

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 19th December, 1905.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: 1, Report on working of Government Railways and the Roebourne-Cossack Tramway to 30th June, 1905. 2, Classification Rates, and General Regulations and Jetty Regulations under "The Government Railways Act, 1904."

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: 1, By-laws passed by the Bayswater Roads Board.

QUESTION—EARLY CLOSING, KALGOORLIE.

MR. WARE asked the Minister for Commerce: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the manner in which the provisions of the Early Closing Act are being observed in and around the Kalgoorlie district? 2, If so, is it the Minister's intention to appoint a permanent inspector for the district with a view of having the provisions of the Act enforced?

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE AND LABOUR replied: 1, Yes. 2, Under consideration.

QUESTION—LAND TAXATION, UNIMPROVED ESTATES.

MR. STONE asked the Premier: 1, Does the Government intend to bring in a Bill, at as early a date as practicable, making provision for the taxation of large unimproved estates, with special bearing on land within a convenient distance of a railway, and also on city and town property?

THE PREMIER replied: It is not the intention of the Government to bring in such a measure this session; but the question of the taxation of large unimproved estates is under consideration.

QUESTION—STOCK ROUTE TO GOLDFIELDS, TICK.

MR. TROY, for Mr. Lynch, asked the Premier: 1, What is the intention of the Government in the matter of opening a stock route from the Kimberley pastoral areas to the north-east goldfields? 2, If the route in question is decided upon, is it the intention of the Government to suspend the tick regulations in regard to such route? 3, If the regulations are so suspended, will the Government immediately acquaint the South Australian and Queensland Governments of the decision?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, It is the intention of the Government to open a stock route from Sturt's Creek to Lake Way, in all probability via Separation Well. A party will be despatched early in April to make a preliminary examination of the proposed route. 2, Tick regulations will be suspended in regard to that particular route. 3, The South Australian and Queensland Governments will be advised accordingly.

QUESTIONS (2)—COMMONWEALTH INFORMATION, IMMIGRANTS.

MR. TROY, for Mr. Walker, asked the Premier: Will he be kind enough to make such inquiries through the Commonwealth authorities as will enable him to answer the following questions:— 1, Were the foreign immigrants who arrived by the G.M.S. "Grosser Kurfurst" under agreement with any resident or residents in the State? 2, To what class of miners did the Italian section belong? 3, Was the education test applied; if so, by whom? 4, Were any foreign female immigrants landed from the above-named steamer? 5, Had the foreign immigrants any means of support?

THE PREMIER replied: I have already communicated with the Federal authorities, and will furnish replies to the hon. member's questions if information is made available to this Government.

MR. TROY, for Mr. Horan, asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the

'Grosser Kurfurst,' on its latest trip, brought 49 Italians to this State? 2, Was it correct to designate 39 of these men as miners? 3, In view of the fact that the goldfields are already over-supplied with miners, will he ascertain whether these men came under contract? 4, Will he utilise the State police to ascertain where these 39 Italian miners were distributed and employed, and give such information to the House?

THE PREMIER replied: I am not aware of the fact, but have instituted inquiries with a view to obtaining the information desired by the hon. member.

QUESTION—MINES INSPECTION, NOTICE.

MR. SCADDAN, without notice, asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has he as yet received replies to the circulars sent by him to the inspectors of mines, asking them for an explanation of their reasons for giving notice when intending to visit mines? 2, If so, will he communicate the replies to this House? 3, If not, will he endeavour to get those replies before the House goes into recess?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: I have not received the replies, or I should communicate them at once.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

Fertilisers and Feedingstuffs Act Amendment, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

Permanent Reserves Rededication (No. 2), transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—STATUTES COMPILATION.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the **PREMIER** and **MINISTER FOR JUSTICE** in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Compilation of original and amending Statutes:

MR. BATH moved an amendment—

That the words "to give effect to implied repeals," in lines 3 and 4 of the second paragraph, be struck out.

As drafted, the paragraph would give to the Attorney-General making a compilation too much power to alter Acts. True, such compilation must be under the

direction of Parliament and the result must be laid on the table; but there was not likely to be so much attention given subsequently to such work as there would be to amendments and alterations made as the result of a Consolidation Act passed by Parliament. It was sufficient to give the Attorney General the right to carry out the compilation as provided in the first paragraph; but the second paragraph might give him power to make some alteration which would not meet the wishes of those who prepared the Act.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member's motive was good; but if the amendment were passed the usefulness of the Bill would be seriously impaired. The power of the Attorney General was only to make such alterations, additions, or omissions as were, in his opinion, necessary to give effect to implied repeals. If the Bill ended there, some remote danger might be apprehended; but Clause 4 provided that any alteration, addition, or omission made under Clause 2 might be amended, altered, rejected, or restored. Parliament had full power to accept, alter, or reject the compilation. When it was obvious, say, that an Act of 1895 had been altered by an Act of 1897 and by another of 1899, it was advisable that the Attorney General should have power so to alter the text as to give the fullest effect to the latest amending measure. If he had to adhere religiously to the text of several Acts, the compilation would not be so effective as if he had power so to alter the wording as to make the meaning clear. Alterations were always subject to the approval of Parliament. This only gave power to the Attorney General to so alter the wording as to give full effect to the original intention.

MR. KEENAN: The object of the amendment was to prevent injustice being done to any parties by reason of misinterpretation of the intent of Parliament being made by the Attorney General. At present there were statutes to which even the Courts themselves had found extreme difficulty in attaching a meaning. The Bills of Sale Amendment Act was an instance. In a particular section it provided that the debentures of a company should not require registration as bills of sale. Our Full Court had decided that the section only related to local companies

and not to foreign companies; but the South Australian Full Court had decided quite the opposite. He suggested an addition to the clause to the effect that notwithstanding anything in this Bill, in the event of the rights of any parties arising under any Act repealed being in question, the Courts should have the right to refer to the original Act for the purpose of determining such rights. By this the Courts would be able to refer to the original statutes and interpret the rights from that examination; otherwise the particular meaning attached to a section by the Attorney General, while it might be the meaning that would gain the support of some Judges, might not meet with the support of the majority of the Full Court, and certainly might inflict hardship on some particular persons. The provision in Clause 4 was that when the Compilation Act was laid on the table, the House was entitled to make any alteration or addition; but once the compiled Act had become the statute, there was no power, except by an amending Bill, to alter the phraseology used by the Attorney General.

MR. FOULKES regretted he could not agree with the member for Kalgoorlie. The intention of this Bill was to give power to the Attorney General not to interpret statutes, but simply to compile the various statutes and make only such alterations as were necessitated by fresh legislation having been passed. The Bill had been prepared by the Parliamentary Draftsman, who had informed him that we were making fresh changes in our legislation continually, and that he desired the power to have one Act instead of a number of Acts following each other at irregular intervals, and to make the law as simple as possible. If it had been intended that the Attorney General should have power to place his interpretation on an Act, this would have been called an Interpretation Bill instead of a Compilation Bill. No one knew better than the Parliamentary Draftsman that it was impossible for him to place a proper interpretation on the statutes. Judges alone could do that. The Bill was merely to make the statutes as simple as possible by compiling the different statutes on particular matters. No danger need be anticipated, but if we made alterations such as suggested by the member for

Kalgoorlie we would be running grave risks. It would be better to leave the Bill as it stood.

THE PREMIER: The Bill was based on and copied from a New Zealand Act of 1903.

Amendment negatived; clause passed.

Clauses 3 to end—agreed to.

New Clause (rights protected):

MR. KEENAN moved that the following be added as Clause 5:—

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, in the event of the rights of any parties arising under any Acts repealed hereunder being in question, the Court shall be entitled, notwithstanding the repeal of the said Acts, to refer to the same for the purpose of determining such rights.

Question passed, clause added.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT.

RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by MR. A. J. WILSON, Bill recommitted for the purpose of amendment; MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE in charge of the Bill.

New Clause (dentists exempted):

MR. A. J. WILSON moved that the following be added as Clause 7:—

Section 8 of the principal Act, 62 Vict., No. 10, is hereby amended by adding the following words:—"Any duly registered dentist in actual practice."

The Act at present allowed a number of exemptions. For instance, medical practitioners, members of Parliament, civil servants, lawyers, lawyers' clerks, and a host of others were exempted; and it was only fair that dentists should be included, because it might be highly inconvenient at times for them to serve on juries.

THE PREMIER: It might be argued that, because medical practitioners were exempted, dentists should also be exempted; but in the case of dentists it was hardly ever likely to be a matter of life or death. It seemed to be going rather too far to add a new clause to the Bill in order to exempt dentists, but there might be cases where inconvenience would arise.

Question put and negatived.

New Clause (exemptions) :

MR. LYNCH moved that the following be added as a clause :—

Section 8 of the principal Act is hereby repealed, and the following substituted : "The following persons shall be exempted from serving on juries, and shall not be inserted in the lists to be prepared by virtue of this Act, and if inserted may claim exemption—that is to say : Members of the Executive, members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly when Parliament is in Session, persons holding office under the Imperial Government, all naval and military officers on full pay, pilots, mariners actually employed, and captains or superintendents of fire brigades, and duly qualified medical practitioners, and officers of the criminal and civil courts.

The object was to enlarge the circle from which jurors could be selected for the proceedings of criminal and civil courts. There was a feeling amongst business people and legal practitioners that there was a possibility sometimes of the jury system not working out in keeping with what the founders of the system expected. Since a small circle would lend itself to the possibility of tampering with jurors, it was the duty of the Legislature to remove, if possible, juries and jurors from being interfered with, and the object of the amendment was to widen the circle from which jurors could be drawn in the future. Why should persons holding office in the Imperial service, while domiciled here, not serve on juries? Members of Parliament, when Parliament was not in session, should be just as free to act as jurors as any other common citizen. There was no reason why ministers of religion should be exempt. Where was the visible reasons why barristers and solicitors, and their clerks, should be exempt from discharging these important duties of citizenship? Why should town clerks be exempt; or schoolmasters and journalists and bank managers and the officers and servants of a private railway company; also persons employed solely in the public service? There was quite a host of citizens who were exempted who ought not to be.

THE PREMIER : The Bill sought to extend the number of persons available to serve on juries by enlarging the area from which jurors should be drawn; but the hon. member sought to enlarge the scope by cancelling a number of existing

exemptions. If the amendment were allowed to pass, ministers of religion, barristers, attorneys, solicitors and their clerks would be liable to serve on juries as well as sheriffs' officers, peace officers, town clerks, schoolmasters, journalists, bank managers, chemists and druggists, public service officers, and servants of the Commissioner of Railways, and persons employed on or in connection with private railways. Let members take one example : barristers, attorneys and solicitors. Would anyone wish barristers and solicitors to serve on juries? Were anything possible in order to arrive at the verdict of a jury, one would only have to look after the barrister and solicitor. They would hardly be serving their profession so well unless they had a great amount of influence over an ordinary jurymen. For many reasons it would be very undesirable that these persons named should be liable to serve on a jury. No one wanted ministers of religion dragged on to a jury to hear criminal charges. Surely no one wanted to have the manager of a bank dragged from his business in order to serve on a jury. The most extraordinary complications might arise if that were permitted; and the general public would be most seriously inconvenienced indeed. A town clerk attended in his office for the convenience of the public, to answer questions affecting municipalities, receiving rates, and generally to perform other useful work. If a town clerk were dragged away to serve on a jury, there would be no one in charge of the municipal office, and a great deal of hardship might eventuate. If at very short notice a servant of the Railway Commissioner, a guard in charge of an express train, were summoned to serve on a jury, again complications might arise, and the lives of the travelling public be endangered. These exemptions in the Act of 1898 were not hurriedly introduced, and if time permitted one could show very reasonable grounds why every one of the exemptions should be continued. They had been well thought out, and it was to be hoped the Committee would not interfere with them upon the slight consideration which had been given to the subject.

MR. BATH sympathised with the member for Leonora in his attempt to

widen the scope of the jury-list, although the proposal was somewhat sweeping. At the present time the jury-list was practically confined to business men and to men of property; and the result was that jurors were drawn practically from the same people year in and year out. We had as a result a system, which did not obtain so much here as in the Eastern States, of what was rapidly becoming professional juries. That was an undesirable condition of affairs. On the goldfields, in the Kalgoorlie district, he had acted as coroner on many occasions, and the juries empanelled were nearly the same on each occasion. If we removed many of the exemptions which were not necessary or justifiable, it would mean an increase in the number of people who could be placed on the jury list, and men need not attend as jurors more than a limited number of times in a year. The objection in the case of town clerks might be removed, also in connection with bank managers and a number of others. He failed to see why public servants should be excluded from the jury list. A good percentage was eligible at any time to serve on a jury. Public servants were not engaged so busily on their duties that they could not be spared for a day, or for a few days throughout the year, to serve on juries. There could be a wider and better choice, and we should secure the object the Bill had in view if we accepted a modification of the amendment.

Question put and negatived.

Bill farther reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

THIRD READING.

Bill read a third time, and *passed*.

BILL—FISHERIES.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. C. H. Rason), in moving the second reading, said: This amending Fisheries Bill is really a consolidating as well as an amending measure. It repeals the four existing Fisheries Acts and consolidates them in this measure. The existing law is not altered to a great extent. There are, it is true, some alterations; their purpose being to make the fishery law more effective, and to protect to a greater extent than is

possible now an industry which, although it does not appear to be an industry of great value at the present moment, is none the less capable of great development, and is as a matter of fact of very great value indeed. The interpretation clauses is made more comprehensive in this Bill than in the original Act. As one illustration I may give a definition of a long line, which reads:—

“Long line or bultow” means any line intended or used for the purpose of catching fish, to which more than six fishing hooks are attached.

And that is included under the term “fixed engine.” Hitherto a fixed engine has not been held to include a long line such as many of us have very often seen in use. It is a line to which hundreds of hooks are attached, and it is left floating; and undoubtedly the number of fish that can be taken by it is almost as large as the number that can be caught by a net very often. Then under this Bill the Governor is given greater power to make regulations prescribing the mode of testing the length of nets and the dimensions and the meshes of nets and providing for the disposal of forfeited nets found in close waters; also for preventing the destruction of fish, and for preventing injury to fishing grounds by a deposit of filth, refuse, or other deleterious matters. There is a new clause which gives the right to enter on any land for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Act. Inspectors have been hampered very much in the discharge of their duties, because they have had no power to enter upon private land. Subclause 2 of Clause 10 is a new provision making it an offence to have a net in close waters, unless it can be proved to the satisfaction of the justices that it was there for a lawful purpose. Hitherto inspectors have found that fishermen have been in close waters with nets in their boats, and manifestly they were there for the purpose of catching fish. Men do not go into close waters with a boat and fishing nets unless they go to catch fish. But it has been held under the old Act, that in order to obtain a conviction, it was necessary to prove that the fishermen had the nets in the water and that there were fish in the nets. Very often it is difficult to prove that, and under the new Bill the mere presence of a boat in close waters with a fishing net on

board is held to be proof that the people in the boat are there for an unlawful purpose, unless they can prove to the satisfaction of justices to the contrary. The onus of proof rests upon the boatman rather than upon the inspector. The next clause provides that by regulation it may be fixed how the license number can be put upon the bow of the boat and on the sails of the boat. It is intended that if this Bill passes, regulations shall be framed providing for a continuance of the number of the license. I may point out that under the existing regulations a fishing boat license, say No. 22, this year, may become No. 26 next year. There is no continuity of number. Not only is that working very harshly on the fishermen themselves, but it operates badly from the point of view of the inspector. A boat that has the character of a poacher will soon be known, and inspectors will look for the particular number of that boat; but when the number is liable to become changed next year or the year afterwards, the opportunity of the inspector of keeping an eye upon the boat is very remote. Clause 13 provides for the issue of licenses to use a seine net for the catching of fish for domestic purposes only. There is a new subclause in Clause 22, making it an offence for any person to sell, or cause to be sold, or offer or expose for sale, or have in his possession or control for purposes of sale any fish known as or called the crayfish of a size less than that prescribed in the second schedule, or any female of such fish of whatsoever size having eggs or spawn attached beneath its body, or which has been caught with eggs or spawn attached. It is necessary to have some such provision as this, because the shores of our coast are being rapidly depleted of crayfish. This is greatly accounted for by the fact that there has been no restriction upon the taking of female crayfish when they are very heavy with spawn. Then there is a new clause providing that every person using fishing nets or other illegal instruments in close waters shall on demand give his name and address. Clause 28 is an alteration of the existing Act, and an important one. The present law provides that no fish shall be caught for the purpose of manure. This clause is amended by Clause 29 in the direction of

making it an offence to catch fish mentioned in the second schedule of the Bill, edible fish, for the purpose of manure. This is to meet the purpose of the next clause, which gives power to the Governor to grant exclusive licenses in regard to any product of the sea not being food fish; to give to an applicant an exclusive right to collect all cartilaginous fish for the purpose of extracting oil and converting the flesh of those fish into fertilisers. That may seem rather an imaginary idea. [MEMBER: What clause?] Clauses 28 and 29. It may seem a wholly imaginary idea to think that anyone would fish for sharks and rays and fish of that kind for the purpose of extracting oils and then converting the flesh into manure; but there are industries in this and other parts of the world; and already proposals have been made to establish such an industry on the northern coast of Western Australia, where sharks, rays, and other cartilaginous fish abound, and where undoubtedly an opportunity would be given of extracting oil and converting the flesh into a very valuable fertiliser. No one would be likely to embark in such an industry as that unless he had an exclusive right within a given area to catch fish of that kind; and no harm can be done in giving an exclusive right of that kind, so long as it does not include food fish. Any right of that kind would only apply, as I hope the Committee understand, to fish like sharks, rays, and whales. Then under the existing law the burden of proof that fish caught were caught for sale is placed on the shoulders of the inspector. Under this new law, if passed, the burden of proof that fish caught were not caught for sale will rest, as I contend it should rest, on the person who caught the fish. There are other small clauses which all have a tendency not to inflict any hardship at all upon *bona fide* fishermen, but to render it more easy for an inspector under this Bill to obtain convictions against those who break the law. The law is being broken daily to a very great extent, and a wholesale destruction of fish takes place, which no one who considers the value of the fish product of the State can regard with equanimity. This measure will render it more easy for inspectors and honorary

inspectors to protect this industry. No one wants to see obstacles placed in the way of the angler and fisherman who fish for the purpose of sale to gain a livelihood, but we must protect the general public, and must protect the angler and *bona fide* fisherman from the unfair competition of those who pay no regard to the regulations of the law. I commend this Bill to members. I am aware that in many respects it does not go far enough; that those who have taken a deep interest in this question would wish to see a Bill even more comprehensive than this; but I submit to the Committee and to those gentlemen to whom I have referred that this Bill, though it may not be so comprehensive as might be desired, and though it may not go so far as some people would like it to, is still calculated to do good. It is a great deal better than the existing law, and if we can only bring it into force before the new year it will have a very good effect. Any amendments that subsequently may be found to be necessary can easily be inserted when the House meets, as I hope it will, in a very few months from now.

MR. T. HAYWARD (Wellington): I have much pleasure in supporting this Bill. It is a matter I have taken a great interest in for many years. I found that under the old Act an inspector might find a man in a boat in close waters, but unless he could actually prove that the man had a net in the water and fish in the net, he had no power. Subclause 2 of Clause 10 provides "that if any person shall be found having in his possession on close waters" and so on. That absolutely meets the case, and will prevent a great deal of the poaching that is done and has been done for a long time. Another clause I consider of very great importance is Clause 28, which says that—

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Game Act 1892, the Governor may declare a scale of rewards, and the conditions for the payment thereof, for the destruction of cormorants, pelicans, and such other birds as by proclamation may be declared hostile to fish life.

For some time there has been a reward with regard to cormorants: but pelicans are by far the worst fish bird we have to contend with. I was lately down on the southern coast on a small piece of water

which was occupied by small fry, and I saw at least 100 pelicans gobbling them up as fast as they possibly could. They were eating more fish than would have fed 100 people for a week. I consider this is the best possible measure which could be drawn, and I do not think it can be very much improved in Committee. But I am of opinion that possibly in the schedule one or two items may be perhaps altered very beneficially.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): It is fairly generally known to a number of members that for many years I have taken an interest in the fisheries question, going so far as to devote my time during many nights to the inspection of fisheries; and my experience would be very interesting to some members, had we time to discuss such details. But I think I shall have to leave the relation of those adventures to another occasion, possibly till next May or June, when I trust we shall have an amendment of this Bill. I feel that, as the Premier says, the Bill is a step in the right direction, taken indeed with great trepidation, and after a long lapse of time. This Bill, or some sort of amending Bill, should have been introduced to this House at least two years ago; but for some reason or other, successive Ministries have allowed the matter to hang fire, and at the last moment this Bill is put through the Upper House and sent down to us. I will satisfy myself by saying that the Bill should be entitled "An Act to empower the Government to make regulations for the control of Fisheries;" because it singularly refrains from putting right the mistakes made in former Acts. It certainly gives power to the Governor to do so; but in many instances the Bill should have done what the Governor is to be authorised to do by regulation. About a fortnight ago I went to some trouble to get the opinions of the fishermen who, as I know, are not destroying fish, but are making a living about Fremantle, South Fremantle, Garden Island, Point Perou, Safety Bay, and other parts of the coast. For years these fishermen, their sons and their grandsons, have lived by the exercise of their vocation, without destroying fish by illegal, improper, unjust and unfair netting in shallow waters. I think the House will

agree that the opinions of such men are worth considering. They have nothing to gain by making fishing regulations more stringent, except that such action will help to stop the continuous destruction of fish. I have reason to believe that men of this sort have not been consulted at all in the preparation of the Bill. The fishermen, of whom 59 met me about a fortnight or three weeks ago, have had no communication at all with the Fisheries Department, except now and then by meeting the inspectors. So far as I know, not one of the 59 has ever been fined for a breach of the law. I think it will be agreed that these men, or a committee representing them, should have been consulted by the Chief Inspector of Fisheries before he drafted the Bill. This is really a Bill to enable the Governor to make regulations; and for that reason I am not inclined to quarrel with it, so long as I am satisfied that the regulations will do what I want done—protect the fish, stop the destruction now proceeding, stop the illegal and improper sale of fish, and generally regulate the wholesale vending of fish and their distribution. The Bill does not deal with the subject in detail, but gives the Governor power to do so; nevertheless, I do not intend to block the Bill. It is a hesitating step in the right direction, and on that score must be welcomed. I am not prepared to block the second reading nor the Committee stage, but will help the Government to pass the measure, hoping to be assured that the regulations will be for the purposes I have suggested, or that some clause with that end in view may be inserted on recommitment. The fishermen wish the following reforms:—The absolute and permanent closing of Woodman's Point against netting. This request may appear to be rather arbitrary. For its size, Woodman's Point is one of the greatest spawning and feeding grounds on this portion of the coast. Some time ago a memorial was presented by the fishermen in that neighbourhood—I think about 40 or 50 British fishermen who were making a living by fishing, and who did not fish on the breeding ground at night time, though the breeding ground is fished over and netted over every night when the inspectors are absent. Those British fishermen petitioned for the absolute closing of Woodman's Point

for ever and a day. The reply received was that their request was scientifically impossible. The reply threw doubt on the fact that Woodman's Point was a spawning and feeding ground at all, virtually saying that the sun is not shining to-day, that Woodman's Point was not a spawning ground, and that if it were, the fish on this coast laid a pelagic egg. There was no explanation of "pelagic"; and on consulting a dictionary I found that pelagic meant "pertaining to the deep sea." I sought farther explanation, and was told that the pelagic egg laid on this spawning ground floats out to sea and is hatched there, which statement is simply ridiculous.

MR. TAYLOR: All science proves it true.

MR. DIAMOND: I beg to differ from the hon. member. I have carefully looked up the matter, and science proves the direct opposite. Within the last few months, a commission sitting in Scotland disproved what was said by the inspector here. Besides, if any scientist told me that fish did not breed and spawn at Woodman's Point, I should call that scientist a cheerful liar and humbug; because I have seen the spawn at Woodman's Point, and the young fish resulting from it. All the fishermen who have worked there for years say it is a spawning and feeding ground. The memorialists desire also to close the River Swan against netting. That is not provided for in the Bill: it is left to the Governor and regulations. We propose to close the Canning River also, except for prawning, which question we do not touch, as I am not familiar with it. We wish to close Safety Bay—a great fishing ground—for seven months in the year absolutely, against lines and nets. We wish to prohibit netting inshore of a certain line drawn down the South Beach, Fremantle, and also to limit the size of the mesh of the net, which should have been done but is not done in the Bill. It is left for regulation. The combined intellects of the fishermen inside and outside agree to a certain-size mesh inside and a certain-size mesh outside. They ask for a mesh larger than the present mesh, shutting out altogether what is called the bunt or bag of the net, which bunt catches all the little fish that are not caught in the big meshes. I think that is a proper request to grant. When these fishermen, mak-

ing their living at the trade, ask that the small meshes shall be altogether abolished, their request is deserving of great attention. We ask also that the sizes of mesh shall be regulated within the river. I do not think I need enlarge on all these points. I wish only to convince the House that the fishermen, who have no immediate personal interest in limiting the sizes of the mesh and closing the fishing grounds, nevertheless desire to do so. Next to the consumer, the fishermen are absolutely the first people to be considered. However, it is quite possible that the defects in the present law can be rectified, either by amendments in the Bill or as a result of an assurance from the authorities that the defects will be rectified by regulation. I do not wish to block the Bill, or to delay the business of the House. It is clear to me that every member is anxious to proceed with business; and though I have data here which would permit of my speaking till to-morrow morning, I am sure that my speech would not be enjoyed either by the Leader of the House or by the Leader of the Opposition. It is understood that time must not be wasted; therefore I will not oppose the second reading. The action I have taken is firstly in the interest of the consumer, secondly in the interest of the amateur angler, and thirdly in the interest of the *bona fide* fisherman. The greater part of the fishing industry is in the hands of aliens, who are working entirely against the public interest. There is going on an appalling destruction of fish; and I think that certain clauses of the Bill will have a good effect in preventing such destruction. I will assist the passage of the Bill; and I hope to have certain assurances later on from the Premier that due attention will be given to my recommendations.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I welcome this Bill to regulate fisheries. I know it is badly needed, and I support the second reading. I am rather sorry that the Bill does not deal more specifically with certain irregularities. Rather much is left to regulations to be proclaimed by his Excellency. At the same time, I feel sure that the Government will be guided by their inspector, who is thoroughly aware of the inconvenience of the Act under which he has been for some years

administering the Fisheries Department. I am pleased to see that the Bill deals with people known as poachers in closed areas. I am somewhat in sympathy with the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) when he says it has been very difficult to secure convictions. I know that too much has been left for the inspectors to prove, when they have caught in closed waters people with fishing nets and all other necessary apparatus. In the past, the onus of proof has always rested on the inspector; consequently, before the justices it has been most difficult to secure convictions. I desire to point out also that in a large measure the fishing industry of Western Australia is now in the hands of foreigners, mostly Greeks, and their knowledge of the English language is very limited, so that before the justices it is always difficult to make them understand. I do not know whether that has not been in a large measure the reason why convictions have been so hard to secure; but when I, as Colonial Secretary, was administering the Act, I received numerous complaints concerning these foreigners as to breaches of the Act and regulations along the coast. So far as closed waters are concerned, it is absolutely necessary that, when a person is caught with fishing nets in his possession in closed waters, unless he can prove that he is only passing through the closed water from his home to where he is going to fish—and that seldom occurs—he should be convicted. As the Premier points out, this puts the onus of proof on the poacher and not on the inspector, and to a large extent it will prevent fishing in closed waters. Another point that has raised considerable excitement and agitation is the net dragging carried on from the shore. No one knows this better than the member for South Fremantle. It has been proved to me beyond all doubt by those who have taken a deep interest in the matter that net dragging has been carried on to a very large extent by these foreigners on our coast, and consequently we have lost thousands of small fish.

MR. DIAMOND: It is going on every night now.

MR. TAYLOR: When I was Colonial Secretary, I issued instructions to inspectors and to the police to use every

effort to prevent the continuance of these breaches of this Act; but I found out there was a sort of freemasonry between the foreigners and that it was impossible to catch them. If they did it at one spot to-night and the inspector was waiting for them there to-morrow night, they would be at some other place. It is well known that as soon as the inspector shows his face anywhere near a spot where a breach of any of the regulations takes place, signals go along and it is almost impossible to catch those committing the breaches. I hope this Bill will prevent all those breaches that have taken place in the past, and that it will by that means prevent the loss of so many of the small fish we have hitherto lost owing to the difficulty in catching those who commit breaches under the existing Act. With reference to the closing of Woodman's Point, I must give the member for South Fremantle credit. Ever since he has been in this House, some five years, on every occasion when an opportunity presented itself to speak with reference to the way in which the fishing industry was carried on, he has seized it and has endeavoured to point out to the Government of the day the necessity for a closer supervision over the industry. The hon. member, in common with other people at Fremantle, has urged the closing of Woodman's Point because of that spot being a spawning ground. I went into the matter some time ago at considerable length, and the arguments advanced by the hon. member and the petitioners would not hold good in the face of the report of a committee of the House of Commons which sat on this very question, I think in 1895 or 1896. I have not the report at hand, but it is in the Chamber. The arguments of all the experts in the piscatorial world examined by that committee proved the contrary to the statements of the member for South Fremantle.

MR. DIAMOND: There were no Australian experts.

MR. TAYLOR: I suppose fish-spawning and breeding is the same in all parts of the world. I do not know. I am not a fisherman, nor have I had much experience; but I felt somewhat in sympathy with the object of the petitioners and tried to meet their wishes; but I found that the whole

of the evidence was against the arguments advanced by them. I had the highest authority I could find on the question. The House of Commons committee went into the matter while a discussion similar to this was taking place in England, and it was pointed out that the closing of areas did not make any difference. Some of the places mentioned were closed in the manner suggested by the member for South Fremantle for a number of years, and after the restrictions were removed the fish had not increased one iota; in fact, they had somewhat decreased. In the face of that evidence, I felt that I could not grant the request of the petitioners. I hope the Premier, when dealing with the Bill in Committee, will have that evidence and give us the value of it. I have no desire to oppose the Bill, I am only sorry that it is not more specific in itself. In my opinion, it leaves rather too much for regulations and proclamations. I know there are many features in the Bill that are a decided improvement on the present Act; and I hope that, though the session is short and there is a strong desire on the part of members to get into recess, the House will pass the Bill and that it will come into force on the 1st of January. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. C. H. Rason), in moving the second reading, said: This short Bill, although introduced by the Government, can hardly be called a Government measure in the ordinary acceptance of the term. It is introduced at the request of the companies transacting life assurance business in West Australia, principally in Perth and Fremantle. One of the main objects of the measure is to protect a life insurance policy against the claims of creditors after a specific period in the event of a person whose life is assured becoming bankrupt. The original Act of 1899 which this seeks to amend is based almost entirely on the South Australian Act, and in South Australia they have found it necessary to amend

their Act on the lines of the amendment sought in this Bill. South Australia has already amended her legislation dealing with life assurance—and the legislation we copied—on the lines of the amendment now sought to be introduced by this Bill. Not only have we followed the procedure adopted by the South Australian Parliament, but we have also introduced an excellent clause contained in the latest Queensland legislation dealing with the same subject. As the law now stands, any one life assurance policy is protected to a certain amount after a certain period of years. As the period of years advances, so does the amount protected advance also; and that is in regard to any one policy. To evade that law is very easy; because, instead of taking out a policy for £2,000, one can take out four policies of £500 each, and each of the four policies is protected. We desire to get away from the necessity for such subterfuge as that, and also to render even greater protection to the man who insures his life for the benefit of those who are near and dear to him. We desire that this investment the prudent man makes for those near and dear to him shall be as far as possible unassailable. Therefore it is provided in this Bill that, after the expiration of three years, the policy, for whatever amount, shall be unassailable by creditors in the case of the bankruptcy of the man assured; but at the same time, justice will be maintained in regard to creditors, because within three years the amount paid by way of premium—the sum actually paid out of the estate in that time—plus interest at five per cent., will be recoverable; and that, I submit, is all the creditors are entitled to. They lose no part of the money that has been taken out of the man's business in order to pay the premium on his life assurance; but they gain none of the principal which that payment attains. In other words, the creditors lose no portion of the money that would have remained in the business but for the fact of the man having assured his life. They secure the return of the amount paid by way of premium within three years, after which date the policy remains protected entirely [Mr. TAYLOR: And the premium likewise.] It is unapproachable; no creditor can approach it.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The existing law is five years.

THE PREMIER: It is on a sliding scale. The existing law is so easily evaded, because it provides that any one policy is protected to a certain amount, and a man, instead of taking a policy for a large amount which would not be protected under the existing law, takes four or five policies for smaller amounts, each policy being protected. There has been some doubt in the past as to whom the life assurance companies should pay the amount assured to, whether to the administrator or executor of the estate, or to the trustee in bankruptcy. The practice they have followed has been to pay to the administrator or executor, and that has been the practice everywhere; but in Queensland, as in South Australia, they have thought it advisable to especially enact that these payments shall be validated in case any question should arise hereafter; so that in this Bill it is sought to validate all payments made by insurance companies to the administrator or executor of deceased persons. Again, provision is also made that a fresh policy may be issued in lieu of a policy lost or destroyed. This follows entirely on the lines of the Queensland Act; the procedure is far more simple than under the existing Act. These are the three objects for which the Bill has been drafted. As I said it is based entirely on the request of the life assurance companies doing business here, backed up by what is the actual experience here, in South Australia, and Queensland. Everyone will agree that the widow and children of deceased bankrupts should be protected as far as possible from the claims of perhaps loquacious creditors; at the same time provision is made that no injustice shall be done to the creditors themselves. This Bill affords protection to people who ought to be protected, and renders clear any doubtful position in regard to the payment of sums to executors or administrators rather than to trustees in bankruptcy.

MR. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): I have much pleasure in supporting this Bill, because all the world over the assurance which a man effects on his life is regarded as provision made for his widow and children after he dies, and in that respect the provision that protects the

policy from attachment under bankruptcy proceedings is one that should be commended. While this Bill proposes to protect the moneys accruing out of the policy from the creditors and from proceedings in bankruptcy, it does not prevent the assured from so mortgaging his assurance policy that when he expires the insurance policy is absolutely of no use to the widow and children. If protection is necessary in one direction it is necessary in another. I go so far as to say the person who assures his life and who is married should be prevented from mortgaging his policy in such a way that it will be useless when he dies. I commend the suggestion to the Premier, and while perhaps he may not be able to insert such a provision in this measure, I would like him to take the matter into consideration with a view of bringing in such an amendment at a later period. If we protect the policy in one direction we should in another. If members believe that a policy should be protected in regard to bankruptcy proceedings they should favour its being protected against mortgage. We all believe that an insurance policy is regarded as protection to those whom a man leaves behind, and we ought to see by legislation that the result is secured.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interest on assured protected in certain cases :

MR. TAYLOR: Members must agree with the Leader of the Opposition that insurance money should be protected for the benefit of the widow and orphans when the husband dies. There should be some provision to prevent a person insuring his life and then mortgaging the policy up to the hilt.

MR. HORAN: Such a proposal would not be listened to in any civilised community.

MR. TAYLOR: It might be necessary to provide that within a certain period, with the concurrence of those who would benefit by the policy, money could be borrowed on it. It might be wise to safeguard the policy against the individual.

THE PREMIER: At a first glance there appeared to be a good deal in the

suggestion made, indeed it appealed to him with considerable force, and he would like to be able to see his way to thoroughly protect the persons who would benefit by a policy of life insurance; but it was to be hoped members would not ask him to bring in an amendment this session. The Bill had already run the gauntlet in another place, and it would be impossible to draft a clause that would effectually attain the desire of members so as to be included in the Bill and passed into law this session. The question was surrounded with difficulties. There were numbers of people who had already mortgaged their life insurance policies, and we could not validate all those transactions. Circumstances often arose in which a man was able to obtain a considerable advance in his position by depositing as security the policy on his life assurance. If it was absolutely necessary for a man to obtain an advance of money, all other things being equal and if the person who was prepared to lend the money was satisfied with the security, knowing the man and having every confidence in him, the very chance that always existed amongst us, that of death, would prevent the lender from advancing the money. There were many difficulties which presented themselves, and he assured members he would give the matter farther thought, but he hoped that it would not be expected of him to bring forward an amendment this session.

Clause passed and passed.

Clauses 3 to 6—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

THIRD READING.

Bill read a third time, and *passed*.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

Resumed from the previous sitting;
MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT
(Hon. W. Kingsmill, M.L.C., Minister).

Vote—Office of the Colonial Secretary,
£7,701:

MR. KEENAN: What was the accountant's branch which had been established for the first time in this

office? Yesterday the Treasurer stated that although an audit branch had been established in the Colonial Secretary's office, no extra expenses had been incurred, the officers having been taken from some other department. He wished to know what department.

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE: This branch was started in September of the present year. The question of amalgamating the various subdepartments had been under consideration for a number of years. Prior to the amalgamation there were eight officers solely, and 27 others partly, engaged on accountancy work in the different subdepartments, at a cost of £2,680. The rearrangement brought about a saving of £800, apart from stationery and other expenses. It had also been instrumental in causing the Treasury and Audit Department a far less amount of work. In fact, in all probability it saved the appointment of an inspector in the Audit Department. The branch was working very satisfactorily, and no increase had taken place in the salaries of those officers who were transferred.

MR. KEENAN: An increase of £1,830 was shown in the Audit Department. Had there been a corresponding decrease in any other department?

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE stated that there was a saving of £800 effected by amalgamation. Cases in which the savings were effected would be found under the different subheads.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS understood that the accountant took over the subdepartments in connection with the Colonial Secretary. Consequently a saving had been effected in the various subdepartments. Mr. Campbell was the officer appointed in charge of this work.

MR. HOLMAN: In the whole of the Colonial Secretary's Department there was a tremendous increase in administration alone, in spite of the fact that during the last year or so a great deal of work has been taken out of the hands of the Colonial Secretary and placed in other departments. There were many Acts now administered by the Labour Department which previously were administered by the Colonial Secretary's Department. He was at a loss to understand why, in face of the economy required, the cost of

administration of this department increased so much this year. He was not at all satisfied with the explanation given in regard to the accountancy branch.

MR. A. J. WILSON referred to various pages showing where officers had been transferred. The increase in this particular department only meant that the officers had been transferred from other departments to do this work.

MR. BATH: The hon. member assured us that there had been a saving of £800, but this was not evidenced in the total vote on the Estimates. He would like to know whether there had been a saving in reality. To shift officers from the Colonial Secretary's Department to some other department, such as the Lands or Mines or Colonial Treasurer's, was simply taking water out of one bucket and putting it into another.

Item—Immigration, £2,500 :

MR. A. J. WILSON: We were entitled to some statement from the Minister in charge of these estimates in relation to the subject of immigration.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Matters relating to oversea immigration had been dealt with by the Colonial Secretary's Department hitherto, but it was now proposed that in all questions of immigration the Colonial Secretary's Department should be responsible for all expenditure previous to arrival within the State. At present the money was cut up into two or three different votes. On the last Loan Estimates £10,000 was provided for immigration. The expenses of the lecturers in England had been paid out of that vote, also the expenses of Mr. Wilbur and Mr. Christy in the Eastern States. It was, he repeated, now decided that the total expenditure outside the State should be controlled by the Colonial Secretary and not by three different departments. When three departments were dealing with the matter it was rather difficult to arrive at what was really being spent on immigration. It was now proposed that after the immigrants arrived, those intending to follow farming pursuits should be taken charge of by Mr. Ranford with a view of settling them on the land. It was intended that certain areas should be reserved, land should be cut up into blocks and classified, not only for the benefit of the

immigrants, but persons inside the State who were anxious to go on the land. We had a proposal to clear a certain portion of this land, and to distribute the expenditure over a certain number of years on very much the same lines as existed in relation to the Nangeenan district. Up to the present the Government had not been able to give sufficient time to the consideration of the subject to bring forward any matured scheme.

MR. BATH: Last session, Ministers and their supporters, then in Opposition, blamed the Daglish Government for the allegedly inadequate provision for immigration. Now the Minister for Lands assured us that all the Government proposals were included in this item of £2,500. What successful immigration policy could be carried on with that sum? How far would it go in bringing farmers from the Eastern States, or in employing lecturers in those States, not to mention the securing of suitable immigrants from Britain? What was the immigration policy of the Government? From what quarters of the globe were immigrants to be drawn? Possibly the zeal of the Agent-General (Mr. James) sometimes outran his discretion. On good authority he (Mr. Bath) was informed that an assisted immigrant now at Northam, who had described himself as a farmer coming here to settle on the soil, had to apply for Government assistance to secure him a job in that town. Other immigrants, ostensibly agriculturists, were proved to have no knowledge of agriculture, they being artisans brought up in London and suburbs. Whether it was advisable to use Government money to import artisans to compete with those who already had difficulty in securing employment, was very doubtful. If suitable lecturers for the Eastern States were procurable, three or four should be simultaneously employed. Queensland had by successful finance been able, without recourse to the money market, to secure a surplus by means of which a farming population was being settled on a large area of land available in that State. Our late lecturer, Mr. Wilbur, had described Queensland as a serious competitor with him. This State offered to the immigrant as good opportunities as Queensland. Though Queensland might have

larger and more fertile areas available, the price of these was prohibitive as compared with the price of our lands. The best immigrants for this State were those accustomed to similar climate, similar pursuits, and similar soil. They knew exactly what they had to expect, and the best methods to employ. The proper policy to pursue was indicated by the success of the Victorian and South Australian farmers already settled here. Though Ministers made a great outcry against the lack of provision in last year's Estimates, the total amount now provided for immigration was only £2,500.

MR. GULL was fairly in accord with the views of the preceding speaker. To spend £2,500 on immigration, without a settled immigration policy, seemed to be a frittering away of money. Such small sums were wasted, in the absence of a scheme for introducing immigrants in large numbers, instead of three or four at a time. But for the fact that much of this money was already spent, he would sooner strike out the item, and let the Government bring in a national scheme.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This £2,500 was not the only money available. Last year £10,000 was voted, and a balance of £5,000 or £6,000 was in hand. The loan proposals, under the head of Development of Agriculture, would give another opportunity for discussing the question. This item was only for passage money.

MR. FOULKES: What amount would be placed on the Loan Estimates—as much as £5,000?

THE MINISTER: Yes.

MR. FOULKES: As much as £10,000?

THE MINISTER: No.

MR. WALKER: These cross-questions and answers indicated clearly that the Government had no fixed immigration policy. A certain sum was allocated to the Agent General, who was allowed to send us such job-lots of immigrants as he could collect. One batch of Scandinavians arrived. Where were they now? Not long ago, the Government sought by advertisement to place them as farm labourers. This was evidence of an absolute lack of system and a negation of policy. There was a charm in the word "immigration." What with General

Booth's scheme and the attitude of the Commonwealth generally, Governments had a fad for introducing immigrants. We were beginning at the wrong end. Before we brought people here, we ought to find them something to come to, some means of livelihood. Hundreds of men in this State lacked work, and with no great tuition could become agriculturists. Settle these on the land; spend on our own citizens the money we now spent to bring immigrants; and all our people would be in employment. But where had we lands suitable for settlement in their present condition? How many immigrants could be expected to get a living from the soil? It was no light undertaking to wrest a livelihood from some of our lands, much self-sacrifice and sometimes heavy expenditure being needed. The assisted immigrants had not the qualifications of successful farmers. We sent to Scandinavia, Germany, and Italy to procure docile servants, men accustomed to other climates and other systems of tillage; and we expected them in a strange country to settle down and be happy. How many assisted immigrants had taken up selections and had shown good results for the sacrifice the State had made on their behalf? The scheme of immigration had no other effect than to secure cheap farm labour, destitute of the spirit of independence which, happily for labourers, was generated on West Australian soil. There was no symptom of settlement arising from the scheme since it had been in progress. It seemed absurd that while Mr. Deakin was trying to encourage settlement in Victoria and New South Wales we were sending lecturers to those countries to try and get people to settle on our lands.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: They could not get land there.

MR. WALKER: There was plenty of land.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: People were leaving Victoria for Queensland in hundreds.

MR. WALKER: Were not people leaving Western Australia in hundreds in every ship that went away? [**MEMBER: No.**] They were leaving for South Africa because there was no opening here.

MR. FOULKES: Where were they going to in South Africa?

MR. WALKER: They were going to Johannesburg, to Cape Town, and to Durban.

MR. FOULKES: Farming?

MR. WALKER: They were trying to get a livelihood which they could not get here; and people were leaving Western Australia for the Eastern States because they did not think they could get employment in this country. On the goldfields were hundreds of people who would like to see a future opening bright before them. While we had strong able-bodied men who were willing to work in our midst, why send abroad for more men? The first duty of any Government was to see that the labour in the country was absorbed. When we were crying out for labour in this State, when we had enterprises in hand and not labour enough to complete them, then we would see the wisdom of not only advertising for men but paying their passages to bring them here. But while we had men here, and the State had not avenues for them, it was a crying shame to send away for people. The Minister for Lands had said that the Government purposed making improvements on some agricultural areas, to make the land fit for settlement. That was a wise course, and he was pleased to hear it. He would like to know what district these areas were in. Was the system to be similar to that adopted at Nangeenan? Were we to encourage a system of clearing the land and then providing the accessories and preliminaries to settlement? If this was to be the policy of the Government it was a wise one, and if generally adopted would absorb all the people we had unemployed. It would take the unskilled labour as well as the skilled labour, and utilise all the surplus stock of workers; but he was not sure that was the policy of the Government. This was certain, if we made our lands fit, and if we got rid of the difficulties that now existed in the way of selection, if we destroyed the power of the agents who had misled so many of those seeking land in the past, we would not need to advertise for immigrants: they would come here themselves. The answer of the Premier to a question yesterday showed that there was no lack of Italian or German immigration or alien immigration of any kind, and some of these immigrants were

bringing their wives; and if we were to trust to the information furnished by the Commonwealth, all these Italian immigrants had enriched the country to the extent of £3 per head. The State did not need to assist these Italians and Germans. Why assist these foreigners? Where was the cry for them? Only because we had land. That land should be for our own children, our own sons. Why did not our own sons take advantage of the land? Because the Government would rather give instructions to the Agent General in London than furnish information to our own people close at hand. No assistance was given them to enable them to become successful agriculturists. The Agricultural Department had hitherto been administered in the interest of the rich and successful farmer, and to the detriment of the struggling farmer. We imported trees from India and rare plants from India. Where did they go? Distributed freely and generously or equally to the farmers of the State?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was not done now.

MR. WALKER: It had been done in the past. They had gone to the vineyards of Mr. Harper, to the farms of rich agriculturists; they had gone mostly to those who were hand-in-glove with the management of the Agricultural Department. Poor farmers could not get them, and when men had tried to ascertain where the trees had gone, they had been generously referred to Mr. Harper, who said if the trees were successful he would allow applicants to have a sprig of the trees in years to come. This one knew to be absolute truth. The Government had no scheme to assist their own citizens on the land. If the Government carried out a scheme and made our own citizens prosperous farmers, we would not need to ask people to come from New South Wales, from Victoria, or distant Scandinavia; the difficulty would be to limit the numbers. There was no policy of that kind: it was only applied in a haphazard manner. There was an invitation for people to come over, and immediately they arrived they became an incubus on the State, causing the Agricultural Department to advertise for billets for them. There was no policy at all; it was sheer waste of money; it was

an insult to citizens in our midst and the sooner we got rid of this pettifoggery, miserable, mongering way of conducting the business of the State, the better for the Government and the people generally.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was the intention of the Government to extend the system that had proved such a success at Nangeenan. He agreed with the member for Kanowna in certain respects as to the immigration scheme being commenced at the wrong end of the stick. Land should be prepared before the settlers were sent out. One of the first steps taken by the Government was to reserve a large area of land in the South-West; 60,000 acres had been reserved at Kojonup, and 40,000 in the South-East at Pingelly. These lands had been reserved and a classification would be made and it was intended to have the land cut up. The officer in charge of the information bureau would inspect the land so as to inform applicants where the blocks were, and be able to place them on the land. The trouble in the Lands Department so far appeared to be that every officer had a general knowledge, but very few had definite knowledge. Men applied to the Lands Department and were told that they would get land down the South-West. The man then went to the land agent and was not able to secure the land, the consequence being that he was very disappointed. The Government could not remedy all the evils in a day. It was only six weeks since the general elections took place, and the Government intended as far as possible to get the land ready previous to immigrants arriving here. In regard to certain Bills of which notice had been given that day, the Government had taken certain steps to reserve the land for 10 miles on each side of the proposed railways to prevent speculative selection; and the amending Bill which was introduced the other day was to stop speculative investments. The Government had already given an earnest of their intention to stop speculative investment and to encourage legitimate investment.

MR. FOULKES: Last December the Government brought forward a proposal for placing £10,000 on the Loan Estimates for immigration. At that time the Minister for Lands and himself were

sitting in Opposition with the present Leader of the Government, and all joined together to attack the Government of the day for not having a proper immigration policy before the country. That was the position of affairs at that time. The then member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) took a great interest in the question of immigration, and with four or five others impressed very strongly on the Government the necessity for a sound immigration policy. It was pointed out how wrong and wicked it was to place an item of that kind on the Loan Estimates without having a fixed policy. He regretted we were still in exactly the same position in regard to immigration as we were twelve months ago. It made one almost despair of any schemes of this kind being carried out by politicians, members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers. We were in fact in the same position as ten years ago. When he was in London last January, he found that the Canadian office had a staff of 17 clerks, and they had branch offices in Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, and Leeds, in each of which places there was a staff consisting of four or five—he would not call them clerks, because they were nearly all Canadian farmers—whose duty it was to give information to agriculturists in Great Britain. As a result of the steps taken by Canada, over 100,000 had settled upon the land in Canada last year. The member for Kanowna said that this was only a movement to obtain cheap labour. That, however, was not the case. We wanted employers of labour on these farms. We wanted people not only from Great Britain and Ireland, but also from Germany and Scandinavia, to come and give employment to the people here. We had millions of acres lying idle. Many people said it was useless to try to get people to come here, and that we were not getting the right class. Some mistakes had occurred, but it was impossible for the Agent General, or anybody else, to ensure that we should always get the right type of man. But at least 75 per cent. of those sent out by the Agent General would go upon the land and become good settlers. Many West Australians went to South Africa, but had learned by now that it was useless for Australians to go there to obtain employ-

ment, and the majority had left. They had gone hoping to get employment in the mines; not to settle upon the land. There were people who would not settle upon the land at any price. There were hundreds of working men in this State who would not go upon the land. They did not like the life, and, if they were willing to go, their wives were not. The time had come when the Government must start a proper scheme of immigration. Even during the time they had been in power, there had not been sufficient care taken in regard to the reception of some of these immigrants who had come here; but during the last few weeks a change had taken place in that respect. He did not think they took the right step in placing the matter in the department of the Colonial Secretary. That Minister did not come into contact with the land.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Immigrants would be under the Colonial Secretary's department only till they arrived here.

MR. FOULKES: There were too many departments dealing with these immigrants. We did not want them sent from one department to the other. He had known of cases where the immigrants had been sent to the Colonial Secretary's Department; from there to the Labour Department, and then say on to the Lands Department. They should be placed under the Agricultural Department. He was glad the Government were going to make provision for having an under secretary for agriculture to keep all these things in one hand, and make one Minister responsible for them. He would like to see the question dealt with in the same manner as the Canadian Government had dealt with it. There they were dealing with the matter on business lines. But here every Government that came into office was afraid of placing any item on the Estimates with regard to immigration. They were frightened by speeches of the kind made by the member for Kanowna, in which it was urged that we had so many men walking the streets unemployed. They were afraid of the cry that we were bringing people from Russia or Scandinavia when there were so many people here out of work. They forgot that the way to give employment to these people was to

increase the population, increase the number of producers. We had too many people living in Perth, Fremantle, and Kalgoorlie. He was in South Africa some months ago, and there he met the Minister for Lands, who told him the Government of the Transvaal had an enormous number of applications from agricultural settlers in Great Britain who were prepared to go and settle there; also that hundreds of farmers had come out from Great Britain, including men with large sums of capital, with £10,000 and £20,000, who were prepared to go largely into agriculture on proper business lines; but unfortunately for the Transvaal Government, that Government had no land where those people could settle, and many of them returned to Great Britain. In many parts of the world there were thousands of people prepared to settle on the land, but unfortunately we did not take the proper steps to advertise the splendid land we had in this country. When Mr. Lefroy was Agent General—and he occupied that position for three years—hardly a penny was spent in advertising Western Australia. When Sir Edward Wittenoom was Agent General, there was an amount placed on the Estimates for advertising, and during that time a certain number of people did come to this country. We could not spend too much upon advertising this country in Great Britain, and we could materially help the other States. People were running away from the other States, there being no land for them. As the member for Kanowna said, people were going to South Africa; many were going to Canada, and he knew that very many were going to the Argentine Republic. We had many railways which were not paying, the reason being to a great extent that there was not sufficient population to settle along those lines. Fortunately, we had a first-class man as Agent General in Mr. James, who was taking the greatest interest in this question, but in his (Mr. Foulkes's) opinion we should send more people to help him in Great Britain. He would like to see half-a-dozen farmers sent from here to Great Britain to give lectures and information in regard to our lands generally. Many members were afraid of a policy of that kind. They would fight and argue as to whether we should house a few snakes at the Zoological Gardens; but

when it came to the question of establishing a scheme whereby we would settle people on the land, we only found a sum of £2,500 provided. He regretted the Government had not greater pluck. He believed the great majority of members would support them at all times in seeing that a liberal amount was provided for an immigration policy; but it was absolutely essential that, first of all, a proper scheme should be established.

[MR. H. BROWN took the Chair.]

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It seemed that before members could express an opinion that would carry weight in this matter, those of them who were not working farmers should qualify by taking up land and working the land they were talking about. No one was more anxious to encourage immigration than himself. The difficulty seemed to him to be that, no matter how careful we might be in regard to the selection of immigrants, unless we had suitable land adjacent to the railways we would have any amount of discontent. Recently a few immigrants had been brought into the country as the result of the efforts of the Agent General. He (Hon. F. H. Piesse) did not care whether they were artisans, or followed any other occupation, so long as they had the determination to succeed on the land; because he had found as good results attained by men who had never had anything to do with land as, perhaps, were attained by those who had been brought up on the land. Everything depended upon the individual and the purpose he had, and on the amount of brain and muscle he brought to bear. As one who had had a great deal of experience with regard to land settlement in this country, he did not consider the conditions here were similar to those prevailing in Canada. The introduction of immigrants to Canada, which had been so successful, had been brought about by the facilities offered to the immigrants to immediately take up the land and commence to work it without very much expense; but throughout Australia generally we could not work land so cheaply in the first instance as they could in Canada. The Canadian country was not covered with the thick vegetation we had in Australia. In Canada they could break up the soil and work it at very little cost;

but here, settlers had to carry out a great deal of work before they could reap any return from the land. Nevertheless he preferred the Australian conditions to the Canadian conditions; because, once we got over the initial expense, farming could be made profitable. After all, the question was what we were going to do with the people coming here without means. If we showed them our timbered land and said to them that we had good land to the west of Kojonup, as mentioned by the Minister, or to the east of Pingelly and other places named, no matter how good the land might be and how favourable the conditions were in regard to farming and how successful others had been, people coming here could do nothing with it without means. It was no use sending them to the country, because they needed assistance. The immigrant could not do the work expected of him, and, instead of being an advantage to the country, he would become a burden in a sense. Day after day farmers had men coming to them asking for assistance either by way of employment or by way of advice in regard to settlement on the land. Though we were all so anxious to see this immigration question carried to a successful point, we must look at it as it had not been looked at before. Considering the changes in Government in this country during the past few years, there had not been any opportunity given to any Government to carry out a set policy in regard to immigration. Each Government had brought forward ideas, but had not been able to carry them out in any way successfully, nor to formulate them in a practical way so as to give practical results and encourage Parliament to vote money for the farther continuance of the work. He was prepared to agree to the item before the Committee. It was sufficient for the time, because the policy of immigration was one that needed to be taken in hand carefully and slowly. We should not proceed too rapidly with it. We should obtain the best information possible in regard to lands available and, as suggested by the Minister, should carry out some improvements on those lands in advance of settlement. We should first of all take the poison off some of the land referred to—really splendid agricultural areas, but covered

with poison—and then we should ring-bark certain portions of the land which could be afterwards subdivided and given to *bona fide* selectors able to select it. But to carry out a lot of improvements in the preparation of these lands, there was no knowing how much money we would need to spend. It would mean an enormous expenditure, and then there would be numbers of failures among the settlers. The best people we had settling on our lands were the young men and farmers from the Eastern States possessed of experience: but at the same time, we were not benefiting Australia as a whole by taking men from other parts of Australia where they could carry on their work equally well if they had the same conditions as we had here. We were asking them to come here to the detriment of the other States. He had frequently said that he was not in accord with the method adopted—going to the Eastern States to induce people to come here. We were benefited by the system, but it was asking people to come from another State to increase our wealth to the detriment of another State. The question of immigration was important. No more important question had arisen. It overshadowed that of opening up the country by railways; because, after all, railways were of no use and the land was of no service unless we could develop it. We heard much talk about developing land and settling people on the land and producing from the land; but if people went among the farmers and lived among them, as he had done for thirty years, they would see that many farmers were making non-successes, that it was hard work from the start, and that it was only those who were determined and of the right calibre that were able to succeed. Unless the people we brought from the old country had means of tiding themselves over the first difficulties of settlement, they would be of no service to us for some time to come. They could only take employment on farms and learn the way to carry on. Then probably they might succeed. The people we should induce to come here were those with some small means to make a commencement on the land. If we would do that we would succeed, but it was difficult of attainment at the present time. There would be a set-back in regard to immigration if we

did not watch it closely. Some of the people who had come had been able to settle on the land and to do well, but the greater number were walking about from place to place looking for someone to take them on so that they could get the necessary experience. In fact he had an appointment the next morning with one man who had come out to settle on the land, and last week he sent a lad and two men to places, while every day he received letters asking if he could give information as to how people could obtain employment. These people had no means. The two men referred to had informed him that all they had was £50 each. It certainly was something with which to make a start, but it was not sufficient to enable these men to get on farms and commence work in earnest. They must first work for someone to gain experience. In Canada a man could make a start at once, because the lands were ready to be tilled; but here the lands must first be cleared of timber, and our conditions were not so inviting as those of Canada. We should give every consideration to this question. It was a matter the Government should take in hand. As they had only assumed office recently, we should wait to see what they could do by next session, and in the meantime we should not talk any more over this matter, because we had many times talked over it, and suggested what should be done. The Government should be given the opportunity to formulate some practical policy in regard to this question of immigration; but it was all very well to say this. Those with experience should make that experience available to those who sought it, and it might be of some service to the Government and to the officers of the department controlling this matter which meant so much to the State. We heard a great deal about putting people on the land; but before we brought them out here, we should have some provision by which immigrants could be met at Fremantle by someone who would give them information as to where they were to go; and we should, if possible, commence in a small way by settling some on the area it was proposed to reserve; because if they could carry on successfully it would be an encouragement to other

people to come and would be a benefit to the country. It was all very well for us to talk here, but there was a great difficulty to be faced. Any Government formulating a policy that would be successful for our local conditions would be deserving of the greatest commendation from the people of this State and of all the States.

[MR. ILLINGWORTH took the Chair.]

MR. TAYLOR did not desire to speak on the particular principle of immigration. He recognised that the item under discussion did not touch upon it. It was an item known in the department as "nominated passages." The Agent General had certain powers, clearly defined under regulations, as to how he could send people out, and power was also given to the Minister at this end. The Government had entered into negotiations with the steamship companies who had given a quote that they would bring passengers out for the Government for £7 10s. [THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE: £6 10s.] Then there had been an alteration. This sum represented the cost of the immigrant to the State. It was desired that these immigrants should be farm hands. The broad principle of immigration which was discussed in the House last year was not touched by this item. While he was Colonial Secretary, he had great difficulty in administering the vote judiciously. Our most enthusiastic Agent General had been anxious to send out people under nominated passages; but we then instructed the Agent General that it was not in accordance with the regulations, and we impressed on him that he (the Agent General) should not depart from the conditions. He was pleased to say that the Agent General had acted accordingly, that he had been besieged by members of Parliament and citizens desiring to nominate people to come to Western Australia from all parts of Europe, but he had acted cautiously in the matter. Many had urged on him the necessity of allowing friends to come out, guaranteeing that these assisted people would not be any burden on the State for at least twelve months. That was the phase of the "nominated passage" from beyond the seas. We had also the system initiated by the member for West Perth (Mr.

Illingworth) four years ago, by which a man could get assistance to bring his wife and family to Western Australia from the Eastern States. The system was that the relative here secured a bondsman and guaranteed repayment of the passage money within twelve months, the Government advancing the steamship fare. Invariably that assistance was given to the people on the goldfields. When he entered the department he found outstanding accounts for years. In one instance not a single instalment had been paid. He then immediately issued instructions that the outstanding instalments be collected. He found great difficulty in having those accounts collected, but he thought that before he left office there was only one, out of the whole of the negotiations entered into during the period of four years, which they failed to collect, and that was through an error of judgment in the signing of the bond. He also instructed the officers of the department to produce a monthly return of how we were getting on with this system. A monthly return was produced showing the amount paid in and the amount outstanding, and we knew exactly where we were. He supposed the department was continuing to do that. This State had lost little or nothing in that scheme of assisted passages from the Eastern States. He thought the provision a very good and wise one, and hoped the Government would follow it up. In reference to the larger scheme of immigration, that was a matter which would come forward at some later date. A Royal Commission was appointed, and the report of that commission, which gave time and labour and worked well, had been presented. He did not see anything in this vote dealing with that immigration system, and had yet to learn what attitude the Government were going to take up as to the larger scheme. This amount was purely in regard to nominated passages. He was sorry the member for Kanowna had waxed so warm and pointed out that these people were brought here to drift on to the farms and afford cheap labour. Whilst he (Mr. Taylor) was administering this vote for ten months, he was very careful, and refused he might say hundreds of people who came to his office. [MR. A. J. WILSON: The

hon. member managed to spend the vote.] He managed to spend the vote, and he spent it judiciously. He did not allow artisans to come out, except that perhaps when he first took office some had come before he got thoroughly acquainted with the conditions which prevailed. To think that £6 would be an inducement to a person with capital to come out here and settle on land was too absurd for words.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The purpose of immigration votes generally had been to bring out a class of settlers that would go immediately upon the agricultural lands of the State, and follow up their avocation. There already existed within our own borders large industrial districts where numbers of workers were congregated, and had not the information they ought to be in possession of which should induce them to become permanent settlers upon our agricultural soil. He hoped the Government would see something was done in this particular connection, so that at any rate information would be placed before men at the timber mills, many of whom had their wives and families with them, and were only too anxious to be made acquainted with the conditions and to have an opportunity of becoming permanent settlers.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS was pleased that he had given instructions to Mr. Wilbur to go to the various mills and lecture on the land question. He had delayed sending until after the holidays, as the mills would be closed during that time.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—*Charities*, £33,277—agreed to.

Vote—*Electoral*, £8,097:

MR. BATH had no desire to discuss this vote at any length. He rose to suggest to the Minister that the gentleman who appeared at the head of this department, the inspector of parliamentary rolls, should be given complete control of the arrangements for compiling the rolls. He believed that officer was capable and industrious, a man who had a thorough acquaintance with the work of his department, and who, if placed at the head of the department, would give entire satisfaction and remove many

grievances which had been urged in regard to the compilation of the rolls in the past.

MR. WALKER: The most conspicuous feature of this vote was the absence of the person chiefly responsible for the compilation of the rolls of this State. Last year the Committee apparently refused to vote this gentleman's salary as Chief Electoral Officer; nevertheless he still continued to perform the duties and to take the responsibilities of the office. His position must be discussed at a later stage; but every member of the House knew from his experience at the last election, and from the public Press, that this officer, instead of assisting the State in the preparation of reliable rolls, had acted detrimentally, and had, one was convinced, been the means of preventing the expression of the popular will through the ballot box. A drastic change was necessary. Through this vote we could not reach that officer, but we could reach him through the next page of the Estimates. But rather than take vengeance on him by reducing salaries drawn under other headings, would it not be better to face the difficulty here? Let the Government assure us that in future the officer would not be entrusted with the management of the Electoral Department, if for no other reason than that his time was fully taken up with other duties. Last night we voted him £550 as Sheriff, though he could not find time to fulfil all the duties of that office. In addition, he was Comptroller General of Prisons, at a salary of £250. Possibly he could fulfil the duties of Sheriff and of Comptroller General. He was apparently a man of fair attainments and of apt tastes. But when in addition he was placed in charge of one of the most important divisions of the machinery of self-government, too much was imposed on him, particularly when he performed the work apparently for nothing. A man with such pressure on him in other departments could not be expected to work for nothing; and this department required the best talents and all the time of a capable officer. The head of this department had not only to attend to the clerical branch, but to supervise every registrar and every returning officer throughout the State, and to manage the details of every general election. We could not expect

that work to be done for nothing; but even if this officer were paid the old salary, he could not find time to do the work. And if, in addition to his other duties, he were paid handsomely to do this work and could find time to do it, the gentleman in question had not the temperament fitting him for it. Mr. Octavius Burt was a gentleman of strong prejudices and remarkable personality, of an extraordinary individuality; a man who, like the Commissioner of Railways, took no greater delight than in asserting his own self-will. Such a disposition, backed up by possible political bias—

MR. EDDY: Leave that till we discuss the question of the compilation of the rolls.

MR. WALKER: It was pertinent to this discussion; and if omitted now, there might be no farther opportunity.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member ought not to make reflection on a public servant.

MR. WALKER: Surely one was justified in pointing out the defects in a department under consideration.

THE CHAIRMAN: To that there was no objection; but he objected to one sentence, which was a reflection upon the officer.

MR. WALKER: The reflection was upon the officer's character as relating to the specific work in question. It might be no derogation to a gentleman's character to say that he was self-opinionated. That might be an admirable quality in a general on the battlefield. It might be no derogation to his character and no insult to him as a man to say that he possibly had political bias.

THE CHAIRMAN: That was the objectionable sentence.

MR. WALKER: It was part of human nature to have a bias. Sometimes that was an honourable quality, and a most admirable quality so long as it did not interfere with the discharge of public duties. Whatever political bias he (Mr. Walker) had, he was proud of; but if he were in a position to display that bias, possibly he might not be the man to entrust with the duties of Chief Electoral Officer. There was on record in Mr. Burt's department evidence which showed that he had checked Labour in the interests of the voters of this State, and condoned the faults of his officers against

the interests of the electors. Of this it was not possible at the moment to bring up the proofs; but he protested against this officer's continuing in his position, more particularly as it was plain that the department could get along perfectly well without him. If Mr. Burt retired to-morrow from the position of Chief Electoral Officer, and were the appointment given to Mr. Daly, the present Inspector of Parliamentary Rolls, the work would be done more efficiently, because Mr. Daly could devote his whole time to it, and because he was an officer of long experience in electoral matters---experience obtained in this State by administering one of the worst Acts that ever disgraced our statute-book, the present Electoral Act, and by administering the former Act, and experience obtained in the electoral department of other States. Mr. Daly, he believed, was a student of every kind of literature throwing light upon electoral matters.

MR. FOULKES: Did Mr. Daly tell the hon. member to say that?

MR. WALKER: Three months ago he had not known of Mr. Daly's existence, and a month ago had not seen him. If he remembered rightly, he had never met him save at a meeting of the Select Committee on Electoral Rolls, in the presence of other members of the committee and officers of the House.

THE PREMIER: No matter if the hon. member had met him a hundred times.

MR. WALKER: But none should insinuate that Mr. Daly was seeking to have his praises sounded. So great was the prejudice against him (Mr. Walker) in some quarters, that praise from him might be considered by some a condemnation. He spoke from his own observation of Mr. Daly before the select committee, and from inquiries made outside. Mr. Daly was evidently a man who could do his duty. It was useless to have a figure-head, or a head which might interfere with the labours of others to the detriment of the electors. Mr. Burt should evidently be asked to retire from this position. Such a request need not be called censure, for the retirement would give him more time for his other duties. The object was not to squelch Mr. Burt, but to improve the administration of the electoral department. The select committee had not yet reported,

but the evidence, when printed and laid on the table, would be quite sufficient to justify all he (Mr. Walker) had said to-day, and all that he would like to say were he given an opportunity.

MR. PRICE could not allow the remarks of the member for Kanowna to pass without comment. The hon. member appeared to have been treading on dangerous ground. Many of the opinions expressed by the member for Kanowna must have been gathered through the evidence given before the select committee, which committee had not reported. The conclusions of the committee at the present moment were not matters for public discussion. He dissociated himself from any charge against the Chief Electoral Officer acting from party bias. That question might easily be left to the future. Members would see the report of the evidence taken before the committee, and could then say whether there was party bias or not. The member for Kanowna waxed very indignant when it was suggested that he interested himself on behalf of the Inspector of Parliamentary Rolls. Consideration should be extended to other people. At present it was most unfair and most unjust, even in the remotest degree, to charge Mr. Burt with party bias in carrying out his office. The Labour party had suffered a severe defeat, and someone had to be blamed. Mr. Burt might not be all we desired as Chief Electoral Officer, but members should not make him the scapegoat for what were after all the delinquencies of their own party.

MR. LYNCH did not go so far as Mr. Walker in regard to his want of faith in Mr. Burt's capabilities to fill his office properly. Members should not attack public servants in the House when those officers had no chance of retaliating. But whatever the member for Kanowna had said was from conscientious principles. There was nothing that would lend itself to the justification that Mr. Burt had been completely wanting in his ability to fulfil his position. When a public officer was entrusted with an Act which was unworkable, certainly in the effort of its working, it must reflect some form of discredit on the officer in charge, and instead of blaming the officer it was our duty to blame the unworkable Act. Although one was not justified in con-

demning the officer, he felt that Mr. Burt was like the fifth wheel in the coach, and that the Government would be justified in dispensing with his services and appointing the other officer, of whom members of the committee had recently had a chance of assessing his worth, to the position.

MR. BOLTON: Was any part of the sum set apart for the electoral department spent in inquiries into the North Fremantle, East Fremantle, South Fremantle, and Fremantle elections? The member for Fremantle who championed the public officer whose name had been brought into the debate was the member who moved the amendment to the motion by the member for Mount Margaret, that the papers in connection with these inquiries be laid on the table of the House. These papers were not yet on the table, and would not be this session.

MR. KEENAN: Everyone recognised the great earnestness the member for Kanoona threw into every question to which he addressed himself, and possibly could make a large allowance for the way in which his earnestness carried him beyond the right limits. Public officers should not be criticised on the floor of the House, if for no other reason than that they were not present to answer charges brought against them. It had been said that the Chief Electoral Officer was the holder of many offices, and possibly the criticism might be well founded. It was desirable that a man should not be asked to do more than human capacity could endure. The multiplicity of offices might render it impossible for an officer to give a full share of his capabilities to each of his offices. An officer in the important position of Chief Electoral Officer should appear somewhere on the Estimates, so that there could be a proper criticism of his conduct if necessary. The discussion seemed to be somewhat out of order, because there was no amount on the Estimates for this officer. If the officer was provided for on the Estimates in connection with some other office held by him, then it seemed that as Chief Electoral Officer he was beyond the control of Parliament, which was an objectionable state of affairs. It was very easy to make charges and to sum up a man's character adversely or otherwise; but there was

something more asked from members of the House than to say that an officer was autocratic.

MR. WALKER: There was proof of it.

MR. KEENAN: Some people talked about proof, and when one examined what was called proof it was of the flimsiest possible character. He (Mr. Keenan) objected to an officer being described in the way in which the member for Kanoona had felt called upon to describe the Chief Electoral Officer. He regretted that the words "political bias" should have been used, although the member for Kanoona disavowed any intention of charging the officer with being swayed by political bias in the administration of his office. It was to be regretted that the member for Mount Margaret was not present, for one would have liked to ask at whose door the blame should be laid? When the member for Subiaco went to the other States, the Chief Electoral Officer asked that funds might be provided for printing the electoral rolls. The then Colonial Secretary was not in a position to furnish the funds, and the Chief Electoral Officer was told to await the Premier's return. When the then Premier returned, the funds were not available and the rolls were not printed. Had the rolls been printed last May or June there would have been nothing like the suspicion in regard to people not being on the rolls; because there would have been a longer time for all parties to see whether they were in possession of their electoral rights or not. The same measure of blame should be placed on the shoulders of those who, after all, had the final say in these matters; not on the shoulders of the officer who had to depend on the approval of a Minister before he could carry his ideas into effect. The officer had been selected to be the scapegoat of a faulty Act. If we recognised that the Act itself was one almost impossible to administer, then no one party was to blame for faulty administration, and one individual should not be selected to carry the blame of the mistake.

THE PREMIER: It would be idle to deny, in fact he was prepared to at once admit, that the electoral department was not satisfactory by any means, nor was the Electoral Act; and it undoubtedly would be the duty of the Government to

endeavour to bring about such amendment of the Act as would be satisfactory. The intentions of the Government were to thoroughly reorganise the Electoral Department. There was no necessity for a multitude of words. That summed up the position entirely. The necessity of improvement in both respects was admitted. He could not miss this opportunity of saying he thought with the member for Kalgoorlie that it was regrettable members should take the opportunity of the Estimates, or indeed the opportunity of their position within these walls, either to belaud one officer of the service or belittle another; and certainly it was not advisable, nor was it in the interests of the service, that members, although they might be actuated by the best of motives, should praise one officer in the department at the expense of his senior officer. It did no good to the service, nor to the individual officers. He very much regretted that the member for Kanowna should have thought fit to make a charge of political bias. It was true he said he only used the words in their Pickwickian sense; but one thought the hon. member would on reflection feel that one of the remarks had been better left unsaid. Because whatever faults this officer might have, and we all had our faults, one did not think it could be justly said that political bias was one of them. He believed the officer endeavoured to discharge his duties without any bias, either to one side or to the other. The administration of the office in its entirety—not one officer, but in its entirety—was unsatisfactory. The Act was unsatisfactory, and both must be remedied. With that assurance he thought the Committee might well allow the matter to drop.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—*Fisheries*, £2,275—agreed to.

Vote—*Gnols*, £31,495 :

MR. LYNCH: On the 31st December there were 720 persons in gaol. He wished to know why it was there was an increase of something like ten per cent. on warders' salaries, whilst the criminal population was about stationary.

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE: Provision was made for three extra

warders, necessary when additions to the Fremantle Prison were completed, and two extra warders for relieving purposes were required; effecting a reduction of £400 under the item "Officers occasionally employed."

Put and passed.

Vote—*Harbour and Light*, £16,095 :

MR. BATH called attention to the item relating to the s.s. *Penguin*. The *Penguin* was an expensive luxury, and he wished to know how much of her time was devoted to useful purposes, and how much to luxury.

THE PREMIER did not know that the *Penguin* was ever engaged in what might be strictly defined as a luxury. She did all the coastal work, which was a very large item in itself, from Wyndham to Albany, lifting and preparing all the bearings and looking after the moorings. There was ample work for the *Penguin* all the year through. It was true that at a certain season she ran backwards and forwards to Rottnest, but that was all business, and could not be classified under the heading of luxury. The *Penguin*, its master and crew, were, he knew from his own experience, useful throughout—a useful boat, a useful set of men, and engaged in a useful work.

Put and passed.

Vote—*Lunacy*, £22,683 :

MR. A. J. WILSON asked for information in regard to the completion of the asylum at Claremont.

THE PREMIER mentioned that there would be an opportunity of dealing with the matter on the Works vote.

Item—*Bandmaster*, £10 :

MR. EDDY: Was a band employed at the asylum?

MR. TAYLOR: When administering this department, it was his intention to urge the Treasurer to allow a larger vote for purposes of this kind. There was room for the Government to make arrangements by which a piano and musical instruments of that description could be provided to make the lives of those in the asylum much more comfortable and happy than at present. If there was not some provision made in that direction, he would feel sorry. No matter how bad the finances were, a

small expenditure of a few pounds in that direction was desirable. These persons were a section of the community deserving of the sympathy of the House and the State as a whole.

Item—Hall porter, £52:

MR. A. J. WILSON asked for information.

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE: This hall porter was needed for attendance required for the new hospital at Claremont.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Observatory, £3,613:

MR. KEENAN intended to move that the whole of this vote be struck out. Of course Ministers could introduce it again under Supplementary Estimates, but he would like to have an expression of opinion on the part of the House. He supposed it was not practicable to wipe this off the face of the Estimates. It was, however, money that might very well be saved. He knew of no particular good that the Observatory did. It was possibly of great value to the Eastern States; and from that point of view, if the Federal Government were wise, they might be prepared to take it over. It was also, no doubt, of great use to the home country and to the different European States to obtain information from it; but he failed altogether to see what its use was to this State. The building might very well be utilised for some higher system of education—possibly not a university yet, inasmuch as our funds would not warrant us in going on with that—or for elementary schools.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could vote in the negative.

MR. BATH: According to the Standing Order the member for Kalgoorlie was in order in moving that the vote be omitted.

THE CHAIRMAN hardly thought so.

MR. A. J. WILSON could scarcely agree with the member for Kalgoorlie. He knew many people in different parts of the State to whom the information sent from the Observatory was of considerable advantage. It was our duty, on a matter not only of national importance but universal importance, to make some

contribution for the upkeep of that institution.

At 6-30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Police, £126,572—agreed to.

Vote—Public Gardens and Government House Domain, £2,967:

MR. LYNCH: Was the item for the upkeep of grounds, £450, an additional expenditure?

THE PREMIER: Last year there were items for the upkeep of public grounds and grounds connected with public buildings, and for incidental, including acclimatisation of plants etc. That disappeared this year.

Put and passed.

Vote—Public Health, £7,547:

MR. LYNCH: Did the item referring to travelling expenses include the cost of the railway fares for the chairman of the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Health Board on his visits to Perth? If so, the Premier might know that no benefit was brought about by such visits; while there was no reason why Kalgoorlie and Boulder should be specially selected in this regard and other mining centres of importance disregarded.

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE: During the last few months there had been occasion to send the president of the Central Board of Health to Kalgoorlie on a most important matter brought under notice by Mr. Johnson, the late Minister for Works. The expense incurred had been debited against the item for travelling and contingencies.

MR. LYNCH: The question had not been answered. Other mining centres did not go to the foolishness of sending a man to Perth in connection with health matters.

THE PREMIER: The James Government did not approve of the president of the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Local Board of Health visiting Perth to attend meetings of the Central Board of Health, and had protested against the idea, believing no good could be done by it; but the people on the goldfields had been

loud in the expression of their desire that it should be permitted. It was only on a very strong protest and a great amount of urging that the Government of the day then consented to allow it. One could hardly resist a local demand of that nature; but if there was no real object attained by the practice, it would be looked into to see if some alteration could not be effected.

MR. SCADDAN: It was quite right that the people of Kalgoorlie should have some representation on a board dealing with matters affecting the whole of the State.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Registry, £8,795:

Item—Registrar General and Government Statistician, £500:

MR. HORAN drew attention to the excessive delay in connection with the compilation of statistics. The Year Book for 1903 had been issued, but we were always a couple of years behind. The department should be brought up to date. Also, there was delay in bringing the Blue Book up to date. Some members of Parliament were still alleged to be employed in departments of the State. The Blue Book was grossly misleading.

THE PREMIER: There might be some delay in the publication of the yearly hand-books and statistical returns, but it was not the fault of this department. The returns that were of practical utility were published monthly, and they contained a mass of information and all that was of vital importance to members desiring to study the statistics of the State. If possible, the delay in the publication of the Year Book would be remedied.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The publication of the monthly statistics was a great advantage. They contained most useful information, and if members preserved them they had all they desired in the matter of statistics. The publication of the Year Book could be very well dispensed with, for a time at any rate.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Rottneest Establishment, £958:

MR. BOLTON: It was time we did away with Rottneest Establishment. The

question had been mooted several times. The only pleasing feature on these Estimates was the reduction of £327 in the salary of the superintendent, the explanation being that after four months the superintendent would retire. He (Mr. Bolton) would be glad if this division did not appear on the Estimates at all.

MR. BATH understood that so far as Rottneest prison was concerned, the amounts for that were included under the vote for the Fremantle prison, and that this particular vote did not refer to the penal establishment.

THE PREMIER: As a matter of fact, Rottneest Establishment, as a penal establishment, had been done away with. The item for the superintendent was merely pay for the leave the superintendent was entitled to for his services. As a matter of fact, the superintendent had retired on leave already. The item of £113 on the Estimates was payment made to him on leave of absence. Medical officer and caretaker were really the only items that should appear. He moved—

That item "Contingencies, £580," be struck out.

Amendment passed, and the vote as reduced agreed to.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (Hon. W. Kingsmill, M.L.C., Minister).

Vote—Education, £155,278:

MR. BOLTON: There was an increase of £1,878 over the expenditure of last year, most of which went towards the salaries of teachers for the proposed new schools. How did the Minister discriminate as to the districts in which the schools should be built? Towards the end of 1904, application was made for a school at Buckland Hill, a portion of the North Fremantle electorate. A report was called for at the time and was favourable to the erection of the school. Correspondence passed, and a petition was sent in to the Minister for Education; and the Minister promised to visit the district. When the visit took place, a petition was handed to the Minister, showing beyond dispute that there were 71 infants outside the radius of the nearest school who could not attend that school in consequence of the dis-

tance they had to travel. In the afternoon, at Mr. Streletz's house, in the presence of the members of the roads board, the Minister for Education said, in regard to the application for an infant school, that provision should be made on the next Estimates for the building of the school, and preliminary arrangements were made. A communication was received from the Inspector General of Schools saying that certain land had been set apart for the purpose, and asking if he (Mr. Bolton) concurred in the site. That was on the 13th June. Naturally he concurred in the site, as it had been prearranged with the Education Department. When the change of Government took place, it was just possible that the favourable recommendation of the Inspector General of Schools was altered to one unfavourable. He desired to find out if that was so. When an absolute promise had been given by a Treasurer, it was the practice for a Government to redeem the promise of a previous Government. The promise had not been kept, and no provision was made on the Estimates for the school. The member for Subiaco, the then Premier and Minister for Education, said that the school should be provided in accordance with his promise; and if the present Treasurer knew that such a promise existed, he no doubt would carry it out.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no record of a promise having been made for the erection of an infant school at Fremantle. Schools were recommended by the Education Department in three degrees, very urgent requirements, urgent requirements, and still less urgent requirements. The very urgent requirements took precedence. According to the member for North Fremantle, the request for an infant school was an urgent requirement, and as he said there was an absolute promise, inquiry would be made, and if it was found that this promise had been given, the school would be built.

MR. HORAN: What was proposed to be done in regard to the establishment of a secondary system of education? In the absence of a university, members should impress upon the Government the advisability of providing a system of secondary education. The High School was subsidised by the Government, and he would like the Education Department or Public

Works Department to remove the unsightly fence along Hay Street enclosing the High School grounds.

MR. BATH: When the Education Estimates came up for discussion annually there was no member who spoke on the Estimates who begrudged the money voted for primary education, or the small amount which the Government were able to vote for technical education. He recollected in connection with the draft estimates which had been spoken of by the Premier that a considerable amount was shown in advance of the vote for last year, not only in the provision for schools, but for the necessary staff. That amount had been cut down. Although there was a small advance in regard to Government schools amounting to £2,000, technical education was practically left untouched. He was somewhat doubtful, notwithstanding the desire to economise, whether the amount voted this year would be found adequate to meet the growing needs of Western Australia as to primary education. There were a great many requests from various parts of the State, backed up by information showing that schools were urgently required. There was a difficulty for the Minister to discriminate between the requests made by the community in different parts of the State; the requests in the outlying districts should take first place. In the metropolitan area and large centres of population there was fairly adequate provision for schools, and perhaps no discomfort was entailed on children travelling beyond the requisite distance to attend the schools. Children in the agricultural districts, goldfields areas, and pastoral areas who had no school accommodation had absolutely the first claim on the Committee for school accommodation and the necessary staff. The provision on the Estimates was not adequate. After all, the net increase was only £1,878, and when we remembered the increase in the population was to a large extent made up of children, and numbers of these were of the school age and continually increasing, members of the Committee should recognise that the provision was inadequate to meet the requirements. He urged the claims of technical education. That was the reason, when discussing the vote last night for the public

library, the museum, and the vote for the snake-house, why he declared emphatically that it would be infinitely better to allow the amounts on the Estimates to remain as they were, and devote the increased money to technical education purposes. If that were done, it would be of infinitely greater advantage to the people of the State and those of our youth who, having passed their primary education, and perhaps embarked in life in the way of apprenticeship to some trade, were desirous of perfecting the instruction they received in the workshop by the instruction imparted in the technical education system. Even £1,000 spent would be effective in increasing the facilities under technical education. He urged on the Minister the necessity of trying as far as possible to increase the vote in this direction. Whatever one might say about the financial condition of the State, and the need for economy, there was absolutely no need for economy in regard to educational purposes. As the State developed we would need secondary education as another connecting link in perfecting the system of education in Western Australia; but the secondary education could afford to wait, while the primary education and technical education could not. Wherever we might use the pruning knife, it was absolutely essential to place the largest amount possible on the Estimates for these two items.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This question of providing a sufficient sum of money to afford primary education for children was one which gave the Government great concern. He agreed that the first duty of the Government was to provide primary education, while secondary education as a Government undertaking must be dealt with at some future date. He regretted the Government could not make this vote much larger. The Government wanted to see schools established wherever there were children to be educated, to give them a sound primary education. That was the aim of the present Government, as he believed it was of the previous Government, and anything they could do to farther that end would be cheerfully done. In regard to the fence of the High School, the Works Department had been in communication with the governors of that school with

the object of having the fence removed or renewed. [MR. H. BROWN: Neither would do anything. They would refer it back from one to the other.] It was the duty of the governors of that school to keep the fence in order. If he had power, as head of the Works Department, to force them to do it, it would be done. He did not know what his powers were exactly.

MR. H. BROWN: With reference to the High School, it would be a very good thing if the Colonial Treasurer deducted the cost of that fence from the annual grant to the school. Neither the governors nor the Works Department would do anything. Dr. Hackett bitterly complained of the condition of Perth, and of the grass growing in the streets, but he, as one of the governors of the school, was mainly responsible at all events for the grass growing in that portion of the street. That fence had been an eyesore for years past.

THE CHAIRMAN: The High School did not come under the Educational vote.

MR. TROY: If less money were spent on fencing recreation grounds and reclaiming foreshores, we should have more money for schools. He knew of localities where children were growing up in absolute ignorance. He wished to draw attention to the railway systems and the children living along those systems, residing in some instances 30 and 40 miles from a town. They were the children of maintenance men, and had no opportunity of receiving education. Surely some means might be devised by which the married men on the railway lines could be shifted to one camp, and a teacher provided for their children. In some localities there were not sufficient children to comply with the conditions for the erection of a school; but he thought in these circumstances provision could be made for the initiation of a half-time school. The teacher could teach there for three or four months in the year, and then be shifted to another locality. [Interjection by the Minister for Works.] It might obtain in certain portions of the State. He wished the system to be extended. The State had not sufficient competent teachers to send such to all remote localities, but he would suggest that the

Minister should appoint persons capable of giving to those children who received no education, at least the primary elements of education. The former member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) last year emphatically impressed this upon the Government, and gave instances where it worked well. He (Mr. Troy) knew of instances in which people who could ill afford it paid £60 or £70 to provide means to educate their children. That was the duty of the Government, and the sooner the Government found these facilities, the sooner would they earn the gratitude of the people in the portions of the State to which he alluded. He had already made applications for three teachers.

Mr. TAYLOR urged upon the Government the necessity of supplying the outlying districts not only on the gold-fields, but the whole of the State, with facilities for primary education. Whilst we catered very well for education in the central and more flourishing centres of the State, the outlying places had been sadly neglected. Two years ago, in a portion of the electorate which he then had the honour to represent, and which was now represented so ably by the member for Leonora, the people guaranteed £50 a year towards the teacher's salary, and also had to find a school before the Government would send a teacher. He had had great difficulty in other portions within the last year or so in securing educational advantages to the children. Half-time schools had been granted in places where it was necessary to have full-time schools. So far as those places were concerned, the Government had decided to have full-time schools there now, but that would not prevent other places from requiring school facilities. There could be nothing more dangerous to the State than to have people growing up in ignorance. As to the High School, he found that the vote for it came under a special Act, 61 Victoria, No. 12, £1,000 being granted. It was necessary for the Government to take some steps in relation to that school, for the results of the school were a scandal.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

MINES DEPARTMENT (Hon. H. Gregory, Minister); total estimate, £267,529.

Vote—*Mines Generally*, £47,885:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In regard to the Mines Department, I do not think it is necessary for me to deal with any statistics. I think the figures given the other night by the Treasurer were quite voluminous enough, and I can assure members there is no need for us to feel that the mining industry is in danger, or that in the near future we are going to have any great diminution in connection with our mining industries. One special feature placed before us on that occasion by the Treasurer was that, although there had been a considerable reduction in the grade of ore treated, our mines were able to show far greater profit than they had done in the past. The lesson to be learnt from this is that our low-grade propositions, owing to our splendid up-to-date labour-saving machinery and the first-class miners whom we have in this State, can be profitably worked. I think I am justified in saying statistics prove that the Western Australian miner can do better than the miner in almost any other country in the world. The subject was fully dealt with when the last Mining Bill was before the House, and I then showed that the miner here could turn out a far larger quantity of stone than could the miner elsewhere. The great lesson those figures teach is that as the high-grade propositions become worked out, we shall, without having to reduce wages, be able to work low-grade propositions. There is no doubt of the necessity for giving greater security to investors. Fortunately we now have a far greater proportion of our own people working leases than we had in any other period of our history. We know also how absolutely impossible it is for the ordinary prospector or the ordinary leaseholder to develop his holding. Money is needed for the development of a mine; capital is needed for machinery, so as to enable our mines, instead of employing six, eight, or ten men each, to employ them by hundreds; so that instead of employing 17,000 or 18,000 men as we do now, we shall have at least twice that number employed in the mining industry. To attain that object we must give greater security to foreign investors. I believe we should do all we can to induce our own people to invest in local mining propositions.

It is a great pity to see such large sums of money going out of the country in the shape of dividends; yet it seems to me it will not pay us to allow our mineral areas to remain unworked. It should be our object, even if we have to encourage outsiders to come here, to try to induce the working of all properties, so as to find employment for our own people. The employment of a larger number of men in the mining industry means not only an increase of the wages fund, but a great incentive to every other industry of the State; and therefore I think that no member can argue against the wisdom of inducing the investment of foreign capital. When we ask that such capital shall come here, I say it is wise on our part to give it greater security than it has now.

MR. TAYLOR: What form of security?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I will answer that directly. A little while ago a great stir was made by a speech of Mr. Hoover, who drew attention to the necessity for greater security of title, and quoted the mining laws of America, pointing out that if we copied the American law much more capital would come here for mining development. That is problematical. For my part, I think we should never even consider the idea of giving away the fee simple of a mining proposition. Not for one moment should we dream of handing over the fee simple of a mineral area. We know the history of gold-mining in Australasia. Consider, for instance, the mineral areas of Northampton, in this State. For many years it has been believed that good copper lodes exist there; but it has been almost impossible to obtain mining rights within the area held by private owners; and there is not the slightest doubt that if we give the fee simple of our mining areas, many people will, in the worst interests of the State, shepherd those properties and allow them to remain idle year after year. In addition to giving greater security of tenure, I think we should give more assistance to the prospector, and should make special efforts to induce the formation of small local companies. To sum up my preceding remarks, there are three requirements which I think are essential to farthering the industry: greater security of tenure, more assistance to the prospector, and special efforts to induce the

formation of small local companies. In giving greater security of tenure, we must try to alter the present condition of affairs. I do not wish so much to alter the Mining Act, as to alter the regulations which make it clear that any person investing in a mining proposition and allowing it to remain unworked for a single day will make it liable to forfeiture, though he may have expended on it £5,000 or £10,000. In answer to an interjection the other evening from the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), who asked whether any lease had been forfeited because it remained unworked for a couple of days, I can tell hon. members that within the last month there have been two instances of recommendations of forfeiture for noncompliance with labour conditions. In one instance, the people had held the lease for about 12 months; and owing to the death of a partner they were granted exemption for 14 days. The lease remained unworked for three days after the exemption expired, only one man being employed on the property, and application was made for forfeiture. The warden did not impose a fine, but recommended that the lease be forfeited.

MR. TAYLOR: How much had been spent on the property?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not the full report, so I cannot say; but I think that the lease had been worked for about 12 months. But I wish to show how the wardens have dealt with some such cases. This case was referred to the warden, who suggested that the lease should be forfeited, but that one of the original owners should be granted an interest in the lease. When the case was referred to me I concluded that it was not a case for forfeiture. I wish to put much more responsibility upon the wardens than they have borne in the past, and to try to make the wardens' findings more in the nature of decisions than recommendations. I do not think it right that the warden should be able to make a recommendation, and that the losing parties should then come to Perth with a view to bring influence to bear on the Minister so as to reverse the warden's recommendation. I know it will be difficult to attain my object. I regret that when framing the draft of the Mining Act I did not make provision for

an appeal board, so that any person desiring to upset a warden's recommendation could appeal to a board of which the Minister was chairman. The special object in giving the Minister instead of a Supreme Court Judge the power to deal with mining and mineral leases and with all cases regarding mining propositions, was that the Minister might consider the equity of each case, and not its purely legal aspect. A Judge of the Supreme Court deals with such matters strictly according to law, whereas a Minister for Mines looks at them in the light of the policy which we wish to pursue, and more especially with a view to doing equitably. In another case some people had recently bought a number of gold-mining leases. An agent for the purchasing companies had to wire to London to ascertain the name of the company to which the leases should be transferred. Before doing this he had the transfers and had paid the money; but he had neglected to apply to the warden's court for 14 days' protection. Then, about 13 days after getting possession of the leases, he received full information as to the transfers, and on going to the warden's court to complete the transaction he found that application had been made for forfeiture of one of the leases, and that the warden had recommended the forfeiture. There was, no doubt, absolute neglect on the part of the agent, in not applying for protection. Had he applied to the warden for protection, I have no doubt he would have got it. Had he applied to me, he would certainly have got it. But the warden, instead of recommending a fine more than sufficient to cover the expense of forfeiture, recommended forfeiture. If all such recommendations are adopted by the Minister, there will be a strong feeling of insecurity as to the tenure of gold-mining leases.

MR. TAYLOR: The warden has not power to recommend a fine.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Most decidedly he has. But the principal point I wish to make is that the warden refused to allow evidence of the working of the lease. He said he could only allow in that case evidence regarding the plaint before the court, as to whether or not that lease was worked during the three days mentioned in the plaint. I have since issued a circular instructing wardens

that I desire the fullest information as to work done on proprieties the forfeiture of which is recommended, so that before dealing with each case the Minister may consider the equity of it, and may, before either forfeiting or refusing to forfeit, know whether the holders were trying in the past to carry out the labour covenants. I should be the last to dream of giving anyone the fee simple. I hope we shall never have any Government advocating the fee simple of mining propositions. I think all members know how we have fought in the past for the right to mine on private property. I hope, sir, that I shall be excused for dealing with this matter, for I am really replying to the member for Mount Leonora (Mr. Lynch), who asked the other night whether we should be able to speak upon such questions on the Estimates; and I presume that members will be glad to know what the Government propose to do, nor do I think there will be any other opportunity of telling them. While objecting to granting the fee simple on any account, I think we must try to frame some regulation which will give greater security of tenure. I promise hon. members that there will be no drastic change until we are able to meet Parliament again; that is to say, no change with respect to labour covenants on leases.

MR. SCADDAN: Why any change at all until Parliament meets?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I say there will be no great change against which goldfields members would like to enter their protests. I do not think there will be any very great change.

MR. TAYLOR: You cannot change the Act, save with the consent of Parliament.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: But the labour covenants are a question of regulation; and changing the regulations may make a great difference. It is with a view to assisting prospectors that I propose to make a change. Members will recollect that some time ago I instituted what was known as the prospecting area, giving any holder of a miner's right the privilege of taking up 18 acres of ground, and holding that ground for a period of nine months, simply on payment of a small registration fee, and on complying with the labour covenants. That right

was largely availed of; and the last meeting of the leaseholders and prospectors' organisation asked that the term should be 12 months. The request was very curtly refused, on the ground the Government had been losing much money owing to the facilities already given to prospectors. I am a great believer in the prospecting area; and I should like to tell hon. members why I introduced the tenure. At one time, when travelling through the Yarri district, I came across three prospectors who had been doing considerable development work. I asked them when had they taken up their lease, and they told me they had only sent in that day to take it up. I inquired how they had held it, and was told that one of their party had pegged out for one week, another for the next week, and a third for the following week, and that No. 1 then pegged it out again, and so on; and for some months they thus held that property. At any time the ground could have been jumped; and the holders had no right to it whatever, and could have been prosecuted for taking it up illegally. I made up my mind that, with a view of assisting these people to take up gold-mining leases, I should bring about a system of prospecting areas. The rent and survey fees mean to the prospector the expenditure of a large sum of money, and my desire was to see that this money was put in the ground, instead of being paid in the shape of fees to the State revenue. So I introduced this system of prospecting areas. I now propose to go farther. I think we can give a prospecting area that will last for two years, and that we can provide that eight months' compliance with the labour covenants in one year shall be held to fulfil the labour covenants. Regulations will be needed to provide for keeping posters on the area during exemptions, and for the protection of these areas; and we should always retain power to refuse prospecting areas, so that when new discoveries are made we will not have held under these prospecting areas too large an area which, in the opinion of the warden, should be held under lease; and we should always retain power to compel the holder of the area to make it a gold-mining lease, if it is sufficiently payable to be made into one. I think by that

means we will give a lot of assistance to the small leaseholder; and it will do away with the feeling that many of the small men have, that they have, in the first instance, to pay a large sum of money away in the shape of fees to the State. It would be far better to forego a little of these rentals to assist these people. If we take away these charges and give facilities to prospect ground without having to pay high and heavy fees, I think we will give the greatest assistance we can to prospectors. Next to that comes the battery system, by which we give the prospector farther assistance to develop his proposition. The crushing charges have been brought down from time to time. When I first took office the charges were from 15s. to £1. Now the rates are from 10s. to 14s., according to the value of the stone. I have given instructions that we should make a 10 per cent. reduction at all batteries on parcels of 100 tons and over, to try to induce people to raise larger parcels, and so that we will not have so many small parcels to deal with.

MR. TAYLOR: When will that come into force?

THE MINISTER: A telegram went away about a fortnight ago giving these instructions. We are also going to make reductions of 25 per cent. in our crushing charges on all stone raised for development purposes.

MR. SCADDAN: Who is going to be the judge of that?

THE MINISTER: The battery manager and the inspector of mines. The prospectors will pay the full fees at the time. Then they will make claims for rebate, which claims will be sent to the officers mentioned. I desire to go into this matter very fully, because a good deal of development work may be done in sinking shafts, or in driving or cross-cutting, which may not yield a ton of crushing stone. So we desire to give the leaseholder who does this dead work a proportionate quantity of stone out of the stope, but this must be below the 100 feet level. I think we can frame a regulation which will deal fairly with the State, and at the same time give a special inducement to the leaseholder to try to do development work. A little while ago there was a rebate given at Mulline of 25 per cent. on large parcels; but I cancelled

those instructions, because I objected to giving a concession to one place that was not given to another. The concessions are to apply to every battery.

MR. TAYLOR: Who gave that concession at Mulline?

THE MINISTER: It was Mr. Hastie.

MR. SCADDAN: Was it not a general concession?

THE MINISTER: No; it was given at two places only. It was given at Yerilla to one man who had a 3oz. proposition, and had to cart his stone 100 yards.

MR. SCADDAN: Did not the Minister state that he would do it in all instances?

THE MINISTER: He did not do it. I can mention some instances where he did not do it. An application was made by Sawyer at Menzies, and it was refused. An application was also made by Holman at Mulwarrie, and that was refused. Those are the records I have in the Mines Department. I am quite prepared to prove my statement. If the hon. member says it is not correct, I am satisfied that he does not know what he is talking about.

[MR. ILLINGWORTH took the Chair.]

MR. TAYLOR: Have you the records with reference to Yerilla?

THE MINISTER: Not here; but I think it was in June. I got a telegram from the Secretary for Mines to the effect that Mr. Johnson had granted a special rebate of 25 per cent. to this gentleman at Yerilla. That is the only instance other than Mulline where this concession was granted. I think 10 per cent. is enough on large parcels, and we are going to make 25 per cent. reduction in regard to stone taken from development work. The next thing I have to make special provision for is in regard to water. I do not think too much can be done by the Mines Department to give water to these arid districts. Too great an effort cannot be made. Let us take Davyhurst. When we had started boring there, there were only 50 people in the district, including the boring party. I spent £12,000 in that district, and the result has been that we have there now a population of nearly 1,000 people; and we have the Golden Pole mine with 20 head of stamps, the Waihi with 10 head

of stamps, the Eileen with 10 head of stamps, and the Great Ophir on which I believe 20 head of stamps are being put up. All these are being supplied from that water scheme, which has paid working expenses and 15 per cent. additional, and they would not have been there had it not have been for this water supply. At Menzies we had occasion to get water for the battery. The charge for water was £1 a thousand gallons. Now we charge 5s. a thousand for battery water; and if it were not for that cheap water supply I do not think any mines would be working there. The Cue-Day Dawn water scheme was also initiated by me, and those who know the district know the great advantages that have followed on that scheme. At Port Hedland good work was done. I could speak of dozens of districts. I have a long list of works done in these mining districts. One of the most special things was putting down six-inch bore holes to make provision for enabling prospectors to get out in the back country. Lately I could not do this, because the whole of the staff has been in the nearer districts endeavouring to get water supply in places where we have people. [MR. TAYLOR: You are boring at Meekatharra.] Yes. I think we will get a fine supply there. I believe the large expenditure will be well justified. It is to be a big district, that should employ a large number of people. [MR. TAYLOR: A good poor-man's field.] No; I think it will be a field for big mines. No doubt the department will be justified in spending a large sum of money in that district. Bulong is a special instance. For many years these people have been asking for water. Provided a guarantee will be given to the department that a certain supply will be used, the department are going to take the responsibility of pumping the water not only to Bulong, but to a hill between Bulong and Boorara to serve the Balagundi district. For many years we have been told that if we supplied water, batteries would be erected there. So in any scheme for Bulong we also must make provision for one that can be afterwards extended; and if they are prepared to provide crushing facilities in the Balagundi district, at little additional expense we shall be able to make provision for water supply. Thus we will open up that particular district.

I am satisfied the expenditure will be warranted, because it has only been on account of the extreme cost of pumping water there that the district has not been opened up before. Many efforts have been made to get a local supply, but it is impossible; so any scheme for Bulong must also include the Balagundi district. We are also making provision in regard to Leonora. The people there, after we found the water for them, are under the impression that the scheme is too good for the Government to have, and they prefer to make it a municipal scheme. I would be more pleased for the municipality to do this work, instead of coming to the Government. Therefore, they can rely on every assistance possible from the Mines Department in connection with their initial efforts. Special effort is required to induce capital to come here and to induce the formation of small companies. I have the best reasons to do that. I do not feel too much inclined to grant subsidies to do development work. I think we can do far more by lending money to purchase machinery. We should induce the prospector to do his own development work, and then stand to his assistance by lending him one-half the cost of the purchase of machinery. Also I think we can do more good for the future development of the country and to induce capital to come here by a system of judicious advertising. As soon as I got into office I gave instructions that every battery manager and all registrars, inspectors of mines, and wardens should send in reports every three months in connection with any new development in their districts. They were to satisfy themselves as to the genuineness of the discoveries, and they were to give full particulars. About six weeks ago, I forwarded to the Agent General a big batch of replies we have received from the various officers of the Mines Department throughout the State. These will be given by Mr. James to some specially appointed officer in England, and we shall endeavour, by having these reports paraphrased, to try to have published in the old country particulars in regard to these new developments. The same offer should be made here also. I may mention that only to-day I gave 50 sheets of foolscap to the Press of the State Mining Engineer's report on the

district from Yalgabbi, Kurnalpi, and Pingin, giving the impressions of the State Mining Engineer of this district. It will be the duty of the State Mining Engineer afterwards to go through the Black Range district and let the country know what he thinks of the district 50 miles north of the Black Range. We desire to have the geological report as far as possible made up to date, so as to let the public have the reports sooner than they have had them in the past. The geological report on the Norseman district has taken nearly two years to furnish. At present it is useless to us, and nothing of that sort must occur in the future. I do not wish to take up the time of the Committee farther; but I would like to mention one thing in regard to the discussion which took place the other night, and the statement made in regard to Chesson and Heydon, who it was stated were refused an advance by me, and that it was left to another Government to make the advance. I, and I alone, made that advance to Chesson and Heydon. They made an application to me for an advance of £2,000, although they could not comply with the Mining Development Act. I waived that and allowed them £1,000, which showed I had some feeling for them. In regard to the application for assistance, I wrote this:—

I propose sending this application for assistance by Chesson & Heydon for Cabinet's decision, but before doing so send on to you for your remarks. I would not entertain a request for a loan of a larger sum than £1,000, for which I think we could only obtain a second mortgage. I feel very favourably disposed to assist these people, as they are the only genuine local mine owners in the Murchison fields, and have done a lot to assist small mine owners in the Cue district; moreover, the finding of a valuable reef at this depth means a great deal for the Cue district, and would put new life into the place. However, I would like you to go through the file, and let me have your opinion.

I provided that if there was a discovery of gold the money was to be repaid.

MR. TROY: Have you paid the money?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The money was paid in instalments. On the 27th June, 1904, Chesson & Heydon wrote:—

As we have been compelled to discontinue sinking operations at the main shaft for the present, we would be pleased to learn if the

hon. the Minister will grant permission to suspend work as the agreement entered into provides. This step has been forced upon us owing to the failure of the air compressor, purchased by us, to keep up sufficient pressure to drive the necessary number of drills to satisfactorily carry on the work of sinking, and has caused us to incur a lot of unnecessary but unavoidable expense, and consequently we cannot continue until we are in a position to make farther arrangements.

Then on the 9th December I approved of the loan so that the work could be carried out. An application was made when these men got to 450 feet, to be allowed to drive, and I regret to say that was only allowed by my successor conditionally on extra security being given. I want to say that I do not think the hon. member would have made the statement he did if he had known the facts of the case. The minutes are here, and I shall be only too pleased to let the hon. member read them. I hope full consideration will be given to the importance of the mining industry, and that the money we are asking for the development of the industry will be allowed to remain on the Estimates.

[Discussion ensued on the Mines Estimates generally.]

Mr. BATH: In dealing with the Mines Estimates it had been the practice in the past, and he hoped it would always be the practice of the Committee, to discuss them as fully as possible, because it was a question of the greatest importance to the State. We had heard from certain gentlemen interested in certain directions in mining development that the industry in Western Australia was in a stagnant condition, we were told it was retrograding, and what was necessary in order to place it on a sounder footing was that greater security should be given investors in regard to tenure. We were told what was needed was something on the lines of the American system; that by doing a certain amount of work each year persons held their area, and in a number of years they obtain the fee simple. He was glad of the assurance of the Minister that there was no intention of attempting to encourage investors in our mines by granting the fee simple. There was no great need for pessimism in regard to our outlook as far as the mining industry was concerned, because if we looked at the returns showing the leases held under

the various Acts contained on page 15 of the report of the Mines Department, we found that in 1904 there were 2,668 leases as against 2,572 leases in the year previous. Although the aggregate was smaller he believed this was due to the fact that we had a much larger number of smaller local companies and local syndicates and individual owners operating in the mining industry than in any previous period of the history of mining in Western Australia. People were in the habit of dealing in a vague manner with what they were pleased to term the mining resources and the great extent of the gold-mining country. He had heard the same thing in speeches by members of Parliament in the Eastern States, and we had seen the same thing recorded in the newspapers and in annual reports. He had heard in New South Wales the vague and elastic statement that the gold-bearing territory of New South Wales extended from the Queensland border to the Victorian border, and from Broken Hill to the western watershed of the great dividing range. That was true; it was also true practically of every other country in the globe. The gold-bearing country extended over wide areas, but we knew, as the result in New South Wales, that in all these countries after all the proportion of profitable mines was rather a small percentage in comparison with the total area, and we could only expect the same in Western Australia. When speaking of the extent of the gold-bearing territory we could expect to have but a small proportion of profitable gold-mining in a district. So in Western Australia while we might think and regard the industry as not making as great strides as we were anxious and might hope for, still we must recollect that the world contained very few Kalgoorlies, and all the prospecting development done was not likely to disclose mining fields of the greatness and extent of the East Coolgardie field. He was doubtful as to the proposition of the Minister for Mines that it was necessary to make amendments in our mining legislation or regulations, in order to encourage the investment of capital. He had a lively recollection of the Minister's remarks when introducing the Mining Bill into the House. The Minister invited the mild criticism of Mr. Morgans, then

member for Coolgardie. The Minister spoke of the fact that the Mines Department had been asked to grant leases here with fewer restrictions and with greater security of title. The Minister then said :—

That is the cry from the people at home, and what we may term the capitalistic section in this House, that we should grant a lease with less restrictions and greater security of tenure. Now I cannot understand why the capitalist should be afraid of his tenure. If he looks back into the past history of mining in Western Australia, I do not think he can point to many occasions on which a *bona fide* mining company has lost its property through any trifling failure to carry out the mining conditions. I do not know of a single instance where a *bona fide* company has lost its property.

He went on to speak of the necessity of labour covenants and of their being practically the *quid pro quo* that mining companies gave as a return for permission of the State to exploit the mines. He had no desire to do any injustice to the Minister. If we wanted to find concrete examples of the opinions of the Minister as to what should constitute the tenure of a mining lease in Western Australia, we could not do better than refer to the provisions of the Mining Bill. To a large extent that would bear out what he had stated. They met with the agreement of members in the House, especially the members on the Labour bench. Perhaps the Labour members wanted to go farther than the Minister did in some instances.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The right to demand exemption, for instance.

MR. BATH: But after all they gave a considerable amount of assistance in passing the amending Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Was that so?

MR. BATH: We found as the result that a provision was made not only for application for exemptions being heard and granted on good reason being shown, but also for exemption by right after the expenditure of a certain amount of money, and the provisions not only applied to companies but to small co-operative parties of working miners. There were also provisions by which when the labour conditions were not observed a fine should be imposed and forfeiture. In the course of his remarks the Minister pointed out the necessity for a provision

in order to prevent the shepherding of leases and other gold-mining properties in Western Australia. Since then if the Minister could point to any case of hardship which had arisen from the operation of the Act, he (Mr. Bath) would agree that there was necessity for amending it; but he could not admit that according to the case that he had quoted it was proof to the House there was any necessity for amendment. The Minister had pointed out that in order to give security to those investing money, and in order to encourage the inflow of capital into this country, there must be amendment. Had there been any great increase in the investment of capital as the result of the amendments that had been made? He had only to call the Minister's attention to the alterations made in the Victorian and Tasmanian Mining Acts in the same direction. When Mr. Irvine framed his so-called reform Government in Victoria he stated that it was necessary to remove the restriction of the labour conditions in Victoria to such an extent that there would be an inflow of capital into the country. The same argument was used in Tasmania, but had this resulted in the other States? They had had mining depression, and not the consequent inflow of capital and not any farther investment. As far as New South Wales was concerned, while there might be labour conditions in the mining laws there was no observance of them. In New South Wales companies took leaseholds and held them for years without doing anything. As far as the conditions were concerned they were liberal in the extreme, yet New South Wales had no inflow of capital and no great investments. He (Mr. Bath) came to the conclusion that there were other reasons operating than these conditions which militated against the inflow of money; nor did he think we had to look very far for them. It was only necessary for any member of the Committee to read the report of the Royal Commission in connection with the Deep Levels scandal and the Boulder Perseverance case to probe to the hilt the reasons that operated to prevent investment in our mining industry. He had a lively recollection of the large number of leases taken up in the early development of these fields. As far as Kalgoorlie was concerned and the country

around that centre, if in 1896 they had placed men on in compliance with the labour conditions for the whole of the leases taken up in that area, they would have had to employ 19,000 men in that centre alone. We knew that the great majority of leases were held for speculative purposes only. They were "wild cats" in the true sense of the term; and many thousands of investors in the old country rued to this day the fact that they were induced to invest in mines in Western Australia. Those who had been most active in promulgating the lie about labour were the people who covered up their own sins by using this as a stalking horse to delude the investors in the old country. We should devote our attention rather to trying to prevent such things from being consummated in the future, and we should thereby inspire more confidence in Australia among English investors than by any amendments we made in the direction of liberalising, so called, our mining conditions. The hon. member had referred to the necessity of encouraging the prospector. Every member desired to give encouragement to the prospector, but what we wanted to see was that it was the genuine prospector that was encouraged, and not any person masquerading under that name. Would the Minister give us his assurance that it would be a prospector's area, pure and simple, that would be allowed to be held for two years, and not a proposition taken up by an individual or a mining company which perhaps had been held previously? Unless we made a distinction it would mean that we were only providing facilities for shepherding our mining areas.

THE MINISTER: How could they do that with the labour covenants? The labour covenants would have to be complied with for eight months out of the year, and the warden could insist upon the areas being taken up as gold-mining leases or be forfeited.

MR. BATH: If those safeguards were taken they would to a great extent prevent shepherding. Every encouragement should be given to the genuine prospector in this way, that he should not be called upon to pay survey fees and rent of the lease until he had had some time to develop the lease and if possible recoup himself for the outlay. Members on the

Opposition benches would give every possible assistance in that direction. Then in connection with State batteries, he believed the failing was not any want of liberality on the part of the State in relation to the charges for crushing, but rather the slipshod method in which the State battery system was administered. We had innumerable cases where individuals, parties, and small syndicates had gone into different mining districts and taken up properties where they knew there was perhaps a quantity of stone or a portion of the reef which was not taken out, which was a payable thing; and they had taken that out and put it through the State battery, availing themselves of the reasonable charges, and had then gone to fresh fields. It was not mining development to run State batteries at a loss in order to allow men to do that. It was no encouragement to the mining industry. [**THE MINISTER:** There were not many of them run at a loss.] We had a report of the Department of Mines, which indicated that they were running at a loss. The balance-sheet showed a loss of £132,819. [**THE MINISTER:** Would the hon. member take much notice of that?] If a report of the Department of Mines was not a reliable document, it should be; and if it could not be made a reliable document it was no use to place it on the desks of members.

THE MINISTER would deal with that when we got to "public batteries."

MR. BATH believed there was greater necessity for an improvement in the method of administering the State batteries than for a general slipshod reduction in the charge for crushing. In regard to local development, he was glad the Minister was going to use every endeavour to encourage it. We wanted, if we possibly could, to encourage the investment of local capital in our mining propositions, because whatever results then accrued, whatever profits were earned, would be spent within the country, and it was encouraging to find that there were greater developments in this direction. On the Kalgoorlie field, for instance, we had a number of propositions which at one time were held by alien companies, whose nominal capital was very large, but whose working capital was very small. These companies finally

abandoned them; but to-day those propositions were being worked profitably and finding employment for a large number of men, under the guidance of the local companies. There were the Devon Consols, Golden Ridge, Brown Hill, and others which were being operated by local companies and syndicates, and were being worked successfully. He noticed to-day that a prominent mining man from Victoria declared that so much of the profit of our mining development was going outside the State, and he made some reference to the necessity for increasing the dividend tax. He (Mr. Bath) was not going to propose any such stringent measure as an increase of that tax, but he would be prepared to support a reduction in the dividend duty on profits earned by local companies. He believed that would give a stimulus to local development. There was another matter to which he would like to refer. Last year—he believed it was during the term of the predecessors of the present Ministry—an arrangement was made by which there was a reduction in the charges of the Coolgardie Water supply for low-grade propositions. No doubt the object was very laudable, but it had been brought under his notice that the operation had worked a certain amount of hardship in different directions. For instance, a syndicate working a low-grade show, through the fact that they had no office expenses and no directors' fees—

MR. EDDY called attention to the state of the House.

MR. SCADDAN: The present state of the House was an absolute disgrace when the Estimates were being gone through.

MR. EDDY withdrew the call.

MR. SCADDAN then called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and quorum formed.

MR. BATH: The reduction in the price of water for low-grade shows had not operated as well as it should, and there was need for some slight amendment. Those syndicates which had no office expenses and no directors' fees were perhaps able to work low-grade propositions at a slight profit, whereas on the other hand a company working perhaps a higher-grade proposition, although a low-grade proposition, was from the fact of having those expenses able to show a loss.

THE MINISTER: The Goldfields Water Scheme deemed a low-grade proposition any mine of which the value of the ore was less than 8 dwts. Whether it paid profits or not did not come into the question.

MR. BATH said that the good results expected from the operation of the mining development vote had not accrued to the extent anticipated when the Act was introduced. Of course good work had been done. In some of these cases the companies had been enabled to make good development, to convert prospecting shows into payable propositions, and to repay the money advanced. After all, he believed greater good could be done by assisting the prospector in the first instance by liberal conditions, by giving him an opportunity to develop his show, without at first calling on him to pay the rent and the survey fees. It was very necessary in the administration of the State battery department, the mining development vote, and the expenditure of money generally under the Mines Department, to see that it was the genuine prospector who was encouraged; not the bogus prospector, and not the syndicator or those who held their properties merely for speculative purposes and not for mining development.

MR. KEENAN: There seemed to be a general objection to those who took an unduly pessimistic view of the mining or other main industries of the State; but to take an unduly optimistic view was equally dangerous, for not only were those misled who were guided by the optimist, but in the long run the truth must come out, and the falsification of optimistic prophecies had a bad effect. In the Budget Speech the Premier's reference to the mining industry was very optimistic. It was surely absurd to talk of the output without considering that in almost every case the output was secured by increasing the number of stamps on mines which had existed for years. The output was not maintained by a large number of mines, each contributing a moderate quantity of gold, but by a few great propositions, each having a far larger mass of machinery than was possessed by mines in any other part of the world; and moreover our mines were producing at the highest possible rate. If a 10-stamp mill on a mine were in-

creased to a 20-stamp, the output would be doubled, but the mine would not be improved. To take the production as a guide to the state of the industry was fallacious.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES had pointed out how cheaply low-grade stone could now be treated.

MR. KEENAN: No doubt low-grade stone could now be treated more cheaply; but that was due to the advancement of mining science, and unfortunately, especially in Kalgoorlie, the low-grade ore was now found in mines once famous as high-grade propositions. The Ivanhoe, now treating only 13-dwt. ore, used to treat 1-oz. It was foolish to think that the industry was flourishing because such mines could treat low-grade ore and show a profit. We must find new mines in place of those fast nearing the end. Many large mines now at work would in a few years be missing. In the last five years, how many mines were found to take the place of mines that had closed down? A member referred to the Golden Pole. Whatever might be the worth of that mine, it was the only mine opened in the State during the last few years, to take the place of mines that must soon cease to exist. Therefore, if the Golden Pole were worthless, so much the worse for the mining industry.

MR. TAYLOR: It was a wild statement that the Golden Pole was the only new and valuable mine.

MR. KEENAN: Possibly the hon. member would tell us what other mines had arisen, and what was their production. The Minister properly pointed out that it was necessary to encourage local investment in mining. The member for Brown Hill (Mr. Bath) suggested that encouragement be given by reducing the dividend tax on local mines. That reduction would encourage the mine after it reached the paying stage; but encouragement was needed before dividends were available, for then the burden of taxation was most severely felt. The Minister should make a definite proposition as to the kind of encouragement to be given to local companies. There was some difference of opinion as to whether security of tenure was a distinct encouragement to mining. He (Mr. Keenan) believed it made a great difference. A man would not invest in a haphazard

speculation unless the apparent reward was great and the apparent return immediate. Generally, therefore, it could not be denied that mining investors would be encouraged by a more secure title. This was not a party question, and should be a matter of compromise between Government and Opposition. In the past, holders of leases, or their employees, were required to occupy the ground for a certain time in each year. This was a pure time test, no inquiry being made as to the work done. It was sufficient to prove in court that certain men were on the ground on certain days. Abolish this time test and substitute a work test, the holders or men employed by them being required to do so much work in the year; and if the work was finished in six months, the workers could take a six months' holiday, or could work as wages men elsewhere. The record could be easily kept in the warden's office; for even now the work done had to be recorded, though the record had no effect on the tenure.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: There was difficulty in computing the work that should be done.

MR. KEENAN: Admittedly, owing to varied conditions. But mining boards should be appointed throughout the gold-fields, to fix the standard of work for each district, and if necessary on appeal by the owners for each mine. The difficulty could be removed by decentralisation. There was a growing feeling that mining boards were necessary. Every Government had attempted unsuccessfully to deal with the difficult question of assistance to prospectors. In the past the Government provided camels for men who roamed through the country at a breakneck pace without restriction as to direction. True, they sent in returns to the Minister; but their efforts were necessarily inefficient. Better give each party for a limited time a certain area not known to possess payable mines, or at a reasonable distance from payable mines. If a party were allowed to prospect a given area only, the search would be nearly exhaustive. They merely broke the stone on the surface and, if they did not get a good colour, left for the next goldfield as rapidly as their camels would carry them. The next stage was when the prospectors got out the gold easily obtainable in the

soft ground near the surface. The most important stage arose in the development of the deeper levels. The Minister suggested giving a large reduction in crushing charges when the stone was produced below 100 feet. It would be dangerous. In some districts the oxidised ore went below that depth, in other districts it would not reach that level. The Minister should make the reduction apply only to sulphide ore. [MR. GULL: Or water level.] That would not do. There were mines where the sulphides absolutely outtopped. Sulphide ore was more difficult to mine, and it was the class of ore we desired the prospector to develop and to make some attempt to bring within the limits of working miners. With regard to the public battery system generally, the Minister had not touched on a serious matter. These batteries in many cases represented discarded plants thrown out on the scrap-heap and held by second-hand dealers until no one but the Government would touch them. He knew of a battery discarded 10 years ago, sold for £20, painted up by some dealers and then sold to a small company for its paint. The company going bankrupt, a paternal Government then stepped in and purchased the plant; yet it was expected that a battery of that kind should be economically worked. To-day our gold-mining led the world so far as economical treatment was concerned. We had demonstrated, not so much by having large batteries, but by having large boxes and heavy stamps and by running under certain conditions now well known, that we could reduce the actual cost of crushing to probably 50 per cent. below what was accepted four years ago as the minimum. Then why should the Government not follow this example? Why should they erect public batteries that would be absolutely laughed at and discarded by the weakest syndicate carrying on gold-mining in the country? He echoed the Minister's remarks with regard to the need for providing water, but he regretted that there was a decrease on the Estimates of £15,780 for water supply.

MR. TROY: The Cue-Dawn scheme accounted for that.

THE MINISTER: The money was to be expended from loan.

MR. KEENAN: The item "Watering places on Goldfields road" had been reduced by £1,000.

THE MINISTER: There was to be no reduction in the expenditure. This was only in wages.

MR. KEENAN regretted that an item of this sort in a matter properly emphasised by previous speakers as most important was not to be kept at the same amount as last year. As a matter of fact, prospecting of the back country had been blocked for some time past by the absence of water supply, probably accentuated by the exceedingly dry season; but there had been very little attempt to assist nature by getting supplies where, if they existed, profitable prospecting could be carried on. In regard to making the warden's recommendation practically a decision, he did not know that it would be a welcome change. As a rule the warden was a man selected for administrative work, and not for his qualities in a judicial capacity. It would be better that in the case of a forfeiture of a lease there should be some person of a higher standing in the State who should take on his shoulders the blame or credit of the warden's decisions. If we merely put it on the shoulders of the warden, we would have it said "I could not help it; so-and-so did it." He would rather have the Minister responsible. The Minister also suggested an appeal board; but this would necessitate a great change in the Act. When the Act was last amended, power was given to appeal on the merits as well as on law points. It was now proposed to constitute some different tribunal, possibly not consisting of any of the tribunals of the land, but of men entirely removed from the administration of the law. He would not like to see such a course adopted. Litigants in most cases demanded that the final court to determine their claims should be the highest legal tribunal in the land. At present there was no appeal in the case of a forfeiture, but he presumed the Minister would make the proposed court of appeal a general court of appeal on matters arising under the Act. Thus the Minister would add largely to the expenditure by having men of high calibre to act on the court, or it would lead to a very unsatisfactory state

of affairs by having men of little knowledge as the final parties to determine rights of, perhaps, a most valuable character. The Minister had not mentioned the size of the proposed new form of prospecting areas.

THE MINISTER: Eighteen acres.

MR. KEENAN: When pegging out new country, 18 acres was sometimes far too little to allow a man to take up. It was impossible to locate the run of the lode in new country. If a man knew exactly the strike of the lode, 18 acres would be ample; but on arriving at new country everything was a blind proposition; and after pegging out 18 acres, the prospector might be entirely outside the ground containing the valuable portion of the lode. We should not encourage the prospector to be continually changing his pegs. We should give a man a liberal area and make it a condition that in six or nine months he must reduce his holding to a smaller area. If we desired to encourage prospecting, we should not do it in a half-hearted way. We should be sufficiently liberal to induce every man to go out to try his fortune in the development of the mining industry. Regarding advertising and sending round State officers to report, while that was advisable, it should be done with the greatest caution. Nothing could be more deplored than that State officers should commit themselves to an opinion that might afterwards be found to be incorrect. It was very easy to err in regard to the value of a mine. Men of the greatest experience did it; and if State officers were to make a mistake by taking too hopeful a view of circumstances, which opinion would be published broadcast, what would be the position of the State if it turned out that the report was almost fallacious? There was great danger of the State's credit being involved if the State officers were to commit themselves to opinions which would be used for advertising purposes. Experts, in giving opinions on mines, knew that they were giving them to persons who understood the risks and that they were allowing for possibilities; but the general public took what was stated by the State officer to be absolutely gospel. In one case a State officer had subscribed his name to a report which appeared in a

prospectus. That was the Peak Hill prospectus.

THE MINISTER had not suggested anything of the sort, but was only talking of general information regarding a district.

MR. KEENAN: In that case probably the officer had not prepared the report for the purpose of the prospectus. We could be assured that mining men would have the greatest pleasure in advertising a district if their prospects were realised; and those who read the advertisement possibly thought in some measure it was a State guarantee. That danger existed if we allowed a free hand in advertising opinions formed by State officials on casual visits round the country. In congratulating the Minister on the very active interest which he personally took in the mining industry and the administration of the department, he felt sure the Minister would recognise that the criticism which those who sat opposite to him, himself and others who came from the goldfields, felt it their duty to offer on the department was not in any sense a reflection on his personal administration nor in any sense derogatory to the great merit he could claim for the work done for the mining industry. It was always more pleasant to say things that were nice than things that were the reverse. It was our duty to criticise the general proposals made as to the mining industry with a view to improving it, and he hoped both sides of the House, if possible, would make a serious attempt to arrive at a consensus of opinion to make the future of the mining industry that which everyone hoped it would arrive at and maintain for years to come.

MR. WALKER: What struck one as most valuable in the speech of the member for Kalgoorlie was the recognition of the fact that the future of the industry in this State must depend on our own citizens. It was a marvellous thing to him that for so long this wealth should have been at our doors and we should have been depending almost absolutely on foreign capital for its development. He would like to know what steps could and would be taken for the purpose of inducing our own citizens to enter into those enterprises for which the Minister proposed to give greater security in some manner or other. The security offered to the foreign money-lender, whatever its

nature, would bring no more capital into our State than the amount of gold we had easily workable would warrant. He quite agreed with the Leader of the Opposition that all the abolition of labour clauses, all the new regulations, the fixity of tenure in any form, would not induce capital to come here, unless the gold was plainly discernible and easily procurable. What had drawn capital to our shores? We had had more gold than New South Wales. That was why we had more mining companies in a flourishing state, because our gold was easily accessible, and because we had the facilities for output. Whilst that was so, we need not for a moment consider the foreign capitalists. Capitalists would come here and invest money if they could get a *quid pro quo* in the shape of dividends. What we had to do was to assist our own workers to discover new mines, as the member for Kalgoorlie said, to replace the mines that were being worked out. We must assist the prospectors, and he rejoiced that the Government were following their predecessors in taking steps towards assisting the prospectors. Here was another suggestion and a valuable one, but not a new one, made by the member for Kalgoorlie, that in all mining districts mining courts should be established not for the purpose of hearing appeals or for taking the matters dealt with in the miners' courts before them, but where practicable to deal with the prospecting vote. In the hands of the Government in the past, the prospecting vote was indiscriminately administered. In some cases there might have been genuine assistance rendered to genuine prospectors. There ought to be in every mining centre a court to deal with this matter, where those asking for assistance should have their cases heard and dealt with according to the merits, where they were known. There had been prospectors receiving Government pay who had spent all their prospecting money in the public-house, and all the prospecting they had done had been in the depth of a beer glass. It was the men who developed the country who required all the attention that we could give, and whilst the Minister paid attention to giving security to the British capitalist, the rich man, he asked that a little attention might be given to the poorer man, the man who had no

capital to advance in developing the gold in the earth. Only a few weeks ago a new rush occurred along the fire-wood line. A number of alluvialists pegged out claims there and got gold, and the matter was proceeding satisfactorily when a member of the timber company in that district happened to learn that there was a reef there, deeper in the alluvial workings. He applied to the warden for a lease over the heads of the alluvialists who were working their temporary claims, and the warden gave a lease to the newcomer, to the interloper—that was all he could be called, and no word could designate him except that of jumper. He intended to give notice of some questions to-morrow in regard to this matter. He knew there were legal points about it, but this clearly showed how necessary it was to turn our attention to giving some security to the workers, the alluvialists, those who really were the discoverers of the gold; the jackals, in many instances, for the British capitalists afterwards. Then, again, he was pleased to see that there was to be an increased expenditure on public batteries.

MR. TROY: No; a reduction.

THE MINISTER: A sum of £20,000 last year; £30,000 this.

MR. WALKER: There was less. There was more in administration—that was the point that struck him. Let members know something about these batteries. What had been said by the member for Kalgoorlie was perfectly just. Absolute rubbish, as far as reports had reached him, had been purchased up the country. Old iron, merely scrap-iron, had been purchased as public batteries. It was a perfect disgrace. We wanted these batteries to be used for development purposes to assist districts where gold could be procured and crushing facilities could be given. In the Minister's electorate, the batteries were so thick that if a horse ran away he could not get far without bumping against one of these batteries. There were other parts of the gold-bearing areas where batteries were required. A battery was wanted at Broad Arrow. Undoubtedly, there was need for one there, as payable gold was found. These batteries should not be fixed in one area. Let every gold-bearing dis-

trict have its proper share of them. There was nothing dishonourable or wrong in such a course. Our object was not to develop the gold in any one particular spot to the neglect of others. Where payable gold could be found in the country a battery should be erected, and if we could replete the depleting population of Bardoc, Broad Arrow, and Paddington by the erection of a battery there we could bring back the population who had deserted the claims because it did not pay to cart the stone for crushing. Would that not be a benefit to the country? It was in this respect that mining development could be genuine and good for the country. On the whole he felt gratified at the suggestions made by the Minister, who was evidently taking an honest course for the purpose of developing the mining industry. Certainly some of his proposals would require very careful consideration when they came before the House in any improvement of the Mining Act, and certainly great care would have to be taken in the interim in the framing of regulations. As far as he could see, there seemed to be an honest attempt to push on the mining industry, possibly to the neglect of the small miner and prospector; still on the whole there appeared to be an honest attempt to push on the industry, and now all we had to hope from the Minister was that the scheme he had outlined and the proposals made would be honestly, generously, and fairly administered throughout every goldfield in the State, and no one particular locality obtain a monopoly of the blessings he had promised.

MR. LYNCH congratulated the Minister for Mines upon his lately developed virtue of copying a good example. In regard to these Estimates generally, the sum total gave hope that the present Government were inclined to more liberally encourage the mining industry than any past Government had done, with the solitary exception of the one which preceded it. The Minister referred to a statement by a speculator who only lately left our shores. He (Mr. Lynch) did not see the great necessity of paying so much attention to utterances of these magnates. We should get on just as well irrespective of whether the statement made contained any threat or otherwise.

But supposing we took this gentleman as faithfully interpreting the feeling of foreign capitalists, it was just as well to consider for a moment how capital was faring here, and to see how it fared in the great republic of America. The editor of the *Economist* referred to the State of Colorado, which supplied about one-tenth of the gold output of the world, and specially alluded to the treatment capital was receiving. It was set forth that lodes of the value of 60s. per ton were actually passed by on account of the local conditions; and that being so we must come to the conclusion that Western Australia possessed many advantages, advantages much greater in every respect than were to be found in other countries, even where a freehold title obtained, as in Colorado. There were, however, many English companies working at the present time at Colorado, notwithstanding the disadvantages which existed. In this State mining companies were served by a railway system without being called upon to provide a sinking fund on the capital outlay, whereas some companies in America were served by private railway companies which made every effort to see that the capital was repaid or included, in order that they might be able to square the finances at the end of their term. There was also water supply, which was provided in Western Australia on a scale most liberal in character. There was the goldfields water supply, which supplied the greater part of the mines, and the mines were not called upon to provide a sinking fund. There were these two great services in relation to which the industry was not called upon to provide sinking fund on the capital account, this being a clear advantage over what capital experienced in the American republic. In regard to the Estimates there was a diminution on the mining vote of £13,000. It was necessary to compare the outlay during the last seven years in order to show what was done last year by the Labour Administration. The actual expenditure in the year 1899-1900 was £91,000, 1900-1 £92,000, in 1901-2 £101,000, in 1902-3 £119,000, in 1903-4 £189,000, and 1904-5 £257,000. [THE MINISTER: This year?] £267,000 was the estimate. The actual mining expenditure in 1899 was 3·4 per cent. of the total actual con-

solidated revenue, next year 3·2, 1902 3·04, 1903 3·3, keeping almost a dead level, 1904 5·3, and in 1905, namely last year, it jumped up to 7·1. This year the proposed expenditure was 7·3, or in other words a slight fraction ahead of the actual percentage of last year. [THE MINISTER: There was a lot of savings this year.] The hon. member was referring to the £17,000 at Day Dawn, which after all could not strictly be apart from the sum total for the encouragement of the industry. The Great Fingal was supplied through the agency of that expenditure. [THE MINISTER: That was money borrowed from the Savings Bank. It was not expenditure from revenue.] The Great Fingal and other mines of the neighbourhood were supplied with water by the State, just as water was supplied from the Menzies dam and the Davyhurst dam. The Menzies dam supplied the Lady Shenton. [THE MINISTER: In one case the water was supplied out of revenue, in the other out of the Savings Bank.] That did not matter as long as the purpose was the same. The mining industry was stimulated by the expenditure of the £17,000, which was afterwards returned before the financial year was finished, and the 7·1 compared very favourably with the estimated amount by the present Minister of 7·3. In regard to State batteries the figures showed an increase of £17,180, but there was an actual decline of £789 as compared with the expenditure of last year. Last year the present Minister was very much concerned about the low amount allocated for public batteries, and it was a pity he could not live up to his promise now he had a chance. One supposed the hon. gentleman had to live according to his means. [THE MINISTER: There was a big increase.] In regard to the purchase of ore from the Phillips River district the Minister had found it necessary to revise his opinions of last year. [THE MINISTER: Not at all.] He proposed to cut down the vote of £30,000 to half of that amount. [THE MINISTER: The previous Government did not spend the amount on the Estimates, namely £30,000, but only spent £14,494.] There was an explanation of that also. [THE MINISTER: Yes.] The smelter was not in shape until some months after the Estimates.

The one item of regret was the decrease of £15,700 in the water supply. Certainly this Day Dawn item came in again, but the amount was £13,988 less than the expenditure. When we considered the present sad plight that so many back-country places were in for lack of water it was regrettable that a more liberal allowance had not been made. Many mines were actually shut up for want of water, and men were out of employment. In regard to mining development there was no increase of the £7,000, and he thought it would be advisable, if it had not already been done, to abandon the policy of past years of subsidising prospecting parties and use the money for purchase of boring plant and in striving to find if possible the continuation of those lodes known to exist in deep country. That would be the most economical method of developing the mining industry. In no case had the large expenditure on Government camels loaned to prospectors resulted in the discovery of a field or a mine of any note, though private parties had made some valuable discoveries. Devote more money to boring, and to the exploitation of established outcrops. The item clerical assistance showed this year an increase of £150, though there were some reductions in temporary assistance. Would the Minister make some pronouncement as to the reduction of cyanide costs and the battery charges for ores under 5dwts.? The salvation of the industry depended on the successful working of low-grade mines. In the back country were well-defined ore bodies just outside the pay limit, and the difference of 1dwt.—3s. or 4s.—made the difference between the successful employment of a number of men and their being left in idleness. If the public battery system was to be farther subsidised to work shows now unpayable, the subsidy might well be increased by £10,000.

MR. TROY congratulated the Minister on his speech to-night. Some of these votes showed increases in cost of administration, whereas many development items showed an estimate lower than last year's. It was regrettable that a Minister professing such interest in the industry when Mr. Hastie was Minister for Mines did not provide for mining development the sums he then thought necessary.

Still, the Minister had gone farther in this direction than the former Government in which he held the same portfolio. The increase of £450 in head-office administration was regrettable and surely unnecessary, particularly when the public battery system had been long enough in vogue to permit of a decrease in administrative cost. The salary of that estimable officer, the Government Geologist, was to be increased by £25, in spite of the state of our finances; and the Geological branch showed an increased expenditure on administration of £265.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Geological branch was not before the Committee.

MR. TROY: This year members hoped for a decrease in administrative cost, the money saved in administration being used in mining development. Last year the expenditure on the erection of State batteries was £33,219; this year the estimate was £30,000.

THE CHAIRMAN: State batteries were not under consideration.

MR. TROY: Considering the necessity for opening up mines by public batteries, the failure to provide more money was regrettable. The Minister said he had authorised battery managers to make reductions of 10 per cent. on crushings over 150 tons. Did this apply to all grades of ores?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

MR. TROY: That was a rather liberal provision, benefiting some mines well able to pay the ordinary crushing rate of 10s. to 14s., which some low-grade mines could not afford. The reduction should be made, for the present at least, to none but low-grade mines, leaving the higher-grade propositions to pay the existing rate while their ore was easily procurable, as it must be in parcels of 150 tons. Decentralisation was needed in connection with public batteries. It was hard to control the batteries from Perth. Battery managers should have more power and more responsibility. In the case of a breakdown or other emergency, the manager should have power to apply the necessary remedies. We should then have fewer stoppages. In his own district batteries were often idle for three or four weeks at a time, waiting for communication with Perth and then for material to effect repairs.

Who was responsible for the purchase of old batteries? The Minister could not personally make the purchases; and the officer who gave wrong advice should be taken to task. The method of purchase needed the most searching inquiry.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That would be made.

MR. TROY: The Minister, at a meeting of the prospectors' association, favoured an inquiry into the public battery system; and during the no-confidence debate of last session, maintained that such inquiry was necessary. Let him adopt his own suggestion, and appoint a Royal Commission; for there was much dissatisfaction regarding the battery system, which dissatisfaction would not be removed without a radical alteration in present methods. An inquiry by a commission must be held, so that the Minister might have the assistance of the commission's report. He did not desire to have on the commission any persons who did not understand mining, nor did he desire to see members of Parliament on it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not discuss a proposed commission.

MR. TROY: Mention had been made of assistance to prospectors by allowing prospecting areas without the payment of rent or survey fees. He would support this; because it would give a *bona fide* prospector the opportunity of working for wages for four months of the year, and so gaining sufficient to tide him over until he could develop his property. To the proposal to allow privileges to prospectors according to results he could not give support. It was suggested that this matter should be left to mining boards; but these boards would be elected from the people in the locality and they would be susceptible to local influence, while they would not give any more attention to the work than was given now by the advisory boards which had been formed in many places. The time of the Minister would be taken up in dealing with appeals from the decisions of the mining boards just as much as if he had to deal with the matters himself. With reference to the transaction between the Minister and Messrs. Chesson and Heydon of Cue, he (Mr. Troy) had not said that the Minister kept them continually waiting until he was out of office, but

that he was under the impression they had not received a satisfactory reply from the Minister. He still held that opinion; but if he were wrong, he would have great pleasure in withdrawing the statement and in regretting that he had made use of the remarks. However he was aware that the late Premier (Mr. Daglish) when on the Murchison had been approached by Messrs. Chesson and Heydon. It might have been in connection with a second grant, but it was given in a very short time. Greater assistance should be given to prospectors to develop below water level. Mr. Hastie had given a grant at Mulgabbie which was of great assistance in the development of that district; also the grant given to Chesson and Heydon had acted beneficially and given the Cue district a distinct impetus.

THE MINISTER: There was also an instance at Bulong the other day.

MR. TROY: In Cue to-day the prospects were brighter than they were for some time previously. He urged expenditure in providing water supply to enable prospectors to reach the back country, and suggested putting down bores in districts where auriferous country was known to exist but which prospectors could not get at. The Lake Barlee district was an instance. It was known that gold-bearing country existed there, but the prospectors could not touch it because of the fact that water was not available. The member for Kalgoorlie had said that outside Kalgoorlie no mines had been opened, with the one possible exception of the Golden Pole at Davyhurst. The hon. member's experience could not extend beyond Kalgoorlie; otherwise he would know that in many portions of the State a considerable number of mines had been opened up. To-day the mining industry on the Murchison was more prosperous, and had a more promising outlook and a brighter future. At Black Range two years ago Mr. Hans Irvine, of Victoria, had purchased a mine for £10,000. Now, after two years' operations, he had obtained gold from the mine sufficient to recoup him for the cost of purchase of the property and machinery, and for the whole of the working expenses, and to enable him to set aside £10,000 as a reserve fund, and to pay £10,000 in dividends. That was indeed a satisfactory development. The development at Meekatharra

during the past two years had been very satisfactory. There had not been a development of such a satisfactory nature in the same period in any other part of the State. The Salisbury mine at Cue and the Vivian mine at East Murchison were other instances of development. He was very optimistic regarding the mining industry. There were many localities where the prospects were not too bright, but they were compensated for by the developments in other localities. With the due assistance of the State—[**THE MINISTER:** And confidence]—he remembered the Minister having said that investors were leaving the State because the Labour Government were in power. The condition of the industry had not been due to any Government, but because at one time money was invested without any regard to how it was spent, and more often people lost rather than gained by the expenditure. Mr. Govett had recently said that there was any amount of money for investment in our mines, but the capitalists must be assured that the mines were worth investing in. More precautions were taken to-day in purchasing mines. He (Mr. Troy) hoped, for the good of the mining industry, that these precautions would be continued, because then we would only have our best mines floated, and that would be better for the development of the mining industry.

MR. EDDY congratulated the Minister on his honesty of purpose, in reference to the big task before him. It could be safely said that the mining industry was in good hands, and in better hands than it had been when in the hands of previous Ministers. There were one or two little suggestions he desired to make. The survey fees were too high. A concession had been made within the last year or so regarding rents, so that the cost was now 5s. per acre to a party taking up a lease. That was a very good concession, but it was being given in an unjust manner. One found that a party of prospectors took up a lease in November or December, and were forced to pay the same amount of rent as if the lease had been taken up in January. [**THE MINISTER:** That was to be amended.] There was another point that was to be considered on behalf of the prospectors. A party of prospectors taking up 18 or 20 acres of land were

called upon to pay the whole rent. It was fair that they should be allowed to pay their rent half-yearly or quarterly. Some reference had been made to Mr. Hoover, the representative of Messrs. Bewick, Moreing & Co., as to what should be done or not done in regard to the mining industry. We could give credit to Mr. Hoover for offering some valuable information. He (Mr. Eddy) was not altogether in opposition to Mr. Hoover in reference to his ideas and suggestions as to giving prospectors their leases two or three months of the year and allowing them to go back again. What we had been fighting for on the fields in the past was giving too much exemption to many of the leaseholders, believing too much shepherding was being carried on. Therefore he was not in favour of Mr. Hoover's suggestion in that direction. One thing suggested to him was that Mr. Hoover and his people (he did not know whether he was criticising them too harshly) were throwing out suggestions as to what the prospector should do by way of opening up good shows for these capitalists to purchase later on at a low price. One promise made by the Minister for Mines and one of the most valuable in reference to the mining industry was the boring for water in the districts of Cunnamalling and Jourdie Hills. There was a big field of gold unworked because there was not water to work the mines. The Carbine mine was only able to crush four hours a day for lack of water; and he was told that an offer had been made for that mine of £30,000, showing how necessary it was to have water in that district. In reference to local companies, a good suggestion had been made and ought to come into existence. If these companies were to be provided for and assisted in the same manner as the agriculturists had been helped from time to time, it would be a good thing. The genuine prospectors should be on their leases, and money lent to them when it was proved that they were deserving of the loans; for often small syndicates had taken on shows which they had worked for some time and unfortunately had to throw up just on the eve of success, after many months of hard work. The member for Brown Hill suggested that aid should only be given to those

prospectors who were prepared to go on to new land. That would not be a fair proposition. There were many fields and many shows that had been passed over time after time and to-day were very payable concerns. In cases like that the prospector should be helped. The hon. member also spoke of the losses at batteries; that must be expected. Many men took up low-grade shows and brought out crushings from 20 to 100 tons, and at the battery found they only returned two or three pennyweights. In such cases the loss should be borne by the batteries. Public batteries must be expected to bear a burden of that kind; they were better able to do so than the men who had worked the shows. A loss of that kind should not be looked upon as some members viewed it, but should be regarded as an investment that might come back two-fold later on to the State. All these cases should be dealt with on their merits, and in the capable hands of the Minister he thought they would be dealt with fairly. Aid to prospectors and the extension of the battery system had been touched on in His Excellency the Governor's Speech. Members must not lose sight of the fact that we must treat all this expenditure as an investment, and if we laid out £20,000 no doubt it would come back later on to the State. Let all sides recognise the value of the mining industry and the great assistance it would be to the State at large.

MR. HUDSON approached the Mines Estimates with considerable difficulty, for the Minister for Mines, during the course of the debate, had referred to the fact that the Loan Estimates were not brought down with the ordinary Estimates so that members of the Committee might have before them the whole of the proposals of the Government regarding the expenditure on the mining and other industries. In reply to other observations made from the Opposition side of the House, the Minister said that certain things were provided in the Loan Bill; therefore the proposals in the Loan Bill should be before members when considering the Estimates in chief. He regretted exceedingly to find that in the general totals there was a decrease in the intended expenditure. He wished to emphasise the decrease in regard to

water supply. This was one of the essential features on which the Government could assist the prospector. No doubt prospectors had been assisted by the present and previous Governments, and they should be, because they were the pioneers of the industry. It was by the prospector we hoped to succeed in that industry and extend the mining fields throughout the State in the way the member for Kalgoorlie said had not been done.

THE MINISTER had not dealt with the various departments, only with the general question. He would deal with the items when we came to them.

MR. HUDSON: In regard to the decrease in the amount proposed to be expended on water supply, the Minister had said the vote was reduced because some places had been provided for. [THE MINISTER: It was not reduced at all.] If the Minister had given the Committee the information he possessed it would not have been necessary to discuss the Estimates at such length, and the Committee could have viewed the matters more intelligently. There were many places on the fields urgently requiring a water supply. The Minister, knowing the difficulties the mining industry suffered in many districts owing to the want of water, ought not to be afraid to expend money in providing water so as to meet this contingency. [THE MINISTER: The hon. member had not much to complain of.] He was not complaining. He was treating the matter generally. With regard to the assistance to be given to prospectors in the matter of labour covenants, he appreciated the extent to which the Minister proposed to go as to prospecting areas, and he appreciated the fixing of the time at eight months, which would allow the prospector to go out and do some work to assist him during the eight months of the year. One did not appreciate the idea of the member for Kalgoorlie when he said that so long as a certain amount of work was done it should suffice for the year, because the prospector might do the work in a month and technically comply with the regulations of the Mines Department. That would leave the area untouched for 11 months of the year. When the Minister considered the matter it would be well for him to take into

consideration both the time and labour—the work done and the time occupied. It only meant a matter of compromise and consideration, and could be easily adjusted. The present Act only required to be administered properly and no difficulties would arise in any direction. As he understood the policy of the Act, it was that a certain amount of exemption should be given when a certain amount of work had been done; and although a prospector or leaseholder occupied a proposition or property, it was not efficiently worked if he was sitting on it and shepherding it. If he was shepherding it only, one thought it a perfectly just ground for forfeiture by the Minister, who should exercise discretion in these matters, and not leave it entirely to a board. With regard to battery charges, he considered the idea enunciated by the Minister a very good one, but was of opinion that when the Minister came to frame regulations he would not bind himself closely to the figures he had placed before the Committee. The Minister said he was going to recommend, or had recommended, an allowance of 10 per cent. on 150 tons. Probably he would be prepared in certain places to reduce the number of tons from 150 very considerably. And one hoped that when the hon. gentleman considered the other proposal he intended to make, as to 25 per cent. when a certain amount of development work had been done and a depth reached of 100 feet, he would also consider a reduction in that depth. He (Mr. Hudson) would be pleased to see advantages given for the formation of local companies, and they might be given in some of the directions indicated. Generally, he commended the preparation of the Estimates by the Minister for Mines.

MR. TAYLOR: In regard to a speech made by Mr. Hoover and an interview that gentleman gave to the Press, he took a somewhat different view from those expressed by members. Mr. Hoover was a partner in the firm of Bewick, Moreing, & Co., who were not noted for investing much capital in any mines they controlled. They were generally controlling mines for other people, and whilst they controlled a large number of mines and a very large number of great gold-producers in Western Australia, he could quite understand a member of that

firm making a great noise in the Press about the security in this State in leaseholds, and howling for more security for capital. That gentleman was representing a firm which had every desire that no other competition in the State should arise. The firm were doing very well in the State, and it was only the ordinary business transaction for them not to advise other people to come in on a similar line to compete with them. Bewick, Moreing, & Co. were perfectly satisfied with Western Australia. They had been spreading their operations from one end of the mining fields to the other, and were practically an octopus; so much so that at one time there was considered a necessity of clipping their wings. In reference to batteries, there was room for great improvement. As had been pointed out, the batteries were not what they should be. Whilst we had in some centres very up-to-date machinery, he had repeatedly received communications in connection with batteries in various parts not being up to date and not giving satisfaction. He had recently written to the Minister on behalf of the secretary of the Leaseholders' Association, Burtville, but had not yet received a reply. He did not make any charge against the Minister or the department, as there were times when there was some hitch or something, and one could not blame any person for the delay of a week or two. The complaint from Burtville was about boxes not being in any way equal to the task set by the quantity of ore to be treated. He would like to know something about the prospecting vote for development work. He had been interviewed in relation to the most distant place in the Eastern Goldfields as to an application for assistance. The application was for £150, so that these poor shareholders could sink their shaft to prospect their property. The application had, however, been practically refused, and they practically had to abandon their property. He was sorry to see the Mines Estimates discussed with a scarcity of members. He had been a member five years, and always found that when any mining proposition was under consideration, those representing agricultural areas were invariably absent. However, he did not take particular note of that, when he

remembered that a Land Bill was passed through on Friday last when there were only about seven members on the Ministerial side, and not one of them represented the farming community.

MR. SCADDAN desired to express his surprise that the Minister had not sufficient control over members on that (Government) side of the House to keep something like a decent number in the House whilst this discussion was on. Either he had no control over members on that side, or members on that side had very little respect for him. Mining was the primary industry of the State, which had built up all the other industries, and which to a great extent was responsible for the flourishing condition of Western Australia to-day. For the first time he believed in the history of the State, the Minister dropped the system of giving statistics, and said nothing as to what the Government intended to do. Probably that course was adopted to avoid waste of time and to get into recess. At any rate, the Minister dropped all these figures, and had given us something which appeared to be practical. The only question to him which was of very much importance was that of the encouragement the Government intended to give prospectors. He had failed to see where any of the suggestions made by members would have any great beneficial effect. The giving of better security to those who invested in mining properties in this State would not have the desired effect of finding new fields to take the place of those getting worked out every day; nor would the removal of labour covenants at present in existence have that effect. Men struggling with shows at the present time should receive encouragement in the nature of help to erect plant or work their shows below water depth, to raise a greater amount of ore than they did to-day; because, after all, two men could potter about on an 18-acre lease all their lives without effecting very much progress. It needed something more than that, additional capital being required either from the State or private individuals, so that the particular district or mine should progress as it ought to do. Local capitalists did not take sufficient interest in gold mining, but generally invested in hotels, which they let to other people. The member for Katanning

(Hon. F. H. Piesse) was probably a rare exception: and we needed men of his stamp to invest in the mining industry. If we had a George Lansell in Western Australia, we should not have such an outcry about the state of the mining industry. He kept Bendigo alive, though at one time it was thought to be almost worked out; but local men invested in the industry and were given every encouragement by the Government, and Bendigo was now flourishing more than ever. What encouragement did we give to local men? The Minister suggested benefiting investors not resident in the State—men who invested £1 with a view to making £2. Was it our province to see that our mineral wealth was worked for the benefit of outsiders, rather than for the benefit of our own people? Undoubtedly the natural wealth of the country belonged to the country. There was no objection to people coming here and making money; but he objected to every encouragement being given to the foreign capitalist while the local capitalist received no encouragement. Some local capitalists who could ill afford to do so had expended thousands in prospecting small shows, and immediately they paid a dividend the State collected the dividend tax. Before being taxed such men should be allowed to recoup their outlay. Though mining now returned to the State a larger revenue than any other industry, yet the Minister appeared to be over-estimating the revenue for the current year. Last year the total mining receipts from all sources was £325,144, and this year the estimate was £372,630, or an increase of £50,000 for the year. The goldfields were much agitated as to the manner of the proposals for encouraging prospectors, who would, he feared, be sadly disappointed with the Minister's remarks to-night. Instead of trying to abrogate the labour conditions to be complied with by companies, the Minister should assist men struggling on their own shows to continue to struggle, should assist them to get local capital. The Minister told the people of the Yerilla district that the State Mining Engineer would report on all new discoveries; that this officer was under instructions to visit Pingin, and thereafter the country north of Black Range. The officer visited the Pingin

district a considerable time after that promise was made.

THE MINISTER: A month ago.

MR. SCADDAN: Why was not his report published?

THE MINISTER: It was given to the Press to-day.

MR. SCADDAN: Here and in the other States discouraging reports were circulated with regard to the field. There appeared to be something underlying the business, because the crushings at Pingin had proved the pessimistic reports to be without foundation. When the Minister found reports circulated to the disadvantage of the field, he should have hurried on the preparation of the State Mining Engineer's report, without waiting till the battery proved that the report was correct. The report of an expert, if we had to wait until it was verified by a battery, represented a waste of money.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member's opinion on such matters was particularly valuable.

[MR. ILLINGWORTH took the Chair.]

MR. SCADDAN: The Minister was apparently so conceited that he would not take a suggestion from anybody. As to the crushing charges in the Yerilla district, he understood the Minister to say that the preceding Minister, Mr. Hastie, had made a rebate of 25 per cent. to some particular person.

THE MINISTER: Nothing of the sort. He said Mr. Johnson had done so.

MR. SCADDAN: And would not give a rebate to anybody else?

THE MINISTER: That had not been said. The statement was that the rebate did not apply to any other battery except that at Mulline.

MR. SCADDAN had understood the Minister to say that applications had been made from other districts, but had not been granted.

THE MINISTER: Why had not the hon. member called for the papers?

MR. SCADDAN did not hold any brief for Mr. Johnson, who, according to a Press report, stated at a meeting that in respect of crushing at Yerilla a concession had been granted because the parcel of ore exceeded 150 tons; that the same had been done at other batteries, the regulation stating that customers were entitled to a 25 per cent. reduction.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: There was no such regulation.

MR. SCADDAN: Such was Mr. Johnson's statement.

THE MINISTER: It was not correct.

MR. SCADDAN: That was not apparent. We had heard many statements and counter-statements.

THE CHAIRMAN: Public batteries were not under consideration.

MR. SCADDAN: The industry was suffering owing to the State batteries being under the control of persons having political interest. To remove the batteries from political control would be a great advantage to the battery system, which was more generally used for political purposes than any other undertaking in the country. Probably the Royal Commission promised by the Minister would report favourably on the project for abolishing political control.

THE MINISTER had said he would have an inquiry.

MR. SCADDAN: The Minister had promised to appoint a commission.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member's statement was absolutely incorrect.

MR. SCADDAN accepted the denial of the Minister, who, however, had urged the previous Minister to appoint a commission; and the red-rag canvassers who had been flying around on behalf of Ministerialists during the general election distinctly said that he (Hon. H. Gregory) intended to appoint a commission. However, the inquiry should be removed from any outside control, for careful investigation was needed. A Royal Commission was, in his (Mr. Scaddan's) opinion, the only practicable method of overcoming the difficulty. He did not altogether agree with members who quoted figures to show that the mining industry was not so prosperous this year. The figures in the Estimates had little or no connection with the state of the mining industry, of which he preferred to judge by the actual results and by the encouragement which the industry was receiving. He believed we were on the road to prosperity. Mining was not booming as in the early days; but he believed there was now more legitimate mining than ever before in our history; that the mining industry was, and would be for years, a stable industry. The

member for Kalgoorlie mentioned the decline in the number of big mines; but not many years ago mining managers in and around Kalgoorlie were not there to work the mines to the best advantage, but to show themselves to the best advantage. The Lake View Consols, for instance, had never recovered from the blow received from a previous manager, who picked out the eyes of the mine, leaving it in the very poor position that it occupied to-day. In the Associated Northern the original chute had been followed for hundreds of feet and no attempt had been made to work it in a legitimate manner. It was called "Rodda's Whim" to this day. It had been reported in London that a winze was being sunk on fine-grade ore and that afterwards they were to go back and stope it out; but when they did so, they did not obtain the same class of ore. Therefore the work on the Northern Associated had been in a bad position, but lately they had been able to get on fair-grade ore. The mines on the Golden Belt were now being worked legitimately. Managers had some stake in the country, and had reputations to lose or hold. It was to their interest to work the mines legitimately. The Great Boulder had lately been shown to be in a sounder position than ever before, in spite of the thousands of ounces which had been taken from it. It showed that the mining industry was on a sound basis, and the Minister could do nothing better than give every encouragement for the opening of new fields and to induce capital to come in to assist prospectors. The industry was a sound investment. Dividends totalled one-third of the gold produced; and with the legitimate working of the mines, no investor would bite his fingers. It was to be regretted more members on the Government side were not present during this discussion to learn something and to assist other members.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote — *Geological Survey*, £6,155, agreed to.

Vote — *State Batteries*, £110,710, agreed to.

Vote — *Mines Water Supply*, £18,760, agreed to.

Vote — Purchase and Treatment of Copper Ore, £61,600 :

MR. KEENAN : Why were the smelting costs decreased by £15,000 when there was an increase of £2,000 in the purchase of ore? If more ore was to be purchased, how did the Minister anticipate a reduction in the smelting costs? Last year £30,000 had been voted for purchasing copper ore, of which £14,494 had been spent, and the smelting costs were £18,651.

THE MINISTER : Last year, when starting operations, there had been ore on hand to the value of £28,000, on which £12,000 had been advanced. That, with the £14,000 spent last year, amounted to £26,000 spent for the purchase of ore, on which the smelting costs were £18,000. We had erected a more up-to-date plant and anticipated that the conditions would be much better than in the initial stages, and that we could carry out the work much more cheaply.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Miscellaneous Mining Development, £7,000—agreed to.

Vote—Mining School, £4,705 :

MR. TROY : Had the Government any intention of carrying out the long-promised grant for a School of Mines on the Murchison?

THE MINISTER knew nothing of any promise; but he had been one who had strongly desired to have a technical school at Cue to deal with mining subjects. It was now arranged to have samples of the different kinds of ore sent to each mining centre, and he would do all he could to have a first-class technical school opened on the Murchison. The policy of the Mines Department was that there should be one mining school in the State, with technical schools in all the centres, to prepare pupils for the mining school.

MR. BATH : Technical schools were under the Education Department. A report had been prepared by the late Director of Technical Education on the claims of Day Dawn and Cue for a school. The report was favourable; but there was so much controversy as to whether Cue or Day Dawn should have the school that neither centre secured the coveted convenience.

THE MINISTER said he had not been aware of that.

MR. KEENAN : Would the Minister direct that all ore coming into the possession of the Government should be handed over to the School of Mines? The Minister would need to ask the Crown Law Department in some cases.

THE MINISTER said he would bring the question before the attention of the Government. Where ores were surrendered to the Crown in cases brought before courts, the School of Mines had a greater claim to them than the technical branch of the Education Department.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote — Explosives and Analytical, £4,120 :

MR. KEENAN : What was the reason for an increase in the number of analysts?

THE MINISTER : This department was now doing a great deal of work in the analysing of food and spirits.

MR. KEENAN : Was that part of the work of the department?

THE MINISTER : The Mines Department controlled the analyst's department. Formerly we had laboratories in connection with almost every department. They were now under one department. Lately there had been a number of analyses of soil for the Lands Department for which the latter department had offered to pay; but it was thought wise that the work should be done in this department and charged to it. This department, to a great extent, was a self-sustaining one, though no charge was made for a great deal of the work done.

Items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—Inspection of Machinery, £7,024 :

MR. SCADDAN : There was an increase of £1,408 in this vote. He had previously said he was satisfied the machinery department would get out of control and pile up expense for very little result; and the statement was now proved by these Estimates. We had in this department nine inspectors and seven clerks in Perth, and five clerks on the goldfields, the last-named receiving half their salaries and allowances from "Mines Generally." A good deal of this expenditure could very well be cut out. He held

the Chief Inspector in high esteem, and any remarks of his in this connection were not hurled at that officer personally. But some statement should be made by the Minister as to what was to be done concerning this department. The Minister had already explained that he intended to alter the conditions under which certificates were issued; but was he going to make any change in regard to the inspection of boilers? There were five boiler inspectors stationed in Perth. The Chief Inspector did so little inspection that the Minister did not consider it necessary to keep a record of the work the officer did. He was what was known as a technical officer who had to go through the files and returns coming from the inspectors, and to make remarks thereon. Then he had to report to the chief inspector, who sent the documents on to some other officer in the Mines Department for farther report. This was piling up the work in an unnecessary manner. We should have inspectors of boilers sufficiently under control without having a chief inspector, a technical officer to advise him, and seven other officers in Perth. The great bulk of the machinery was on the goldfields, but the least number of inspectors was stationed there, which showed that there was something wrong in the administration of the department. The idea was to centralise the work of the department in Perth, but we should get away from that idea and decentralise as much as possible.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: A perusal of the Estimates showed a large increase. There were a number of inspectors who were appointed long before the Minister took office. There were too many inspectors, and there was too much red-tapeism in connection with the department regarding the Machinery Act. The protection of the public in regard to inspection of boilers was necessary, and it was necessary to have certificates granted for the protection of employees. He had not the knowledge he should like in regard to this department, and it was hard to say whether the staff was too big. Next year he would be able to say whether a lesser staff should be employed. Many of the appointments were only recent, and it was essential in the early stages of an Act to give the department

an opportunity of saying what was necessary and what was unnecessary, but he (the Minister) would not like to say whether some of the officers were not necessary just yet.

MR. SCADDAN: In the way of protest he moved—

That the item, Clerks £895, be reduced by £195.

This was the increase as shown on the Estimates.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The estimate was cut down by over £2,000. The only two increases shown were that of the Chief Clerk, £225, an increase of £15, and the Chief Inspector at Kalgoorlie, who received £20 a year more. A higher salary was given to this officer as it was desired to make it the more important office.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Examination of Engine-drivers' Inspectors, etc., £400:

MR. LYNCH: A member of the examination board had been induced to give up his occupation on the fields, and was not now receiving remuneration equal to the wages he received when on the fields.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The policy of the previous Government was not departed from.

MR. BATH: But the previous Government intended to deal with the matter.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Full consideration would be given to this matter. He did not know what scheme should be adopted in connection with these boards, but he did not agree with the regulations framed. Every applicant should come before one of the members of the board or the inspector. These boards went to the important districts of Perth, Kalgoorlie, Cue, and Geraldton to carry out examinations. He did not intend paying the member of the board a rate equal to the wages he had been receiving on the fields if that officer was not employed, but if work could be found for him he would be compensated for it.

MR. BATH: Arrangements could be made so that the man, when not employed, could get other employment.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES would go seriously into the matter. He could not think of keeping that officer in Perth. He was earning £3 a week when formerly

he had earned £4 10s. a week. If the Government could find work for him they would; if not, arrangements would have to be made so that the officer could be employed elsewhere. The man would receive a salary commensurate with the work done.

Mr. SCADDAN had communicated with the whole of the branches of the Engine-drivers' Association throughout the State and asked for an expression of opinion on the matter of granting certificates without applicants going before the board, and also the treatment meted out to the engine-drivers' representative on the board. The associations were unanimous in their opinion that applicants should go before the board, and that the representative of the engine-drivers on the board should receive fair treatment from the Government. He did not think the Government had treated this officer fairly. When the officer found that he was not sufficiently employed on the board he desired to return to Kalgoorlie to get work, with an assurance that he would be allowed to return when the board sat again in Perth. The Minister was prepared to send the officer back to Kalgoorlie, but he was not prepared to allow him to come to Perth again. That would cost the man three days' work; it would take £2 for a second-class return ticket from Kalgoorlie and travelling expenses would amount to about 10s. 6d. a day, yet the Minister expected that this officer was to go to Kalgoorlie to work and then attend in Perth at the convenience of the country for £2 2s., when his expenses would amount to about £6. The officer went through a strict examination before he was appointed to the position. Since the change of Government the officer had been so placed that he had not averaged £1 per week. It seemed as if the Minister wished to get rid of him by sending him to Kalgoorlie and not supplying a return ticket. The Central Board of Health had a representative from Kalgoorlie on it, and this representative received his expenses in travelling to Perth and back again. Why should different treatment be meted out to the officer of the engine-drivers' board? He believed the Minister would deal justly, irrespective of what shade of politics one held, and he felt satisfied

that the hon. gentleman would get a report. In his opinion this board should be converted into a travelling board, which should hold examinations throughout the State. The board should visit centres in the South-Western district, the Murchison district, the Eastern Gold-fields district, and the North Coolgardie district. Then we should have some satisfaction as to examinations being of a uniform nature, and there would be less reason for complaint than at present. There was considerable dissatisfaction at the way in which the examinations were held and in which service certificates were granted. [THE MINISTER: That was not his fault.] He was not saying it was, but was pointing out that the matter might be taken into consideration during the recess.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

This completed the votes for the department.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

BILLS—FIRST READING.

Banking Companies Amendment, received from the Legislative Council.

Bills of Sale Amendment, received from the Legislative Council.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 12 midnight, until Wednesday afternoon.
