

projects ever authorised in this State. It is an extension of the main trunk line which is an excellent paying line, and under this project the railway will be extended on into new country. I can assure members that I have watched these goldfields grow for the last 12 or 13 years and I feel very much concerned about the district. Yet, like Mr. Patrick, I have not a farthing's worth of interest North of Cue, so I am speaking, not in selfishness but in the interests of the development of the country as a whole. In addition to the gold produced up there, it must be remembered that it is all excellent pastoral country. Every square mile of country from Cue right to Peak Hill is held under pastoral lease, and although these mulga areas look very dry yet they carry excellent feed. I think that in the interests of the stock-owners as well as of the miners this line is absolutely justified, and I will gladly support the second reading.

Hon. C. Sommers (Metropolitan): At the request of Mr. Drew, I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, the second reading adopted.

ADJOURNMENT—STATE OF BUSINESS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): As the other place are now dealing with the Estimates, and we are not likely to have anything sent up for the next five or six days, I do not intend to ask members to meet for a fortnight. Were the House to adjourn until next week, it might be that members would have to come up from the country to do very little work. Consequently I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to Tuesday, 26th January.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.34 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 12th January, 1909.

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

QUESTION—EARLY CLOSING ACT, INFRINGEMENTS.

Mr. DAGLISH (without notice) asked the Premier: Whether the Government propose to initiate proceedings against those shopkeepers in Perth who are keeping open till 10 o'clock on Friday evenings?

The PREMIER replied: Yes, after notice has been received by the firms in question.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE DOCK, RESOLUTION FROM COUNCIL.

Mr. NANSON (without notice) asked the Premier: Whether he will at an early date give the House an opportunity of taking into consideration the following Message from the Legislative Council:—

"The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to the following resolution:— 'That in view of the present state of the finances and in the absence of a substantial contribution from the Admiralty or the Commonwealth towards the cost of the Fremantle Dock, this House considers that as the construction of the dock is not a matter of urgency, further work in connection with the project should be postponed until fresh instructions be received from Parliament—in which resolution the Legislative Council desires the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.'"

The PREMIER replied: Yes, I will endeavour to afford an opportunity.

QUESTION—CORNSACKS, STANDARD.

Mr. HOPKINS asked the Honorary Minister: Is it intended to take any action with a view to correcting the size of cornsacks which are found on an average to hold much below the standard of 200lbs.?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: The attention of the Federal Government will be called to the matter.

QUESTION—RAILWAY COAL SUPPLY, NEWCASTLE.

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the average price (taking all ports into consideration) that the Government will pay for Newcastle coal under the new contract entered into? 2, What was the average price (taking all ports into consideration) paid by the Government for Newcastle coal during last contract? 3, What is the actual advance in price for Newcastle coal in connection with new contract?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The average price, taking all ports into consideration, which will be paid for Newcastle coal under the new contract is 20s. 3d., the estimated quantities and contract prices being: Fremantle, 1st year, 23,000 tons, 19s. per ton; Fremantle, 2nd and 3rd years, 40,000 tons per annum, 19s. 6d. per ton; Geraldton, 8,000 tons per annum, 24s. per ton; Bunbury, 500 tons per annum, 21s. per ton. 2, The average price, taking all ports into consideration, paid by the Government during the last contract was 18s. 11d. 3, The actual advance in price for Newcastle coal in connection with the new contract is: Fremantle, 1st year, 23,000 tons at 1d. per ton; Fremantle, 2nd and 3rd years, 40,000 tons per annum, at 7d. per ton; Geraldton, 8,000 tons per annum, at 5s. 1d. per ton; Bunbury, 500 tons per annum, at 2s. 1d. per ton.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Papers relating to the survey of lots in the Wickepin Town-site; annual report of Caves Board.

By the Treasurer: Amended Regulations under "The Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907."

By the Minister for Railways: Railway Industrial agreement; additional papers asked for by Mr. Holman.

RAILWAY INDUSTRIAL AGREEMENTS.

Papers not complete.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. Gregory): In regard to certain statements made recently in the House, I have the following communication from the Secretary to the Commissioner for Railways:—

"With reference to the statements in the Legislative Assembly that all papers in connection with the disputes, conferences, industrial agreements, and industrial arbitration case between the Minister and Commissioner of Railways and the railway employees in the years 1904 and 1905, had not been placed on the Table of the House, so far as I am aware, all the papers we had in the office were duly sent you. After reading the remarks, I remembered that we had in the office a file of old papers which had been sent down from Mr. Holman's office after the change of Government in 1905, and which had been stowed away in a cupboard. While searching through these I discovered the attached papers, which are the notes of a deputation which waited on Mr. Holman in 1905. The file of papers referred to consists principally of carbon copies of letters on various subjects which were written during Mr. Holman's term of office, and when the papers were called for by you it did not occur to me to look through this file to see if there was anything in it which bore on the matter, as I concluded that all the papers were on the office files."

When Mr. Holman was Minister for Railways he was in the habit of keeping separate records and files of all that transpired at the Minister's office, with the result that a large number of special files accumulated in his office. When Mr. Holman retired from office these special

files were put away down at the railway offices. The practice of keeping separate files has not been continued since Mr. Holman left office. Probably that was the reason why this file was overlooked. It contained, other than records which appeared on the other files, the result of a conference between the railway men and Mr. Holman himself. I am not sure whether this is the paper of the absence of which Mr. Holman was complaining; but these are all the papers the Railway Department has in its possession. I beg to table the accompanying file.

ELECTORAL—MURRAY VACANCY.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): Owing to the death of the late John Pollard McLarty, I beg to move—

That the seat of the member for Murray be declared vacant.

Question put and passed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 7th January; *Mr. Duglish* in the Chair.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCHES (Hon. Frank Wilson, Treasurer).

Vote—Indenting Office, £1,875:

Item, Incidentals, £600:

Mr. TROY: An increase was noticeable in this item as compared with that of last year; would the Treasurer tell the Committee what was the reason for this increase?

The TREASURER: As members would see it had been thought advisable to separate these items from the London Agency Vote, it having been thought wise to keep the Indenting Office distinct as far as possible. The only way of comparing this year's vote with that of last year was to add the incidentals of the Indenting Office this year to that of the incidental in the London Agency vote, and compare them with the total incidental vote for the London Agency of the previous year. This would show that this year the total for incidental was £1,100, as compared with £1,215 in

the previous year. The two had to be taken in conjunction in order to get the net result.

Mr. TAYLOR: The foot-note stated that the estimated revenue from the department was £1,875. Was he to understand that the State received that revenue from this particular office?

The TREASURER: The system was to charge two per cent. for inspection. The revenue was charged when the goods were sent out, and the sum of £1,875 was the estimated revenue from the indenting office for the year.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Literary and Scientific Grants, etc., £13,475:

Item, Public Library of Western Australia, £3,250:

Mr. ANGWIN: In addition to the sum appearing on the Estimates the Library received some £300 or £400 from the general vote for mechanics' institutes, working men's associations, etcetera, for the purposes of the travelling library. He could not see where the additional cost came in, as the country libraries had to pay for the carriage of the books.

The TREASURER: The amount proposed to be paid for the travelling library was £250, not £350 as mentioned in the Estimates. It was a printer's error that the sum of £350 was mentioned in the footnote. The travelling library had undoubtedly been doing excellent work in the State, and the money spent year by year for that purpose out of the total sum voted for libraries was altogether too small for requirements. So far as it went, however, the money had been well spent. The balance sheet for last year showed on the expenditure side: purchase of books, £147; book-cases £49; salaries, £25; cartage and freight, £30. So that notwithstanding what the hon. member had said some sum had to be paid by the department for the distribution of books. The greater proportion of the expenditure was due to the purchase of books. This was necessary because the library officials could not send out books from the Perth library, otherwise they would be short there. There had to be a special supply of books for the travelling

library. The demands for cases of books was increasing every year, showing that the system was growing in popularity. Last year nearly 6,000 volumes were in circulation among 51 institutes. No portion of the Library vote could be better justified than this, because there were being distributed gratis in the different centres of the State which could not pay for books themselves a large number of useful volumes. He had received a letter from a man on one of the timber mills at Greenbushes in which the system was spoken of very highly. It was mentioned that there was a reading room and library there managed by a committee elected by subscribers, and that in the library were 100 volumes supplied from the Public Library under the travelling library system. The majority of these works were valuable books of reference and formed the backbone of the library, and the writer said that they were books that could not possibly have been purchased by the local committee owing to their cost, and that the system of sending out books from the Public Library was very highly appreciated there.

Mr. BATH: There was no doubt that the system of a travelling library was very desirable, but what he objected to was the sum of £30 being taken for this purpose from the general vote for mechanics' institutes, working men's associations, art societies, etcetera. The cost of this work should be paid for out of the annual vote for the Public Library, Perth.

The Treasurer: The travelling library is for the benefit of the out-back institutions.

Mr. BATH: The Public Library, Perth, received all the credit and owned all the books. The total vote for mechanics' institutes, etcetera, was only £2,100, and when one considered the large number of institutes that this sum had to be divided among, it would be realised that to deduct £300 from the total vote constituted a hardship.

The TREASURER: If it were the wish of the Committee he would in framing the Estimates next year—should that duty be his—put the item for a

travelling library down separately. Probably that would be the better course to adopt and then the exact sum to be spent for that purpose would be shown on the Estimates proper. He had simply followed the custom of the past, which had been to deduct the sum from the general vote to mechanics' institutes, etcetera. The sum was £250 a year, not £300 as mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. It was due to a printer's error that the sum was shown on the Estimates at £350.

Mr. BATH: Would you not deduct the sum from the vote for the Public Library?

The TREASURER: No; it would be a separate item entirely.

Item—Perth Museum and Art Gallery, £3,800:

Mr. OSBORN: Year after year large sums of money had been spent on the Museum in building, and now we might well expect that the cost for upkeep would be less than it had been heretofore. The amount voted for the Perth Museum was altogether out of proportion, considering the small amounts paid to the institutions in other parts of the State. The vote might reasonably be reduced by a few hundred pounds, and perhaps then the money so saved would be able to be spent in a better direction. He moved

That the item be reduced by £300.

The TREASURER: This vote had been kept as low as possible. In the years 1903-4 and 1904-5 the sum of £3,800 was provided. The amount this year was exactly the same. In 1905-6 it was found that the committee could not make ends meet. In fact they got into debt, and the vote was increased to £4,500. Next year it was cut down to £3,500, because they had had £800 more in the previous year. In 1905-6 the result was that at the end of the year the Committee found they were in debt again to the extent of about £300 or £400. They gave an assurance that they had exercised every care and had been unable to avoid getting into debt. The amount was then raised again to £3,800 and it had stood at that ever since. Last year a new Art Gallery was opened, and notwithstanding this meant

a considerable increase in expenditure, between £400 and £600, he told the committee that they would have to make the amount to which they had been accustomed serve their ends. During the past six months the expenditure on this institution had equalled nearly £2,000, and there were still many items such as salaries, wages, mineralogy, furniture, books and incidental charges, including interest on overdraft to be met, and it would be quite impossible for the committee, the members of which were acting in an honorary capacity, to do more than keep within the vote provided on the Estimates. He could not speak too highly of the work that this institution was doing. The number of visitors alone showed that it was very extensively patronised. The number had averaged 60,000 during the past few years, and since the opening of the new Art Gallery about five months ago there had been an attendance of 41,412 which showed at once that that branch of the institution was appreciated, and that the public were taking full advantage of it. Everyone must recognise that these institutions were doing very excellent work, and were an important adjunct to our educational system. Lectures were delivered during the winter months and taking everything into consideration the institution was one of the most up-to-date we had. The Committee should deal with the vote in a reasonable way, and he hoped the amendment would not be pressed. If the amendment was carried it would put a body of men into a tight corner, a body of men who gave their services gratuitously in the interests of science and education generally.

Mr. BOLTON: The item appeared to be a large one, but he would not like to see the institution hampered, because it was one of those institutions which was not of a class nature. It was surprising to him that the motion to reduce the item should come from the champion of champions of the Caves vote. In connection with the Caves vote, there was a different argument to be advanced and he felt that he could sheer off supporting the amendment because it was moved by the member for Roebourne. This institution

which was open to any citizen from any part of the State was more worthy of consideration and support than one which was of a class nature and open to only a select few.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was not quite possible to follow the hon. member for Roebourne in his desire to reduce this vote. With other hon. members it was not his intention to encourage the reduction of any item that had for its object the education of the people, and there was no doubt that this institution assisted largely in the education of the people. He could not but express his absolute astonishment that the proposal to reduce the item should come from the member for Roebourne, after having heard the speech he delivered a few nights previously on the subject of the reduction of the vote for the Caves, which was purely a class expenditure, an expenditure for the luxury of a few at the expense of the many. The item in question was for the education of the whole of the people and did a great deal towards the education of those who took a particular interest in that form of education.

Mr. BUTCHER: It was not his intention to support the reduction of the item.

Mr. Bolton: The member for Roebourne stands alone.

Mr. BUTCHER: These grants, however, were increasing too rapidly, and becoming year after year too great. We were going too far ahead of our requirements. He was not saying anything against this particular item because he was quite in accord with it, but he hoped that the Government would be cautious in the future and see that these items were not allowed to increase to any great extent or beyond that amount which we were justified in granting from time to time.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was not his intention to support the reduction of the item but would the Minister in charge give some information concerning the constitution of the board of management?

The TREASURER: The board was constituted as follows:—Dr. Hackett was chairman, and the members were Sir George Shenton, Dr. Harvey, Mr. Can-

ning, Mr. Justice MacMillan, and Mr. Henry Briggs, the President of the Legislative Council, and Dr. Kelsall. One seat was vacant. The attendances at the meetings had been as follows:—Seven committee meetings had been held; Dr. Hackett had attended six, Mr. Briggs the full number, Mr. Canning six, Sir George Shenton, who unfortunately had been ill, attended two, Mr. Harper, who had since resigned, having been out of the State, had attended one, Dr. Harvey four, Dr. Kelsall three, and Judge MacMillan five. It could be seen that the attendances were fairly good and keen interest had been taken by the members of the committee in the work of the institution. These gentlemen were appointed for five years.

Mr. Johnson : I would suggest that the Treasurer alter the class nature of the committee. It would be very advisable to make the committee as broad as possible.

The **TREASURER** : It was proposed in the future to appoint the committee for three years instead of five. He was in accord with the hon. member's suggestion and he would make a note of it.

Mr. OSBORN : It was not his intention to take much notice of the remarks which had been made by the member for North Fremantle. It showed what judgment that member had when he said that he would not support the reduction of the item because it was moved by the member for Roebourne. The member for Guildford also wanted an elaborate explanation from him in respect to the attitude he had taken as compared with his attitude when the House sat on a previous occasion. He did not intend to make any personal explanation to the member for Guildford. What he did in the House he did as any hon. member would. He acted on his own initiative and according to his own judgment and it was his intention to keep to those lines. He threw that out as a hint to show that he was not there to be dictated to. When he felt it was his duty to rise in his place to make any remarks he would do so without reference to any

hon. member, and without asking their permission. He had no intention of giving an account of his stewardship to any member, but spoke for the sake of the Committee generally, having had something to say in reference to these items during his election campaign. Some of this expenditure should be decentralised and the benefit of it given to the outlying towns of the State. Though the amendment was not likely to be carried, it gave him the opportunity of expressing his views on the matter; and as for this being a non-class institution, of course any institution was non-class where there was no fee for admission. Another item he had supported was for a committee that had to find a certain amount of funds, but the committee controlling this item had no funds to find, being amply supplied from the public purse. Any committee could do good work in these circumstances, but it was time the public told the committee that they must keep within the bounds set down on the Estimates. He had recognised the amendment would not meet with support when he moved it; he now desired to withdraw it.

Amendment withdrawn.

Item, Zoological Gardens, £3,600 :

Mr. BUTCHER : The gardens did not appear to be in keeping with the full benefit of the expenditure of the money; they had an arid appearance like the North of the State when suffering from extreme drought. The money seemed to be spent on improving cricket and tennis lawns at the expense and sacrifice of the gardens, the portion to which the money should be devoted, and for which it was voted by Parliament. Was there any report to show where the money was spent, and what good had been derived from it? It seemed as if there was a smaller number of animals now.

Mr. BATH : The gardens were at considerable disadvantage by reason of their situation. It would be advisable if the Government took into consideration some means of cheapening the cost of getting to South Perth, because the cost of getting there detracted from the attendance at the gardens and, therefore, from the revenue which went to-

wards maintenance. The ferry company had enjoyed the monopoly altogether too long, and it was time the Government or the municipality ran a service at a reasonable rate.

Mr. GILL: When tennis matches were being played there was an extra charge to go on the fine lawns at the gardens. Did those who were playing tennis pay for the privilege?

Mr. Scaddan: My word they do! The gardens absolutely fleece them.

Mr. GILL: One was impressed with the fact that a number of animals and birds had disappeared, and that the gardens were not up to the standard they should maintain for the amount of money voted.

Mr. JACOBY: An important principle was raised by the member for Gascoyne. Money was voted by Parliament to establish a Zoo, but a large portion of the money was spent in providing a cricket ground and tennis lawns. If such expenditure was justifiable every grant given by Parliament for a specific purpose could be utilised in directions other than those for which the money was voted. In this case money voted for educational purposes was spent in establishing recreation grounds. It was wrong and illegal; if not illegal, it was highly improper. More steps should be taken in regard to acclimatisation, one of the most important works of the committee controlling the gardens. He (Mr. Jacoby) was afraid that this work had been rather neglected, and that an undue amount of money and time had been devoted to works not intended by Parliament. It was practically a misappropriation.

Mr. OSBORN: The committee controlling the gardens looking ahead had recognised that the time must come when Government grants would be discontinued. The courts they had laid down were an asset that would always be available to secure revenue for the upkeep of the Zoo. Of course anything would be more popular if there was no fee charged. If the tennis players and supporters patronised the courts in the way indicated then the people interested in that particular sport were satisfied with the treatment they re-

ceived. If there was no indication in the grant of the way in which the money was to be spent then the trustees could expend it in whatever way they thought best for the benefit of the grounds, to make them revenue-producing. He praised the management of the Zoo for the way in which they carried out their trust. He did not profess to have a great deal of experience in regard to zoological gardens, but about 12 months ago he had visited the zoological gardens in three of the other States and the Zoo at South Perth compared more than favourably with the institutions in other places. The management of the Zoo had done admirable work.

Mr. TAYLOR: When one compared the Zoological Gardens at South Perth with those in the other States one had to take into consideration the conditions that existed in the various places. In the other States the zoological gardens were situated where the trams reached them, but here people had to cross a stretch of water to get to the Zoo. Then there was a difference in the up-keep. The land on which the Zoological Gardens at South Perth were established was composed of white sand, while in the Eastern States the land was of a more valuable character. The water used at the Zoo was highly mineralised, while better conditions prevailed in the Eastern States. We must recognise that we could not produce in the sand what could be produced in good soil, without using manures. Then the rate of wages in this State was considerably higher for the class of labour required than in the Eastern States, and there were not the same facilities for getting and exchanging animals here as in the Eastern States. A large amount of the money expended in the upkeep of the Zoological Gardens here went into the pockets of the producers of the State for the purchase of fodder for the use of the animals. Then we could not compare the Zoological Gardens which had been established here only 10 years with those which had been established in Melbourne for 46 years. Those in charge of the Zoo here had done very good work; there were not the same facilities for visitors going to the gardens here as existed in

the Eastern States. If a person with a family wished to make a trip to the Zoo it was very costly, and the Zoological Gardens were largely patronised by the working classes and their families. It was to be hoped the member for Gascoyne would not move to reduce the item.

Mr. BUTCHER: The point which he wished to make was that the amount of money granted every year for the maintenance of the Zoo was not used in the direction which Parliament intended. If the member for Roebourne was willing to assist in passing a grant of £3,800 for the up-keep of tennis courts instead of being used for the purpose originally intended he had no more to say, but if this item appeared on the Estimates another time he would make strenuous efforts to have it struck off. In speaking of the gardens as they existed 12 months ago they were a credit to the State, but in speaking of the gardens to-day they bore an arid appearance which he (Mr. Butcher) compared to a drought in the North-West which he had experienced. The gardens were not a credit to the trustees. It was to be hoped that in the future this money would be put to the purposes for which it was granted, the maintenance and upkeep of the Zoological Gardens and not for the maintenance of tennis and cricket grounds.

The TREASURER: After the remarks of the member for Mount Margaret there was very little to say in defence of this item. If members had taken the trouble to consult the Act they would find that it was laid down there that these grounds were vested in certain trustees to be maintained and used for gardens and for zoological and acclimatisation purposes, for a public reserve and recreation. It was never intended that the grounds should be exclusively used for zoological and acclimatisation purposes. The recreation of our rising generation was as of much importance as education. This money was expended on a public reserve where people could go and enjoy themselves, and not only have healthful enjoyment but at the same time receive some educational benefits. He wished to add his tribute to the management of the gardens: we had the very ablest man who

could be selected in charge of the gardens, Mr. Le Sueur, who had an uphill battle to fight, and had to overcome the difficulties of nature in the shape of 200 feet of white sand. He had to use bore water which came out of the ground at a temperature of 100 degrees and was highly mineralised. In a year or two it destroyed vegetation; he believed it was much better on the grass and gave good results on the tennis courts. The objection taken to the item could not be sustained. The member for Gascoyne stated that the item had increased year by year, but the Government had endeavoured to cut down the items to the utmost farthing. In 1903-4 the Zoological Gardens were granted a vote of £3,900 and a special vote of £500, making a total of £4,400. In 1904-5 the vote was £3,900; in 1905-6 it was £3,900, and there was a special vote of £500, making a total of £4,400. In 1906-7 the amount voted was £3,900. Then he (the Treasurer) took charge and found that the various votes must be cut down, and the amount was reduced to £3,600. This year the vote was again £3,600. If members looked into the papers on the Table they would see that every economy had been exercised and every care taken. These gardens were doing much more for the public of Western Australia than most similar institutions in other portions of the Commonwealth. One could see by glancing at the balance-sheet what work had been done. It was shown that there was £658 for premises, upkeep, etc. Food and forage represented over £1,000, and this it had to be remembered was all expended within the State. The purchase and transport of stock was put down at £174. That, too, was spent within the State. He reminded members that our specimens were collected and sent Home and exchanged for specimens from the old world. The director informed him that in this direction there was a balance in his favour from London of £175. Office expenses amounted to £104, printing and advertising £129, incidental £152, and interest £301. The Zoological Gardens received a Government grant of £3,600 and notwithstanding that we had been passing

through some rather depressed times, notwithstanding that our people had not so much money to spend on recreation as hitherto, last year they took at the gates £1,565. That was about £150 below the average of the last four or five years. It was however much greater than the receipts of some of the zoological gardens of the Eastern States. Compared with South Australia it was better, notwithstanding that the gardens at South Perth were to some extent inaccessible. Exception had been taken to the tennis lawns. Although the clubs had a right to use these lawns, their members had to pay the entrance fee at the gardens as other people did and they also paid a fee to the club. There was thus a great source of revenue. In the amount collected at the gates there was a fair proportion due to those tennis clubs, and anyone who had attended there on a Saturday afternoon to witness the pennant matches would recognise what a great benefit they were to the gardens from a revenue point of view and what an enormous advantage it was to our own people to have those beautiful lawns to play tennis on. The lawns were equal to any in the Commonwealth. The sports ground receipts totalled £80, pony and other rides £32.

Mr. Gill: Does the £80 include entrance fee to the sports?

The TREASURER: No. There was also rent from the refreshment room, £30 per annum, and the rent of weighing machines, £10, and smaller sums bringing the total to £1,565 for last year. Taking everything into consideration Mr. Le Souef was to be congratulated on what he had done on such a large area of ground, larger than that occupied by any other zoological gardens in the Commonwealth, and he had the very worst country to tackle, a fact which could be perceived by the white sand, and he had also a very bad water supply.

Mr. Butcher: It has had the effect of destroying some of the animals.

The TREASURER: That was not so. The fact remained that we had between 60,000 and 75,000 people every year visiting these gardens notwithstanding all the disabilities. Another feature we must not overlook was that the director

gave every Friday afternoon nature study lectures to school children and there were about sixty of our public schools which took advantage of this opportunity. This was work which was not undertaken in any other zoological gardens in Australia. We could not commend too highly the director for the work he was performing and he hoped the vote would be passed.

Mr. SCADDAN: Last year he had something to say in connection with the expenditure of money for providing tennis courts and cricket grounds at the Zoological Gardens. On that occasion he desired to obtain some information from the Treasurer as to what the gardens were actually receiving from these players and others who were using the grounds, but he was unable to obtain that information. Since then he had been in communication with the tennis clubs and the association and they had informed him that they paid the Zoological Gardens £90 a year for the right to hold their annual tournaments. The South Perth club paid £70 a year for the right to practise and to play every Saturday. Every member either of the associated clubs or the South Perth club paid 6d. entrance, whether to play or practise during the week days. At the same time every person who went there to witness tennis also paid 6d. entrance fee. Under those circumstances one could see that the tennis clubs were a great source of revenue to the Zoological Gardens and he regretted having been informed now that the clubs were likely to withdraw their patronage from the gardens, not because they were dissatisfied with the treatment they had been receiving, but because it was found that the Fremantle and other suburban clubs could not utilise the grounds there provided, on account of their inaccessibility. These clubs were now negotiating with the municipal council of Subiaco to lay tennis courts at Mueller Park which was much more accessible, and they were likely next season to hold their tournaments and most of their practice at that park. It might be as well to say after all that it seemed the Zoological Gardens were wise in providing these grounds for

recreation purposes. One wanted some little recreation in the grounds besides looking at the animals. He had taken this, the earliest opportunity, of not altogether withdrawing the remarks he had made last year when the Treasurer was not able to give the information wanted regarding the takings from these clubs—

The Treasurer: It was not shown.

Mr. SCADDAN: Then it should be shown in order that members might understand what they were asked to pass. The member for Gascoyne would not make any complaints about the grounds when he knew exactly the amounts that had been paid by the clubs which had been more than sufficient to keep the grounds in order.

Mr. BUTCHER: These amounts do not keep the grounds in order; that is my objection.

Mr. SCADDAN: Visitors from the Eastern States had remarked that these courts were among the best to be found in the Commonwealth. The Zoological Gardens authorities were wise in providing them, and he hoped they would hold out every inducement to the tennis players to continue to play their games there.

Mr. BUTCHER: The information he had obtained was what he had sought and it was to the effect that the Committee were granting £3,800 for the upkeep of the tennis lawns and not as was originally thought for the upkeep of the Zoological Gardens.

The Treasurer: That is quite a wrong construction.

Mr. BUTCHER: The whole of the Treasurer's arguments substantiated the remarks he (Mr. Butcher) had made that the vote was being used for that purpose. He was extremely sorry we were granting this sum of money annually for the upkeep of tennis lawns and cricket grounds when it should be devoted to the zoological portion of the institution and for the educational purposes and benefit of our people.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Lithographic*, £5,638:

Mr. BATH: On the last occasion when this vote was discussed he suggested the advisability of effecting economy by

combining this department with the Printing Department. The administration salaries alone were fairly considerable items, and there was no need in a State like Western Australia to have these departments conducted separately. He would like to know whether the Treasurer had gone into the matter and whether he was considering the advisability of effecting the combination.

The TREASURER: The matter had been delayed owing to the absence of the Government Lithographer on long service leave. He (the Treasurer) had called for and obtained a report from the Government Printer on the subject, and now he had a similar report from the Government Lithographer. These he had sent on to the Public Service Commissioner for advice as to whether the suggested amalgamation would be beneficial to the State. Up to the present, indications were quite the other way. In each of the other States—and, he believed, in the old country also—the offices were kept distinct. In Victoria each department had its own lithographic establishment attached to it. The same thing obtained in New South Wales. In South Australia and in Queensland the lithographic office was attached to the survey department. The reports of the Government Printer and the Government Lithographer were now before the Public Service Commissioner, who would furnish a report to the Minister in due course.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*London Agency*, £3,646:

Mr. ANGWIN: For some considerable time many had thought it would be advisable that the officers of the London Agency should be periodically changed with other Government officers in the State in order that the latest personal information might be obtainable in the London Agency. Officers in the London Agency who had originally gone from this State had now been so long in England that they had practically no personal knowledge of the State in its latest developments. In consequence, many immigrants had been led astray

by wrong information, as was to be learned every week from articles in the Press. It was, he thought, highly advisable that periodical changes should be made. In order the more definitely to draw attention to this, he moved—

That the vote be reduced by £1.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The State was not receiving anything like an adequate return for the money expended on the London Agency. For his part he was totally opposed to the vote in its entirety. The time had come when the position of Agent General should be abolished and someone appointed as a business agent—someone who would attend to his business and leave the social functions to look after themselves. Recently he had met a lady who had come from England and had, immediately before her departure, gone to the London Agency for information regarding Western Australia. She was there furnished with the *Commonwealth Year Book* for 1904, and the most recent information given to her was two years behind date. Was it for this that the State was paying nearly £4,000 a year? He thought the office ought to be abolished altogether. He moved—

That the vote be reduced by £1,000.

The CHAIRMAN: The later amendment, involving as it did a larger amount, would take precedence over the first amendment.

The TREASURER: The moving of so drastic an amendment was hardly the way to achieve the object of the hon. member. It mattered not whether the officer in London were termed the Agent General or the business agent, he would still have to represent Western Australia, and to represent it worthily. It would indeed be a bad thing for Western Australia if the London Agency were closed up at this juncture. What it might be in the distant future when the Commonwealth High Commissioner was resident in London it was not easy to say; but for the next few years Western Australia would have to hold her own in London, and it would be the duty of the Agent General, or business agent, to see that the State got as good a deal as did any other State of the Common-

wealth. The present Agent General had done that during his two years of office. When it was remembered that all the other divisions of the British Empire were by their representatives concentrated in the city of London the necessity would be realised of Western Australia having a thoroughly capable representative stationed there. The agreement with the London and Westminster Bank, made in the early part of last year, in itself went to show the advantage and the profit of having a fitting representative in London. The flotation of loans and the arrangements and re-arrangements frequently to be made with financial institutions suggested the benefit of having in London a thoroughly good representative. It was to be hoped hon. members would not run away with the idea that it was a waste of time and of money to attend to social functions. Anyone knowing anything about Imperial political circles knew full well that a State which wished to hold its own in the eyes of the old country would have to be worthily represented in social as well as in business life. As to the personal knowledge of Western Australia which the member for East Fremantle desired in officers in the London Agency, it was to be remembered that quite recently new blood had been transmitted to the old country. It was not so many years since the then Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Palmer, had been sent to London. Mr. Salter also had been sent Home shortly afterwards.

Mr. Bath: What position did he get?

The TREASURER: His title was Assistant Inspecting Engineer.

Mr. Angwin: Then he is not there to give general information.

The TREASURER: Still he was available in the event of the Agent General requiring information from him. Quite recently Mr. Ranford had been sent Home. Mr. Ranford was conversant with everything pertaining to the agricultural conditions of Western Australia. He had gone to the London Agency to assist in advertising Western Australia; and it would be his duty, as it was his desire, to get out of London into the agricultural cen-

tres there to proclaim what he knew of the soil and climate of Western Australia.

Mr. Scaddan: He is a champion at telling a tall tale.

Mr. Taylor: He is the best snake-yarn teller in this country.

The TREASURER: Mr. Ranford was intimately acquainted with the agricultural features of Western Australia and with the conditions of life in the agricultural districts. These he had at his fingers' ends, together with a mass of general knowledge. So the member for East Fremantle would see that in this respect the London office was up-to-date. If members would add together the two votes, the London Agency and Indenting Office, they would see that between them there was an estimated saving of from £500 to £600.

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Treasurer's remarks made one more convinced that this office as it was at present constituted should be done away with. It seemed to be a regular thing to refer to every officer leaving the State as being an excellent man, and it was extraordinary that all these officers, Mr. Ranford, Mr. Gilbert, and Mr. Farmer, should be drawn from the Lands Office. Perhaps that accounted for some of the fearful bungling that now existed in the Lands Office. We must have sent all the good men away. It was remarkable how people always said, "We have sent so-and-so Home." Australia was his home, but listening to many Australian Legislators, one would be justified in defining an Australian as, "A person who is born and lives all his life 16,000 miles from Home." Sending these gentlemen abroad spoilt their usefulness to a great extent. They should be changed fairly often. No doubt the civil servant "at Home" was a very superior person, and that the Australian who got "Home" was likely to take on some of the traits of the London civil servant.

Mr. BATH: One could not support the proposal of the member for Pilbara to reduce the item by the amount the hon. member desired. Western Australia for more than one reason required a representative in London so long as so

much financial business was transacted in that centre of the Empire. Competition between nations and countries was largely commercial competition, and unless we kept up our end of the log and put our best foot foremost, as was the expression, we were likely to be left behind in the race. The statement of the Treasurer in regard to the more favourable arrangement for dealing with our loans and the amount of saving to be accomplished by the new arrangement, was something substantial to be urged in favour of the work of the Agent General in London; but a fair proportion of the credit was due to the vigorous way in which the Premier of South Australia had dealt with the question of the charges of dealing with loans on the Home market when on a visit to London last year. The criticism then indulged in, and the publicity given to it in the London journals, had brought the question prominently forward, and this the Treasurer would admit was partly responsible for the more favourable terms conceded.

The Treasurer: That, and the Victorian effort at the same time.

Mr. BATH: We would probably be able to do even better than in the future, because it was shown by the negotiations in connection with the loan issued by the South Australian Government for redemption purposes that there was some ring or combination to maintain the percentages for carrying on this work. The member for East Fremantle was right in drawing attention to the need for changing the officials in the London Agency at stated periods. We could with advantage change these officers about, bringing those at Home to the State, and replacing them by officers from our departments in the State, so that the information available in the London office would always be up-to-date, and would be practical information acquired first-hand and from recent personal knowledge of Western Australian progress and affairs. Therefore, while he could not support the drastic proposal of the member for Pilbara, he would vote for the other proposal of the member for East Fremantle to reduce the vote by £1. The member for Pilbara showed great en-

thusiasm in his ideas of reform, but seemed to be absolutely devoid of any sense of proportion in the matter. While in the near future it would be to the advantage of Australia to have one representative in England, until that was consummated the State must still maintain her representative in London. A gentleman who had visited the Franco-British Exhibition said that Canada scored over Australia because the Dominion was represented by one comprehensive exhibit which impressed the people, whereas each Australian State had its own exhibits.

Mr. Nanson: But they were all in the same pavilion.

Mr. BATH: This gentleman said that if there had been one combined exhibit for Australia as a whole it would have been better than the Canadian exhibit, and would have impressed the people more. Canada scored in being able to sink provincial jealousies for the good of the whole. Whatever advantaged the whole must undoubtedly benefit the individual.

Mr. FOULKES: The London office was not in the best position, being in a street devoted entirely to offices. Located in a more business part, for instance, in the City itself, it would be more likely to do good. A change of officers was likely to do a great deal of good. It would do a great deal of good if the three clerks were selected from our departments here.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: One officer went from here.

Mr. FOULKES: That was seven years ago. The officers should be changed every three years.

Mr. TAYLOR: It would be wiser and more beneficial if the secretary was changed. That officer had been out of the State for about 20 years, and it was impossible for him to give to intending settlers any idea of Western Australia to-day.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: He has been back here.

Mr. TAYLOR: Only for a short visit. The need for this change was emphasised during the passage of the last Estimates. While he had no intention of supporting the amendment moved by the member for Pilbara, he would support the pro-

posal of the member for East Fremantle for a nominal reduction in the vote to emphasise the opinion of the Committee as to the need for reorganising the London Agency and sending home men up-to-date in regard to land settlement and the state of our industries, so that they would be able to send out a proper class of immigrants. That could not be done satisfactorily until we had a secretary who was thoroughly seized with the industries of Western Australia, had a knowledge of the strides in land settlement and be able to say he knew all portions of the country, all about the wheat yield, the fruit and grape crops and, in fact, everything connected with the various industries. In order to keep the work up to date that official should be changed every five or six years. There were officers in the State quite capable of filling the position, and men who were receiving a similar salary to that the present secretary was paid. Clerks should also be sent home who were well up in the latest information about the State. If the vote were reduced by a nominal amount it would let the Government know that before next year some change would have to be effected. The Committee had referred to this matter for two or three years past but there had been no improvement, and the only way to make the Government realise the Committee were in earnest was to reduce the vote. From what vote were the lecturers paid? We knew that a gentleman had gone from this State to deliver a series of lectures in the interests of immigration. He had already lectured in Scotland. Some time ago at a public meeting he (Mr. Taylor) had asked the Colonial Secretary, when standing for re-election, whether the State intended to pay Mr. Wallace Nelson for lecturing in England. The reply was that the Government would not contribute one penny towards the cost, but now we found that Mr. Nelson had gone Home and had been engaged by the Agent General to deliver lectures. Did the Government instruct the Agent General to secure the appointment for that gentleman and did the money come out of the contingency vote?

The TREASURER: Lecturers were engaged to encourage immigration and they were paid for out of the immigration vote. As to Mr. Wallace Nelson, that gentleman was engaged to deliver a certain series of lectures. The instructions for the appointment went from this end to the Agent General and the sum of £50 was voted for the purpose. Mr. Nelson was not in any case to receive more than that sum, which was little enough for the work he was doing. Up to now that sum had not been spent. No matter what members thought, they would agree that Mr. Nelson was a man of ability and was capable of holding an audience and of giving a good impression. The money had not been wasted. As to the site for the London Agency, he agreed with the member for Claremont that there should be some more suitable site selected if one could be secured. He hardly agreed that Trafalgar Square was an ideal spot, nor would the Government be likely to secure suitable offices there at anything like a moderate rental. The Agency should be very much nearer the City and among the business people near the Strand. If that could be accomplished he would be prepared to move the office. As to the interchange of clerks he would point out that we did not want all colonials in the London office. It was necessary that some of the clerks should have London experience as well, for they must be depended upon for knowledge of London. One of the clerks there now was a Western Australian. The suggestion, however, might be followed to some extent. He agreed that the secretary perhaps had been there rather too long, and some arrangement might be made to alter that. At the same time members must remember that that officer had been there for very many years, and it would be a very difficult matter to find a suitable opening for him if he were changed to Western Australia. It might be that he would have to be retired and paid a pension. Anyhow, all these matters would receive the attention of the Government.

Mr. TAYLOR: The statement that Mr. Nelson was an admirable lecturer in the cause of inducing the right kind of settlers

to come to Western Australia could not be accepted by him. No man who had held a public position knew so little about the agricultural, pastoral and mining industries. Certainly Mr. Nelson could speak very eloquently on the public platform, but it was not a platform speaker who would induce the English peasantry to come out to Western Australia. What was needed was a practical man who had been raised on the soil, and knew the whole work from start to finish, was acquainted with the different classes of soil and could describe the different timbers and point out exactly the hardships, trials and tribulations a settler would have to go through before making a home for his family in this State. The man to make a successful lecturer in England was he who would straightforwardly give the peasantry a true account of the actual state of affairs in Western Australia. There was no need for a man to go Home and lie about the country, for the land here spoke for itself. The flowery orator on the platform was of no use for the work. The success of the lecturer would be achieved more in private conversation than in platform utterances, for many men after hearing him speak on the platform would want to see him at his office and go into minute details as to the prospects before a settler in Western Australia. A practical man was needed who knew his business, and not a man who could not tell a Swedish turnip from a bladder of hog's lard. Put both those articles before Mr. Nelson and he would not know one from the other. Neither would he know a sheaf of wheat from a bundle of lucerne, nor a sheep from a goat. He ventured to say that Mr. Nelson was foisted on to the Agent General's Department for political reasons. Mr. Nelson was a journalist who had spent his time in abusing the game that gave him his political breath of life, and he did that so successfully for a year that this Government foisted him on to the Agent General to lecture. What would have been said if the Opposition side of the House had done anything like that? It would have been thrown in their teeth not only by the House but by the Press. He was pleased, however, to know that

the price paid this gentleman was not too high, but he was dissatisfied even with that price. When the Committee reached the immigration vote, whichever Minister intended to defend the Colonial Secretary's part of the Estimates would want to put his best foot forward. It was not a threat, but he was giving a fair warning.

Amendment (to reduce the vote by £1,000) put and negatived.

Mr. ANGWIN moved—

That the vote be reduced by £1.

There was no desire to go over the statements previously made. He merely wished to state that Mr. Palmer, when sent to England, was sent as an engineer and was not in the office to give information to the general public. The other gentleman who had taken his place was in the same position. Mr. Ranford was now travelling through England to give information. It had been known to Ministers that a change should take place with regard to officers in the London office. Last year, seeing that Ministers were so convinced of the necessity to effect this change, it was thought that it would have been brought about. Now members heard the Treasurer admit that one officer had been there too long and that that must be detrimental to the interests of the State. He wished members to express their opinion by voting on his proposal to reduce the vote by £1.

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

Ayes	18
Noes	22

Majority against .. 4

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Bath	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gouriey	Mr. Walker
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Ware
Mr. Holman	Mr. Troy
Mr. Horan	
Mr. Hudson	

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Barnett	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Carson	Mr. Monger
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Draper	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Layman
Mr. Hopkins	
Mr. Jacoby	

(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote. *Printing, £27,815:*

Mr. GILL: In speaking on the Printing Department in the general debate the Treasurer in effect said that he (Mr. Gill) had been misled and that he had listened to remarks in the street and consequently did not get correct facts to go upon. He had made a statement to the effect that one man was placed in charge of three or four machines and that boys were sent along to take up the work of these men, who were held responsible for the work of those boys. That was the most serious charge he made. The Treasurer practically admitted that, and stated that a man was placed in charge of a machine or two and sometimes three. He went on to add that as a machine had to work for 48 hours at a stretch it was not necessary to always have a man practically wasting his time by watching it, and that a boy could do the work. The Treasurer added that that was the practice adopted throughout the Commonwealth. He did not know whether such was or was not the case; evidently the Treasurer had been informed that it was.

The Treasurer: I quoted wires.

Mr. GILL: Then the Treasurer was justified in making the statement. While he (Mr. Gill) had not the opportunity of going throughout the Commonwealth and getting information, he had a little information himself, obtained nearer home, and with that he would contradict the statement of the Treasurer. It was not the practice throughout the Commonwealth to employ one man to take charge of two or three machines, and moreover it was not the practice in Perth. The information given to him (Mr. Gill) was supplied by a man working on machines.

not in the Government Printing Office but in other printing offices. This was not information he had gained from rumours in the street; it had been put before him by tradesmen working in private establishments, who considered that the practice in the Government Printing Office was a menace to their trade. He had that day visited Messrs. Sands and McDougall's where, in answer to questions, the manager had told him that the practice in their machine room was one man one machine. The firm considered that they got better results from this principle. The manager had volunteered the information also that the Government Printer was well aware that that principle of one man one machine was in existence in the private establishments in Perth. He (Mr. Gill) was bringing this matter forward in order to justify remarks he had made on a previous occasion. It was only necessary that hon. members should understand the true position of affairs for the men in the Government Printing Office to be treated fairly. He knew for a fact that employees in the bookbinding branch of the Government Printing Office had been walking the streets for the last fortnight for want of work; and notwithstanding that there was no work in the Government Printing Office for these regular employees, a very large order had recently been sent to the prison at Fremantle—an order that would have kept these employees in work for the next three weeks. While he did not think prisoners ought to be allowed to be idle, he was of opinion that honest men should not be kept out of work in order that employment might be found for those prisoners. By the present system honest tradesmen were being driven out of the State.

Mr. BATH: The member for Balkatta had touched on two vital questions. The first was the practice which obtained, not of building up manufactures and trying to put boys in the way of becoming good tradesmen but, in the first place, of merely employing boys with the view to cutting down expenses and, secondly, of employing them apparently with no other object than to make them mere slaves to machines. The Treasurer would agree that in this course of conduct he

was not taking the right step for building up a capable class of artisans in Western Australia. No country which sacrificed its employees to machinery, which made them mere unskilled tenders of those machines, would ever build up the units of the industrial classes into competent tradesmen. In regard to another point, not only was it true that book-binding work was being given to prisoners, but a large amount of printing work also was being carried out in the Fremantle gaol. The primary idea had been to teach a certain proportion of prisoners the trade of printing; as others were taught boot-making and other trades, in order that they might have a means of livelihood on being released from their confinement. But in this tendency of giving more and more of the work to the Fremantle prison the Government were depriving those outside the gaols of the right to carry out this work, and were forcing honest workers into the ranks of the unemployed or driving them to a desperation that would result in making them inmates of prisons. The mere statement of that fact was a condemnation of the existing economic order.

The Treasurer: What would you suggest?

Mr. Gordon: Read *America at Work*.

Mr. BATH: The Treasurer and the hon. member for Zoological Gardens would have to go to some school of sociology or social economics to learn what was the redress.

The Treasurer: What would you suggest?

Mr. BATH: A rational suggestion would be found in the extension of the idea of State manufacture, and in the further idea that in the march of invention—in the perfection of new machinery—that machinery should not be made labourer-saving but labour-saving; so that every new machine would lighten the burden of the workers without reducing the number of workers employed.

The Treasurer: If you had a machine working automatically for a week would you let a man stand looking at it?

Mr. BATH: There was no machine that would run without someone attending

to it. Did the Treasurer know of any machine that could be so run?

The Treasurer: A machine printing telegraph forms will run on one job for a week; a boy feeds it. You would not have a man to watch the boy?

Mr. BATH: As pointed out by the member for Balkatta, the Government, which was supposed to exercise a paternal care, was setting an example which private employers were not prepared to follow, namely, that of employing unskilled boy labour for the machines to the exclusion of the men who hitherto had obtained a livelihood by those machines. The member for Canning had asked him to quote the book *America at Work*. If the member for Canning had read that book he would find that the skilled artisans received better wages in America than in any other part of the world. The tendency there was to employ more and more men from the technical schools to the exclusion of those who had not acquired the special knowledge there to be derived. There was nothing for Western Australia to gain by employing boys to tend machines, thereby building up a class of jackeroo workers who, when they ceased to be boys, would have no greater skill than was required to tend a machine.

The TREASURER: If the member had been correct in his statement one might have taken more notice of his remarks. He (the Treasurer) absolutely denied that the Government had set the example of employing boys to do men's work. It was out of place in the Leader of the Opposition to get up and reiterate a statement which had been disproved in that House time and time again. It was all very well for members to growl about the Printing Office. That office had been reorganised, and it was impossible to thoroughly reorganise a department of its description without treading on somebody's corns. The hon. member knew full well the condition into which the Printing Office had previously drifted. Members on the Opposition side of the House had declared that it was nothing but a loafing shop; and so it had been. The office had now been reorganised; it had been cleaned out, and was to-day in a healthy condition. Those who had

to go in the process naturally complained. The value of the work done in the prison last year was about £800. Was that vital to the trade? The Government had not done anything that was not done in the past. The Labour Government had printing done in the prison, and thought it economical.

Mr. Bath: It was only £32 worth.

The TREASURER: In fact the Labour Government started the work. Why was it started unless it was intended to continue it? The work had been conducted by this Government on a moderate scale, and it was proposed to so continue it. There was no desire to swell the operations at the gaol; the officers were instructed to keep down the quantity of work sent to the gaol in order that one class of trade might not be injured. No large order had been sent to the gaol. Certain rough books had been made for the Education Department, but it was not a large order, and it was a class of work that had always been done at the gaol, and it was proposed to continue it as being true economy in the interests of the Government. The matter the member for Balkatta had laid much stress on had already, he thought, been made perfectly clear. The hon. member was misled in connection with the one man one machine principle. No such custom existed anywhere in the Commonwealth. Even in New Zealand there was no restriction as to one man one machine. In 1907, when the New Zealand Printers' Union made a claim, the award dealing with that portion of the claim provided "that the employers were not to be limited to the number of machines to be worked by any journeyman, and that the employer should have full discretion in the management and arranging of the working of the machines in his factory, and could make such regulations, not inconsistent with the award, as he might think necessary for the proper working of his business." Could there be anything more emphatic? The award also said, "that feeders could be employed to feed machines at such wages as might be agreed upon between the employer and the worker, that the feeder must not make-ready any job or do any other work that in the custom of the trade should be done by journeymen,

but that where a machinist was employed a feeder might assist him in making ready." The Leader of the Opposition complained that we were bringing up boys who were not learning their trade, but that was because the unions would not allow boys to assist journeymen, or to attempt to do journeymen's work.

Mr. Bath: They ask for a proper system of apprenticeship, which the employers will not agree to.

The TREASURER: In New Zealand it was recognised that the boys working on these machines should have some means of gaining experience, and, therefore, it was stipulated that they could assist machinists in making-ready. Next we had the Victorian Wages Board. A decision given in 1905 made provision for male and female feeders, but made no restriction as to the number of machines to be worked by one man. Again, in Great Britain the arrangement, made in 1905, between the master printers and the printing machinists and binders provided the minimum wage for a machine manager having in his charge two machines. Telegrams had, as promised, been sent to the different States of the Commonwealth to this effect, "How many letter-press machines does one journeyman mind in your office; do you employ feed boys?" The reply from Wellington, New Zealand was, "Number unlimited; machine feeders employed." The reply from Brisbane was, "According to run, one man two machines; we employ feeders." The reply from Adelaide was, "One journeyman two machines, boy feeders." The reply from Melbourne was, "Each journeyman usually minds two machines; feeder boys are employed." Again, the reply from Launceston was, "Union conditions under jurisdiction Melbourne Typographical Society." These he had just read. It was unnecessary to go further. Even if there was an isolated case where one man worked one machine, perhaps it was owing to the exigencies of the office. There might be a large number of small orders in which case one man would be constantly attending to one machine, running an hour on one order and then readjusting the machine and starting on another order. But where there was continuity of work, where large

quantities of the same class of work were turned out, the machine ran automatically, and it was unnecessary for the machinist to be constantly attending to it. The difference between colour printing and ordinary work had been explained. In colour printing we employed one man for one machine, because it was necessary that the machinist should be constantly attending to the colours, but in addition he had a girl or two feeding the machine. His time was constantly occupied looking after the machine. The object of the Government was, and the Government Printer's instructions were, to adhere to the arbitration awards of the State, and to treat the employees in the department on exactly the same footing as the employees in private firms were treated. This the Government Printer was doing, taking it all round, though occasionally there might be slight differences. It was a most ungenerous statement that we were employing boys where men should be employed, especially in the bookbinding trade. Mr. McCallum, at one time secretary of the union, before the Arbitration Court said that the number of employees in the Printing Office had considerably decreased and that there was only half the number employed previously, but explained that a lot of unskilled work which had usually been done by skilled workers was now done by unskilled hands. Previously, unskilled work had been done by journeymen, instead of by unskilled labour. That conclusively proved his (the Treasurer's) contentions, and he hoped the Committee would accept the explanation.

Mr. SWAN: The Treasurer had not answered the charges made. They were substantially true. The telegrams received did not say that one journeyman was controlling several machines in other States. Probably the employees in the Printing Office would be satisfied if the system of one man to two machines was adopted here, because it was not in existence now. The statement was made, and he believed it, that one man was in charge of several machines, that boys assisted in feeding, and that if any accident occurred to a machine the journeyman was held responsible and had to pay for it.

The prison printing system had been carried too far. No doubt, it was true that the system was introduced by the Labour Government.

Mr. Bath: To give prisoners a chance of learning a trade.

Mr. SWAN: As in many other things the ideas of the Labour Government had been murdered by maladministration, and had been carried far beyond the limits set upon them by the people introducing them. The trouble was that prisoners came into competition with a trade that was in ordinary circumstances a dying trade owing to the introduction of machinery. More work was being done at the gaol than should be done. First-class work was being done, as he had himself seen. Prisoners certainly should not be kept in idleness. There was no objection to their being employed as in the past in clearing and replanting work in the timber districts, but it was unreasonable for the Treasurer to bring prisoners into competition in a dying trade. In reply to an interjection by the member for Pilbara the Treasurer asked whether it was expected that a man should be kept in charge of the machine which worked automatically for hours. There were many cases in this State in Government departments where this was done.

The Treasurer: Where?

Mr. SWAN: In the Midland Junction workshops.

The Treasurer: That should not be the case.

Mr. SWAN: The labour organisations that would be affected by an innovation of that description in that department were possibly stronger than those affected by the introduction of prison labour and of the existing system with regard to machinery in the Printing Office. If there were such a reduction as that in other departments there would be considerable trouble. There was too much boy labour engaged in the State workshops already. Mention had been made of the treatment meted out to officials of the Printing Office, and he desired to refer to the case of Mr. Smith, who was at one time an overseer there. Notwithstanding the fact that several of the higher paid officials had been granted large pensions. Mr.

Smith, after 29 years' continuous service in the Printing Office, was refused a pension.

Mr. WALKER: With regard to the question of prison labour which had been introduced on this vote, he doubted whether there was any other civilised country in the world who used their prison labour within their own boundaries. It was wise that prisoners should be employed and be kept active in mind and body, not only for their own good but also for the good of the community; but other large nations, in utilising that labour, generally did so by means of exportation. They did not allow the products of prison labour to compete with the products of the labours of their own people.

The Treasurer: That is not Federal.

Mr. WALKER: It was right. Prison labour should never be allowed to compete with the honest labour of the community.

The Treasurer: Would you dump it into a neighbouring State?

Mr. WALKER: If this labour had to be got rid of he would much rather send it to China than keep it in this State to compete with our own men. The whole question was certainly one of looking after our own family and of "charity begins at home." Were it by printing or any other work it was not just to allow that work to deprive of a job a man who had perhaps a family to keep here. What had actually happened in consequence of this unfair competition? Printers were now walking the streets, and many of them had been compelled to leave the State.

Mr. Bath: If the system is extended it will mean that we will have to go to prison to get a job.

Mr. WALKER: And they would be better off too. He had personally met very many printers during the last month who were out of work. They had gone through a long apprenticeship to become expert at their trade, but now owing to the introduction of up-to-date-machinery they found there was nothing for them to do. No trade had been affected by the introduction of modern labour-saving machinery to the extent the printing trade had. The printers who were out of work

had no chance of getting a job, and were in a state of almost chronic despair, certainly in a state of great mental suffering and physical affliction. While their hands were idle, their hopes blighted and their hearts despairing, the work they could do and should do was given to the prisoners in gaol. These latter at least had shelter, their minds and time were occupied, and their food, although not luxurious, was enough to keep body and soul together. That was not the case with the printers out of a job, who had lost their credit because of their adversities. That was an outrageous state of affairs. While there was no work in the Government Printing Office there was work that should be done by printers given to those in gaol. It made those in the trade feel there was no reward for keeping honest. The Government who should have regard for the welfare of their citizens never gave them a thought. So long as the gaol-bird could be got to do the work for nothing it was given to him. Let the other man starve, or if he wanted a job go to prison for it. That system was wrong economically, wrong from the side of humanity, wrong in every respect, and it should be stopped. Were the prisoners of the State to be the chief workers and all others slaves, with no chance whatever? The Treasurer should give an assurance that the system would be discontinued. The protest recently made by the machinists at the Printing Office was also a just one. Reference had been made to the customs in the Eastern States, but our system was worse than theirs, for there one man had to attend two machines, while here one man had to attend to a great many.

The Treasurer: There is no limit in New Zealand.

Mr. WALKER had referred to the Commonwealth. If the men here had the same advantages as existed in Melbourne, Sydney, or Adelaide they would be quite satisfied. But no; the example of New Zealand, where there was no limit, must be adopted. The actions of the Government with regard to this department were not of a sort that provided an advertisement for the State, for when men heard that the work was given to prisoners and

the officials were treated in the way the machinists at the Government Printing Office were, surely they would think Western Australia was a good place to keep away from. Above all things the Government should be just to their workmen, for they should be looked upon as model employers, so that every private employer could say they were imitating the actions of the Government, feeling when they said this that they were doing something which was very meritorious. The Government instead of having that paternal feeling which governments were supposed to have, had no regard whatever for them, but set the very worst example that could be followed. If an employee of the Government could be humbled, reduced, put down to the lowest possible level of existence, this Government would do it; and it was against that he protested. If the Government desired to dignify the State, elevate the citizens and make them proud of being residents of the State, then the example they should set should be one of justice, one of generosity and, above all, one of humanity towards those who worked for them, the chief employers of labour in the community.

Mr. ANGWIN: Some time ago tenders were called for the supply of books for the various departments, and the Government Printer was the successful tenderer and consequently got the work. The books were supplied, and he understood that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction because they had not been made in accordance with the specifications laid down when tenders were invited. If a number of these books were made in the gaol there might be some just reason why they were not manufactured in the manner which had been specified. He would like some information on this subject from the Minister, but he did not suppose it could be supplied forthwith. He hoped, however, the Minister would be able to state later on whether it was correct that there was considerable dissatisfaction because of the manner in which these books had been supplied by the Government Printer.

The Treasurer: Were the books made in the gaol?

Mr. ANGWIN: That could not be said, but they were certainly not manufactured in accordance with the specifications.

Mr. GILL: He had to admit not having read the telegrams which the Treasurer said he had received from various parts of the Commonwealth regarding the state of affairs which existed throughout Australia, and which were said to be similar to those existing in the printing establishment in this State. However, he hoped the Treasurer would at least place the men in the Government Printing Office in Perth on the same footing as they were in the worst places in Australia.

The Treasurer: The men are on the same footing as men are in Victoria, Queensland and South Australia.

Mr. GILL: Each man should have two machines to look after and that should be the limit. In our printing office a man had as many as four machines to look after. With regard to prison labour, he was surprised to find the Treasurer taking up the stand that he did. If the Treasurer had the interest of this State at heart he would see that some other methods were adopted in dealing with prison labour. It could be used to much better advantage instead of keeping people out of employment. Certainly the State was in a bad condition, but it was not in such a condition that it required the services of the prisoners to pull it out of its difficulty.

The Treasurer: How would you employ the prisoners?

Mr. GILL: In planting pines in the South-West.

The Treasurer: Would that not compete with agriculturists?

Mr. GILL: Our agriculturists had plenty to do in clearing their own land. If we had agriculturists in the true sense of the word they would be fully occupied in devoting the whole of their time to their own land. The work in connection with the planting of pines could be given to prisoners with advantage to themselves and to the State. Those pine trees would be a great source of profit, for they would be largely required in the future in connection with the manufacture of fruit cases. The Treasurer should give more

consideration to honest men and good citizens than he had done in the past, especially in regard to the Printing Office.

Mr. BATH: In discussing the Estimates on a previous occasion he had pointed out the unnecessary amount of printing which took place in connection with the issue of the *Government Gazette*. By cutting this down very considerably he was of opinion that a great saving could be effected in the cost. He had a copy before him of the issue of the 18th December, and on the first page he found in regard to the proclamation of a bank holiday that it occupied three inches of space. It was found necessary in making this proclamation to devote several lines in very small type to set forth the titles of the Governor, or a good portion of them, and then ending it with many etceteras. These etceteras if used earlier would save a good deal of type setting, and then it went on, "given under my hand and seal . . ." and the balance occupied many more lines. Every bank holiday was set forth by proclamation which could easily be printed in a few lines, just as public holidays were gazetted. Turning to the land reservation column it was found there that there was a column and a half proclamation of a rifle range, and it was deemed necessary to set forth a great amount of verbiage in which greetings were extended and in which there was also mention of appurtenances, powers, reservations, conditions, rights and privileges, all of which appeared to him to be absolutely unnecessary.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: I thought the hon. member was an advocate of the retention of old institutions.

Mr. BATH: Of the traditions which were absolutely valueless he was a strong opponent, traditions which involved lots of time and entailed a great amount of expense and which appeared to him to be quite unnecessary. He would stick to traditions which were valuable. All these which he had quoted, however, it seemed to him were a waste of time and money to publish, and people who had to peruse the *Gazette* in order to ascertain the information had to wade through all these columns of print to find out the

item of information that they wanted. They had to pan a dish of dirt to get the grain of metal that they were after. If necessary it might be wise to introduce a short Act to enable the Government to dispense with this form of introduction to announcements.

The TREASURER: In connection with the matter referred to by the Leader of the Opposition he took action some months ago but it had since escaped his memory. It was his intention to see whether the power existed to curtail these announcements. He fancied that the form was statutory; at any rate he would obtain advice from the Crown Law authorities and see whether it was possible to cut down the matter published in the *Government Gazette*. He agreed that it was quite possible to cut down these announcements. A considerable saving had already been effected in connection with the publication of the *Government Gazette*. In 1906-7 it cost £5,270, then in the next year £4,141, and this year the estimate was £3,487.

Vote put and passed.

[Mr. Taylor took the Chair.]

.Vote—Public Service Commissioner, £847:

Mr. ANGWIN: In connection with this vote he desired to enter his protest against the Public Service Commissioner criticising or interfering with the policy of the people as he had done in his recent report. There was no power in the Public Service Act which gave him the right to try to counteract any good thing that may be introduced by speaking against it, or doing anything which would have a tendency to prevent the officers of the various departments taking an interest in carrying out the policy introduced by the Government. The Public Service Commissioner was an avowed opponent of the scheme of decentralisation, not only in connection with the Lands Department but also in connection with other departments. It was found that the aim of the Commissioner was to try and centralise everything at the seat of government. If members referred to the Commissioner's report it would be found

on the question of decentralisation that he stated—

"The decentralisation scheme has been shown to be unworkable because it necessitated the removal of the permanent records of the Lands Department from Perth to the provinces. The legal, banking, and commercial communities naturally objected, and promptly showed that it was altogether against the interests of public business for such to be done. The remainder of the scheme hardly deserves the designation of 'decentralisation,' or as far as the Commissioner has at present been able to gauge, justification for appointing such high-sounding officials as 'District Commissioners of Land.'"

I do not know why a title given to any officer should be detrimental to any scheme of decentralisation. Then he goes on to say—

"With proper organisation at headquarters the duties attached to the office of Chief Land Agent should, if carried out efficiently, reasonably meet the requirements of the case."

In 1905 the Minister then controlling the Lands Department had stated that it was his policy to introduce a decentralisation scheme. In 1906 this policy was again brought forward by the Minister in charge, who said it was his intention to open offices in the principal centres of settlement in order to provide greater facilities for those who wished to take up land. This was a matter of policy, and he (Mr. Angwin) maintained that the Public Service Commissioner in criticising an act of policy was going beyond his rightful domain. If, for instance, the Government should introduce a policy of manufacturing agricultural implements, were they to be dictated to by the Public Service Commissioner because the commercial community would lose certain profits, because the legal fraternity would not have so many law suits over the machinery, and because the banking community would lose the high rate of interest at present paid to them for discounting bills given for machinery supplied by private firms? It would be highly detrimental if, for these reasons or for any other reasons, the

Public Service Commissioner were to be allowed to dictate to the Government in matters of policy. When any official attempted to frustrate the wishes of the people as expressed through their representatives in Parliament it was necessary that members should speak out distinctly. The Public Service Commissioner had been appointed to see fair play between the civil servants and the State, but when he obtruded himself on a matter of policy he was going outside his jurisdiction and it was time hon. members should put him in his place as appointed by the Public Service Act.

Mr. BATH: It was very difficult sometimes to determine where the policy of the State began and where the question of administration ended so far as the policy of decentralisation was concerned. If the Public Service Commissioner were of opinion that any scheme, even if it were one propounded by the Government, was not likely to utilise the services of the officers of the department to the best advantage it would be essentially within his province to point out that fact.

Mr. Angwin: He had not mentioned officers.

Mr. BATH: Nevertheless the Public Service Commissioner was dealing with officers in his report. After all, the Public Service Commissioner was answerable for any course he might adopt, and probably he was prepared to explain his attitude in this particular respect. What he (Mr. Bath) had to complain of was that the expressed will of Parliament, as embodied in the Public Service Act of 1904, was to a certain extent being ignored as the result of the hostility existing between the Public Service Commissioner and the Ministers administering the various departments.

The Premier: Who says so?

Mr. BATH: It was apparent from the attitude of the Premier. One had only to remember the opinions expressed by the Premier immediately prior to the adjournment over the Christmas holidays to recognise that undoubtedly there was friction between the Public Service Commissioner and the Ministers.

The Premier: I said there was a difference of opinion, and always will be.

Mr. BATH: It amounted to more than a difference of opinion. The heat imported by the Premier into his remarks in replying to certain criticisms went to show that it was more than a mere difference of opinion. At all events it was that kind of difference of opinion which hampered the Public Service Commissioner in the carrying out of those duties directly assigned to him by Parliament. One of two courses ought to be adopted: the Public Service Act ought to be administered and the Commissioner given the fullest opportunity of exercising the powers vested in him; or else the Act ought to be repealed and a reversion made to the old order. He (Mr. Bath) for one would not be satisfied to go back to the old order. He was convinced that under the existing system the public service of the State was conducted better and with a greater regard to the respective merits of the men in it than could be hoped for under the old system of Ministerial patronage. He did not wish the Committee to countenance a policy growing up under the temporary labour sections of the Public Service Act, namely, of ignoring the Commissioner to the extent which was being done, and thus practically nullifying the Act. In connection with the appointment of the Superintendent of State Batteries there had been a violation of the Act. How otherwise could it have been made possible in respect to so important an appointment for the Government to continue that appointment for three years as a temporary one? It seemed to him that if the temporary labour sections could be stretched to cover an appointment like that there was something absolutely wrong. In still another respect the uses that were being made of the temporary labour sections had never been contemplated when those provisions were inserted in the Act. The object of those provisions had been primarily to allow some elasticity in the administration of the Act: because it had been recognised that in a State extending in all directions it was essential that there should be some such elasticity, some amount of reservation from the strict administration of the sections of the

Act. But it had never been intended that the Government should be able so to use those provisions as to get behind the Public Service Commissioner and his right to supervise the appointments to the public service; and secondly, to secure men as temporary employees to carry out work which if performed by officers in permanent positions would carry a much higher salary. The regulations relating to temporary employment provided that the permanent head or the head of a sub-department, when forwarding an application for assistance should state what amount of salary was in his opinion appropriate to the work to be performed. But it was also provided that the rate of payment should be the same as that paid to permanent employees for similar work. As a matter of fact, temporary employees in receipt of £156 a year had been employed on work which, if it had been done by a permanent officer, would have carried a salary of £200 or £250. In one instance of which he knew the work done would, had the position been a permanent one, have carried a salary of £350 a year. It meant that the services of the temporary employees were being obtained at a sweating rate. He (Mr. Bath) was further informed that the Government, recognising that this regulation was in existence, were compelling the temporary employees to sign agreements to the effect that no matter what the work might be or the salary it would carry if the position were a permanent one, they must perform that work for the payment of £150 per annum.

The Treasurer: I have never heard of such a thing.

Mr. BATH: Such tactics, while they might have been expected in an unscrupulous private employer, were hardly to be looked for in the Government of the State.

The Treasurer: Quote one of those agreements.

Mr. BATH: Certain temporary employees had been engaged in making the alterations necessary to the introduction of the card system. These men had been employed at night, and in order

to avoid the necessity of paying them for the Christmas holidays, they had been discharged at the beginning of the holidays, and re-employed at their termination so that the Government which had to provide holidays for the permanent employees would not need to give the temporary staff the same privilege. That was in connection with the Lands Department. Some officers in the service who knew the regulations, which had the force of law, and who, while in receipt of £156, had been engaged on work carrying higher salaries as permanent positions, had made application for the payment to which they were entitled to under the regulations; but the Government, though having no legal answer to the claim, had attempted to burke the issue and deprive these men of that to which they were entitled by putting them to the expense of legal process and following all the legal byways the Government sought to impose on them. The Government should recognise their legal and just obligation. If a position, as a permanent position, was worth a certain salary, the officer holding the position, whether called a temporary employee or not, should receive the salary of the position. One objected strenuously to this method of getting behind the Public Service Commissioner and at the same time sweating temporary employees, and it was to be hoped the Government, instead of putting these men to the expense of legal proceedings, would recognise their liability and pay the salaries due to them, whatever arrangement might be made in the future in regard to other employees. If this conduct was going to continue, Parliament would have to seriously consider the necessity of placing temporary employees under the charge of the Public Service Commissioner so that there might be a fair deal all round.

The Minister for Mines: Do you say that the head of the battery department was kept on for three years as a temporary employee?

Mr. BATH: The appointment of superintendent was made for three years, and was a temporary position.

The Minister for Mines: The agreement is just the same as that of Professor Lowrie's.

Mr. BATH: Was it not in the temporary class?

The Minister for Mines: It may be.

Mr. BATH: In reply to a question relative to this appointment, the Minister had said that the Public Service Commissioner had acquiesced. That was a mild sort of word conveying the impression that it was only with considerable reluctance that the Public Service Commissioner had been induced to go to that extent. The reply was that the appointment was made under Section 36 of the Act. This section provided that if a Minister considered temporary assistance necessary and the Commissioner could not supply it from other departments, the under secretary could from the register of persons available for employment choose those best fitted for the work, but any person so chosen could not stay in the service for more than twelve months or an additional six months in certain cases, and could not be re-employed during the six months at the conclusion of the twelve months or eighteen months as the case might be; but Subsection 7 provided that the Governor-in-Council could temporarily suspend the operation of certain subsections in respect of any department or officer specified. So in order that there might be a departure from the practice of advertising a position as vacant and calling for applicants and selecting the best for the position, it was necessary for the Government to take advantage of Subsection 7, which probably was never intended to apply to an appointment such as that referred to, so that the appointment might be for a longer term than was provided in the Act. Other instances could be quoted showing the unsatisfactory manner in which the Act was being administered. We must either have the Act administered as Parliament desired when it was passed, or we should wipe it out altogether and let Ministers take the responsibility of resorting to the old system of ministerial patronage in the appointment of officers to the public service.

Mr. FOULKES: No one could say after a perusal of the Public Service Commissioner's report that there had been any attempt on the part of the Commissioner to try to dictate to Parliament what the policy of any legislation should be. On page 14 of his report the Commissioner dealt with the proposed decentralisation scheme in regard to the Lands Department saying, "The decentralisation scheme had been shown to be unworkable, because it necessitated the removal of the permanent records of the Lands Department from Perth to the provinces. The legal, banking, and commercial communities naturally objected, and so it was altogether against the interests of public business. The remainder of the scheme hardly deserved the designation of decentralisation or justification for appointing such high-sounding officials as District Commissioners of Land; because, with proper organisation at head quarters, the duties attached to the office of Chief Land Agent could, if carried out efficiently, reasonably meet the requirements of the case." That was all we knew in regard to the proposed scheme. All we heard in the Chamber was an expression of opinion on the part of the Minister for Lands in regard to the action of the Public Service Commissioner. Unfortunately, we were in the dark as to the reasons; they were not set out at sufficient length in the report. We had the views of the Minister with regard to his proposals for this decentralisation scheme, but unfortunately, we had no reply by the Public Service Commissioner to the views enunciated by the Minister, so it would be grossly unfair to the Commissioner if we did not give him a further opportunity of setting out more fully the reasons why he could not agree to the Minister's proposals. When asked whether he had not received some proposals from the Public Service Commissioner dealing with reforms in the administration of the Lands Department, and whether he could produce them and lay them on the Table, the Premier, to one's amazement, had replied that if the proposals could be found he would be very glad to lay them on the

Table. The mere fact that the Premier seemed to hesitate as to whether he could find them showed that he did not place much value on the representations made by the Commissioner. But it was only fair to the Public Service Commissioner and to the public servants to know definitely what proposals were sent to the Minister, and why they were rejected. Unfortunately, we heard only one version in regard to matters concerning this office, and it was unfair to come to any decision unless we had a full explanation from the Public Service Commissioner with regard to the way in which his proposals were met. When the Premier complained at Bunbury that he was unable to reward extra merit on the part of any civil servant or to grant any honorarium, the Commissioner sent a letter to the Premier saying, "It seemed desirable to point out that it was not the case that a reward or honorarium could not be granted under the Public Service Act. If the Government considered a reward or honorarium should be granted for bona fide special service, and were prepared to provide the necessary funds, he could hardly conceive the set of circumstances which would cause him to raise any difficulties under the Act, especially as under the Act there were specific facilities afforded for recognition by way of rewards and gratuities." One would have thought that was plain enough, but already this session the Premier had complained again that he was unable to reward exceptional merit and special services rendered by civil servants. But here we had before us the reply of the Public Service Commissioner. It seemed perfectly clear and straightforward and proved there was ample power to any Administration to confer any honorarium they thought fit. Continuing, the Public Service Commissioner said—

"What I strive against is preferential treatment in defiance of regulations, as when this is allowed it creates in the staff as a whole a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction, the reflex action of which is against the best interests of the State."

Further he stated—

"A permanent increase of salary to reward a passing circumstance is objectionable, firstly because it becomes a recurring annual charge on the State, and secondly because subsequently in dealing with promotions it gives an officer so favoured an unfair advantage over the vast majority of his fellows, who are unfortunately called upon to labour in spheres which are not so directly in touch with headquarters, but which nevertheless are of equal importance and value to the State."

That was sufficient to prove conclusively that Ministers had full power to reward special services. The only exception taken was that they should not be of a permanent character and that the preferential treatment should be in accordance with the regulations. No Minister could complain of these stipulations. Many charges had been brought against the Public Service Commissioner. The other evening the Premier complained that the Commissioner would not agree to reward adequately the services of the Engineer-in-Chief. He said that the Public Service Commissioner would not agree to a salary of £1,200, but thought the position was worth only £1,000. That complaint of the Premier might be justifiable or not; but in all of these cases where there were complaints by Ministers an opportunity should be given to the Public Service Commissioner to give his reasons for the action he had taken. It was most unfair to judge a man unless he was given a full chance of explaining his position. It would be grossly unfair for any Ministers to set out their version of the facts in dispute without allowing the Public Service Commissioner an opportunity of explaining his side of the case. It would be useless for him (Mr. Foulkes) to move for papers now. There would be no opportunity for him to have the motion considered, but what he would like the Government to agree to was that they should ask the Public Service Commissioner to forward a report as to whether the Minister for Lands had, under Section 46 of the Public Service Act, made any proposition to the Public Service Commissioner that for the more

economic, efficient, or convenient working of the Lands Department a particular disposition of officers and rearrangement of work should be effected, and that if such propositions had been made by the Minister, what were the suggestions the Public Service Commissioner had refused to act upon and the reasons for such refusal; also that the Public Service Commissioner should be asked to forward reports as to whether any requests had during the last two years been made by any Minister for the retirement or dismissal or censure of any civil servant, on the alleged grounds of incapacity, unfitness, or misconduct, and as to how such requests (if any) had been dealt with by the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. Monger: Who provided that?

Mr. Gordon: The Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. FOULKES: If the Government would agree to these proposals and a report of that kind being obtained from the Public Service Commissioner, who should set out in full his reasons why this so-called decentralisation scheme should not be approved of by him, and also as to his refusal to increase the salary of the Engineer-in-Chief, and his reasons for refusing to grant rewards to public servants, members would be better able to judge of the dispute. The Premier had said a few days ago that if he could find certain papers containing the scheme of reform as initiated by the Public Service Commissioner he would be glad to lay them on the Table. It was to be hoped the Premier would arrange that the Public Service Commissioner should forward a report as soon as possible, setting out in full the reasons why he had on several occasions disagreed with the various proposals made by the different Ministers.

[Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.]

Mr. NANSON: The proposition put forward by the member for East Fremantle in regard to expressions of opinion by the Public Service Commissioner, more especially when they rrenched upon what were called matters of policy, did not meet with his approbation. It was very difficult indeed to

draw a line and say what was a matter of policy and what was not. One generally found that if some scheme the Government or a member approved of very strongly was disapproved of by a civil servant who was authorised in his reports to express opinions, the officer was taken to task for expressing an opinion upon what was called a matter of policy. But in the Public Service Act there was a section which defined the duties of the Commissioner in regard to making an annual report upon the public service, and it was stated there that in such report there should be set forth any changes and measures necessary for improving the method of working of the public service and especially for ensuring efficiency and economy in working. The wording of the section was very wide, and when the Act was passed it was purposely made wide. It was a very poor proposal that could not stand a little hostile criticism, and when we found members suggesting that the Public Service Commissioner should be taken to task for criticising the proposals of the Government, it did not say much for the proposals if they could not stand a little criticism. In regard to the passage in the report to which particular exception had been taken, he had yet to learn that there had been an effective reply to that criticism of the Commissioner. In the first place we were without any real, definite information as to what was this decentralisation policy in the Lands Department. When he went into the portion of the country with which he was most familiar the complaint was that under recent conditions in the department there had been more centralisation than ever, and that what the Premier regarded as decentralisation apparently was in the country districts, and by the persons more immediately concerned, regarded as centralisation of the most odious type. It was very desirable we should have a Commissioner pointing such matters out. While agreeing that it might perhaps be unfair to the Commissioner that he should not be allowed an opportunity to reply to the strictures passed by members of the Government on

his recommendations, what struck him as of infinitely greater importance was that it was unfair to the country, unfair to the taxpayer, that the Commissioner should not have the fullest freedom in setting forth his views, as such views were not those of a politician actuated by the exigencies possibly of party, but the views of an official who was placed in an unassailable position, and who, whether he be right or wrong in the conclusions he arrived at, must be regarded as being actuated absolutely by the desire to give to the Committee and to the country at large a perfectly unbiased view as to how the public service of the State should be administered. We would not be acting in the interests of good government or in the interests of the country if, when criticism was indulged in by the Public Service Commissioner, any words of members were employed which would lead the Commissioner to draw in his horns, so to speak, and refrain from indulging in that plain language which, though it might hurt feelings in some quarters, would probably in the long run be of benefit to the community at large, if not to the Government for the time being. In the report of the Public Service Commissioner some reference was made to the administration of the public service, concerning which the Committee would be lacking in their duty if they did not demand from the Government an explanation, not yet given. The question of the large number of temporary employees engaged by the Government had been referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, and therefore he need not deal with it at any great length. The Commissioner referred to some of the grievances under which some temporary employees laboured because they were paid less than the rate given to permanent employees. That circumstance alluded to by the Commissioner led to another incident which fostered discontent in the ranks of the permanent employees, and that was that temporary employees were paid a higher rate than the permanent employees. In connection with the appointment of temporary employees we found the Commissioner making charges of a most serious description as to the

engagement of undesirable persons on the temporary staff. He pointed out the moral effect of this on the permanent staff, and especially on the younger members, when officers who had been compelled to leave the service for grave offences were again employed as temporary officers. The Commissioner pointed out in his report that there had been two or three flagrant cases during the past year, and he had had occasion to indite some decided minutes on the question. These minutes should certainly be in the possession of the Committee. The Commissioner quoted the case of a man who had embezzled considerable sums of money and who was actually taken on out of mistaken sympathy, and even given letters of recommendation regardless of the broader issues at stake.

The Premier: What page are you quoting from?

Mr. NANSON : These remarks would be found on page 17. He would like to know what Minister was responsible for these particular appointments. One did not wish in the cases of men who had made mistakes in life that their errors should be published to the world and that their chances of obtaining future employment should be destroyed ; therefore he did not ask that in these cases the names of the civil servants in every instance should be given, but there should be some means of finding out how it came about that these persons were appointed, and by what Minister they were appointed. Of course there should be some explanation. It was a wise rule not to condemn until one had heard the other side, and unquestionably in this, as in other matters referred to in the Commissioner's report, there was real necessity for explanations to be given. When complaints of that kind were heard it was due to the Ministers themselves to endeavour to set right their administration in the eyes of the Committee and of the public. If such statements of the Commissioner went forth unchallenged and uncontradicted there could be only one conclusion drawn, and that was that there was no satisfactory answer to be given. He, however, was loth to believe that that was the position. He re-

garded the Commissioner as a very valuable check upon the administrative actions of whatever Government might be in office. He was not speaking with a feeling of hostility to the present occupants of the Government benches, far from it; but he recognised that it was always a good thing to have officials like the Auditor General and the Public Service Commissioner as watch dogs of Parliament, to check irregularities on the part of Administrations, irregularities which, though small in their initiatory stages, if allowed to pass, might assume proportions of a very dangerous character.

Mr. MONGER: The Commissioner must feel highly honoured at the strong advocacy which had been given to him by the members for Claremont and Greenough. One would almost think he had placed in their hands a brief to show Parliament what a capable officer he was. He had nothing unpleasant to say about the gentleman who held this high office, and who dictated to Parliament and to Ministers, and whose ruling on almost every occasion was practically accepted, a man who, in the case of one of the principal engineers in the State, recommended a reduction in that officer's salary by £200, either through ignorance or bias. He was referring—and he did not mind mentioning the name of the particular officer—to Mr. Muir. Any man holding the position of Commissioner who would make such a recommendation would do it either through bias or absolute ignorance.

Member: What position does Mr. Muir hold?

Mr. MONGER: He was the engineer deputed by the Western Australian Government to carry out recently the work of surveying the Transcontinental railway as far as this State was concerned.

Mr. Scaddan: It was prior to that that the Commissioner made the recommendation.

Mr. MONGER: Another matter had come under his personal notice, and that was in connection with the magistracy. The Commissioner recommended that Bunbury, Albany, and Geraldton should be placed in the first class list and the Eastern districts in a kind of minor position. The population of the Eastern dis-

tricts exceeded that of any of the other magisterial districts, and when that was pointed out to the Commissioner the only consolation that was given by him was that the Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton districts were a much harder crowd to deal with, in other words they were a less law-abiding community. Apart from all that, it was found that in 1904 the Public Service Commissioner was appointed for a period of seven years, and what he would like to know was, whether there was any chance of bringing forward a small amendment to the Public Service Act—

Mr. Troy: To shorten his life.

Mr. Taylor: To make him more pliable?

Mr. MONGER: No: more capable, I should say.

Mr. Scaddan: Tell us something about medical officers.

Mr. MONGER: I do not like the dirt that emanates from the—

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

Mr. MONGER: I think interjections of the kind which emanate as a rule from the member for Ivanhoe might be worthy of some notice in the particular locality he hails from.

Mr. Scaddan: There is something in them apparently.

The CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. MONGER: If the member for East Fremantle had moved in some way that the item should be reduced he (Mr. Monger) would have supported that reduction.

Mr. Bath: It is not too late for you to do that now.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Act under which the Public Service Commissioner had been appointed was passed in 1904, and immediately after making the appointment the Government had left office. Succeding Governments had at all times been hostile to the Act. Whether they had carried that hostility to the Public Service Commissioner or not he (Mr. Taylor) was not in a position to say, but it was clear that a gentleman appointed under an Act to which Ministers were hostile could not but feel himself somewhat hampered in the execution of his duties. He (Mr. Taylor) would venture to say that the Public Service Commissioner had never had a fair deal—had never been given a chance to satisfy the

Committee on the point of whether or not he was a good administrator. One had only to listen to the speeches delivered from the Ministerial side of the House to realise that the feeling amongst members of the Government and their supporters was to-day exactly as it had been when, in Opposition, they had opposed the passage of the Bill.

Mr. Gordon: Was the appointment opposed?

Mr. TAYLOR: The appointment had not been opposed for the reason that the Act gave power to the Government to make the appointment. However, the members of the Opposition had opposed the passage of the Bill as far as they dared, seeing that those representing metropolitan districts had civil servants among their constituents, and that these civil servants were anxious for improved conditions under which to work. The civil servants had desired to be placed in a position in which, consistent with their giving their best to the public service, due promotion would be assured. They had believed that they would obtain that improvement under a Public Service Commissioner. And in his (Mr. Taylor's) opinion they would have got it too had it not been for the change of Ministry. The present Government were admittedly hostile to the Act, and the member for York had felt pained that no opportunity was given for making some curtailment of the powers of the Public Service Commissioner which would have given Ministers an opportunity of distributing political favours amongst their friends in the service. It was generally understood that persons making applications for positions in the civil service wrote to their favourite Minister and apprised him of the fact that their applications were in; whereupon the Minister, probably by telephone, reminded the Public Service Commissioner that he (the Commissioner) had a certain application in, and intimated a desire that it should be submitted to the Minister. He (Mr. Taylor) was not in a position to know whether this was true, but it was common talk. It would be found too that some of those who had not been recommended by the Public Service Commissioner, whose names had merely been sub-

mitted by that gentleman in accordance with the expressed desire of the Minister, had been appointed above others specially recommended. If it were true it was scandalous. Certainly the Commissioner had had no opportunity of showing his skill as administrator of the department. The Premier himself had made a statement in the House only a short time ago as to the differences between himself and the Public Service Commissioner. Differences of opinion he (the Premier) had called them, but others might find a stronger name for them. He (Mr. Taylor) held no brief for the Public Service Commissioner, with whom indeed he had no communication other than a few casual conversations in the street; but he would say that if the Government would but accept the Public Service Commissioner's recommendations and give him a free hand to administer his department for 12 months or two years it would be known for certain whether that officer was a success or a failure. While the Commissioner was faced with the necessity of administering his department, not as he desired but as the Government directed, it was impossible to estimate his abilities. The Government were hostile to the Act; he (Mr. Taylor) would venture to say that they carried their hostility to the Commissioner himself.

The Premier: What justification have you for saying that the Government carry their hostility to the Commissioner?

Mr. TAYLOR: The Government succeeding that which had passed the Bill and appointed the Commissioner had been hostile to the Bill. The present Government was practically the same as the Rason Government—it was the same old team with a new leader. That being so, the hostility was there and it was carried to the gentleman who administered the Act. The Public Service Commissioner ought to be allowed to administer his department as he desired. At present it was but a shandy-gaff arrangement, partially Commissioner and partially Ministerial control. The Attorney General had openly complained that he could not promote those in his department whom he knew to be worthy of promotion. They had had an instance in the Mines Depart-

ment, where an engineer and metallurgist had been given the position of Superintendent of Public Batteries. The appointment had been made by the Ministry. Was that the way to get the best value out of the Public Service Commissioner? Had that gentleman made a straight-out recommendation to the Government in respect to this appointment? If any member were to move to reduce the vote he (Mr. Taylor) would not support the amendment, or leastways not as a protest against the administration of the Public Service Commissioner. It was noticeable however that the department was growing similarly to the Premier's Department: and it was the duty of the Committee to keep a vigilant eye over these new and growing departments.

Mr. WALKER: There seemed to be some slight element of party feeling in the discussion of this topic.

Mr. Johnson: It was introduced by the member for Greenough.

Mr. WALKER: There could be no party feeling in the discussion of a great question concerning a large section of the public, and affecting an important matter of State policy. It was impossible to have a Public Service Commissioner who could give anything like satisfaction to the "ins" or the "outs," or who could fulfil the duties expected of him under the Act. It was impossible for him to be omniscient, and to thoroughly understand all the qualifications of every public servant necessary to be employed in the administration of a large State; yet this task was imposed upon the Commissioner; and as no Commissioner could adequately perform it, one could safely say the present Commissioner could not adequately perform it. Some of his conduct, more particularly under the classification, had crushed more or less the hearts out of the civil servants, and had reduced the living energies of men into the cold precision of iron machines. All men were placed on the same level.

Mr. Johnson: The Public Service Association said differently.

Mr. WALKER: As in all other things there were certain individuals who dared to speak for the whole body politic; but

there were others who appeared to favour the Commissioner, not because he was their idol, but because he was, with all his defects, better than the old system. There was the fear of going back to the weak patronage of ministerial control. Surely there could be some scheme devised without having to go back to the old scheme?

Mr. Gordon: Put the right man in the place.

Mr. WALKER: It was not a case of the right man: possibly a better system could be devised of management and appeal boards, and so forth. The whole machinery at present was defective, had proved so, was broken down and had created almost universal dissatisfaction. No matter what power the Commissioner might have under the Act, the language used in his report was, to say the least, indiscreet. The Commissioner said in regard to the decentralisation of the Lands Department, "The decentralisation scheme has been shown to be unworkable." How shown? By whom? Where? Under what experiment? By what system? It was pure assertiveness.

Mr. Butcher: Finish the sentence!

Mr. WALKER: It said, "has been shown to be unworkable, because it necessitated the removal of the permanent records of the Lands Department from Perth to the provinces." If that was the reason, if that be logic, and if it was evidence of the capacity of the Public Service Commissioner, it condemned him absolutely. In the first place he did not show that it was proved, or that it was necessary that we should remove the permanent records of the Lands Department to the provinces. That could be done without, yet the whole scheme was condemned upon this one reason. No Government would ever propose that all the permanent records of the Lands Department should be removed into the provinces. Then where was the great logic in claiming that the scheme was defective because some of the permanent records might have to be removed into the provinces? If all were to be removed into the provinces, how could they be distributed in each of the provinces? Was it logic? But what

followed seemed to be the real reason actuating the Public Service Commissioner. It was not because of a defect, so far as the department was concerned, but it was because "the legal, banking, and commercial communities naturally objected." Everybody wanted to deal with the money of the whole of the State here in Perth, and wanted no distribution in the outside centres. They wanted to focus all enterprise, energy, life, and possibilities in Perth. The Weld Club! That was where this was inspired to make decentralisation impossible. They "showed promptly that it was altogether against the interests of public business," not against administration but against public business—the business of the banks and the commercial community. Those were the reasons on which the Commissioner condemned the scheme; but one asked the member for Greenough was this language dignified? If the hon. member were in the position of Public Service Commissioner—and one would have more confidence in his judgment than in Mr. Jull's—was this the language he would use, "the remainder of the scheme hardly deserved the designation of decentralisation or, as far as the Commissioner has at present been able to gauge, justification for appointing such high-sounding officials as District Commissioners of Land?" (*Mr. Nanson* interjected.) That did not come from the lungs, it came from the nose, there was no heart in it. Was it dignified on the part of the Public Service Commissioner? It was not dignified. It was neither criticism, nor fair condemnation. It was a sneer.

Mr. Nanson: There is no sneer in it.

Mr. WALKER: Then there is something defective in the hon. member's nasal organ. He did not desire to defend the Government system of decentralisation, for we had not the scheme fully before us, but it was evident that if there was any decentralisation there must be districts, and there was no harm in calling the officer in charge a district commissioner. The criticism showed the character and mind of the Public Service Commissioner. It showed the small

character of his judgment and criticism and it appeared as if it were a case of a man who desired to hit but did not know how, and seized upon small pretexts in order that he might have some possibility of striking at a small spot.

Mr. Taylor: In Queensland the officers were all termed commissioners of districts.

Mr. WALKER: There was no point in the Commissioner's contention and it was hardly worth mentioning, but he instanced it to show that the man's mind was not great, that it was not magnanimous, that he dealt in little things, and that all his conduct since his appointment had been little and pettifogging. He dealt with farthings, and knew nothing about the grandeur of wealth, either in feeling or cash. He (*Mr. Walker*) might be charged now with abusing a man when he was absent; but the Commissioner had challenged us. He had by his criticism invited a reply, and must accept the consequences. The Public Service Commissioner was not authorised by the Act to deal with policy, for the section said—

"The Commissioner shall furnish to the Governor for presentation to Parliament at least once in each year a report on the condition and efficiency of the public service and of the proceedings of the Commissioner; and, in such report there shall be set forth any changes and measures necessary for improving the method of the working of the public service, and especially for ensuring efficiency and economy therein and in each department thereof. The Commissioner shall, in such report, draw attention to any breaches or evasions of the Act which may have come under notice."

It was all about the public service, and the Commissioner was confined in his criticism to the public service. He had no right to deal with policy. A proposal which made a complete alteration in the administration of a great department was a matter that did not deal purely with the public service. It was for the general convenience of the public and welfare of the State and was not either of benefit or harm to the civil service.

Mr. Bath: Does it not affect the efficiency of the public service?

Mr. WALKER: No. How could it do so?

Mr. Bath: The policy of decentralisation is introduced to increase the efficiency of the service.

Mr. WALKER: It was a matter of policy. To take the contention of the hon. member, everything affected the efficiency of the service, for if a man was "sacked" to a certain extent it would destroy that efficiency. Surely this was a matter of policy. It was a change entirely in the method of administering the Lands Department. If the Public Service Commissioner was going to run the whole of the country what was the good of Ministers?

Mr. Taylor: The Government are no good anyway. Get them from this side.

Mr. WALKER: There was nothing under the sun that the member for Mt. Margaret could not do, were it to drive a steam engine, to guide a steamer over the rocks, to measure the heavens, yes, to tell the Infinite how to keep the moon in its course—there was not a thing he could not do. He knew it was a very grave misfortune that the hon. member was not on the Government benches, but in his absence what was the good of a Ministry while there was the Public Service Commissioner, seeing that they could not move unless he gave his direction. No alteration could be made in the land administration, one could not open an office in the back blocks, unless with the approval of the Commissioner. That was according to the Commissioner's opinion. He (Mr. Walker) had misunderstood Responsible Government if such things were possible, and Responsible Government still could exist. If every phase of public life was to be regulated by one man it was a case of dictatorship, not Responsible Government.

Mr. Nanson: The Commissioner was only criticising.

Mr. WALKER: The Commissioner forbade criticism. He, however, admitted his own liability, for only that morning he had read that the Commissioner was now beginning to call in the heads of the departments to consult with him, and

we were to have a little parliament of the heads of departments to confer every three months with Mr. Jull and act as a sort of advisory board. That was the first creditable thing he had known the Commissioner to be guilty of, for he recognised for once his liability.

Mr. Nanson: He is limited by the Act.

Mr. WALKER: The Act gave him control of the civil service, but did not give him control of policy. Professional men did not escape him, no matter what the character or nature of their profession, even a medical man. Of course the Commissioner knew everything about a medical man, and if it was a legal man he knew precisely his legal value. He was almost infallible. It was perfectly true that there had been a rebellion against this, and he did not wonder at it. No one could approve of the treatment of the temporary hands in the civil service; there the member for Greenough was on solid ground. If the Government were not satisfied with the Public Service Act and Mr. Jull with his autocratic powers, why did they not at once bring in an amending Act; that was the offence he (Mr. Walker) had against the Government. Let the Government, as it was incumbent upon them while they existed, at the earliest opportunity bring down an amendment of the Act; he had been expecting this for two years and he saw no signs of its approach. In the meantime the conduct of the Public Service Commissioner was such as might be expected of a man given his immense powers, but notwithstanding that, he was inimical to the welfare and efficiency of the civil service.

The PREMIER: In opening the discussion in connection with the vote, the member for East Fremantle referred to the fact that he did not consider it was one of the functions of the Public Service Commissioner to interfere with the policy of the Government. With that he was certainly in accord. Reference had been made that owing to the fact that the Government were not in accord with the Act it necessarily followed they must be hostile to the Commissioner. One could have a difference of opinion with the Public Service Commissioner with-

out being hostile to him personally, in the same way that members had political differences without any interference with their personal friendship. There had been differences of opinion and naturally these would continue. It was easy for a Minister to follow the line of least resistance and adopt every proposal of the Public Service Commissioner; that would save Ministers a considerable amount of criticism and would not necessitate a great waste of time. There had been one or two occasions when questions of policy had cropped up between the Ministers and the Public Service Commissioner. He mentioned these the other evening when speaking in connection with the decentralisation of the Lands Department, and in order that members might have the opportunity of going into those proposals it was his intention on the following day to place on the Table of the House the whole of the papers in connection with the decentralisation scheme. To give members an idea how very easy it was to differ from the Commissioner he would quote one instance. Soon after the passing of the Agricultural Bank Amendment Act, which provided for advances being made to settlers up to £300, the full value of improvements, there was a certain difference of opinion between the Public Service Commissioner and the manager of the Agricultural Bank in regard to the appointment of one or two clerks, with the result that applications were pouring in and were not being attended to. Some complaints were made and he (the Premier) instituted inquiries and found that the applications were being piled up. He pointed out to the Public Service Commissioner that by not coming to an understanding it meant that, as far as the policy of the Government was concerned, the Government were becoming discredited owing to the dispute between the two officials. He (the Premier) made an alteration then which both the Commissioner and the manager of the bank agreed to, and he appointed temporarily for a fortnight every inspector of the Lands Department to the bank in order that inspections might be made at once and applica-

tions dealt with and brought up to date. That was a question where, in the dispute, the policy of the Government was interfered with. With regard to strictures on hon. members in connection with the employment of officers who had been compelled to leave the service for grievous offences, he only knew of one case, and that was the appointment of an officer to the Taxation Department. The member for Greenough in reading an extract from the Commissioner's report might have gone a little further down. The Commissioner added—

“Owing to this extraordinary laxity the Commissioner was compelled to make representations to the Premier on the subject, who was good enough to circularise the departments in the following terms:—It has come to my knowledge that in connection with the employment of temporary officers the third paragraph of regulation 333 is not generally complied with. Instructions should be issued that in every instance, on the retirement of any temporary official, a report must be sent to the Public Service Commissioner regarding the efficiency of any such employee. In regard to the efficiency of the applicant, the fact of his appearing on the books of the Public Service Commissioner must not be considered by the head of the department as ample evidence that the applicant is of good character and suited to the duties he is called upon to perform. It is, of course, the duty of the Commissioner to endeavour to secure persons of good character and ability only, but the head of the branch or department desiring to employ temporary officers must make such inquiries as will satisfy himself that the person selected is in every sense suitable for the position. The sending in of a report to the Commissioner, when dispensing with the services of a temporary officer, showing how such officer conducted himself during his term of service should prove of great value to the Commissioner in the selection of names to be retained upon the register. When temporary officers are appointed at outstations, the authority

of the head of the department should be first obtained by letter or wire, provided it is possible to allow sufficient time for that purpose."

Mr. Nanson: The Commissioner mentioned two other cases.

The PREMIER: There was only one case that he knew of. With regard to the remarks of the member for Mount Margaret, who dealt with the extra expense in connection with this department, the Public Service Commissioner had reported—

"Incidentals: the amount of £300 is to cover the cost of hearing the appeals lodged by the officers of the professional division, holding two examinations for entrance to the Public Service (the fees received amounting to £50) as well as all the office expenses, such as printing, advertising, stationery, postage, and cost of travelling, etcetera, of the Public Service Commissioner's office. Temporary assistance: about half of this amount is to cover the cost of a special shorthand reporter taken on in connection with the appeals; the balance it is intended to use in temporary assistance to write up certain registers in the Commissioner's office, which, when once written up, can be kept by the ordinary staff."

The Public Service Commissioner had undoubtedly a very difficult row to hoe. He was a man who, having once made up his mind, was not prepared to alter it readily. If a Minister happened to be of like temperament the chances were that there might be a certain amount of friction. If a Minister were absolutely satisfied that an action he had taken was in the best interests of the country, surely he was privileged to object to some contrary recommendation by the Public Service Commissioner. So far as he (the Premier) was concerned there were only one or two occasions upon which any objection had been taken. Except in the more important appointments the Government had not taken objection to the Public Service Commissioner's recommendations. Certainly an objection had been raised to his classification of the Engineer-in-Chief,

whom he had proposed to reduce from £1,200 to £1,000. The Engineer-in-Chief was entrusted with the expenditure of many thousands of pounds of public money, and the Government had considered it was not very encouraging to that officer that after so many years of good service to the State he should be reduced merely because in the opinion of the Public Service Commissioner the recommendation made would bring the position more into line with similar positions in the Eastern States where there was less work to be done.

Mr. Foulkes: Could you get the Public Service Commissioner's reasons for this and lay them on the Table?

The PREMIER: The Public Service Commissioner's report was available. Again, certain surveyors had objected to the Public Service Commissioner's classification. They were good men and as the result of their dissatisfaction their services were being lost to the State. There was, for instance, Mr. Terry, who was eminently qualified for the particular work in which he was engaged; work which was largely responsible for the framing of the Government policy in regard to railways. In the circumstances it was only natural that the Government should object to the salary of that officer being fixed at less than half of that earned by an ordinary contract surveyor. Surely it could not be expected that a Minister having knowledge of these things should refrain from entering his protest.

Mr. Foulkes: Why not ask the Commissioner to grant a special reward for special services?

The PREMIER: Only recently he had had an experience of this special reward system. On making an inspectional trip over the Preston-Donnybrook line he had been impressed with the work done and in consequence he had recommended that the foreman, Mr. Ross, should get an extra remuneration for the work he had been carrying out. That officer was receiving £5 a week; if he had been doing the work for a contractor he would have got £10 a week with a bonus. On his return he (the Premier) had asked that some extra remuneration should be granted; but it was not until after the

expiration of about six months that the remuneration was forthcoming. In such a case he (the Premier) would not suggest that the salary should be increased; but where particular services were rendered some substantial recognition of these services should be given.

Mr. Foulkes: The Commissioner, in his report, says he is quite agreeable to that.

The PREMIER: The Commissioner had died very hard so far as his (the Premier's) particular recommendation was concerned.

Mr. Bath: What about this question of temporary employees being employed at a lesser rate than would be paid to permanent employees?

The PREMIER: The Commissioner had said it was never intended that the regulation should be read as the Leader of the Opposition had read it, and that it was his (the Commissioner's) intention to amend it.

Mr. Bath: It would be interesting to know how the Premier was going to deal with those cases existing under the regulation as it stood. It was one thing for the Commissioner to say he was going to amend it, but the claims of those entitled to an extra amount under this regulation was another thing altogether.

The Premier: There is a test case in progress at the present time.

Mr. Bath: But the Government would not let the case go forward: they were trying to beat the men by an extended legal process.

The TREASURER: The Commissioner did not read this regulation in the same way as did the Leader of the Opposition. It had been claimed that the latter portion of the regulation, namely, that the rate of payment should be the same, referred to work carried out by temporary employees and not to the work of the permanent employees. A case had cropped up quite recently in the Audit Department. An inspector had gone away on long service leave. For a time the Auditor General, with the assistance of a junior, had attempted to carry on the work. Finding this to be impossible he had secured extra assistance. But the clerk appointed to the temporary position had not proved anything like equal to the

work of the permanent officer: he was a man capable of doing a fair amount of work and was satisfied to receive 10s. a day. The Auditor General had recommended that he be paid 10s. a day, and he (the Treasurer) had approved of this. Subsequently the Auditor General had discovered the regulation and had pointed out to him (the Treasurer) that according to its terms the man ought to be receiving the full wages paid to the permanent official. This he (the Treasurer) had said was absurd, as the country was not getting anything like the same services. On being appealed to in the matter the Public Service Commissioner had said that the regulation had never been intended to be absolutely mandatory in the provision that a temporary employee should receive the same salary as that paid to a permanent official.

Mr. Johnson: You should distinguish between the casual and temporary hands; a temporary hand may be on for five years.

The TREASURER: In such case the employee would get the full value of his services. If not, what was the meaning of the first part of the clause? A permanent head asked for assistance and stated the salary which he thought appropriate for the work done.

Mr. Johnson: We are not speaking of casual hands, we are referring to temporary hands employed for three years at a stretch.

The TREASURER: We could not keep temporary hands in the service for three or four years. They could only be employed for eighteen months. There was no friction with the Commissioner about this.

Mr. Johnson: But there is friction with temporary employees.

The TREASURER: They simply claimed something to which they were not entitled. They were offered a certain wage for certain work and took the work, but suddenly found this regulation on which they attempted to base a claim for the full salary. If this were carried out in its entirety, the funds of the State would suffer and inferior men would be receiving the wage that experts permanently employed were receiving. He

had none of the details to which the hon. member referred. In regard to the complaints that the Government were getting behind the Public Service Commissioner and the Act in the appointment of temporary employees, that was not the case. The number of temporary employees had been swelled in connection with the appointments to the Taxation Department; but he had thought it unfair to ask for permanent appointments until Parliament decided whether the Land and Income Tax was to be reimposed. Now there was no reason why many of the temporary employees in the department should not be dispensed with and permanent appointments made. There was no ulterior motive in these temporary appointments; they were only in the interests of the departments and the State.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Refunds*, £2,500—agreed to.

Vote—*Taxation*, £9,553:

Mr. BROWN: The appointment of Chief Land Tax Assessor was most scandalous. There were dozens of good applicants who had a general knowledge of land values in this State, but the one appointed was an officer who had something to do with the Mines Department and had no earthly knowledge of land values, and yet was to be sole arbiter of land values taxation in this State and would put taxpayers to the expense of appeals. One would like to see the item struck out.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

Received from the Legislative Council—

Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.

Fremantle Disused Cemetery.

House adjourned at 11.19 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 13th January, 1909.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Timber Tramways, permits granted under the Land Acts. 2, Return showing resumption of pastoral leases under the Land Act.

QUESTION—TIMBER TRAMLINE, LAVERTON-LANCEFIELD.

Mr. TAYLOR (without notice) asked the Premier: Is there any objection to laying on the Table all papers in connection with the granting of a permit to the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company to run a tramline from the Laverton railway station to Lancefield?

The PREMIER replied: I have no objection if the hon. member will move in the ordinary way.

QUESTION—RAILWAY COAL SUPPLIES, COLLIE.

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways,—1, What is the quantity of coal produced by each of the coal companies operating in the Collie district during the twelve months ended 31st December, 1908. 2, What is the amount of Government purchases from each company? 3, What is the amount of private trade supplied by each company? 4, What is the amount of bunkering trade supplied by each company? 5, What is the percentage of Government trade supplied by each company? 6, What is the percentage of private trade,