

Mr. BATH: That is wrong. The report of the officers of the department on the railway proposition was first on the position of the field as it stood at that time.

The Premier: They submitted an estimate which has been doubled.

Mr. BATH: But they went further, and gave information as to what it was likely to be with railway communication; and I say that that report was favourable and not that it was of such a nature that if it had been acted upon the line would never have been built.

The Premier: The actual receipts are double the amount of the receipts estimated by the officers who prepared the report.

Mr. BATH: All the more to the credit of those who submitted the report. If it has proved even better than their report led us to expect it is to the greater advantage of the State, but it is in no sense an argument that their report was against the construction of the line. As a matter of fact we were prepared to construct the railway on that report.

The Premier: Who was?

Mr. BATH: The Government of which I was a member.

The Premier: There was nothing but reports for six years, and you did nothing.

Mr. BATH: At that time the proposition was scouted by members supporting the Ministry, but who afterwards turned round and supported the proposition.

The Premier: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. BATH: I say it was so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss the Norseman railway.

Mr. BATH: But the Premier—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Premier must not discuss it either.

Mr. BATH: The Premier is continually interjecting; how, then, can one avoid discussing it? What I wish to say is that on any railway proposition we have had we have been supplied with the scantiest of information. We have been asked to take it on trust, and we have afterwards had the admission of those who supported it that a mistake

had been made. These are costly mistakes, and we want the information before we are involved in the expenditure. That is why I say the House, while it may consider it advisable—and I believe it is—to recommend or give favourable consideration to the proposition for railway communication for Lawlers, should leave the route to be determined after mature consideration, and after more accurate information has been furnished, and more concrete facts adduced, in favour of one route or the other.

Mr. TROY: With the permission of the House I would like to alter my amendment to read, "That the words 'from Leonora' be struck out" instead of "all the words after Lawlers."

Leave given; amendment accordingly amended.

On motion by Mr. Keenan, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th October, 1909.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: By-laws Beverley Local Board of Health.

QUESTION — ASIATIC HAWKERS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Premier: 1. Is he aware that numbers of Asiatics are hawking throughout the State without a license? 2. In order to allow white men to hawk their wares, will he amend the Hawkers Act, and bring it into line with the Eastern States?

The PREMIER replied: 1. I am not aware, but have instituted certain inquiries. 2. The matter will receive consideration.

QUESTION — SCHOOLS, TIMBER LANDINGS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Works: Has any provision been made for the establishment of schools at the landings of Jarrahdale, Hoffman, and Mornington?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Yes. Tenders are being called in this week's *Gazette*.

QUESTION — SAVINGS BANK, COOLGARDIE.

Mr. McDOWALL asked the Treasurer: Is there any truth in the rumour that the Government Savings Bank at Coolgardie, as at present constituted, is to be closed with a view of having the business transacted at the post office?

The TREASURER replied: I have not had the question put, so far as my memory goes, it is not intended to close the Government Savings Bank at Coolgardie, with the view of having the business transacted at the post office.

QUESTION — SANATORIUM, COOLGARDIE.

Mr. McDOWALL asked the Treasurer: 1. Is it true that Dr. Palmer, late House Physician at the Coolgardie sanatorium, resigned in consequence of its being decided to reduce the salary attached to that position? 2. Has the salary been reduced? ?

The TREASURER replied: 1. Under the regulations of the Medical Department Dr. Palmer was appointed for two

years. On expiration of the engagement, he desired to know if the appointment would be made permanent and at what salary. He was informed that the appointment could not be made permanent and that the salary would possibly be reduced. Arrangements were made to fill the vacancy by another officer, but it was found that the work could be performed by the District Medical Officer, and a salary was fixed accordingly for the dual appointment. 2. Yes. A saving has been effected by the above amalgamation.

QUESTION — PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. McDOWALL asked the Premier: How many non-residents of Australia have been appointed to positions in the public service of the State during the past five years?

The Premier replied: The following gentlemen have been appointed under the provisions of the Public Service Act:—Professor Lowrie, from New Zealand; Doctors Anderson and Bentley, from England, for the Lunacy Department; Mr. S. Bennett, from England, as Government Actuary, etc., and Mr. J. Abernethy, from Scotland, as Dairy Expert.

QUESTION — RAILWAYS, FINANCIAL RESULTS.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1. Are the officially published figures showing net credit balance on the Railway Department's operations for the year 1909, after allowing for working expenses and interest, as £156,980 correct? 2. If so, how does he reconcile this result with his reply to a question when he stated, "That the exigencies of the Railway Department's finances caused a general suspension of classification advances"?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1. Yes. 2. The finances of the Railway Department are inseparable from the finances of the State.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Port of call for mail steamers.

Mr. W. PRICE: I desire to make a personal explanation concerning an answer given by the Premier yesterday to a question I put him as to the port of call in Western Australia for the mail steamers. In reply to my question the Premier said, "The suggestion that Albany should be substituted for Fremantle has been made, but it has not been shown that the inconvenience referred to would be obviated." The inference from that answer is, that my question suggested there should be a substitution between the two ports. I am sorry the Premier gave such an answer, for such an idea is in no way referred to in my question, and his reply is calculated to stir up a feeling between the two places. I trust my explanation will be sufficient to make it public that I had no desire to infer that the mail boats should not call at Fremantle.

BILL—EARLY CLOSING ACT
AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Angwin, and read a first time.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1909-10.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 28th September, on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and the Annual Estimates; Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Vote—His Excellency the Governor, £2,209.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): I think the Premier is entitled to credit for the fact that on this occasion he fulfilled the promise he made in replying to a question put by the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson), and brought down his Budget before the end of September. On many previous occasions we have been promised that the Budget Speech would be delivered and the Estimates be placed before members, by a specific time, but on no occasion I can remember has the promise been fulfilled. The departure of the Premier is one which I hope will be perpetuated in

future years. Members will agree with me that the Premier came through the two hours' ordeal very well, and to use a sporting phrase, he did it without "turning a hair." I think the time has come, however, when we might dispense with a great deal of what after all is only padding to the real matter which should be placed before us in the Budget Speech. Not that I would like for one moment to sheer away all information supplied as to the progress of the various industries of the State, for after all I know that has come to be regarded as an advertisement for the State. The Treasurer's speech is not only circulated here, but reaches the old country, where those gentlemen reside who lend us our money, and we have to make as good an appearance as possible; but at the same time, even if it is a good idea, I do not see why it should be necessary for the Premier, or the Treasurer for the time being, to put in two hours retailing this matter, nor for members to sit in their places and listen to it. Members will agree with me that it would be a good idea to take this information as read, have it printed and attached to the other portion of the speech. It would save the Treasurer and the members of the House. I noticed on the last occasion that while we stood it pretty well and were interested, the Treasurer's own supporters were prepared to take it as read. I make this suggestion as much out of regard to the Treasurer as to members of the Assembly. The Budget speech has another use. I notice that when things are not looking too bright in the Treasury we have a great deal more of this retrospect in regard to industries of the State than when the finances are flourishing, and it seems as if we are using the bounties of Providence and the good things showered upon us in the way of our natural resources to cover a deficiency in the financial statement. In another respect, too, there was something that, perhaps, made this speech go somewhat better—for after all it was the same old story in many respects that we have had from the ex-Treasurer—there was a new story-teller, and the Treasurer imparted

a vigour to it that detracted from the monotony which, to a certain extent, characterised the Budgets of previous years. There is also in one or two respects—certainly not to the extent that I would like to see, but there is certainly an indication on the part of the Treasurer that there will be an attempt in the future to get away from the cult of Micawberism, of which the present Minister for Works is so graceful an exponent, and, in some respects, to try and adjust our finances on those methods which commend themselves to sound financial authorities. In this respect the members of the Labour party can take a fair amount of credit to themselves, because in those very particulars, where not only the present Treasurer but his predecessor, and, in fact the Government as a body, have adopted rational measures for meeting the situation, they have really appropriated them, perhaps not to the extent advocated by us, not in as complete a form as we would desire, but they have certainly appropriated in some measure the ideas promulgated by the Labour party. For instance, in 1905 the members of the Ministerial party would have nothing to do with either land or income tax; they opposed it when we submitted the measure in 1905, and framed a motion of censure on it in fact, and opposed it at the election in 1905, and vowed they would never consent to such taxation. But ultimately they consented to it, in a modulated form, it is true, but they certainly consented to the principle. Then we find the present Treasurer adopting an idea which has been advocated from this side, and which, judging from some remarks made by his own supporters, is not meeting with favour on his side—I refer to the increase in the death duties. Again, when I pointed out that a large amount of money which was coming due in the way of public debts in Australia during the next ten years, would necessitate the Commonwealth assuming the responsibility for the debts of Australia, the Minister for Works laughed at the idea, scouted it, and said it was impossible from our point of view, and to-day we find—

The Minister for Works: What was impossible?

Mr. BATH: Impossible for us to entertain the idea.

The Minister for Works: What idea?

Mr. BATH: The idea of the Commonwealth assuming responsibility for the State debts.

The Minister for Works: I never said so.

Mr. BATH: It is only necessary for the Minister for Works to look up his past speeches to find that what I say is true. The Treasurer now says that he has given his consent, as far as this State is concerned, to the proposal for embodying in an amendment of the Constitution the taking over of the State debts by the Commonwealth, provided that our borrowing powers are unimpaired. I ask any hon. gentleman in this Chamber who has given any thought to the question, can he conceive that if the States agree to hand over the control of the debts to the Commonwealth, our borrowing powers will not be limited. If the Commonwealth is going to assume responsibility, then we will not be on an equality with the Commonwealth in going on the London or the local market: we will not be able to go on either market on an equality, and it will mean that if we do borrow on more disadvantageous terms than the Commonwealth. If we hand over control we must inevitably make up our minds that as time goes on the Commonwealth will naturally assume responsibility, or, at least, will assume the right to oversee the question of borrowing by the individual States. That is my opinion. While, of course, there will be a difference in the financial considerations of each State, I cannot see how, if we consent to hand over control of all our debts, we can obviate a certain amount of control of our borrowing rights being taken by the Commonwealth.

Mr. Foulkes: In Canada the Federal Government have no jurisdiction.

Mr. BATH: As has been pointed out, the relationship is different; and, again, the circumstances are entirely different. At the present time the Dominion of Canada cannot borrow on equally advan-

tageous terms with the Commonwealth of Australia or the Australian States, for the reason that in Australia our money goes into the construction of railways and public works by the States to a very great extent. In Canada these works are carried out by private enterprise, and, therefore, the debt of that country is not represented to the same extent by solid assets as in Australia, and under those circumstances the basis of comparison is not a good one. In the course of the Treasurer's speech, and the comments which have been made on it in the public Press, we have heard a great deal about optimism and courage. We are told it was an optimistic speech, and we have on the part of the Treasurer himself a reference to the Government in the peroration of the Budget speech. I must say that in my opinion that peroration was not exactly in the best taste. I do not say for one moment that the Treasurer is responsible for it. I should rather say that he told someone to fix it up, and someone did so while he got out the more important details of the speech, and the gentleman who wrote the peroration laid it on rather thicker than, perhaps the Premier himself would have done had he prepared it. As far as this boasted optimism is concerned, there is a good deal too much platitudinising about it. As a matter of fact, I do not see that we are able to convert this optimism into a marketable commodity. It would be all right if we could pack it up in a bag and sell it as a cheap fertiliser; but it does not do anything practical as far as I can see. In every respect it is pessimism masquerading as optimism.

The Premier: A very good substitute.

Mr. BATH: I should say for a policy to be optimistic and courageous it has to possess several essentials. In the first place, that policy must give a practical exemplification of our faith in the country; in the second place, it must be a policy which will suit the requirements of Western Australia, or, rather, which will provide the foundation for permanent financial stability, not only for the immediate present, but for the future; and in the third place, and the most important of all, it must not be a postponement of

our obligations. I want to point out that as far as the attitude of the Government of the day is concerned, they are the worst croakers we have in the community. We are publishing it to the world that while on the one hand we talk about our resources, our agricultural, mineral, and pastoral wealth: in effect, we publish it abroad that we cannot even afford to pay for hospital treatment for the people of the State. In the second place we have, by our attitude, shown to the persons from whom we borrow our money—the public generally—that we have not been able to continue our policy of expending loan moneys only on reproductive works. The present Government have departed from that; they have said that our resources are such that we can rely upon the people owning those resources providing sufficient revenue to obviate such a course as that, and we have since 1906 a constant recurrence of the policy of utilising money for other than reproductive works. That is evidence of want of faith in the country; it is a direct contradiction of the platitudes we hear about the resources of the country. Then there is the policy, often commented on, of the postponement of our obligations instead of a courageous battle being put up as they arrive. I want to take exception to the Treasurer adopting what is a very favourite attitude on the part of his colleague, the present Minister for Works: that is, by tortuous argument misrepresenting the real issue of the case. In connection with our loan indebtedness, the statement was made that there had been an increase of £10 per head of the population. I will agree with the Treasurer that the comparison between 1905 and 1909 did not take into consideration the loan raised in 1905, and the reason was because that loan had not then been brought to account. The figures were quoted from the *Statistical Abstract*, but a further statement was made in reply to the Treasurer that there had been an increase of £7 per head of the population, and to show that was correct, if we take the next year, 1906, when the loan of 1905 was included, we find that the net indebtedness, leaving out odd shillings, was £64, while in 1909 it was £71,

or an increase as then stated of £7 per head. Then the Treasurer went on further to make a comparison after the balance at the Treasurer's disposal had been deducted, and he made it out that the debt had only increased by £1 9s. per head. Now the Treasurer did not make a comparison on an equality of terms; because he took the figures at August and September of 1905, and compared them with the figures as at June 30th in 1909. Now if we take the basis upon which the Treasurer should have made his comparison, that is, June, 1905, and June, 1909, we will find that none of the loan of 1905 was brought to account, but that on the other hand they had a balance of £180,000 to the credit of loan fund. Making that deduction the debt was £61 10s. per head of population. Then, taking the figures as at June 30th, 1909, and making the same deduction of the balance in hand, the debt was £65 10s., or a difference of £4.

The Premier: The figures were £63 13s. 3d. and £65 10s.

Mr. BATH: No. I have looked up the public accounts in both years, and the Treasurer will find that my statement is correct. There is another point to be taken into consideration—this is not so much a criticism of the present Treasurer as of the general practice of basing the comparison on the total population. There has been a very great decrease, since the last census was taken in 1901, in what might be termed the percentage of the tax earning population of the State. That is to say, the number of people under 15 years of age—that is giving a very low margin—the number under 15 is very largely increased; so that if we are to make an accurate comparison, one upon which we can safely rely in computing our indebtedness, it should rather be based on the tax earning portion of the population.

The Premier: You might apply the same thing to the Eastern States.

Mr. BATH: I think the same argument would apply to the Eastern States. But I am dealing with Western Australia, and I think it would be the proper basis of comparison for such a computation in Western Australia. Because,

taking the bulk of the population under 15, they are involving expenditure in education and other directions, while on the other hand they are not contributing to the taxation except indirectly through the head of the family.

The Premier: What, then, would you make it, adult males?

Mr. BATH: No. In the Commonwealth *Year Book* the basis is taken between the ages of 15 and 65. And although the figures are not available since 1901, and therefore the comparison cannot be made since that date, and will not be capable of being made until 1911, when the next census is taken, still I think it would be an excellent idea, and one giving greater security in recounting indebtedness, if that were the basis upon which these calculations were made. There was a reference made to the difficulties under which the Government had laboured owing to the diminution in the amount annually received from the Commonwealth. We all admit that that has involved difficulties in the financial administration of our affairs. The Treasurer referred also to the increase in the amount of interest and sinking fund which has been involved through our developmental policy, and these two facts are cited as reasons for the financial stringency under which we labour. It is true they are two salient reasons, but, to have been candid, the Treasurer should also have referred to the fact that while we have incurred these increases in interest and sinking fund by the developmental policy, we lost revenue from public works and services to the extent of £150,000. That point should have been dealt with by the Treasurer who should not have tried to place the blame entirely on the Commonwealth, on something outside of our control, and have forgotten all mention of this fact, that in spite of the increase in mileage on railways opened, in spite of the expenditure on other public works and services, we had a decline in revenue of £150,000. In referring to the reductions, the loss of railway revenue in recent years, the Premier cited only one freight return to account for that, namely, the freight on manures. That would only amount to a very trifling portion of the

loss of revenue from the railway system. There are other items, and before we can obtain a clear view of the position, those other items should be stated. The inference was that this had been done entirely for the benefit of the producing community. But there may have been other reductions which could not be supported by the same argument, and which might have been considered inadvisable in view of the financial condition of the State. Now I come to another question upon which the Minister for Works was wont to wax eloquent at the time you, Sir, were Treasurer of the State. At that time there was, so far as the Public Works Department was concerned, a certain underdraft on the estimates of expenditure, and the present Minister for Works made it a great point of adverse criticism that that Government had not expended all that was provided on the Estimates for certain public buildings. And yet we find the present Government have been great sinners in that respect.

The Minister for Works: But you had the money.

Mr. BATH: No, we had not. Where it has been a question of trying to make it appear that the Estimates which the Minister for Works submitted to Parliament were correct, all he has done has been merely to drop a certain amount of expenditure from public works. That has been adopted in previous Budget speeches, and is one of the methods adopted for trying to square the Estimates of revenue and expenditure. I am not going to complain; if we have not the money we cannot expend it on the works, but at least we can ask for a greater degree of accuracy when the Estimates are submitted. It looks too much like kite-flying to make things appear good at the beginning of the year; and when the time arrives that the Treasurer's estimate is not realised the practice is merely to knock off a certain amount from the Public Works Department to balance the Estimates and meet the reduced revenue. Now, the Treasurer was very brave in his defiance of any Government which might have existed as an alternative to his—and, I presume, any Gov-

ernment in future to be entrusted with the administration—to replace by direct taxation the shortage of revenue returned by the Commonwealth to this State. It seems to me that what should have been done was not to defy any other Government but really to make a plucky attempt, perhaps not to balance the whole amount in one or two years, but at least to make a big effort towards doing it. And then if the Government found they were not being supported in their task, they could leave the matter to some other Government. But in this case the defiance is issued, although the effort is not made. I want to refer to an extract from a leading article in a newspaper which acts as mentor of the present Government.

The Premier: Do you contribute to it?

Mr. BATH: I do not contribute the leaders.

Mr. Walker: Is that the *Daily News*?

Mr. BATH: No, a more influential journal; it is the *West Australian*.

Mr. Heitmann: That is a libel on the *Daily News*.

Mr. BATH: This is the opinion of that journal on the Budget which is exciting so much discussion in the old country. Of course I have often found not only individuals but also newspapers which are very democratic when it concerns a matter 3,000 or 4,000 miles away. And so far as this editorial is concerned, the remarks which are contained in it, and intended to be applied to the financial situation in the United Kingdom, are in many respects applicable to the position of Western Australia to-day. And it seems to me that if it be a worthy thing, in fact a necessary thing, in the old country to seek to institute direct taxation in order to meet the deficiency there, there should be no lack of courage, no lack of optimism, and of trust in the people, to institute direct taxation in Western Australia to meet the deficiency here. And in spite of the defiance of the Government I say that was the only statesmanlike method by which the financial situation could be adjusted without passing obligations and liabilities on to

people of the future. This editorial states—

"But the landholders still enjoy an immunity which extends to no other class. They have been allowed, as so sound an authority as John Stuart Mill declared, to grow rich in their sleep. The increase, not in agricultural but in urban values has marched with the rising prosperity, wealth, and population of the nation. All the productive elements, whether of labour or capital, have been taxed in one form or another for the increase they have reaped from their toil and their managerial care. The rise in land values is mainly attributable neither to effort nor thought, but to social causes. There may be unearned increments in other forms of wealth, but none so sure, so vast, so exactly measurable, so completely divorced from toil or desert as in land—that is, especially urban land. Now, the nation burdened beneath imposts on industry, such as income and tariff taxes invariably are, is about to decree, it would seem, that the wealth which is enjoyed by them who toil not nor spin shall bear something like an equitable share—which no income tax upon its annual proceeds can give—of the obligations of the nation in which the landed class holds so many of the seats of honour, and grips tightly still the prestige, the influence and sway of political and social forces. To plain men this scarcely sounds like a revolutionary proposal, based as it is on precedents innumerable with which colonial communities especially have been long familiar. But it is a revolution in England, peaceful and sure, for it is the first step towards the removal of an incubus upon the industry and capital and brains of a nation described by Bagehot as 'constitutionally differential.' The result of that mild temper has been to leave the landlord practically free and to enchain the merchant, the manufacturer and labourer."

These are excellent sentiments. One could say that they were taken from the propaganda of the Labour party. And it emphasises that whatever may be the difficulty, whatever amount of courage is

necessary on the part of any Government to institute such a course, it is a statesmanlike course, where an opportunity is presented, to take means such as are there suggested for replacing any deficiency of revenue—that is, through direct taxation. Now, it may be urged that there is no trouble in collecting revenue through the Customs, that people really do not know what they pay. That may have been true of years past, but undoubtedly knowledge is growing among the people, and there is not that readiness to-day to object to direct taxation and to support indirect taxation through the Customs for revenue purposes, and I am confident that if at any time in the past four years the issue had been placed in the hands of the people as to whether they were desirous of maintaining the policy upon which we had embarked, that of exclusively devoting loan funds to expenditure on reproductive works and finding revenue for expenditure on other works as well as for paying our ordinary administrative expense, they would have unhesitatingly declared in favour of direct taxation. I am so confident that the opinion of the people generally has been educated up to that extent that it seems to me that any Government would not be very courageous in braving the defiance of the Treasurer, and that is by instituting direct taxation in order to obviate the financial stringency and consequent depression we have had in the past three or four years. At any rate I commend that editorial to the Treasurer believing perhaps he may have inadvertently overlooked it. There are States in the Commonwealth which have had to face precisely the same task as the present Government have had, to meet deficits in revenue, and although perhaps they cannot claim to possess the same rich resources as Western Australia—at least not so varied—they have faced the position in a courageous way.

The Premier: And funded their deficits.

Mr. BATH: The reason why South Australia, although almost purely an agricultural State, has forged ahead in the last two or three years, is that its people were not afraid to institute direct taxation when the necessity arose.

The Premier: It was because of good harvests.

Mr. BATH: We have had good harvests here. Last year's was not too good, but in previous years they were, and at any rate we claim a higher average for our crop than South Australia, so surely they are not in a so much better position than we are.

The Premier: The only thing is that they got a £5,000,000 profit on their crop last year.

Mr. BATH: They were practically only an agricultural and pastoral people, but they faced the position and instituted direct taxation, and raised a much greater amount than we do in Western Australia from that source. Reference has been made to the fact that other States have funded their deficits; but I would like to point out that from the time Mr. Price took over the Premiership in South Australia the surpluses have been devoted towards wiping out the deficit and also towards a sinking fund for the extinction of the debt. Certainly this was not such an adequate provision as we make in Western Australia, but it was a departure from the policy which the Treasurer says they adopted of funding their deficit. However, they have at least recognised in South Australia that when necessity arises direct taxation should be introduced: and as one who believes that it is the best way of apportioning our taxation or our burdens according to the capacity of the people to bear them, I maintain it is a statesmanlike policy to adopt in Western Australia to meet the deficit, and even if we do not make up the whole amount lost through the wiping out of the sliding scale and the relief from taxation given us in that way, at any rate we will have made a greater effort towards it than we have made so far. We have heard the member for West Perth, and also I think the member for Murray, referring to the great taxation the people of Western Australia are called upon to bear. Comparing the position in 1905-6, when the present Government assumed office, with the position in 1908-9, and taking our local taxation and the amount raised in taxation by the Com-

monwealth from Western Australia, that is from Customs and Excise, without deductions for expenses, in 1905-6 the amount was £5 11s. per head of the population, whereas in 1908-9 the amount was only £4 6s. per head of the population so that instead of an increase of further taxation we have had a reduction of £1 5s. per head of the population. On the other hand, apart from any economy we may exercise in some departments, we have had that natural growth of expenditure in other departments to which the Treasurer has referred, such departments as Charities, Police, Education, and others that for the moment I cannot think of; and in my opinion the financial administration of the affairs of the State demands that if we are to keep a clean sheet and avoid difficulties we should at least maintain the taxation per head of the population at the amount it was in 1905-6.

Mr. George: You do not argue from the point of view of the man who has to pay.

Mr. BATH: I argue from the point of view of the interests of the people of the State. I know who have to pay. Again, there is one method which has been adopted by the Government and to which I have referred on previous occasions when discussing the Budget, and that is the practice we have dropped into, apparently as a matter of course by this time, of utilising loan funds for works other than reproductive. That is not meeting the situation; that is not a basis upon which we can build up a sound policy of financial administration for the future; it is merely a policy of postponing liabilities and leaving them for other people to meet.

Mr. George: They get all the assets we build up for them.

Mr. BATH: They do not get assets in non-reproductive works, at least they do not get interest-earning assets, and no one knows better than the hon. member how these assets have depreciated. We leave them the indebtedness intact, but when they come to inherit the article they find it has very much depreciated in value.

Mr. George: They get a better world than we have.

Mr. BATH: For some people, but not a better world for many. There are many thousands in this State whose conditions are gradually getting worse. They are the people to whom the member for Mount Magnet referred last night, and it is sufficient for future generations of those people to bear their own troubles and liabilities when they come rather than that we should postpone in a cowardly fashion our obligations and liabilities and leave them to the future. While we may talk about the railways, roads, bridges, and schools we build for these people, let us remember we are depleting our timber resources and our mining resources, and that in every direction we are really robbing the people of their heritage. To-day we are selling the land which should be their heritage, and when we talk about what we are doing now for posterity we have to remember what we deprive posterity of and have to set the one account against the other. In connection with the utilisation of loan funds, will the member for Murray, or any other member, tell me that it is a sound policy to use loan funds for the purpose of paying for surveys?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. BATH: I think it is a most disastrous policy, and one that cannot be supported by any sound argument, especially when we remember that we are really disposing of our capital—because, after all our lands are our capital—and using the proceeds as revenue. We are selling the lands and the proceeds we derive from the sale we are paying into revenue, while the expenses of surveying to make these lands available we pay out of loan fund, leaving future generations to meet them.

The Premier: The expenses will be repaid into loan funds.

Mr. BATH: What will be repaid to loan funds?

The Premier: The cost of surveying.

Mr. BATH: The hon. member did not mention that in the course of his speech.

The Premier: Certainly I did. I said that the cost would be added to the capital value and would be refunded to loan.

Mr. BATH: That puts a different complexion on the matter, but does not dispose of the fact that in disposing of our lands we are really using our capital for revenue purposes. This has been referred to previously, but the ex-Treasurer excused it on the ground that our financial necessities made it necessary for us to do this, although perhaps it was not financially sound.

Mr. Jacoby: We always have the right of taxation.

Mr. BATH: The hon. member has made that interjection before, but those who believe in disposing of the land and say that we have the right to tax it, are just the gentlemen who fight tenaciously against any recognition of that right, and against the introduction of such taxation. When it comes to the question of the State trying to assert its right to secure the unearned increment we find it is a very difficult task and that there are a number who are very little disposed to recognise that right. It would be a much safer plan to pay the money for the sale of the land into capital account. I would like to see the proceeds of land sales used as an endowment for educational purposes, and then we could give to the coming generation some recompense for the loss of the heritage of which we are now depriving them. In the course of his remarks the Treasurer said very little in regard to the amount which was raised by the land and income taxes during the past year. In view of the expense involved the amount raised seems to me to be very disappointing. I cannot think that the unimproved values of the land in Western Australia are so low as to mean the realisation by the tax of so small an amount. We were promised by the Minister for Works that a return would be prepared by the Taxation Department showing the result of the valuation, and giving us some idea of the total amount upon which the tax is based, and then members would have information as to the incidence of the tax. This Parliament being a new one, a different one from that which instituted the tax and passed the machinery Bill, we should be entitled to review the latter measure. The actual taxation measure is incomplete

without the machinery Bill, and before we are asked to reinstitute that tax we should be given the chance to deal also with the machinery measure. There may be a disposition on the part of a majority of the members to alter the incidence of the tax, but we cannot do that unless we are permitted to discuss the machinery measure. During last session I strongly protested against being asked to pass the taxation measure without this opportunity being given. At that time our attitude was misinterpreted, as people said we were opposed to the measure. I intend to take the opportunity—I cannot do it by moving an amendment, as a private member has not that right—of moving the adjournment of the House, or of moving a substantive motion in order to obtain a pronouncement as to the incidence of the land and income taxation by a discussion of the machinery measure. We find that among the economies effected is the reducing of the subsidies to municipalities and roads boards. The member for Murray and others are continually complaining of the high taxation imposed by municipalities; yet at the present time we have not only deprived them of a certain revenue which they have had hitherto—that is the revenue through fines and penalties of which we now take a part—but we are also depriving them of a portion of the subsidy they received in previous years. How are municipalities going to carry on operations, carry out the duties entrusted to them, if they lose this revenue, without an increase of taxation. The member for Murray and the member for West Perth will have to reconcile the position. If they think the municipal taxes are too high they will have to tackle the Treasurer on this question of reduced subsidies.

The Premier: Or reduce the cost of administration of many municipalities.

Mr. BATH: There is no doubt that the cost would be reduced by the amalgamation of municipalities but we first have to give them the power. That is a question we will have to tackle. Before the municipalities can amalgamate, and thus reduce their administrative costs, we shall have to give them power.

Mr. Foulkes: They have the power now.

Mr. BATH: That power is very difficult to enforce, and so long as it is left to the municipalities there will be difficulties. We will have to do as they propose to do in Sydney now, that is to provide for the calling together of a convention representing the citizens in the area proposed to be brought under one local governing body. The convention will bring up a scheme. Let the citizens, not the pettifoggish mayors and councils, decide the question. I am satisfied that if the position were put before the rate-payers of the metropolitan area they would declare for amalgamation to-morrow, and thus bring about a great saving in administration. Until we give them that power the amalgamation cannot be brought about. There can be no reconciliation of the argument that the municipalities and roads boards should reduce their taxation if we, on the other hand, are going to deprive them of revenue under the Fines and Penalties Act, and also propose a reduction in their subsidies. Then we have the question of hospitals. The Government claim that they are exercising economy by cutting off the support hitherto given to the hospitals. This is the worst form of the economies proposed by the Government. In other respects their attitude may be commended.

The Premier: We make the people pay who can afford it.

Mr. BATH: I am opposed to the proposal the Government have submitted. The Treasurer made a comparison between this and the other States, but he must remember that in this State we take from the various districts into the Treasury revenue which in some of the other States is left to the local authority. If we deprive them of support and say to the local authorities, "You must undertake the care and find part of the costs of these establishments," if we saddle them with this responsibility, we must leave them some of the revenue. In New South Wales, under the Local Governing Act, the local bodies are given the proceeds from the land tax. If the shires like to institute a tax of one penny in the pound on the unimproved value of the land in

their areas, and undertake the hospital work, the State say that the district will not be charged over and above that for the State land tax. In Western Australia we give the roads boards power to institute taxation on the unimproved value of the land, but over and above that we levy the State tax. In New South Wales the local governing bodies receive the fines and penalties inflicted in the police courts but here the Government take a considerable portion of that sum. Therefore there is no equality in the comparison between the two States. If we deprive the hospitals of support we at least must give to the local bodies the revenue which at the present time is centralised in Perth and used for State governing purposes. The tax on the totalisator receipts amounts to a considerable sum on the Eastern Goldfields, and the Treasury get it. If we impose responsibility in regard to hospitals on the local bodies that source of revenue should be handed over to them. If that were done the local bodies would have a better opportunity of undertaking the responsibility of providing the necessary money for the support of the institutions; but I am of opinion that there is no service to the people which it is more desirable that we should run communally than the hospitals. If the matter is gone into carefully it will be found that the work of maintaining the hospitals can be done more economically and better by the State than if it is left to the local authorities. Even if we do not provide the funds from our revenue the people have to pay just the same. They will have to pay by donations and contributions, by sports gatherings and the devious methods adopted to raise money for charitable purposes, and by passing round the hat. It would be much more economical if the whole matter were managed by the State. It would be false economy for the Government to cut off the support they have given these institutions in the past. In addition it would be a bad advertisement for Western Australia. I am pleased to note that the Government intend to provide increases and are going to bring the civil servants up to their minimum classification. The Treasurer in referring to this

matter urged a rather peculiar argument, for he said, "It cuts both ways, for if we have not brought the lower paid officers up to the minimum, we have not reduced those who are getting more than their maximum to their maximum." In a policy of economy it seems to me the first consideration should be not to deprive those who are receiving low salaries of their minimum, but rather, if the necessity arises, to ask those receiving more than their maximum to consent to a reduction to that maximum. That would impose the minimum of hardship and that course should be pursued. The Treasurer and the Minister for Lands have referred on different occasions to the great advantages the Savings Bank is to the State. The deposits in that institution are utilised not only for the Agricultural Bank but also for carrying out supplementary works such as the Goldfields Water Scheme or the Metropolitan Water Supply. The danger of the position is apparent when one inspects the return issued by the manager of the bank. We have at the present time in reserve £374,019 and the total amount of deposits is over three million pounds. The reserve only represents an amount of a little less than 2s. 6d. in the pound. That appears to be a very small margin. Of course it will be pointed out that even if a panic arises we always have power under the Savings Bank Act of requiring that depositors shall give three months' notice before withdrawing their deposits, but I do not think, if there were a panic caused by a run on the financial institutions of the State, and extending to the Government Savings Bank, any Government could exercise that power. I believe the pressure would be altogether too strong; therefore if we are to hedge the bank around with safeguards against such a panic, we should have a higher reserve. I think the time has arrived when the advantage enjoyed by those living in the metropolitan, coastal and goldfields areas, of being able to use the Savings Bank with a minimum of restriction, should be extended to other centres in the State. We should remove the limitation now imposed on the maximum amount which can be deposited. There should be no

maximum at all, and depositors should be permitted to give any sum they like into the charge of the bank. If, for instance, the member for Claremont desired to deposit £20,000 in the Savings Bank I would let him do it by all means. It would mean that there would be more money at our disposal, and then there would be no difficulty on the part of the Minister for Lands lending as much as £1,500 from the funds of the Agricultural Bank to agriculturists.

The Premier: What do you say the reserve should be then?

Mr. BATH: We might increase the reserve to, say, 3s. 6d. or 4s. in the pound, and the interest we would be earning on the remainder would enable us to pay the interest to the depositors and still have the bank as a paying institution.

The Premier: You would make the depositors pay pretty heavy interest.

Mr. BATH: I do not think it would be a very heavy amount; we pay 3 per cent. on Savings Bank deposits at present and we lend again at 5 per cent.

The Minister for Works: No, less than that, 3¼ and 4 per cent. It has just now been raised to 4 per cent.

Mr. BATH: The Agricultural Bank lends at 5 per cent.

The Minister for Works: Oh, yes, the Agricultural Bank does.

Mr. BATH: As long as we insist on taking these two institutions, the Agricultural Bank and the Savings Bank, separately, so long will we keep the expenses of administration higher than they should be. I cannot see any logical reason why these two institutions should be maintained separately, to support two offices and two staffs. You might retain the present manager of the Savings Bank, and the manager of the Agricultural Bank in their separate departments, but there would be no reason for keeping separate staffs.

The Premier: One bank is receiving and the other is paying out and valuing.

Mr. Butcher: Every other banking institution is in the same position.

Mr. BATH: In South Australia there is a State Bank which carries on all these operations. Even if a small saving could

be effected by the amalgamation it should certainly be made, and the operations extended, and greater inducements held out to utilise them. More money would then be placed at the disposal of the Minister for Works or the Minister for Lands. On the admission of the Minister for Lands himself, who has had experience in connection with private banking, the Agricultural Bank has been leading the way to private enterprise and has led where private enterprise are now following. It seems to me that the opportunities we are giving to the people in the metropolitan area, and to some of the country districts, should be extended to many other centres throughout Western Australia. I have no further remarks to make with regard to the Budget. There are other details, especially with regard to the Railway Department, to which I would wish to call attention, but I intend to reserve my remarks until the Railway Estimates are under discussion. I think, however, it would be as well to call attention here to the action of the Government in doing away with the provisions for replacing obsolete stock. That is another instance where we are merely postponing liabilities. The present Government are enjoying the advantage of a provision which has been made in previous years, and in their turn they should make a similar provision for those who are to follow them. We find this question referred to in most emphatic terms in the report of the Commissioner of Railways, who points out that he has available £234,180 for this purpose.

Mr. George: How can they use it?

Mr. BATH: In building additional carriages, wagons, etcetera. The question is an important one. It seems to me that it is not economy not to adopt the recommendations of the Commissioner. It is a false step and one that, I think, should be retraced. The same thing applies to the permanent way. The Commissioner points out that the sleepers and rails do not last for ever, they have to be replaced. He says that between 1896 and 1899, 779 miles of main line were opened, including the Great Southern railway, and that the rails and

sleepers of these lines will have to be replaced. Unless we make provision in the form of a regular contribution each year we will have to resort to loan funds, and in this way, perhaps, double the loan indebtedness, and then we will only have the assets representing half. I hope the member for Murray will add his views in this direction; and urge that the present policy should be retraced, and that we should continue to make this provision for replacing obsolete stock.

Mr. George: If you do not expect to make a profit out of the railways you can do it.

The Minister for Works: We have spent a good deal of money out of revenue on the railways.

Mr. BATH: That is a good work, and I would like to see it continued. This seems to me to be a businesslike provision, and if we have not the revenue we must devise ways of raising it so as to carry on the administration on sound lines. A business man would look around for income. He would not let things drift when faced with trouble, and that is the policy that should be adopted by the Treasurer, who talks about private enterprise, but adopts an entirely different course with regard to carrying on the undertakings of this State. A business man would soon go bung if he attempted to carry on his undertaking on such lines. I have nothing further to add. Hon. members on this side can re-echo the statements I have made, and emphatically endorse my remarks as to the resources of Western Australia. We have the wealth here, and what is of more import, we have the people, the class of people who can develop those resources, and they, after all, are the wealth of any community. There are places in the world to-day with the most fertile soil, with the greatest wealth of national products, but unless they have stamina in their population they get very little good out of it. On the other hand take countries where the natural surroundings are poor, countries like Scotland and Switzerland, and it will be found that in these places the stamina of the people, their energy and cap-

acity really constitute the wealth. Here in Western Australia, with the resources that we have, if we only have confidence in the people and appeal to them in our difficulties and ask them to give us the necessary financial assistance to carry on the administration of the State without resorting to such subterfuges as the postponement of our obligations, then we can make Western Australia a great country. We have everything here; we have resources, we have population, and all we want is a Government with confidence in the resources and the people and the State will advance, and then the State will be what hon. members hope it will be, a prosperous and happy one.

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

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £2,209—agreed to.

Vote—*Executive Council*, £25—agreed to.

Vote—*Legislative Council*, £1,844:

Mr. TROY: For a considerable time past a promise had been made that a measure would be brought in to liberalise the franchise of this Chamber. Would the Government explain what their intentions were with regard to this matter?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not discuss that question on this item.

Mr. TROY moved—

That the vote be struck out.

There was no other opportunity of discussing the particular matter that he had referred to—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not move that the vote be struck out, and the matter that he desired to refer to should have been discussed earlier on the general debate.

Mr. TROY moved—

That the vote be reduced by £841.

The Minister for Works: Why?

Mr. TROY: Because the vote could be expended to better advantage. The Government had promised on many occasions to bring in a Bill for the reduction of the franchise of the Legislative Council—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not not discuss that question; it in no way affected the vote. The question before the Committee affected the provision of supplies for the purpose of carrying on the business of the Legislative Council and no franchise question could be discussed.

Mr. BATH: Could a member not discuss the question as to whether the Legislative Council was required or not?

The CHAIRMAN: When the necessity arose a ruling would be given on that point.

Mr. TROY: It was only reasonable to ask to be allowed to protest against the existence of the Legislative Council.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was out of order. That question could not be dealt with on the Estimates. Certain expenditure was provided by the Constitution Act, and it was impossible to allow a discussion on the propriety of that expenditure on this vote.

Mr. BATH: Perhaps it would simplify matters if the Chairman would state what could be discussed on this vote.

The CHAIRMAN: Hon. members could discuss the expenditure provided in the different items.

Mr. HEITMANN: Some of the officers of the Legislative Council were being overpaid. For instance, the Clerk was receiving the same salary as the Clerk of the Assembly, although there was no comparison in the respective duties to be performed.

Mr. JACOBY: Some opportunity should be given the Legislative Council of itself reducing the cost of its establishment. In South Australia the President of the Council fulfilled the duties of Chairman of Committees, and, no doubt, this system could be adopted in our Legislative Council. As for the salaries of the respective officers, these were fixed by the Constitution Act. With a general attempt being made throughout public life to cut down expenditure, if the attention of the Legislative Council were called to the fact that economies could be effected in that House, no doubt the members of the Council would see the wisdom of adopting such a course.

The PREMIER: It required a good deal of faith in human nature to anticipate anything of the sort. As for the proposal that the President should carry out the duties of the Chairman of Committees, it was scarcely likely that the Chairman of Committees would be agreeable to committing hari kari; consequently, in the Chairman of Committees would probably be found a formidable opponent to the suggestion. He (the Treasurer) was sorry that under the rules of the House he was not able to accede to the wishes of the member for Mt. Magnet, and give some information in regard to Legislative Council reform. He could only say that the Government intended to carry out the promise made in this regard.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Legislative Council had adjourned for three weeks, and "his Lordship" the Usher of the Black Rod had gone away to Rottneest for that period. While that officer was at Rottneest the taxpayer would still continue to pay him £6 per week. It was high time that some of this frill was cut off from the Council.

Mr. George: You are forgetting the dignity.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was not dignity the State required to pay for, but work. There was no necessity for an officer of this kind in the Council at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Usher of the Black Rod did a great deal of work outside the position he held in the Council. He was also Clerk of the Executive Council, in connection with which he had a fair amount of work to do.

Mr. Scaddan: How did he get on the civil list?

Mr. Heitmann: Simply because he can say, "Haw"

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was scarcely the reason. The Committee could rest assured that the officer was highly capable, and had a fund of legal knowledge which at times was very opportune.

Mr. Collier: A fund of legal knowledge for £5 a week?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was so; and it would not have been surprising if hon. members had attempted to bring pressure to bear upon the Government to pay this officer a higher remuneration. As for the Clerk of the Council, it was true that he had not anything like the amount of work to do as was to be found in the Assembly. At the same time he had to be at his post, and it was a familiar argument that if a man had to be in attendance he ought to be paid.

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

THE CHAIRMAN: The discussion on this question was covered by Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1889 which provided, "That the salary of the President of the Legislative Council should be at least equal to the salary of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and that the salaries and allowances of the various officers of the Legislative Council should be the same as those of the corresponding officers of the Legislative Assembly." However, the only officer of the Legislative Council, apart from the Chairman, provided for on this vote was the Clerk of Council. There was no provision for the Usher of the Black Rod; and that officer was therefore not within the scope of the discussion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In these circumstances we could not reduce the vote unless we were prepared to reduce the corresponding salaries of the officers of the Legislative Assembly, and apparently from their remarks hon. members opposite were not prepared to do that.

Mr. Heitmann: Certainly not.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: By law we were required to pay the officers in another place at the same rate of salary as was paid to the officers of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Underwood: We could raise the Librarian's salary.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We were not discussing whether the officers of the Assembly were getting too much or too little. The member for Cue did not wish to reduce our own officers; in fact

that hon. member said that the officer of the Assembly was worth £1,000 a year as compared with the corresponding officer of the Legislative Council.

Mr. Heitmann: Would you like to reduce the salaries paid in the Legislative Council?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS. No. Parliament demanded the whole of the officers' time and must therefore give the officers reasonable salaries though perhaps they did not do the same quantity of work as was imposed on the officers of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was apparent that the Minister would be inclined to reduce the salaries paid in the Legislative Council if they had power to do so, and it would be simple to do it by reducing the salaries in both Houses, and then adding other paid positions to the officers of the Legislative Assembly. We could, for instance, increase the salary of the Librarian.

Mr. COLLIER: The matter could be easily arranged in that way. If we reduced the salaries of the Clerks of both Houses by £100 each, we could add £100 to the salary of the Librarian. There was not the same amount of work for the Clerk of the Legislative Council, and when retrenchment was taking place in every direction surely it could be brought out in the Legislative Council where there was little to do. At any rate the position of Clerk of the Legislative Council would be adequately paid at £350.

Mr. SCADDAN: While there was no mention under this vote of the Usher of the Black Rod, we all knew there was an Usher of the Black Rod, and the salary for that officer was provided on the Civil List at £350 a year.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss an item not on the vote.

Mr. SCADDAN: It would be interesting to see the file to see how this officer got on the Civil List.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not discuss that.

Mr. SCADDAN: At any rate this officer received £350, while the corresponding officer in the Legislative Council was paid only £300.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Legislative Assembly*, £3,137:

Item, Clerk of Assembly, £450:

Mr. COLLIER: To carry out the intention already indicated was it possible to move to increase the item "Librarian"?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not move to increase any item unless he had a Message from His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. COLLIER: In the circumstances there was no inclination to move to reduce the salary of the Clerk.

Item, Sergeant-at-Arms, £150:

Mr. HEITMANN: The time had arrived when members should consider the position. There was no desire to discuss the position of any officer of the House from a personal standpoint. The present officer filled the position to a nicety, but the time had arrived for us to do away with a good deal of the commodity referred to previously as dignity and frill. The other evening the Deputy Speaker entered the Chamber without wig and gown, but none took exception to it.

The CHAIRMAN: That has nothing to do with the item under discussion.

Mr. HEITMANN: For every pound spent there should be a pound's worth of labour, but that was not obtained in connection with the position. In South Australia there was no sergeant-at-arms. Even if the country were in a good financial position he would object to such a waste of money. While there were men begging to be allowed to work, civil servants crying out for a living wage, railway and police officers, and men on the clerical and professional staffs paid under their proper wages, while the rations of prisoners were being cut down, money should not be spent in such a way as this. It had also been decided to decrease the cost of the sanatorium for consumptives at Coolgardie.

The CHAIRMAN: The member must not discuss that question on this item. He could allude to it, but not express an opinion with regard to it. Such matters could be dealt with on other Votes.

Mr. HEITMANN: The position under discussion was unnecessary, and if it were done away with no injury would be done

the official as he was in a public department in Perth where he received £180 a year. The officer was a professional man, and could earn a fair salary in his department. He moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There had been a wave of economy passing over the State and it had been said that Parliament itself should economise. The first economy should be made in the least useful office, and the least useful office in connection with Parliament was that of sergeant-at-arms. Members would understand that he referred merely to the office. The financial stringency had been so great that only recently it was found advisable to abolish the Parliamentary typist who did members' work and other duties in connection with select committees and general work of the House. If we could not afford a typist we could not afford a sergeant-at-arms. Members who voted against the typist should, to be consistent, vote against the retention of the sergeant-at-arms. The office was useless, and of no advantage whatever to the State.

Mr. JACOBY: If the office were abolished, and the Mines Department were able more fully to utilise the service of the present holder of the office, would that officer receive an advance in his remuneration equal to that he now received when holding both positions?

The Minister for Works: He would be bound to lose.

Mr. JACOBY: At present the officer only spent a portion of his time in the Mines Department, but if he spent all his time there, could not the salary be increased to the total sum he received now? As to the office itself, the time had arrived for it to be abolished. Unless we put our own house in order we could not be considered sincere when we went to the country and advocated economy. He would regret if the abolition of the office acted to the detriment of the officer who for so many years had held the position of sergeant-at-arms. If it were abolished it was to be hoped his services would be utilised in the Mines Department at a remuneration equal to that he now received.

Mr. W. PRICE: No great service was performed for the country by the gentleman who marched into the Chamber at the head of the Speaker.

The Minister for Works: Wait till you have to be turned out some night.

Mr. W. PRICE: If the officer were to be paid as a sort of glorified "chucker-out" the sooner we got a man to do the work in a rough and ready style the better. There was no necessity for the particular flummery now attached to the position. It did not impress him with great dignity to see a person dressed in a style which obtained many years ago sitting in a particular chair in the Assembly or carrying in a mace and putting it at the head of the Table. What effect had that on the deliberations of the Assembly. No benefit was derived from the expenditure of £150 a year. He did not know the gentleman who filled the position, so no personal feeling could be alleged against him: he was referring directly to the office. The Government said they could not find funds for the sick and suffering in the State. We were putting up with empty flapdoodle while the people of the country could not get into the hospitals. The sum of £150 a year was paid to a man to walk into the Chamber and say "Honourable members, the Speaker." That was ridiculous. If one real advantage brought about by the retention of the position could be shown to him he would vote for the item. There were many ways in which this money could be spent to the benefit and advancement of the people. The show attached to the position impressed no one inside the Chamber. He intended to vote for the striking out of the item.

Mr. JOHNSON: While year after year the item was mentioned by members, it was usually received with a great amount of frivolity. We should, however, seriously consider the question. Every member would admit that it was not a necessary office. There were already enough officers in the Chamber to carry out the duties the sergeant-at-arms was called upon to do. We must economise. The Government had said they could not tend to the sick and suffering of the State.

The Minister for Works: We never said that.

Mr. JOHNSON: Actions spoke louder than words, and the actions of the Government demonstrated that they could not maintain the hospitals in the back parts of the State.

The Honorary Minister: No State in Australia treats the hospitals so generously.

Mr. JOHNSON: It did not matter what they did in the other States. If we could not do better than Victoria and other places did for their people, it was time Western Australia shut up altogether.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must adhere to the question.

Mr. JOHNSON: One was led away by silly interjections, which made it difficult to adhere to the question. The Government still maintained that greater economy was necessary, and here was a position which could be dispensed with. Hon. members should not deal with the question with hilarity, but realise it seriously, and regard the position as a luxury and a thing of the past.

The PREMIER: Hon. members, especially on the opposite side of the House, had drawn attention to the fact on more than one occasion that it was necessary as far as possible to uphold many of the traditions that had descended to us from time immemorial; no doubt the sergeant-at-arms would come within that category. Whether he wore silk stockings or a silk suit, or appeared as a police constable was quite immaterial. We might as well criticise the fact that the messengers wore uniforms, or that the Speaker and Clerks wore wigs. It was just a question of the practice in vogue, and before any drastic action was taken it was well that members should give the matter serious consideration. The gentleman who filled the position of sergeant-at-arms was not referred to personally. When absent from the Chamber recently members recognised what an excellent officer he made. His commanding tone, the military manner in which he shouldered the mace when he brought it in should be sufficient to encourage members to vote for the retention of the amount. A suggestion had been

made that the vote might possibly be provided by the Mines Department where the sergeant-at-arms, in his capacity as draftsman, received £180 a year.

Mr. Bath: What would he get if his time were fully occupied?

The PREMIER: No doubt the officer's time was fully occupied in the Mines Department, because the House did not meet until 4.30. In any case the salary there was a small one, and if the item was reduced it would, no doubt, make a difference in the income of the officer. A suggestion had been made that economies might be effected in connection with the opening of Parliament. Reference was made to the fact that it was unnecessary to go to the expense of providing a guard of honour, and turning out a battery of artillery in order to fire a few guns to intimate to the world that the session was being opened. Possibly a reduction could be made in that direction, but the question, again, was whether it was desirable. Before coming to a decision in the direction of abolishing, what might be termed an institution of the House, hon. members should give careful consideration to what they were doing.

Mr. TROY: One had to look at the matter from the standpoint whether such an office was required. The Minister for Works, who considered it would be a terrible thing to abolish the office, was clinging to the old things of the past, but the Committee, after all, had not to consider the question of clinging to traditions, they had to consider what was best for the time being. As far as the dignity of the office was concerned, the only dignity that existed was that which the occupant of the office itself gave to it. There was nothing added to the position of Speaker by being heralded by a sergeant-at-arms, or by any ornament that might be worn. What, after all, was most desired was simplicity and efficiency. The work could be as efficiently carried out without that particular officer as with his assistance. The amendment would receive his support.

The HONORARY MINISTER. Some of the forms and ceremonies of Parliament might be considerably sim-

plified with advantage. No one could accuse him of unnecessarily desiring to expend money. With regard to the officer, who was filling the position in question, some members would recollect that he was pressed into taking this position, and that fact should, to some extent, establish his claims to the post. There was no one in the Chamber who would desire that anything should be done in the way of injuring him; the question was one that should not be determined too hurriedly. But the question of abolishing the office was one that might be determined later on. Nothing should be done hurriedly, but, perhaps before the next Estimates were framed, the advisableness of effecting an alteration might receive consideration.

Mr. WALKER: If there was to be a vote taken he would vote for retaining the salary, and that action would be on the grounds of fair play. Were members going to sack a man in this summary way without giving him time to prepare for another place?

Mr. Scaddan: They sacked the typist the other day, and a great injustice was done.

Mr. WALKER: That typist was of use to all, but because we were deprived of that little assistance in our labours why should we "sack" the sergeant-at-arms? He would rather have the conditions different from the ordinary humdrum circumstances of every day debate, in order that hon. members might have some inducement, if only by artificial surroundings, to devote their best efforts to the services they were here to perform. If hon. members were going in for abolishing what they could do without, why not give up the Chamber and hold their meetings in the open air? There was a thousand elements of luxury about the buildings which could be done without. Because he was a reminiscence of the history of Parliament, the sergeant-at-arms was attacked; even his silk stockings were taken to pieces. That official could not help having to wear those garments; they were imposed upon him by custom. He (Mr. Walker) preferred to see the messengers going about the Chamber in uniform. These were little ceremonies showing that

hon. members had some respect for each other, and for the work they were doing. These little ceremonies showed a tendency to refinement—surely a good thing, even in Parliament. It was a mistake to imagine that all the sergeant-at-arms had to do was to announce the Speaker; this was the least of his duties. He was here to, if necessary, serve the writs of the Assembly. He (Mr. Walker) remembered that on one occasion in the New South Wales Assembly, at three o'clock in the morning, the sergeant-at-arms had had to run out nearly a dozen of the members, one after the other, he (Mr. Walker) being one of the ejected. He remembered that on being run out he found his friend, Mr. O'Sullivan, in deshabille in one of the ante-rooms. On hearing what was happening, Mr. O'Sullivan rushed into the Chamber before he had time to properly garb himself and attempted to address Mr. Speaker; but ere he had got beyond the opening formality, he in turn was run out by the sergeant-at-arms. There was an amount of clerical work which the sergeant-at-arms had to perform, and it was not always light work. A pilot might be kept waiting for months for a ship to come along, and if he only saved one ship from wreck in the course of a lifetime his salary was earned; so it might be said of the sergeant-at-arms that if only at long intervals he was called upon for disagreeable but highly important duty, his post was fully justified. Under these circumstances it would be wrong to delete that official's salary. If hon. members wished to make reforms he (Mr. Walker) would be delighted to render assistance, but let it be in a proper manner.

Mr. HEITMANN: Is this too hasty? It is three years since the motion was first moved.

Mr. WALKER: What has been done in the meantime? Had any indication been given of what hon. members desired.

Mr. HEITMANN: The original motion was in itself an indication of what hon. members wanted.

Mr. WALKER: A child might want the moon, but how was he to get the ladder to reach it?

Mr. HEITMANN: Get you to talk for it.

Mr. WALKER: Never would he be guilty of talking such twaddle as did the hon. member.

Mr. JOHNSON: You are getting pretty close to it now.

Mr. WALKER: At all events, he was not going to win a cheap popularity by attacking an officer of the House who was not able to defend himself.

Mr. TAYLOR: The officer is not being attacked.

Mr. WALKER: Undoubtedly he was. To take away a man's salary was about as forcible a form of attack as could be imagined. An innovation of this kind should not be made at such short notice. Those who had attacked the officer and the officer had not taken all the circumstances into consideration, nor could they be aware of all the duties that officer had to perform.

Mr. HEITMANN: The officer had not been attacked, and the hon. member for Kanowna in saying that he had was merely illustrating the twaddle hon. members might expect from the member for Kanowna. That hon. member had spoken of twaddle as coming from others, but it was well known to all hon. members that many hours of the time of the House had been taken up in listening to the vapouring twaddle of the member for Kanowna.

The CLAIRMAN: The hon. member must discuss the argument of the member for Kanowna, and not the hon. member himself.

Mr. HEITMANN: There was no intention to attack the officer concerned. He (Mr. Heitmann) was of opinion that the office was unnecessary, and because of that he had moved that the item be struck out.

Mr. TROY: It was wrong to argue that because the vote was attacked the officer most concerned was also attacked. If that were so no item in the Estimates could be attacked without an attack being made upon some individual. The same charge could be laid at the door of every member of the House. The argument for the abolition of the office had been lost sight of by the last few speakers. Members did not ask for the abolition of the office out of a feeling

ing of revenge because the position of typist had been abolished. The point to be decided was whether there was vital necessity for retaining the position of sergeant-at-arms. Did the presence of the sergeant-at-arms add or detract from the discussion of matters in the Chamber? Clearly not. So the position could be abolished without any inconvenience, and the Government if they so desired could make arrangements to transfer the officer to some post in the civil service. A member of the police force could do the work should occasion arise for any member to be removed from the Chamber, or to serve writs. From a practical standpoint there was no vital necessity for the retention of this old established custom. No doubt the sum that would be saved was paltry, but it was necessary to make small economies, and if from some false sentiment we did not make a start in this direction we would do nothing.

Mr. SCADDAN: The amendment could be withdrawn, and another amendment submitted to reduce the vote by £1. and this, if carried, would be an instruction that the item should not appear on the next Estimates. This officer had been 17 years in the position of sergeant-at-arms, and it would be a hardship to deprive him of his post without some notice. The Government would probably transfer him to a position in the public service at a salary equal to the joint salary he now held as geological draftsman and sergeant-at-arms.

Mr. W. PRICE: Those who supported the abolition of the office must resent the imputation that they were seeking cheap popularity, or had personal feeling in the matter. The line of argument used by the member for Kanowna was ridiculous in the extreme. The position of sergeant-at-arms was unnecessary, and could well be abolished. The policy of giving 12 months' notice was not pursued in regard to men who filled menial positions. There were many railway servants who after 20 years' service had been dismissed without notice.

Mr. Scaddan: Two wrongs do not make a right. Reduce the vote by a pound, and that would be an instruction.

Mr. W. PRICE: That suggestion could be adopted.

Mr. FOULKES: The officer carried out the duties attached to the office as well as he possibly could. During all-night sittings the sergeant-at-arms and the clerks were practically the only officers of the House in attendance. The officer had occupied a position in the old Legislative Council before responsible Government, his services dating back to 23 years ago, and no doubt his career in the Mines Department had been considerably retarded by the fact of his holding the position of sergeant-at-arms. Further, no doubt the officer when he accepted the position did so fully believing that it would not be taken away from him. Members in considering this point must realise that if we abolished the position of sergeant-at-arms, it would be necessary that somebody should be engaged to be in attendance during all-night sittings, and that the Government would need to find a considerable sum for compensation to the officer whose position was abolished. The sincerity of members who wished to see economies in the House would be tested by him (Mr. Foulkes) in other directions. Last year he had made the suggestion that the dining room, bar, and billiard room should be closed during recess.

The CHAIRMAN: The member cannot discuss that now.

Mr. FOULKES: There were many ways in which a very much greater saving could be effected than that suggested by the striking out of the item.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	28
—			
Majority against	..	14	—

AYES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. W. Price
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hellmann	Mr. Ware
Mr. Holman	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Troy
Mr. Johnson	(Teller).
Mr. O'Loghlin	

NOES.

Mr. Bath	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Monger
Mr. Butcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Draper	Mr. J. Price
Mr. George	Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hayward	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Horan	Mr. Layman
Mr. Keenan	(Teller).
Mr. Male	

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. SCADDAN: One could easily be misunderstood in connection with a division such as that just taken. To his mind the position of sergeant-at-arms was unnecessary, but at the same time it would not be fair to the officer that he should be dispensed with forthwith. Notice should be given that members desired the office to be dispensed with in the future. South Australia had no sergeant-at-arms. He intended to move an amendment to the item in order to give members an opportunity to vote on the question as to whether or not the position of sergeant-at-arms should be retained. He moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £5.

The CHAIRMAN: It was not competent for him to accept any amendment to reduce an item by a nominal amount. There was some difficulty as to what was a nominal amount, but he was prepared to accept an amendment for the reduction of the amount by £10. To his mind a reduction of £5 would be purely nominal.

Mr. SCADDAN: In the circumstances then he would alter his amendment to read—

That the item be reduced by £10.

Mr. BOLTON: If the amendment were carried, would it mean that the officer would be £10 out of pocket? While the Government would be right, if the amendment were carried, to keep this item off the Estimates in future, it would not be fair to make the officer lose the £10. Would the Treasurer say that the sum would not be taken off the officer's salary?

The CHAIRMAN: Previously he had ruled that he would take a motion to reduce the total vote by £1, but that any reduction of an item must be of a substantial amount. While he did not want to interfere with the fullest liberty on the part of members to move in any direction, he could not accept a nominal reduction of this item.

Mr. WALKER: The only object in submitting the amendment was to gain an expression of opinion from members as to whether they wanted to do away with the office of sergeant-at-arms. Surely that opinion could be expressed by moving a reduction of the item without it being necessary, if such were carried, to curtail the officer's salary by that amount.

The CHAIRMAN: An amendment could be made on the total vote, but not on the item unless it was for a substantial amount. *May*, dealing with this question, said—

"The reduction of a grant or item must be of a substantial and not of a trifling amount: nor may a series of motions be made upon the same grant, raising substantially the same issue."

Mr. SCADDAN: In the circumstances, therefore, he would ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Item, Messengers, £423:

Mr. SCADDAN: The member for Claremont was inaccurate in his statement as to the time spent by messengers in the Chamber. Since 1904 he had attended every all-night sitting, and had always been able to get the services of a messenger, even at 5 o'clock in the morning. So far as the permanent staff were concerned, their hours were from 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. during recess, and from 9 a.m. until the House rose while Parliament was sitting. Some of the sessional messengers got away earlier in the evening. As to the item, the salary of the assistant messenger was set down at £125 whereas it should be £150. There had evidently been an oversight on the part either of the Speaker or the Government. The same remark applied to the salary of the messenger who was down for £60 a year; he should be getting £75 a year. In

the discussion last year on the item, it was recognised that the salary should follow the office rather than the officer, and that the messengers should be classified according to the positions they held.

The PREMIER: There had evidently been an omission. A promise was made last year that the additional £25 would be paid and, the necessary arrangements would now be made so that the messenger would not suffer.

Mr. Scaddan: Does the Treasurer refer to both messengers?

The PREMIER: The only recommendation that was made was with reference to the second item, that of £125.

Mr. SCADDAN: In 1907 the same matter cropped up, and it was pointed out that each officer was not receiving the salary that the position carried. A promise was then made that the question would be considered. Last year it was understood that both messengers would receive their full salaries. What had the Government done about the messenger who, according to the Estimates, was receiving £60 a year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There appeared to have been no promise made with regard to the junior messenger. A promise was made last year that increases would be given to the two senior messengers, and to the hall porter. The chief messenger was to receive £200, the second messenger £125, and the hall porter 9s. 6d. a day. The question of the third messenger was not raised at that time, and no promise was made. In connection with these salaries, the Treasurer was guided by the recommendations of Mr. Speaker. If Mr. Speaker felt this junior messenger was entitled to further consideration no doubt representations would be made to the Treasurer.

Mr. SCADDAN: If the Treasurer turned up *Hansard* of last year he would find that the messengers were referred to by him (Mr. Scaddan) in the plural, and what was said then was that if the messengers qualified for their positions they should receive the salaries paid to their predecessors. The junior messenger did receive an increase of £10 in the first year of his employment, and

it was then stated that he would receive gradual increases until the amount reached the salary that his position carried.

Mr. JOHNSON: The office of the junior messenger was worth £75 a year, and he should get that. It was no use leaving the matter to Mr. Speaker, because Parliament were responsible. Keeping the messenger at the work that he was engaged in and paying him only £60 per annum, when the position was worth £75, could only be regarded as sweating. It was becoming painful that year after year members had to raise this same point, and year after year there were the same quibbling and promises from the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Guildford imagined that a grave injustice had been done, and, therefore, was indignant, and accused the Government of quibbling and sweating officers. Did the hon. member know who the officer was and what work he performed?

Mr. Johnson: No, I do not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yet the hon. member professed to know that the position was worth £75 a year.

Mr. George: How old is the boy?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Just turned 16. The lad received £60 a year, and was very well paid for the work he did. Mr. Speaker was in charge of the House, and it was his duty to recommend to the Treasurer if he wanted any alteration made in the payment of the officers under his charge. As far as the junior messenger was concerned, no promise had been made that he should receive £75. The chief messenger thought the boy well paid at £60. The answer that the Premier had given was a legitimate one, that if Mr. Speaker recommended that the occupant of the office should receive more money the matter would then receive consideration.

Mr. SWAN: The junior messenger should certainly receive the salary which the position carried, and which was none too much. He would not like to submit to what the Minister might consider to be a decent wage for him, and he hoped the Committee would not allow this boy to be paid what the Minister deemed to be a reasonable salary. He pointed out to him

Mr. SCADDAN: The Minister had been wrong in stating that a promise was not made that the item would be increased.

The Premier: You would not put a man there at £75.

Mr. SCADDAN: Certainly not.

The Premier: Suppose the boy leaves school at 15, is £60 not a good salary for him?

Mr. SCADDAN: At 16 years of age he himself had received £3 a week. The question was, did the boy fill the position satisfactorily, and did he do the work as it should be done. The value of that work had been assessed at £75 a year, and, consequently, if the boy was doing the work satisfactorily, £75 was the salary he should be paid. The Treasurer was indulging in the tactics of a sweater towards these boys, who had no chance of making any progress except when a higher position became vacant. To reduce a position merely because there had been a change of officers was to revert to the methods of some of the big firms in the City, whose practice it was to pay a new man £50 a year less than had been paid to his predecessor.

Mr. George: They would lose by that.

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member had done it himself when in the Railway Department. It was only by pressure from members of Parliament that the Government had raised the salaries of civil servants.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must discuss the item.

Mr. SCADDAN: As a member of the House he had a right to say whether he thought any person employed by the House was receiving a decent salary. He disbelieved the statement made by the Minister for Works.

The Premier: Is that in order?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must accept the statement of the Minister for Works.

Mr. SCADDAN: In accordance with the ruling of the Chair, he would accept the statement. At the same time, he would assert that the chief messenger had recommended this lad for the higher salary.

The CHAIRMAN: It was necessary that the hon. member should understand that he must not accuse the Minister for Works of a falsehood. His statement, in the first instance, had been tantamount to that.

Mr. Bath: But he withdrew.

The CHAIRMAN: That was so, but it seemed necessary to make the ruling clear.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was not desired that a discussion on this particular item should be repeated year after year; this was the third year in which it had been found necessary. He was not referring to one office, but to all the positions in the messengers' department. When moved up, these officers ought to receive the salary pertaining to the higher post. Last year he had received an assurance that this would be done, but it had not been done.

Mr. JACOBY: It was to be recollected that the responsibility was left in the hands of the Speaker and, consequently, a discussion of this sort was scarcely in place, except, perhaps, as an intimation to the Speaker. The Speaker was responsible to the House, and if hon. members were not satisfied with his administration, there was a proper method of expressing their dissatisfaction. It would be impossible to get proper administration if hon. members were to go behind responsible officers. Members ought to be satisfied that the Speaker was doing a fair thing by the officers in his charge. If the Speaker had any inclination one way or the other, it would be to pay a higher rather than a lower salary.

Hon. T. F. QUINLAN: It seemed necessary to offer some information to hon. members. He did not know of any promise made in regard to this officer at all. Certainly he himself had never made any promise or it would have been kept. With regard to the other officer he (Mr. Quinlan) had carried out the wishes of the House and made a recommendation which, apparently, had by some mischance been overlooked. At the same time, he had no reason whatever to alter the opinion he expressed last session when the same question was under

discussion, namely, that the officer was not worth £150 a year. With regard to the officer under discussion, he was only 16 years of age, and was in receipt of livery, and meals on the premises during the time the House was sitting, while his duties were very light indeed in recess. He (Mr. Quinlan) had himself been an employee and, during the last 26 years, an employer of labour. He had had persons in his private employ for close on ten years. This in itself might be regarded as a fair indication of his disposition towards anybody in his employ. He had to confer with the chief officers of the House, and was guided by the executive officers as to whether or not he should make certain recommendations in regard to the officers.

Mr. JOHNSON: Under the Public Service Act it was the officer who was recognised and not the office. This particular officer had been classified by Parliament at £75 per annum.

The Minister for Mines: As a messenger, what would he get under the Public Service Act?

Mr. JOHNSON: That was not the point. The Committee were not discussing the officer. The officer had been classified at £75, and if the officer were capable of filling the office, he should get the salary attached to the office.

The Premier: Who classified it at £75?

Mr. JOHNSON: Parliament. In previous years Ministers had declared that they did not desire to reduce the position, and that it was only a transfer of officers which had caused a temporary reduction. This year, however, Ministers said that the office was not worth more than £60. Members had not been asked whether they would agree to this reduction; indeed, the reduction had not been notified until the Minister for Works had spoken to-night. Was Parliament going to agree that the third messenger of the Chamber was to receive only £60 per annum? We could not expect the messenger to live on this wage. He would be dependent on his parents, but at £75 could probably maintain himself. Of course, if the youth could not properly fill the position at £75 he must make room for

somebody else. Apparently he was a capable youth, and filled the position equally with any of his predecessors.

[Mr. Taylor took the Chair.]

The HONORARY MINISTER: This new-born zeal to increase salaries was interesting. The Estimates of 1904-5 showed that the third messenger was paid £52 per annum, and the member for Guildford was a member of the Government that brought down those Estimates. At any rate this matter was one that could be left to Mr. Speaker. It could not tend to discipline among the messengers for it to be discussed at this length.

Mr. TROY: The Honorary Minister had not properly consulted the records. The Estimates quoted from were those prepared by the James Government, and which had to be brought down by the Labour Government owing to the lack of time to frame new Estimates. Ever since then there had been an endeavour to better the position of those receiving low salaries among the officers of the House.

Mr. GEORGE: It did not matter much to many members whether the messengers received £60 or £75, but it was undignified for Mr. Speaker to have to appear at the Table and explain his conduct in the matter; and if Mr. Speaker were to be attacked on matters of this sort, it was practically questioning him as to his right to be in the Chair. If the Government held a view that £60 was sufficient remuneration for this officer, and if the Committee decided that he should be paid £75, the Government would naturally conclude that he would be over-paid at the latter figure, and the boy would lose his position.

Mr. W. PRICE: A messenger did not learn much, and had little chance of improving his position. To do so a messenger would need to seek another position, so that while we had a messenger in the service of Parliament we might pay him a decent salary. There was no lowering the dignity of the House when the Committee considered what was due to any citizen of the State.

Mr. OSBORN: The member for Guildford had suggested that a boy receiving £60 a year would be a burden to his family, whereas if he got £75 a year he would not. A lad receiving the former sum and at the same time gaining experience and having an opportunity to look round for a better position was doing very well. It was not to be expected that he would remain in that position very long. So long as he remained in that office he had nothing to look forward to, and did members suggest that he should stay there until he was a man and be content to accept that salary forever?

Item, Incidental £300:

Mr. SCADDAN: When the item was being considered last session a promise was made by the Government that they would inquire into the practice in vogue in the Eastern States in regard to privileges made to members as to postages and telegrams. Had such inquiries been made?

The PREMIER: In some of the States allowances in this respect were made to members according to whether they represented country or city constituencies.

Mr. Bolton: No members had to pay postage in the Eastern States.

The PREMIER: A differentiation was made between country and City members. He had not the full information with him, but he would see that the hon. member was supplied with it.

[Mr. Doglish resumed the Chair.]

Mr. TROY: The Commonwealth Government franked all postages and telegrams of members.

Mr. Jacoby: In addition to their £600 a year?

Mr. TROY: Yes. In all the Eastern States an allowance was made to members for correspondence and telegrams. In New South Wales the allowance was £12 a year for country members. Personally it cost him £1 a month for his correspondence. He had mentioned this matter last year, and he did not intend again to ask the Government to make similar provision to that in the other States. It was humiliating to have to

ask for such a thing. The correspondence of country members was forced upon them by their representation. All that was asked of the Government last year was to make the same provision as in the Eastern States.

Mr. SCADDAN moved an amendment—

That the vote be reduced by £1.

The intention was to test the feeling of members on the question whether or not the position of sergeant-at-arms should be abolished.

Mr. TAYLOR: The question had already been debated at some length and he was not inclined to give a silent vote upon it. He would not vote for the removal of the position. So far as the cost to the country was concerned by the retention of the position, any decision they might come to would have but little effect on the finances of the State. It was not fair to compare the position of sergeant-at-arms with that of the House typist. This was a people's Chamber, and it was their desire that it should be a dignified Chamber. Other Parliaments in the Commonwealth were doing their best to belittle this Parliament, and when members here were assisting to do the same thing, it was a bad thing for Western Australia. The desire of some members was to remove from the Chamber the dignities which existed there. Every country should endeavour to dignify its representation, whether it be in Parliament or out of it. He intended to oppose the amendment.

Mr. BATH: For a member to make the statement that because others might desire to dispense with an office they considered unnecessary it was belittling the Assembly or in any way infringing its dignity, was almost too absurd to be listened to. The delusion members laboured under was a reversion of all experience of civilisation. If one wanted to find an individual who liked show and outward display, he would be found among the blacks in their original state. After all, we had to bear in mind the fitness of things, and the ceremonial or fashion, which may have been suitable to the conditions of 500 years ago, or

even 200 years ago, would be an absurdity at the present time, when our view of things had altogether changed.

Mr. McDOWALL: A few minutes before he voted against striking out the item of £150, because the action seemed to be extremely drastic. Now, however, the amendment before the Committee would receive his support. The arguments which had been used in connection with the mace, or things of that kind being necessary for the dignity of the House, were simply ridiculous. Bringing the matter down to a business point of view, there was not one member who, in his business or private capacity, would maintain an office that was admitted to be unnecessary. That would be his (Mr. McDowall's) reason for voting in favour of the amendment on the present occasion. It was with a considerable amount of reluctance that he spoke on the amendment, because the occupant of the position was respected by all, but the position should be entirely dissociated from the officer. Was the position necessary in the interests of the House? Those who argued against that were arguing against progress in the whole world, and those who so argued were people who would go back to the wooden plough. There were most important assemblages in this world which did not go in for baubles of this description.

Mr. Seaddan: The South Australian Parliament has no sergeant-at-arms.

Mr. McDOWALL: Whether that was so or not, what did it matter to this Parliament? The fact remained that the position was not necessary, and that being the case it should be abolished, and its abolition would not affect the dignity of the House in any way.

Mr. KEENAN: The arguments advanced by the Leader of the Opposition, the members for Ivanhoe and Coolgardie would equally justify the abolition of all formalities associated with Parliament. The suggestion could be looked at from only one point of view, and that was that our State Parliaments were undoubtedly running every day a grave risk of being treated, not as sovereign Parliaments, which they still were, but of being treated as mere parish councils, and if we were

not to agree to that degradation, and it would be a grave degradation, we could not afford to allow any of those symbols—which after all were mere symbols—of our authority and our dignity to be put aside. If it were not for risks of that kind, and risks which were absolutely imminent, it might well be that we could do without officers of such a character without incurring any grave risk. But to do so there was a risk of our State Parliaments being placed in the position of being entirely subservient to another Parliament, and that was what no one should consent to.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The member for Kalgoorlie had pointed out that there was a possibility of the State Parliament losing its popularity if we abolished the office of sergeant-at-arms.

Mr. Keenan: I did not say popularity.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The losing its prestige. If we had 200 sergeants-at-arms it would not prevent people looking federally if they desired to do so. The amendment would receive his support. The remarks of the member for Mount Margaret were surprising. The hon. member, above all others, spoke with a good deal of feeling regarding the economy practised by the Government, and possibly before the session was over he would be going on his knees appealing to the Government for support for the outback hospitals, and would be condemning them up hill and down dale for not granting that support. Yet we found him, the boasted champion of democracy, referring to the dignity of the Chamber. The hon. member had not put up any arguments in favour of the retention of the office of sergeant-at-arms; his remarks were surprising.

Mr. SWAN: Not being in agreement with the majority of members on that side of the House it was, perhaps, as well to explain why he was not prepared to vote for the amendment. It was not because he valued the dignity so highly, but because common sense was infinitely more valuable; it was not because of the dignity of Parliament that the amendment would not receive his support; it was because he would consider the matter from a sense of justice. The gentleman who

occupied the position had filled it for a great number of years, as far as he (Mr. Swan) was concerned could continue to occupy it while he lived. Having filled that position for over 20 years it was not worth members' while to abolish the office while the present occupant was there to fill it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Were members in order in debating a question which had already been determined? The authority that the Chairman had already quoted stated that a proposal could not be made for a reduction in the whole Vote for the purpose of renewing a discussion on an item. That was what was being done by members, and the question relating to the sergeant-at-arms had already been decided by the Committee.

Mr. Seaddan: The Chairman gave me a direction how to proceed, and on that I moved the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Was that so?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That being so it was not his intention to dispute the ruling. The member for Albany seemed to claim for himself all the honesty of purpose, but he (the Minister for Works) claimed for himself and for other members, more especially the member for Kanowna, that they were honestly of opinion that the dignity of Parliament was upheld by these ceremonials. It was to be hoped the Committee would not permit a reduction of the vote, seeing that it had already been decided that the position should be maintained. Some hon. members, doubtless, thought it necessary to do away with all ceremony, whether in or out of Parliament. He agreed with the member for Kanowna that this office tended to some refinement of feeling in the Chamber.

Mr. COLLIER: If this vote were reduced by £1, would it be in any way hindering upon the Government next year in introducing their Estimates? He knew of experience that it would not. Similar motions had been carried, intimating to the Government that the Committee desired that a certain course should be taken. But the Government had ignored the intimation, and the Committee had

no power to enforce it. He was going to vote against the amendment, because he regarded it as a waste of time and as something that would have no effect.

Mr. WALKER: The amendment would not effect the abolition of the office, because the Committee had already expressed their opinion upon this matter. Moreover, if there were need to dispense with the ceremonials of the House, this was not the correct way to go about it. Nor, if reforms were to be made, was this by any means the only one that should be effected. Hon. members should go the whole hog if they moved at all in this direction. A substantive motion should be made at some later date, and a committee appointed to go thoroughly into the matter and make a recommendation to the House. This piecemeal work was nothing but cruelty which we should not for a moment tolerate.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—COOLGARDIE RECREATION RESERVE REVESTMENT.

Second reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. Mitchell in moving the second reading said: This is purely a formal matter. In 1896 certain land, known as Coolgardie town lot 1080, was set aside as a recreation ground. The practice of vesting such reserves in the municipal council was not followed on this occasion: the reserve was vested in the names of certain gentlemen of Coolgardie, for the purpose of recreation. Subsequently, the council paid off certain liabilities against the reserve, and they now desire to have the reserve vested in the council as such reserves usually are. It is purely a formal matter, and I am sure hon. members will pass it without discussion.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause—agreed to

Schedule—agreed to.

Preamble:

Mr. SCADDAN: How did the name of John Boileau come to be among those in whom the land had been vested?

Mr. McDOWALL: The hon. member was referring to a very old resident of Coolgardie. As the Minister had said, this reserve had been vested in trustees in the early days. Eventually the sum of £300 had been raised for the purpose of installing it with electric light and other improvements. However, the trustees could not pay up and the bank had threatened to foreclose, upon which the municipality had raised a loan and paid off the bank. It was now desired to vest the land in the municipality.

Preamble passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; the report adopted.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second reading.

Order of the Day read for resumption of debate on second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

FIRE BRIGADES BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

Member to give evidence.

On motion by the Premier (without notice) the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) was permitted to give evidence before the select committee of the Legislative Council on the Fire Brigades Bill.

House adjourned at 10.31 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 19th October, 1909.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: Papers relating to a loan to R. Berteaux of the President Loubet Lease, Davyhurst (Return ordered on motion by Mr. Collier).

By the Premier: 1, Rules and regulations of the Fremantle Public Hospital. 2, Wharfage charges on wool at Derby, Broome, Port Hedland, Onslow, and Carnarvon.

QUESTION—RAILWAY OFFICERS RECLASSIFICATION.

Mr. HARDWICK asked the Premier: Seeing that the reorganisation of the Railway Department has been going on for two years, is it the intention of the Government to place a sum of money on this year's Estimates so that reclassification by the Commissioner of Railways shall take effect from the 1st July, 1909?

The PREMIER replied: Reclassification is now proceeding, and provision will be made for increases to take effect from the 1st July.

QUESTION—COMMERCIAL AGENT AT ROME.

Mr. JACOBY (without notice) asked the Premier: What are the conditions under which Signor Astengo will act as commercial agent at Rome for this State?

The PREMIER replied: This gentleman was appointed honorary commercial agent at Rome for Western Austra-