

to the eleven plutocrats or to the 25 men who did not pay their rates and who are still in arrears, had this idea, that there was no desire whatever, no suggestion of a thought in their minds, that they wished to escape or to repudiate their liabilities. On the other hand, what they wanted was that the Government should treat them reasonably and in a business manner. I hope that when this Bill goes into Committee next week, the suggestion which I have made will be given effect to, and that not only will the rate be reduced, but also that some provision will be inserted in the Bill whereby easy terms can be granted to settlers in arrears for payment of their rates. Under these conditions I support the second reading of the measure.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North) [5.35]: I do not intend to make a speech on this measure. As a member for the North Province, I rise to thank Mr. Kingsmill for the admirable manner in which he has placed the question before the House. I think if one were to spend a week in stating the case, it could not be put more comprehensively than it has been by Mr. Kingsmill. The Bill if carried in its present form would, in my opinion, inflict great hardship on a very deserving part of the community, on men who have gone out into country that is certainly not pleasant to live in, and where they have had to face the prospects of drought and otherwise run great risks in endeavouring to develop new territory. I trust that the Government will agree to the amendment which Sir Edward Wittenoom intends to move in Committee. The carrying of that amendment will be to the advantage of the pastoral lessees, who will be ruined if the Bill is carried in its present form. Like Mr. Kingsmill, I do not think it is the intention or the wish of the Government to bring ruin on the pastoral lessees of the Gascoyne. Therefore I hope the Government will meet those people in a fair way when the Bill is in Committee. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.37 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 14th October, 1915.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

PETITION—TROTTING ASSOCIATION LEASE, KALGOORLIE.

Hon. FRANK WILSON presented a petition from 221 persons engaged in the mining industry on the East Coolgardie Goldfield praying for an investigation into the granting of a special lease of gold mining lease No. 4370E to the Western Australian Trotting Association.

Petition received and read.

QUESTION — POLICE FORCE, CHARGES OF DRUNKENNESS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Premier: 1, How many charges were preferred against members of the police force stationed in the central portion of Perth for drunkenness during 1912? 2, How many convictions were obtained, and what were the names of the culprits? 3, How many of those convictions were obtained before the issue of the order in August, 1912, and how many after, in the latter part of the year?

The PREMIER replied: An investigation of numerous files would be necessary in order to obtain this information, and the request should be made the subject of a motion.

QUESTION — COOLGARDIE MEDICAL OFFICER AND HOSPITAL.

Mr. McDOWALL asked the Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): 1, Has his attention been called to an article in the *Coolgardie Miner* of the 9th inst., to the effect that it is proposed to leave the town without a Government Resident Medical Officer? 2, That it is also proposed to close the Coolgardie hospital altogether? 3, What does he propose to do in connection with these matters?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is not the intention of the Government to close the Coolgardie hospital. 3, The Medical Department is endeavouring to secure a successor to Dr. Thurstan, but owing to the general shortage of medical men throughout Australia, difficulty may be experienced in filling the position. Pending the appointment of another District Medical Officer, arrangements have been made with the District Medical Officer at Kalgoorlie to visit Coolgardie and attend to urgent cases. The matron and nurses at the hospital will render such assistance to patients as they are able, pending the visits referred to.

QUESTION—ALBANY HARBOUR, BULK HANDLING OF GRAIN.

Mr. WILLMOTT (for Mr. Wansbrough) asked the Minister for Works: Is any provision being made for the handling of grain in bulk in connection with the construction of harbour works at Albany?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: None in the present extension. In the complete scheme provision has been made.

QUESTION—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE, FARMERS' STATEMENTS.

Mr. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Agriculture: Will he have statements forwarded to assisted farmers if possible by the end of October?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: A start will be made

almost immediately, and it is expected that statements will all be issued to assisted farmers by the end of November.

QUESTION—WHEAT EXPORT AND SHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS.

Mr. MALE (for Hon. J. Mitchell) asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is there any law to compel wheat exporters to ship in vessels arranged for by the Federal Government? 2, Can exporters make their own shipping arrangements?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Wheat cannot be exported from Australia without the approval of the Federal Government. The export of the Australian surplus this year can only be done in vessels chartered under agreement entered into by the Commonwealth and States. 2, No.

QUESTION—EDNA MAY DEEPS MINE.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has his attention been drawn to an article in Monday's issue of the *Daily News* commenting on share dealing in connection with Edna May Deeps mine? 2, If so, will he order an inspection of the mine by the State Mining Engineer with the view of safeguarding the interests of genuine investors in mining in this State?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, There is no power under the Mines Regulation Act to order an inspection for the purpose which it is desired to attain. The objects of the Act are to ensure the safety of persons employed, and the power of the Minister to order an inspection is for the purpose of seeing that the intention of the Act is being carried out.

PAPERS — RAILWAY STEEL TYRES, CONTRACT WITH STRELITZ BROS.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [3.16]: On the 7th

October I answered a question asked by the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) in connection with a contract for railway steel tyres placed with Messrs. Strelitz Bros. It appears that a wrong reply was given. The matter was brought under my notice by a minute from the secretary of the Tender Board and a communication from the Comptroller of Railway Stores. I desire to table these communications in order that the member for North Perth may obtain the information. I move—

That the papers do lie on the Table.

Question passed.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, HORSE-RACING CONTROL.

Report presented.

Mr. Hudson brought up the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into the control of horse-racing.

Report received and read.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn) [3.25]: I move—

That the report be printed, and that the consideration of the same be made an Order of the Day for Wednesday next.

Question passed.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, MONEY BILLS PROCEDURE.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [3.26]: I move—

That the time for bringing up the report be extended for a week.

The matter is still under consideration.

Question passed.

SITTING HOURS, EXTENSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [3.27]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session, the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 3 p.m., and sit until 6.15 p.m. if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 onwards.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Susssex) [3.28]: I have no desire to throw obstacles in the way of the Government getting through the business of the session, but I would like to know whether it is absolutely necessary that we should meet at 3 o'clock each day. I should have no objection if it would mean that we could get away a little earlier in the evening than we have been in the habit of adjourning recently; but we have our private business to attend to in addition to our Parliamentary duties, and it seems to me a hardship to force members to come here at three in the afternoon, especially if we are to continue sitting until the early hours of the morning. Even if we have to sit a day or two longer, it does not matter much at this stage, so far as I can see, unless the Premier has important engagements or conferences to attend in the East. Then we might consider sitting earlier or longer as the case may be. In view of the state of the Notice Paper, the present hours ought to be sufficient to get through the business. Can the Premier give us any idea as to when he proposes to close down? Is there any more business to be brought before the House?

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe—in reply) [3.29]: The reason why the Government are asking that the House should assemble at 3 o'clock is that the business of the House may be transacted, and, if possible, transacted before the early hours of the morning. At present we do not meet till half past four, and by the time formal business and questions are disposed of the tea adjournment has arrived. After that we do not resume until 7.30, and by the time members have relieved themselves of some of their grievances midnight has arrived.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have got on just as expeditiously as you have brought the business along.

The PREMIER: I have consulted a number of members, and I have heard no objection to this motion. Some hon. members on the Opposition side have suggested that we should meet early in the forenoon. Quite a number of those hon. members have private businesses which

urgently require attention in November, and they wish to attend to their businesses in the same way as the leader of the Opposition wants to attend to his affairs in the City. The Government have never yet asked the House to sit unduly. I have always tried to adjourn in time for the last train. The exact date of closing down I am not yet able to state. There is a fair amount of business before another place, and I think the greater portion of that business will come back for reconsideration in this Chamber. Of course, I do not know exactly what will be resubmitted to us. Again, the position is such that, while we recognise there is no reason for closing Parliament hurriedly, yet it is desirable that as soon as practicable Ministers should be relieved from attendance here in order to deal with business arising from time to time—some of that business being abnormal in nature and urgent and important in character. I do not know that there is any business the Government will introduce except Loan Estimates and a Loan Bill, and I hope to be able to introduce them on Tuesday next. Personally, I see no reason why, if hon. members devote themselves to dispatching the business before them, we should not close down the week after next with perfect ease.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It would be just as well to make it 2.30.

The PREMIER: I recognise the position that members after lunch might just as well come to the House straight away and I am willing to make it 2.30 if the hon. member likes to move in that direction.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I will move to make it 3.30 or 4 o'clock, if you like.

Mr. Willmott: I do not mind meeting at 2.30 if we knock off in decent time.

Question put and passed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1915-16.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Department of the Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister—Hon. R.

H. Underwood, Honorary Minister, in charge of the votes).

Vote—Office of the Colonial Secretary, £31,661:

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara) [3.33]: I desire to say very shortly that in bringing these Estimates before this Chamber there is considerable difficulty, inasmuch as most of the branches are administered by the Colonial Secretary, who is in another place, and knowing my own difficulty now I can appreciate to a large extent the difficulties which the Colonial Secretary must encounter in representing six Ministers in another place. That position should appeal to hon. members, and it might be a strong factor in recommending the abolition of another place. In regard to these Estimates, I would just like to point out that the expenditure for 1914-15 was £447,452; the revenue was £84,372, leaving a net expenditure of £389,780. The estimated expenditure for 1915-16 is £474,152; the revenue is estimated at £105,510, leaving an estimated net expenditure of £368,642, which is less than it was for 1914-15 by £21,038. I want to say that in framing these Estimates the Ministers have used every effort to economise in expenditure. So far as economy is concerned I would just like to put this proposition to members. I realise that these Estimates belong to Parliament and any decision they may come to will be carried out. There are many departments on these Estimates in which reductions could be made. The medical and charities both represent very big votes and if hon. members want to cut anything out of those Estimates, anything substantial, all I can say is that we shall do our utmost to get on with the money which Parliament votes us. We shall do the best we can with what members can afford to give us. There is one other point I would like to mention, so that members will not keep on talking about it. There are no increases on the Estimates to officers receiving over £150 per annum; that, however, does not include the constabulary—the police force

—where some of the increments have gone above that amount, but not many. I desire to say a few words about the aborigines, and I would like to comment shortly on the select committee which was appointed by another place to deal with the retirement of Mr. Gale from the position of Chief Protector of Aborigines. I want to make this position pretty clear. A Message was sent from another place asking this House to give permission for me to give evidence and it was not considered by this House. I have no doubt it would have been had we not been so pressed with other business but it was a matter certainly which should not be allowed to interfere with very important questions. I want to say in regard to the select committees appointed by another place to inquire into the administration of a Minister in this Chamber that I consider, if there is any explanation of any action or any defence to be given of any action on the part of a Minister, that is due to this House, the House which is responsible, and I consider that no Minister should go before a select committee appointed by another place until he has explained the position to this House and the members of this House.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You could have made a statement any time you liked.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I did not like.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And you did not like to give evidence.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The members of this House have had ample opportunity of bringing forward a motion, and as they did not do so I take it for granted that they wanted no explanation, and were satisfied. Speaking on the question itself, and very shortly at that, when the Government took office the cry of the country and of Parliament was for economy and it was obvious to everybody that the utmost possible economy should be practised in the whole of the Government departments. I had a very large staff in the Immigration Department. The immigration business had practically

ceased, at the same time it was not advisable to entirely close that office—that was in my opinion and the opinion of the Government. It was desirable that the organisation should be kept intact so that the work could be taken up at a future time without organisation, which would be necessary if we disbanded the department. On the other hand, it was not, in my opinion, a fair proposition to keep a highly paid officer to act as a record clerk. It was necessary to give him some other work to do and in looking round for other work for him to do the Aborigines Department struck me as the most likely of the whole lot.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Is that the reason why you wanted to appoint the Superintendent of Charities first?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I want members to consider this proposition. By some extraordinary process of reasoning, the Appeal Board has put the Chief Protector of Aborigines, as far as payment is concerned, among the under secretaries. His department will be expending something like £28,000. The control of the expenditure is chiefly in the hands of other departments. That is to say, the Medical and Health Departments control the expenditure of something like £3,500 of it in lock hospitals. The police distribute practically all the rations and the remainder of the money is simply for head office expenses and is paid out to occupants of positions. The position of Chief Protector of Aborigines has been made a sinecure throughout Australia. It is a most peculiar thing but there is a place in England called Exeter Hall, where, as far as I can judge, some idle rich of England congregate and salve their consciences by looking after the aborigines in other countries, while a quarter of their own people are on the verge of starvation. It is easy to make Chief Protectors of Aborigines in the Exeter Hall who give the money to missions and who write reports. These are read by the noble chairman and everything is going along swimmingly, but the least thing that is thought of is the

aboriginal himself. My opinion is this, that if we want that department administered properly we can get an officer out of the police force. We can get a score of officers out of the police force who could run that department well. The police not only know the habits and ways of the aborigines but they know also the habits of certain storekeepers and squatters who in the past have been doing very well out of the aborigines and the aborigines' vote. The position has been that we have a Chief Protector of Aborigines and he has a secretary to do the work. The Appeal Board put the position of Chief Protector up to £628 a year; I think a more absurd decision was never given by any judge in any country. I was in this position: I had two fairly highly paid officers, one a man who has had no training whatever in ordinary office work, who started in the departments 20 odd years ago and has had made jobs all the time. He started as inspector of scab in sheep. He kept that position until there was not a scab in the country and the job had to be abolished. Then he was made inspector of fish at Shark Bay. He worked that out and the position was abolished. Another department was started, the Fisheries Department, and he was put into that. He could not manage that, and so they had to get Mr. Aldridge, a man who knew something about it. Then they put him into the Aborigines Department, a place where he could not go wrong. What was I to do? The other man is well trained, full of energy, and has held positions in many of the departments, getting up towards Under Secretary. Which of the two would anybody have kept? Of course, the one I kept, Mr. Neville. It has been stated we should have a man in charge of that department who knows something about aborigines. That is true, but the knowledge of aborigines is not hard to learn. Thousands of men in this country have learnt it just as well as ever Mr. Gale did. Any man of average intelligence who will devote his time to it is bound to get all the knowledge necessary to run the department in less than a year, and from my experi-

ence of Mr. Neville, I am certain that he will soon know infinitely more about the natives than ever Mr. Gale knew. One other point: it has been stated that in dealing with this matter I should have asked advice from my Under Secretary, Mr. North. Why should I go to Mr. North, for information on aborigines? The position is simply this: I decide to do a certain thing, and I ask my Under Secretary for information and advice. If his advice agrees with my opinion I accept it; if not, I do not accept it. I may just as well save the time and not ask it at all. As a matter of fact, the Under Secretary has a great deal of knowledge on many subjects, but he has not so much knowledge as myself on this subject, and, therefore, it would have been only wasting time to ask his opinion.

Mr. Foley: If you had asked him for information, to whom would he have gone?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): To me. Alternatively, he would have gone to Mr. Gale. In regard to the working of the department, I have been of opinion for a long time past that there was a considerable amount of waste, and I have endeavoured to stop the leaks wherever possible. The Estimates were reduced last year by some £3,000, and we estimate a reduction of another £1,800 this year. I claim, nevertheless, that the natives are being looked after as well if not better now, than when the larger expenditure was being incurred. Probably hon. members will want still further information on this subject when we are on the items. I will be glad to supply it. In regard to the Charities Department, last year was a pretty heavy one. When I took charge of the department there was a great number of men out of employment. It was the duty of the Government to provide food and shelter for those people. We endeavoured to do that, and at the same time to provide work wherever possible. I am pleased to say that we have now been able to stop issuing meal tickets and to close down our shelter shed. It is pleas-

ing to know that there are infinitely fewer unemployed to-day than there were some months ago. Any man who is prepared to take any sort of work can get work to-day. I feel convinced that if the seasons remain good we will not again be called upon to issue meal tickets or open shelter sheds. In looking through the Estimates, some increases may be found in regard to gaols. In respect to some of these items, the increases are due to the fact that the Gaol Department has been baking bread for the German prisoners. The expense has been incurred in the purchase of flour. There are one or two noticeable instances in connection with the gaols. One is that 60 prisoners in the Fremantle gaol gave a subscription to the wounded soldiers' fund. It represented gratuities earned by them and, of course, involved their voluntary deprivation of small comforts. It reflects great credit on the prison methods, and I think it is worthy of note. It certainly speaks well for the reformatory methods of that prison. There are fewer prisoners in our gaols this year than last. The average of the past year was slightly lower than that of previous years, which possibly indicates that the world is growing better. In the Lunacy Department there is an increase of £5,000 odd, due to the increased number of attendants consequent upon the normal increase of patients; also due provision has been made for the full use of the hospital for inebriates. It is rather depressing to note that there is a regular and continual increase in the inmates of the Hospital for the Insane. It speaks well for the management, however, that a great number of the patients are from time to time released as cured, and the re-admittals represent a very small percentage indeed. It is my opinion that as an officer working the institution with a view to curing the patients, Dr. Montgomery has been a very great success indeed.

Mr. O'Loughlen: A lot of the patients do not think so.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): They are not very reliable judges. In regard to the Medical

and Health Department there is a slight increase of expenditure. This is due to the opening of the Wooroloo sanatorium. We expect to have that building complete by the end of the year or the beginning of the next year, and with that we will be able to attend to something over 300 patients. Of course a number of the patients are at present being treated in other hospitals, so it is not wholly a new expense, although a great deal of it is new. We also anticipate some expenditure in connection with the maternity hospital which is to be provided at Subiaco. We anticipate starting work on that hospital almost at any time. As soon as the children now there are removed to the new depôt of the State Children's Department the work will be put in hand, and we trust that the hospital will be open very early in the new year.

Mr. Robinson: Have you made provision for it?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): No; how can we estimate something we have not got?

Mr. Robinson: That applies to the whole of the Estimates.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Of course, the hon. member does not know too much about Estimates.

Mr. Robinson: Well, do not discuss me; discuss the hospital.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I do not want to have anything to say to that person.

Mr. Robinson: Why cannot the man behave himself?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): In making provision we cannot possibly put down an item for a hospital not yet built, but in making up our estimates for nurses, stores, and requisites we have assumed that something will have to be expended on that hospital.

Mr. Allen: How much?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): In my opinion, sufficient. I have not exactly gone into what we have allowed.

Mr. Allen: I see; you do not know anything about it.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): No. We have also taken into consideration the fact that expenditure may be necessary under the amending Health Bill, which I trust will be passed, expenditure in hospitals for treating venereal cases, and also in larger subsidies to medical officers who will be compelled to attend to these cases if the Bill is passed. There is only one other department I desire to say a few words on, namely, that of the police. In this department, notwithstanding that very material increases have been made in the men's pay, the general increase has not gone on as it might have been expected to.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why is that?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): There has been better administration.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Because the Commissioner has refused to fill vacancies long overdue?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Because there have been economies effected and better administration instituted. For instance, on the question of stores, I would point out that stores were not properly checked previously. If a station was started, certain stores were put there that might not be required and would remain there practically forever and eventually be wasted. There is now a better system of checking the stores and bringing them from stations where they are not wanted and using them where they are required. There is also an improvement in regard to the supply of clothing, and there has been a fair saving effected there. The regulation is that a man shall be supplied with uniforms when required. This worked into a system by which the men required them at given intervals, say twice a year. It has been found, however, that they do not require them as frequently as that. If men do require the uniforms twice a year they get them. If their clothes are good they do not get them. As a matter of fact they used to get new overcoats at the rate of one in every year, and in some cases men had five or six of these

overcoats which were all in good condition. Policemen's overcoats can be seen all about the place and they are being sold for a few shillings. In cases where this sort of thing has been going on the leakage has been stopped, and this has practically made up for the increases which have been given to the officers of the force.

Mr. Foley: If the constables wanted more than one suit a year, under the present system, could they get them?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): They can get uniforms when required. The regulations do not specify any particular time. There is one other remark I have to make, and that is in regard to the police force.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What check has the Minister on the question as to when uniforms are required?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The department generally use their own eyes.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Can the Commissioner see from here to Wyndham to ascertain what uniforms are required?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I would point out that the Commissioner has inspectors in various parts of the State to attend to this business. When we introduced the system of reducing the hours of work and pay of Government servants by 7.89 per cent., members of the police force were brought under it. Almost all of the Government employees were able to get their time off, but the members of the police force have had their pay stopped and have had no time off, because it has not been possible to give it. I want to express my appreciation at the loyal manner in which they have come to the assistance of the Government in that regard. The police could absolutely have broken that down if they had stood out, but they realised that the position was a difficult and serious one, and they accepted it practically without complaint. I want to say this seriously, that when the time comes for us to put this right, we should give them what is their due and make up to them the equivalent for these hours.

I have, I know, launched these Estimates on a sea of trouble, but I ask hon. members to treat them leniently.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [4.4]: The Honorary Minister has, in his usual optimistic style, presented the Estimates of this very important and large department clothed in that rosy tinge with which he is accustomed to clothe everything. All the garden is fair. Even the discourtesy, which has been once again meted out by this Chamber to another place by its Messages being ignored until too late, is passed over with a brief explanation which does not, in my opinion, carry conviction to most members of this Chamber.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): That is a question for the House to decide.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Honorary Minister says he was too busy with other important work to attend to the Message. What has that to do with the request that we should consider this Message? Once before, hon. members will bear in mind a Message of this description was sent down to ask that the Minister for Works should be permitted to give evidence before a select committee in another place. Messages from the Council are continually being ignored by this Chamber.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why is it the House did not take action?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The House would not take action unless the Government first did so. The Government control the business of the House. The hon. gentleman ought not to display his ignorance in that way. The House cannot do anything except to put the Government out if there is a sufficient majority to do so.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: They can move the adjournment.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is a discourtesy meted out to another place, and now we have had this repeated. It is evident that the Government do not intend that the House should even consider the Message. I do not care what the Message is that comes from another place.

It ought to receive consideration at the hands of this Chamber and should receive prompt consideration even if we decline to accede to the request.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Another place had no right to appoint the committee at all.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister had the option of declining to give evidence if he did not desire to do so. I protest that we are not dealing with these Messages as we ought to do, and we are showing discourtesy which the Chamber should not show to the other Chamber of the Parliament of this State. The Honorary Minister says that he considered that he should give some explanation to the House first before he gave any evidence on a matter of this sort, namely the question of the retirement of Mr. Gale. Why did he not give a statement to the House?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The House did not want it, apparently.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Because members did not ask for it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the Honorary Minister thinks that an explanation is due he does not give it because he says the House did not ask for it, and that no one moved a motion that it should be given. Of course no member would move a motion. The Minister comes to the conclusion that an explanation to the Chamber is necessary and on such a question it is certainly due from him to make it.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It was not necessary at all.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I contend that the Honorary Minister should have made this explanation there and then and that this was the proper course to pursue. He says, after making that amazing statement—for it is an amazing statement coming from a Minister of the Crown—that his motive in retiring this officer was because the Appeal Board had raised the emolument fixed for the position.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I am prepared to stand to that, too.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Are we justified in accepting that as a satisfactory explanation of the apparently high-handed action of the Honorary Minister? He says, "I am the best judge. I am best qualified to judge of the value of the department." It is not a question of the occupant of the position which is classified; it is a question of the work which is classified. Here is a gentleman who occupied the position of Chief Protector of Aborigines. It was the position that was classified and not the man.

Mr. Foley: The board do not make a practice of taking the position into consideration.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They classified the position.

Mr. Foley: The Appeal Board do in some instances, but not in this.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Because the Honorary Minister, for some reason or other, has got a set upon the gentleman who has been retired he says the Appeal Board are all wrong.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I want to save £1,000 a year.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He surely never heard of a court or a judge putting forward such a position as this.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I am prepared to stand to it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is not much standing to it about the matter; the Honorary Minister is sitting to it. He then switches off the Appeal Board and comes to the question of Exeter Hall. I was wondering what Exeter Hall had to do with his action towards a select committee which was appointed in the Legislative Council and the refusal of this Chamber to entertain or consider a Message on the question with which they were dealing. The position is absurd, unparalleled in its uncouthness. I venture to think that the Honorary Minister has again made this branch of Parliament, at all events, the laughing stock of the whole of Australia. He went on to say he was not going to

consult his under secretary. Why should he? If his under secretary does not agree with him, he says he will do as he likes and will stick to his own judgment; and if he did agree with his under secretary he asks what would be the good of his asking the advice of that gentleman. Is the Honorary Minister going to get any efficiency or loyalty from his officers under such a system?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I am getting efficiency.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If he treats them in this ungentlemanly manner how will he get loyalty from them? He is entitled to get the advice of his permanent officers, and when he has received it it is his duty to give it due consideration. Surely there are some questions upon which the Honorary Minister will benefit from advice given to him by his officers, if he permitted his under secretaries and other officers to put certain aspects of cases before him. He says outright, however, that he does not care twopence for the advice or the opinion of the under secretary belonging to this department. That is an insult I think to the officer in question, which ought to be resented.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: He only said so on this particular question.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It does not matter on what question he makes a statement of this sort.

Mr. Foley: When the hon. member was Minister, was he always prepared to take the advice of his under secretary?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Most decidedly not, but I always consulted them and weighed their recommendations very carefully.

The Premier: Not always.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I did not say I would not consult them.

The Premier: I say the hon. member did not always consult them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I always consulted them except on matters of policy. The select committee in question has sat and has issued its report on the retirement of Mr. Gale. I do not profess to know whether this officer is as the Honorary Minister has branded him

this afternoon, or whether he is as the select committee has found in its report, which has been issued on the evidence brought before it. It does appear to me that, when a select committee sits and brings in a report of this description, it is entitled to some consideration at the hands of the Government and that its recommendations should be taken into account. I understand that its members recommend that Mr. Gale should be reinstated.

The Premier: I do not propose to take any notice of this.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course not. The Premier did not do so on a previous occasion. He proposes to go his own sweet way, no matter what evidence is brought before him, what inquiries are held, or what conclusion is arrived at. It is this sort of spirit, which has been in evidence for the last few years, which has brought the country to the disastrous position in which it now finds itself. He will not seek advice from those who know, but he will go to outsiders for advice rather than to men who have the best interests of the State at heart. In that way he lands himself in difficulties and the State with him. Unfortunately he has not to carry the responsibility of this himself. The people of the State have to pay the piper in the long run.

The Premier: Members of another place do not represent the people of the State. We represent the people of the State through this Chamber.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not think the hon. member who interjects represents the people of the State.

The Premier: I represent a bigger section of the people than does the hon. member.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier represents the Trades Hall and the unions, and he represents them very badly.

The Premier: I did not fix up a seat for myself, anyhow.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier has made up many secret contracts. It is advisable that he should look into his own acts and clear away the mystery concerning these secret contracts. It is

not a question of a member's seat. That is neither here nor there.

The Premier: I think the hon. member fixed up one once.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No.

The Premier: Did he not?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No.

The Premier: His memory is failing him.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It will take the Premier all his time to defend his acts of omission and commission without insinuating anything against me. If he has anything to bring forward, let him bring it forward publicly. I know if they could have downed me they would have done it long ago. With regard to the retirement of this officer who has been attacked unfairly by the Honorary Minister this afternoon, condemned as a loafer, a waster and a ne'er-do-well—

Mr. Foley: He never used the word "waster."

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Honorary Minister implied that. Whatever may be said as to this officer's ability we have to remember that he filled the position for 21 years, and I should be sorry in an official capacity to use towards any officer terms such as those we heard this afternoon from the Honorary Minister. The select committee brought in their report and they came to the conclusions which were arrived at on the evidence put before them. To sum up the whole thing they concluded that the Government, on the advice of the Honorary Minister, acted illegally when they dismissed Mr. Gale, and that conclusion was come to on the evidence of no less a person than the Crown Solicitor (Mr. Sayer). I venture to assert that the Minister ought to have consulted the under secretary, but of course he said that was unnecessary. The under secretary, although not having any personal knowledge of the proper treatment of aborigines, might have been able and positively would have pointed out the illegality of the action which the Honorary Minister intended to embark upon. That in itself would have been something to have gained. But no, Ministers are laws unto themselves and on all occasions they do not care a rap about

the laws of the State. In this case the Honorary Minister determined to get rid of an officer who had served the State for 21 years.

Mr. Foley: Did you read the opinion of the brainy man on that select committee. There was one there who dis-sented from everything.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then that must be a proof of brains. The summing up of this committee is very amusing because they gave the reasons for the action of the Honorary Minister as they appeared to them, and one of them was that the Honorary Minister himself could equally as well look after the interests of the aborigines. After saying that there should be in charge of this department an officer who has full knowledge of the habits, customs and distribution of the aborigines, and that Mr. Gale has these qualifications, they declare that one of the reasons why he was retired was that the Honorary Minister thought he could quite well fill the position himself. That, of course, is the opinion that the Honorary Minister holds of his own ability, but it is not convincing, and if that were the reason for the retirement of Mr. Gale, then I think the Honorary Minister should have given evidence of his ability in that direction.

The Premier: Why all this fuss about retiring an officer who was highly paid?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If a man who is paid a low salary and is dismissed under similar circumstances there will be just as much fuss.

The Premier: If he is not attached to the Weld Club nothing is ever said about it.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Gale is not a member of the Weld Club.

Mr. Foley: I have never seen him there.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know either whether any members of the select committee are attached to the Weld Club, and even if they are, what on earth would that have to do with this inquiry? It is rather an unfair insinuation on the part of the Premier. He is always making these unfair insinuations without any evidence to support them. And is that

any reason why another place should be flouted.

The Premier: It is not their business.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is their business. They have the same powers in the legislation of this State and the Premier knows it from bitter experience, and he is learning more about it the longer he holds his position. I do enter a protest on this matter, not on account of the manner in which Mr. Gale was retired, but more on account of the fact that the select committee which was appointed by another place was treated discourteously by the Honorary Minister. In connection with the Colonial Secretary's Department the Honorary Minister referred to the gaols administration and of course the Comptroller of Prisons comes under that. The gentleman who fills this position also acts as the Honorary Minister's under secretary. He is the gentleman who was ignored altogether on the matter of Mr. Gale's retirement. I want now to refer to a little matter about which I asked some questions, namely, the incarceration of the person Hughes at Kalgoorlie instead of sending him to Fremantle to serve his sentence for gold stealing. I asked several questions on this subject and I got perfectly frank replies from the Attorney General who, of course, was only giving the replies provided by the Comptroller General, I presume, in the ordinary course. It had come to my knowledge that this man Hughes who, after a very lengthy existence on the goldfields, was, with others, convicted of gold stealing, was held nominally in custody in the gaol at Kalgoorlie instead of being sent to Fremantle, which is the ordinary course to pursue if a sentence exceeds more than one or two months.

Mr. Foley: The regulations do not provide for that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They do not provide for a man to be kept up there, but the Comptroller has gone outside his authority and power in this case. We know what an immense sensation the gold stealing business created throughout Western Australia and in the Eastern

States six or seven years ago. Large quantities of gold were alleged to have been stolen and there was great difficulty in getting a conviction against offenders, so much so that special officers were told off to endeavour to put this criminal practice down.

Mr. Foley: And special legislation.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And special expense was put on the mines in order that the department might not suffer injury.

Mr. Foley: And they made a criminal of every man who worked underground on a mine.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know about that, but it had a good effect.

Mr. Foley: It was un-British anyhow.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: One of the arch offenders was this man named Hughes. He was not taking the gold from underground. He had nominally a mine under his control and a plant on that mine and, he was supposed to be working his own property. Really he was in the position of receiver, thus engaging the men who were underground and who annexed the gold.

Mr. Foley: There was nothing proved in that case that he was getting gold from men who were working underground. Why bring that in? Be fair to the men working underground.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I suppose the gold comes from underground.

Mr. Foley: I want to defend the men who are working underground.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The gold must have come from underground. Does the hon. member think that Hughes caught it in the atmosphere? Undoubtedly Hughes was a receiver of stolen gold. Does the hon. member say he did not get it from underground?

Mr. Foley: I do.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well that is not the point. The point is that Hughes was convicted and he was sentenced, after a long trial and an appeal to the Full Court, to six months' imprisonment with hard labour. The evidence was so conclusive that, though the man was well defended, the Warden, in giving his judg-

ment, said it was much too grave an offence to deal with by way of a fine and he had no alternative but to commit Hughes to gaol. Then I asked some questions to find out how this person was being treated. It was rumoured that he had his own bedstead and that he had a room to himself, and that he had practically an unlimited amount of freedom.

The Minister for Mines: The report of the gaoler does not bear out that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I want to show the necessity for some further inquiry and I am going to show that if the Minister does his duty, and if he has that vast intelligence which he claims for himself, and that grasp of all the departments which he has told us about, then he will perhaps promptly order an investigation into this matter. I asked those questions and was answered—

This prisoner has been permitted by the Comptroller General to serve his sentence in Kalgoorlie on the grounds of ill-health, but otherwise the conditions of his sentence have not been varied.

I was satisfied with that answer for the time being, although I had my doubts because so many people had mentioned the matter to me. Yet I accepted the answer and the report which was subsequently laid on the Table of the House by the Attorney General, although one could not help remembering that this report was written by the very man who had charge of the prisoner Hughes, who is alleged to be receiving differential treatment. If anyone reads the report he will see it is borne out on the face of it that he was simply defending his own position and not defending it too well. His report says—

Re George Hughes not being treated as an ordinary prisoner and occupying room instead of cell—I would respectfully point out that there are three large cells in the Kalgoorlie gaol, in which no more than five persons are to be placed. These three cells have been occupied by prisoners for the last two or three months. Sometimes I have had to take prisoners who are not sentenced, and put them in these cells to

make room for prisoners being locked up through the night by the police and, as regards the female prisoners, at different times I have had to place two or three women in the children's lock-up, owing to the scarcity of room in the female portion of the gaol;

I do not know what that has to do with the question. The report continues—

also, at times I have had to put one or two of the well-conducted male prisoners in the same place where George Hughes is now. The cells are at the present time full, there being 13 male prisoners under sentence.

If the cells were all full, surely the authorities should have been glad to have carried out the warrant of commitment and sent this prisoner to the Fremantle gaol where there is more room. The report proceeds—

As regards being interviewed by friends, the first few days Hughes was seen by people connected with the business with which he was connected: after that he was allowed to see visitors every Wednesday afternoon, the same as other prisoners, but no more. He is not doing hard labour. Hughes is let out at 6 a.m. to get the fire lighted and get everything ready for breakfast at 9 a.m. After breakfast Hughes, up to 5 p.m., has been employed in remaking the footpaths, by picking up the old metal and placing new metal and blindings, and making the place in good order; also has been picking the coir of the old beds and refilling new covers; also doing work at the stables (police) and generally keeping the place clean. *Re* freedom of action, Hughes has no more freedom of action than other prisoners who are employed outside the gaol doing anything that is required. I would also like to state that Hughes also has been keeping the gaol records written up.

Then the official goes a little bit too far and says—

There are prisoners whom I would not think of letting outside the gaol gate, because it would be very easy for them to get away, as I cannot always be with them to watch them.

Evidently Hughes was let outside. He was one who was allowed this freedom.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Did not he go to the races one day?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The report continues—

Therefore I get the men whom I can trust and know that they would not attempt to do so.

The Premier: They do that in every prison.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The concluding paragraph of the report states—

Re using his own bedding—it is absolutely untrue. The bedding is all gaol bedding.

The Comptroller General added to the report the following minute—

This report comprises my answer already submitted, and it does not require either altering or adding to, as far as I am concerned.

With regard to the bedding, there is an equivocation because I never asked anything about it. I asked whether he used his own bedstead, a very different thing. I understand Hughes has the use of the gaoler's office and that his bedstead is there, that it was taken in for his own use, although, perhaps, as the report says, he uses the gaol bedding. This is only leading up to what I wish now to draw attention to.

Mr. Foley: The Comptroller of Prisons has ratified that report.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then the Comptroller must be set straight in order to get a full inquiry.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I will straighten him up. Leave him to me.

Mr. Foley: Some of us might do it on the Estimates, yet.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The points in that report are that the gaol is crowded and I ask, why has Hughes been kept there? His health has been pleaded, but cannot he be looked after better at Fremantle, where there is a hospital attached to the gaol, than in the gaoler's quarters at Kalgoorlie?

Mr. Foley: Do not you think it is better to treat a prisoner leniently than to

act as some of your party did to Hopkins, allow him to die in the Fremantle gaol?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement.

Mr. Foley: I know it is true and will not.

Mr. Taylor: You will have to withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. Foley: I saw the man dying and know.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. Foley: According to the Standing Orders—

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to withdraw unreservedly.

Mr. Foley: I withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to rise in his place and withdraw.

Mr. Foley: I withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: I have been most gracious and considerate and have allowed interruptions and interjections which I certainly ought not to have allowed, and I am only asking the hon. member to comply with the Standing Order which is very explicit, namely that when an interjection of that kind is objected to, it must be withdrawn. I expect to receive the support and consideration of hon. members when I ask that the Standing Orders be complied with.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The prisoner Hughes was kept at Kalgoorlie because it was understood he was in ill-health. I want to know what doctor certified to his condition and whether the certificate definitely stated he was too ill to be conveyed to the Fremantle Gaol. It is inconceivable to me that a man who, according to the report of the gaoler, could have a considerable amount of liberty and was employed to pick up the footpaths and work from 5 o'clock in the morning till 6 o'clock at night, is in such a state of ill-health that he could not, in accordance with the warrant of commitment, be taken to the Fremantle gaol where he ought to have gone in the first instance. The gaoler's report says Hughes is not doing

hard labour. Is there any certificate to say that he is incapable of doing hard labour in accordance with the sentence? The sentence was six months imprisonment with hard labour. Hughes evidently has a certain amount of freedom because he gets outside the gate and can be trusted not to run away. I have referred already to the fact that he has his own bedstead in the gaoler's office, which is not that portion of the gaol premises in which ordinary prisoners are incarcerated.

Mr. Thomas: You seem to get special satisfaction in pursuing this poor unfortunate man.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have special satisfaction in seeing that justice is meted out to all alike. Together with this man Hughes, who was the prime mover in this gold receiving episode, were convicted two other men, named Veale and Bozin. Bozin was sentenced to five months' hard labour and was promptly sent off to the Fremantle gaol to serve his sentence. Veale was incarcerated at Kalgoorlie to serve his sentence of two months but he had not the right to the gaoler's office. He was put behind the bars in the ordinary cells and had to conform with the ordinary routine of the prisoners kept there.

Mr. Thomas: Is not this man Hughes ill?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is no evidence at all of his being ill.

Mr. Foley: The report says he is ill.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not want the Committee to rely upon the evidence which has been given to me, hearsay evidence, I admit, but if members take the *Sun* of the 10th October they will find an article dealing with this case. It gives some specific statements which I think we are entitled to take into consideration, and which fully warrant me in demanding from the Honorary Minister that further inquiry should be made into the matter. This has become an absolute scandal on the goldfields and I am surprised that members who profess to so well represent the goldfields con-

situencies have not already moved in the matter. This article states—

The wonder is that the questions have not been asked before, for the treatment of Hughes under sentence has been a common topic of conversation—it may even be said, a common scandal—for some considerable time past. In fact, several complaints have been lodged in this office, and the matter has been under investigation for some weeks. Briefly, the questions ask if it is true that, whereas Bozin, sentenced to five months for the same offence is serving his time in Fremantle gaol, and whereas Veale sentenced to two months for the same offence did his term “behind the bars” in Kalgoorlie gaol, Hughes is allowed to occupy a room instead of a cell, using his own bedstead, can be interviewed by friends and does no hard labour, is practically living as a boarder instead of a prisoner, and is enjoying freedom of action quite unknown to other prisoners. It is safe to say that, had those questions been put to any man in Hannans-street a week or two back, they would everyone have been answered in the affirmative with the additions that Hughes has never yet been made to wear the prison garb, that he can obtain beer and other luxuries when he wants them, that an occasional game of poker with his friends is not beyond his reach, and that the wife of a prisoner, doing time “behind the bars,” expressed her opinion of the differential treatment meted out to her husband and to Hughes, to the lockup-keeper, and in no measured terms. Whether all these allegations are true or not we cannot say.

The Premier: That is the usual attitude adopted by that section of the Press.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is rushing in where angels fear to tread. He obviously has not read the article, for it goes on to say—

Nor do we know whether any alteration has been made in the treatment of Hughes since the questions were asked in the House, but this we do know—

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that a *Sun* reporter paid a visit to the lockup about mid-day on Friday in the absence of the regular lockup-keeper, and was afforded every facility to go through the establishment. The ordinary inmates at that time were “behind the bars” eagerly waiting for their mid-day rations, but George Hughes was found seated at a well-appointed table in a comfortable room with a female companion. Both were enjoying a hearty meal, and Hughes was discussing also a bottle of Union beer. Hughes’s companion, the *Sun* man was informed by the lockup-keeper, was also a prisoner, but—. It may be added that Hughes was in ordinary civilian clothes, and those who have frequently seen him about the precincts of the lockup, watering the garden and so on, have never seen him otherwise attired.

Surely that ought to be sufficient to cause some further inquiry, before accepting the report of the man who is blamed for meting out this differential treatment to prisoners under his charge. The *Sun*’s report continues—

The report of the gaoler in answer to the questions in the House as published in Friday’s *Miner*, has been the topic of very general conversation, and the opinion is freely expressed that whatever may be the case now, Hughes certainly used not to occupy a large cell with other prisoners, but that he had a bed with sheets, pillows and the usual bedding in the room in which the *Sun* man saw him enjoying his lunch. As we have said, we cannot vouch for the truth of all the allegations floating round of our own personal knowledge, but the very prevalence of those reports and the circumstantial details with which they are accompanied, render it imperative that a searching inquiry into their truth or otherwise should at once be instituted. If they are not true, then the lockup-keeper is a much maligned man, and his character should be at once cleared. If they are true, then those responsible should be brought

to book and made to show by what authority they differentiate between the treatment of prisoners under sentence. The extraordinary system that prevails in connection with the Kalgoorlie gaol simply lends itself to abuses such as are alleged to have occurred in connection with Hughes. In the first place, the gaol is no place for long-sentence prisoners. It must be bad for any man to be cooped up for any term longer than a month in such a limited space with practically nothing to do. It must be bad for him at any time—bad physically, mentally, and morally—and it must be trebly bad in the hot weather. Then, again, it is not right that prisoners awaiting trial should be compelled to associate with men under sentence. Lastly, the gaol—as distinct from the lock-up—is under no local supervision whatever, except the perfunctory supervision of visiting justices. The gaoler is a constable who by virtue of his office as lockup-keeper becomes gaoler when a man under sentence is handed over to his charge. As lockup-keeper he is answerable to his superior officers in the police force in respect to prisoners in the lock-up, but as gaoler he is responsible to no one in respect to his treatment of sentenced men save only to the Comptroller. He receives his orders from the Comptroller, and he reports direct to the Comptroller. The local inspector of police and the police officers under him are absolutely powerless, have no say whatever in the conduct of the gaol, though one of their own subordinates is in charge of it. Such an incongruous system will not bear a moment's investigation. It is bad, radically bad, rotten. It lends itself to abuse and to corruption. If any proof is needed of its utter incongruity, it is shown by the fact that when questions are asked in the House reflecting on the treatment of a prisoner in charge of a gaoler, the Comptroller or the Attorney General sends for a report, not to that gaoler's superior officer, or to some other independent source of information, but to the gaoler himself. He asks a man to

report on his own conduct. He has no other option under this ludicrous system. The point needs no labouring, the farcicality of the procedure is obvious at a glance. We need say no more, but we sincerely trust that immediate steps will be taken to probe this matter of the alleged preferential treatment of prisoner George Hughes to the bottom, and at the same time to rectify the very glaring incongruities in connection with the existing Kalgoorlie gaol system.

The Premier: Do you agree with the statement in that report as to the system being rotten?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If what is stated in the report is true, the system is rotten.

The Premier: It is the system that you inaugurated.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The system we inaugurated is not carried out.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, and I will prove that in one act. Again the Premier has rushed in where angels fear to tread, and again he will come down with a thud. Here is evidence that the man was permitted to entertain his lady friends. He had a lady friend, also a prisoner, having lunch with him when the *Sun* reporter visited the gaol on Friday last. Let me draw the Premier's attention to the Prisons Act which he ignores, but which, so far as I know, was never ignored in our time. I am not giving the whole of the evidence now; but this evidence, as it appears to me, is for the benefit of the House and for the benefit of the Government. If the Honorary Minister is so stupid and so pig-headed that he will not take notice—

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I have told you I will make inquiry.

The Premier: I think that remark of the leader of the Opposition is offensive.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then of course the Honorary Minister must bear the responsibility—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Responsibility of the acts of his subordinate officers.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I have not taken objection.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I daresay the Honorary Minister deserves all the compliments I can pour upon him. The Premier says by his attitude that it is good enough to have prisoners entertaining their lady friends.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Such a thing ought not to be permitted under any Government, and it was not permitted under our Government. Section 26 of the Prisons Act says—

In every prison containing both male and female prisoners the females shall be imprisoned in separate buildings or separate parts of the same building in such manner, in so far as practicable, as to prevent their seeing, conversing, or holding any intercourse with the males.

Yet here is a prisoner sentenced to six months' hard labour enjoying all the conveniences of the gaoler's office and having as his companion a female prisoner, who enjoys a luncheon with him. I do not wish to labour the question. This is not an attack upon the Government, but an attack upon the loose way in which the department is controlled. I think the Comptroller General of Prisons ought to be told that when a man's conduct is called in question, then, although the man has a perfect right to be afforded an opportunity of answering the charge, yet the inquiry ought to be made by an independent person. The warden himself might have been called upon to report in this particular case, instead of a report being obtained from the lockup-keeper. I believe some members of this Committee have a knowledge of the position. I believe one or more members of this Chamber have visited Hughes in the gaol at Kalgoorlie, and know he is being treated preferentially and not as an ordinary prisoner; know, in other words, that the sentence of the court is being flouted. I hope the Honorary Minister will be as good as his word, although it is given in his usual jocular manner. I trust the

Honorary Minister will cause a thorough inquiry to be made, and I hope the Premier, too, will see that a thorough inquiry is made. The matter has been taken up by the public of Kalgoorlie, as evidenced by this newspaper article. I do not think the *Sun* would print statements as the evidence of its own reporter unless there was foundation for such statements. The one portion of this article which gives the direct evidence of the reporter who visited the gaol is quite sufficient basis for inquiry.

The Premier: I am not questioning that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier goes on in a happy-go-lucky style saying, practically, "It does not matter a hang; good enough for the prisoner if he can have these liberties." That is the style I deprecate. It is evidence that the Premier does not realise the responsibilities of his position. I will conclude my remarks on this matter by pointing out that a great deal of expenditure has been borne by the State, and also by those interested in the mining industry, for the purpose of putting down gold stealing. For years past many thousands of pounds have been expended. It is a most difficult thing, as hon. members know, to get convictions for gold stealing; and I do think that when a conviction has been obtained the order of the court and the terms of the warrant of commitment ought to be carried out, and ought not to be relaxed in the slightest degree. With regard to the sub-departments in these Estimates, we shall have an opportunity of touching them as we go along. It has not been customary to deliver long orations on the introduction of the Colonial Secretary's Estimates, seeing that the Minister has generally been a member of another place. I did, however, feel it incumbent upon me, even at the risk of taking up a considerable portion of the time of the Committee this afternoon, to reply to the few remarks the Honorary Minister let fall in regard to the retirement of Mr. Gale and the treatment given by this House to the Message in that connection from another place. I also felt bound to call attention to what is evi-

dently a very serious state of affairs as regards this person Hughes at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [4.57]: I did not intend to say anything on the general discussion of the Colonial Secretary's Estimates, and I would not have spoken except for certain statements made by the Honorary Minister. I wish to enter my emphatic protest against the methods adopted by the Honorary Minister in the administration of the department which he controls. I refer more particularly to the sub-department of the aborigines. The treatment meted out to that sub-department since the Honorary Minister had control of it, is certainly not creditable to the Government. It goes without saying that the people and the Government of this State owe a duty to the aboriginal race. I protest, as I protested last year, against the exceptionally shabby treatment which the Government see fit to deal out to the aborigines missions. When Western Australia was granted its Constitution, a duty was cast on us by the Imperial Government to provide a sum of at least £10,000 per annum for the benefit of the aborigines.

The Premier: But that does not mean that a gift is to be made of that sum to the Chief Protector of Aborigines to do as he likes with.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I will come presently to the Chief Protector of Aborigines.

The Premier: The late Chief Protector of Aborigines took up the attitude that the sum of £10,000 was his to do with as he liked.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It was impressed on the people of Western Australia, before they were granted their Constitution, that they must provide for the aborigines of this State. The minimum provision under the Constitution Act was £10,000.

The Premier: What has been the expenditure?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I know it has been a great deal more than that.

The Premier: Eighteen thousand pounds more than that.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: And even still more than that in some years. I only wish to emphasise the fact that the provision in the Constitution Act for the expenditure of £10,000 per annum shows the importance of the duty cast on the Government with regard to the aborigines. If we had started a different system the expenditure could have been a great deal less and the aborigines better cared for to-day; but the expenditure has been worked up to too high a standard altogether and that is the position we find to-day, therefore we ought to meet it. I said that the expenditure is too great, but the system being as it is we must be fair to that system and the position created by that system. After a good many years of experience and close attention to this department, I came to the conclusion that it was our bounden duty to preserve the aborigines race as far as possible. This is the only State in which any number of the aborigines race still exist; therefore, it devolves on us to preserve that race and believing that I came to the conclusion that by the establishment of missions we were not going in any way to help that race and preserve the lives of the aborigines, because I contend that a great percentage of the aborigines have not brains enough to comprehend learning or religion. It is wasted on them, in fact, it does them a great deal of harm. I came to the conclusion that the aborigines of this State will not live under white men's conditions. I can give no better example than by referring to the New Norein mission. That has been in existence for 70 years and I have never heard one word against the conduct of that mission, in fact, quite to the contrary. I know from my knowledge and from reports that no mission could have been conducted on better and purer lines than that mission has been for the last 70 years. A great deal of money has been expended and the lives of many good men have been given to it, but what has been the result? There is scarcely a full-blooded aborigine within the scope of that mission. That proves that the aborigine will not live and thrive under

white men's conditions. They are differently constituted from the white race but we find that that has not been recognised until now, and when I recognised that position I took other steps. A reserve has been gazetted by the Government of a big track of country in the Kimberleys, millions of acres for the native races. These natives can live there alone as if they were in their native state; but once the country gets stocked up the native herbage is eaten off and the life blood of the aborigine race is destroyed. I, therefore, when Minister, recommended—and it was approved by Cabinet—the reservation of four or five million acres of land, and I give the present Government the credit of having made a class A reserve of it for the aborigine race, and I hope it will always remain such. I believe that is the only way to preserve the aborigine race from extinction. Unfortunately in the past we have adopted a system of missions throughout the State. These missions at the present time are largely populated by half-castes. I found this position in the Kimberleys: there was a large number of half-caste children at large, and if these children had been allowed to grow up in the wilds of Kimberley, in a generation or two we should have a race of practically white people living under the worst aborigine conditions, morally and otherwise. That being so, by my instruction I had these aborigine children, one hundred or two hundred, gathered together and sent to the Beagle Bay and Swan River mission stations. Having placed that burden on the missions it was the bounden duty of the Government not to cut down the grant but to give sufficient money to keep the missions going. The first action I regret on the part of the Honorary Minister in taking charge of this department was to ruthlessly cut down the grants to the missions, and he made the reduction retrospective from the beginning of the financial year. That was unfair treatment to the missions. It was unjust and improper to the aborigines or the half-castes of the State, and the half-castes come under the Aborigines

Act in the same way as the aborigine does. These half-caste children must be kept in the missions until they grow up. I am not speaking of the way in which they should be brought up because I have different ideas from the managers of some of the missions as to how these half-castes should be brought up and taught. The half-caste females do not get a fair chance when they go out into the world, and the only way to keep them until they are married to other aborigines, or to other half-castes, is to put them in the missions. I protest against the action of the Honorary Minister, and although he may not hold the same views that I do of the missions, I ask him to look at the position which has been created for years. These mission people who have borne the burden of the aborigines for the last 70 years, unless they get money elsewhere to support their mission, it means the casting of these half-caste children into the bush again. Some of the native missions, at New Norcia and elsewhere, are in good positions and are able to carry on, but the Beagle Bay mission and the Swan River mission are not in a position to support themselves, and in justice to the aborigines I ask the Minister to see if that state of affairs cannot be altered even at this late hour as far as the finances at the present time will permit. I do not agree, by a very long way, with the administration of the Honorary Minister in regard to the treatment meted out to the late Chief Protector of Aborigines. The Honorary Minister has stated that it was purely for the purpose of economy that Mr. Gale was retired. In effecting economy, one must be fair and just to officers in the departments, and the Honorary Minister was never fair or just in retiring Mr. Gale in the way in which he did. I disagree entirely with the Minister when he said there was no necessity for Mr. Gale because he, the Minister, was an expert on the aborigine question: he knew all about it, and, judging by the remarks made by the Minister last session, no doubt he has an intimate knowledge of the aborigines.

Mr. Male: He will not be there long.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Granted the Minister has this knowledge, I would point out that there is a political head and a permanent head of a department. The political head is there to direct the policy, and he is only there for a few years at most. He is not the expert.

The Minister for Works: If anything goes wrong he takes the blame.

Mr. Bolton: Under which head does retrenchment come?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Honorary Minister has shifted his ground because he has said that the retirement of Mr. Gale was in the interest of economy, but we now find that he says Mr. Neville had little to do and therefore he had to find other work for him. Mr. Neville is an excellent officer, probably there is none better in the service for the position which he holds; but the Minister says that because he had to find something for Mr. Neville to do he had to retire Mr. Gale. The Minister shifted his ground. I interjected when the Honorary Minister was speaking that the position was offered to the Superintendent of Charities, and I find that such was the case because in his minute the Honorary Minister recommended to Cabinet that the Aborigines Department be taken over by the Charities Department to which it properly belonged, and that Mr. Longmore should act as Chief Protector. It was only after the Public Service Commissioner deprecated the retirement of Mr. Gale that the Honorary Minister desired to place Mr. Neville in the position of Chief Protector of Aborigines.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): A very satisfactory arrangement.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is very different from what the Minister states to-day—that he found that Mr. Neville had nothing to do and that he had better retire Mr. Gale so as to give Mr. Neville some work. On the 18th January the Honorary Minister recommended that Mr. Gale be retired and that Mr. Longmore, the Superintendent of Charities, be appointed in his stead. What does the Crown Solicitor say on this matter? Mr.

Sayer was not consulted by the Public Service Commissioner but he was called as a witness before the select committee and he stated that in his opinion Mr. Gale could not be considered an excess officer and he appeared to think that he could not be legally retired under the Public Service Act, he not having committed any offence, being under the statutory age for retirement and his office not having been abolished. The committee was, therefore, of the opinion that Mr. Gale had been illegally retired. Then the finding of the select committee is summed up in this: "your committee therefore consider that the action in retiring Mr. Gale, which they have been appointed to inquire into, is an ill-considered and unjust step, illegally carried into effect, resulting in no saving of sufficient magnitude to justify it, and redounding neither to the credit of the State nor to the efficient administration of the office in question." That is the finding of an unbiased committee.

The Premier: Mr. Sayer says he did not intend to lead the committee to believe that Mr. Gale had been illegally retired.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is a direct contradiction of the committee's report.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Your statement that they are unbiased is hardly borne out.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The last paragraph of the committee's report sums up the whole thing, namely, "It is neither economy, nor does it reflect credit on the Minister or the State." That is really the position. The Honorary Minister complained that Mr. Gale had a secretary. I hold that the Chief Protector of Aborigines should be, not in his office at Perth, but principally in Kimberley.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): He was there once in six years.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: He was there once a year when I was Minister.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): He could have got all his information from the police.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: He set up an entirely different system in regard to the police administration of the aborigines, and by doing so saved the country many thousands a year. The Minister claims that he has made a saving in the department. He states there is a net decrease of £1,800 for the year; but he forgets to state that in last year's Estimates the Moola Bulla station was included in the aborigines' division, whereas it is now in a different section. That station means an expenditure of £4,600 a year, so that, instead of there being a saving of £1,800 a year, as a matter of fact there is an excess expenditure of some £2,000 over that of last year. So much for the supposed economy of the Minister. On behalf of the service generally I wish to enter my emphatic protest against the treatment meted out to the Chief Protector of Aborigines. If this sort of thing continues we will have a very sorry public service indeed. I regret that we have a Public Service Commissioner so weak-kneed as to allow the Chief Protector of Aborigines to be retired in the way he was. We should have an officer who would be a Public Service Commissioner in the spirit intended by the Act. Only last session the Premier said that when the Public Service Commissioner knew the policy of the Government he acted accordingly.

The Premier: I never made any such statement.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I will turn it up in *Hansard* for you.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The Government are in power against the Public Service Commissioner.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Ministers should be powerless to retire the Chief Protector of Aborigines without good cause.

Mr. James Gardiner: I would abolish the lot if I could.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes, if it were in the interests of the country, perhaps, but I say the Public Service Act was ignored on this occasion. I notice with regret that no provision has been made under medical and health for the

long promised maternity hospital in the metropolitan area. There may be some provision made elsewhere, but it is not here.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara—in reply) [5.23]: In respect to the Hughes case, I will ask the Colonial Secretary to make inquiries, and if things are not all right I am pretty sure they will be put right. In reply to the member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in regard to missions, I desire to say that the hon. member, when Minister, certainly handled this question very well. I was agreeably surprised in reading many of his minutes which showed me that he was well ahead in regard to missions. This is what has happened: I hold, as the hon. member holds, that missions in close proximity to towns are altogether undesirable. I gave notice that I intended to remedy that as far as possible. To begin with, I stopped their subsidies, to see what would be done. When it was pointed out to me that the stations at Victoria Park, Midland Junction, and Collie, and the Salvation Army station at Kalgoorlie, had children who had been sent to them by the department, I at once undertook to pay for those children. I have had to pay for them ever since. But I am desirous of abolishing that system, and a station is being started in the Katanning district where we hope to get away from the missions altogether and build up a Government institution to which we can send those children. I am sanguine that we will make a success of that, and then the payment conditions will cease. In regard to the New Norcia mission, I thought the hon. member would have mentioned the fact that I have cut off the subsidy entirely.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: I did not know of it.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I did it because that is a very rich institution. The expenditure on their buildings has been enormous. They published an elaborate pamphlet concerning their institution. If they can do all this they do not require a subsidy.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: To be just to them, they established, entirely at their own expense, the mission at the Drysdale river.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I appreciate the work done by these people, but I do not think it is a fair thing that this institution should have a subsidy when it can get on without one. With regard to the Beagle Bay mission, I have cut that down materially. I did intend to cut out the subsidy altogether, but it was pointed out to me that if I did so some of the natives might possibly want for food. What has taken place at Beagle Bay? The Government have subsidised that place to the extent of £800 a year, in addition to supplying food for the natives. The missionaries came along, and the Government granted them the land free of rent. They have expended over £18,000 on buildings. Mr. Gale went up and reported that the land was absolutely useless, that they could never make a success of it, and in consequence it would always be an expense to the State. He concluded his report by saying he was pleased to see that the children were learning to sing hymns and the National Anthem. I do not think it is right that we should continue to pay subsidies to these institutions. I have had letters from all parts of the North-West on this subject. It is the one upon which I have been complimented more than any other since I have been in office. One man wrote to me about these missions, stating that most of the time was spent in teaching the children to pray, while no time was spent in teaching them to work. I desire that they shall be taught to work and make themselves useful so that they may earn sufficient for their own living. I think, after all, I have treated these missions reasonably well. In regard to the Port George missionaries, I told them last year that I would pay this year, but would not give any more subsidies. I said that if they desired to start properly I would supply them with some cattle. I found afterwards that I could not supply them with cattle, because our station is in the tick-infested

area, whereas their mission is outside that area. To get over the difficulty I gave them £100 worth of stores this year. In my opinion it is the right position to take up. I just want to say a word or two in connection with Mr. Jull's position with regard to Mr. Gale's retirement. We will possibly come to the question again on the items, and by that time I will have a statement here by Mr. Sayer as to what he did say in this connection. So far as Mr. Jull is concerned, he is, in my opinion, taking up the right position. I recommended or suggested the retirement of Mr. Gale. He came and advised me that it was desirable, in his opinion, to have a man in that position who was acquainted with the ways and habits of aborigines. That advice it was his duty to give me. I said that in my opinion it was not necessary to have a man of this description in the position of Chief Protector of Aborigines. He replied that if this was the policy of the Government, that they did not require a man in that position with knowledge of that nature, in those circumstances it was the policy of the Government and that, of course, he could not dictate to them on a question of policy. It only remained for him, then, to make arrangement for the transfer. I am of opinion that Mr. Jull took up the right position. There is this to be said, that many people are under the impression that Mr. Jull's position is one in which he is representing the civil servants, that he should at all times take up the cudgels for the civil servants. If that is to be the case who, in the name of conscience, is going to take up the cudgels for the people? What is wanted in that position, and what the Government must have, is a man to take their side of a question and not that of the civil servants. One might as well put up a McCallum to fix the wages and say that McCallum is representing the manufacturers——

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Who is McCallum?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Or the mine owners, as to say that Mr. Jull in his position represents the civil servants. As a

matter of fact, Mr. Jull is, or he should be, representing the Government, and through the Government, the people. To my knowledge he fills that position reasonably well.

This concluded the general debate on the Colonial Secretary's Estimates; Votes and items discussed as follow:—

Vote—Office of Colonial Secretary.
£31,644:

Item—Under Secretary and Comptroller General of Prisons, £600.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £100.

I feel I am absolutely justified in moving this amendment. This officer has been in the service of the State for a period of 28 years, and was appointed to his present position in 1902. As an officer he has not given satisfactory service to the State. Not dozens, but scores of times I have seen him during hours when he should be engaged in his office, either walking around the streets or on his way home. A few months ago I saw him catching the 10 o'clock train on the way from his home to his office. I hope that a protest against this kind of thing will induce the Minister to take action. If the Minister knows that this is going on and takes no steps to prevent it, he is equally blameable. That officer has no right to be playing golf and meandering about the street when his subordinate officers are doing all the work. If the Public Service Commissioner is not aware that this officer is not giving a fair crack of the whip over his department he should look into the matter. I am not satisfied with the services which this under secretary is rendering to Western Australia.

Mr. George: On a point of order, is it permissible, seeing that we have a Public Service Commissioner and an Appeal Board, for any member to move for a reduction of this particular item?

The Premier: Yes, in the case of any item which is not under a special Act.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing to prevent the hon. member moving for a reduction of this item.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If we want an exhibit of physical proportions or a fashion plate the gentleman I am speaking of would possibly fill the bill, but as an under secretary he is, in my opinion, utterly lacking in his duties. It is a matter of public comment. Anyone going through the City or suburbs will hear this officer spoken of more than any other officer of the department. People have asked how it is that he can enjoy such a splendid position. One gentleman asked him how it was that the under secretary could leave his home at such a late hour in the morning and return so early in the afternoon. He pointed out with some degree of pride that he should be complimented for being able to get through his work in half the time it would take any other under secretary to get through his. If the Minister does not know that this is going on he is not attending to the administration of his department.

Mr. George: The hon. member argues that the office must be overmanned or this gentleman would not be able to do this.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The argument of this officer is that his superior abilities enable him to do this. If the office is overmanned let us cut it down. I protest against this officer meandering about the City in such a fashion as to set a bad example to the rank and file of the public servants.

Mr. Heitmann: He has a long line of distinguished ancestors.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have no personal feeling in the matter; indeed, I do not think I have ever spoken to the officer in question.

Mr. Willmott: If the hon. member had spoken to him he would have found him a decent sort of fellow.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What is he paid for? Other officers of the public service are decent fellows and they earn their salary. I am of opinion that this officer does not earn his salary.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): My opinion is that he is a very capable officer.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Time brings extraordinary changes. It is not long

since the Honorary Minister, who now says that this gentleman is a capable officer, held an entirely different opinion. We can surely insist that this highly paid officer gives the Government a fair deal in regard to the hours he works and the work he does, and to setting a better example to other members of the service in the matter of attendance at his office.

Mr. FOLEY : I agree with the member for Forrest that it is an economic fallacy to employ highly paid officers who are not giving the State an adequate return for the money they receive. I would like to see the Estimates compiled in a different way. I do not know how much this officer receives for his position of under secretary and how much for that of Comptroller General of Prisons. If I knew that I should be in a better position to say what portion of his salary I should like to see cut down.

The Premier : He does not get anything as Comptroller of Prisons.

Mr. FOLEY : Then why is it on the Estimates ?

The Premier : A man can have three or four titles.

Mr. FOLEY : The Government are misleading the House. Wherever we go in the City we hear the name of this gentleman mentioned, and we hear also that he has a very good position. I had the honour, with the Premier, of meeting him one night at a civil service dinner, and I never heard a more violent party speech in my life than that which was delivered by the gentleman in question, and when the Premier rose to reply he was at a loss to know whether he was going to move a vote of thanks to him, or to reply on behalf of the Government. That gentleman told the gathering that he was placed in the service under conditions that some people could not get into the service under at the present time, and I also heard Sir John Forrest state that it was he who placed the gentleman in question there, and that he was glad that he had done so. Then in the very next breath they went on to talk about spoils to the victors. He even went to the extent of criticising the Government about opening meat

shops, and he practically insulted the Premier.

Hon. J. D. Connolly : Where did this take place ?

Mr. FOLEY : At a civil service dinner. After seeing the gentleman in question walking from the railway station to his office, that is if he succeeds in getting his early 10.30 a.m. train, the dignity with which he waves his stick would be the only thing that would impel me not to vote against the reduction of his salary. There are men in the service who earn their salaries, and there are men who are not paid enough for the work they do. But there are also those employed whose services could well be dispensed with. The second item on these Estimates provides for an increase of £318 for clerks. If there is to be this increase then I reckon the gentleman who is supposed to supervise that office should earn some of that money.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : The member for Forrest has adopted a very improper attitude on this item. The Minister who controls the Colonial Secretary's Department is not in this House.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister) : I am here ; it is alright.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : I think I am correct in saying that the gentleman whom the member for Forrest wants to have a sly dig at is the Colonial Secretary, but his action is highly improper.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Well, what is the proper attitude ?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : It is not the proper attitude to attack a Minister who is not in this House.

Mr. O'Loughlen : That is a reflection against the Honorary Minister.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : The very action of the member for Forrest in moving for a reduction of the under secretary's salary is a reflection against the Honorary Minister. If the under secretary's services are not worth the salary he receives the Minister has no right to leave him there. But it is extremely unfair that an officer should be attacked at all, and, in regard to this particular officer, from the experience I have had of him while holding

the portfolio of Colonial Secretary I can say nothing but good of him. I always found him to be a very loyal and capable officer.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He supplied the brains that you did not possess.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Then that is a good argument in favour of an increase instead of a reduction in his salary. The member for Forrest tells us that this officer is frequently seen out of his office.

Mr. O'Loughlen: My complaint is that he will not leave his home in good time.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The position of Comptroller of Prisons is no sinecure, and it often takes him out of his office. Moreover it is in the interests of his department that he should not devote the whole of his time to the office. The fact must not be overlooked that there are sub-departments and branches scattered all over the State. This officer, although he may arrive at his office late in the morning, is very frequently found there at 7 and 8 o'clock at night.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It is my intention to oppose the amendment, but not because of the reasons advanced by the member for Perth. It is not advisable in the interests of the service that a responsible officer should be seen walking about the streets at all hours of the day. Such a thing must certainly interfere with the discipline of the service. But to reduce the officer's salary is not the way to voice an objection. The matter should be discussed in a proper manner on a motion, and, if he is not carrying out his duties in the way that they should be carried out, he should be removed from his office altogether. There must be an under secretary in this department, and if the position is worth £600—and every member is agreed that the position is worth that money—we must pay that salary. If we cut down the salary this officer may refuse to continue in his position. In that case, we will have to appoint another, and may get a gentleman with any amount of ability and with sufficient vigour to work from 9 o'clock in the morning till 6 o'clock in the evening, notwithstanding which he will have to be

content with the reduced salary. I suggest that the hon. member withdraw the amendment.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I endorse the remarks of the last speaker. The position of Under-Secretary and Comptroller General of Prisons has been classified at £600. In considering that salary the question of the officer's competence is of no importance to us. If the officer has proved himself to be incompetent or lazy it is the duty of the Public Service Commissioner to deal with him. However I have known this officer for 30 years, and I have always found him to be thoroughly up to date in his work. For any information regarding his department one can safely go to that officer.

The Premier: He knows where to go to get it.

Mr. George: Whom do you want the billet for?

The Premier: We would not put you into it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The question of who appointed this officer in the first place has nothing to do with his salary. The office has been classified at £600, and if in the opinion of members this officer has fallen from grace, there is a proper way of dealing with him. To move to reduce his salary is not the proper way.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What is the correct way?

Mr. WILLMOTT: If you know he is not doing his duty, report it to the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. O'Loughlen: More than one Colonial Secretary has had reason to reprimand him before to-day.

Mr. WILLMOTT: If we are to deal with individual officers and the way in which they carry out their duties, we shall be here till 1917 dealing with the Estimates. It is absolutely improper to attempt to reduce this salary. From personal knowledge of this officer I can say that he has always fulfilled his duties in a proper manner.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

1. Mines Regulation Act Amendment.
 2. Licensing Act Amendment Continuance.
- With amendments.

House adjourned at 6-11 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 19th October, 1915.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Report on the inspection of liquors for the year 1914-15. 2, (a) Corrigin Road Board, Health Act, 1911-12.—Resolution (A) adopting model by-laws; (b) Burtville Local Board of Health.—Resolution (B) adopting model by-laws; (c) Melville Road Board.—by-law; (d) Menzies Road Board.—Resolution (A) adopting model by-laws. 3, Life Assurance Companies Act, 1899.—Tables in connection with the business done by life assurance companies operating in Western Australia. 4, Audit of accounts of the State meat stalls. 5, Report on the work of the Charities Department for the year ended 30th June, 1915. 6, Fremantle Harbour Trust.—Amendment of regulations Nos. 163 and 96.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, MONEY BILLS PROCEDURE.

Extension of time.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) the time for bringing up the report was extended for a week.

MOTION — COMMONWEALTH DEFENCE ACT, CONSCRIPTION.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [4.34]:
I move—

That in the opinion of this House any attempt to extend the conscription sections, as set forth in the Commonwealth Defence Act, other than to amend the existing provisos therein relating to exemptions, so as to provide that age or physical infirmity shall be the only qualification for exemption, would be inimical to the best interests of Australia, and would not at this juncture assist the Empire and its Allies in prosecuting the present war to a successful conclusion.

I have no intention of trenching at any great length upon the valuable time of this Chamber. I recognise that the subject matter of the motion is one over which this House and this Parliament cannot exercise jurisdiction. The fact, however, that it covers a question which is well worthy of consideration at the hands of this House is my one and only reason for bringing it forward. For some time past various members of the Federal Parliament and a section of the Australian people have advocated that conscription should be enforced beyond the confines of the Commonwealth, or any of its territories. More recently in this State a section of the Press and a section of the community have been advocating in a similar direction. No doubt the action adopted by this section of the Press has been instrumental, to a very great extent, in prompting the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Heitmann) to give notice of a resolution of an affirmatory character in the Legislative Assembly in the direction of conscription. That motion