

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Minister should limit the proviso to the manufacture of agricultural machinery and should substitute "standard" for "prescribed." It would save the department an immense amount of trouble.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No good would be derived from the proposed substitution of "standard" for "prescribed." The proviso was only intended to apply to men engaged in the manufacture of agricultural machinery. As it did not seem to be quite clear he moved—

That the clause be postponed.

Hon. W. PATRICK: If the word "provided" were to be made to follow on the word "Australia" the meaning of the proviso would be made clear.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: With the leave of the Committee he would withdraw his motion to postpone the clause and move to report progress.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Progress reported.

BILL—LANDLORD AND TENANT.

In Committee.

Hon. M. L. Moss in charge of the Bill.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment; the report adopted.

House adjourned at 9.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 2nd December, 1909.

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

BILL—LOAN, £1,342,000.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending a Bill authorising the raising of a sum of £1,342,000 by loan for the construction of certain public works and other purposes.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE DOCK, EXPENDITURE.

Mr. SWAN (for Mr. Horan) asked the Minister for Works: 1, What expenditure has been incurred up to date for professional and advisory services in connection with the proposed dock at Fremantle? 2, What amount has been expended in the initiatory work of constructing the dock named? 3, Is the work now being done at Fremantle intended to form portion of the scheme for the dock in question?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, £1,656 19s. 9d. 2, £3,783. 3, Yes.

QUESTION—FACTORY, ALLEGED UNHEALTHY CONDITION.

Mr. HORAN asked the Premier: 1, Has the Colonial Secretary's Department received any complaint regarding the alleged unhealthy condition of certain premises of Foy & Gibson's in Hay-street? 2, What action, if any, has been taken to remedy the conditions complained of?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The only complaint received was made by the hon. member himself. 2, On receipt of the

complaint an inspection was made by an officer of the Central Board of Health, in company with the Chief Inspector of the Local Board of Health, as such a matter comes within the jurisdiction of the latter body, which has it in hand with a view to causing the ventilation of the boot department to be improved. The inspector's report stated that the sanitary conveniences were clean, well-kept, and well-ventilated. The hon. member was informed of this fact on the 22nd ult. Further inspection will continue to be made until the requirements of the local board have been satisfied.

QUESTION—TUBERCULAR COWS, STRAYING.

Mr. TROY (for Mr. Bath) asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the complaints made *re* cows, suffering from tuberculosis, being permitted to stray, thus menacing dairy herds? 2, What action has been taken to prevent this serious menace to the public health in the metropolitan area? 3, If none, will the Premier give immediate attention to the matter, and thus obviate the possibility of our milk supply being made the easy vehicle for the dissemination of tubercular disease.

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Stock inspectors are always on the move amongst the dairy herds, and whenever the disease is detected the affected animal is destroyed and the carcass burnt. Two qualified veterinary surgeons devote practically the whole of their time to dairy inspection in the metropolitan and suburban districts. 2, Answered by No. 2.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Police Benefit Fund—Statement of Accounts to 30th June, 1909.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report presented.

Mr. Daglish brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the administration of friendly societies.

Report received, and ordered to be printed.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) moved—

"That for the remainder of the Session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be passed through all stages in one day, and Messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received; also, so far as to admit of the reporting and adopting of the Resolutions of the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means on the day on which they have passed those Committees."

Mr. HOLMAN: In moving a motion of this sort the Premier should give the House some explanation as to the necessity for such drastic action. It was usual when such motions were being moved to give the House an idea as to what business would be transacted. This course should have been followed on this occasion. Seeing that there were some 36 Orders of the Day on the Notice Paper, and that there was still further business to come down, the Premier should have given an outline of what he proposed. Surely the Premier did not expect that this motion would be passed without any information being vouchsafed to members. For his part he (Mr. Holman) had no desire to see the session strung out, but he would be lacking in his duty if he failed to protest against the passage of this motion without full Ministerial explanation. The Premier was smiling over the matter.

The Premier: I have heard you make this speech before, you know.

Mr. HOLMAN: On the present occasion he had no desire to make a speech at all, but merely to enter his protest against the passage of the motion without any explanation from the Minister. All he asked for was an indication of what business the Premier proposed to go on with. He objected to the rushing through of business in a slipshod manner. Rather than scurry over a great deal of

work he would prefer to see the more important matters selected for consideration in a proper manner, while the remainder were allowed to go. Again, as a matter of courtesy the Premier should have consulted the members of the Opposition before bringing down such a motion. If he thought he could force anything he liked through he would find he was making a mistake.

The Premier: I have not taken that stand.

Mr. HOLMAN: Perhaps not intentionally, but the moving of such a motion with the bare reading thereof made it appear that the Premier wished to take that attitude. If the desired explanation was given he (Mr. Holman) would be prepared to assist in bringing the session to a close. He had no desire to sit longer than was necessary, and as a matter of fact would not mind if the session closed now. Members would be neglecting their duty, however, if they carried this motion without knowing what business was to be dealt with. The Constitution Act Amendment Bill should receive careful consideration. On glancing down the Notice Paper members would see that very many important measures were still to be dealt with, and should not be rushed through without receiving thorough consideration. All realised that when the end of the session was approaching a motion like this was necessary, but never before in his recollection had business been so backward as it was this year. It would be unwise to suspend the Standing Orders to allow Bills to go through all their stages in one day when there were such important measures to be dealt with.

Mr. FOULKES: There were several matters on the Notice Paper which were questions of great interest. During the last few days an important petition had been presented to the Chamber by the public servants of the State setting out the various grievances they laboured under. The Premier might inform members whether he would give an opportunity for that petition to be considered.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Premier might outline what measures it was proposed to pass through all their stages in one

sitting. There were several Bills on the Notice Papers which should not be dealt with in that manner, such as for instance the Constitution Act Amendment Bill.

The Premier: The Leader of the Opposition has arranged to adjourn the debate on that.

Mr. DAGLISH: What is wrong with the Bill, anyhow?

Mr. SCADDAN: The member for Subiaco would find what was wrong with it when he was in the Chair. At present members hardly knew what it contained. Then there were the Health and Licensing Bills; and to push them through in one sitting was absurd. Again, this year, there was the procedure of putting through important Railway Bills after the Standing Orders had been suspended. Important measures of that nature should not be left so late in the session.

Mr. JACOBY: It was to be hoped the Government were not going to be induced to place more important business on one side in order to deal with the petition from the public servants. There was the Health Bill which urgently needed dealing with, and it would be most unfortunate if it were not given thorough consideration this session. Matters of minor importance should not be allowed to take precedence over important measures.

Mr. GEORGE: It was surprising to hear the remarks of the member for Swan. He talked of matters of minor importance when the question he was referring to was a petition put before this House and signed by practically every public servant of the State. Surely the member could not have considered the position. No doubt there were important items on the Notice Paper which required attention, and he took it that members would be prepared to sit until they had done their duty to the country, but they were not going to leave out of consideration a petition brought forward on behalf of the public servants in order that certain grievances might come under the review of members. No matter whether the petition came from the salaried or wages staff we could not ignore a matter presented in a way this one had been. The Premier would doubtless be grateful to be given an opportu-

ity to state once and for all, without any questioning, what was the real principle guiding the Government in the steps they had taken with regard to the service. For the member for Swan to come here and talk about a matter affecting the livelihood of 1,200 persons as a matter of minor importance was ridiculous. Perhaps that member's own importance was far more minor to this State than the grievances of the public servants.

Mr. JACOBY: Any gutter-snipe could use that language.

Mr. GEORGE: The member for Swan had by inference called him a gutter-snipe. He would not allow that to be said of him by anyone whether inside or outside the Chamber. The hon. member should withdraw.

Mr. JACOBY: The member for Murray made an insulting remark, and the retort was that any gutter-snipe could use that language.

Mr. SPEAKER: That remark was offensive, and must be withdrawn.

Mr. JACOBY: The member for Murray had made an insulting remark about him (Mr. Jacoby).

Mr. GEORGE: No insulting remark was made by him, but he would not allow the member for Swan or anyone else to apply such a term to him as that of gutter-snipe.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the member for Murray used words considered offensive then he must withdraw; certainly the member for Swan must withdraw the remark he made.

Mr. JACOBY: If the member for Murray took exception to what he had said he would withdraw.

The PREMIER: A fortnight ago the question of altering the days of sitting of the House arose, and he then outlined the measures he thought it would be advisable to give consideration to during the balance of the session. If reference were made to *Hansard* it would be seen that he had said then that he intended to introduce the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, and the Land and Income Tax Bill. These measures had now been brought down. It had not been his custom since occupying the position of Premier to

force measures through the House, more especially such a measure as had been referred to by the member for Ivanhoe, namely, the amendment to the Constitution. He had intimated to the leader of the Opposition what the amendment to the Constitution Act would be, and that gentleman said he was going to move the adjournment of the debate. It would be difficult to point out all the measures that would be dealt with, but the first seven Orders of the Day must be dealt with, and also the three Railway Bills.

Mr. Holman: Why do you not bring them down and give us a chance?

The PREMIER: The Engineer-in-Chief went over the routes again last week to obtain certain information, and he only returned on the previous day. The Minister would be in a position on the following day to introduce the three Bills. So far as the Loan Bill was concerned notice of that had now been given, and he hoped also to bring down the Loan Estimates. He proposed to move the second reading of the Loan Bill next Tuesday afternoon. He would endeavour to give consideration to the matter referred to by the member for Claremont, namely, the question of the petition from the public servants. He had been prepared to discuss that question on two occasions but unfortunately last week when an opportunity presented itself, on a motion for a return asked for by the member for Murray, the chance did not arise owing to the motion coming on so early, and he had been unable to give an explanation in regard to the matter. So far as he was personally concerned, he would like to have an opportunity of stating the position the Government held with regard to the public service. There would be no objection later on to give members an opportunity of discussing the question. The main reason for submitting the motion was that where there were alterations and amendments coming from the other place there was a great waste of time if they could not be dealt with forthwith. Unless the motion were carried it would be necessary to receive them on one day, move that they be taken into consideration on another day and then the

report of the committee had to be made an Order of the Day for the following sitting, and so on, and it would mean a considerable amount of delay. Several important amendments had been made to measures by the other place, there having been alterations to the District Fire Brigades Bill and the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Bill. The sole reason for presenting the motion was in the interests of business. There would be ample opportunity given to discuss various matters. It was to be hoped members would not object to the motion. He had intimated to the leader of the Opposition on the previous day that he proposed to move the motion, and Mr. Bath said he did not see any objection to the adoption of that course as there was precedent for it. He hoped there would be a possibility of closing on the 18th December, but if business would not permit it some other day would be fixed. It was usual to provide at this stage of the sitting that Government business should take precedence over private members' business, but such a step had not been taken.

Mr. Scaddan: Will you do that before next private members' day?

The PREMIER: No. He commended the motion to members.

Question put and passed.

BILL — CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in moving the second reading said: The amendment of the Constitution which it is proposed to effect by this Bill is one that I think will be received favourably, not only by this House but by the Chamber which is more particularly affected.

Mr. Holman: You know it will be thrown out.

The PREMIER: I know nothing of the kind; I have every hope that it will be passed.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The majority of them have expressed themselves against it.

The PREMIER: I have said more than once that it was desirable to bring the Upper Chamber into closer touch with the

people and it was proposed to reduce the franchise from a £25 to a £15 annual value. With that end in view the matter has been before the country for a considerable time, and prior to the last general election a definite statement was made that in the event of this Government being again returned to power, it was their intention that the matter should be dealt with at an early date. In fulfilment of that pledge, which I am satisfied will be endorsed by the electors of the State, I have the honour to submit the proposal for the consideration of hon. members of the House. I may be criticised for not giving the House an opportunity of discussing this reform at an earlier stage of the session, but I can assure hon. members that the will has not been wanting. It has been because of the urgency of the measures that have hitherto occupied attention that I have delayed bringing the measure down. In 1855 Responsible Government was granted to four of the Australian colonies. The movement was largely the outcome of the trouble in Canada in 1838 caused by the old system of government under the Crown. There were continual conflicts occurring between the Governors and the Houses of the Legislatures which ultimately culminated in a rebellion in Lower Canada and grave unrest in the Upper Province. Lord Durham was commissioned to investigate this matter and he advised a considerable extension of the powers and functions of the Legislatures. As far as Western Australia is concerned, Responsible Government was not granted until 1889. I do not propose at this stage to refer to the struggles of the settlers in the days before Responsible Government. From 1870 to 1890 most of the settlers in this State thought that that privilege should be extended to them, and in 1889 the Constitution was granted. Under that Constitution the Governor could summon to the Legislative Council such persons to the number of fifteen as he might think fit, and fill vacancies from time to time. By an amendment of the Constitution in 1899, assented to on the 18th May, 1900, the qualifications for the Council electors were altered. They were: "A legal or equitable freehold es-

tate situate in the electoral province of the clear value of £100 sterling; a householder within the Province, with clear annual value of £25 sterling; leasehold estate within the province of the clear annual value of £25 sterling; the holder of a lease or license from the Crown within the Province at a rental of not less than £10 per annum; or if the name of such person is on the electoral list of any municipality or road district within the province in respect of property of the annual ratable value of not less than £25." Comparing the qualifications with those of the other Australian States we find that in New South Wales and Queensland the nominative principle still continues. In the States in which the elective principle has been adopted we find the franchise as follows:—Victoria: a freeholder of land in the province rated at not less than £10; a lessee of an unexpired term originally created for not less than five years, or the occupier of property rated at not less than £15, or a graduate of the British University, matriculated students of the Melbourne University, qualified legal and medical practitioners, ministers of religion, certificated schoolmasters, and naval and military officers. South Australia: the occupier of a dwelling house of £17 rental; the registered proprietor of a Crown lease on which are improvements to the value of at least £50 the property of such proprietor; the freehold estate in possession situated within the State of the clear value of £50 above all charges and encumbrances affecting the same; the leasehold estate in possession situate within the State of the clear annual value of £20, the lease having been duly registered and having three years to run at the time of voting, or containing a clause authorising the lessee to become the purchaser; ministers of religion; the head teacher of a school or college residing on the premises belonging to the college or school; a postmaster or postmistress residing in a building used in connection with a post office; a stationmaster residing on premises belonging to the Government; and every member of the police force in charge of a police station. Tasmania: a freehold estate of the annual

value of £10; the occupier of property of the annual value of £30; graduates of British Universities, legal and medical practitioners, and naval or military officers. This Bill reduces the capital value of the freehold qualification from £100 to £50 and the leaseholders and householders' qualification is reduced to £15 per year. I apprehend that in the opinion of some the franchise should be still further enlarged beyond the intention of this Bill; but these measures of reform invariably proceed slowly, and I have shown that the franchise as now proposed favourably compares in point of liberality with the other States of the Commonwealth. It is not necessary for me to weary hon. members with the recapitulation of the arguments for and against the Upper Chamber nor do I think this is the time for doing so. The Constitutions of the various States provide for a second chamber, the functions of which are principally those of review. The power of rejection is very seldom exercised, although it is recognised that the powers of each House are, to a large extent, co-equal. With regard to our second chamber, it is to a large extent a revising and suspending chamber. It can alter and it can reject Bills which it may think that the Lower House has not given sufficient consideration to. That it does not reject, excepting on rare occasions is due not so much to any lack of power but largely owing to the discretion of the members of that Chamber. It is generally conceded that the Upper House should be the house of review, where the more stable elements of population obtain representation. In the Bill now before the House it is proposed to reduce this qualification so that practically in effect all, irrespective of class, who are permanently settled in the State can obtain a voice in the selection of a representative for the Legislative Council of the State. The elimination of the word "clear" before "annual value" will have the effect of giving each occupier who pays six shillings a week rent, a vote for the Council. The most recent example in Australia of an alteration in the franchise of the Upper House was in the case of South Australia last year, where after much conflict and

as a result of a compromise it was decided to reduce the qualification to £17 instead of, I think, £25 which obtained previously. Having in view the larger rental values ruling in this State, it will be seen that the present proposal forms a considerable reduction on what was adopted last year in South Australia which has ever been considered one of the most democratic of the Australian States. The Government believe that those people who are permanent residents of the State should be able to exercise a greater influence in legislation than the floating elements who are here to-day and gone to-morrow. I trust this measure will be accepted as one of reform, and that hon. members will be content with this advance, which, if carried, will place Western Australia in the van as far as legislative enactments of this kind are concerned. The man whose hat is his roof should not exercise the same influence on legislation as the man who by reason of the claims of a family, the ownership of property, or a hundred and one other reasons finds it more difficult to leave a State whether he likes its condition or not. As I have stated this measure has a decidedly broadening effect on the franchise, and admits to full practical power every stable and settled section of the community. This is what we desire to effect and we believe we will effect it should this measure become law. I do not know that I need detain hon. members at any length in connection with this matter. I can only say that one matter will be cleared up and that is the question of the "clear annual value" an important point which has been set at rest. Legal decisions in England on the interpretation of these words in Acts dealing with the qualifications of electors which decisions our Courts would feel bound to follow, have fixed the meaning of "clear annual value" at the yearly rent at which the property would let, less rates and taxes. The words "clear value" in our Constitution Act would bear the same construction. The omission of the word "clear" in setting out the qualifications in this Bill at once takes the interpretation out of the operation of the legal decision which I have referred to, and every leaseholder or householder at a rental of

£15 may claim the franchise without any deduction from that rental in respect of rates or otherwise. That is to say, at present any person who occupies property and pays rent at the rate of 6s. a week will be entitled to have a vote for the Legislative Council in this State.

Mr. Angwin: Why not word it that way and make it clear?

The PREMIER: By omitting the word "clear" it is contended by the Crown Law authorities that it does make it clear.

Mr. Angwin: It would be clear to every person the other way.

The PREMIER: I do not know that there would be any objection to considering an amendment in Committee that would make the matter more explicit. However, I do not intend to delay hon. members in connection with the measure. We have cut it down to the smallest possible limit; there are only three amendments; but it is a very important factor in connection with the legislation of the State. I was under the impression until this afternoon that possibly it would be necessary for this Bill to be reserved for Royal assent, but I understand that in view of instructions received some time last year it is not necessary to reserve for Royal assent any Bill amending the franchise, so that if this Bill obtains the approval of both Houses it will come into law at once. I move —

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Bath, debate adjourned.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Legislative Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair; Mr. Bath in charge of the Bill.

No. 1, Clause 2.—After the word "completed," in line two, insert "or may complete."

Mr. BATH: The reading of the clause as it passed the Assembly was thought to be ambiguous, and in order to make it

certain that those who in the future completed 10 years and fulfilled the other qualifications of the clause would be entitled to the privileges of the Bill the amendment was effected in the Council. He moved—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question passed: the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2, Clause 5.—Strike out "Eastern," in line four, and insert "other," and after "States" insert "of the Commonwealth."

Mr. BATH: This amendment was to make the words "Eastern States" apply only to the Commonwealth. He moved—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question passed: the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3, Clause 6.—Strike out "Australasia," in line three, and insert "the Commonwealth of Australia or the Dominion of New Zealand."

Mr. BATH: This was a similar amendment to make the language clearer. He moved—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question passed: the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted; and a Message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1909-10.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Dalglish in the Chair.

Department of Mines (Hon. H. Gregory, Minister).

Vote—Mines Generally, £41,920:

Item, Registrars (19), £5,501:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In connection with the proposed inquiry into the assistance granted to the President Loubet lease at Callion, near Davyhurst, Warden Finnerty would leave Coolgardie on Saturday morning and hold an inquiry at Callion on Sunday. Every facility would be given to the member for Boulder to attend the inquiry and put his case forward. Inspector Greenard had been

instructed to proceed to the mine, and to endeavour to get it put in order so as to have a windlass and ropes on the shaft, with a view to a proper inspection being made. Captain Ey was supposed to be on the way from Murrin Murrin to Kookynie, and an endeavour would be made to induce him to go to Callion and be present at the inquiry to give evidence. Mr. Berteaux had also been informed of the charges, and advised to appear at Callion on Sunday with any evidence he chose to bring forward, so as to enable Warden Finnerty to come to a proper decision. Mr. Speaker would be asked for permission to remove the file from the House so as to send it to Warden Finnerty to enable him to go into the case in its entirety. In dealing with this matter last night he had assumed that Inspector Greenard's report was subsequent to the allegations made by the member for Boulder, but inquiry at the department showed the report was made prior to the hon. member's allegations, and was based on statements made by the present holders of the lease. Inspector Greenard's report on those statements was on the file. It was anticipated that the report from Warden Finnerty would be available on Tuesday or Wednesday next. As soon as it arrived it would be presented to the House.

Mr. HOLMAN: When progress was reported we were dealing with the question of registrars. He had brought forward the necessity for the Minister to redeem a promise to place a registrar at Wiluna. Did the Minister intend to do anything, or to leave matters as they were?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was proposed to allow matters to go on for a short time as they were at present. His desire was to give facilities to the people to have their cases dealt with in proper courts without going to great expense; and that officers in one department should be induced to do work for other departments. He said last night that even a stationmaster should be able to do work of this sort, and he had mentioned Broad Arrow where there was a medical officer, a police officer, a

school teacher, and a stationmaster, and yet it was also necessary to have an officer to act as mining registrar; but he had merely mentioned Broad Arrow as an instance, and had no intention of doing anything in this direction in that locality. He considered, however, that in the out-back places the school teacher should possess sufficient acumen to be able to carry out the duties of mining registrar sufficiently well to satisfy what might be termed a small community. By doing that we gave increased facilities to the people, and it was being done with little expense to the State. He (the Minister) was desirous of sending a mining registrar to Wiluna, because it was thought that if people had to travel 120 miles to go to the warden's court they would rather suffer injustice than attend the court. If the Government received more revenue it was to be hoped we should be able to give more facilities to the people of Wiluna than at the present time. In small localities surely the schoolmaster had sufficient knowledge to carry out mining registrar's work. He hoped the member would be content for the time, recognising that it was the desire of the Government rather than take away the small facilities to add to them. The officers of one department ought to be able to assist in the work of another department.

Mr. HOLMAN: There was no objection to an officer of one department doing work in another department if that officer had the time and ability, but he objected to hundreds of men being inconvenienced in any locality.

The Minister for Mines: There were not half a dozen applications in a week.

Mr. HOLMAN: No, and as long as the Minister continued his policy there would not be any more applications. After granting one or two periods of exemption for two or three months, the Minister fortnight after fortnight granted exemption for a period of another six months.

The Minister for Mines: What had been the result? The introduction of capital.

Mr. HOLMAN objected to the locking up of auriferous areas for speculative

purposes when small prospectors could not get exemption. Immediately a big "gold bug" came along and got scores of acres tied up he could get exemption for twelve months on end. That was why the Minister was not granting facilities in these places. If half a dozen applications were received every week then the mining industry would be making good progress. But as long as the Minister continued the policy he had adopted ever since he had been in the Mines Department in allowing leases to be locked up under exemption month after month the mining industry would not make the progress it should. Not only was one lease locked up under this system, but probably the Minister knew of 140 acres which were locked up under exemption at the present time. These lessees obtained their six months' exemption in court, and in the office in Perth they were granted exemption fortnight after fortnight for another period of six months, and it was for such persons of influence as A. E. Morgans who knew how to pull the strings that this was done. Knowing the great harm that had been done to the mining industry in the past by these methods, he strongly objected to a continuation of them. Time after time the same old argument was trotted out, that it was going to encourage capital to come into the country. It had not been the means of opening up one mine in Western Australia, but it had been the means of keeping large areas of good auriferous country locked up. If there was a mining registrar at Wiluna, people would be able to make their applications for exemption there, but the Minister liked to have the key of the position in his office in Perth, and the people of Wiluna did not know when exemption was granted. There were over 200 acres locked up under exemption at the present time, and many of them had been locked up for over 12 months. The sooner a radical change was made the better. The protection which had been granted would not be shown in the return of exemptions.

The Minister for Mines: Any protection which was granted either at Perth

or at any other office should be included in any exemption return sent to Parliament.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was wonderful that this protection should be granted when people were not entitled to it, and it was marvellous how it could go on from one end of the year to the other. There would be many objections lodged at Wiluna if there was a mining registrar there with whom objections could be lodged. It was impossible to make objection to indiscriminate applications made to the Minister. It was absolutely necessary to have a registrar at Wiluna to protect the people and the mining industry. Had any action been taken in respect to the registrar who dealt with the application for prospecting areas at Garden Gully? This was the case where an old colleague of the Minister was counsel for one of the persons interested in the case, and some information was obtained before Cabinet had decided the matter. One of the registrars was mixed up in the case, and the Minister made a promise that an inquiry should be made. Had the Minister any information to give on the matter? Some serious statements were made against this registrar to whom he (Mr. Holman) referred. He had heard statements outside that were by no means satisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In connection with certain exemptions granted at Wiluna, from memory certain owners of leases desired to amalgamate and to place the leases on the London market. Exemption was recommended by the warden and the leases were taken to London. At the last moment the holder of an adjacent lease desired to co-operate. This caused a delay of two months, and while the negotiations were proceeding protection was granted. To show that this was not a problematical matter an option had been taken over these properties by a corporation, and he (the Minister) had received a private letter from London informing him that £260,000 had been provided and that this money was available if the properties were taken over. In the circumstances he was quite justified in doing what he had done for a short period. He also

wished to impress on members that if any protection was granted it had to appear in the return. It was open to the hon. member (Mr. Holman) to point out what leases had been unduly favoured. In regard to the Garden Gully matter he (the Minister) felt some dissatisfaction with the action taken by the acting registrar on the occasion, and he had asked the warden to supply a special report.

Mr. Taylor: Who was the acting registrar?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There was no need to mention the name, for he was not sure that anything was wrong; he preferred to wait for Warden Troy's report before saying anything for or against the registrar. If the warden's report was unsatisfactory, so far as the officer was concerned, the matter would be referred to the Public Service Commissioner, but until he had received a report of the sort he did not care to place before the Committee what little information he had.

Mr. HOLMAN: What was the use of recording an exemption or protection against a lease if the thing continued from year to year. He knew of leases that had had exemption for six or seven years. The Minister's explanation as to the option taken over these leases was hardly correct. The position was that as soon as the option was taken, and before any work had been done on the leases, exemption was applied for. As the question of the acting registrar in the Garden Gully affair was being inquired into he would await the result of the inquiry.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Minister had said that economy was the reason for refusing to appoint a registrar at Wiluna. In respect to the appointment of these registrars would it not be a wise plan to appoint to the post one who was a qualified draughtsman? It would be a decided advantage to the State and to the people having business with the courts, if the registrars were capable of performing draughtsman's work. Moreover it would be a distinct saving to the department.

Mr. Taylor: Had the Minister said that the extra protection had been granted on the strength of private information from

England that certain monies would be forthcoming?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. A private letter had been received from London stating that £60,000 had been subscribed. As for the registrars, the Committee would remember that each of the battery managers had been appointed deputy mining registrars, so that instead of people having to go to the nearest Warden's Court, wherever there was a State battery a deputy mining registrar was to be found. He (the Minister) was using his best endeavours to alleviate the conditions of living in the backblocks. The suggestion made by Mr. Heitmann would be laid before the Under Secretary.

Item—Exemption fees—Refund of, £250:

Mr. HOLMAN: Were any exemption fees ever paid?

The Minister for Mines: Oh yes, distinctly so.

Mr. HOLMAN: Applications for these exemptions should be heard in open court. There was no possible check upon them, and to pay ten shillings per fortnight for a lease of 24 acres was an easy expedient for holding for speculative purposes. He had no objection to exemption and protection in cases of urgency, but the principle was being abused. It had not been thought possible that men would be able to get exemption on their leases for six months.

The Minister for Mines: Nor are they able.

Mr. HOLMAN: But such exemptions were secured. It was being done every day. Many leases at Wiluna had been held for six months under exemption and had been rendered idle for another six months under protection. Some leases had been under exemption for many years.

The Minister for Mines: You said that about the Star of the East; that was not correct.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was correct. He made periodical visits there and he had communications from men who had watched the leases for months. The leases had not been worked in a legitimate manner for many years past. He would like to have a definite assurance from the Min-

ister that these abuses of the system of exemption would not continue.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member would bring forward any specific cases, he (the Minister) would be pleased to let the hon. member have all information in connection with them and to acquaint him with the reasons for granting of extra exemptions. The hon. member was under a misapprehension in regard to the Star of the East when he said that it had been for some years under exemption. As a matter of fact the only exemption granted to the Star of the East last year had been for one month and five days. Only in cases where good reasons for the concession could be shown had he granted extra protection.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister should not accuse an hon. member of trying to put a false case before the Committee. The Star of the East had not been worked in a legitimate manner for the last six or seven years. As to the Minister's statement that for last year the mine had not had exemption for more than one month and five days, that was only half a truth. Exemption had been granted and when the exemption was finished the leases were jumped. The warden had recommended that the leases be forfeited, but the Minister had refused to carry out that recommendation and had imposed a fine instead. But this had taken him six or seven months to do, and during the whole of that time the leases were idle.

Mr. TROY: It would be interesting to know how much exemption Mr. de Benales had been given and whether the statements made by that gentleman in support of his application for exemption were correct. In his (Mr. Troy's) opinion Mr. de Benales was holding the lease for none but speculative purposes and had no intention of working the lease in a legitimate manner. If the Mines Department had instituted enquiries when the sale was made from the original company to Mr. de Benales it would have been found that there was collusion between the parties. Was there any possibility of legitimate mining operations on Mr. de Benales' lease?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The papers had only come before him once when the application was made for exemption for a fortnight or a month, he forgot which. The circumstances were that the leases were to have been taken over by the Victory United Co. Since the application had been made he had not seen the papers, but the hon. member could have them if he desired to peruse them.

Mr. TROY: Certainly the papers would be of interest to him. If the company purchased the lease there would have been a chance of it's being worked. When the Minister said he had given exemption in order that the purchase might be arranged he (Mr. Troy) raised no objection to it. It was doubtful, however, whether the purchase had come off and he had grave doubts as to the sincerity of Mr. DeBernales to work the lease.

Vote put and passed.

Vote — *Explosives and Analytical*, £4,368:

Mr. GEORGE: Was there to be a general discussion on the vote, or would members go directly on to the items.

The CHAIRMAN: There had been a general discussion on Mines and there could not be another on this vote.

Item. Chief Inspector of Explosives and Government Analyst. £150:

Mr. GEORGE: Was the salary of £450 the value of the officer's service according to the classification of the Public Service Commissioner?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The value of the position had not yet been determined by the Public Service Commissioner. The maximum salary at which it was classified was £600. Attached to the vote there was an item of £210 for bringing salaries up to the minimum. Out of this sum £60 would be taken and would be added to the £450 voted for the chief inspector. That would bring his salary up to £510. It was probable that the Commissioner would fix the minimum for the position at a higher sum than that. There had been a delay in the matter, but the question had been of a rather complex nature. Anyhow the minimum had not been fixed.

Mr. GEORGE: The Public Service Commissioner had fixed the minimum at £600, and the Government now intended to give the officer the minimum of £510.

The Minister for Mines: The minimum is not yet finally determined.

Mr. GEORGE: It would take the Minister a long time to justify the Public Service Commissioner in making any such classification. It would be difficult to show that the regulations were not altogether ultra vires and that the action of the Government was not warranted.

Mr. SCADDAN: Did the Government decide to pay the officer the salary of £510 before the Estimates were printed? If so, why was not the full amount shown? How was the £210 to be distributed? There was a marked difference between this and the previous division for whereas here the amount for the minimum salaries was £210 for eleven officers, on the previous vote there was an amount of £214 for 100 officers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Under the classification the increase of Mr. Mann was from £450 to £510. The assistant inspector had his salary increased from £195 classification to £270, increase £75. Mr. Stacy, an analyst, had his salary increased from £220 to £270, increase £50. Mr. Clark, an analyst, had his salary increased by £15, and another clerk had his salary increased by £10; that made the total of £210.

Mr. COLLIER: The work of the chief inspector of explosives was very important when one considered the quantity of explosives imported each year. In 1908 there were 4,169,930 lbs. weight of explosives imported. The duty of testing the explosives, and seeing that they were up to the standard, devolved on Mr. Mann and his staff. According to the departmental report there were several matters of complaint concerning the want of sufficient staff to cope with the work. Mr. Mann in his report said—

"Numerous opportunities of making special investigations which would be both of interest and of practical public value constantly occur, but the irregular condition of my staff during the year has obliged me to put these opportunities aside. It is impossible.

also, to obtain sufficient remuneration for analysts in this State to enable me to procure that amount of talent and experience which is required for carrying out research work."

Further on he referred to the state of the staff by saying—

"Owing to the shortage of staff I have been compelled at times to retain Mr. Kirton in the head office when he should have been engaged upon inspection circuits. This entirely accounts for the slight falling off in the number of inspections made."

There had been a decrease during the year in his staff, and Mr. Mann said—

"It will thus be seen that my staff comprised three analysts less than last year, although the work shows considerable increase. It is very difficult with the remuneration offered to obtain men of the stamp required for the work which has to be performed, and I can only repeat the conviction already expressed that if the laboratory is to perform the functions of which it is capable and there is to be derived from it the maximum benefit to the State as a whole, then a very different view will require to be taken as to the status of the work performed and its monetary value."

That seemed to indicate that Mr. Mann had been working with a short staff and when one compared the amount of the imported explosives the department had to supervise with the previous year, it seemed that even more men were required. During 1907 the weight of explosives imported was 3,605,697 lbs. as compared with 4,169,930 lbs. for the following year, the increase being somewhere about half a million lbs.; therefore, it did not seem reasonable to reduce the staff while the work was increasing.

The Minister for Mines: We are not reducing the staff.

Mr. COLLIER: The chief inspector said he had three men less than in the previous year.

The Minister for Mines: Those are temporary men, and he has them still.

Mr. COLLIER: The officers were enumerated. Various complaints had been

received by him from men working on the fields as to the class of explosives used there. The miners' union made a complaint as to the Phoenix explosive. There was an inquiry held into it.

The Minister for Mines: We have received special appliances from the old country to enable us to make proper tests of the fumes.

Mr. COLLIER: It was said about the Phoenix explosive that it was not up to the standard and that the smoke and fumes were very injurious to the men's health.

Mr. Gourley: It is the worst explosive on the market.

Mr. COLLIER: All the men agree on that point. He mentioned this fact in order to show how necessary it was that the office should be kept up to the standard. Mr. Mann also said in his report, "The regular testing of fumes on the mines is now becoming an established practice." That was a very important matter for very many accidents were caused by explosions due to defective fuse. There should be a full test of the Phoenix explosives.

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

Mr. GOURLEY: Would the Minister inform the House when the tests were made, and how often, and with regard to the Phoenix explosive what the form of test was. As far as the use of explosives on the goldfields was concerned it was known that the Phoenix was the most detrimental to the health of the miners. The Minister should take every care in having tests of these explosives made to see that they were up to the standard of the department's formula. Miners had been known to use the Phoenix and some of them used it because of its cheapness, and it was much cheaper than Nobel's Glasgow and Nobel's Hamburg; but they suffered very considerably from the fumes. In many cases the Phoenix explosive was found to be of a most inferior quality and that was most noticeable after firing a number of holes, and when a miner went up to clean up the fumes were so deadly as to be most injurious to health. He would like to

see the standard of the test raised somewhat.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: With regard to explosives, they were not allowed to be landed or stored until tests had been made. The department also had a travelling inspector who took stock, and if explosives were found to have been kept for any lengthy period in a magazine further tests were insisted upon before the explosives were permitted to go into general use. The question brought forward by the member for Boulder with regard to the staff, did not apply to the question of testing explosives. It was the primary duty of the officer of this department to carry out the work of the Mines Department, but there had been a considerable expansion in the business of that officer's department, and it had been necessary to employ more analysts. The Agricultural Department had been sending a great amount of work there, and that alone had necessitated an increase in the staff. The department was actually doing the work of several branches of the service, and they were allowed to deal direct with other departments and in that way a good deal of red tape and delays were obviated, but as there had been such an increase in the work, especially in that done for the Agricultural and Health Departments, it should be the duty of those departments to make some provision for an increased staff. Under no circumstances however would the work for which the office was primarily created be interfered with by the work which came in from the other departments. For the information of goldfields members he desired to say that the Government had indented a compressed air apparatus to enable a person immediately after an explosion had taken place to go right up to the face and take samples of the fumes for the purpose of examination. The departments were working in this matter in conjunction with the Transvaal mines, the desire being to discover what was deleterious in the material used in the manufacture of gelignite, and to see if it was possible to prepare a formula which would get rid of these objectionable fumes. The apparatus arrived a fortnight ago, and the work which would be

conducted with it would form part of the general inquiry to be conducted into the question of tuberculosis so as to discover what it was that was so injurious in the fumes, and in the hope of making some proposal which would result in these fumes being less inimical to health.

Mr. SCADDAN: The goldfields representatives would be pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister with regard to the apparatus for testing the fumes. It was to be hoped that the tests which would be made would have a good effect. There was no doubt that some of the explosives used in the mines should never be permitted to be brought into the State. During the time Mr. Hastie was administering the department his attention was drawn to the matter, and he gave an assurance that a proper examination would be made of every shipment of explosives which arrived, but on inquiry it was found that only a few cases were ever tested. Since that time however it was understood that the authorities had been more vigilant. This State permitted any firm to dump its stuff here.

The Minister for Mines: Explosives must be manufactured according to our formula.

Mr. SCADDAN: But we had experienced the manner in which they got over the difficulty. The Minister too would remember that he found it necessary to institute a prosecution against one of these firms. It all showed the extremes to which these people would go to obtain their ends. With regard to the Phoenix explosive miners were continually complaining in spite of the fact that the department had made inquiries about it. If it was manufactured according to the formula prescribed by the Government it was a wonderful thing how so many men became overcome by its fumes. It would be interesting to know from Mr. Mann exactly what were the contents of these various classes of explosives, and to know in what respect the Phoenix differed from the others, and what it was the Phoenix contained which caused so much trouble. He knew of many cases where men had been compelled to knock off work owing to the use of the Phoenix in places which were not well ventilated. There

were many instances where miners had refused to use the Phoenix explosive, yet we permitted the stuff to come into the State. It was to be hoped that the tests the Minister proposed to make in the near future would have the effect of showing exactly what was wrong with this class of explosive, and if it was found that it was so injurious, it would be prohibited from being imported. The Minister ought to allow the mining members to see this report when it was prepared. There would be no need to make it public.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The examination would be put in hand forthwith and the hon. member could see the report as soon as it was furnished. The chief inspector was of opinion that it was a good explosive and saw no reason to justify forbidding its use. He (the Minister) would be guided by the decision of the chief inspector in the matter.

Item, Magazine Reserves, Maintenance of Sidings, Repairs to Trucks, etcetera, £100:

Mr. HUDSON: Was there differentiation in localities as to these reserves? Did the Government maintain reserves for private people?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This expenditure was in connection with the magazine at Woodman's Point. Nearly all the revenue for the branch was received from rents paid for magazine sites and stores at Woodman's Point.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Geological Survey, £5,843:

Mr. HUDSON: What reports were drafted during the year by the department, and what was the work done?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The work of this branch had been interfered with to some extent owing to Mr. Maitland having gone to London as a special commissioner in connection with the Franco-British Exhibition. However, there was a good deal of field work done during the year. One important work was the examination of the iron ore deposits at Yampi Sound. Other work was done in the Kimberleys in connection with copper and wolfram. It was understood a big consignment of wolfram was coming down

this week. The Phillips River district had been mapped out in detail. The Irwin River coalfield had been reported on. An officer accompanied the transcontinental railway survey party and reported on the country on either side of the route, and another officer accompanied Mr. Canning from Wiluna to Hall's Creek, afterwards visiting Tanami; the detailed report would be available shortly. Other work had been done in West Pilbara. Mr. Woodward was completing the work started by Mr. Maitland years ago, linking up the Murchison and Pilbara geological maps. Other officers had been engaged in trying to bring up the field map of Kalgoorlie to date. Other works were being carried out. This year it was proposed to get the Kalgoorlie field map more up to date, but it was anticipated that this important work would not cost the department much as Dr. McLachlan was engaged on this work at the instance of some of the companies, and we would be able to get the use of his report for State purposes.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Inspection of Machinery, £6,021:

Mr. SCADDAN: Probably by now the Minister had given up the task of attempting to defend this department. Last year the Minister told the Committee he would appoint a board to examine the department and report upon it. What was the nature of the report and who were the officers appointed to the board? What action had the Minister taken in remedying some of the grievances in connection with the department; or had the Minister done anything. The Minister always made definite promises that he would do certain things during recess. It would be interesting to know what the Minister did during last recess.

The Minister for Mines: What item are you speaking to?

Mr. Scaddan: Generally.

The CHAIRMAN: It was not necessary to deal with an item, the hon. member could speak generally on the vote.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was understood that when we had the general debate on the department the need for a general debate on the divisions of the

department would be avoided, and it was to be hoped we would not have a general debate again in connection with this division. The object of the hon. member could be arrived at just as well by dealing with the first item. He (the Minister) had intended to appoint a board to inquire into the working of the Machinery Department to see if more economical methods could not be adopted and had gone so far as to have an Executive Council minute prepared. This minute was to the effect—

"The feasibility of placing greater responsibility upon inspectors in order to reduce the work done at head office. The possibility of reducing clerical work by requiring reports to be made to head office only in the event of inspections disclosing serious defects. The possibility of reducing the number of inspections made. Whether the nature of the inspections made always warrant the employment of qualified engineers. Whether much of the inspection outside the goldfields areas could not be done by the inspectors of factories as is the custom in Victoria. The feasibility of amalgamating the work of administration of the Mines Regulation and Machinery Acts to the extent of admitting the inspector's order, each to act in a joint capacity in order to minimise the expense of travelling, and to utilise to better effect the time of the inspectors. To enquire and to advise whether the present Acts and the present systems under which the work is done are capable of alterations or amendments in any direction which would be likely to result in economy without from a practical point of view reducing efficiency."

However, he thought it would be wiser, instead of appointing a board to consider the advisability of amending the Act. The Public Service Commissioner had pointed out that by a small amending Act a good deal of expense caused by the over-lapping of departmental inspectors could be avoided without reducing efficiency, but the State Mining Engineer, the Chief Inspector of Machinery, and the other officers to whom the matter had been referred were not in accord with him (the Minister) with regard to a proposal to

amend the Act so as to effect economies. Therefore it was impossible to come to any determination with regard to the alteration of the Act this session. And it would be necessary to allow the same methods to continue this year. He believed a lot of the work done by the Factories Department could also be done by the inspectors of machinery and that we could amalgamate a fair proportion of the work of the Factories and Machinery Departments, and that the inspectors of mines might do a little of the work of machinery inspectors, more particularly in the back country. He did not anticipate being able to make any change this year. He had not determined upon what action to submit to Parliament. When one found oneself in conflict with officers a great deal of consideration was necessary before taking action. He had refrained from appointing the Commission, although he had selected the gentlemen to be appointed, and the Public Service Commissioner had prepared the Executive Council minute. It was thought better to endeavour to amend the Act, and by amendment to secure economy without in any way reducing the efficiency. Up to the present nothing had been done to effect a change.

Mr. SCADDAN was somewhat tempted to say that the Minister was sparring for wind. The Minister had in mind dealing with the Machinery Department by an amendment of the Act or in some other direction. Should not the Minister take members into his confidence and tell them what was proposed to be done? The Minister had admitted, in spite of promises made from year to year, that the same condition existed to-day as when members first made their complaints. Was the Minister content to allow the department to continue as at present, and were we to have this question debated year after year about the Inspector of Machinery? After promising to appoint a board the Minister went back on that, because he thought it better to have an amendment of the Act. But where was the amendment of the Act? The Minister might be in conflict with his officers, but the officers could only express expert opinions. We had to consider what economies

could be effected. Was it not to the advantage of all officers to assert their importance? In view of that the Minister should have come to some conclusion as to what he intended to do in the future and he should take the Committee into his confidence. From his (Mr. Scaddan's) knowledge of a few things that had happened during the past few months it was apparent that something had to be done, and that speedily, with regard to the control of this department. Last year we had a discussion as to the advisability of using inspectors of mines as inspectors of machinery or *vice versa*.

The Minister for Mines: Only in out-back districts.

Mr. SCADDAN: The whole question hung on this. What was the necessity for inspectors of boilers and machinery and inspectors of mines if it was not for the protection of life? Was it possible to obtain persons to fill the positions of inspectors of mines and at the same time be fully qualified inspectors of boilers and machinery? How many inspectors of mines would be qualified to give a certificate that a boiler was in good order and condition, when inspectors of mines had already sufficient responsibility to protect the men employed in the mines? We had endeavoured times out of number to obtain an assurance from the Minister that inspectors would pay surprise visits in large centres such as Kalgoorlie and in out-back districts. If the Minister brought into operation the proposal to amalgamate the inspectors of mines and inspectors of machinery there never would be surprise visits, because the inspector of machinery must issue a warning of his intention to visit a mine, so that the owner of the machinery would have the boiler ready for inspection. Then, where was the protection for the men in the mines, because the machinery would not be under steam. The efficiency of the inspection of mines was to be set aside to make economies in the Machinery Department. There were other reasons but that was the chief one. The Minister need not go out of Perth to effect economies. The Machinery Department had too many technical officers. There was no neces-

sity for a Chief Inspector of Machinery to control this branch of the department. Somebody must be at the head, but was it necessary to have a chief inspector who never made an inspection, but went through reports made by other technical officers. The duties of the Chief Inspector of Machinery was to go through reports, compare them with previous reports, and concur or otherwise; and he always concurred, it was never otherwise. If the Minister was earnest in the direction of making economies in this department it could be done by bringing the inspectors of machinery and the inspectors of mines under one head. He could be the Chief Inspector of Mines and Machinery or he could be the State Mining Engineer. War had been waging for some time between the two departments. The State Mining Engineer gave one opinion while the Chief Inspector of Machinery gave another, and his officers gave another. A report came before the department and the State Mining Engineer expressed an opinion and he sent it to an officer in the country to express an opinion upon. The Chief Inspector of Machinery did the same, and all this came under the eye of the Minister, who said that he wished to study economy. If the State Mining Engineer was qualified to express an opinion on a winding engine, where the conditions of the engine were responsible for carrying men to and from their work, if he were qualified to express an opinion on that then he was qualified to express an opinion on the report of another officer as an inspector of machinery. Could not the inspectors of mines and machinery be brought under the inspection branch? The same number of inspectors would not be required, in the first place. He was doubtful if any public servant or anyone else had ever made remarks such as those made by the State Mining Engineer about certain actions of the Machinery Department. The files were under the notice of the Minister, and he doubted if the Minister had taken any action in the matter. It was stated that machinery was in perfect order, good condition, and fit for the work for which a certificate was granted, such as raising and

lowering men, yet it had been shown that accidents had happened owing to faulty brakes. The first necessity about an engine was the brake; it should be effective, yet we found accidents had happened, and engine-drivers had been brought before boards to state why the accidents had happened and it had been found that they had occurred owing to defective brakes. The State Mining Engineer used the words, that he had "to goad on" the inspectors of machinery before they would have machinery put in order. This was not a statement made by the member for Ivanhoe; these were the words used by the State Mining Engineer, the qualified officer, about whom the Minister was speaking last night, an officer receiving £800 a year, not the member for Ivanhoe. It was found that not only had the engine defective brakes, and was allowed to work with these defective brakes, but nothing was done to make them effective; but there were other engines in the district in a like condition and yet nothing was being done. If it was necessary to inspect machinery at all it was winding machinery, winding engines. There were various classes of machinery about the South-Western district and in other parts of the State, and it would not matter whether, after all, they were inspected from year to year, but in connection with mining machinery it was essential that every part of the machine should be kept in order. The late Mr. Lavan had stated, when an accident happened to a machine that there was no record that that machine had ever been inspected; the machinery had been in work for five years hauling dirt, which would soon wear out a machine, but there was no record of the machine ever having been seen internally from the time it was erected; and even the inspector granted certificates year after year, but there was no attempt made to satisfy himself, except from outside appearance, that the machine was in order and fit to do the work it was required to do. It appeared to him that the two departments should be amalgamated under somebody who would insist that machinery, particularly winding engines, should be kept in proper order and

condition. Mr. Montgomery had stated that he could not understand how any man could say that a winding engine was fit to do its work when it had a defective brake. It seemed that the present Chief Inspector of Machinery was either not qualified for his post or was not sufficiently active for the performance of his duties. It was not for want of sufficient time, because the chief inspector happened to be chairman of a board of examiners, and could find time to go to Albany and Ravensthorpe to hold an examination which could have been just as well held by the inspector who had periodically to visit the district in the ordinary course of his duties. But, if that inspector had carried out the examination Mr. Mathews would not have got a little holiday trip. Another remarkable thing about the examination was that the warden of the district had been appointed to assist the Chief Inspector of Machinery in carrying out the examination. It was not easy to discover where this warden had qualified to sit in judgment upon an engineer prepared to take charge of a winding engine. Again, in respect to these examinations, why could they not be made uniform instead of, as at present, of varying standards. There was no reason at all why a man in charge of a winding plant at Ravensthorpe should not be expected to hold the same qualifications as a man occupying a similar position on the Golden Mile. The Minister should take some immediate action in respect to these officers who had time to go holiday trips on mere pretexts, and who, on the showing of Mr. Montgomery himself, had to be goaded to the performance of their legitimate duties. If the Minister would go through the file and peruse some of the remarks made by the State Mining Engineer he would find it essential that he should take some action of a drastic nature in respect to the mining inspectors.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The suggestion that economies could be effected by allowing an inspector of mines in certain places to inspect boilers as well as mines appeared to meet with the strong approval of the member for Ivanhoe. There was something to be said in

favour of the suggestion, and if it could be arranged that the inspectors of mines could inspect the boilers in certain out-back places he would endeavour to give the experiment a trial. So far as the Chief Inspector of Machinery was concerned, he had to look to the organisation of his department, and could not be expected to carry out the duties of an inspector of machinery in the back country. As for the examinations at Ravensthorpe and Albany, if men living at those places desired to qualify as engine-drivers surely the same consideration should be given to them as would be afforded to others on the Eastern fields. The appointment of the warden as assistant examiner had been made on the recommendation of the board for the purpose of complying with the regulations. It really meant that the one officer was going to conduct the examinations and award the certificates. It was regrettable that the hon. member had seen fit to draw attention to certain lapses which had occurred in regard to the inspection of machinery. The hon. member was fully acquainted with all the particulars and had been shown the whole of the papers in connection with the dispute which had taken place. A new inspector had been sent to the place, and there was no doubt that the matters drawn attention to by the Chief Inspector of Mines in regard to the care of the winding plants were now being most efficiently attended to by Inspector Jones. He (the Minister) thought it should be the duty of the inspector to make a practical examination of all parts of the machinery. The State Mining Engineer and the Chief Inspector of Machinery, together with some of the more prominent managers at Kalgoorlie, were agreed that in regard to the inspection of machinery it was wiser that a technical man should be appointed to do the work rather than it should be done by an ordinary inspector of mines. In his (the Minister's) opinion an examination made by a practical man would be more efficient than one carried out by a technical man. However, the State Mining Engineer and the Chief Inspector of Machinery were of the opinion that it should be carried out by a trained engineer. The suggestion that the inspectors of the Mines Depart-

ment should be amalgamated with the Machinery and Boilers Departments was in his opinion, scarcely a valuable one. Such amalgamation would be a mistake. A gentleman at the head of the Machinery Department should be a practical engineer and as such he would be useless as a Chief Inspector of Mines. He (the Minister) would prefer to see the factories branch amalgamated with the Machinery Department with a view of reducing the cost of administration. If any amalgamation at all were undertaken it should be in this direction.

Mr. Bath: But you surely would not amalgamate the factories department with the inspection of machinery under this officer.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The question of economy was all that he was considering; he was not dealing with the officer. The question was, would it not be wise to amalgamate the two departments? In a great number of cases the work of the Factories and Machinery Departments could be carried out by the one officer.

Mr. SCADDAN: With regard to the case he had quoted at Kalgoorlie the chief inspector was fully aware of what had transpired and knew the condition of the work. Winding machines which were not in good order and condition owing to defective brakes should never be allowed to continue working. By his action in this case the Chief Inspector showed that either he was not qualified for his position or he had not paid proper attention to the matter. As the State Mining Engineer had pointed out in his minute, although an accident had occurred as a result of a machine being out of order, that machine, which had a defective brake, was allowed to be worked for four months while in the same condition, and the lives of hundreds of men were jeopardised, yet the Chief Inspector of Machinery did nothing but quarrel with the State Mining Engineer. It would be a great mistake to bring the Factories Act under the Machinery Department; there was no relation between the two. He was not in any way satisfied with the work of the Machinery Department and it would never do to add any other work to it. If the heads of the Inspection of Mines and

Machinery Departments were amalgamated and the Chief Inspector of Machinery were sent out to do some inspection work instead of only bearing the title, an advantage would accrue from every standpoint and the inspection of boilers and machinery would be more satisfactory than at present. It would be very interesting to get the Chief Inspector of Machinery out doing some practical work instead of being in his office all the time and having a technical officer at his elbow. Apparently the Minister did not pay sufficient attention to the department. If the same state of affairs existed next year and the Minister's promises regarding the department were not fulfilled, he would make a severe attack not only on the Machinery Department but also on the Mines Department as a whole, and would ask the Committee to delete the salary of the Chief Inspector of Machinery.

Mr. BATH: Any proposal to place the administration of the Factories Act under the Chief Inspector of Machinery, should be nipped in the bud. The administration of the Factories Act now was a byword, and a measure of so much importance involving as it did the welfare of hundreds of workers should not be placed under the administration of that officer. In the face of the three cases that had been quoted, the boiler explosion at Gwalia, the difficulties occasioned by the neglect of the officer as to the inspection of boilers at Collie, and the matter brought forward by the member for Ivanhoe, the administration of the Factories Act should never be entrusted to the Chief Inspector of Machinery.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Chief Inspector of Machinery also held the position of chairman of the board of examiners. Frequent complaints had been received by him as to the way in which the board carried out their duties. These were chiefly in connection with engineers on State batteries. If the complaints were true, as he had no reason to doubt, seeing that his chief informant was a certificated engine-driver of high standing on the fields, the chairman of the board was sadly neglecting his duties. At Burtville State battery a man had been in charge driving, who did not hold a certificate. In face of repeated

complaints to the board of examiners, this state of affairs continued. The last intimation he had received was that a man who had been driving there for more than a year had gone before the board for a second class certificate and had failed; nevertheless he was still engine-driving at the State battery while there were men with first class certificates looking for employment. It was the duty of the chairman of the board of examiners to put a stop to that sort of thing. It was absolutely wrong that men who failed to get a second or third class certificate should be doing this work while there were many men holding first class certificates out of a job. That did not speak well for the chairman of the board, and if that officer could not succeed any better in his work as Chief Inspector of Machinery, than he did as chairman of the examiners board, then the Committee would be justified in striking out the item. When he (Mr. Taylor) had shown the Minister the complaint he had received as to the engine-drivers in question the Minister said he could hardly believe it possible, but that he would lose no time in investigating the matter and putting it straight. The Minister should not be put to that trouble. A man in the responsible position of chief inspector of machinery and chairman of the board of examiners should be able to perform his duties without being chased up by members of Parliament or officers of the engineers' association. The Minister should deal with his officer for his negligence.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member was aware that the department were rather unfortunate last year in connection with one of the inspectors. Every effort was made by the Mines and Machinery departments to get the brakes made as effective as possible. An exhaustive examination was made and everything had been done in order that they should be made thoroughly efficient. Hon. members knew that a brake might be effective at the time of an examination and on the next day it might not be. The chief inspector could not follow up the work of every inspector, and it was unfair to suggest that he should be cognisant of every inspection. We should not throw the re-

sponsibility on the chief inspector for every little accident which might occur in connection with his department. More responsibility should be thrown upon each individual officer than was done at the present time. The leader of the Opposition had drawn attention to the fact that since this policy had been in vogue there had been an explosion at Gwalia; that, however, was the only one since the inspection of boilers had been started in the State. Hon. members were aware that we had to use the worst water that it was possible to find in connection with the boilers on the goldfields, and it should be pointed out that in Victoria last year five explosions had taken place, while several had occurred in New South Wales. The result would show that the inspection here must be good and it showed that the chief inspector had been doing his work exceedingly well when we could boast of such a good record. With regard to the complaint made by the member for Mount Margaret, he (the Minister) agreed that a non-certificated man should not be employed at a State mill. It was not admitted, however, that this was so in the case referred to by the member, who was not certain himself. The hon. member had received a complaint and he (the Minister) had forwarded it on immediately, with instructions that if a non-certificated man was being employed, his employment should cease at once; but if in the back country it was not possible to get a certificated man a manager might be excused for employing one who was not certificated. No manager, however, would be upheld for engaging a non-certificated man when it was possible to secure the services of one who was qualified.

Mr. TROY: When the Estimates were under discussion last year a motion was moved to strike out the salary of the chief inspector of machinery. On that occasion the Minister said that it should first be proved that the officer was unfitted for his office. Would the Minister explain now what action he had taken in order to prove the capacity or otherwise of the chief inspector? Had the Minister done anything, or was he prepared to subject the chief inspector to the same examination to which other inspectors were

subjected and pay this officer by results? He (Mr. Troy) could not help feeling from what he had learned that the Chief Inspector of Machinery was not competent to fill his office because he largely depended upon another officer to advise him in all matters, and but for that officer the chief inspector would not be able to carry on the administration of his office. Complaints had been made that the chief inspector had never been out of his office for 10 years on a tour of inspection. He was recently at Ravensthorpe and Albany examining a number of candidates for engine-drivers' certificates, but he would have been better engaged on a tour of inspection because this work of examination could very easily have been left to subordinates. How was this officer going to criticise satisfactorily the reports of his officers unless he had some practical experience, and could he get that practical experience in his office in Perth? Would the Minister be content to allow the State Mining Engineer to remain in his office and to accept the reports of his subordinates as being correct. Again, with regard to the Engineer-in-Chief, that officer did not remain in his office, nor was he guided entirely by the reports of his subordinate officers. The Engineer-in-Chief had practical experience and as a result the reports he sent in were reports of operations he had seen and understood. The member for Ivanhoe in 1905, when this officer's department was under discussion, challenged the Minister for Mines to send the chief inspector on a six months' tour of inspection in the country; but the Minister had never accepted the challenge.

The Minister for Mines: Why should I do that?

Mr. TROY: Because it was generally understood that charges had been levelled year after year against this officer of being incompetent. The Minister had stated that it had to be proved that this officer was incompetent. What better test could we have than a practical test? The Minister was aware of the incompetence of this officer, and he was afraid to send him out because it was known that the chief inspector would fail. The chief inspector was recently selected as one of

a number of gentlemen to give expert views with regard to the Perth Gas Works before the arbitration board which recently sat in Perth. What was the result? This officer found himself utterly unable to do the work required of him and had to call upon a subordinate to assist him. The chief inspector, however, was not called to give evidence. If he was a competent man why was he not called? This officer was the wrong man to have in the department to advise the Minister on matters, and he was not competent to offer advice unless he had practical experience. There was no justification for keeping this man in his office; he should be sent out into the country, and he should be prepared to do his work as the Government Analyst was doing, by making inquiries personally and not being dependent on the services and advice of his subordinates.

Mr. SCADDAN: In the cases to which attention had been drawn, the chief inspector should have gone out of Perth immediately to satisfy himself on the spot as to accidents. Instead, he allowed his inspectors to report to him, yet made a trip to Ravensthorpe to examine candidates for certificates, whereas a subordinate could easily have done the work. The Minister should insist that in future the chief inspector should make periodical inspections to satisfy himself first-hand, and not try to push the responsibility on to subordinate officers.

Mr. George: What do you propose to do?

Mr. SCADDAN: Each year the Minister promised action, but absolutely nothing was done. What could a private member do. He (Mr. Scaddan) had wearied members for three years by discussing the matter, and he would continue to do so until some action was taken.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member, of course, was desirous of doing justice to the officer.

Mr. Scaddan: Yes.

Mr. GEORGE: Was it that the officer did not know his work, or that he did not do it? In any case the officer should have some opportunity of showing that members' views were correct or incorrect. Any

officer charged with being incompetent or lazy, or both, should be given the opportunity of showing his competency, or whether he was not lazy. The discussion of items like this acted like pin-pricks to the officers. Was it fair to them? Had any inquiry been made into the conduct and qualifications of this officer?

The Minister for Mines: It has never been suggested.

Mr. GEORGE: Was it stated that the officer was lazy?

Mr. Scaddan: No.

Mr. GEORGE: Then was it because the officer was incompetent? Was it said that because the officer was incompetent he would not make an inquiry into an accident because it would show his incompetency?

Mr. Scaddan: I have proved it.

Mr. GEORGE: Had the hon. member given the officer an opportunity of showing the hon. member was incorrect? Surely members would play the game and give opportunity to the officer to prove or disprove the hon. member's case. If he (Mr. George) made a charge against a man like this he would try to give the man the opportunity to meet him face to face. It was wrong, unless one was absolutely certain, to bring things like this before Parliament unless one was prepared to give the officer a fair inquiry, and an opportunity to defend himself. Many a time had he (Mr. George) been given the opportunity to deal with some of the things charged against him in his administration of the railways, he could have changed the opinions of hon. members and the public. If this officer was incompetent or lazy he had no business to be in the service of the State, but if these charges were made the officer should be given the opportunity of convicting himself, or of causing hon. members to change their minds. But we should not hit a man behind his back.

Mr. SCADDAN: One listened with patience to the lecture from the hon. member; but these charges were not made by him (Mr. Scaddan) in the first instance; they were made by the State Mining Engineer who reported, "It was only after the inspectors of mines and

he had repeatedly brought the matter up that the inspectors of machinery appeared to have bestirred themselves to see that certain engines were made safe. It was not his (the State Mining Engineer's) minute that had put the officers of the Machinery Department in an invidious position but their own neglect to take action." Also, "it was monstrous that a horrible accident might have occurred on any day for four months before the inspectors of machinery were goaded to take action." If the member for Murray were Minister what action would he have taken?

Mr. George: I would have held an inquiry within a week.

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member was beginning to see light. On every occasion when he had made a statement in regard to the working of the Machinery Department he had asked the Minister to make inquiries, and the Minister had made them and on every occasion the charges had been proved up to the hilt. Take the case of the boiler which he had referred to on a previous occasion in the Collie district. He had stated previously that the boiler had been allowed to work in the Collie district at 100lbs. working pressure for about four years before its dimensions and other standards were taken and when they were taken it was found that the maximum working pressure of the boiler was 80lbs. If this officer was qualified to act as Chief Inspector of Machinery he ought to be qualified to go out when an accident happened and make an inspection first hand, particularly where lives were lost. The same thing happened at Kalgoorlie. An accident occurred through defective machinery. The inspectors of mines and machinery became mixed up, because the accident happened down the mine. The men were in a cage, and the accident was caused through an ineffective brake. The two inspectors, therefore, went to make an inquiry. It was pointed out by Mr. Montgomery that this machinery was allowed to go on working for four months in the same condition as when the accident occurred. The Engine-drivers' Association, for the protection of their members, asked that the

matter should be inquired into. By the courtesy of the Minister he (Mr. Scaddan) saw the file and knew what happened. If the Chief Inspector of Machinery was qualified he would not remain in Perth one day when a man had lost his life through defective machinery, and when one of his officers had granted a certificate for the machinery. For four months the engines were allowed to work in exactly the same condition as when the accident happened. Lives were at stake, yet the Chief Inspector of Machinery did nothing. Why did the Chief Inspector of Machinery require the services of a technical officer in Perth to go through the district reports if the chief inspector understood technical work? How many inspections had the chief inspector made since he had been in the department; how many boilers had he inspected? He had not been inside two boilers since he had been inspector unless he had been inside boilers since the last report was published. The technical officer made remarks on the district reports, and the chief inspector went on the advice of the technical officer. We could not afford to pay an officer to approve of the remarks of the technical officer; the two men were doing the work which one man should do.

Mr. Bath: Was the technical officer provided for on the Estimates?

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes; as an inspector.

Mr. Bath: Then move to wipe out the chief inspector's salary.

Mr. SCADDAN: There was some justification for the report made by the select committee which was appointed to inquire into the explosion at the Gwalia mine. It was suggested that the Chief Inspector of Machinery together with the district inspector, were responsible for that explosion. Would the member for Murray be prepared to sign his name to a certificate for a boiler which had been using water on the goldfields for 12 months, stating that it was in good order and condition the same as when the previous certificate was given?

The Minister for Mines: For how long?

Mr. SCADDAN: For several months. It went on until the boiler eventually exploded.

Mr. Heitmann: That was the only thing that stopped it.

Mr. SCADDAN: In that case a working inspection certificate was given on the instructions, by wire, of the chief inspector.

Mr. George: Why get angry.

Mr. SCADDAN: One did get angry when one found the lives of good citizens were being lost through the inaction of the Machinery Department. If a single life in the community was at stake he would always be found standing up for protection of life, notwithstanding lectures from the member for Murray or the whole of the members of the House. He had a genuine complaint against the inaction of the Machinery Department. The Minister should take some action and the Committee should compel him to do so.

Mr. GEORGE was not trying to lecture the member for Ivanhoe, all he was saying was that a man should be given a fair show when an accusation was made against him. As to the care for human life, he had been reproached during his career for being almost too extravagant in taking precautions to save human life, and when Commissioner for Railways he had never attempted to save money and thus endanger life. He would never have forgiven himself if one life could be laid at his door. So far as boiler explosions were concerned, few had had more experience of them than himself. When in South Staffordshire, where there were no inspectors of boilers and no inspection at all, we had rushed out of school, masters, ushers, boys, everyone, because they had heard a boiler explosion. He had never been responsible for a boiler explosion. The member for North Fremantle could tell members, if he so desired that he (Mr. George) had not only made regulations but he had put them in force to prevent the loss of life. In the interests of fair play, if an officer were incompetent or lazy then give him an opportunity of placing his side of the case forward. If the statements made by the member for

Ivanhoe had been made to him (Mr. George) and he had held a responsible position he would not have allowed a week to go by without having had the charges thoroughly investigated. The Minister had to carry his own burdens. Still when accusations were made against an officer of the department the charges should be thoroughly investigated. He had heard this officer attacked, and he wanted to give him an opportunity, if possible, to meet those who accused him of incompetence, inattention, neglect and apathy, and if the hon. member would move that the item be struck out, so as to get an inquiry into the matter he would support the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Every effort had been made to remedy the state of affairs which was found to exist in Kalgoorlie in connection with the brakes. As the hon. member had stated a certain mining plant was continually working with a defective brake, but that was the only case of importance where such a thing had happened. When the inspector of mines drew attention to these defective brakes an officer was sent there and a most exhaustive examination was made with regard to the whole of the winding plants on that belt, and action was taken to see that they were all up-to-date.

Mr. Scaddan: Who was it made by?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The inspector from the Laverton district.

Mr. Scaddan: Was not the matter serious enough for the chief inspector.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The chief inspector had been there. It was wrong for hon. members to say that the chief inspector never went to the goldfields. A fortnight ago he was in Kalgoorlie amongst these men. To-day he was at Cue; in fact he was always travelling around. If an accident occurred at a mine would it be said that the State Mining Engineer was responsible because by his absence he allowed a certain state of affairs to exist? The same thing applied to the Chief Inspector of Machinery. Members could rest assured that every effort was being made by the chief inspector, and that most exhaustive examinations were being made with regard to the winding plants in order to secure their utmost

efficiency. If we took the records of Australia it would be found that there was no State which could show such a satisfactory record with regard to its boilers and its machinery department as Western Australia; and it had to be remembered also that Western Australia laboured under the worst of conditions. The record of this chief inspector was that for 5½ years he was a mechanical engineer in New Zealand, and then for two years he occupied the position of boiler inspector there.

Mr. Scaddan: I have a statutory declaration to say that he was not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Subsequently he was transferred to the loco. superintendent's office where he spent 2½ years, and then he came to Western Australia. He was under Mr. Jobson, the engineer for some time, and then was with the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor who recommended him as the most fitting engineer for the position of chief inspector of boilers.

Mr. Taylor: Was he doing engineering work in the late Mr. O'Connor's office?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He was a draftsman in the office. The chief inspector was in the Goldfields Water Supply office for some time. This officer had occupied his present position for some 8 or 10 years, in fact, since the branch was opened. No one could say that Mr. Matthews was a lazy man, and no one could say that he was incompetent. He was a good, intelligent, painstaking, and efficient officer, and certainly made every endeavour to see that boiler inspections were most complete. In fact, he went too far in connection with the inspection of small plants at times. With regard to larger plants, however, too much attention could not be paid to them.

Mr. TAYLOR: Would the Minister inform the Committee whether this officer had been classified by the Public Service Commissioner at a higher salary than he was receiving?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He had been classified at £450 and he appealed to the Appeal Board who decided that the office should carry with it a maximum salary of £600, and a minimum of £510.

Mr. TAYLOR: Whether the officer was competent or not, one could not travel through the goldfields where machinery was used without being informed that the officer was incompetent. Whether that was true or not could not be said, but *Hansard* would prove that for the last 9 years this officer's vote on the Estimates had been questioned, and the officer had been accused by hon. members of incompetence. A former member for Brown Hill, the late Mr. John Reside, condemned this officer, and the Minister, even at that time, defended him. Instead of the chief inspector being more acceptable to the people he was becoming more objectionable and his salary had been increased some £50 or £75 during the last five or six years.

The Minister for Mines: Four years ago his salary was increased from £400 to £450.

Mr. TAYLOR: And at the present time the position had been classified at £150 more. The office might be worth it, but there was a grave doubt whether the gentleman holding the position was worth it. In spite of what the Minister said that the officer travelled through the State the officer did not get about as much as he should. The general opinion however was that it was of no use the chief inspector travelling about. The idea seemed to be that the more reports he read in his office the better would be the complexion that he would be able to put on a situation. There were many, and among them competent mine managers, who did not speak in very high terms of this officer's ability to fill the position he occupied. It was doubtful whether the chief inspector could himself pass the examination that he set candidates in his capacity as chairman of the board of examiners. He (Mr. Taylor) had been credibly informed that the officer would fail if he were subjected to an examination. Generally speaking there was room for investigation as far as the officer was concerned. The Minister was there to protect his officers, and so it could not be said that hon. members were attacking an officer behind his back. The Minister had been defending this particular officer for the past nine years and the defence was not

becoming any stronger, in fact there was a noticeable weakening in that defence. If anyone would move to strike out the item he (Mr. Taylor) would support it.

Mr. JACOBY: The member for Ivanhoe had made direct and distinct charges against this officer, and in justice to the member who made the charges and to the officer attacked it was to be hoped the Minister would have an inquiry made. The hon. member was taking considerable risk in making these charges and he had declared his readiness to substantiate them. In justice to both parties the hon. member should have an opportunity of proving his charges before an independent board of inquiry.

[Mr. Taylor took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member was prepared to make definite charges and put them in such form that they could be inquired into, he (the Minister) would be pleased to have those charges investigated. To his mind the officer was not at fault. If the hon. member was prepared to show that the officer was incompetent he would be afforded an opportunity of so doing.

Mr. SCADDAN: Surely the charges he had already laid against the Chief Inspector were sufficiently definite for the Minister. If the Minister was going to back up the chief inspector in the matter then he (Mr. Scaddan) would have to lay the charge against the Minister.

Mr. Heitmann: And I will investigate it.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was useless for the Minister to talk about an inquiry, because all knew that he had no intention of holding such inquiry.

The Minister for Mines: If you will formulate the charges I will have the inquiry held.

Mr. SCADDAN: The charge made had been repeated in *Hansard* year after year for the last nine years. What more definite charge could be looked for than that made by the State Mining Engineer when he had declared that the inspectors of machinery had to be goaded to the performance of their duties? To say that for four months after the accident the engine had been left in the same de-

fective condition with the full knowledge of the Chief Inspector of Machinery, was a sufficiently serious charge for the Minister to inquire into. As for the other matters, a previous Parliament had appointed a select committee to inquire into the boiler explosion at Gwalia. The Minister had never read that report.

The Minister for Mines: A board of experts!

Mr. SCADDAN: Some of them knew a boiler if they did not know a kerosene tin. The report showed that the committee was of opinion that the explosion had been caused partly through the fault of Inspector Lovegrove and partly through the injudicious action of the Chief Inspector of Machinery.

The Minister for Mines: I think you were on that committee.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was because he had been on that select committee that he knew what he was talking about. The report had been signed by Mr. Barnett, then member for Albany, and a staunch supporter of the Government, and had been signed also by the member for Geraldton. He (Mr. Scaddan) was satisfied that the findings of the committee were correct. But what had the Minister done? He had taken a recommendation from the Chief Inspector of Machinery, who had been found to be partly responsible for the explosion, and on that recommendation had dismissed Inspector Lovegrove who thus had been made to bear the whole of the responsibility. Did the Minister still want a definite charge to be made?

The Minister for Mines: I am not going back five years.

Mr. SCADDAN: There was no occasion for the Minister to go back five years, for he would find on his departmental files sufficient to warrant the suspension of the Chief Inspector of Machinery, or the dismissal of the State Mining Engineer for having made such charges against another officer. The Minister was at liberty to obtain a proof copy of his (Mr. Scaddan's) speech from *Hansard* next morning, and commence with the inquiry; he could call as his first witnesses the State Mining Engin-

eer and his fav Hudson. The Minister had stated last year that not being in a position to pit his opinion against that of the Chief Inspector of Machinery he had done the next best thing by arranging for a board of a couple of departmental engineers to examine into the work of the department and report to him.

The Minister for Mines: That was as to economical administration.

Mr. SCADDAN: If so that was tantamount to a charge against *Hansard*, because it was not so shown in that report. Departmental officers, it would seem, were allowed to make much more serious charges than those made by hon. members, and yet the Minister had taken no action. For instance, one officer had reported that a certificate had been refused to a winding engine notwithstanding which that engine had been allowed to continue working. Then, according to Mr. Hudson, when a certain accident had happened it was found that the engine had not a certificate. Mr. Hudson had reported that he was not satisfied that there was not more behind this matter than appeared. That was a charge by a departmental officer which ought to have been inquired into. These statements were made by departmental officers and repeated by members. Then let the Minister have an inquiry.

Item, Chief Inspector of Machinery, and Chairman of Board of Examiners, £450:

Mr. HEITMANN: Would the Minister tell members something about the salary of this officer?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The salary was classified at £450, but Mr. Mathews appealed to the appeal board, and the appeal board fixed the salary at £510 minimum and £600 maximum for the office. The Governor-in-Council could refuse to approve of a classification if it was considered too high, but had no power to do so in case of a decision by the appeal board. The Public Service Commissioner had not yet dealt with the papers.

Mr. HEITMANN: Though we should pay good salaries to good officers, we should treat all officers alike and par-

ticularly should start at the bottom of the ladder. Three years ago the Government promised that they would not consider any increases over £200, and even then the secretary to the Colonial Secretary's Department who was receiving £400 got an increase to £450. The same thing seemed to apply here.

The Minister for Mines: We are giving the minimum increases all through.

Mr. HEITMANN: The proportion of the expenditure on the clerical work in this department was altogether too high.

The Minister for Mines: One clerk has been reduced since the Estimates were printed.

Mr. HEITMANN: The chief work of the department was the inspection of machinery and boilers, but there was £1,623 to be spent on clerical work as against £2,263 on inspection work. There was nothing extraordinary in the reports from the inspectors. There was a sameness about them, so that they could nearly all be dealt with in the same way, and the work of dealing with the reports was about the whole of the clerical work in the department. The trouble was that throughout the civil service we were building up small departments. These, particularly in this case, could be cut down considerably. This department could very well be brought under the control of the State Mining Engineer. The chief inspector merely dealt with reports as they came in and was rarely called upon to do inspections, and was really in a position of a supervisor. It was understood that there was also a technical man in the office to deal with technical matters.

The Minister for Mines: That is not correct; he is not always in the office.

Mr. HEITMANN: How many inspectors were there in Perth?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Three in the metropolitan area covering from Ravensthorpe to Northampton. There were also: one at Cue, one at Mount Morgans, and two at Kalgoorlie.

Mr. HEITMANN: The department was costing too much. He moved an amendment—

. . . That the item be struck out.

He moved this not with any feeling against the officer, but merely because he believed the department was costing too much, and that with benefit to the State and economy it could be brought under the control of the State Mining Engineer who could do the work very well with the assistance of the technical officer.

Mr. TROY supported the amendment for the reason given by the Minister that the officer had been classified, and that a higher salary was provided than was already paid. There was to be an increase this year of £50.

The Minister for Mines : Of £60.

Mr. TROY : Against this officer there had been complaints ever since he (Mr. Troy) had been a member of Parliament. One heard frequent complaints about the officer's incompetency, and nothing better could be done by the Minister, seeing the officer had been classified, than to subject him to an examination and put him to a test to see whether he was qualified for the position, and whether he was entitled to the salary.

The Minister for Mines : If charges are formulated we will have an inquiry.

Mr. TROY : The Minister changed his ground every year in regard to these charges against this officer, and now wanted members to lay definite charges. The officer was for the greater portion of his time in his office. The State Mining Engineer was not the whole of his time in the office, and did not accept reports from his officers without being able to criticise them. The Minister wanted to pin members down to some definite charge, something vital, but let the Minister make a thorough inquiry into the qualifications of the officer. It was held that there was no justification for the increase in salary because the officer was not deserving of it and was not qualified or competent. No more emphatic statements could be made than had been made in Parliament during the past four years. Let the Minister give the officer an opportunity of submitting himself to an examination before the increase was given. Let the officer be subjected to the same tests as the subordinates were subjected to.

The Premier : I would not like to go up for a surveyor's examination now.

Mr. TROY : The Premier was not a surveyor now. The Chief Inspector of Machinery, however, had been in touch with his work all through, and should be a better man to-day because of the experience gained. If the officer were not qualified to pass the test he was by no means fitted to criticise his subordinates' reports or to superintend their actions.

Mr. W. PRICE : Though not in Parliament long, he had heard previously accusations made against this officer's alleged incompetency. It was a monstrous position for the Minister to take up to ask members, immediately they started to criticise an officer, to lay definite charges. That was decidedly unfair, and there must be something wrong and some cause for the controversy which had waged around that officer year after year. Why should the Chief Inspector of Machinery be selected out of all the officers of the department for this adverse criticism if there were not some good and just cause for it ? A definite charge had been made against him by another departmental officer holding a higher position namely, the State Mining Engineer, and surely that was sufficient for the Minister to act upon. The position the Minister took up indicated it was no good members attempting to criticise any officer as their remarks would not receive consideration. Members should show their disapprobation of the stand taken by the Minister by wiping out the item.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item, Inspectors (8), £2,263 :

Mr. SCADDAN : During 1908 the number of boilers in the South-West was 1,404, and on the East Coolgardie field 952. There were four inspectors in Perth to look after the boilers in the South-West, so that each one had to look after 351, whereas on the fields, with two inspectors, each had to look after 476. If there were only three inspectors for the South-West the average would be about the same as on the fields. That proved conclusively that the time of one inspector in Perth was taken up in office work, and that he was merely what had been described as a technical officer.

There should be no need for such a position while the chief inspector was in Perth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If it were found that the second officer was being kept in the department for technical work only he would make a charge and see that the officer did outside work. One officer of the department had been recently handed over to the Harbours Department, and worked at Fremantle.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Mines Water Supply, £16,881:

Item, Engineer-in-Charge, £550:

Mr. BATH: On the appointment of this officer a promise was made that if his work was satisfactory he would receive a minimum salary of £600. Evidently his work had been satisfactory, for the Minister had spoken in high terms of the officer each year.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The officer had been in the department for a long time, and there was no other man in the department so desirous of getting 20s. in the pound for his work. Mr. O'Brien was a particularly good man and well fitted for the position. So far as the agreement was concerned, he had no knowledge of any promise having been made to Mr. O'Brien that if his work were satisfactory he would get a salary of £600. The question of that officer's salary had not been brought before him lately.

Mr. BATH: The officer was first engaged in 1903, on the understanding that if within three months his work was favourably reported on he would receive a salary of £600. His work undoubtedly had been favourable and the promise should be fulfilled. Had the officer been classified by the Public Service Commissioner?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There had been no question raised as to Mr. O'Brien's salary, but he would make inquiries and advise the member the following day.

Mr. GEORGE: There was an item of £150 in the vote in connection with minimum increases. As there were only five officers in the department as shown by the Estimates that £150 would doubtless be split up among them.

The Minister for Mines: There were other officers in the department who were brought under the loan votes.

Mr. BATH: The Public Service Commissioner had classified the position at £600. The Minister had said he was unaware of any promise so he (Mr Bath) would take the opportunity by way of question to find out whether such a promise was made. If it had been made it should be carried out.

Mr. GEORGE: The officers to whom the £150 must apply were the engineer in charge, three clerks, and a draftsman. Was the sum of £50 to bring the chief engineer up to his classification included in that amount? Another deduction to be shown was that this was the only division in which the amount of the minimum increases was so absolutely out of proportion to the number of officers to be paid. It either showed that they had been scandalously underpaid before or their merits had only recently been disclosed.

The Minister for Mines: There was no increase provided for the engineer in charge although the salaries of the other officers had been increased to the minimum.

Mr. GEORGE: Where are the salaries shown?

The Minister for Mines: On the Loan Estimates.

Mr. GEORGE: That was hardly the proper place for them.

Mr. HUDSON: Was it the intention of the Government to abolish this department and place it under the control of the Goldfields Water Supply Department, or was it intended to amalgamate the two, or to abolish the Goldfields Water Supply Department and place it under the Mines Water Supply Department?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That phase of the matter had not been dealt with. The question of amalgamation of departments was being considered. The Public Service Commissioner and his assistant was dealing with the matter and it was expected that they would submit a recommendation to the Government.

Mr. HUDSON: Was it understood that the abolition was to be left to the Commissioner? Was it the policy of the department or the policy of the Government to abolish one or the other of the departments, and the one to be abolished to be administered by the one which remained?

The Minister for Mines: The question of absorption has not been decided.

Mr. HUDSON: Would the Minister give an indication of what the policy of the Government was with regard to it. Perhaps the Premier might make an explanation.

The PREMIER: The question as to whether it would be advisable to place the Goldfields Water Supply and the Mines Water Supply under one administration was one on which the Minister for Mines held fairly strong views. Certainly, an amalgamation could, with advantage, be brought about, but as had been stated the whole question whether it would be effected within the next month or two had not been determined. There was not the same necessity now for the number of executive officers as there was some years ago. The Mines Water Supply Department, at the present time, was not of the dimensions that it was previously, and possibly an amalgamation could be effected with one of the officers at present in charge to control the whole scheme.

[Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.]

Mr. ANGWIN: Had consideration been given to the advisableness of placing all the water supplies under the control of one department?

The PREMIER: The matter had been given consideration but the Metropolitan Water Supply could not be included. That was separate and distinct.

Mr. TROY: While the department had done a great deal in the past there were localities to-day which were badly in need of water supplies. There were roads which had to be traversed in summer and on which wells ought to be sunk. It would be a wise policy if the department would place a certain sum of money in the hands of the roads

boards and so enable them to provide water supplies wherever they were required. Roads boards would be able to provide a supply better than the department could do it. The work would be decentralised and there would be no necessity for keeping administrative heads and engineers as at present. He believed it would be in the best interests of the department if the suggestion were acted upon, while it would give greater satisfaction to the people outback. Since provision for water had not been made on certain well-known roads in his electorate, he had to bring the matter forward to-night. Until recently he had no occasion for complaint of the attitude of the department in providing wells in his electorate. Generally speaking, good work had been done. There was a splendid supply of water on the Mt. Magnet-Black Range road than which there was no better equipped road in the State. And even when the railway should be through, the Government would not lose on those wells, for they would be able to rent them to the pastoralists.

The Premier: Provision would have to be made for right of access for the travelling public.

Mr. TROY: That could be easily arranged. He desired that provision should be made for a water supply in the Youanme locality, a rising field of some importance. Whilst the population at Youanme was growing and would continue to grow, no increase was being made in the water supply. It was most undesirable that a community as large as that of Youanme should have to depend upon one small bore for its water supply. The department should provide an efficient water supply.

The Minister for Mines: It is a question for the Loan Estimates; we have no items of the sort here.

Mr. TROY: Whether it had to do with the Loan Estimates, or with the vote under discussion, he intended to keep on until something was done in the matter.

Mr. Monger: Oh, keep on.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. TROY: Nobody could be surprised at the member for York, who was.

not himself to-night ; indeed, he seldom was himself recently.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member must not discuss the member for York.

Mr. Monger : I would like to ask the hon. member—

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member is out of order ; the member for Mount Magnet may proceed.

Mr. TROY : The wells on the road to Youanme were by no means sufficient for the traffic on the road. The stages were altogether too long for teams in summer, and when the railway was completed to Black Range there would be considerable quantities of machinery carted down the Youanme road. A water supply ought to be provided before any serious inconvenience was felt.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : There were no items in this vote for providing water supplies ; it was a matter for the Loan Estimates. The hon. member knew that he had been well treated in the past, and he could rest assured that everything would be done which the department considered fair and equitable.

Mr. TROY : How did the Minister view the proposition of placing a certain sum of money in the hands of the roads boards, and leaving it to the roads boards to do this work themselves ?

The CHAIRMAN : It would be better if the hon. member brought this up when dealing with the Loan Estimates ?

Item, Minimum increases, £150 :

Mr. GEORGE : It was understood from the Minister that the minimum increases did not refer to any officers on these Estimates, but referred solely to those on the Loan Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : There were four officers who were doing loan work, and whose salaries were paid out of loan funds. These officers were entitled to minimum increases, but the Secretary for Mines, in order to provide that their increases would be paid, had provided for increases out of revenue.

Mr. GEORGE : That was manifestly wrong. Members were led to form the impression that the minimum increases referred to officers whose salaries they had the opportunity of discussing, but now it was found that there was only one

officer in the Mines Water Supply Branch who was receiving portion of this £150. The balance was to go to four other officers who did not come under the notice of members except for the information given by the Minister. Revenue Estimates could only contain money for services paid for out of revenue, and this innovation of dealing with loan money on the Revenue Estimates was repugnant to straightforward business. Were there any other minimum increases in the same way through the Estimates ?

The Minister for Mines : Not in my Estimates.

Mr. GEORGE : It was a shock to find this item did not apply to Revenue salaries. We were asked for money in a way it should not be asked for. He therefore moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £125.

Of course the Minister would naturally look after his men on the Loan Estimates. He moved this as a protest against mixing up Loan Estimates and Revenue Estimates.

The PREMIER : This provision had been inadvertently made on the Revenue Estimates. The member for Ivanhoe had asked to whom the increases applied and at considerable trouble a statement was prepared showing the whole of the officers concerned in the minimum increases items throughout the Estimates. If the amendment were carried it would perhaps necessitate reprinting the Loan Estimates. Of course that was immaterial, but having put up his protest the hon. member might withdraw the amendment.

Mr. GEORGE : The salaries were not given in detail on the Loan Estimates. There was a lump sum on which Ministers could draw, so there were no insuperable difficulties about putting the matter right. There was no charge against the Minister of having done anything wrong, but something had been done wrong.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : The hon. member should withdraw the amendment. The heads of the departments were asked to give a list of those receiving less than their classified salaries. These items had come into the Estimates without his (the Minister's) knowledge. One

of the officers concerned was the engineer at Coolgardie who had contracted influenza and had been seriously ill for months past.

Mr. GEORGE: As there were other employees engaged on loan works it was probable that elsewhere on the Estimates these increases appeared wrongly. He had no desire to prevent anyone from getting his increase, but it should be obtained in a legitimate way.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Mining School*, £4,630 :

Mr. BATH: Had any attempt been made to keep a record of those who had gone through the school, obtained certificates, and acquired positions? All these records were kept in New Zealand, and it would be wise to adopt the same principle here. The information would be most interesting as it would show the result of the work of the school and the positions the men who had gone through it attained.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The suggestion was an excellent one, and he would ask the director to see that such a record was kept in future. The performances of those who had gone through the school were excellent, and they should be kept.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*State Batteries*, £83,596—
agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—REGISTRATION OF DEEDS, ETC.

Received from the Legislative Council
and read a first time.

House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 3rd December, 1909.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: Return
showing Expenditure on State Farms.

BILL—LOAN. £1,342,000.

Introduced by the Minister for Works
and read a first time.

QUESTION—LOCAL COURTS, KAN- OWNA ELECTORATE.

Mr. WALKER asked the Minister for Mines: J. Has his attention been drawn to the following paragraph appearing in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*?—"Economy in Administration.—Departmental heads, as well as the Public Service Commissioner, Mr. Jull, have under consideration the question of closing the local courts, wardens' courts, and offices pertaining to them at an early date at Kanowna, Broad Arrow, Davyhurst, Kookynie, and Morgans. The business of these courts will, it is proposed, be transacted at Kalgoorlie in the case of Kanowna and Broad Arrow, at Menzies in the case of Davyhurst and Kookynie, and at Laverton in the case of Morgans. If the local and wardens' courts be abolished at the places indicated, provision will be made for deputy appointees there to receive applications in respect of mining tenements. Dependence will be placed on the services of local justices of the peace to try offenders for venal breaches of the law, and upon deputies to take the papers for the registration of births, marriages, and deaths to be forwarded to the chief centre of each district. When the Public