

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 23rd October, 1902.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—HANSARD REPORTS, AS TO CURTAILMENT.

MR. WALLACE asked the Premier: 1, Whether any instruction has been given to the *Hansard* staff to curtail the reports of members' speeches. 2, If yes, whether he considers the staff competent to discriminate between what should and should not be reported.

THE PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, No instruction has been given to the *Hansard* staff as to curtailing reports, since the instruction to curtail interjections, given early in the present Session and as previously reported to the House.

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS, SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) moved:

That until otherwise ordered, from and after Monday next the House do meet on Mondays, at 4:30 p.m., in addition to the present days of sitting.

In placing the motion before the House, he was anxious to ascertain which day would best suit a majority of members, Monday or Friday. He proposed to give notice that on Tuesday he would move to extend the hours of sitting as at present so that the House would meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 2:30 p.m., and either on Monday or Friday, whichever the House thought would best suit the convenience of members, at 4:30 p.m. So far as the Government were concerned, we were desirous of having farther sitting days. It was the opinion of the Government that three days a week,

sitting at half-past 4 o'clock and rising as a rule at half-past 10 o'clock, and allowing one hour for the tea adjournment, giving therefore only five hours a day for three days a week, was far too short a time to carry on the business of the House. If the Government remained in power until next year it was intended to introduce the extended hours at the commencement of the session. At present it was desired to consult members as to which was the more convenient day, Friday or Monday. So far as town members were concerned either day was suitable, but it was a question with country members whether they desired Friday or Monday.

MR. JACOBY: Both were very inconvenient to country members.

THE PREMIER: It was intended to give notice to extend the hours of sitting on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, commencing at 2:30 o'clock.

MR. THOMAS: Could not that be done on the present motion?

THE PREMIER: Perhaps with the consent of the House it would be better to withdraw the motion and move another.

THE SPEAKER: With the leave of the House, that could be done.

THE PREMIER: It would be well to settle the question of Monday or Friday, and then, by the leave of the House, he would move to extend the sitting hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

MR. NANSON: An amendment to the motion could be moved.

THE PREMIER: Monday next would be a public holiday. By leave of the House, he would move the motion in this form: "That, until otherwise ordered, after Wednesday next the House do meet on Mondays at 4:30 p.m., and on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 2:30 p.m. in addition to the present days and hours of sitting."

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): If there were any evidence that members were attending the sittings under the present arrangement with anything like regularity, he could understand the Government introducing a motion of this description. He found, however, that although early in the sittings there would be a full attendance, yet as the evening wore on the members dwindled down, and the great bulk of the work in

examining and investigating the legislation brought before members fell on the shoulders of a very few. On an average, about 75 per cent. of members were either away from the precincts of the House, or were in the smoking-room or some other of the precincts. We should consider whether by making this change it would conduce to the better carrying on of the business. Doubtless if the aim of the Government and of the House was simply to pass Bills *pro forma*, to rush them through Committee with often not a quorum present, then the longer the sitting, the more business that could be done. But if we looked at the statute-book of Western Australia, could it be said that the attention devoted to Bills was such as to show that a large amount of consideration was given to the legislation brought forward? He believed that in past years a much better state of things had prevailed.

THE PREMIER: There had been less examination.

MR. NANSON: In the days before payment of members, there was a great deal more examination. When the present Premier, also the late Mr. George Leake, Mr. G. T. Simpson, and the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) were in Opposition, a great deal of examination was given to the measures; and it was also seen then that the Premier of the day, Sir John Forrest, was ever in his place in the House through the longest sitting, never leaving his chair, but hour after hour attending to the business with the closest attention, and not acting the part of a jack-in-the-box, so to speak, being half his time in his seat and half his time in the smoking-room.

THE PREMIER: That was absolute and deliberate misrepresentation; wilful and gross. He hoped these words would be reported.

MR. NANSON: One need not take more notice of the intemperate language of the hon. gentleman than to say that if the metaphor of a "jack-in-the-box" offended him, he would withdraw it, and assert that the hon. gentleman was continually oscillating between his seat on the front Government bench and the smoking-room or the back precincts of the House. It was not as though that were a fresh charge against the hon. gentleman. From the moment the hon. gentleman

entered Parliament it was noted in the Press of the State that it was one of his characteristics to fire off his remarks, then leave the Chamber and go elsewhere. During last session we had repeated instances of the same thing. If this reference hurt the hon. gentleman's feelings, one regretted the fact.

THE PREMIER said he did not mind facts, but he objected to misrepresentation.

MR. NANSON: The words "jack-in-the-box" had been used by him—

THE SPEAKER: Those remarks were not germane to the question before the House.

MR. NANSON: Instead of the proposed longer sittings advancing the true interests of the public business, they would be likely to impede them; because the likelihood was that instead of there being a larger attendance than at present on ordinary sitting days, we should find even a smaller attendance. The work of criticising Bills in Committee, and pointing out very many defects in the clauses, fell on very few members, so few that those who had to undertake that work were continually being accused of obstruction. We had a highly controversial Factories Bill, a Constitution Amendment Bill, a Redistribution Bill, a Police Act Amendment Bill, this last dealing with some of the most difficult social problems it was possible to conceive; we had the whole of the Estimates yet to deal with; and if members were to be in the House four days a week instead of three—and he understood it was the intention to sit on three days from half-past two in the afternoon instead of from half-past four—what leisure time was there available for members to follow closely the legislation submitted to the House? If these long sittings were to be acceded to, it would be almost mentally and physically impossible to compass so many subjects as were brought before the House. The Premier was simply overloading us with legislation. He was piling Bill upon Bill, and the only result could be scamped legislation. We had already more than ample legislation to occupy the leisure time of members when not sitting. He protested against extending the sittings of the House at this stage. The Government might to a very large extent have

lightened the aggregation of public business if, when the session opened, they had had some of these highly controversial measures which had been recently presented to the House ready for presentation. The first part of the session was almost entirely wasted, because none of the measures of first importance were out of the hands of the Government. The recollection of the Speaker would carry him back to the time when it was the practice in this State, before Bills were introduced, to publish them during the recess in the *Government Gazette*, so that members might have opportunity of studying the measures to come before them. That admirable practice had been abandoned, and now the Government did not present their Bills before moving the second reading. This course left members very few days to master the contents of measures. It was well enough for the five gentlemen on the Treasury bench, whom the country paid at the rate of £20 per week for their services, to express a willingness to sit five days a week; but the honorarium paid to private members could not be considered sufficient to warrant them in devoting all their time to the business of the State and totally neglecting their private affairs. Under existing conditions, the tax on private members in Opposition to master the mass of legislation submitted, and at the same time to attend to their business affairs, was indeed severe. Members in active Opposition were entitled to some consideration. Had the Premier asked earlier in the session for longer sittings, the pressure would not have been so heavy, especially if the more important legislation had been brought down at an early stage. No doubt, following the usual custom, the Government wished to bring the session to a close before the setting in of the extremely hot weather. While joining in that wish, he did not join in it to the extent of being willing to sit long hours in an endeavour perfunctorily to pass Bills which ought to have been introduced much earlier. The right course was for the Government to go through the Bills on the Notice Paper and decide which should be dropped and which should be proceeded with. If the Premier cared to adopt that course, and would meet him in consultation on the subject, the direct

Opposition would be glad to assist the Government in the direction indicated. In order that the business of the country might be properly conducted, a large number of Bills must be sacrificed. Should longer sitting hours be decided on, it would be incumbent on the Government at least to keep a quorum; and if himself and one or two other members should be the only ones able to attend on the Opposition side, they would consider it their duty to use the forms of the House to the extent of calling attention to the want of a quorum if necessity arose. It was intolerable that important legislation should be rushed through a House consisting mainly of an array of empty benches. If we did not remedy that evil, it would certainly be remedied by the people. He opposed the motion.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): Although opposed to the motion, he wished to express his entire dissent from the insinuation thrown out that the Premier spent half his time in the refreshment-room. He emphatically protested against any innuendo of the kind. He intended to move as an amendment to the motion, that all the words after "that" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu: "until otherwise ordered, on and after Tuesday next the House do meet at 2:30 p.m." A similar amendment moved by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) at the opening of the session was defeated by a narrow majority. It was then urged that some consideration should be shown to country members. The same thing cropped up during last session. The business could be got through if the House sat for longer hours on three days per week. It had been claimed that the town members were entitled to consideration, that a large number of them had private businesses to attend to, and that it was unfair to expect them to leave their businesses to attend the House at 2:30 instead of 4:30. Country members, however, had in many cases to travel from 800 to 1,000 miles per week in order that they might attend here and also spend a day or two in their homes now and again. Country members were fairly regular in their attendance; at any rate far more regular than town members. On two occasions last night when the attention of the acting Chairman of Committees was drawn to

the want of a quorum, he (Mr. Thomas) had counted the members present. On each occasion 15 members were in the Chamber, and 10 of those were country members, while only five were town members. Legislative duties imposed far greater hardship on country than on town members. The £200 a year paid for our services was not sufficient for all of us; and if the sitting days were to be so extended as to preclude country members from engaging in private business, either the pay must be increased to such an extent as to allow of a man devoting his whole time to the business of the country, or else country constituencies would in almost every case be captured by residents of Perth or Fremantle as the only persons able to attend the House, and also look after their private affairs. The Premier had said the average sitting had been from 4:30 till 10:30, with an hour for tea; but surely the average hour of adjournment had been earlier during the 15 weeks which the House had been in session. Business did not start till about 4:45, and till about ten minutes after the tea hour; so that the working hours were about four and a-half per day, or say five hours, which would give 15 hours a week for the actual consideration of business. To adjourn at 10:30 was to adjourn too early. If the House met at 2:30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, as proposed by the Premier, and made a practice of not adjourning till 11:30, there would be 24 hours, instead of 15, devoted to public business during those three days, or a gain of nine hours, quite sufficient to enable members to get through business without an extra sitting day. To sit at 2:30 and adjourn as at present at 10 or 10:30 would give from four and a-half to five hours extra per week, and to sit for an extra night would entail enormous inconvenience on country members. To sit on Monday as well as on the three other days would mean that country members could not spend even the Sunday in their own homes; and sitting on Fridays meant that they could not leave Perth till Saturday afternoon, could not reach home until Sunday morning, and must leave again on Monday morning for Perth. Thus it would be hardly worth while to leave Perth at all: and if such members attended religiously

to their duties, they must during the session either be permanently absent from home or move their homes to Perth. During last session country members had endured considerable hardship, not only to benefit town members, but mainly because they considered that to sit longer on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays would entail undue hardship on the Speaker. This, however, would be obviated by the appointment of Deputy Chairmen. As a country member, he appealed to town members to fall in with this suggestion. The extra day was unnecessary, for it would mean a gain of only one and a half hours per week as against sitting an extra hour in the evening on the three other days. The House of Commons met at 2 or 2:30 in the afternoon, and sat till one or two in the morning, while an early adjournment was almost unheard of. As most members slept in Perth or Fremantle, it would be easy to get home after 11:30.

MR. DOHERTY: No. The last train for Fremantle left at that hour.

MR. THOMAS: Then let Fremantle members go, and we could promise them that nothing affecting Fremantle should be decided in their absence. The extra sitting day would involve hardship on Ministers also. All knew what the Ministers had promised the country, and what the country expected from Ministers; and that if one-half of what they intended to do in reforming the civil service were attempted, their time would be fully occupied in their offices, giving no justification for their being dragged to this Chamber for the sake of a gain of one and a half hours per week. Most country members would agree he had made out a strong case, not only for meeting earlier and adjourning later, but against the extra sitting day which would prevent country members from attending to their private business as well as to the business of the State.

THE PREMIER: Better alter the amendment to read that the words "on Mondays at 4:30 p.m. and" be struck out.

MR. THOMAS altered his amendment thus:

That the words "on Mondays at 4:30 p.m. and" be struck out.

THE PREMIER: We ought to sit later at night.

MR. MORAN: There should be an arrangement not to sit after 12 in Committee on a Bill, so that measures might not be forced through.

MR. H. J. YELVERTON (Sussex) disagreed with the Premier's proposal to sit on Mondays at 4:30. As a country member, he had now the greatest difficulty in attending the House. Only by working late at night and all day on Sunday was he able to leave his business on Tuesday morning for an eight-mile drive to catch the 7 o'clock train for Perth. Moreover, many of the more prominent country members were now absent; and while it was not suggested that the Premier had taken advantage of their absence, it would nevertheless be unfair to them to press the motion now. With the remarks of the leader of the Opposition as to the Premier's absence from the House at certain times he did not agree. He fully recognised that the Premier was working very hard in the country's interest. At the same time, the Premier was possibly attempting too much; and it would probably be well if he accepted the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition, that some of the less important measures be passed by, so as to deal thoroughly with the more important. While in Perth from Tuesday till Thursday night, he (Mr. Yelverton) was ready and willing to sit from 2:30 p.m. till 11:30 or 12; but he strongly objected to being longer absent from his business. Country members living 150 miles away needed almost a day to come to Perth, and a similar time to return home. He supported the amendment.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): When it was recently announced that it was necessary to give the people in some country districts much greater parliamentary representation than people elsewhere, the reason was not obvious; but to-night it was apparent, as two country members stated they could not attend to the parliamentary duties which they had been returned to perform, the inference being that people in small country districts should have double representation.

MR. YELVERTON: The duties had been performed notwithstanding the difficulty.

MR. HASTIE: They were doubly represented now; and surely if given a still more disproportionate representation, it might be expected their members would attend more strictly to the work of the House. Members had been returned for a specific purpose, and the Premier had proposed that their duties should be fairly performed; but the only objection made by the last two speakers was that this would not suit their private convenience.

MR. THOMAS: And would not be of advantage to anyone else.

MR. HASTIE: It would be of advantage. Such members wished those who tried seriously to do the business of the country, to wait on their convenience.

MR. YELVERTON: That was absolutely unfair.

MR. HASTIE: If there were business to be done, do it at once; and if such members could not attend to their duties with moderate diligence, let them say so. He protested against the statement of the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nanson), which would be quoted in the newspapers, that very often when 75 per cent. of hon. members were not within the precincts of the House, important business was transacted. The hon. member must know that was untrue. [Mr. MORAN: It was quite true.] Give an instance of it. He had never heard of an instance where, when business was going on, there were not at least five Labour members available.

MR. THOMAS: What about the other night?

MR. YELVERTON: What about last night?

MR. HASTIE: They were within the precincts of the House. But there were some members who objected to sit here hour after hour listening to the hon. member's interminable babble, repeating himself over and over again. The hon. member called it serious debate. Most members were within the precincts of the House; and when a member rose to address the House in a serious strain, they gave to that speaker a large share of attention. Farther, if the leader of the Opposition took the trouble to find out, he would ascertain that at all times half the members of the House were within the precincts of the Chamber. He (Mr. Hastie) had proposed, three months ago, that the House should meet on three days

of the week at 2:30 p.m., and from the division-list it appeared that the leader of the Opposition opposed that motion. Had the leader of the Government brought forward the motion, the leader of the Opposition in the House, and certainly in the Press, would have abused the Government for doing so. When the time came for the member for the Murchison to lead a Government, he would try to get along with the business as quickly as possible. There was a large amount of work to be done which most members believed should be considered this year; and if members seriously wished to pass measures into law, or seriously consider the questions that came up, then the time devoted to business would have to be increased. If members wished to see the time of the House conserved, that could be done by discussing the business in an ordinary, fair, and honest way, and not by devoting a considerable portion of the night in preventing other members dealing with the business of the country. Last night a large portion of the time was deliberately wasted, chiefly by the leader of the Opposition, in open obstruction and preventing members of the House from expressing their opinions. And it went without saying that in whatever the leader of the Opposition did he was supported by the member for the Swan. While in sympathy with the member for Dundas in regard to the inconvenience which would be caused to that member by the House meeting on Monday, at the risk of not having that member's company he (Mr. Hastie) would vote to meet on an additional day of the week.

MR. HAYWARD (Bunbury): As a country member, he would support the amendment. As to the attendance of members, he came to the conclusion that those who lived farthest away were the best attenders. Country members were always present. He protested against the accusation that members spent a great part of their time in the smoking room; but when we found members as last night, stonewalling for hours together, it was enough to drive members away. He frequently retired from the House because he had not the patience to sit and listen to members killing time and stonewalling for no earthly reason.

MR. WALLACE (Mt. Magnet): A similar motion to that before the House

was discussed last session. Members should agree to the suggestion of the member for Dundas. Sitting now on three days a week gave an average of 15 sitting hours, and if the length of the sitting were extended for two extra hours each day, that would give six hours extra, or 21 sitting hours in three days.

MR. THOMAS: Put another hour on each night.

MR. WALLACE: If members sat until half-past eleven, that would give three more hours. A number of goldfields members desired to go home at least once a fortnight, and if the House sat on Mondays or Fridays members would be forced to lose that day. No time would be lost by accepting the amendment moved by the member for Dundas. He did not know if it would be inconvenient to Ministers to sit at half-past two on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, but it would not meet the convenience of members. A difficulty might arise in getting a quorum at half-past two, because members living out of the city would require to have their luncheon in the city. Half-past 2 o'clock would be very inconvenient to members living at Fremantle, as those members would have to be in Perth by 1 o'clock.

MR. THOMAS: A lot of Fremantle members took luncheon at the House every day.

MR. DOHERTY: The Fremantle members could leave by the half-past 1 train.

MR. WALLACE: In that case Fremantle members could have luncheon at home, and be at the House by half-past 2.

MR. DOHERTY: The Fremantle members would go without luncheon or dinner to be present.

MR. WALLACE: An important question had been raised by the leader of the Opposition in pointing out that only a few, and presumably it was the same old few, discussed measures in the House. He (Mr. Wallace) was never anxious to find himself in the columns of the Press or the columns of *Hansard*, or playing to the gallery. He had made up his mind that the most important way to deal with measures was by voting. If members were to be allowed to carry on as some members had done during the progress of the Factories and Shops Bill, it would be necessary to have much longer sittings. Some members discussed the Bill clause

by clause in such a manner that if such a course were to be continued, we would not get through one Bill during the session. It was well that all members were not as loquacious as the member for the Murchison. He believed many members like himself looked to the member for the Murchison and other big guns to put forward their points of debate, and having heard those points, to record their votes. It was only in fairness to the Premier—and he did not wish to champion the Premier—to say that on many an occasion when the Premier was absent he was to be found in the committee room going through piles of papers. The Premier was not in the refreshment room nor indulging in a whisky and soda. It was unjust to make such an accusation against the Premier. It was also as untrue to state that Sir John Forrest stuck hard and fast to his chair.

MR. MORAN: He did, though.

MR. WALLACE: The member for West Perth knew that Sir John Forrest had to go away at times.

MR. NANSON: When in charge of a Bill Sir John Forrest was always in the Chamber.

MR. WALLACE: Sir John Forrest did stick to his post in the House closely. But the present Premier had not merited one word of the condemnation so ungenerously and unkindly heaped on him. When members had to sit in the House day after day and night after night to hear balderdash poured forth from the front Opposition benches—

MR. DOHERTY: The hon. member called them "big guns" just now.

MR. WALLACE: When the member for the Murchison gave the House the benefit of his knowledge in dealing directly with the measures before the House, members were thankful, but when the hon. member burst forth with balderdash, then members got tired. Such conduct as had been carried on during this session was never, to his knowledge, carried on during the four years he had sat on the Opposition side of the House. The records would show that during the four years the present Ministers were sitting in Opposition, they did not call attention to the state of the House as often as the members of the Opposition had done during the present session.

MR. MORAN: The reason was that Sir John Forrest's supporters never left the House without a quorum.

MR. WALLACE: It was to be hoped the amendment of the member for Dundas would be carried, and that there would not be an extra sitting day.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan): It was to be hoped the Premier would accept the amendment proposed on behalf of country members. The effect of sitting on Monday would be to disfranchise the country voters. Country members were put to more inconvenience and made greater sacrifices than other members. They sacrificed family ties, their businesses, they had to live in lodgings during the time they were in town; therefore he hoped the amendment would be carried. The extra time added by sitting at half-past two would more than compensate for the loss of the Monday. He would support the amendment. Though not joining in what he considered rather too severe condemnation of the Premier, he had been somewhat surprised to see the hon. gentleman stick so tenaciously to his seat, considering the reputation he had. Whilst, therefore, not going quite so far as his hon. friend in condemning the Premier in that matter, he believed certain members who criticised the leader of the Opposition would give their ears to have the ability that gentleman possessed in criticising some of the Bills introduced to the House.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): With regard to the motion and amendment, he would have said nothing but for the reflections that members had unnecessarily gone out of their way to cast upon Perth members, reflections which, he thought, were absolutely uncalled for, considering that many Perth members were in their places night after night, and were fully as regular if not more regular than almost any other members of the House. Those reflections, as regarded a number of the Perth members at any rate, were absolutely uncalled for, unjustifiable, and untrue. It was a very rare thing to see the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss), the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran), and the member for East Perth (the Premier) absent from their seats.

MR. MORAN: The member for South Perth was here too.

MR. DAGLISH: Yes. We might recognise on the part of all members a desire to do their duty as it appeared to them as individuals, and we might recognise also that there was a large amount of work to be done. Country members had certain claims on members representing town constituencies, and he was anxious as one town member not to impose his wishes with regard to the hours of sitting unfairly on the country members. Members ought to try to meet each other as far as possible, and the question was whether we should sit one extra day per week, or whether it was better to allow the sittings to be prolonged. As one town member he was indifferent which course was adopted; but he thought it was absolutely indispensable that certain measures should be passed before the session was closed. We should insist upon the introduction of a Metropolitan Water Supply Bill. He would not be satisfied unless the House did that this session. We also ought to have an Old Age Pensions Bill this session. He did not care how long or how often we sat, if the House would do the business the country called for. He would like to see some opportunity of getting on with business in a legitimate manner. He agreed with everything the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) said with regard to criticism of all measures; but criticism could be carried to an undue length, and it was not necessary for reasonable criticism that we should have long speeches on every clause of a Bill. There was no reason why member after member should repeat views already expressed. It was unreasonable and unwise for any member to make invidious criticisms of the House as if the business were carried on in a worse fashion here than in other Assemblies. He had seen one other Australian Assembly, and could assure members that the attendance here was fully as good as it was there, and, as far as he was able to gather from the *Hansard* reports of other States, not only was the attendance as good, but the ordinary standard of behaviour of the Assembly here was far higher than it was there. It was absolutely wrong for members to get up and try to bespatter other members with a certain amount of mud.

THE PREMIER (in reply) indorsed entirely the concluding observations of the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish). He had, on more than one occasion, deplored the fact that the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) was so apt to hurl public accusations against members. He had had longer experience in the House than the hon. member, and unless he was seriously mistaken he could say without much fear of contradiction that Committee work was almost invariably done in a thin House, and the only work done by any Government was done towards the end of the day, when members got tired. This was not a peculiarity applicable only to this House, but to every House of Parliament. It could never be contended or asked that during the whole time the House was sitting every member should occupy his seat, and that at all times all of us should have the same temperament as that which enabled the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) to so carefully keep his seat from the opening of the day's work to its completion, or that we should be like the Speaker, who by the rules of his office must keep his place. Those who had not the temperament he had referred to, or did not occupy that high office, could not be expected to be always present. So far as he himself was concerned, he would admit that he was astonished that he had been able to keep so closely to his duties in the House. He would be quite satisfied if able in the future to keep so closely to them as he had in the past. He could say that there never had been a Bill of importance in which he had been concerned, unless he had been present during the whole time; but he distinctly refused to recognise any obligation on him to retain his seat when he thought deliberate obstruction was being carried on. That must be left for him to judge. If he made mistakes, he must take the consequences. That was the principle which he proposed to go upon, and which he hoped would guide every member of the House. While we were anxious for criticism, however strong it might be as long as we believed it fair, we must protest against obstruction. He hoped the House would see its way to fall in with the views of the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), if he understood from

him and the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) that they did not indorse the somewhat peculiar views of their leader, who threw out a threat that if extra hours were availed of he would not recognise the necessity of keeping a quorum, and that he would on every opportunity call attention to the absence of a quorum. The hon. member would at once see that difficulties would crop up. If members would all act upon the principle he had referred to, and would begin the sittings at half-past two and go on till half-past eleven, we should be able to get through the work. Might he suggest that we should try it for a week or two and see to what extent members would stand by their promises, and ascertain what progress had been made. The work on the Notice Paper could be done in the time available for this session, if we recognised the duty of those who desired to criticise legislation and to improve it to direct their main attention to the important parts of a Bill. The attitude always adopted by the late Opposition was to deal mainly with principles and fight on those, but never to worry about the Committee stage.

MR. MORAN: That was what the hon. gentleman never did.

THE PREMIER: That was the position he always took up.

MR. MORAN: The hon. gentleman was never here in those days. If he took up that position, he did so outside. He was not one of those who obstructed.

THE PREMIER: On questions of principle he was prepared to fight, but he did not think his duty as a member of the Opposition went beyond that. In this House we had new critics, and they would introduce new methods. Perhaps at the end of the session we should revert to the old system, and realise that our chief duty was to look after the principles, leaving the details to those who were mainly responsible for them, namely the Government. He hoped the House would agree to the amendment.

MR. PIGOTT: The leader of the Opposition was, he thought, prepared to meet the Premier. As the most important work of the House was done in Committee, we should make provision that no Committee work should be done after midnight.

THE PREMIER: We should never get the work done.

MR. PIGOTT: The rule had, he believed, been introduced by the House of Commons.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No new business was taken after 12 o'clock.

MR. PIGOTT: The difficulty of getting members to stay in the House did not exist to any great extent till half-past eleven arrived.

THE PREMIER: If we sat till half-past eleven we could do a lot of work.

MR. PIGOTT: We might sit till then. He thought every member on the Opposition side of the House would agree to sit to that hour; but the Premier might accept the suggestion, and if the amendment were carried he would move to add a few words to the motion so as to bring the suggestion into effect.

THE PREMIER: That would be introducing an entirely new rule.

MR. MORAN: The three classes of members who belonged to the House had always, in his experience, found some little difficulty in making the attendances suit. There was what might be called the permanent boarder of the establishment, who came from different parts at the commencement of the session and never went home again, because he had no home to go to, till the end of the session. Of course he lived here all the time, and worried the life out of poor Kitchener, and was never known to be off the premises. He was a valuable member, because he was always here to facilitate the business of the country by making up quorums, and otherwise making himself generally agreeable to the party to which he belonged. Then there was the country member, who belonged to all sorts and conditions. We had a goldfields member who was also a country member, who had a home of his own to go to. Then there were the agricultural members from different parts, like his friend the member for Sussex (Mr. Yelverton), the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby), and others; and it was desirable indeed that we should allow country members to represent their own constituencies, bearing in mind that anything which would crowd this hall with footpath politicians who knew only the central constituencies was bad. Local knowledge was extremely desirable;

and it would be a great mistake to mop up Monday with the rest of the week to the inconvenience of country members. As a last resort, we might take two hours on Friday, though that should not be necessary. It was scarcely surprising that the two leaders of the House could not, after last night, refrain from having a fling at each other to-day. He deprecated the continual tendering of advice by Government supporters to prominent members of the Opposition. If it were not for the occasional extreme use of the forms of the House, important Bills would be rushed through with only two or three members present. All reforms in the world had been fought for against majorities, and therefore minorities ought to be protected. Why did the forms of the House exist if they were not to be used? If necessary, let us abolish the form of calling attention to want of quorum. British constitutional practice was to afford at every stage of a measure opportunities for its delay or even defeat. Governments ought to be criticised. If the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) had only an infantile conception of liberalism, he would know that but for the extreme use in the past of the forms of other Houses his party would have no existence. He (Mr. Moran) objected to advice from a *doctrinaire* Liberal who was content to sit behind an Administration and swallow whatever that Administration offered him. It was to be hoped the amendment would be carried. The Estimates alone would take a long time to get through, at any rate as far as he was concerned. So long as we had party government, let us have honest and fearless criticism. He was glad that by the compromise being effected country members would have the opportunity of attending at the House and also visiting their homes. If the Government would submit Bills at the first reading, the business of the session could be done before Christmas. It was to be hoped that in future the necessity would be avoided of rushing the Estimates through at the "heel of the hunt," without any discussion, as had been the practice recently.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS AND RAILWAYS (Hon. C. H. Rason): While hoping the amendment would be accepted, he might be permitted a few words about

the forms of the House, on which subject the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) had said so much. No one had ever complained about the forms of the House, or their legitimate use; but a good many members had complained about the abuse of the forms of the House.

MR. MORAN: How could they be abused?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That would be explained in good time. Many members were under the impression, rightly or wrongly, that it was an abuse of the forms of the House when certain members deliberately walked out of the Chamber in order that attention might be called to the want of a quorum. This had happened repeatedly last night, as well as on other occasions.

MR. JACOBY: Did the Minister say that was done last night?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

MR. JACOBY: Quite untrue.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member himself knew it was so.

MR. JACOBY: Quite untrue.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: One regretted the necessity for calling attention to the disparaging remarks made by the leader of the Opposition concerning the Premier and that hon. gentleman's frequent absence from the House. Having sat a good many years in this House, and many years behind Sir John Forrest, whom he would be the last to disparage by a single word, he honestly and sincerely felt it was his duty to say that if a comparison was to be drawn between the present Premier and the Right Hon. Sir John Forrest in point of attendance, the present Premier undoubtedly had shown equal attention to his duties. He (the Minister) could speak from experience on this point, while the leader of the Opposition could not. Being extremely undesirous of witnessing a repetition of such scenes as occurred last night and in the early hours of the morning, he felt bound to say it did not tend to that good feeling which one hoped would exist in the House when the leader of the Opposition almost in the first words he uttered commenced an attack on the Premier. One hoped that if the amendment were accepted, and the House met at 2:30, the leader of the Opposition would not carry out his threat—

MR. PIGOTT: The leader of the Opposition had already said he would not.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The leader of the Opposition said nothing of the kind.

MR. PIGOTT: Then he (Mr. Pigott) said it for the leader of the Opposition.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If we were to understand that in future the statements of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott) were to be taken as proceeding from the member for the Murchison—

MR. NANSON: The hon. member was under a misapprehension. The member for West Kimberley had said that he (Mr. Nanson) accepted the amendment. His acceptance of it was nevertheless subject to the condition that, even if he were the only member in the House to do it, he would see that a quorum was kept.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was to be hoped that if the House did meet at 2.30 in the afternoon, members on each side would endeavour to discharge their duty and make a quorum; and it was to be particularly hoped that no member would be found leaving the Chamber in order that a quorum might not be kept.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): The Premier had done well to accept the amendment. Experience showed that little good was done by continuous sitting, and that it was better for hon. members to have time to consider measures. If the sittings of the House needed to be still farther lengthened, we might sit on Friday afternoons from 4.30 till 6.30. In such circumstances a number of members could leave for home by the evening trains just the same as if the House had not sat at all. At the same time, he did not think it would be found necessary to sit more than the extra hours suggested on the three days. There was a general but utterly erroneous impression that the duties of members of Parliament were confined to attendance in the House. Members needed time to give consideration to what might be termed outside work in connection with the business of Parliament. He held some strong convictions in regard to attendance. If members took on themselves to represent electorates, they ought to be in

their places in the House. Inevitably accident must prevent a certain number of members from attending; but it was the duty of members generally to attend at the sessions of the House, and during those sessions to be in the House and not outside it. In this particular, he could claim that he practised what he preached. He himself had frequently complained in the past that the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James) had not attended as frequently as he might have done, and it had been a pleasant surprise to see how regularly the Premier attended since he had taken upon him his present responsibilities. None had a right to complain of the non-attendance of the Premier, or indeed of any other member of the Ministry; and the remark of the leader of the Opposition was surely an inadvertence.

MR. NANSON: The complaint was that information on a Bill of which the Premier was in charge was not forthcoming when needed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Certainly, in years past the present Premier had not been a regular attendant. [MR. DAGLISH: He had been last session.] But since taking office, he had set an excellent example to other members. Try the proposal of the member for Dundas; and if it were necessary to increase the hours, add not an evening but an afternoon sitting, on Friday rather than Monday, so that country members could leave the city on Friday evenings. But it was to be hoped three days would for the present be found sufficient; for to increase the number of days had not, wherever tried, been found advantageous.

MR. J. J. HIGHAM (Fremantle) supported the amendment. As to the hour of adjournment, eleven members who reached home by the Perth-Fremantle railway desired to catch the 11.30 train on each sitting day. As a body, these members were as constant in attendance as others; and if there were exceptions, they sat in Opposition. The Fremantle members were prepared to sit till 3 a.m. when necessary, but as a rule desired to catch the 11.30 train.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): The discussion must do good, because it would give an opportunity of taking stock of our time. All must admit that during this session legislation had not progressed

rapidly, and this was largely due to the fact that the Government had been too lenient in giving full opportunities for discussing private motions and other unimportant matters. Of such generosity the Opposition should be last to complain, for the Government had erred in liberality only. In animadverting on the conduct of the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson), it must not be forgotten that he was only the acting leader of the Opposition. He was, no doubt, doing his best, and more consideration should be shown him in his present unhappy position. A comparison had been made of the manner in which the present Premier and Sir John Forrest had attended to their duties as leaders of the House. No doubt Sir John Forrest had been a regular attendant, but he had been assisted by Mr. Sept. Burt as Attorney General. For the first four or five years after Responsible Government, Mr. Burt had drafted nearly all the Bills; hence the Premier had been freed from that laborious work. Much of this work the present Premier had to discharge.

MR. DOHERTY: There was a paid Parliamentary Draftsman.

MR. FOULKES: The hon. member interjecting could not be expected to know, because he had been so frequently absent that many amendments brought forward had to be redrafted by the Premier; and for that work the House was under a considerable obligation. To bring general charges of absence against members did no good; and the shocked and pained expression of the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty) on hearing of such absences was noteworthy. Nothing had done the House so much harm as the proceedings of last year. An English statesman had said "Representative institutions are now upon their trial."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That had been said for 300 years.

MR. FOULKES: No. The people of this State would not allow a repetition of the scenes of last session, or of the disgraceful charges then slung about from one side of the House to the other. [MR. MORAN: From both sides.] The hon. member interjecting had been elected at the same time as he (Mr. Foulkes), and could corroborate the statement that the electors were utterly disgusted with the

disgraceful charges made in Parliament. Such charges did not help public business, and when they were frequent, no wonder some members stayed away. Considerable work was done by members who did not advertise their industry—for instance, on select committees. The members for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), Beverley (Mr. Harper), Kanowna (Mr. Hastie), and he (Mr. Foulkes), had spent many days on the Roads Bill and the Collie-Boulder select committees. [MR. MORAN: Do not forget Mrs. Tracey.] Yet the acting leader of the Opposition complained that members did not attend to their duties, though, as soon as the motion for the appointment of the Mrs. Tracey committee was brought forward, or on the following day, that hon. member, though elected to serve, excused himself and said he could not attend.

MR. NANSON: No; he had never referred to the matter, nor had he attended a meeting.

MR. FOULKES: It happened by chance that the members elected on that committee sat on the Opposition side; and though they might have held one meeting, they had surely not held three.

MR. MORAN: The Mrs. Tracey committee had already held at least seven meetings, had examined all the Crown Law Officers, and in searching wills had had the advice of the bush lawyer of the House, the member for Mount Magnet.

MR. FOULKES: Such industry was refreshing to hear of. Members must make up their minds to proceed with the important business of the session.

MR. NANSON: The amendment had his hearty support, as there had been a wish expressed on both sides that if we met early we should rise at a reasonable hour; and it should be understood we were not to sit much beyond midnight at the latest. In speaking of the Premier he had referred to that hon. member's absence from the House when in charge of a Bill. On more than one occasion at the last sitting, he (Mr. Nanson) wished for information from the Premier, and the Premier was not present to give that information. The Minister in charge of a Bill going through Committee should be constantly in his place to give information on the clauses as discussed. As to the select committee on Mrs. Tracey's grievances, he (Mr. Nanson) had not

attended a single meeting. In his absence he had been elected to the committee without being consulted; and surely common courtesy demanded that the leader of the Opposition, who had more claims on his time than an ordinary private member, should be consulted as to whether he was willing to serve on a select committee. Considering the duties which devolved on the leader of the Opposition, he should be exempted from serving on select committees unless he was willing to do so. His personal opinion in regard to the appointment of the committee referred to was that a gross breach of courtesy had been committed by members. Probably members were not aware that they were committing that breach of courtesy, but it was a very undesirable state of things, and the leader of the Opposition should be entitled to some consideration in these matters: he should be consulted before being proposed as a member of a select committee.

THE PREMIER: To simplify matters, he asked leave to withdraw his motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

THE PREMIER moved:

That until otherwise ordered, on and after Tuesday next the House do meet at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, in addition to the present hours of sitting.

Question—put and passed.

MOTION—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) moved:

That after Wednesday next, Government business take precedence of all other business during the remainder of the session.

The motion was moved now so that no complaint could be made by members that ample time had not been given them of the intention of the Government. On Wednesday next private business would take precedence.

MR. JACOBY: Would the Government give the member for the Murray an opportunity of disposing of the motion relative to the contract system?

THE PREMIER: It ought to come on to-day.

MR. TAYLOR: Was it to be understood that private members who had notices on the Paper would not now have an opportunity of moving them? As a

private member he was invariably in his place, for his name would be found on the records as having attended every day since he had been elected a member except on two occasions; and he sat here during the whole of the sitting, and not as some members did, just come in to have their names recorded. He was absent on one occasion, having received a subpoena to attend a court case at Kalgoorlie, and on one other occasion he was absent attending the funeral of the late Mr. Reside. It was time members attended to their duties seriously and decided to carry on the work of the session. Private members would now have no chance of moving motions which they might desire to bring forward. The first two hours of Wednesday's sitting should be given up to private members, for often discussions on motions produced valuable arguments which enlightened members. More time was lost last night than had been lost during the whole of the session by the discussion of private members' business. Unless the Premier gave an assurance that the notices on the Paper would be discussed, he would oppose the motion.

THE PREMIER: Members in charge of motions on the Notice Paper seemed to be quite satisfied.

MR. DOHERTY: This motion would put a stop to all business brought forward by private members: it was a drastic step. The Government of the country was being run in a peculiar way. Here we were at the end of October, and only last week the Financial Statement was placed before the House. This system had gone on for years, and the House must take the matter seriously into consideration and demand that the Financial Statement be not placed on the table three months after the due date.

THE SPEAKER: That question had nothing to do with the motion before the House.

MR. DOHERTY: Probably not; but the time that should be devoted to private members' business would be taken up by the discussion of the Estimates. Grievances were sometimes brought up by private members' motions.

MR. THOMAS: Whilst being certain that the Premier would not make any bad use of the power given by the motion, he was satisfied if a private member consid-

ered he had a question which should come on for discussion, the Premier would try and meet that member in every possible way.

THE PREMIER: So long as it was not academic.

MR. THOMAS: There was a vital principle at stake, and without attempting to speak on that principle he maintained that two hours for private members in a House of this sort was not too much to devote to bringing up matters which members considered to be grievances. The two hours should be retained for the discussion of private members' business.

Question put and passed.

At 6:30, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

BREAD BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill), in moving the second reading, said: Members who have glanced through the Bill will appreciate the fact that it is simplicity itself, and I hope that if carried out in its entirety it will be usefulness itself. It is introduced this session at the instance and by the request of the Municipal Council of Perth. Strange to say, the second reading of the Bill took place on the 23rd October last year in another place, but unfortunately after its passage through the Upper House, when it came down here it shared the fate of many other measures and dropped out. Members no doubt will be surprised that this State has for so long been without such a measure, especially when we remember that the Act upon which it and several other Acts are founded have been in force in England since 1836, and when we also remember that in the Eastern States, several of the Eastern States at all events, a measure similar in its provisions to the Bill now before the House is in existence. I do not think there will be any doubt in members' minds about the necessity of the Bill, or about the useful principle which is involved. The article of bread is of such universal and constant consumption that the fact must appeal to members that laws relating both to the sound manufacture and the proper

sale of such an article are badly needed. I do not think any hardship can be inflicted under the proposed Bill to anybody who is carrying on the trade of a purveyor of bread in a proper manner. To those who are carrying on such a business in a proper manner this Bill affords, I maintain, a certain degree of protection, inasmuch as it guards them against illegitimate competition by persons of less principle. If members will bear with me while I touch on a few of the principal clauses, they will readily understand that the Bill is, as I have already stated, drafted in a simple and clear manner, and has none of that involved legal verbiage which sometimes, I regret to say, occurs in some measures which are laid on the table of the House. Members will see from the interpretation clause that the first thing the Bill does is to divide bread up into three classes, the first class which is mentioned being "household wheaten bread." This is made of any pure and sound meal or flour of wheat of an inferior quality to the flour used for "standard wheaten bread." "Mixed bread" means bread wholly or partially made of the pure and sound meal or flour of any sort of grain other than wheat, or made of the pure and sound meal or flour of any peas, beans, or potatoes. I do not think that there is a very great demand for or very great supply of this class of bread in Western Australia. "Standard wheater bread," to which class I understand belongs the greater portion of the bread sold in this State, means bread made of pure and sound flour of wheat and which flour contains no mixture or division of the whole produce of the grain (other than the bran or husk thereof), and which weighs at least two-thirds part of the weight of the wheat whereof it is made. Clause 4 provides that in the case of the two inferior classes of bread which I have alluded to the consumer shall have the protection of having the bread legibly and plainly branded, so that he will know at a glance what class of bread he is buying. The clause provides that all household wheater bread shall be branded on each loaf with the large Roman "H," and that all mixed bread shall be branded on each loaf with the large Roman "M." The clause also provides that bread not s

branded, other than rolls, shall be deemed offered for sale or sold as standard wheaten bread. In all countries it has been found desirable to insure to the public that the bread which they buy, particularly that which is sold daily in the shops and in the streets of the city, shall be pure; and to provide against adulteration of bread. In Clause 6 it is provided that no bread shall be sold or offered or exposed for sale which is not made of pure and sound flour or meal of wheat, barley, rye, oats, buckwheat, Indian corn, peas, beans, rice, or potatoes, or any of them, with common salt, pure water, eggs, milk, barm, leaven, potato, or other yeast, and with no other ingredient whatever. Of course, members will appreciate the fact that it is not supposed that the bread shall contain all these ingredients at once. Clause 7 deals with the weight, and provides the scale of weights which shall be used by the purveyors of bread. Clause 8, farther dealing with weight, provides that the customers shall have ready access to a means of finding out whether they are getting the worth of their money, full weight to the loaf. [Interjection.] Provision with regard to the selling of bread from a cart is contained in Clause 9. It is the usual thing, and I fancy it is always done everywhere else. I think that if the hon. member throws his mind back to the happy days when he was in Victoria he will remember seeing in or on the cart, scales for the proper weighing of the bread. It is invariably done, and it is proposed to do it here. Clause 10 provides that no person shall, for the purpose of human consumption, sell or purchase or have on his premises any impure, unsound, or unwholesome flour, and farther that he shall not adulterate flour. Clause 11 provides that no impure bread or improperly-made bread shall be sold. Clause 12 provides for the entry on premises of justices of the peace, or of police constables authorised by them, and any inspectors under this measure. Clause 13 provides a measure of protection for the person who is selling the bread as regards short weight, and it is laid down that no one loaf shall be taken as the criterion of the weight, but as a much fairer means, and I say as a protection to the man selling the bread, the average of six loaves is to be taken,

which insures the baker, to my way of thinking, against an inspector picking out by design or accident a loaf which may possibly be smaller than its brothers. Clause 16 provides that no person exercising or employed in the trade or calling of a baker shall on Sunday make or bake any bread, rolls, cake, etc. But I would draw the attention of members to the fact that there is no restriction placed upon the preparation for the baking of such bread, rolls, cake, and all the other articles enumerated; and as I am led to believe that by far the greater part of the work consists in the preparation for baking, rather than the baking itself, I do not think that this will act harshly upon the bakers actively engaged in baking, and I do not think that the general public will, on account of this clause, have to go short of their Monday's bread, as was, I understand, somewhat feared in another place when the Bill was then going through. Clause 17 provides for the appointment of inspectors by any municipality. Clause 18 defines offences which may be committed under this Bill, and fixes the punishments to which persons committing those offences render themselves liable. It is provided, for example, that any person who sells or exposes or offers for sale any bread not stamped in accordance with Clause 4, or bread not of the description or weight demanded or which it purports or is deemed to be, and any person who does, suffers, or permits any act, matter, or thing contrary to any provision of the Bill, shall be guilty of an offence. The remainder of the Bill consists practically of machinery clauses, but also defines certain minor offences and provides penalties therefor. Bad flour or defective scales may be seized and destroyed; and a servant committing prohibited actions is equally liable with the master or employer. This provision I consider necessary as stopping an outlet frequently made use of. It often happens that under measures of this nature the employer escapes on the plea that the servant was at fault, whilst the servant occasionally escapes on the plea that the employer was at fault. The Bill being so plainly worded, it is hardly necessary to deal at greater length with it. I have no ardent desire to rush the measure through Committee; neither have I any burning desire that the Com-

mittee stage should be unduly hurried on. I beg to commend the Bill to the House, and have much pleasure in moving the second reading.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan): I see nothing in the Bill to which serious objection may be taken; but one or two points call for mention. First, I wish to ask the Minister whether the measure provides fully for the making of whole-some whole-meal bread?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; it does.

MR. JACOBY: There is no class of bread in which grosser adulteration takes place than in this particular class, the use of which should in my opinion be encouraged. The greatest difficulty is experienced in obtaining whole-meal bread in anything like a pure state. Generally the whole meal is mixed with all kinds of rubbish; and there is, besides, frequently too large a percentage of ordinary flour mixed with the whole meal. I hope that in Committee, or even before, the Minister will consider whether the measure cannot more fully provide that whole-meal bread shall be pure.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: All classes of bread, I think, are provided for in Clause 6.

MR. JACOBY: Possibly the point might be dealt with under Clause 3, though I should not class whole-meal bread as bread of an inferior quality.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is mixed bread, again. Whole-meal bread would come under one of those two classes.

MR. JACOBY: Presumably it is possible to insert a provision to the effect that whole-meal bread shall consist of whole meal, and of nothing else. The Bill provides that it may be partly whole meal and partly anything else.

MR. HIGHAM: It is provided that bread branded "H" shall be whole-meal bread.

MR. JACOBY: The Bill does not say so distinctly. Whole-meal bread would be in very general use if it were not so grossly adulterated. I wish to refer briefly to the clause dealing with Sunday baking. In country districts there is sometimes great difficulty in obtaining bread. Within my recent experience a baker who got drunk during the week

had in consequence to work all day Sunday in order to provide bread for the people requiring it. I am not altogether convinced of the necessity for this clause. In order that trouble may be avoided, it is as well to omit the clause. We cannot always be certain that it is possible to avoid Sunday work in connection with bread baking. The clause might tend to increase the difficulty already experienced of getting bread in country districts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The clause is adopted from the English Act, and is now in force at home.

MR. JACOBY: In a highly-developed country, where all conveniences are available and where trade is well regulated, the provision might answer; but it is not, I submit, altogether suitable here. If the baker misses two or three batches, as sometimes happens, the result may be awkward. I have quoted a case from actual experience in order to show the Minister that this clause may become a positive nuisance. We must bear in mind that the measure will apply to the whole country, and not to the cities alone. By Clause 17 municipalities are empowered to appoint inspectors. How would the measure be administered in country districts outside the area of municipalities? Would the appointment of inspectors be under the direct control of the Minister?

DR. O'CONNOR: Under the control of the Central Board of Health.

MR. JACOBY: Or is it intended that the Bill shall apply only within the bounds of municipalities?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Clause 3 provides that "inspector" under this Bill shall include any inspector appointed by the Central Board of Health, or by any local board of health.

MR. JACOBY: That meets the case. I trust that when the Bill has been passed, steps will be taken to apply it throughout the State. I observed that the Minister in moving the second reading used almost exactly the same language as that in which he introduced the Elementary Education Bill. I can only trust that in connection with this measure we shall not repeat our experience in connection with the Elementary Education Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ROADS BILL.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE.

Report of amendments made in Committee of the whole read.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the report be adopted.

MR. THOMAS: The Premier had promised to draft clauses in respect of men living on leases.

THE PREMIER: The clauses would be introduced in the Upper House.

Question passed.

MINES DEVELOPMENT BILL.

RECOMMITTAL.

MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Division of Act:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: As it was intended to make advances to persons as well as companies, he moved that all the words after "follows," in line 1, be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"Part I., Preliminary, ss. 1-4; Part II., Advances for Pioneer Mining, ss. 5-13; Part III., Advances to Miners for Prospecting, ss. 14-18; Part IV., Establishment of Plant for Crushing, Ore-dressing, Cyaniding, or Smelting, ss. 19-21; Part V., Assistance for Boring, ss. 22-25; Part VI., Miscellaneous, ss. 26-29." Also that the clause as amended stand as Clause 2.

Amendments passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 5—Application for advance:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES moved that the words "a company," in line 1, be struck out, and "any person or company (hereinafter called the borrower)" inserted in lieu.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 6—Evidence and information to be submitted with application.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES moved that paragraphs (h) and (i) be struck out, and "such other evidence or documents and such further information as the Minister may require; and if the application is made by a company," inserted in lieu; also that paragraphs (a) and (b) stand as paragraphs (g) and (h) respectively. In the event of a person applying for a loan, he must comply with the conditions in paragraphs (a)

and (b); hence, the paragraphs were transposed to the end of the clause.

Amendments passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

On motions by the MINISTER FOR MINES, consequential amendments made in Clauses 7 to 13, inclusive.

Clause 9—Company to execute mortgage:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES moved that lines 4, 5, and 6 be struck out, and the words, "and in the case of a company its other property and assets (except uncalled capital) to secure the repayment of the advance and," inserted in lieu.

Amendments passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 10—Payments to Minister to form first charge on company's profits:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES moved that the words "borrower being a" be inserted in line 2 before "company."

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 11—Liabilities of company made a Crown debt:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES moved that all the words after "Majesty," in line 3, be struck out.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 22—Public bodies may apply for assistance towards prospecting:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES moved that the words "municipal council, roads board, miners' association, or other public body of persons," in lines 6 and 7, be struck out, and "miners' association or other body of persons, or with any person" inserted in lieu.

MR. HASTIE: Was it intended to exclude councils and roads boards?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No; they were included in "other body."

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 23—Application for assistance, how made, and mode of payment:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES moved that in line 2 the words "the body to which" be struck out, and "the association or body of persons to which, or the person to whom," be inserted in lieu.

Amendment passed.

Clause 25—Minister may make reserves:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES moved that the following be added to stand as paragraph (b) of Subclause 1:—

(b) Grant, on such terms as he may think fit, and with the approval of the Governor, a claim, gold-mining lease, mineral lease, or other holding, to any association or body of persons or person by whom the boring was undertaken, in priority to any other person.

The object was to enable the Minister, in the event of receiving assistance for boring in any part of the country, to give a prior right for a substantial reward. It was intended to try to get the people who were mostly interested to assist the Government. If any body of persons assisted the Government in boring, the Minister should have power to reserve an area, and, in the event of gold being struck, those persons would have the prior right to a reward claim,

MR. WALLACE: The Minister for Mines received an offer by a private company in the Cue district, who were the owners of a lease, to bore on the adjoining property. The objection to treating with a company like that was that the company should not be allowed with the aid of the State to prove the existence of a lode on their property. Under the amendment, this company would have the prior right to a reward claim on the ground they had proved. In matters of this sort the Minister should remember that the offer was made by a company who held the adjoining ground. If that company had a plant, and would not use it to develop the company's ground, it was not right to allow it to come in and help to prove the adjoining ground, thus proving its own lease. Such a company should not be entitled to any of the land so proved. The powers were discretionary, and the Committee could trust the Minister to deal with cases of that sort.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The provision was very necessary in order that any public body of persons or any person contributing towards the boring might be assisted. He doubted if the Minister would be acting properly under the present regulations if he assisted such persons as those mentioned by the hon. member for Mt. Magnet by giving them a prior right over ground which they had assisted to test. It was suggested, as the hon. member would remember, that the

local people should subscribe and assist the Government to bore on the lands which had been reserved by the Crown; and if these people assisted the Crown and paid a portion of the expense in proving the land, they should have a prior right to retain a portion of the ground. But it must be left to the discretion of the Minister whether a reward claim or a reward lease should be granted to them. It would depend on the support which the people gave.

MR. WALLACE: The provision would give to a certain class of persons a monopoly. The men who, as a rule, followed mining had no capital, but there were companies who had boring plants but did not make use of them on their own ground: they went round seeking what they could devour, and taking from the people their birthright, so to speak. These persons were to have the first "say" on any proved land. On the second reading he had suggested that to a certain extent the State should do the boring and reserve an area, and dispose of it by means of lot, and the person getting the area should be held responsible to the State for the amount of money expended in proving that land, and pay to the Government a royalty on the first thousand ounces obtained. He wished to put those men who proved the land in a better position than the capitalists who owned a plant, but who, with the assistance of the State, developed property adjoining their own. The Minister seemed to think the provision would attain the object he had in view; but it appeared to him that those who possessed boring plants would have an advantage over those persons who did not.

Amendment passed.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES moved that in Subclause 2, between "pay" and "such" the words "by means of premium" be inserted.

Amendment passed.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES also moved that the following be inserted as Subclause 4:

(4) The Minister may, in his discretion, apply any premium, or part thereof, to reimburse any association or body of persons or person the moneys expended by them or him in boring.

An area having been reserved, and certain boring operations having taken place, the

Minister had the right to call for tenders for the ground. Should any public body assist in the boring, the Minister would have the power to give back to those persons the whole or portion of the amount they had expended in developing the ground.

MR. HASTIE: Was the subclause necessary? Should the Department of Mines be in a position to say whether money should be given back to these persons or not? If the Government were asked for the money, and had it, they could not well refuse to give it. If people carried out boring by using a large share of their own money, and got anything good, they would be reimbursed at once. Those persons who had gained considerably from the boring would be the applicants. The Government should keep the money, and if thought desirable use it for carrying out other boring.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The subclause must be read in conjunction with Subclause 3. Some time ago an application was made by the people of Paddington and Bardoc that the Mines Department should do certain boring. These people offered, if the Government did a certain amount of boring, to provide a sum of money to assist the Government in developing the district. The Government had power to reserve an area before any boring was undertaken, and in the event of anything good being discovered, the Government had power to call for tenders for the lease, should the public body assisting not desire to take any land. Supposing a sum of money was received by the Mines Department, which repaid them to a large extent for the boring, should that money be received and expended in some other district? The public body who assisted in the first place should be recouped for the expenditure they had been put to.

MR. HASTIE: The Minister assumed that some public body would subscribe the money for the boring, and that the body would not take up a lease. If the Government allowed a public body to have a reserve or take up ground, that body would not refuse to do so: the first thing a public body would do would be to see that a certain amount of the ground was reserved for themselves. That being so, the public body would have been sufficiently rewarded by the discovery. The Minister

should rather take the money and put it into farther boring, or give it to those who should be rewarded.

MR. WALLACE: If the explanation of the Minister was correct, there would be no objection to the clause, as it would meet such a case as he had pointed out.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Bill reported with farther amendments.

REMARKS ON RULING GIVEN.

THE CHAIRMAN (before reporting the Mines Development Bill) said: I would crave leave of the House for one moment. Last evening my ruling was disputed upon a question before the Committee, and it was referred to the Speaker, who maintained my ruling. At the time I could not find the authority quickly enough to answer the leader of the Opposition. The authority will be found on page 129 of the *Practice of the House of Assembly*, by Blackmore, as follows:—"Questions 'that the Chairman leave the Chair' are always in order if made without interrupting a member when speaking, and are at once put from the Chair, no discussion being allowed thereon."

STAMP ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the PREMIER in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Cancellation of adhesive stamps:

THE PREMIER said he wanted to make it clear that the definition of instrument did not include a bill of exchange or promissory note. He moved that after the word "instrument," in line 2, "not being a bill of exchange or promissory note" be inserted.

Amendment passed.

MR. FOULKES: This clause provided that stamps had to be cancelled within 14 days from the first execution of the instrument, if executed in the State. The time was too short, and he suggested that it should be 28 days. He thought the time fixed in England was 28 days.

On motion by the PREMIER, "fourteen," in line 4, was struck out, and "twenty-eight" inserted in lieu.

THE PREMIER suggested that after the word "Treasurer," in line 11, "or the Under Treasurer" be inserted.

MR. FOULKES suggested that after "Colonial Treasurer," the words "or such person or persons as shall be appointed by him" should be inserted. Persons might have a difficulty in meeting the Treasurer, who might be engaged on important duties or be away.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member would refer to paragraph (b), he would find that the Treasurer could not appoint any person to cancel stamps where the amount exceeded £20. If the amount exceeded £20, it was desirable that the person should go before certain recognised officers, who would see that the proper stamp duties were imposed.

MR. FOULKES: It might not be very easy sometimes to find the Under Treasurer. Of course we could rely upon the Colonial Treasurer appointing fit and proper persons to cancel stamps. Most probably he would appoint three or four clerks in his department to do it.

THE PREMIER moved that after the word "Treasurer," in line 11, "the Under Treasurer or Registrar of Titles" be inserted.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 7, inclusive—agreed to.

New Clauses:

THE PREMIER: Members would observe on the Notice Paper several new clauses. The object of them was to require that certain duties, fines, and penalties should be received by stamps, the desire being to extend as soon as practicable the practice of paying court fees by means of stamps instead of paying them as at present by way of money. The great advantage of that would be that we should have a more accurate check upon collection of these fees, and it would very greatly simplify the matter of bookkeeping. These provisions existed in Victoria and also in New Zealand, and he thought that in most of the courts, certainly the Supreme Courts, the fees were collected by means of stamps. The clauses provided machinery which enabled the Governor by notice in the *Government Gazette* to direct that from and after a certain date fees should be payable by stamps. They then provided how the

stamps were to be affixed to the documents. The documents were to be invalid until properly stamped by an officer of the court. Provision was also made for a penalty on any person issuing unstamped documents. The practice was desired to initiate under these clauses had been on more than one occasion strongly recommended in connection with Supreme Court proceedings, and he hoped to apply it not only to the Supreme Court but also to most of the inferior courts.

On motions by the PREMIER, eight new clauses (Nos. 8 to 15, inclusive) added to the Bill.

Schedule 1:

On motion by the PREMIER, schedule amended by adding, after "17," in the third column "18," and also by adding between the fourth and fifth paragraphs in the third column: "To section 43 add the following paragraph":—

The stamp shall be cancelled by the person who first makes or executes the bill of lading

Schedule 2—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

MOTION—CONTRACT SYSTEM, TO ADOPT.

Debate resumed from the 1st October on the motion by Mr. Atkins, "That it is in the best interests of the country that the construction of Government works should, wherever practicable, be thrown open to public competition, instead of being undertaken under the system of Government day labour."

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): When this motion was last under discussion, I had the floor at the time the House rose for refreshment (6:30 o'clock). I presume, Mr. Speaker, I can now proceed.

THE SPEAKER: Yes; the hon. member can proceed.

MR. DAGLISH: I do not desire to offer many further observations on the motion. I wish to remind hon. members in view of the time which has elapsed since the matter was brought forward that the motion, if carried and observed will effectually tie the hands of the Government. The hands of the Government will be so tied that under all circumstances where no absolutely insuperable obstacle exists to the adoption of

the contract system, the Government must let out work to public competition, no matter how undesirable such a course may be in various respects. I contend, therefore, that the wording of the motion goes too far. I wish to point out, farther, that the day-labour system has been advocated by the greatest authority on public works Western Australia has yet known : I refer to the late Engineer-in-Chief. The system was continually advocated by that officer, and I think the House must pay great respect to the opinions expressed on the subject by the late Mr. O'Connor. I may likewise remind hon. members that Sir John Forrest has always been a strong supporter of the day-labour system in connection with large and important Government undertakings. I have also to recall to the memory of the House that when the motion was last under discussion I adduced certain information showing that the day-labour system had been highly successful in the State of New South Wales, and that under Mr. O'Sullivan's administration the system is still proving highly successful. I have, on former occasions, stated that a great deal depends on administration. Western Australia has suffered the absolute misfortune of an entire absence of proper supervision in connection with the greatest national undertaking carried out under the day-labour system. There has been no proper management in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme, but a state of chaos from the head office down to the lowest rung of the work. I contend that it is unfair to judge either the contract system or the day-labour system as exemplified by the results produced in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme. The results, I maintain, are such as naturally spring from utter mismanagement, from utterly bad though at the same time expensive supervision. I contend, farther, that similar results would have followed everywhere under similar conditions. In advocacy of the motion, the construction of the Leonora and Goomalling railways has been quoted. The cost of these lines, however, undoubtedly has been increased considerably by delay in obtaining necessary material. There can be no question that with similar delays in obtaining material, those railways would still have proved unduly expensive under the con-

tract system, which would have afforded no means of obviating the delays in question. The adoption of the motion as it stands would absolutely preclude the possibility of our giving a trial to the butty-gang system, which has proved so successful in New Zealand. I urge that it is not reasonable for members of this House to tie the hands of any Government so absolutely as the motion proposes. The motion might be more acceptable if it were amended by the striking out of the word "practicable" and the insertion, in lieu, of the word "desirable." I urge the House, if it be determined to pass a motion on the lines of that proposed, to consider the desirability of adding to all Government contracts a provision that the ruling rate of wages shall be paid by the contractor in any district where work is done. Contracts should, however, not only contain such a provision, but should also provide adequate penalties to insure its enforcement. The minimum wage provision in itself is absolutely valueless.

MR. MORAN : What you suggest would operate against the workers in many districts. The ruling rate of wages in agricultural districts is much below the ordinary rate for Government work.

MR. DAGLISH : I do not agree with the hon. member, since the ruling rate of wages for agricultural work cannot in any way be regarded as the ruling rate of wages for railway work.

MR. MORAN : What do you mean by the ruling rate of wages in an agricultural district ?

MR. DAGLISH : I mean the ruling rate of wages paid for a similar class of work.

MR. MORAN : That would be a uniform rate, and not a district rate.

MR. DAGLISH : The rate would naturally be based, I take it, on the wage ruling in the large centres of population, plus any addition necessitated by the increased cost of living occasioned by distance of the scene of work from those centres.

MR. MORAN : The minimum wage would protect against too low a rate, in any case.

MR. DAGLISH : I hold that the adoption of the ruling rate of wages in a district affords a far better protection than the minimum wage, because a

minimum wage in Perth would not be fair half-way between Perth and Kalgoorlie, where the cost of living is far in excess of the cost of living here. However, I believe that the mover is willing to accept an amendment such as I have suggested. Rather than that the motion shall be carried in its present form, I trust some amendment in the direction indicated will be moved before we pass to a vote.

MR. ATKINS: Propose the amendment.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan): I am not wedded to the contract system, as I believe that in a great many instances the day-labour system can be adopted with advantage. I have personally witnessed the operation of the two systems side by side in the construction of a road at Mundaring. Portion of the road has been made under Government supervision, and another portion has been constructed by contract; and without any question whatever, the portion built under the supervision of the Government foreman of works at Mundaring is far superior to that done by contract.

MR. JOHNSON: It is always so.

MR. JACOBY: Not only has the Government portion been done better, but what is still more satisfactory, it has been done at a cheaper rate. I maintain that in many cases the day-labour system can undoubtedly be applied. Everything hinges on the man in charge. The difficulty of the Government is to get hold of suitable men. Another great difficulty is that if unsuitable men are appointed, there seem to be a hundred things in the way of dismissing them.

MR. JOHNSON: That is not so.

MR. JACOBY: It has been the trouble at Mundaring. I have watched that work for years, and my experience is that the trouble arising from the dismissal of a man is so great, there is so much hubbub over a dismissal, that foremen and gangers frequently make shift with bad men rather than face the trouble involved in discharging them.

MR. JOHNSON: Quote an instance in point.

MR. JACOBY: Hundreds of instances could be quoted. All of us who possess experience of these works know very exactly the cause of the trouble. If the Government get hold of thoroughly good organisers and pay them adequately, they should be able to do work just as

well and just as cheaply as contractors do it. Perhaps the Government may even be able to do it better. The whole difficulty lies in the fact that the Government as a rule do not succeed in getting hold of the best class of men. In the first place, the State will not pay the necessary salaries. Moreover, the State has not always an Engineer-in-Chief possessed of the faculty of picking his assistants well. If any fault is to be found with the late Engineer-in-Chief, it is that he was not able to put his hand on the right men. The first essential for success in contracting is to know where to put one's hand on a good man. No one ever became a successful contractor unless possessed of the ability to choose good assistants and imbued with the inclination to pay them well when chosen. In connection with the contract system, there would be a good deal less cause for dissatisfaction if the Government, when victimised by a contractor, as has frequently happened, would put that contractor on a black list, and never again accept a tender from him.

MEMBER: The contractors would all go on the black list.

MR. JACOBY: I believe that some system of the kind is in operation at home, that tenders are invited only from contractors who have proved themselves thoroughly reliable and trustworthy. In my opinion, the time has arrived when this State should penalise certain contractors who are always endeavouring to work points on the Government, by debarring them from tendering. An instance has just come under my notice of considerable trouble and expense being occasioned to a roads board by a most audacious attempt on the part of a contractor to work a point by means of a slight error in the specification. I urge on the Minister for Works and on the Government generally the necessity for initiating a system of black-listing for contractors who occasion the Minister for Works much trouble, or with whom the Minister has reason to be seriously dissatisfied. From such contractors no tender should ever be accepted. On the whole, I am distinctly in favour of the contract system. I do not say that it can be adopted in every case, but where circumstances render its adoption expedient the contract system is far more satisfactory than

day labour. If steps were taken to penalise contractors who have attempted to get at the Government, the result would be satisfactory. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) in speaking to this motion previously devoted himself almost entirely to an appeal to the House to declare that no facts had been offered in support of the contract system. I can hardly conceive how the hon. member can make a statement of that description in the face of the figures given to the House by the mover relative to the Leonora railway. Those figures prove that the day-labour system in the case of that line has occasioned an increase of £45,000 on the cost which would have resulted from the acceptance of tenders. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: No.] The official figures have been given in detail by the member for the Murray, and no attempt has been made by anyone arguing on the other side to controvert those figures. Moreover, on the present year's Estimates there appears a sum of £900, designed to make good losses in connection with goods carried over the railway when in course of construction. This is a very small matter, but it is one for which contractors would be responsible, and for which they would have to pay. I have had opportunities of meeting men who have worked on the day-labour system, and I recently put a direct question to several working on the Mundaring weir, whom I asked whether, if they were placed in a position of trust to spend a large sum of public money on public works, they would carry out those works by day labour or would let contracts; and in every case the reply was that they would let contracts. And there is no doubt it would have paid them better to work for a contractor in respect of that Mundaring weir than to work as they have been working, for the Government. When the work commenced, many of them went there with their families and, with considerable trouble, erected temporary cottages; and they have lost much time owing to faulty administration and the frequent stoppage of the work.

MR. TAYLOR: Was that the fault of the principle?

MR. JACOBY: A contractor could not afford to have his work thus blocked: he must keep it going. Those men have been for three months at a time knocking

about idle, waiting for work, and not earning wages.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When was this?

MR. JACOBY: It was before your time. On one occasion they were waiting for cement, and on another owing to some breakages of second-hand machinery which I think a contractor would never have purchased. Machinery was constantly breaking down; supplies of material did not come to hand; with the result that at the end of a year these men had done only about six months' work altogether. It would have been impossible for a contractor to carry out work in this way; and had the men been working for a contractor they would have been working full time, instead of practically half time for the Government. The idea underlying the Labour members' objection to the contract system is, I believe, that the men would probably get lower wages; but I think that difficulty may be easily overcome, as in South Australia, by the insertion in all contracts of a minimum wage clause; nor do I think there would be, in arriving at a satisfactory minimum, the difficulty suggested by the interjection of the member for West Perth (Mr. Morau). I have some difficulty in ascertaining whether the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) is altogether sincere in his remarks about contract work, seeing that the Engine-drivers' Association at Boulder, when they found it necessary to build a hall, built it by contract.

MR. DAGLISH: I am not a member of that association.

MR. JACOBY: Perhaps the hon. member will inform me whether it is correct that when he recently had occasion to build a house at Subiaco, he let a contract for the work to the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson). If the hon. member is so delighted with the day-labour system, I am surprised he did not build his own cottage by that method, instead of letting a contract to another member on the Labour bench. The House will have a difficulty in believing that the hon. member is sincere in his objection to the contract system.

MR. DAGLISH: I have been suffering ever since for my action.

MR. JACOBY: The late Engineer-in-Chief has been mentioned as an authority

and as an advocate for day labour; but it is well known that he had occasion to alter his views, and expressed himself to that effect before his death. I hope the contract system will be availed of by the Government in connection with works similar to cutting the Coolgardie pipe-track, for the State will probably have similar work to do before many months elapse. I hope an opportunity will be taken to test the butty-gang system, which I believe has worked satisfactorily, though I have heard it severely criticised. It appears to be very satisfactory from the point of view of the men, and has, I believe, been successful in New Zealand. In a simple go-ahead job like the cutting of a pipe-track, or on other earthworks, there can be no difficulty in making satisfactory arrangements with gangs of men; and what appeals to me most strongly in connection with the butty-gang system is that it gives an opportunity for the employment of the older and the weaker men. If I rightly understand the system, the men in a gang are paid according to their ability, the best workers getting the highest wages, and those of less capacity a smaller wage; and thus the man who is not able to do the heaviest work is not shut out. I support the motion, and will not object to the amendment suggested by the member for Subiaco. I notice, however, that the hon. member is always suggesting amendments but never moving them. I should have been willing to support his amendment had he moved it, and shall support it if moved by anybody else.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) : I rise to oppose the motion, which is one such as we might expect from the mover (Mr. Atkins). I was not present when the hon. member addressed the House; but I see by the reports that he said he had for a considerable time been a contractor in this State, and was sorry to leave his old firm to join this firm. Well, it is only to be expected that the hon. member should support contract work as against day labour, because the day-labour system would mean dispensing with the contractor, which I think would, from a workman's standpoint, be most desirable in this State. The hon. member has quoted figures showing that the State has suffered a great loss through the departmental construction of the

Leonora railway. I will endeavour to show that the delay and expense have not been the fault of the day-labour system, but have resulted from the fact of the Construction Department not being fully supplied with material. I have no records from February to June, 1901, but during the month of June the Construction Department applied for 258 trucks from the Traffic Department, of which they received 41; in August they ordered 161 trucks and received 32; in October they asked for 431 trucks and received 104; and the proportions received for the remaining months are about the same as those quoted. I shall not weary the House with all the details; but in February, 1902, the Construction Department ordered 238 trucks and received 106, and in April, 1902, 168 trucks and received 65. Those trucks were required for the conveyance of rails and fastenings, sleepers, fishplates, and other material for the line; and I will ask the House whether a contractor could have carried on the work under such conditions. We find also that the Construction Department started the work in February, 1901, and up till May of that year had completed 22 miles of earthworks and 18 miles of rails and sleepers. In June they had completed 30 miles of earthworks and laid 28 miles of rails; in July, 52½ miles of earthworks and 31 miles of rails; in August, 66 miles of earthworks and 36½ miles of rails; in September, 66 miles of earthworks and 41½ miles of rails. Presumably they then ceased to proceed with the earthworks, seeing that the distance between the end of the earthworks and the end of the rails and sleepers laid was something like 26½ miles. In October of the same year there were 69½ miles of earthworks completed and 43½ miles of rails laid; and in January, 1902, 81½ miles of earthworks and only 64 miles of rails laid. That is, to my mind, the cause of the expense and delay in constructing that line; and anyone who knows anything of railway construction knows full well that the earthworks represent the bulk of the work. In every country other than this, the earthworks take more time and cost more money. The mere laying of the rails and sleepers is hardly ever taken into consideration. Compared with the earthworks it is a mere bagatelle; and

for a man to say that the department cannot keep the rails and sleepers up to the earthworks shows that he knows nothing of railway construction. The member for the Murray (Mr. Atkins) knows that what I say is absolutely correct. He has, I believe, been a railway contractor in this State, and knows that once the earthworks are done, one can without much difficulty lay at least a mile per day of rails and sleepers; and, as has been pointed out by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), if it be desired to do that work more quickly, it needs only to double the number of men to get double the amount of work. But on a small contract job, on a small length of 80½ miles of railway, the laying of the rails and sleepers should easily be kept up to the earthworks, and should proceed at the rate of a mile a day. And I have it from the Government officers who are carrying out the work that they are capable of doing the work by day labour under favourable conditions. Place the Government officers under the same conditions as contractors are placed, and the Government officers can carry out the work as expeditiously and as cheaply as a contractor can, and with benefit to the State. The fault does not lie with the day-labour system, but with the Traffic Department in not supplying the Construction Department with the rails and sleepers and fastenings. If the House condemns the principle of day-labour in the railway construction of this State, especially in regard to the Leonora and Menzies line, I say it is practically, to my mind, a vote of want of confidence in the Construction Branch. We know full well the contractor has to have men to supervise his work, and the Government have another staff of supervisors to see that the contractor carries out his part of the agreement and to keep their eyes on the work on behalf of the State; so that there are two staffs of supervisors, and as it is impossible to have two staffs of supervisors at the cost of one, so the State has to pay more for the two. It is all very well to say the contractor pays his staff, but the State pays the contractor, and the State pays the supervisors who see that the contractor carries out his agreement. As the member for Kalgoorlie remarks, the contractor beats the supervisor every

time. I cannot go so far as to say that the contractor beats him every time, but I have worked on several railway constructions in Australia, not in Western Australia, but in New South Wales and Queensland, and I know very well that the contractor in eight cases out of ten beats the Government on every point. I may tell members that contractors I have worked for off and on for 33 years are as full of points as a porcupine. It is absurd to think the contractor can do the work cheaper and better than the department can do it by day-labour. It has been argued by the member who moved the motion—I am only taking what I read, as I did not hear the speech, and if I misquote the hon. member I hope he will draw my attention to it—that Victoria had long since abandoned the principle of day-labour, that Victoria was heartily sick of the day-labour and butt-gang systems.

MR. ATKINS: I read an extract from the *Argus*.

MR. TAYLOR: You believed the extract was true.

MR. ATKINS: I do not know anything about it.

MR. TAYLOR: It is only right to assume that, as the hon. member produced this argument from the *Argus*, he was deeply sensible to the fact that it was true, and it was his opinion. I do not think any member advances an argument, or reads an extract from a newspaper, that is going to tell against him in debate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The *Argus* always speaks the truth!

MR. TAYLOR: Yes; like contractors.

MR. ATKINS: The *Age* is the truthful newspaper!

MR. TAYLOR: Was the hon. member quoting from the *Age*? No; he took the less accurate of the two newspapers. It is only reasonable to suppose that the hon. member took an extract which would advance his argument. But the hon. member did not say, along with Victoria, having abandoned the day-labour system that Victoria had something like a million deficit. The hon. member did not point out that New Zealand, where they have adopted the day-labour system and the butt-gang system, is flourishing to-day, and has been flourishing ever since that country adopted the system. As pointed

out by the member for Subiaco, New South Wales has carried on the day-labour system under the administration of Mr. O'Sullivan, the present Minister for Works, most successfully. Every Sydney newspaper one picks up contains statements by Mr. O'Sullivan that he is enraptured with the day-labour system. I am not going to say that gentleman, when he makes a statement in the Parliament of New South Wales or on a public platform, says things which he does not believe. Mr. O'Sullivan says that he will always support the principle of having works constructed departmentally.

MEMBER: The New South Wales Government are supported by the Labour party.

MR. TAYLOR: I do not know that it is because the Government are supported by the Labour party. The Premier may know something about that. If the Labour party have any power in this Chamber, I hope they will be able with that power to maintain the principle of day-labour in this State. It seems strange to find the great democrats of the present day in this State advocating the old system of contract work against day-labour work, when the system of contract work was abandoned by the Forrest Government three years ago, and that Government was always looked on by the democrats as being a conservative Government. I have always argued outside and inside the Chamber that there was no doubt about the conservatism of the Sir John Forrest Government, reading the debates of the Opposition against the debates of the Government of that date. It has been pointed out in the House before that the speeches, especially those by the present Premier when on this side of the House opposing Sir John Forrest, were against the conservatism of the Government; and I hope now that gentleman is Premier of the country, at least he will adhere to some of those principles which he sounded so loudly from this side of the House. I hope the principle of day-labour will be carried on in this State. I think I have made my points clear. I will not labour the question. I believe that a member will move an amendment to the motion which will enable me to speak again, if necessary. I hope the figures which I have given of the way the construction branch were treated by the traffic branch will be

accepted. The figures are practically accurate, and I could give the detailed figures for every month since the line was started. By having conversations with some of the men in charge of that work I am satisfied that if they received a fair opportunity to put their energies forth and were not trammelled in any way by the Railway Department, and were supplied with material quickly, they could have constructed the line at the rate of a mile a day. On the Estimates there is an amount of money for the continuation of the line from Malcolm to Laverton and I hope that portion of the line will be constructed on the day-labour principle. I feel confident if it is carried out by the same people who constructed the line from Menzies to Leonora, they will be able to construct the line from Malcolm to Laverton equally as quickly and cheaply and as well as any contractor could do it, and with much better results to the State. I also know that the construction of this line which has been so much condemned, was actually started before the Government were ready. I can find no figures dealing with the time from February until June as to whether any quantity of material was carried on to the work. I was started before the Government were ready, and there have been hitches from start to finish, which were the cause of the delay. I hope when the other section is started the Government will see that the material is kept up to the work. I shall oppose the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): I do not think it is desirable to pass a motion of this kind, or a motion to the converse effect. I do not think we are called on to say that the contract system is better than the day-labour system, or that the day-labour system is better than the contract system. Each depends on the application of particular circumstances. I am not one of those who look on contractors as a lot of people who try to squeeze their employees. As a rule they are a body of men earning the profits which they make; they run serious risks in their business as in any other business, and they well deserve those profits. If it does happen at the same time that they succeed in obtaining a large share of extras, that is not their fault: it is the fault of the want of car

of those responsible Government advisers who prepare the conditions or specifications under which the contract is carried out. That is in itself one of the elements of risk that every Government and every employer must run when employing a contractor—the efficiency or inefficiency of the servants called on to prepare the plans and specifications. And whilst I say that, I am also prepared to admit that in theory one may say, “Why should the contractor have these profits? Why should not the Government themselves do the work that the contractor does, and keep the profit that otherwise would go into the contractor’s pocket?” That, no doubt, all of us want to do if we possibly can, to squeeze out the middle-man. None of us attempt to do it unless we have some other means available. The whole success of a contractor depends entirely on his organisation and management. There is more in the manner in which the contractor manages his men than anything else. If the Government are to carry out departmental day-labour in connection with public works, they first have to acquire a staff of employees so that the work may be carried out efficiently. The Government cannot, any more than a private individual who is suddenly called on to do a big public work, have in their control an efficient body of men to do the work under them. If to-morrow any individual had the privilege of finding himself possessed of £50,000, and determined to put that money into bricks and mortar, there is not one man who would think of doing it by day-labour controlled by himself. There is not one man in the House who would think of having under him a body of subordinates who would look after the building while he himself exercised a sort of general control. That lucky individual would say at once that he had not available the necessary means to enable him to utilise to the fullest extent the services of those people to carry out the work. Why are the Government in any better position than the ordinary individual? We first of all have to run a risk in connection with contractors—that is the risk every building owner runs when he employs an architect or an engineer—of a want of care in the preparation of plans and specifications. Beyond that, where a contractor is employed, no risk is run.

It is no doubt because a risk is run that a contractor wants part of the profits. If we, however, do our own contracting, the element of risk and loss comes in, so that we have to guarantee efficiency and competency of the men who are acting as our supervisors and controlling the different works. The States in Australia have always been somewhat prominent in administration and in legislation of a distinctly socialistic trend. They have not been afraid to try experiments, nor have a few preliminary failures daunted them; but I do not know of any case to-day—I speak of course subject to the exception referred to by Mr. O’Sullivan—where day labour is employed successfully. Although we have had this strong socialistic trend in administration for the last 15 years—I may say 10 years, and it suits my argument as well—I cannot find any continual effort during that time to complete the carrying out of departmental day labour in connection with all Government contracts. On the contrary, the only instance we are referred to to-day is that of New South Wales, under Mr. O’Sullivan. On that, each individual member must make up his own mind. Personally the experience of New South Wales under Mr. O’Sullivan by no means convinces me. On the contrary, if my opinion in connection with this matter were to depend entirely upon what has taken place in New South Wales, it would considerably alter the views I hold now. If we want to carry out, as I believe most of us do—certainly I do—a system of efficient administration by which the State can secure all it should, and squeeze out the contractor and every other middle-man, how can we expect to do it by a jump? I believe no greater harm was done to the cause and interests of departmental day labour than when, for purely political purposes I venture to think, very great departmental works were done in this State by day labour. Here we had this enormous work carried out under that system before we had any administration to give that system fair play. The member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) himself referred to instances which showed how defective that system was, how the men were working under conditions which made it almost inevitable that the system could not be a success. But whatever might have been

the cause, there is the result. It has not been as satisfactory as we should all like to have seen it; and although we may think it was due to the fact that certain rails were not delivered promptly, that certain other things did not come in due course, those causes after all arise more from want of administration, which makes all the difference between a successful contractor and an unsuccessful contractor. We ought to approach this question of departmental and day labour with very great caution, and above all things should not be misled by any vague theory as to the obligation cast upon us of doing the work and getting the contractors' profits, which is a theory that does not apply to us in practical life. If we have to get a big ship built, and expert men are needed in every direction, we do not take upon our own shoulders the responsibility of constructing the ship by our own boat-building staff. In matters like that we send men who have had experience, and who have had to pay for it. If we could succeed in connection with these Government works in obtaining the services of those men with the experience, we should overcome the difficulty. But whilst there is that difficulty to-day, and the difficulty is one which apparently has been recognised throughout Australia, I believe we ought to constantly keep before us the object of securing the construction of all our public works some day or other by means of departmental day labour. I should like to see the system gradually extended, as we can give day labour a fair opportunity to prove itself, and not endeavour to do works at a jump with a result reflecting somewhat disastrously upon the principle. So that whilst I think it is inadvisable to pass a proposal in the direction of this motion or in the direction of the exact converse, I am of opinion that we ought gradually, as far as we can, to extend this system. Whilst I recognise that we have not available to-day at the Government's disposal a staff that would bring to us efficiency of administration, with the care and management which distinguish every contractor when he is working for himself and controlling his men, while we recognise this and realise that the limitation prevents us from going right and left into this system of carrying out

great public works by departmental day labour, my own view would be to at all times realise that this principle is the ultimate goal, and as far as possible we should move on steadily year by year never doing more in connection with day labour than we are able to do efficiently, and realising that if we want to build up a system by which our public works can be carried out by day labour, we can only do it by building up internal to it an efficient administration which will carry it through with the same care and thoroughness as contractors bring to bear. For that reason I look upon this motion as being inadvisable, if it attempts to bind us to a certain line of policy. It would be equally inadvisable to attempt to bind us to a policy of day labour. It is a matter which must be one entirely of administration, and I personally should approach all these questions with the principles I have placed before the House. With those views I certainly should not feel, if a motion like this were passed, that it ought to bind this Government or any other Government down too narrowly. It depends of course entirely upon the construction to be placed upon the words "wherever practicable." If those words are viewed in a broad sense, I agree with the motion; but if they are to be treated as putting us in this position, that departmental work must always be done—

MR. MORGANS: It does not say that.

THE PREMIER: No; it does not. I say that if these words are to be read with that object, of course I think the motion objectionable. My desire was to have words there which would make it clear to the House; but at present a member who thinks that contract work should be done, except perhaps in a few insignificant cases, might reasonably think that if a motion like this were passed his views were embodied, because he might place upon the words "wherever practicable" a narrow construction; whereas if a wider construction were placed upon the words, they would perfectly carry out my views.

MR. ATKINS (in explanation): In my first motion I asked that the Government should have an opportunity of doing the work by day labour, if they could do it for the same money. I want to have some motion before the House to affirm

the principle that if the Government see their way to cheapen the work, to lessen the loss to the State by some other means than those now adopted by day labour, they shall adopt that course.

THE PREMIER: If a motion were brought forward asking the House to affirm the contract system in preference to day labour on broad lines like that, I should oppose it; and if a motion were brought forward asking us to have day labour in preference to the contract system, I should also oppose that. I do not think the House should go to the extent of affirming either principle to the exclusion of the other. I have placed before the House my views in connection with this principle. Although I think we cannot to-day carry out with justice to this State large public works by means of departmental labour, nevertheless this Government and every other Government should plainly keep before itself the desire to secure that wherever it can be done with justice to the State it shall be. These are my views, and if members who bring forward the motion think these views can be covered by the motion, I shall be glad to vote with them.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): I am glad to hear the remarks of the Premier, because I think they indicate with sufficient clearness that the hon. gentleman, speaking I presume on behalf of the Government, is in general sympathy with the terms of the motion. I think the words "wherever practicable" are capable of a broad and common-sense construction, and that while they cannot be regarded as binding the Government to accept the contract system in every particular, yet the meaning of the motion as a whole is plainly that the policy of the Government with regard to public works should be the carrying out of those works under the contract system, subject of course to exceptions that must from time to time be requisite. We know that in a matter of this kind there cannot possibly be any hard and fast rule; but we are endeavouring to claim that the policy of this country, speaking generally, should favour the contract system and give a certain amount of latitude for exceptions to that system. The member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) in speaking on this question referred to it as if it were a matter of democracy. I utterly fail to see

that the question of day labour has in its essentials anything at all to do with democracy. It is not a question of democracy, but a question of the State getting the best value for its money; and when we see a thoroughly consistent democrat like the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) himself affirm the principle of constructing works by contract when he is having a house built for himself, I utterly fail to see how it can be regarded as undemocratic for the State to follow the example of that eminent Labour member, where he thinks it advisable to carry out work for himself by contract.

MR. DAGLISH: Of course you can prove it.

MR. NANSON: Well, the hon. member does not deny—

MR. DAGLISH: I have not spoken. I have not denied it, and I have not admitted it.

MR. NANSON: I have good reason to believe it is true. The hon. member admitted that he let the contract to a fellow member of the Labour party.

MR. DAGLISH: No.

MR. NANSON: Upon which I interjected: Was it true that dog ate dog?

MR. JOHNSON: I would like to point out that there was no contract made with Mr. Daglish and myself in connection with the building.

MR. JACOBY: Was it day labour?

MR. NANSON: I do not want to hurt the feelings of members on the Labour bench. They are somewhat supersensitive, it seems to me; but let us try to forget the episode if it hurts their feelings.

MR. JOHNSON: Stick to fact.

MR. NANSON: I will stick to fact. Will the hon. member tell me the price he built that house for? The idea has been suggested that a contractor, whether engaged on a small or a large work, is in the nature of a middleman. I dissent from that theory, which seems to me entirely fallacious. The contractor, especially the contractor for large works, instead of being a middleman is an expert who in many instances has an inborn genius for carrying out great undertakings; and not merely an inborn genius, but also a great wealth of personal experience gathered in a large measure through the risks which he is bound to run in his capacity as a contractor. Will anyone say that the

grandfather or the father of the present Lord Brassey, one of the great contractors of the mother country, was a mere middleman? Why, that man was one of the greatest captains of industry the nineteenth century has seen. There can be no question, whether the trend of the age be towards socialism or towards individualism, that the world will always have a demand for and will always be ready to grant liberal remuneration to those men who are possessed of that great organising capacity, that rare genius for controlling and getting the best value out of labour which at all times and in all ages has characterised the captains of industry. Now it is impossible for any Government, subject to the limitations which are imposed on Governments through political and parliamentary criticism, to lay down any law fixing the amount of remuneration in the case of men possessed of that rare genius for organisation and control. Not even with boards of conciliation and courts of arbitration can one fix what shall be the fair rate of remuneration for one of these great controllers of industry. The only possible guide for fixing what shall be the remuneration of the men is their capacity to earn. I despair of seeing the day when any Government will be prepared to pay to men of this type the salaries private employers are prepared to pay, recognising capacity as they do by the amount of profit it is able to earn. We have had quite recently an instance of what that capacity is able to earn in a country like the United States. When the great steel trust was formed last year a Mr. Schwab was appointed manager of the trust, and I believe I am right in stating that his salary was fixed at the enormous, the unprecedented amount for a salaried servant of £125,000 a year. I am reminded by the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) that the head of the shipping trust is paid a salary of 200,000 dollars a year. It is quite certain that the people controlling that vast industrial organisation known as the steel trust would not pay Mr. Schwab such a salary out of any feeling of sentiment, out of any other feeling than that he is able to earn the money. It is the very hopelessness of getting a Government to pay these enormous salaries, the hopelessness of getting men

of such capacity to enter Government service, that impels us to the conviction that for great public works we must have resort to private enterprise, to that enterprise which is able to command a degree of capacity altogether outside the scope of Governments. In deciding what shall be the general policy of the country as regards the carrying out of public works, we are entitled, I think, to take a wide range of observation and to endeavour to ascertain which system, Government day labour or contract, most generally obtains. Taking that wide survey, we shall find that many countries in which the day-labour system has been used, and in which I presume it has been given a fair trial, have abandoned it in favour of the contract system. Take the case of Cape Colony as one instance: there a considerable portion of the railway lines was built under the day-labour system; but that system proved so expensive that after a time the Cape Colony Government had to abandon it. In Queensland the day labour system has been tried, and owing I believe to political exigencies is still in vogue, or at any rate was until recently. In Queensland, however, the day-labour system has been condemned by the railway department as needlessly expensive: there can be little doubt that the Queensland railway authorities much prefer the contract system. It has been stated by a leading firm of Victorian contractors that when day labour is scheduled in a contract, the practice is not to inform employees of the fact, because experience has shown that if employees know that for any particular work a schedule rate is provided much less work is got out of the men than if they supposed themselves to be working under the contractor; that is to say, the men will do considerably more work when believing themselves to be employed directly by the contractor than they will do knowing that their rate is fixed by the Government. I do not mention that circumstance with a view of casting any reflection on the labourers engaged on public works. Human nature is very much the same in every condition of life, and it will probably be found that no matter whether a man works with his hands or whether he works with his head, much better results, as a rule, will be got out of him if he is paid for what he actually does, and is thus given the

greater incentive which payment by results carries with it. In South Australia the Adelaide railway station was, to the extent of one-half, constructed by day labour at a cost of £100,000. When the station had been half finished by day labour, the Government, aghast at the cost, decided to revert to the contract system; and the latter half of the work, which I am given to understand was practically of the same nature as the first half, was completed by contractors at a cost of £33,000. The half done under the contract system cost £33,000, whilst the half done under the day-labour system cost £100,000. In Victoria a controversy of the most intricate description has been raging for years in regard to the respective merits of the contract system and the *butty-gang* system. Without entering too deeply into that controversy, I may point out that *butty-gang* work is in itself a species of contract work. At any rate, those employed on the *butty-gang* system are paid by piece rate, and thus the thing is not quite the same as the day-labour system. Even in regard to the *butty-gang* system, however, a large body of Victorian evidence tends to prove that the work carried out by contract is done every bit as well as that done under the *butty-gang* system, and that higher wages are paid by the contractor to workmen than can be earned by the members of a *butty gang*, while the cost of contract work to the State is less. I am aware that Mr. Kernot, an official of the Victorian Public Works Department, has claimed that works constructed by the *butty-gang* system during a series of years showed a saving of 15 per cent. as compared with works constructed during the same period under contract. Mr. Kernot's figures, however, have to my mind been riddled through and through by the reply which his pamphlet evoked. It has been shown that the cost Mr. Kernot placed opposite certain items did not include by any means the whole of the work. To take a concrete example, we find that the Horsham-Dimboola railway was carried out under contract at a cost of £1,500 a mile, while the Natimuk-Goroke railway, built under the day-work system, over country absolutely identical with that which the previously mentioned line traverses, cost £2,000 per mile. If any test were needed,

it would be an interesting experiment to have one section of a line constructed by a contractor and another section of the line, running over exactly the same kind of country, constructed by day labour. Personally I have little doubt as to the result of an experiment of that nature. The main reason, I take it, why the contract system proves cheaper and more effective than the day-labour system is, not that the men doing the hard work are not as good under the former system as under the latter, but that the supervision of the contractor is better in quality. By reason of his better supervision the contractor gets more out of his men than the Government supervisor is able to get out of them. Frequently men who have been employed by contractors go to work under Government day labour, and it is found that very different results are obtained from the same men according to the nature of the supervision. One reason why Government day labour has on occasion been supported by Government officials is, I venture to think, that the mistakes made by Works Departments are much less likely to be discovered under the day-labour system than under the contract system, which necessitates the preparation of conditions, specifications, and schedules. Under the day-labour system, of course the Government officials have all the details of the work in their own hands, being responsible for the carrying out of the work. A great deal of the bad odour under which the contract system has come from time to time is due not so much to any fault of the contractor as to the fact that specifications, conditions of contract, and schedules have not been drawn with the care, skill, and completeness which the country has a right to expect. It may be that one reason why the care and completeness have not been attained in Australia—certainly not in Western Australia—consists in the unfortunate circumstance that the man working with his hands is frequently paid on a much more liberal scale than the man working with his head. During the investigations of the Royal Commission which inquired into the Coolgardie Water Scheme, it was discovered that carpenters, foremen, and gangers were, in a number of cases, actually paid higher salaries than

the engineers employed on the work. I am not arguing that necessarily the gangers and the foremen were paid too much. Perhaps I am not an authority on such a question. But I do assert most emphatically that the engineer, the man who is the brains of any big undertaking, should be paid more than the man who, after all, is there to carry out the engineer's instructions. And in Western Australia we have to face the position that if the Government liberally remunerate labour, they must liberally remunerate the brains which direct labour. Under private enterprise that is a truism which there is no need to repeat. It is amply recognised by every successful business man. I have never yet known a business man worthy of the name who did not recognise that it was to his own personal interest to pay a very high wage to capacity. No one recognises that more than the contractors themselves, who pay a higher rate even to the men who are doing the hard work, the navvies on the job, than is paid by the Government. In Victoria it was found, on comparison of contract with departmental day-labour work, that the contractors paid 1s. to 2s. a day more than the Government; and I should offer no objection whatever to the proposal that in arranging a contract the contractor should be bound to pay a minimum wage. I think it was the member for Subiaco, or some other Labour member, who suggested that the contractor should be liable to a penalty if this were not paid; and I am willing to agree with that also, as I feel quite sure that in great public works we shall never find the contractor wishing to pay anything less than the full current rate of wages. It would not pay the contractor so to do. He is able to get the pick of the men in the labour market, and he pays them the highest rate of wages ruling in that market. I believe the member for the Murray will bear out my statement that no objection whatever will be raised by the contractors to paying a minimum rate, but on the contrary it will be found that in many cases they pay more than that minimum. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR. J. EWING (S.W. Mining): It seems to be almost unnecessary to speak on this motion; but I rise to propose an amendment which I believe will be accept-

able to the House. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) has practically said all that need be said on this question, and the leader of the Opposition has signified his intention to support an amendment of the nature I am about to propose. The Premier has stated he will not at present affirm either the principle of day labour or of the contract system. However, I think this amendment will leave the Government in a much better position than would be achieved by the motion; and I understand the member for the Murray himself (Mr. Atkins) is willing to accept the amendment, which is:

That the word "practicable" be struck out, and "desirable" inserted in lieu.

I will subsequently move that a new clause be added, to read: "Every Government contract shall contain a clause providing that the contractor shall pay not less than the ruling rate of wages in the district where the work is proceeding, with a substantial penalty for any breach thereof."

MR. ATKINS: That wage must be stated in the contract.

MR. EWING: Last session this House affirmed the principle of a minimum rate of wages in all Government contracts; and the amendment proposes a minimum rate, with a proviso that the ruling wage in any particular district must be paid by a contractor working in that district.

MR. ATKINS: Unless it be in the contract, how can the amount be known?

MR. EWING: This is a general direction, in pursuance of which the Government will doubtless see that the rate is inserted in the contract. In the coastal districts the wages are, of course, much lower than on the goldfields; and it would be necessary to alter the rate accordingly. I need not delay the House, because, judging from unanimous expressions of opinion, it appears to me the Labour members are satisfied that the country thinks the Government should, as far as they think desirable, carry out the contract system. The Labour party cannot at present expect the Government to carry out all works by day labour, and those hon. members will, I am sure, accept this amendment, which will practically meet the wishes of other sections of the House.

MR. T. HAYWARD (Bunbury): I second the amendment.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): During the first few minutes of the Premier's speech it was somewhat difficult to gather what side of the question he was supporting; but he has affirmed his belief in the principle of day labour, though he appears to have a particular animus against that part of Australia where the system has been most successfully put into practice. To my mind, as one who has been watching the great enterprises carried out in Sydney by the New South Wales Minister for Works (Mr. O'Sullivan), I am fully satisfied that as far as New South Wales is concerned, and in reference to city works, that system is a pronounced success. This may be because there is a wave of enthusiasm passing over the workers of Sydney; it may be because the Minister for Works has inspired them with some of his own enthusiasm and energy, or that he has in his service the best that money can buy in the way of engineers. I am quite satisfied that he is now doing work in Sydney by the day-labour system equal to and perhaps better than any work of the same kind that could be done by contract. Moreover, I am cognisant of the fact that day labour in Western Australia has received a very staggering blow, and is probably now at as low an ebb as it has ever been even in the early days of responsible government.

MR. JOHNSON: The motion has been brought forward at a very opportune time.

MR. MORAN: There is no doubt about that. It seems to me, however, to be forgotten—but I do not forget it—that the first goldfields railway, which was constructed by Messrs. Wilkie Brothers, afforded a most tremendous and almost overpowering argument against the contract system.

MR. THOMAS: That was not constructed on a proper contract system.

MR. MORAN: Inasmuch as on that contract, anyhow, much more than the original cost of the line was dragged out of this country and taken away—probably it will be said, owing to special circumstances. Had the Government of this country constructed that railway with anything like ordinary, capable supervision, they would have kept the money in the country which was earned

by the contractor and taken away from our shores. Of that there is no doubt.

MR. MORGANS: That is where the difficulty comes in.

MR. MORAN: I admit the whole difficulty lies in supervision. I have not yet forgotten the opinion of the greatest engineer and the greatest manager too whom we have ever had in Western Australia—our late worthy and respected Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. O'Connor)—who, till the day of his death firmly held the opinion, and backed it by figures, that the Fremantle Harbour Works could not have been constructed with anything like satisfaction by the contract system. It would have been, he thought—and it looks as if this were true—absolutely impossible to specify by any human foresight so as to guard against tremendous extras in the building of those works, inasmuch as the getting out of the stone itself carried with it unforeseen difficulties and unexpected happenings every day. It was impossible to specify the stone, because of the unreliable nature of the quarries; because, as he pointed out in one word, there was required a Government supervisor all the time on the job, to reject stone one day, to accept it another day, to take stone from one face to-day and to reject similar stone to-morrow. In all these cases the Engineer-in-Chief thought that, do what he would in the specification, the contractor would, in respect of schedule rates, have very serious claims against the Government for extras. I think I am entitled to quote that opinion, and I think it is entitled to the respect of this House, seeing that it was the matured, definite, and lasting opinion of the late Engineer-in-Chief. I give that opinion for what it is worth; and it comes from the best authority we can quote in Western Australia. It has been stated that the late Engineer-in-Chief changed, before he died, his opinion with regard to day labour. Now, I think I can claim to have had a long conversation on this question with the late engineer, at as recent a date as any other person in the country. This conversation was held only a few days before his tragic end. At that time the Leonora railway contract was a burning topic; and I said: "Mr. O'Connor, your favourite theory of day labour seems lately to have received

a very severe blow." That was two or three days before his death. He had just come back from Adelaide, and was very much troubled in his mind. He replied: "Yes; but bear in mind that it is entirely a matter of the circumstances surrounding each case. It is entirely a matter of the peculiar circumstances attending each public work. I believe it would have been altogether better to call for tenders for that railway; and I am not sure that in every case that would not be better in railway contracts. Seeing that we have so many contractors in the State, with so much material and such complete plants and equipments ready, I think in every case of railway construction it would perhaps be better to call for tenders, because in plain work such as this competition will protect the State." But it was his deliberate opinion that for harbour works at Fremantle, and like works, the contract system would never be suitable. And I believe we have had documents laid on the table of the House not so long ago, showing that as the work progressed the Engineer-in-Chief, as was his wont, claimed that the harbour works had been constructed more cheaply than any other harbour works in the world. That was his statement, made in public, and apparently proven by the figures he gave this House. I am therefore inclined on this question to take the view taken by the Premier; but I certainly am not inclined to vote for a hard-and-fast mandate for either system. Look at the day-labour system. The same men do the work, in each case. The same set of navvies or labourers do the work, whether it be built by the Government or by a contractor; therefore the material is the same: the same units of labour are there in each case. It ought to be possible to get a fair day's work from these men for a fair wage under either system. Ought it not? Then the only defence for those who believe in contract entirely, a defence put forward by the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Government, is because the Government are unable or unwilling to control, or buy, or use the best organising power. It stands to reason, for the contractors of the country are not living on losses. They cannot live on the losses they make. They must

be living on the profits they make out of the State. That is certain. Mention has been made to-night by the leader of the Opposition of the name of Brassey, the founder of the present house of Brassey, or some relation. It was the firm of Peto, Betts, & Brassey, who constructed the first railway in Queensland. That was about the time when I first saw the light of day. I know that firm made tremendous profits out of the Queensland Government, hundreds of thousands of pounds I may say. Wilkie Brothers made a tremendous profit out of Western Australia. John Robb had an arbitration case running into a tremendous amount of money; and we have seen extras in Western Australia running to double the amount of the contract. We know that under any set of specifications it is quite likely that a contractor will make tremendous profits. Any unforeseen circumstances cropping up favouring a contractor will make him a great profit. Contractors do not often "go broke." They do not often lose.

MR. MORGANS: Do not say that.

MR. MORAN: As a rule contractors in a large way are about the best circumstanced men in Australia, and they make their money with the same labour as is available to the State. What is the position of the man who says you cannot work day labour? We are very fond in the House of preaching the doctrine of responsible government. Why? Both parties in the House—I did not—lately almost swept away protection from the civil servants in order to place fuller responsibility on the Ministry. The great platform is responsible government. The Government must take the full responsibility for everything, yet when we come to the principal work of the Government in Western Australia, these two parties do not believe in responsible government. The leader of the Opposition does not believe in it, the leader of the Government does not believe in it. They will not trust the Government. They will not trust any Government to expend the moneys raised for building the works of the State. There is no getting away from that position. Why, behind it all is this argument: the leader of the Government, and the leader of the Opposition—both parties in the House—are not prepared to stand the pressure brought

to bear by the labourer. That is the secret of the matter. The leader of the Government and the leader of the Opposition both admit that they cannot get the work out of the men under Government supervision. There is no escaping that proposition, and I appeal to the House to know if that is not correct. That is an absolute admission that responsible government is a failure so far as the spending of money is concerned.

MR. MORGANS: What has responsible government to do with building a railway?

MR. MORAN: Nothing, only finding the money and bearing all the losses. That has nothing at all to do with it. I wonder that the principle of contract is not brought into the administration of the Post Office. Why not have a system of contract in running our railways? Why is it not possible to have an annual contract for running the railway system of Western Australia? Some people think it would be an advantage to do so. That is logical. If the democratic Government and the democratic leader of the Opposition tell us that responsible government is the proper thing for the administration of a department which spends £600,000 a year in wages alone, and that they can get the best work out of the railway servants by responsible government, do not tell me you cannot do it in a railway contract.

MR. JACOBY: Does it pay? That is the question.

MR. MORAN: One of the two positions must be taken up. Either it is not good to have Government control of departments, or it is not fair to say that men will not work while under Government, but that they will work under Government employment on big public works.

THE PREMIER: Supposing a motion was brought forward to build all our locomotives by contract?

MR. MORAN: The Premier must not seek to draw new matter into the question. The Premier asks me, do I believe in building all our locomotives? If the Premier had not voted for federation, and I could have got a little protection in this country, I was in favour of it. Does not the Premier see that no new matter should be brought into the question. It is contract or Government

employment? It is human labour, shifting material with the pick and shovel.

MR. THOMAS: The "stroke" is the great difficulty.

MR. MORGANS: What is the difference between the control of a contract under a contractor and day labour?

MR. MORAN: If you do not believe there is a difference, you are in favour of either system.

MR. MORGANS: But I want to know your opinion.

MR. MORAN: I am asking, why is it not possible for the Government to get the same work out of men as a contractor can? It is because politicians are afraid of political control. Members are afraid of political influence on the part of the men if they are interfered with by the Government boss. The men will get a member to kick up a row about it in the House.

MR. THOMAS: You admit the Government stroke, then?

MR. MORAN: I never admit anything—that is a maxim I have laid down; I admit nothing except what I wish to admit. Let us go to the bed-rock of the position. Members say a workman will not work for the Government employer—that is the position, he will not give an honest day's work. Therefore he is placed under somebody who will make him work. If that is the position, then we come to an honest exposition of the question. If it is possible to do work under the responsibility of the Government and their engineers, if that phase is put forward by anybody, I admit it is an honest position. If it is the contention of the Premier that men do not work under a Government engineer responsible to the Government, then responsible government must be a failure.

THE PREMIER: Suppose the Premier says, I accept day labour in part and not in part, what becomes of responsible government?

MR. MORAN: What does that mean?

THE PREMIER: As to part of the work he accepts it; as to another part, no. What becomes of responsible government then?

MR. MORAN: The position I take up is this. The Premier accepts it in part. In railways he says he will only have direct Government control; but he removes the Public Service Act and all other

protection, and places the civil servant directly under the responsibility of the Minister; yet he will not do the same thing with regard to the expenditure of millions of loan money. Is that so?

THE PREMIER: I am asking you a question.

MR. MORAN: I am asking the Premier a very logical question. Does he believe in the responsibility of Government officers in the expenditure of millions of money?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in arguing with another member. He must address his observations to the Chair.

MR. MORAN: Then I hope hon. members will not interrupt me by asking me questions.

THE SPEAKER: You need not answer them.

MR. MORAN: It is objectionable to be interrogated by the leader of the Government, who ought to give us a better example. The position is this: the Labour party advocate day labour because they can bring pressure to bear on the Government.

MR. JOHNSON: We wish to protect the State.

MR. MORAN: The Labour party wish to protect the State. The member for the Murray wishes to protect the contractor. The leader of the Opposition believes in the theory of day labour, but he does not believe in it in practice as far as the Government of the country are concerned at the present time. I have always advocated the theory that it would have paid the Government to have got a good engineer at a cost of £5,000 or £6,000 a year to carry out the Coolgardie Water Scheme. That is where the weakness has been all through that business. The Government would not pay a sufficient salary to compete with the contractor. I have always advocated this. I tried to get the old Government to call for applications for the position of engineer for the scheme in three countries, in America, India, and in England. I was in favour of the Government giving such an engineer £5,000 or £6,000.

MR. JACOBY: He would have to be an organiser as well.

MR. MORAN: Certainly. It would have been money well spent to have obtained an engineer of that kind on the

terms I have mentioned; but the Government would not see their way to do it. It was not possible, with the strong Parliament they had. The Government would not listen to the idea, with the immoral pressure that was brought to bear on them; but they backed up their engineer, who had his reputation at stake, who said "I do not see why we cannot get good work from day labour, the same as a contractor can." It must be that the Government are unable to get work out of the men, not because their engineers cannot see when the men are not doing their work, but because the engineers are afraid to sack a man because the Minister will turn on him. The Minister is afraid of the political party, of pressure being brought to bear on him in politics. In Parliament one member will take up a case if another one does not; and then there is a political crisis, or a strike, or confusion. If that is not the reason, then there is no reason in the world. It is not because we cannot get engineers of ability, but because the Government will not protect their engineers to get rid of the "wasters" on Government works. That is why the Government cannot get good work out of day labourers the same as a contractor can. I quoted the late Engineer-in-Chief of the State, and that opinion has not been altered, that in the largest work ever carried out in Western Australia to a successful issue, under the contract system it would have been impossible to have got the work done for anything like the money it was carried out for. This was the opinion of Mr. O'Connor.

MEMBER: That is the exception and not the rule.

MR. MORAN: That only goes to prove that a direct motion in the House making it obligatory to call for all works by contract would be wrong. I am supporting the amendment which has just been moved, and I think it is well worthy the consideration of the Government that in a place like Perth, where the work can be carried out directly under the control of their best officers, where the all-seeing eyes of the Press of all shades and descriptions will be on the work, if the Government will carry out an extended water supply scheme or a deep drainage scheme, I advocate that in large works, as in Sydney, I believe the

best work can be obtained under a good Minister for Works and under good engineers by day labour. I firmly believe that if the work of deep drainage for Perth had to be carried out to-morrow, or the work of an extended water supply in the metropolitan area, which will have to come about very soon—an expenditure of perhaps half a million—in this capital city the same as in Sydney, the best, most satisfactory, most permanent labour could be got under the day-labour system if the Government would pay decent salaries to their engineers and back them up, employing none but those who would do good work. I appeal to members, and especially to the Labour party, who I am sure would not advocate the cause of any labourer who would seek to do less than a day's labour under the day-labour system.

MR. HASTIE: I thought you said just now we did.

MR. MORAN: I made no accusation against the present Labour party. I never said a word. I am sorry the hon. member is so liable to take an imputation of that kind and wear the cap.

MR. HASTIE: You put the cap on so often.

MR. MORAN: I do not think the present Labour party would unduly back up the case of any man, if they did not think he was doing a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. My opinion travels somewhat on the lines of those of the late Engineer-in-Chief, that there should be special engineers for special big works like the Fremantle Harbour Scheme, and the Perth deep drainage scheme. I believe they can carry out such works by departmental labour; and where there are many railway contracting firms, as in this country, and where the work is far removed and there are teams, I think the contract system is the best. I therefore have much pleasure in supporting the amendment, and, as far as I can judge, the sympathies of the Government may be said to travel altogether in favour of contracts. I hope they will not forget the possibilities and the good work done in other parts of the world, especially in metropolitan areas, by the day-labour system under a good engineer of works and the best capabilities money can buy. I hope to see the present Premier consistent with the ideas he for-

merly expressed when he occupied a seat on these benches. I should be sorry to see him abandon all those resolutions now and become, instead of being what he was, the leading democrat of Western Australia, an encrusted and hoary-headed conservative. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie): I think it is practically agreed on both sides of the House that it is not possible to apply day labour or contract labour in every case in Western Australia. It has been said we had a system of day labour in vogue in Western Australia, and that it did not prove a success. But whilst we had certain work going on by day labour, we had other work going on at the same time under contract; and seeing it is agreed on both sides of the House that it is not possible to have day labour going on in Western Australia entirely, and that neither is it possible to have the work done entirely by contract, I do not think it is desirable we should carry either the motion or the amendment. The discussion has done a certain amount of good; but I do not feel disposed to vote for the motion or the amendment, because after hearing the debate and having the opinions I hold, I do not believe it is desirable that we should carry any motion to-night on this question.

MR. MORAN: It will not have any effect, whether carried or not.

MR. JOHNSON: It has been stated, and truly so, that the reason the day-labour system has not proved successful is that the supervision is bad. As one who has worked with contractors, and as one who has worked under the Public Works Department of this State, I know perfectly well that inadequate supervision in the Public Works Department is the cause of the same amount of work not being obtained on the day-labour system as is obtained out of men working for a contractor.

MR. MORAN: Who is to blame for that?

MR. JOHNSON: The supervisors. I have found in Government works where I have been employed that the competent men are not the supervisors, but men who are doing the work, and those men are supervised by men who do not understand the particular work they are carry-

ing out. You will always find, and it has been stated in this House, that the Government do not get the best class of labour. I do not say the Government have no good men in their employ, for I know they have; but the fact remains that these men will not be dictated to by men who are not capable of instructing them in their work. I have found that so, and I know it applies to many other men who have worked in the Public Works Department. It has been stated that the contract system is a cheap system. I agree that in some particulars the contract system is cheaper than the day-labour system; but I do not agree that the work done by a contractor is equal to the work done under the day-labour system. We know that when we are working under the Public Works Department, under Government supervision, we do the work strictly to specification. The work turned out by the worker under the Public Works Department is carried out as it should be, according to specification. We know that when we are working for a contractor we do not in all cases stick closely to the specification. I have stated here in an interjection, the contractor tries to beat the Government and the proprietor every time, and we know that he does. If he can get behind the specifications, he will do so; and I suppose we can forgive him for doing it, because, after all, he has to make ends meet somehow, and he will do it honestly if he can. Instances have been quoted, and principally the Coolgardie Water Scheme, to prove that the day-labour system is not a success. Whilst we can point to the Coolgardie Water Scheme as being a failure under the day-labour system, we can point to the Coolgardie-Southern Cross railway as being anything but a success under the contract system; for whilst the contractor made something like £125,000, I think it was, under that line, the work is anything but satisfactory. I know as far as the buildings are concerned, they were not completed according to specification. We know perfectly well that the materials put into this were not such as would have been put in if the work had been done by the Public Works Department. Had the work been done by day-labour, the Government would have reaped that £125,000. They would

have built the line and received the profit. The money that went into the pockets of Wilkie Bros. would have gone into those of the people of this State. I could quote instances where other contracts have not proved successful. I can come to my own electorate. The way in which the contract in relation to the Kalgoorlie public building was carried out is a disgrace to this State. That building is an eyesore to any man who goes up to Kalgoorlie. The work is a disgrace to the man who did it, and to the department for passing the work. It has been stated that the place is falling down, and that the tower will be found across Hannans Street some of these days, and I would not be surprised if it were so. Anyone who goes through that building, whether a practical man or not, will come to the conclusion that the work has not been done as it should have been, according to the specification. We know there has been a considerable amount of trouble with the men employed on that building, and in my opinion the Government assisted the contractor to get through the work in the best and easiest way he possibly could. They assisted him in every possible way to get through the work, whether it was according to specification or not. Now let me turn to the Supreme Court building here in Perth. The contractor for that building undoubtedly beat the Government. I do not blame him, but I do blame the Government for allowing themselves to be beaten. The contract for the building specified Donnybrook stone with an alternative of stucco. The contractor put in schedules for stucco and stone. As the member for the Murray (Mr. Atkins) has pointed out, the work was all to be done by schedule; but it is well known that the schedules are totalled, and that in the majority of cases the lowest tenderer gets the contract. The successful tenderer was much lower than any one else for Donnybrook stone, but he was particularly high for stucco. According to the contract he had to find the quarry, supply the stone, and all the rest of it; but he delayed as much as possible the finding of the stone. Time went on and owing to the fact that the temporary buildings erected for the Supreme Court are not suitable for carrying on the business of the court, it became absolutely

necessary that the permanent buildings should be pushed on with all speed. The contractor then convinced the Government that he could not find the stone. His inability to find it, however, was entirely owing to the fact that he did not start in good time to look for it. As a result, Donnybrook stone is cut out and stucco is substituted. Thus the contractor, instead of putting in stone at a small price, puts in stucco at a large price. The case is absolutely as I state, and many parallel instances can be given. The contractors beat the Government every time. [MEMBER: The Government beat themselves.] The Government beat themselves, if you like; but the fact remains that if the Supreme Court building had been erected by day labour we should have a satisfactory and substantial stone building instead of a stucco building which will not last half as long. By day labour we should have had a satisfactory building, whereas the contract system has produced an unsatisfactory one. In the circumstances, I shall not support either the motion or the amendment. I contend that the Government should take the responsibility of deciding this question, as they are in a position to know when to adopt the day labour system and when to adopt the contract system. I consider that neither the motion nor the amendment should have been submitted to the House. Although I realise that the discussion has done some good, I hold that the matter should not be pushed to a division.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): I should not have said much, if anything, on this motion, but that the Labour representatives have protested so emphatically against what, if I may judge from the people whom they represent, those members must believe in. The construction of the Southern Cross-Coolgardie railway has been instanced by several speakers as affording a strong argument against the contract system. Those who adduce that instance, however, know full well that Messrs. Wilkie Bros. had not a contract in the true sense of the word at all, and that their agreement with the Government cannot for a moment be classed as a contract. The firm in question undertook to build the railway at a ridiculously low price, something like

£600 per mile. [MEMBER: Less than that.] It may have been only £400 per mile. At any rate, Wilkie Bros. undertook to construct the line for considerably less than the cost of the rails delivered on the scene of the work. [MR. TAYLOR: The Government supplied the rails.] Then I will say, for less than the cost of the materials which as contractors they had to supply. It is well known that the price at which the contract was taken would have been utterly absurd had nothing else attached to the contract. Farther, it is well known that Wilkie Bros. were granted an extension of the time during which they were at liberty to charge the public heavy rates for the haulage of goods. The Eastern Goldfields paid for the construction of the line. I claim, therefore, that the Southern Cross-Coolgardie railway cannot be adduced as an argument either for or against contract or day labour. [MEMBER: Neither can the Coolgardie Water Scheme.] I am not saying anything about the Coolgardie Water Scheme. The member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) referred to the Fremantle Harbour Works as an instance of the day-labour system proving far less costly than the contract system. The hon. member quoted the late Engineer-in-Chief as his authority. That is all right as far as it goes, but we must remember that Western Australia has no great harbour contractors. The greater portion of the Fremantle Harbour Works, I maintain, could have been done by contract more cheaply than by day labour, provided the various classes of work were not mixed up but were done by separate contracts. Such work as blasting in the harbour, for example, would have been an extra under the contract system. To obviate the danger of heavy claims for extras, the engineer could have provided beforehand for contingencies which he must have known full well were likely to arise. Certain portions of the great harbour scheme the engineer would necessarily resolve to carry out by day labour. I am absolutely satisfied that the great bulk of our people—and not only the big bulk of those who may be opposed to day labour, but the big bulk of the working men themselves—are absolutely in favour of the contract system. There can be no doubt of it. Labour unions themselves are strong ad-

herents of the contract system. Labour members themselves, when they have work of their own to do, prove that they are absolutely in favour of the contract system, which they know produces better and cheaper results. In the course of this debate we have been told of a house being erected for one Labour member by another Labour member under contract.

MR. JOHNSON: That statement has been contradicted, you know.

MR. THOMAS: Well, rumour if nothing else has it that such is the case. The contractor, I understand, did very well out of the job because the Labour party to a man went out to the scene of operations and helped him to raise the walls. Now, as to my contention that the labour unions favour the contract system, numerous instances are on record in this country of tenders being called for the erection of trades and labour halls, and of those halls being erected by contract.

MR. JOHNSON: I defy you to quote one case.

MR. THOMAS: The friendly societies on the Eastern Goldfields may be regarded as societies absolutely dominated by the labour associations. I shall leave it to the sense of hon. members who know the composition of the friendly societies on the Eastern Goldfields to decide whether I am not absolutely correct in stating that the huge bulk of the members of those friendly societies are members of labour unions.

MR. JOHNSON: Trades halls are built by day labour, and you know it.

MR. THOMAS: All of them?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

MR. THOMAS: No. I was remarking that the huge majority of the members of friendly societies on the Eastern Goldfields are also members of labour unions.

MR. TAYLOR: No; you are wrong.

MR. THOMAS: I have here an advertisement calling for tenders, cut from last Saturday's *Kalgoorlie Miner* :—

Hawkins & Sprigg, architects, invite tenders up to noon on Wednesday, the 22nd instant, for the erection of friendly societies' hall in Porter street. A deposit of £20 to accompany each tender. The lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted. Plans and specifications to be seen at our office, Semaphore Chambers, Hannans Street.

Was the workers' hall in Boulder erected

by day labour or by contract? Was the Edjudina workers' hall at Boulder?

MR. HASTIE: There is no such building.

MR. THOMAS: Can the the Labour party dispute the first instance I quoted?

MR. JOHNSON: That is the only instance you can quote.

MR. THOMAS: The instance I read out, of tenders now being invited, is sufficient to prove my contention that labourers are themselves in favour of contracts. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) recently conducted a big arbitration case in that town; and I will ask him whether he can deny that the almost unanimous opinion of the witnesses before the court was in favour of contract as against day labour.

MR. HASTIE: Is that work similar to railway construction?

MR. THOMAS: And at the end of that arbitration, Mr. Beasley, representing the workers, and I think the member for Kalgoorlie, saw that as far as that part of the case was concerned they would have to throw up the sponge.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes; when we had six witnesses for 6,000 men.

MR. THOMAS: I know the facts from my experience on the Eastern Goldfields, as one of the first men to introduce the contract system on mines in Western Australia. The contract system was introduced to the mines under my control, not at my request, but at the request of the men working under me; and I know that when the system was introduced, the working cost of sinking, rising, and driving went down, that the men were getting better pay, that the work was being done better and more quickly; and there was a big saving to the mine, including a saving in cost per foot. There is no getting away from that, as the books of any mine will prove; and if any Labour member wish to dispute that statement I have just made, I shall be pleased to show him my own books and to prove that after contracting was introduced to those mines the average earnings of the men went up and the average cost of the work went down, and that everybody on all sides was satisfied. If that is done by private people, I claim it can be done by the Government also. The member for Kalgoorlie himself admitted that the reason why day labour cost the

Government so much was that the Government had not the means properly to supervise that labour. Then I claim that is the strongest argument which can be used in favour of the adoption of the contract system wherever possible.

MR. JOHNSON: It does not justify our carrying a motion.

MR. THOMAS: It undoubtedly justifies the adoption of a motion by this House. The member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) admitted that the "Government stroke" was a reality and not a fiction; and that is a conclusive argument for the adoption of the motion, or of the amendment, which practically means the same thing. I should have thought the figures as to the Menzies-Leonora railway, given by the member for the Murray, and which cannot be disproved, would have induced the House to vote for the motion when proposed the other evening, and to carry it without discussion. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): I shall occupy but few minutes, as after the late sitting last night we all wish to finish this question. I should have liked a full debate on the subject, and I feel that on any occasion other than this we should have had a somewhat more sober debate, as far as one side, at all events, is concerned. Those who have debated this subject may be divided into two distinct classes. One side contends it would be unwise to lay down any rule as to whether all Government works shall be done departmentally by the Government, or shall be done by contract; and the other side contends that in every case the departmental system has in some respects failed, and we must therefore instantly declare that the general policy of this country shall be to adopt the contract system. And the implication in all such speeches is that contractors are always the saviours of the country; that all contracts are really good; that nothing can possibly be lost, but that everything is to be gained, if we hand over to contractors all the difficult problems of construction. I should like to point out to the member for Dundas, who with his experience of contractors will, I am sure, agree with me that in many cases those contractors do their work in a particularly unsatisfactory manner,

MR. THOMAS: No; I do not agree with you.

MR. HASTIE: Then it is hardly any use my appealing to the universal experience of every other man here, who will, I believe, admit that those countries which adopt contract work exclusively have often had a large amount of unsatisfactory work turned out. We had an instance a few minutes ago from the member for Kalgoorlie of the contract for the erection of the Supreme Court, Perth; and in every country where I have yet been in which contracts have been let, the main allegation I heard about them was as to the very unsatisfactory manner in which they were carried out. It is unfortunate that many of us have been disappointed with the manner in which some large works have been done departmentally; and I recollect that during last session I was one of those who did my best to improve the method of carrying out the Coolgardie Water Scheme. We appointed a committee, which was subsequently turned into a Royal Commission, to investigate that scheme; and in the report we were told that the most unsatisfactory feature of the scheme was the contract system which obtained; that the great drawback was that the Government had entered into certain contracts which in every case had proved very unsatisfactory; but that when the officers of the department—and they were not geniuses in the way of supervision—were put on their mettle, they altered the rate of progress to six times what the rate of progress had been before; thus showing that the contract system that obtained there was very unsatisfactory, and that the departmental system was susceptible of great improvement.

MR. NANSON: What particular contract are you referring to?

MR. HASTIE: There was a certain contract that was entered into with Couston and Finlayson about some machinery. Members look on it as a matter of no consequence just now; but I recollect the time when the matter was discussed and when members looked on it as a question of the greatest consequence. It is ridiculous to think if we go in generally for contract work we will always get the work done in a satisfactory manner. The contract with Messrs.

Couston and Finlayson was for certain machinery to be erected at a certain time, and under certain circumstances, so that certain work might be performed by the machines. This is practically what is wanted in nearly all contracts; but it is too late to continue that particular argument. I only hope the House will see the great danger of carrying the motion in the manner in which it is evidently intended. Judging from the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, his interpretation of the motion is that the general principle on which all works shall be carried out in future shall be by the contract system, and if the House declines that, and carries a motion of any kind on this matter, which I very much doubt, I hope they will take the milder course and agree to the amendment as proposed by the member for the S.W. Mining District. So far as I understand, we shall have very few public works to let in the future, so that I expect before either of these systems has to be considered again we shall have another opportunity of discussing the subject. If the Laverton railway has to be constructed, a Bill for the purpose will be brought before the House, when we shall have an opportunity of discussing the matter.

MR. THOMAS: It is on the Estimates as well.

MR. HASTIE: Then at that time we shall have an opportunity of discussing the subject. I have only to say that I trust the House will not carry the motion in its original form.

MR. HOLMAN (North Murchison): I beg to enter my protest against the carrying of the motion, and I do not think any stronger argument has been advanced than that used by the member for Dundas. He stated that a contract was let for the relaying of the Eastern railway line, and he showed conclusively that the contract system was detrimental to the people living on the Eastern Goldfields.

MR. THOMAS: I said it was not a contract.

MR. HOLMAN: Instead of the whole of the people of the State paying towards that work, the people on the goldfields were absolutely robbed over the construction of the line. The same occurred in regard to the Mullewa-Cue line. A

contract was let for that line amounting to some £70,000, and after the contract was finished there was a matter of another £70,000 or £75,000 for extras. And at the same time the people on the Murchison Goldfields were robbed probably of another £150,000. If the line had been built by the Government under the day-labour system the people on the Murchison would not have been robbed of that large sum of money. I was on the Murchison at the time, and I have some knowledge of the ways and means under which the line was constructed. And I say, the people on that part of the goldfields of the State were wronged to the amount I have mentioned.

MR. ATKINS: Where does the robbing come in?

MR. HOLMAN: The people on the Murchison Goldfields had to pay for the construction of the line, whereas the whole of the State should have contributed towards the construction of the railway. Take the Nannine line, which is just being constructed departmentally by day labour. I went over a portion of that line a few weeks ago, and although the line is not ballasted—in fact, the man who is supervising the work on the line has a great trouble to get the work advanced, as he cannot procure the rails and when he sends for trucks he cannot get them—it is in a much better condition than the Mullewa to Cue line, which was constructed by contract. The material train going over the non-ballasted line does not cause so much knocking about in the trucks, which are worn-out old ones, as in the Government carriages over ballasted lines. That is the difference between departmental day-labour work and contract work. I propose to oppose both motion and amendment, because the time has come when the Government should take in hand all these works. Instead of going backwards, we should go forward and get all the work constructed by departmental day labour that we possibly can.

MR. ATKINS (in reply): I wish to speak to the amendment, and I may say I will be quite satisfied with the amendment proposed; but I would like say a few words in contradiction of statements made that Government work is so much better than contract work. I have here a

letter from a member of the Coastal Operative Industrial Union of Bricklayers, and it says:—

On reading your letter of the 9th in the *West Australian* I came to the conclusion that there is a lot of truth in your statement, and I quite agree with you in reference to the carrying out of Government works departmentally. I think it is a mistake. I have always been of an opinion that the Government should carry out their own work until lately. I think myself that if it were let by contract we should have the work done much better, cheaper, and as it should be. In reference to your letter re the Midland Workshops, I was working on them for six months, therefore I know what I am writing about. I make the statement without fear, and can prove the same if asked to do so. The work (brick) that is done there is disgraceful. If it was done by a contractor it would have been condemned. You can see the work that is done by tradesmen and other work that is thrown up against it, by—well, I should be ashamed to call them tradesmen, and there is no internal bond on the work: the outside face of the piers is only a shell.

MR. JOHNSON: Is he talking about the Midland Workshops?

MR. ATKINS: He is talking about the Midland Workshops that are being built.

MR. JOHNSON: Did he see them?

MR. ATKINS: I am reading a letter. You can find the man if you like. I did not interfere with other members while speaking. Did I not sit quietly and let those gentlemen say what they liked? That sort of obstruction is not fair. I do not see what advantage it does to those men. I am meeting the statements of the member who spoke on this matter. The letter continues:—

I do not blame the tradesman, as I do the foreman, who is a stonemason, and knows no more about the work than some of the men who work there.

MR. JOHNSON: He is sacked.

MR. ATKINS: The letter continues:—

Now, sir, I ask you, would contractors be allowed to carry out the work in this fashion for one moment? I think not. I have worked for several of your association, and am a thorough tradesman, and afraid of no man. Therefore, dear sir, I hope that your association will be granted the inquiry asked by them, as I think it will open the eyes of the public, and will be a big saving to them in the end.

MR. HOLMAN: Is there a postscript asking for a job? Who is it?

MR. ATKINS: With regard to the contract let on the Coolgardie Water

Scheme, I think the member who spoke on the matter alluded to the contract let by Couston for machinery. I may say this much, and I challenge any person to contradict me, that as far as the machinery went, it was good machinery. It was the price that was wrong; not the machinery. [MEMBER: And the time.] And the time. The fact that the Government did not keep the man to his time, or the fact that they gave him twice or three times as much as he ought to have got for the machinery, does not make the machinery worse. The machinery, if properly worked, could do the work well and effectively, and it is one of the greatest proofs that the labour was bad, because it has been the labour that has been wrong in every case in that pipe track. It is the careless, bad way in which the work was done. The men will tell you the same; and everybody in charge of it. They cannot get the lead run into the joint because the men do not care. They run three-quarters of a joint and leave a hole.

MR. TAYLOR: Whose fault is that?

MR. ATKINS: The men's.

MR. TAYLOR: Who pays the supervisor?

MR. ATKINS: If I rob my master, does that give you a right to rob him? Is not that most arrant special pleading, and a childish way of talking, that because you have not a sharp man over you to see you do the work right, you are to rob him?

MR. HASTIE: Nobody said that here.

MR. ATKINS: That is the argument.

MR. HASTIE: It is not.

MR. ATKINS: That because the management is bad the men can do as they like.

MR. JOHNSON: No; we say the contractor is bad.

MR. ATKINS: I pointed out that on that job there was £100,000 of the country's money wasted. He said, "Yes; that is so. Well, but it does not much matter because the men got it." [MEMBER: Who said that?] Mr. Daglish said it to me. You want these things. You will have them now. [Interjection by MR. JOHNSON.] Please do not interrupt. Seeing that I did not interrupt, I think the least they can do if they have any gentlemanly or manly feeling is to act in the same way towards me. I think

it is very unfair for me to be interrupted in this manner. [Interjection by Mr. TAYLOR.] Of course you cannot know anything about it, because you do not belong to a civilised country at all. I want to say, and I am determined to say it, that Couston's caulking-machine is one of the greatest proofs that can be given to-day that it was the fault of the men, and not the fault of the machinery or the management, that the work was bad, because in every case where the work was done right by the men, the machine did the work right. It was the lead-running principally, because men were careless and lazy, and would not take the trouble to run the lead properly. You cannot have a greater case in point than that. I do not see that it is any use to labour this matter, or give more reasons for it. You must remember that all over the world contracts are used in preference to day labour, and it is nonsense to say this thing cannot be done or that cannot be done by contract. I suppose one of the most critical works in the world is that of building a man-of-war, and the very last man-of-war built by the English Government was built by contract. What more can people want? Cannot we in our little pettifogging way get work done by contract, if people in England and all over the world do work by contract? Every man amongst us who wants work done well and cheaply has it done by contract. We can never have civilisation or anything else except by competition. If we have day labour, it means levelling down. The best man has to do the same work as the worst, and no better. And I say that this is a bad principle, and it is the reason why so much money is lost and wasted in this country. I do not care particularly about day labour, contract labour, or any other labour; but I want to see the money of the Government not wasted but saved. I have seen so much of the Government money wasted that we are paying for by the sweat of our brow; culpably wasted by both the men and the manager. I do not say by one more than another or one less than another. The fact that the management is bad does not give me or you the right to rob my employer; but if we were fair-minded men we would do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. The principle of day labour is simply to

do as little as possible for the money. There is no emulation, and Jack is as good as his master. When we had eight men on hand-caulking, I could see before they had been half-an-hour at it that two of them were able to do half as much again as the others were doing; but they had to sit down and loaf about until the other men had finished, because if they had gone on to another joint the others would have said, "Look at him going on before we have finished." What sort of game is that? Is that conducive to good and cheap work? I say it is not; and I assert, therefore, that I want some other way of spending our money than the way in which it is being spent and wasted to my certain knowledge. I could speak for hours in giving instances where money has been wasted disgracefully by Government day labour. However, I will be most happy if the House will allow me to substitute the amendment for my motion; and if that will stop this debate and finish it up I will be very glad.

MR. DAGLISH (in explanation): I am given to understand that the member for the Murray charged me with having said, when I knew that £100,000 had been unnecessarily expended on the Coolgardie Water Scheme, "Oh! it does not matter; the working men got the money."

MR. ATKINS: I said you said, "It does not matter so much, because the men got the money."

MR. DAGLISH: I must say I never used words conveying that meaning.

MR. ATKINS: All right. Then I am wrong; that is all.

MR. DAGLISH: I challenge the member to tell me where these words were used.

MR. ATKINS: In walking down Hay Street, to the railway station.

MR. DAGLISH: I scarcely think the hon. member has done right to make a statement like that, and to adduce in support of it a private conversation which he alleges to have taken place. The hon. member knows that on various matters I have had many private conversations and many jocular conversations with him.

MR. ATKINS: There was nothing jocular about this.

MR. DAGLISH: I absolutely deny having made at any time a remark of such a description to the hon. member, either inside or outside the House, in a

serious manner. To the best of my belief, I have not even jocularly made such a remark, which is utterly foreign to my sense of right, and moreover so absurd as to carry its refutation with it.

MR. ATKINS: All right. I'm a liar, and you're a gentleman.

THE SPEAKER: The interjection of the member for the Murray is improper.

Amendment put, and passed on the voices.

Question as amended put, and a division taken with the following result:

Ayes	14
Noes	5

Majority for ... 9

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Atkins	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Holman
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Taylor (Teller).
Mr. Kingsmill	
Mr. Monger	
Mr. Moran	
Mr. Morgans	
Mr. Nanson	
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Thomas	
Mr. Yelverton	
Mr. Wallace (Teller).	

Question as amended thus passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.26 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council, Tuesday, 28th October, 1902.

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THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: 1, Returns under "The Life Assurance Companies Act, 1889." 2, Permission to construct a Timber Tramway to the Kalgoorlie Boulder Firewood Company, Limited. 3, Perth-Fremantle Railway Deviation—Particulars in connection with land purchases. 4, Western Australian Government Railways—Alteration to Classification and Rate Book.

QUESTION—ABORIGINE RESERVE, MURCHISON.

HON. J. A. THOMSON (for Hon. J. M. Drew) asked the Minister for Lands: 1, If any portion of the Aborigine Reserve 297A, on the Murchison, has been leased to any person or persons. 2, If so: (a) the extent leased; (b) the name of the person or persons to whom it has been leased; (c) the length of the lease; (d) the consideration. 3, Why the reserve has not been devoted to the purpose for which it was originally declared.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, (a.) 22,000 acres; (b.) F. B. Wittenoom; (c.) 10 years, from 1st July, 1899; (d.) £1 per 1,000 acres rental annually. 3, The time is not ripe, as the collection of aborigines thereon and the expense of their supervision is at present beyond the power of the Aborigines Department.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by HON. J. E. RICHARDSON, leave of absence for 14 days granted