assist the Government when they came forward with proposals to effect economies. But to assail this particularly small vote while leaving the others untouched was carrying inconsistency to an unparalleled degree.

MR. M. H. JACOBY: The present item involved not only the salary of a resident magistrate, but also the ultimate creation of a staff in connection with that magistracy.

MR. NATION: No; the staff existed already.

MR. GEORGE: Oh, £20 a year for a clerk!

MR. JACOBY: The principle he contended for was that if the amount had to be put against the Attorney General's Department for the express purpose of obtaining a doctor for Northampton, it should have appeared in the Medical vote. It was quite within reason that the legal needs of Northampton might be served by the resident magistrate at Geraldton.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was necessary to give the medical officer at Northampton a little retaining fee.

MR. JACOBY: There would be an increase in the item next year, and so it would go on. In consistency, he would have to oppose the item.

MR. G. TAYLOR: There was no desire on his part to oppose the appointment of a medical officer at Northampton. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) had raised the point that the proposed appointment was a political one. Whether this was so or not, the fact remained that when visiting the district during the elections consequent on the formation of the Morgans Ministry, he had been repeatedly told by people in the Murchison electorate that the then Minister for

Lands (Mr. Nanson) almost won his election on the cry that if the electors voted against him they would lose their doctor. The electors of the Murchison were told that the Leake Government proposed to take away the district's doctor. He did not know whether or not that was correct.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The item was then already on the Estimates.

MR. TAYLOR: The electors told him that the then Minister for Lands had stated that Mr. Wallace, the Government whip, was going to attack the vote for the Northampton medical officer, and that if the Leake Government returned to power the item would almost certainly be lost, since Mr. Wallace would still sit behind the Leake Government. The event had shown Mr. Nanson's prophecies to be perfectly correct: the member for Mount Magnet had attacked the item. The then Minister for Lands had stated that the item would be attacked by the Leake Government.

MR. NATION: No.

MR. TAYLOR: No man should be returned simply because he promised to support the appointment of some civil servant, whether that civil servant received a high or a low salary from the State.

At 6-30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Swan, Resident Magistrate and Coroner, £200:

MR. WALLACE: This item carried another salary, the officer receiving, as shown by a note at foot of the page, £150 as district medical officer. He wanted to enter his protest against those appointments which had not been proved to be necessary. The member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson), in his endeavour to show justification for the appointment already referred to, made out a very bad case. One had no desire to deprive any section of the community either of a magistrate or a doctor, but he wanted the Government to show consistency, and in this instance they had not done so. This officer, who was known to most members of the House, resided at Guildford. One had nothing to say against

this officer as a resident magistrate, but he desired to speak on the vote for the Medical Department, and he intended to move when that vote came up that the £150 be struck out.

MR. GEORGE: The officer referred to received £482 altogether.

Item — Vasse, Resident Magistrate, £275:

MR. M. H. JACOBY: On this item he would raise the question of the combination of magisterial districts. He was strongly of opinion that a more economical arrangement could be made in the vicinity of Bunbury. The magisterial district of Vasse was only a short distance from Bunbury, and this magistrate also received, presumably, a salary as resident medical officer. The district was a particularly healthy one. When he was there no patients were in the hospital.

MR. GEORGE: That showed what a good medical man the officer was.

MR. JACOBY: This magistrate had to visit one or two outlying centres. Without moving to strike out the item, he wished particularly the Attorney General should see if he could arrange for some economy in the adjustment of these districts. It appeared that the magistrate stationed at Bunbury could, by circuit work, do the whole of the Vasse work as well.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: These Estimates were prepared on the basis of the old ones, and there was no material alteration made simply for the reason that when the Estimates were framed the Government had not the time to reconsider those matters of reorganisation which hon. members said, and which he admitted, were essential. If any other Government were in power, that Government would say the same as he now said, that there had been no time to reframe the Estimates. It would be readily understood that when it became a question of reorganisation, we must have the amount to allot for new appointments, otherwise we must exceed the votes. He thanked members for drawing attention to so many of these items. These were places connected by rail, where the duties might possibly be performed by one or two instead of by three or four officers. He would note the suggestions made, and hoped to be able

to meet hon. members' views in the majority of cases.

MR. JACOBY: If an item were struck out, did the officer concerned receive compensation or a pension?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Probably the officer would go. Few civil servants would work without salary. Such an occurrence would not affect the legal position of the Government, even were all the salaries struck out, save that the Government, as well as the civil servants, would retire.

MR. HOPKINS: What about the Public Service Act?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Act was subject to the voice of Parliament.

MR. JACOBY: In the ordinary course, was not a retrenched civil servant in some way compensated?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Of course the object in reorganising was to avoid compensation; and this could be done by omitting to fill vacancies which from time to time occurred, allowing the duties of the retiring officers to be performed by others. Any scheme of reorganisation would come before the House, so that hon. members might vote salaries and grant compensation either by bonuses or by pensions. The idea of giving pensions seemed objectionable.

Item—Williams, Resident Magistrate, £100:

MR. R. HASTIE: This officer received £150 also as doctor. Why were his services so cheap in comparison with those of similar officers?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Williams district was large and well settled, and the medical officer had a private practice. In allotting medical officers' salaries such a fact was always considered.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The officer received in all £324—not excessive payment for a medical officer and magistrate.

Item — Relieving Magistrate (eight months at £400 per annum), £266 13s. 4d.:

DR. O'CONNOR asked for explanation.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This was a new appointment, for which he and his departmental officers would be

responsible. Many magistrates and their clerks took occasional leave, and there was difficulty in filling such temporary vacancies. The new officer would not only be relieving magistrate, but could inquire departmentally at the places he visited, and report to headquarters. Such inspection was desirable, for it was difficult to get local authorities to report against themselves. The experiment seemed well worth a trial.

MR. W. H. JAMES : Why not make the appointment from among the magistrates about to be removed ?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : The vacancy would be filled from the present list of magistrates.

MR. JAMES : Were any precedents for such appointment to be found in the Eastern States ? Considering the small number of magistrates inaccessible to ordinary supervision, the wisdom of the experiment was questionable. Why have a relieving officer to facilitate applications for holidays ?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : The Public Service Act provided for holidays.

MR. JAMES : But there were no relieving Judges or relieving registrars.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : There were 30 magistrates, and only a few Judges.

MR. JAMES : Why not have relieving officers in other departments ?

MR. GEORGE : Have a relieving Premier.

MR. JAMES : If there were no such officers in the sister States, some farther reason should be given for the appointment. Moreover, it did not seem right to appoint a man at £400 and allowances, to relieve and inspect men receiving £600 per annum.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : During the past few months, he had become convinced that this appointment would dispose of the difficulty in meeting applications for leave from officers of long service, to whom such leave must be granted. If the magistrate at Coolgardie went away for six months, a magistrate had to be sent from Perth or Fremantle. There was a continuous moving about. He (the Premier) had not looked for a precedent in the other States and he did not propose to do so. His own practical experience in the administration of the department showed that this was worth giving a trial to.

He was not going to introduce a new officer, but would give the position to one of the present civil servants.

MR. J. GARDINER : Supposing an officer, to whom it was proposed to give this appointment, was receiving a higher salary ?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : He would only draw the salary as relieving officer.

MR. GARDINER : Presuming, for the sake of argument, that Albany was to be one of the districts merged into another, the resident magistrate at Albany received £600 a year, and if that officer was made relieving officer he would be retrenched to the extent of £200 a year.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : An officer getting £600 a year would not be taken to fill a position worth £400 a year. Probably a man who was receiving £600 a year would get more to do. Albany was not of the same importance as it was some few years ago, and the magistrate at Albany might perhaps take some work up the line as far as Katanning, and the Katanning magistrate could then be moved farther along the line to Wagin and Beverley. Thus the work would be done by two magistrates which was now being done by three. He did not want unduly to cut down the salaries of civil servants who had enjoyed privileges for some years past. There was no doubt that members in whose district the officer was retrenched would kick up a great fuss in the House.

MR. G. TAYLOR : It seemed strange that an officer receiving £400 a year should relieve another officer getting £600 a year. He did not think the Government were going to get a good man for £400 a year, judging by some of the officers to whom £600 a year was paid.

Item—Albany, Clerk to Magistrates and Local Court, £225 :

MR. McDONALD : The clerk to the magistrate at Albany received £225 a year and he held other positions which brought his salary up to £329 a year. The officer had been pitchforked into this position over the heads of senior officers. The officer's name was Mr. Wright, son of the resident magistrate at Albany. Clerks in the police court at Perth, who had been in the service much longer than Mr. Wright, made application for the

position, yet this gentleman, who had not seen such long service, was given the appointment.

MR. TAYLOR: But he had a father there.

MR. McDONALD moved that the item be reduced by £50

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This officer was not long ago clerk to the Chief Justice, and as a matter of fact held, in writing, an appointment as resident magistrate in one of the goldfields centres. It was a particularly hard case, and this position becoming vacant he (the Attorney General) had made the appointment.

MR. DAGLISH: Who gave the appointment in writing?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Was it necessary to say?

MR. TAYLOR: It was just as well to know.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The officer held a letter in writing from a late Attorney General, saying that he was appointed magistrate at Southern Cross. When the question came before the Mines Department the then Minister for Mines would not agree to the appointment, because the Mines and Law Departments generally came together with regard to the appointments on the goldfields. The officer had given up another position in order to take up the appointment, relying on the statement from the Minister. It was a particularly hard case, and if anybody was to blame, he (the Attorney General) was.

Item—Boulder, Clerk to Magistrates and Local Court, £170:

MR. HOPKINS moved that the item be struck out and recommitted. The population of Boulder was 16,000. The clerk of the court at Albany, who received a salary of £320 a year, only had to deal with a population of 6,000.

MR. GARDINER: That was not so; he received £225 as clerk of courts.

MR. HOPKINS: Other salaries brought the amount up to £320. The Kalgoorlie clerk of courts received £250, and there was an assistant at £150 a year, making a total of £400 a year, and they had to deal with a population of 9,000. Probably those officers did less work than the clerk of courts at Boulder, who received only £170 a year. Some time ago he moved for a return to be laid

on the table so that this matter could be dealt with, and according to that return the clerk at Boulder during 12 months handled £1,000. Eleven hundred and fifty-two cases were dealt with, besides which there were examinations of lunatics, coroners' inquests, inquests on fires, summonses, judgments, executions, summonses to show cause, garnishees, appeals against rates, applications in bankruptcy, the whole lot totalling 152 cases. If this officer retired from the position of clerk of courts at Boulder, and took up the position of sweeping the roads for the municipal council, he would get an increase of £12 a year; or if he became a fettler on the railway line, he would still get an increase. If he took up mining, he would get an increase of £12 a year.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If this item were struck out, the officer would get nothing.

MR. HOPKINS: If the item were recommitted, that would be a different thing.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If there was a request from Parliament to bring down the item on the Supplementary Estimates, then of course it would be done.

MR. HOPKINS: Was it right that a man occupying a responsible position as clerk of courts at Boulder should receive a salary £12 less than the man who swept the streets? A junior clerk working on the fields received more salary than this officer; and if a resident magistrate were appointed to Boulder, that would lead to extra work for the clerk.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then the officer would get an increase.

MR. HOPKINS: Surely there should be some reasonable minimum. The revenue received at the Boulder court during the last 12 months was £999, and one item, the confiscation and sale of ore, realised £162 a year, this one item being equal to the officer's salary. The courthouse at Boulder had been absolutely neglected in a disgraceful way from its inception. It was not swept or dusted for 12 months.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The officer was being given an increase of £70 this year.

MR. HOPKINS: It was astonishing to learn that the officer had worked for such a salary as £100 a year.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : If there was a consensus of opinion on the part of the Committee that the salary should be increased, he would be only too glad to act as desired.

SEVERAL MEMBERS : Hear, hear.

MR. W. H. JAMES : It fell to him to raise one voice of protest above the chorus of approval. The clerk in question might have been sent to Boulder to do a very small amount of work in the first instance; and now, when the business of the court was growing, it was urged that the salary was grossly inadequate and should be doubled. Such a matter ought to be left to the decision of the Minister in charge of the department. Hon. members could, in connection with a great number of items, bring forward long type-written statements to show a particular officer was being underpaid for the work he was doing. For his part, he refrained from doing so because he had been in the House long enough to know that if that course were pursued we should never get through the Estimates. On paper a good case might easily be made out for paying every civil servant a salary of £1,000 a year. The number of complaints issued in the Boulder court conveyed no idea of the value or importance of the work done by this clerk; neither did the population of Boulder, nor the revenue of the Boulder court. He had said nothing when the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) was stating his case, because he thought the Committee would recognise the futility of the arguments advanced. Either the man was worth his salary or not.

MR. GEORGE : The office should be worth a certain salary.

MR. JAMES : The Estimates certainly showed no disposition to reduce salaries unduly. If the proposed increase were granted, the officer would be entitled to the larger salary as from the 1st June last. During the preceding year the salary had been only £100; so that now there was an increase of £70.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : That was a mistake on his part. It appeared that the officer served only during a portion of last year; being appointed and paid under Form J.

MR. JAMES : It was to be hoped that members, while expressing their opinions,

would refrain from interfering with the Estimates, otherwise we should never get through them at all. If the consensus of opinion was that an increase should be granted, well and good. For his own part, he did not think a case had been made out.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) had not made use of one argument which he might have employed. If we increased the salary of the magistrate's clerk, we might get a very efficient man, and so be able to save the salary of either a resident magistrate or a warden for Boulder.

MR. JAMES : That would not suit Boulder at all.

MR. HASTIE : The member for East Perth (Mr. James) had done well in pointing out to the Committee the difficulties which would arise if we started to increase the salaries of various officers. We could only judge of the sufficiency of salaries relatively. Taking the salaries paid to other officers in similar positions, he found that the Boulder clerk of courts received about the lowest remuneration. The clerk to the resident magistrate at Geraldton, for instance, was paid at the rate of £505 a year, together with the allowance of a house valued at £250. It might therefore be an advantage if the Attorney General caused those two officers to exchange courts; for it was an absolute certainty that the officer at Boulder did a great deal more work than the officer at Geraldton. If the Attorney General employed people in responsible positions on the goldfields at £170 a year, he was practically sweating. Most civil servants on the goldfields were paid at a higher rate than those employed in the coastal districts, because the former received goldfields allowance. The present difficulty might be got over by passing the item at £170 a year, if the Attorney General would include in the Supplementary Estimates a goldfields allowance for the officer in question.

MR. W. J. GEORGE : It would be much better to fix the salary absolutely. A good clerk was necessary at such a court as that of Boulder. It was not competent for us to alter the item here; but there was nothing to prevent the Attorney-General, if satisfied that the Committee desired the salary should be

raised, from including an increase in the Supplementary Estimates.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND: An intimate acquaintance with the conditions of life on the goldfields enabled him to say that to ask a man to undertake the duties of clerk of courts at Boulder for a salary of £170 a year was, to put it mildly, "sweating" the officer. It was impossible for a man to live there on such a salary, except in the most penurious manner. After the practically unanimous expression of opinion from the Committee, the matter might be left in the hands of the Attorney General.

MR. HOPKINS: On the assurance of the Attorney General that the matter would receive fair consideration, he was satisfied to leave the case in the hon. gentleman's hands.

Item—Geraldton, Clerk to Magistrates and Local Court, £300:

MR. DAGLISH: In connection with this item, a scandalous state of things was disclosed by the Emoluments Return. It appeared that this clerk of courts in his various capacities received a total payment of £505, besides being provided with quarters rent-free. The return showed that this officer drew £300 as clerk of courts, £35 as electoral registrar, £40 as land agent, and £25 as inspector; that he also received, in his capacity of district registrar, fees estimated at £33 annually; and was provided with quarters valued at £72 a year. His remuneration was thus almost equal to that received by the head of a Government department, and far higher than that enjoyed by most chief clerks of departments. It might reasonably be expected that an officer supplied with free quarters should be required to pay a fair rental value for those quarters. A man with half-a-dozen billets could not put in half-a-dozen days in the 24 hours to attend to those billets; and if he held six billets, it simply meant that each of them occupied but a small portion of his time. This multiplication of small offices afforded no justification for giving a multiplicity of salaries. He moved that the item be reduced by £100.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Committee had a good deal more information now, from the Emoluments Return, than he had when the Estimates were framed. That information was very

necessary, and had given rise to useful discussion. So far as this officer was concerned, in regard to free quarters the officer did not receive £72 in cash, but that sum was the estimated rental value of the quarters he occupied.

MR. GARDINER: It was the same thing.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: But sometimes estimates were wrong. No doubt this clerkship at Geraldton was a very good one, but he believed the people there had a very excellent officer, who was capable of filling almost any position in this particular division.

MEMBERS: Send him to Boulder.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That might be considered during the recess (laughter). He hoped members would not reduce this officer's salary.

MR. JAMES: It was to be hoped the Committee would reduce this officer's salary. Why should a man who was well paid, receiving £300 a year as clerk, and who was asked to do half an hour's work extra a day on other incidental matters, be paid extra for each of those matters? In Geraldton, where the volume of business was extremely small, a clerk was paid £300 a year as salary, and he also received emoluments which brought the sum up to £505. In addition to that he had an assistant clerk at £240. Coolgardie had not an assistant clerk, but there was one assistant clerk at Kalgoorlie, and in Perth there were, he thought, one or two; but in Perth the clerk in the Local Court received £275, and his chief assistant £186. The extra work thrown upon the shoulders of this officer at Geraldton, by virtue of his small duties in respect to which he received small sums aggregating over £100, was done inside the office hours, and the officer had any quantity of time to go out and enjoy an afternoon's walk. This was an opportune time to say whether we should allow this to continue, or say that officers getting fair salaries who had extra work thrown upon them should not receive extra pay unless the extra work caused them to be employed outside the regular office hours.

MR. GARDINER: Probably the necessity for an assistant at Geraldton was caused by the fact that the principal officer was engaged in those other duties for which he was being paid extra; so

that if we could confine the principal officer to being clerk of court at Geraldton, it would be easy for those other offices to pay for the assistant. In plenty of instances it was a known fact that nearly all the duties for which the head was paid were performed by assistant clerks, and in time were paid for by another department. It was time we stopped this business altogether.

MR. HASTIE: The House had never before had presented to it, he understood, a return showing the total sums of money paid to certain civil servants. The Treasurer deserved the thanks of everyone for bringing it forward. No doubt if we went over it we would discover cases besides that under discussion. In Geraldton one man could do the work, and apparently the duty of the Attorney General was to promote the assistant clerk to be clerk of court in some other place.

Amendment put and passed.

Item—Geraldton, Assistant Clerk to Magistrates and Local Court, £200:

MR. W. H. JAMES asked the Attorney General if he would see what could be done to find this officer a position elsewhere. He hardly thought the officer could be required in his present position.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said he would certainly inquire into the matter.

Item—Clerk to Coroner, Perth and Fremantle, £200:

MR. DAGLISH: To test the opinion of the House, he moved that the item be reduced by £1. His opinion was that the clerk was absolutely unnecessary; although the officer's salary should be voted so as to provide for the current financial year, and enable him to be placed elsewhere. In Melbourne and in the districts around Melbourne, there were two coroners doing the same work as the two coroners for Perth and Fremantle, and they were doing about ten times as much. Both those gentlemen were competent to take their own depositions, and they did their work without a clerk. Some members desired to go farther still, but he had moved, as a test, that the item be reduced by £1. The depositions should be taken by the coroners themselves. If the work were done by the coroners themselves, it would be more

accurate and more reliable, as an instance that occurred about two years ago amply proved to persons connected with the courts, where a serious mistake was made by the chief clerk to the coroner, which led to the retirement of that gentleman from the service.

MR. McDONALD: Dr. Black wrote his own depositions; and therefore one did not see why this coroner should have a clerk to follow him all over the country.

MR. HOPKINS: Had the clerk any other duties?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said he did not think the officer had any other duties.

DR. O'CONNOR: The coroner was often away, and the duties were taken up by justices outside. It was just as well to have this clerk.

MR. HOPKINS: A question arose whether it was advisable to allow outside justices to come in when we were paying coroners to do the work.

MR. GEORGE: This particular coroner received only £150 a year for acting as coroner, most of his salary coming from his position as president of the Board of Health. Probably the clerk carried out all the preliminaries so as to save time to the coroner, and perhaps if we deprived this officer of the assistance of his clerk, Dr. Black would give up the coronership, and then we should have to provide a coroner to do that work only, giving him perhaps £400 or £500 a year.

MR. HOPKINS: The Attorney General was understood to say the duties of a clerk consisted in taking the depositions.

MR. GEORGE: A clerk had a lot more than that to do.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The fact that the coroner sometimes committed persons for trial necessitated certain detail work which was done by his clerk. This appointment had been made by a former Government in 1901, and the coroner, Dr. Black, thought it necessary. The clerk was a shorthand writer, and the coroner's time was thus saved. Moreover, Dr. Black performed other duties, and if his clerk were removed and the coroner forced to do the drudgery, he would be taken away from his other duties and would apply for an increase of salary, which would be equivalent to the salary of the clerk.

MR. PURKISS (Perth): Having had considerable experience in the coroner's court, he knew there was much more work thrown on the clerk than the mere taking of depositions. During the best part of the week, the clerk was the only representative of the court in attendance. There was certain administrative work to do. In cases of inquests on fires and on sudden deaths, subpoenas had to be issued when required, and it would be rash to reduce the item.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Inquiries would be made into the matter.

MR. DAGLISH: In view of that promise, he would withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Item—Forage, Government Resident, Geraldton, £100:

MR. GARDINER asked for explanation. These allowances amounted to £1,412 10s. Forage allowance should not be paid unless it were necessary for an officer to keep a horse. As there was now a resident magistrate at Northampton, the magistrate at Geraldton had no need to visit the former place.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: But he visited the Greenough and Dongarra.

MR. GARDINER: Searching inquiries should be made into the forage question.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: These were adopted Estimates, for which he was not responsible. Such items as these, being matters of administration, might well be left to Ministers controlling the departments. For years past he had spoken in the House against forage allowances, which were relics of the past; but the items must stand till the new Estimates could be introduced. It would be long ere we passed the Estimates if every item were criticised. He would take a note of objections; and if it fell to him to re-frame the Estimates, he would take care that all such pluralists should disappear, or that the sum total received by each, including allowances, should be seen at a glance. From the return which had been prepared it was quite evident this department required reorganisation; but to strike out individual items would be inconvenient and possibly harsh.

MR. HASTIE: It should be a rule not to give forage allowance to any resident magistrate who was not obliged to keep

a buggy. On inquiry he had found that the magistrate at Geraldton never travelled outside that place in his buggy. To the Greenough and Dongarra he always went by train. [MEMBER: No; not to the Greenough.] The people at Geraldton felt sure the magistrate was not entitled to this allowance.

Item—Lodging, Resident Magistrate, Esperance, £50:

MR. DAGLISH asked why this allowance, seeing that this magistrate occupied Government quarters.

MR. THOMAS: A similar amount had been voted last year, but it appeared not to have been drawn.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The return showed that this officer received in all £591. For many years lodging allowance seemed to have been granted to all these officers. Inquiry would be made.

Item—Postage, Telephone Rent, and Telegrams, £1,200:

MR. GARDINER asked why the increase from £709 18s. 11d. Presumably this was caused by the State Departments having to pay the Federal Government for such services.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

MR. JACOBY: There was evidently much extravagance in these items. On receipt of a letter, for instance, each department sent a formal acknowledgment, prior to replying in detail. Why not discontinue this practice of sending by post a formal acknowledgment?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: When formerly in office, he gave instructions to economise in postage and telegrams; but he had not any opportunity since to see what economies were effected.

Other items agreed to, and the vote (as reduced by £100) put and passed.

Land Titles, £8,723:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. Illingworth) pointed out certain clerical errors, which were corrected accordingly. In Item 31, the word "junior" was struck out; in Item 36, the words "and extra labour" were added, the total amount also increased from £50 to £65; in Item 40, travelling expenses, the amount was changed from £35 to £50.

Items—Salaries, Provisional and Temporary :

MR. DAGLISH: Had these surveyors who were temporarily employed been long in the service; and, if so, why were they not on the permanent list?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: These officers appeared to be still on the temporary staff. One was appointed in September, 1896, and the other in February, 1897. Under the Public Service Act, these officers would be regarded as permanent.

MR. GEORGE: Would they be entitled to pension?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said he hoped not.

MR. GARDINER: But the Public Service Act provided that they should get a pension.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No; it gave officers holidays and leave, and secured to them certain privileges. Pensions were provided under another statute.

MR. GEORGE: As "temporary" officers could they claim a pension?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. Vote put and passed.

Patents and Trades Marks, £1,365 :

MR. JACOBY: Had the head of this department been sent to a conference of Government Statisticians at Hobart?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No; it was the Registrar General. The Patents and Trades Mark Office had been made into a separate department, and the Registrar General had nothing to do with it now.

Vote put and passed.

Official Receiver in Bankruptcy, £1,890—passed.

Curator of Intestate Estates, £710—passed.

Friendly Societies, £2,180—passed.

Premier's Department, £6,545 :

MR. GEORGE: It would be better perhaps to postpone this vote, as an interesting debate was anticipated. He had several pages of the Premier's speeches on this subject to quote.

MR. GARDINER: The Under Secretary of the Premier's Department received £550. Something required to be done with this department straight away. We did not want to create departments in this State. Anyone who visited the Premier's Department noticed that a large sum was paid for keeping it up, and the Premier would no doubt give some information as to what he thought would be the probable cost of the department when he had put the pruning knife into it. There was an Under Secretary who received £250 a year—that officer also received an extra £350; then there was a chief clerk who was retrenched from the Post Office Department because he was not able to do much there, and was bundled at once into the Premier's Department at £425. The cost of administration was too much; there was very little to do, and he believed the department would be better administered by officers of other departments. Therefore, the Committee would like to have some explanation from the Premier as to what the cost of the department would be to the State when the pruning knife was put into it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake): This was more or less of a poser, and some members thought they had got him in a corner. He had always been opposed to the Premier's Department. When it was brought forward by a previous Government he came to the conclusion that it was unnecessary. He had not altogether altered that opinion at the present moment, but confessed he had great difficulty in putting the pruning knife into it, as the member for Albany stated.

MR. TAYLOR: The Committee would put it in for him.

THE PREMIER: That was not what he (the Premier) wanted to be done. One of the very first things he did on taking office was to make inquiries—he had to make inquiries from the departmental officers themselves, and the report he received was that there was no possibility of reducing the expenditure. He still thought something could be done. One alteration must be made, and he had determined to make it—that the same officer should not hold the position of Clerk to the Executive Council as well as Under Secretary to the Premier. That was the first reform he intended to effect.

He had also come to the conclusion that two systems of registration could be done away with. There was a conflict of opinion amongst the Under Secretaries to whom he had, in a way, referred this matter. Some were of opinion that the department could be done away with altogether. But since the accomplishment of federation there was a great deal of correspondence direct from the Premier's office with the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. That had to go direct to the Premier, and whatever the officer was called, whether under secretary or not, hon. members would find there must be somebody at hand to conduct the correspondence. He was under the impression that there was not the necessity for the somewhat complicated system of registration, and the Colonial Secretary's office might be used for registering matters that came into the Premier's office. This was a question purely of administration. It was difficult to explain the whole thing to the Committee at a moment like the present, but he intended to separate the office of clerk to the Executive, and the chief officer in the Premier's Department.

MR. GEORGE: What could be done about the salary?

THE PREMIER: That was a very great trouble, and he wanted the Committee to pass the items on the Estimates, because he wished to readjust the office. He did not want to dismiss officers from the service if he could avoid it. It was an unpleasant thing to do; almost as bad as increasing salaries. One was bound to come to grief, whichever one took.

MR. JACOBY: It must be faced, if there was to be reform.

THE PREMIER: The Public Service Act stared him in the face, and he could not discharge officers at will. If the Committee insisted on his removing some of these officers he would have to pension them, and he thought the House would scarcely like to see that done.

MR. DAGLISH: The officers might be given new appointments.

THE PREMIER: There were not many billets at £400 or £500 a year going about; and if a man who had been drawing £400 a year were offered a billet at £250, he would without much consideration come to the conclusion that

he was being rather hardly dealt with, and he would have a good many friends to advise him to the same effect. Consequently there would be considerable trouble in effecting this reorganisation. He hoped to be able to do something, though he confessed the matter was not so easy as it first seemed to him. The great difficulty was that officers losing their present positions had either to be provided with new billets or to be given pensions. With the Public Service Act staring us in the face we could not get rid of these officers, as we could before the Act was passed, by simply saying "Your services are no longer required."

MR. JACOBY: The Act could be repealed if the Premier would bring down a Bill to that effect.

MR. HOPKINS: Regard must be paid to the obligations of the State to the officers.

THE PREMIER: If Parliament would repeal that Act, reorganisation and readjustment would be facilitated very materially. The Under Secretary in the Premier's Department drew £350 a year as Clerk to the Executive Council, and £200 a year in his capacity as Secretary to the Premier, or, as the office was now termed, "Under Secretary to the Premier." If the gentleman were told these two offices must be separated and that he must remain either as Under Secretary or as Clerk of the Executive, the chances were that he would choose the office carrying the higher salary; but even then he would find himself reduced by £200 a year. And the same would be the case with many other officers. Nobody liked to dismiss officers who had been a long time in the service, nor did the Committee like even reducing the salaries of such officers. Of course, if it had to be done, it must be done. If we could by readjustments and by resignations in other departments draft the officers in the Premier's Department by degrees into other departments, then the difficulty could be solved without causing ill-feeling, and that was the mode he desired to adopt. It was not easy, however, to find billets into which to transfer officers drawing from £400 to £500 a year. A gentleman who had occupied the position, say, of Under Secretary to the Premier and Clerk to the Executive Council for a number of

years, might not perhaps be fit for a magistracy.

MR. HOPKINS: It was to be hoped that the gentleman would not be sent to Boulder.

THE PREMIER: The gentleman in question had worked faithfully and well. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] He would say in fairness to the officer that when he took office as Premier he had a great prejudice against the whole department. The Under Secretary had, however, by his loyal and good work succeeded in removing this prejudice.

MR. GEORGE: In that case it would not be necessary to read *Hansard* to the Premier.

THE PREMIER: That formerly he had entertained great objection to the Premier's Department he would not deny for a moment. If he could, he would wipe the department right out to-morrow; because he was convinced that by a system of reorganisation and by combining the Premier's Department with the Colonial Secretary's Department, at any rate half of the present staff could be dispensed with. The Premier's Department might be allowed to consist of a small staff, which would follow the Premier round, as it were, to wherever he went. Personally he was Attorney General and Premier; and in such a case the Premier's staff should be attached to the Attorney General's Department. If the Treasurer were Premier, then the Premier's staff should be attached to the Treasury Department; and so on. That was how the system ought to be worked, and how, he believed, it was worked in South Australia. He had fully expected that hon. members would put some very awkward questions concerning this department, and he confessed the questions which had been put were very awkward. Loud as he had been in declaring his intention of effecting reforms in this very department, he must confess he had found the matter surrounded with greater difficulties than he had anticipated. Hon. members should, however, remember that the department was not of his creating, and that there was in the public service such a thing as vested interests. No matter who controlled the department, he would always find it a difficult matter to bring about even what he knew to be salutary and necessary reforms, particularly when he was hampered by a

Public Service Act such as ours. Reforms could be effected, but not by a wave of the hand or a stroke of the pen: they would have to be effected gradually. Any vacancies occurring in the Premier's Department ought not to be filled up; and if vacancies occurred in other departments, the best endeavours should be used to fill them with officers from the Premier's Department. He asked the Committee to leave these salaries as they appeared in the Estimates, on the understanding that the staff would certainly not be increased but would be diminished as opportunity offered. If hon. members determined now that the pen must be used freely in scratching out the names of officers, of course he would have to carry out that decision, though he would do so very unwillingly. The Premier must have a right-hand man, whether he was called Under Secretary or by any other name; because there must be someone who could conduct in a proper manner the correspondence between this State and other States, and between this State and the Commonwealth. Matters of telegraphic and written correspondence requiring the attention of a careful, accurate, and he might say an educated man, cropped up every day. Of course, he as Premier did not draft all the letters that went from his department, although he drafted those of especial importance. Consequently the Premier needed a man to hold the chief appointment. What he proposed to do was to appoint another officer Clerk to the Executive Council, and to amalgamate the two offices of Under Secretary and Chief Clerk, making one officer perform both sets of duties.

MR. GEORGE: What salary would that officer receive?

THE PREMIER: The hon. member must ask him something easier. There would be less difficulty, of course, in disposing of the registrar, the shorthand clerk, and so forth. The department, after all, was not very heavily armed. The present expenditure of £6,645 was not likely to be of annual recurrence. The expenses in connection with the South African Contingents alone amounted to £4,740.

MR. GEORGE: The annual cost of the Premier's Department was £1,500.

THE PREMIER: By degrees that amount might be reduced, he thought, to

well below £1,000; particularly if with the assistance of the Colonial Secretary he could arrange an amalgamation of their respective staffs of clerks and introduce one system of registration. The intention was to revert as far as possible to the old system, whereby the bulk of correspondence having no reference to any particular department went through the Colonial Secretary's Department. Hon. members should bear in mind that the question was one of great difficulty. The Ministers who had preceded him in office were not here to say a word in contradiction or in support of what he was saying. But everyone, he thought, would admit there was some force in his remarks. He would be honestly glad of any criticisms of the department, because his desire was to reform and reorganise, and if possible reduce expenses. He did not, however, want to set about the matter in an arbitrary manner. One must act fairly; and he for his part did not want to indulge in any wholesale dismissals. Even if he had the inclination, he could not give effect to it on account of the Public Service Act.

MR. GARDINER: It appeared that at every turn we were met with what the Premier would do if he could.

THE PREMIER: In recess.

MR. GARDINER: That was the position he intended to put. The Public Service Act seemed to stand in the road everywhere. Probably it would be a month or six weeks before this session closed under any circumstances. Would it not then be advisable, if the Premier and his colleagues intended to submit to this House a system of reform, to pass the necessary amending legislation so far as the Public Service Act was concerned, and so to give the Ministry the power they needed to effect reforms? If every time these Estimates came up the Committee were to be met with the same story, "The Public Service Act stands in the way," he could see no hope of ever getting the public service placed on such a footing as he certainly thought it was the desire of the Committee to put it on. Consequently he would ask the Premier, if he could see his way to do it, to get the necessary amending legislation drafted, giving to this House and this country something of the power enjoyed

by private individuals to dismiss a man who did not do his work, or was not qualified to do his work, or whose services were not needed. Why should a man be paid £425 a year as chief clerk in the Premier's Department, when the chief clerk and accountant in the Auditor General's Department received only £350 a year? Such things should not be allowed. There would be no chance of our purging the public service so that it would be in a sound, commercial condition until the Public Service Act was amended. Consequently the sooner Parliament were given the opportunity of passing an amending Bill, the sooner would there be some justification for spending time on the Estimates.

MR. NANSON: The Premier seemed to imagine it would be possible to reorganise the civil service without trouble and without raising ill-feeling. It was very natural to wish to avoid trouble, but if he imagined the civil service was going to be cut down to reasonable dimensions without a very great deal of trouble and a very considerable amount of ill-feeling, he was making a great mistake. The Premier admitted that in his own department, the Premier's Department, he could do with half his present staff. What did that mean? That the taxpayers were called upon to pay six men to do work that might just as well be done by three at half the cost. He was prepared to admit that we could not deal with the civil servants in a wholly arbitrary manner, but at the same time we must consider the public, the taxpayers, and it was admitted on all sides of the House that the wages bill, if he might so call it, of the civil service was swollen to quite an abnormal extent. He joined with the member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner) in hoping that the Premier would, this session, bring in a short amending Bill relating to the Civil Service Act, and he was sure that from neither side of the House would a Bill of that description meet with any opposition. It would give the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches an opportunity of showing they were actually in earnest on this question of reorganising the civil service. We had a right to insist that the gentlemen now sitting on the Treasury bench should carry out the pledges made, pledges which those now on the Opposition side

of the House were prepared to carry out if remaining in office, and which the Premier many months ago uttered in the Queen's Hall, but which he did not seem inclined to push on with any great speed.

THE PREMIER: Would the hon. member repeal the Civil Service Act?

MR. NANSON: One trusted that the Government, on seeing the sense of the House on the subject, would bring in an amending Act this session. It might be a matter of a very few minutes to pass that amendment, and then the Government would be armed with the necessary power to carry out the reorganisation of the civil service during the recess. Unless an Amending Bill were brought in this session, the matter would apparently be delayed until next session; and, therefore, many months, nearly twelve months, would probably be lost before we could get the desired reforms.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE: This department was one on which he felt compelled to make a few observations, because he always had a strong opinion that the department was a most unconstitutional one. He believed it was one that did not exist in any other part of the world. Not only was the department unconstitutional, but it was, he thought, extremely improper that the gentleman who was private secretary to the Premier should have the position of under secretary of this department. That was another thing he objected to, and he would like the House to strike out the department altogether. It was an expensive one, much more expensive than in any other State for the work performed. When in Adelaide a short time ago he made careful inquiry, and the Premier there told him the practice was, as stated just now by the Premier of this State, that whatever department the Premier was in, that department furnished him with two secretaries. If the Attorney General was Premier, two clerks in the Attorney General's department acted as his secretaries; if the Treasurer was Premier, two clerks in the Treasurer's office acted as secretaries to the Premier; and he did not think the total expense was £500. We ought to reduce our expenses greatly; in fact, we could not do better, in his opinion, than follow South Australia in many respects in reducing the expenditure in

our public departments, because he believed South Australia was the most economically conducted Government of any in Australia, and one of the most capable Governments also. We might well follow the example of South Australia in this respect. In his opinion the cost of this department was much greater than it ought to be; and, as he had asserted, it was a wholly unconstitutional department, which ought never to have existed. He also hoped the Premier would see his way, not to repeal the Public Service Act, but to bring in such an amendment of it as would enable him to deal with the public service in the way the Premier desired it should be dealt with. He had heard the Premier say repeatedly during the present session that he could do nothing, that he was hampered by the Public Service Act. If such was the case, we must amend the Act so that we could deal with the public service, and he hoped no time would be lost in bringing in a short amendment to enable that to be done. He felt compelled to make some observations on this matter, because he had always held a strong opinion that this department ought never to have existed. He still thought it ought not to exist, and he would like to see it struck out.

MR. DAGLISH: It was unnecessary to say anything now in support of the attack that had been made on the Premier's department. He was glad to learn that the present clerk of the Executive Council was to be relieved of those duties. As a matter of fact, for some considerable time past those duties had been performed by an assistant clerk. One clerk was quite sufficient to perform the duties of clerk of the Executive Council in this State, because the duties, after all, were very light. They could readily be performed by one man, and they did not require the services of a highly-paid officer. He had risen to speak rather on the reform not only of the Premier's Department, but of the public service. As the Premier had pointed out, there were great difficulties confronting the Government, and it would be hard for the Ministry to surmount them. The House was compelled to rely on the statements of Ministers in regard to the different officers in the public service, in relation

to their capacity touching the duties they performed, and in regard to the amount of salary they ought to receive. The Ministers themselves were compelled in turn to rely on the permanent heads of departments, and the Ministers could do nothing except through and by the advice of those permanent heads. There could be no thorough reorganisation of the public service by Ministers for that very reason. If the Government were going to reform the public service, it was essential to appoint an independent commission to go through all the departments and make a classification of the value of the work performed by the different officers in them; an independent body, who should not listen to the heads of departments alone, or to the heads of branches alone, but who should go right through every office in the State and find out every officer and his precise duties, and ascertain from the different sub-heads how those duties were discharged. If we had an independent board of classifiers appointed, we should have some basis upon which the Government could work. We should have a report upon the matter, and Parliament would be able to act on that report, which would be altogether independent of the recommendations of the various Ministers or the opinions of the various departments, though it would be supported, or opposed, as the case might be, by the views of those departmental heads or various Ministers. If we were to have an amendment of the Public Service Act, he would strongly urge that it should include a provision for the appointment of those classifiers, and such a provision also that any attempted reforms should not be simply reforms done in the dark, which would really create more new evils than relieve old ones.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON: The Premier's Department was one which, in his opinion, we could easily abolish. The Premier himself had said it was not necessary.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. JOHNSON: The Premier practically said there was not sufficient work for those officers.

THE PREMIER: What was asserted by him was that it was quite necessary to have some officer to act for the Premier, to conduct the correspondence between

this State and the others; still, we could do with less.

MR. JOHNSON: We could do with fewer officers in this department. The Premier admitted there was not sufficient work to keep all those officers going; yet he asked us to pass these Estimates and practically say those officers were to be kept on for another twelve months.

THE PREMIER: Would the hon. member dispense with them?

MR. JOHNSON: If the Premier were sincere in his desire to get rid of a certain number of those officers, he would bring down an amendment of the Civil Service Act which would enable him to do so. If we were to pass the salaries say for six months, that would give him time to amend the Act, and then do away with those officers who were not, according to the Premier's own words, earning the salaries this country was paying.

MEMBER: Six months of the year had already passed.

MR. A. E. THOMAS: All through the session so far, the Premier and his Ministers had been telling us repeatedly that nothing could be done because the Public Service Act barred the way. During the recent elections, and right through, wherever Ministers had appeared in public, we had been told how anxious and desirous the present Government were of carrying out the wish of the country, and the desire of almost every constituency in the country, for a radical reform in our public service; but no attempt had been made by the Premier to remove the bar which stood in the way. The Premier told us during the no-confidence debate that the reorganisation of the service could only be done during the recess. We had no evidence before us whatever that it was the intention of the Government to carry out these reforms at an early date. We had a list of Bills here, 43 of them. We had been told that a short amending Bill would be quite sufficient in this case; but nothing had been done to bring the matter before the House. He joined with others in a sincere hope that the Premier would, before we went into recess, introduce an amending Bill, so that we could pass it at an early date, and not go into recess until we had succeeded in passing it.

MR. GEORGE: One would like to suggest to the Premier that a way of

getting out of the difficulty in this matter was this. The hon. gentleman had said that an amending Bill was necessary, and the House wanted it to be passed this session. If the hon. gentleman would give an assurance that the Bill would be brought before us next week, or in the next fortnight, the House might be well satisfied with the discussion that had taken place.

THE PREMIER : Yes; he would give an undertaking to bring in within a week a Bill to repeal the Public Service Act.

MR. GEORGE : The House might be well satisfied with that assurance, and pass the item. Although he had been bitterly opposed to the Premier, and was opposed to him still, he wanted to see fair-play given to the hon. gentleman.

MR. JACOBY : There was the assurance of the Premier, as Attorney General, that an officer retrenched need not necessarily be pensioned.

THE PREMIER : No. If an office were abolished, the man was entitled to a pension.

MR. JACOBY : What if this position of chief clerk were abolished?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : He must receive at least seven months' salary, and afterwards a pension.

MR. GEORGE : On the basis of his salary.

MR. JACOBY : The work of the chief clerk and the registrar was previously done by the Colonial Secretary's Department, in which there were now some clerks who were consequently idle.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : There were no idle men in his department.

MR. JACOBY : The word "under" should be struck out, and "to Premier" added after "secretary."

MR. HOPKINS : With what gain?

MR. JACOBY : That would abolish the under secretary, and make him, as he should be and was originally, secretary to the Premier.

THE PREMIER : There was not much in a name.

MR. JACOBY : The repeal of the Public Service Act would have his support.

MR. TAYLOR : After the Premier's assurance as to such repeal, he (Mr. Taylor) would not oppose the item. In the Queen's Hall, the Premier had promised to abolish this department and to

apply the pruning knife all round; but there had always been some obstacle to his so doing.

MR. WALLACE : While all agreed that this department was unnecessary, none had moved to reduce the items, though the salaries were admittedly too high. Besides reforming the department, the white bulldog he had often seen there should be abolished, though this animal did not appear on the Estimates. The only economy effected had been that of the junior clerk and messenger, whose salary was £12 10s. per annum. The chief clerk in the Public Works Department received only £400; yet here we had a chief clerk receiving £425. He moved that this item be reduced by £125.

MR. HOPKINS : How could the Committee effectually criticise individual officers in departments? Retrenchment should not be effected by patchwork, but by a Royal Commission of thoroughly qualified men. Was there not some obligation to a man who joined the service perhaps as a youth, and rose to a high position?

MR. WALLACE : This man had not done so.

MR. HOPKINS : There could be no satisfaction to the country, to Parliament, or to the service, if retrenchment were not effected in a businesslike way. Why reduce a salary without warning, perhaps causing serious trouble to the officer affected?

MR. TAYLOR : In this case there had been sufficient warning.

MR. HOPKINS : The amendment should be negatived.

MR. HASTIE opposed the amendment. It was very well to say one or two officers ought to do all the work of their department; but all men of experience knew it was the first duty of a loyal civil servant to increase the work and the importance of his department. For this reason, under secretaries could not be relied on to effect retrenchment, and some sort of Royal Commission was required. To single out one officer for reduction would be unfair. The officers of this department would understand that the Committee were not finding fault with them individually; but in this thinly-populated country, all the departments had grown at such a rate that it was

necessary to prevent any farther increase. If there were good men in this department, let them be transferred to some other. Let the Premier introduce his Bill for repealing the Public Service Act, and give him a free hand to decrease as soon as possible the number of civil servants.

MR. WALLACE's amendment by leave withdrawn.

Vote put and passed.

Police, £137,456 2s. 6d.:

MR. A. E. THOMAS: Expenses allowed to police officers when on gold escort duty, he understood, were 5s. a day as a rule, and 6s. 6d. a day was allowed in the Lawlers and North Murchison districts. He knew that on the Norseman route it cost the police officers 15s. on the route down and 15s. on the route back, also 10s. while in Norseman. The allowance which the Government made only amounted to 30s., so that the police officers had to pay £1 out of their pockets when on this police escort duty. The Government made a large profit on these escorts. The Premier had said that an extra allowance would be made, and one wanted to know if any provision had been made for the money being paid.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL said he would endeavour to carry out the wishes expressed by members. If we were to have an efficient police force, the members must be well paid; we should have a force of picked men, and we could never have a proper force until that idea was carried out.

MR. RESIDE: Had provision been made for the increased allowance for the goldfields police?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That could not be done until the Estimates were passed.

MR. RESIDE: But was not provision made on the present Estimates?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Item 543 provided a special allowance for police officers in certain districts.

Item—Subsidy to police benefit fund, Rewards £100, Gratuities £1,100:

MR. W. J. GEORGE: There was an error in this item. How was it the expenditure in previous years in connection with this matter was £2,200, whereas

this year it had been cut down to £1,100? Were the Government practising economy?

MR. DAGLISH suggested, in explanation, that gratuities were paid on the retirement of members from the police force, and the vote required for any one year depended on the condition of the Police Benefit Fund. Probably it was estimated that £1,100 would be sufficient to cover demands when this amount was added to the amount standing to the credit of the Police Benefit Fund.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was a clerical error in the figures [referred to by Mr. George], but the total was correct.

MR. QUINLAN: What had been done in respect to Detective McCarthy's claim?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No determination had been come to yet.

MR. QUINLAN: It was a very urgent matter.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There was no recommendation departmentally to recognise the claim.

MR. QUINLAN: Having seen the papers, he could assure the Attorney General the matter should be dealt with as one of urgency.

MR. HOPKINS: Was it intended to publish the annual balance sheet of the Police Benefit Fund in the *Government Gazette*?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It would be published, if not too long.

Item—Steam launch, £1,000:

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Some time ago the police launch was sold by auction, and hon. members should be informed why it was sold.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was sunk.

MR. GEORGE: But it was brought up and sold.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: At present the Police Department used the launch "Cygnet," which they borrowed from the Works Department. The police had a good deal of work to do on the river. There were strict regulations as to fishing, and it was no good setting the police to row after fishermen. Many accidents now occurred on the river, and the police were supposed to go out directly an accident happened and sometimes to be on the alert in case of accident. A

good launch was required to protect the game and fish.

DR. O'CONNOR: Would the launch be available for the Fisheries Department, because farther on in the Estimates there was an item of £700 for a launch for that department?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No; this launch would be available for the police in Perth and Fremantle. The police had a good deal of patrolling work on the river to do, between Guildford and Fremantle, and up the Canning River.

Item—Band instruments, £100 :

MR. DAGLISH: This matter should be left to private enterprise. If the police wanted a band, they should take steps to raise the money. He moved that the item be struck out.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Commissioner informed him that the idea of forming a police band was a good one. It would be useful when the men were going on parade, as well as being a source of recreation. The men were very deserving, and anything that would tend to keep them together it would be well to give them. Speaking generally of the force, he would be glad to see the men in barracks, and some provision made for pensioning them on retirement, so as to make it worth their while to remain in the force. He rather fancied that the item under discussion appeared in pursuance of a promise given last year. The Commissioner told him that if it was necessary to reduce any items in this schedule he would forego the band.

MR. DIAMOND: The item ought to be passed. On inquiry it would be found that the practice in the Eastern States was to pass a vote in aid of the police band.

MR. JACOBY: The item should be passed. It would also be advisable to follow the practice obtaining in South Australia, of having a monthly inspection of the police.

Amendment (to strike out the item) put and negatived.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Aborigines, £5,000 :

MR. PHILLIPS: Was the Premier and Attorney General satisfied with the

manner in which this money was being spent? It was an Imperial matter, but he would like to have the Premier's opinion on it.

MR. HASTIE: Before that question was answered, he would like to ask another. Personally he was not satisfied with the manner in which the moneys voted for the support of aborigines were spent; and in many respects he was not satisfied with the treatment of aborigines. Some months ago a motion was before the House for the appointment of a select committee or a Royal Commission to inquire into the treatment of aborigines. Hon. members appeared to be practically unanimous in the opinion that a Royal Commission should be appointed. The end of the session being now near, he wished to ask the Premier whether he would give an undertaking to afford facilities for finishing that discussion?

MR. HOPKINS: The Federal Parliament appeared to be taking a fatherly interest in the blacks of Western Australia. Although the care of aborigines was a State matter, still with the concurrence of the various States it would be competent for the Commonwealth Government to legislate for the welfare of aborigines. He would be glad to see the care of the blacks made a Federal matter, and then the vote of £5,000 would be considerably reduced.

MR. PHILLIPS: The £5,000 represented only half the expenditure.

MR. HOPKINS: We should then have only about £1,000 to pay instead of £5,000. What had been said about the treatment of blacks in this State might have been applied to the other States in their early days. Probably it would be well if, instead of appointing a Royal Commission, the House were to adopt a motion informing the Federal Government that this State, at any rate, would be pleased if the Commonwealth undertook the responsibility of legislating for the treatment of the blacks.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Commonwealth Government had not power to legislate for the aborigines of individual States.

MR. HOPKINS: The various States could delegate their powers to the Commonwealth Government.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Under the old Constitution Act, a certain per-

centage of our revenue was set aside for the benefit of the aborigines. It was either one per cent. or five.

MR. QUINLAN: At the inauguration of responsible government there was a special provision made, according to population; but the amount was not to be less than £5,000.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: After certain representations had been made to the home Government, the local authorities were given control of this expenditure; and then some fresh arrangement was made whereby we had to provide not less than £5,000 a year. The money was being expended through Mr. Prinsep and the Aborigines Protection Board.

MR. GEORGE: What was the total amount, £5,000 or £10,000?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: £10,000, he thought. Hitherto he had not seen many reports of the expenditure. There were occasionally complaints by officials as to improper treatment of natives and so forth; but on the whole his experience showed that the natives were not so badly treated as some people would have us believe. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] He did not wish to go into that aspect of the matter again. In answer to the member for the Irwin (Mr. Phillips) he could only say that he had no particular complaints to make. He would look into the matter more closely; and if the hon. member desired any information it would be readily furnished.

MR. PHILLIPS: The officials did as well as they could, and he had no complaint to make concerning them. He considered, however, that the expenditure ought to be more under the control of this Parliament. He understood the Imperial Government had the spending of the money.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was the result of the compromise by which, instead of paying a large sum of money, we paid a comparatively small one.

MR. HASTIE: Would the Premier agree to the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the treatment of our aborigines?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was another matter. We must not anticipate a motion on the Notice Paper.

Vote put and passed.

Audit, £6,920 18s. 3d.:

MR. GARDINER: This was one of the departments requiring considerable reform. Members had a right to complain of the length of time which elapsed before the Auditor General's report on each financial year was available.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The trouble lay in the audit regulations, which were passed at a time when the revenue was very small. The Auditor General could not start work until three months after the close of the financial year. Under present conditions, the report was in consequence absolutely waste paper. It had to be borne in mind, however, that it was one of the most bulky documents published, on account of the lengthy returns which had to be scheduled in it.

MR. GARDINER: The South Australian financial year ended on 30th January, 1899, and the Auditor General's report was in the hands of members of Parliament on the 5th November, 1899; whereas the report of our Auditor General was always two years old.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The report of our Auditor General was, unfortunately, far more lengthy than that of the South Australian Auditor General, by reason of the requirements of our statute.

MR. GARDINER: Was there any hope of our getting any closer to South Australia in respect to the date of publication, or was the report still to continue to be so much waste paper? If so, the Audit Department might just as well be abolished.

MR. GEORGE: The Audit Department was doing good work.

MR. GARDINER: The work might be good, but the report was always two years behind time when Parliament got it.

MR. GEORGE: The Audit Department did their work day by day, auditing departmental accounts.

MR. GARDINER: Apparently only a slight amendment of the Audit Act was needed to make the report available at a reasonably early date.

SIR JAMES G. LEE STEERE: The report of the Auditor General as now presented, he quite agreed with the hon. member, was utterly useless. He had looked into this matter a great deal, and the only way of getting an alteration was

to change the date of our financial year and make it the same as in New Zealand, where the financial year ended on the 31st March. Then, if the financial year ended on 31st March, during the succeeding three months the Auditor General and the Treasurer would be getting their accounts in order, and the report could be presented to Parliament when Parliament met in June or July, in which case it would be of real service. As it was now, the report was so old that it was useless to members. In fact, he doubted whether members took the trouble to look at it.

MR. GARDINER said he had been looking at it for information.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: A previous administration had already recommended an alteration of the terms upon which the report was made. He would make it his duty to get the Auditor General to report, with a view to seeing if we could not have his report earlier; and if it were necessary to amend the Act or any regulation—and he thought it was the regulation more especially that needed alteration—he would take care the amendment was effected.

Vote put and passed.

On motion by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:33 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 15th January, 1902.

Question: Tariff, how enforced—Question: Villiers v. Government, Appeal—Question: Reserve at Wanneroo, Fencing—Question: Firewood Cutters, License Fee—Question: Canning Timber Railway, to Purchase—Question: Railway Duty, as to neglect—Question: Immigration of Italians—Leave of Absence—Motion: Government Business, Precedence—Motion: Railway Rolling-stock, to Increase—Question: Lease 37s, Kalgoorlie, how granted—Papers: Railway Duty, as to neglect at Burswood—Papers: Gold Mining Lease 3285s—Return: Plumbers, List of Licenses—Papers: Education, Teacher at Boulder—Papers: Clerk of Courts, (assistant) at Coolgardie, Removal—Return: Railway Engine Sparks, Fires and Compensation—Return: Royal Visit, Expenditure—Papers: Tonnage Dues, Hamelin Bay Remission—Return: Fruit Industry and Pests—Papers: Londonderry Dam, Leasing—Companies Duty Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Return: Education, School Attendance at Boulder—Motion: Coal-Mining, to Stimulate—Question: Agricultural Bank, to Improve and Extend—Annual Estimates (resumed), Treasury votes to Miscellaneous, progress—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—TARIFF, HOW ENFORCED.

MR. F. McDONALD asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Whether the Tariff Act has been re-enacted? 2, If so, whether the Collector has power to administer the same? 3, Why the Collector refuses to allow manufacturers to manufacture essences in bond at the old rate of 5s. per proof gallon.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. Illingworth) replied: This question can only be answered by the officers of the Federal Parliament, but I may be able to obtain the answer.

QUESTION—VILLIERS v. GOVERNMENT, APPEAL.

MR. F. McDONALD asked the Attorney General: Whether it is the intention of the Government to appeal to the Full Court against the decision of the Local Court, Fremantle, in the case of Villiers v. the Government.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. Leake) replied: Yes. The magistrate who tried the case has been requested to state a case for opinion of the Full Court.

QUESTION—RESERVE AT WANNEROO, FENCING.

MR. M. H. JACOBY asked the Premier: Whether a reply can now be