

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 2nd August, 1910.

| | PAGE. |
|---|-------|
| Oath of allegiance | 42 |
| Questions: Goldfields Water Supply, agreement | 42 |
| Esperance district | 42 |
| District Fire Brigades Act, as to amendment | 43 |
| Sitting days and hours | 43 |
| Committees for the Session | 49 |
| Government Business, Precedence | 51 |
| Bill: Supply, £1,053,875, all stages | 51 |
| Address-in-Reply, second day | 52 |

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

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

The members for Murray (Mr. George), Guildford (Mr. Johnson), and Coolgardie (Mr. McDowall), took and subscribed the oath of allegiance to King George V.

QUESTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY, AGREEMENT.

Mr. KEENAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Were the conditions now in force, and under which Mundaring water to be used for all purposes is supplied for use on mines in connection with mining operations, brought under his notice before issue thereof? 2, If they were not, have these conditions been before him at any time since they were issued? 3, Has he at any time approved or disapproved of same?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The regulations relative to the supply of Mundaring water at reduced rates to low-grade mines have been always referred to me before being adopted. The recent regulation relative to deposits by consumers was not so referred for the reason that it is a purely departmental arrangement between the administration and its customers. 2, When in Kalgoorlie on the 1st July I was asked to receive a deputation relative to same, and consented to do so on the evening of the 2nd, with a view of making a recommendation to the Minister for Works, but on the morning of the 2nd I was advised on behalf of the deputation that it would be inconve-

nient to meet me that evening, and arranged that the matter should be brought before me at some future date when in Kalgoorlie. 3, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—ESPERANCE DISTRICT.

Mr. KEENAN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What acreage of land is held under pastoral lease in the district within 15 miles to the eastward and 15 miles to the westward of the surveyed road running from Norseman to Esperance? 2, Have applications been received from persons desirous of taking up portion of the lands so held under pastoral lease as agricultural holdings? 3, Is the Minister prepared to take the necessary steps to enable such selection to be made? 4, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, 346,624 acres. 2, Yes; a few such applications have been made. 3, Applications are now being approved in cases where the lessees' consent is given. The question of resuming and throwing open land for selection will receive attention if the quality of the land justifies payment for improvements to the pastoral lessees and the rainfall is sufficient to enable agriculture to be carried on as is the case in regard to the holding near to Esperance. 4, Answered by No. 3.

QUESTION—DISTRICT FIRE BRIGADES ACT, AS TO AMENDMENT.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Premier: Owing to the great dissatisfaction expressed by local governing bodies, is it the intention of the Government early in the session to introduce a Bill for the purpose of amending or repealing "The District Fire Brigades Act, 1909"?

The PREMIER replied: The Government have no such intention.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The PREMIER (Sir Newton J. Moore) moved—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m. if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): This motion was proposed in the early stages of each session, and on every occasion he had opposed it in its present form, which was to the effect that the House should sit only three days a week, and should start at 4.30 o'clock each afternoon. He moved an amendment—

That the word "and" in line 3 be struck out, and "and Fridays" be inserted after the word "Thursdays."

The object in bringing forward this amendment was that the House should have an opportunity in the early part of the session to deal with the business of the country in a manner becoming to the Chamber and becoming to every member within its walls. Ever since he had been in Parliament, now some 10 years, there had been the spectacle at the end of the session of business being hurried through in the last fortnight, and during the course of all-night sittings; while practically all the Bills relating to expenditure for the year were dealt with in another place during the last week, and often, in fact, during the last 24 hours, of the session. Bills for great expenditure in public works were passed by another Chamber in a very hurried manner, and in a short time. Under the existing custom of three sittings a week, starting at 4.30 o'clock in the afternoon, the early portion of the session was practically wasted. Personally, he would be prepared to have Parliament start its sittings at 10.30 o'clock each morning, so that they could be concluded at a reasonable hour in the evening, thus following the practice adopted in private businesses in the State. It was absurd to think that during those all-night sittings the business of the country could be carried on with the necessary wisdom and care; members should be prepared to carry it on at rea-

sonable and proper hours, and should also be prepared to sit four days a week in the early part of the session in order to get as much work done as possible. Then, if subsequently it was found that still more time was necessary, the sittings could be extended to cover five days, or even six, in order that members might get away to their homes and their families for the Christmas holidays. Instead of that, it was found that on every occasion the Government were pointing out the unfitting character of the summer weather for sitting in the Chamber, and insisting that their tasks in their various departments were very hard, and that, in consequence, it was quite necessary that Parliament should abruptly close up. To remove any possible argument of that nature, hon. members should sit at 2.30 p.m. and on four days a week. Certainly they should sit four days a week. It would perhaps inconvenience Ministers a little through their having to administer their departments and attend to the House on the extra day a week; but, giving that view all the value it could claim, one could not get away from the fact that it would be much better for Ministers to sit four days a week in the early part of the session than to sit all night for, perhaps, five days a week in the hot weather at the close of the session when they were much more fagged than in the early stages. It would be well if the Premier would accept this amendment to add "Friday" to the motion.

The PREMIER (on amendment): It came somewhat as a surprise that there should have been any exception taken to the days outlined in the motion. These days had been adopted ever since he had been in Parliament. With the hon. member he recognised that it was regrettable that very often, towards the close of the session, not sufficient time was available to complete the legislation which hon. members were anxious to have passed. At the same time, so far as he personally was concerned, he did not approve of meeting on Fridays, or at least not in the early part of the session, if only because of the limited time available for Ministers to prepare the necessary legislation. However, he thought that after the Bud-

get had been introduced there was no reason why the amendment should not be accepted.

Mr. Taylor: When do you expect to have the Budget?

The PREMIER: The Budget would probably be ready in about seven weeks' time. There was a great deal of work in connection with the framing of the Estimates, and this, with the receiving of deputations and the holding of interviews, kept the time of Ministers wholly employed.

Mr. Johnson: You had all the recess.

The PREMIER: It was to be remembered that the Estimates were not in until after the close of the financial year.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue): If members were to sit reasonable hours during three days a week, it would be possible to get through a fair amount of work. He recognised that the custom of meeting late in the afternoon had arisen by reason of the fact that up till a few years ago a majority of the members had looked upon politics as a side issue—as something to occupy their time after business hours. He had heard a good many arguments in favour of late sittings, chief among them being that members could not get away from business during the early hours of the day. The most persistent argument of all was advanced by Ministers, who said that they had their office work to attend to. But Ministers had seven months in which to put their houses in order, and during that seven months it was almost impossible to find three Ministers at any one time in their offices in Perth. It seemed to him that this last recess had been little short of a picnic, with one Minister out here, and another somewhere else, while the Premier was away in London. The time had come when members should adopt business methods in dealing with the business of the country. A good deal had been said against the professional politician—against the member who earned his living by politics. He was one of the professional politicians, and he thought the experience of Australia had been that when the professional politicians predominated it was much better for the country. It was better to have

public affairs in charge of men earnest in their desire to do something for their country, than in charge of individuals who looked upon politics as a means of employing their spare time. There should be no place in the House for the man who was not prepared to sacrifice his time, even his business hours, to the country, for the man who plunged into politics should be prepared to give the best part of his time to his country's affairs. At the same time it was clear that the country should be expected to pay a decent salary for that time. He was in favour of the House sitting at 10.30 o'clock in the morning, but he could see no necessity for its sitting on Fridays.

Mr. CARSON (Geraldton): It was to be hoped the amendment would not be pressed to a division, because the House ought to take into consideration the position of country members. If the House were to sit on Fridays it would be impossible to get home until the following Sunday morning, and one would have to leave again on Monday morning. Country members should certainly receive some consideration, and, to his thinking, three days a week during the early part of the session should be quite sufficient as sitting hours. He had no objection to meeting a little earlier than 4.30 p.m., but he hoped the amendment would not be carried, if only for the sake of country members.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet): Without wishing to labour the question he would support the remarks of the member for Cue. There was no doubt in his mind that if members were to meet at 10 o'clock in the morning and sit throughout the day, without going into the long hours of the night, much better work would be accomplished. The work done in the House had not been of the very best character owing to the fact, particularly in the later and more trying months of the session, that members were compelled, at the expense of their health, to sit in the Chamber and discuss measures which, after all, were rushed through without proper consideration. No hon. member could deny that it was in the later part of the session that the most important measures were

introduced. The present Government, and indeed their immediate predecessors, had ever been in the habit of promising members of the Opposition that Parliament would meet early in the year, notwithstanding which Parliament was not assembled until the later months, following upon which came the hottest part of the year. It was then that the most important measures were brought down, and members were compelled to sit in the Chamber till the early hours of the morning discussing these questions; while members of the Ministerial party went out into the corridors, where they enjoyed themselves, after which they came in and voted down conscientious members who had remained in their seats taking part in the discussion. This should not be tolerated by any intelligent Assembly. Again, the excuse was given by Ministers that during the day they had to attend to the work of their offices. Last year he had not been able to see two Ministers in their offices during the whole session. Ministers had said they were too busy. When the House was not sitting those Ministers had seven months in which to attend to their office duties. Yet it was a notorious fact that during the greater portion of that time Ministers were rarely in their offices. Notwithstanding the long recess Ministers did not give the consideration to their departmental affairs they should do, but were satisfied to leave those affairs to the heads of the departments. On the other hand, hon. members were compelled to sit all hours of the night giving consideration to the affairs before the House. For his part he had no desire to sit on Fridays, and he thought that if the House were to meet at 10 o'clock in the morning on three days of the week, it would be sufficient. He certainly sympathised with the member for Geraldton, who was a country member. The chief objection to early sittings had not been raised by the country members, but by members who had affairs of private business in the city to attend to during the day. Those members should give their full attention, or at least their very best attention, to the affairs of the country; yet they were found coming to the House at the fag end of a session to

consider those affairs, and only utilising their position in the House as a means of recreation and advertisement. That was not fair to the country. The country did not want the spare time of any man; it wanted his very best, and no man could give the country his very best when he came along after having performed a day's work elsewhere. The House should meet early in the afternoon for three days a week. He hoped members on the Government side would assist Opposition members in bringing about that reform.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan): It would be easy to support any suggestion for longer sittings if some procedure could be arrived at whereby the work could be got through more expeditiously than at present. If, for instance, hon. members would adopt the New Zealand principle of fixing a time-limit to speeches, better work would be secured in less time than formerly. The difficulty of hon. members was that they occasionally spent such a lengthy period of time in discussing small matters that, later on in the session, when big measures concerning large sums of money were brought down, those measures were of necessity often passed through at midnight, and without proper consideration. He sympathised with the remarks of some members who objected to passing legislation after a long sitting at the dead of night, but was afraid we would never get beyond our method of dawdling along in the earlier part of the session and then pushing big matters through at long sittings without due consideration unless a time limit to speeches was agreed to. If that were agreed to he was prepared to come to the House earlier and sit all day long.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): The House should not meet on more than three days a week, and should sit during the day and not at night. The member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) was right in saying that the system had grown up from the idea that the institution of Parliament was a concession given by the lords and dukes, those with whom the Premier had recently been dining and whom the Premier had found were as good as they were in the olden days, not having fallen off in any way. One could not agree with

the member for Swan (Mr. Jacoby) in regard to the length of speeches. Some members required longer to make a few remarks than others, and some questions were most emphatically deserving of longer speeches than others. Parliament would not be a success working on a time limit system. He (Mr. Underwood) could not agree with the member for Mt. Magnet who spoke about the danger to hon. members through sitting in the summer time. Parliament should meet two months later and work two months after Christmas. He would rather attend the House in the summer; because if there was any possibility of danger to his health it would be through sitting in the Chamber during the cold weather. There was an idea amongst the Australians that the summer was very trying, but he was certain there was no climate in the world equal to the Australian summer. It was time this continual cry about the oppressive heat of Perth was stopped. The man who could not stand the heat of Perth should certainly be preparing for a place in another world. The amendment to meet on Fridays should not be agreed to, we should not meet at any time on Fridays, and if the business could not be finished before Christmas, members could sit after Christmas; there was all next year to deal with. Though opposed to sitting on Fridays, he hoped that an amendment to meet at 2.30 o'clock would be carried. Later on he trusted we would be sitting in the morning when there was a little bit of sunshine, instead of sitting during bleak, cold nights in the winter.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): It would not be convenient to Ministers or members if the House were to meet in the morning, from a point of view of administration. There were matters on which he had frequently to see Ministers, and it would be impossible to see them before 10 o'clock in the morning. It would be impossible for Ministers to carry out the necessary routine work for which they were responsible in their departments. It was all very well for members to say that the work was carried on by the permanent administrative heads. Certainly a great

deal of work was carried out by the permanent administrative heads, but a Minister of the Crown, if he was to be held responsible for his department, must be something more than a mere signing machine for minutes prepared for him. No man should be a Minister of the Crown unless possessed to a considerable degree, not only of the power of administration, but of the power of initiative in his department, and in order to carry that through the Minister must have opportunity for doing his work and doing it properly. There was no desire to lecture members, but it was difficult for anyone who had not held a responsible position in connection with a department to know the immense amount of files and work that came before the Ministers. Those who had held office knew that a Minister must keep in touch with the routine work of his department; and was it fair to hold a Minister responsible if we took up the time that should be better devoted to administration, that time being in the morning? As for sitting in the afternoon, he (Mr. George), and probably other members on the Government side, would not object to sitting at 2.30 o'clock; but sitting in the morning would not only be inconvenient to members but would also not be conducive to the carrying out of the business of the State by Ministers of the Crown.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. TAYLOR moved a further amendment—

That "4.30" be struck out and "2.30" inserted in lieu.

There was a desire in the Chamber to meet earlier in the day. Even members who opposed the extra sitting day favoured sitting earlier in the day. It would be necessary therefore for members to support him in striking out "4.30" in order that an earlier hour might be fixed on. He felt disposed to divide the House on the point. Some members asked that we should meet in the forenoon, but he was satisfied to give Ministers the opportunity of being in their offices until lunch time, and then coming to Parliament House there to do the work of the country.

Mr. SWAN (North Perth) seconded the amendment.

The PREMIER (on further amendment): The same argument applied in regard to the substitution of 2.30 o'clock as applied to the previous amendment. Reference had been made to the fact that owing to the remuneration members received it was necessary for members to give consideration to other matters in which they were interested, and already there was not too much time between the hour at which a member attended his office in a morning, or any other place where he was engaged, and 4.30 in the afternoon. He spoke more for others than for himself, but he preferred at the present time not to meet at 2.30 o'clock, though realising that he was prepared to support longer hours later in the session. The Federal Parliament met four days in the week, at 3.30 o'clock on three days and in the morning on Fridays. Possibly later on some arrangement might be made in that direction, but at present he could not fall in with hon. members' suggestions.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): All members had not businesses in Perth. Many members, in order to make their remuneration sufficient to keep themselves and families in decent and ordinary comfort, had to apply themselves to other classes of work, and it was their desire when Parliament sat to get through the business in order that they might return to their places in the country. Why should these members be kept kicking their heels in Perth all day and coming to the House only at night? The country members should be considered. Also there was the question as to how long the House should sit. He intended to move to add the words "unless a majority of the House otherwise decides we shall rise at 11 p.m." If the majority of the House wished to sit later than 11 o'clock on any particular night, it was only for the Government to move in that direction, but it was fair that we should close the sitting at 11 o'clock. Viewing the position from that standpoint, in order to have sufficient hours for work the Government should consent to meeting at 2.30 o'clock. If they did so there would be little desire on

the part of Ministers to sit after 11 o'clock, and we would get through the business of the country with greater expedition and more care. Believing the amendment would be more suitable he supported it.

Mr. JOHNSON (Guildford) supported the amendment because of his experience of last session. When he had, late in the session, protested against important measures being dealt with late at night, the Premier referred to the fact that more work might be done earlier in the session; and he (Mr. Johnson) had told the Premier that an opportunity would be given next, that was this session to start earlier so as to avoid any rush at the end of the session. The opportunity was now given, and if it was not successful members would know that they had done their part towards doing the business of the country in reasonable hours and during reasonable limits; and if at the end of the session the Government persisted in bringing in important measures, theirs would be the responsibility if these measures were not got through the Chamber. It was time the country members received consideration. It was always the argument that because certain members were in offices and in businesses in the city the affairs of the country should be regulated so that these members could devote attention to their businesses, it being entirely forgotten that a large section of members had businesses outside Perth that needed attention, and that there were quite a number of members, himself included, who looked to the recess to recoup the amount of cash they lost during the session. If we were going to dilly dally along as we had done in previous sessions it would be most unfair to country members. For that reason "4 o'clock" should be struck out, and members might adopt the suggestion made by the member for Geraldton, and make the hour 3.30. Personally, he favoured 2.30 p.m.

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

| | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 23 |
| | | | | — |
| Majority against | .. | | | 7 |

AYES.

Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Collier
Mr. Gill
Mr. Heltmann
Mr. Horan
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. O'Loughlin

Mr. Price
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Swan
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Walker
Mr. Troy
(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Butler
Mr. Carson
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Davies
Mr. Draper
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. George
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Keenan

Mr. Layman
Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Sir N. J. Moore
Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Murphy
Mr. Nanson
Mr. Osborn
Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gordon
(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe) moved a further amendment—

That the last word "onwards" be struck out, and "from 11 p.m. onwards, if ordered by a majority of the House" be inserted in lieu.

If that were made a sessional order, when 11 o'clock arrived the House would either adjourn or the Government would have to submit a motion to continue the sitting, and obtain a majority of members to support it, otherwise they would not be able to continue. It was known that if a private member submitted a motion that the House do adjourn, that motion was tantamount to taking the business of the country out of the hands of the Government. It was his desire to avoid that. All that members wanted to do was to sit until 11 o'clock, and then, if the Government desired to carry on after that hour it should be done by a motion, and obtaining a majority of members in favour of that motion. It did not affect him whether the House sat until 11 or 12 o'clock, but it would be better if members were not detained after 11, because late hours did not conduce to good temper.

The PREMIER (on further amendment): The member for Ivanhoe proposed that the House should adjourn at 11 o'clock, except in the case where a majority of the House expressed a desire

to continue the sitting. A majority of the House would mean 26 members, and that majority was never invoked except in the case of an amendment to the Constitution or the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Mr. Taylor: He means a majority of the members present.

The PREMIER: If that was what the member for Ivanhoe meant it would be accepted; but hon. members knew that there was no desire on the part of the Government to sit after 11 o'clock, and every information was always given to them if the Government intended to sit later. There was never any attempt to deceive members as to the time the House was going to sit. Speaking for himself, he would be glad if the House did adjourn at 11 o'clock, because it was known that many members had suffered owing to the long hours. An assurance would be given that unless some exceptional business arose, the House would adjourn before 11 o'clock. Members were often anxious to know whether the House was going to adjourn at a certain time before 11 o'clock so that they might catch a train, otherwise it would mean that they would have to wait another hour, and they naturally felt that if they went over 11 o'clock they could go on for, perhaps, another hour.

Mr. TAYLOR: According to the view of the Premier, the amendment moved by the member for Ivanhoe would make it necessary for an absolute majority of the House to vote.

The Premier: It is only in exceptional cases that it is necessary to have that majority.

Mr. TAYLOR: If there was a desire on the part of hon. members that the House should cease at 11 o'clock, and there was a motion moved in that direction, and the Leader of the Government opposed that motion, then, if it was carried, the Government would be in a very awkward position; it would mean that the business of the House would be taken out of their hands, and it would be necessary for the Government to consider the situation. The experience had been that the work of the session increased as the time

decreased to complete the labours, hence there was a scramble to get through before Christmas, when the Government rallied their forces. It was realised it would be better to sit, perhaps, the last week in November and the first three weeks in December, and so help the Government to bludgeon their Bills and propositions through the House with the object of finishing the work before Christmas. Members on the Government side realised that if they did not come up to the "collar" during the end of November, and throughout December, they would be brought back after Christmas, and they objected to coming back. We should begin work early in the afternoon so as to get through our work, then there would be no necessity for all-night sittings. On one occasion he (Mr. Taylor) sat in the House 34 hours without a break fighting the Government on the Electoral Bill, and he fought himself into a bed of sickness for four weeks. The Electoral Bill was coming on again this session, and he would still fight the Government if the Bill was not a fair and equitable measure. There were contentious measures coming on this session, and he hoped some blood would be put into the session, members speaking their mind notwithstanding how it affected them in their constituencies. (Mr. George interjected.) The hon. member would only want one day a week so as to complete that organisation which he had taken in hand. He believed the hon. member had already asked for exemption. We had the assurance of the Premier that unless there were extenuating circumstances there would be no late sittings. But, towards the end of the session, the Premier, as had been the case with all Premiers, might be absent, and, if a Minister was piloting his Estimates through Committee, that Minister thought it was a good time to push on with his work. The Premier was of course exonerated because he could say he was not present. He hoped the amendment would be carried so that we would be able to test the stability of the supporters of the Government.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Library Committee.

The PREMIER (Sir Newton J. Moore) moved—

That the Library Committee for the present session shall consist of the following members, namely: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Draper, and Mr. Walker, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): How many times had this Committee sat during the session? He understood the Committee was supposed to sit to deal with matters pertaining to the Library. Had the Committee ever met?

The Premier: Whenever occasion arose a meeting of the Committee was called but members did not attend.

Mr. HORAN (Yilgarn): Who decided what books should be purchased for the library? Books which were purchased at great cost had been in the library for 15 or 17 years, and the leaves had not been cut. There seemed to be a number of dictionaries and books purchased at great cost which no one ever looked at. The money might be much more wisely spent. What was the use of decorating the shelves of the library.

The Premier: There is a suggestion book.

Mr. HORAN: Suggestions could better emanate from the House. He could not congratulate the Library Committee on the expenditure of the country's money in the purchase of books when those books remained on the shelves for many years uncut.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): A word of explanation was due to the House. It was true that there had not been so many meetings of the Library Committee as he would like, but members must realise that the Library Committee consisted of members of two Houses, consequently there might be attendance on the part of those representing this Chamber and might not be attendance in another respect. Still more meetings might have been held. As to the charge that books were purchased by the Library Commit-

tee and remained on the shelves of the Library unread, surely that was not a reflection on the Committee, but on the members of the House. If good books were purchased which members declined to read, it was unfortunate for the members and it was a somewhat unfortunate accusation against the Committee of last session that books had been on the library shelves for 14 or 15 years. That was some time before Parliament was started.

Mr. Horan: Before Responsible Government.

Mr. WALKER: Such objections as these were distinctly frivolous, and he did not know for what purpose they were introduced into a debate of this description.

Mr. Troy: How many meetings of the committee have been held?

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member should give notice of such a question.

Mr. Taylor: Shall I be in order in giving notice now?

Mr. WALKER: One could not exactly state how many meetings had been held, but the committee had met for the purpose of considering the purchase of books, and had not only taken into consideration the recommendations in the suggestion book, but as far as funds would permit, and the liabilities of the members of the committee would allow, books had been purchased which were considered suitable for a Parliamentary institution—books of utility, books connected with Australian history and patriotism, and books that were keeping in line and march with intellectual expansion. If justice were done to the committee there could be no blame or censure placed on them, for lack of duty in this respect.

Question put and passed.

Printing Committee.

The PREMIER (Sir Newton J. Moore) moved—

That the Printing Committee for the present session shall consist of the following members, viz.:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Scaddan; to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order

of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing Returns and Papers presented in pursuance of Motions made by members, and all Papers laid upon the Table whether in answer to addresses or otherwise.

Mr. GILL (Balkatta): It would be just as well now that we were having a little catechism to know if this was also an honorary committee. He was given to understand that this committee never met. If so, it was just as well for members of the committee to let the House know. There was some business surely connected with the House that should be dealt with by this committee.

Mr. Taylor: The printing has been done, anyhow.

Mr. GILL: Yes. If there were no matters to be dealt with by the committee then it was not required. Some member on the committee should give the House information on the question.

Mr. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): The object in asking a question on the previous motion was to point attention to the fact that we appointed committees to do certain work which they were never called together to do. Personally he was a member of the Printing Committee, but if the work of that committee were to be carried on in the future as it had been in the past, he would prefer to have his name removed from it. What were the duties of that committee? Was it not their duty to decide what papers were to be printed, and was it not in conformity with the motion that the committee should decide such questions? Yet the committee had never met after the previous session in order to go through the papers and decide which should be printed. He was drawing attention to this matter so that the committee might do the work expected of them. That very day he had been asked questions as to what had become of reports laid on the Table last session, and he was unable to answer members. No meeting had been held. If drawing attention to the matter would cause the committee to

do their work in the future a step in the right direction had been taken.

The PREMIER (Sir Newton J. Moore): The member having drawn attention to the matter there was no doubt that when the occasion arose opportunity would be taken of calling the members of the committee together. As a good many members seemed anxious to take an active part in the work of the Printing Committee, no doubt an opportunity would be provided for them to do so.

Other Committees.

On motions by the Premier other Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Standing Orders Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Foulkes, Mr. Collier, Mr. Hudson, and the Chairman of Committees, with leave to sit during any adjournment and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

House Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Underwood, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Male, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the House Committee of the Legislative Council.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Sir Newton J. Moore) moved—

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and on Wednesday, August 3rd, and each alternate Wednesday thereafter, Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): The motion just moved provided for a departure from the practice which had been followed ever since he had been a member of the House, at all events when moved at the beginning of the session, when it was provided that members should be given Wednesday of each week for their business. That applied only up to the tea adjournment so

far as Notices of Motion were concerned. Private business which had become Orders of the Day was allowed to be taken after tea time. Evidently the Premier had moved the motion usually placed before members later in the session when, owing to pressure of business, one private members' day in each fortnight was dropped, and in consequence only every alternate Wednesday was set apart for them. The motion might be amended so as to provide that Government business should take precedence on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It had been his experience, and also that of other members, that it was almost impossible to secure the passage of any measure they desired to bring forward, although the whole session was available, owing to the fact that private members' business was always crowded out. Although very important private members' business was introduced last session, only one measure, the Legal Practitioners Amendment Bill, scraped through the House, and that only by the skin of its teeth at the end of the session.

The PREMIER: The honourable member had been informed that an amendment would be accepted to provide that Government business should take precedence only on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory) moved an amendment—

That the words "and each alternate Wednesday thereafter" be struck out.

Amendment passed.

Question as amended agreed to.

BILL—SUPPLY, £1,053,875.

All Stages.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with this Bill.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The PREMIER AND TREASURER (Sir Newton J. Moore) moved—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those

Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages on this day.

Supply was necessary in order to meet the requirements of the Service for three months, and to meet expenditure under Consolidated Revenue Fund, General Loan Fund, and Loan Suspense Account authorised by Parliament. This was a motion which could be described as a formal one and had been moved on many previous occasions. He asked members to accept it.

Question put and passed. .

Bill introduced.

Resolutions in Committee of Supply and of Ways and Means having been passed, a Supply Bill in accordance therewith was brought in providing for the expenditure of £1,053,875 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the General Loan Fund, and the Loan Suspense Account.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Sir Newton J. Moore) moved—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): Seeing that, according to the statement of the Premier, there is such a considerable sum to the credit of the General Loan Fund vote, I should like to know why we are being asked to authorise Supply from the Loan Suspense Account.

The PREMIER (in reply): A certain expenditure in this connection occurred out of the Loan Suspense Account. This included expenditure in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Works, an excess on the Newcastle-Bolgart railway and the Pinjarra-Marrinup railway, deep boring in connection with the Transcontinental Railway, Development of Mining vote, and expenditure on two or three tanks in the Ravensthorpe district, totalling in all £58,000. The sum of £1,053,875 is made up of £572,400 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £423,475 from the General Loan Fund, and £58,000, as I have enumerated, from the Loan Suspense Account.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

(Sitting suspended from 6.4 to 7.30 p.m.)

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 28th July.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): Some philosopher has said he is a happy man who can leave his speech until after dinner and I presume, Mr. Speaker, that was the thought that ran through your mind when you adjourned at 6 o'clock instead of 6.15. On an occasion like this, when one is leaving a position he has occupied for a considerable time, he might be excused if he imparted less asperity and perhaps less critical characteristics to his speech than he might at other times. The gentlemen who moved and seconded the Address-in-Reply have certainly set an example in the way of felicitation. It seems to me Parliament has assembled in an atmosphere of felicitation; and although the member for Fremantle perhaps owes his return to Parliament not so much to the fact that he was a supporter of the Government as that he received the support of another body who seem to imagine they have suddenly climbed to a position of great influence in the community, he forgot that fact and joined in the general chorus. Perhaps it is excusable, because hon. members who took some part in that campaign remember that when the Minister for Works went to Fremantle on the eve of the election to assist the hon. gentleman who now represents Fremantle, the most successful part of the Minister's speech to the electors was that in which in "tear-stained" accents he pictured to the audience gathered there the terrible state of forlorn feeling, and the copious tears which the Premier would shed

when he returned to Western Australia and failed to find Mr. Murphy to greet him on the wharf as the member for Fremantle. While one may readily express pleasure—and I believe all members without exception will express that pleasure—at the opportunity which was afforded the Premier, not only to have a trip which was in the nature of a relief from his duties but also to present Western Australian views and prospects before the people of the old country, yet there is this fact in my mind, that is that the good fellowship of the Premier, his personal good heartedness, is being very artfully stage-managed in Western Australia in order to cover up the sins of the Government. And where the supporters of the Government and the Press of the State have entered into a sort of mild conspiracy to blot out any reference whatever to the undoubted failures of the Government, and to tell nothing and say nothing but praise, praise, praise of the Ministry, then it is even more incumbent upon those who occupy the position of members of the Opposition to deal fairly and squarely with the political position as it stands, and also to deal critically with the administration of the Government. The Premier in the course of his brief pre-session speech at Bunbury made certain references to the financial position of Western Australia, and he was particularly careful to tell us what an excellent position we were in so far as our loan indebtedness is concerned, and he went on to say that there are very few, and their numbers are declining, who can say that Western Australia has reached anything like its limit in regard to borrowing powers. I do not know that there ever were people who indulged in that kind of statement. It reminds me very much of the story of the man who had been drunk for a considerable time and saw a fine array of snakes of various colours and dimensions, and after looking at them for a time said, "If they are alive, I want more; but if they are not I have had enough." It is just the same with the community that is borrowing. While borrowing is going on and money is being expended there are not many

who declare that the limit of the borrowing power of the people has been reached. That time only comes when the inevitable crash comes, when the time arrives that some careful, painstaking Treasurer has to pick up the broken threads and take up the unpopular task of righting the finances and bringing the financial condition of the State into a more satisfactory condition. When that is done usually, as in the case for instance of men like Sir George Turner or Mr. Ballance, we generally find politicians coming along and saying, "We are ready for another burst," and the good work of men like Sir George Turner is forgotten and at the best of times is unpopular. If we look around us for evidence as to whether our capacity for borrowing is unimpaired, or as to whether there is a stage at which it is unwise to venture further, we might find some note of warning in the views expressed by leading financial journals in the old country, for instance the *Financial News*. We might find a further note of warning in the fact that the last loan flotation was nothing like so satisfactory as it ought to have been. It is not very satisfactory to find that, although advertising, as we are told, has drawn the attention of the investing community to Western Australia as an advantageous field, only 11 per cent. of the loan was taken up by the public and the remainder was left to the underwriters.

The Premier: What do we pay underwriters for?

Mr. BATH: If the hon. member will cast his mind back to loan flotations in the past he will find that the public have subscribed much more largely for loans issued by this State than they have on the occasion of the last loan. A further note of warning might be accepted in the fact that the price per £100 received by the State was certainly not satisfactory. These all are evidences which point to the fact, not perhaps that we have reached the limit, but still that there is need for the exercise of greater care and discretion in the expenditure of the moneys which we borrow. The Premier, who is also the Treasurer, in

the course of his speech at Bunbury made a comparison with the year 1903. In the first place the comparison was incorrect. The Premier made it appear that although we had borrowed upwards of five million pounds since 1903 the net debt per head of the population was less in 1910 than it was in 1903; but on looking through the figures supplied to us I find that is not the case. Making allowance for the credit balance on general loan funds in hand, the net debt in 1910 per head of the population was £66 12s., while in 1903 it was £65 9s., so that we have increased it, and not, as the Premier said, decreased it. The Premier might very well have selected, say, 1904 as the year with which to make comparison, and he would have found that the net debt per head of the population is to-day £3 13s. per head higher than it was in 1904, the year after the one he selected. I may add that, after all, the figures supplied by the Treasurer and published in our *Statistical Abstract* are a more reliable criterion as to the debt per head of the population; because, after all, although the Premier has a certain credit balance on general loan funds in hand, we cannot forget that to a very great extent that money is already allocated, that we have authorised works and started expenditure on them which will eat up a considerable portion of that amount. So the figures supplied to us in the *Statistical Abstract* and issued by the Treasury are more reliable than those supplied by the Premier. A fact the Premier omitted to point out, and which has a very important bearing on our capacity to borrow money, is as to the manner in which these loan moneys are expended. The position to which the Premier can point, that is, the small increase in the net debt as compared with the large increase in the aggregate amount of debt, is in no sense to be laid to the credit of the present Government. That position is due absolutely to the care and foresight of those who preceded the present Government. It is due in the first instance to the care which was exercised in the expenditure of loan moneys, and in the second place to that departure in

Western Australia which has set us apart from the other States, which has made our position superior to theirs, namely, that we have always provided a Sinking Fund of a stated percentage in order, later on, to redeem our debts. The present Government can show the position which was laid before the public in the course of that address by reason of the care and foresight which has been exercised in past years; but while they are reaping the advantage they are to-day doing things which are going to destroy that foundation for those who come after them. They are destroying that foundation because they are adopting a course which we have always previously tabooed, and that is of utilising loan funds on works which are not reproductive. That position is shown by the fact that whereas in 1903 it only required 19 per cent. of our revenue to provide interest and Sinking Fund charges, still in 1910 it required 27.4 per cent. The percentage is increasing and the increase is due to the fact that the Government have not continued the policy by which revenue is obtained from the works constructed out of loan moneys sufficient to provide for the interest and sinking fund charges. Since 1906 we have been expending money, as I have said, on unproductive works, and thus it is necessary to eat more and more into the ordinary revenue in order to meet those charges. There is that increase of eight per cent. in seven years, and if we are going to have a similar increase in future it will not be long before we reach a critical position; because when we reach the stage where we have to take 30 per cent. or 35 per cent. of our revenue to meet the charges, it will be a very serious one. Turning to the revenue returns, there certainly has been an improvement in our position as compared with that of previous years, but in giving some outline as to the revenue and expenditure for 1910-11 the Premier was very indefinite in his prediction as to how he was going to meet the contemplated increase of expenditure amounting, I think, to a little over £200,000, with an increase in revenue which he could only set down at about

£90,000. It seems to me that he left the question of meeting the remainder to be decided by Providence and not by the wisdom of the present Government.

The Premier: One cannot make a Budget Speech at this stage; we have no Estimates yet.

Mr. BATH: The Premier was dealing with the financial question, and he dealt with it in such a way that while he gave certain information it was absolutely impossible for anyone to conceive how he was going to make both ends meet. If he were going to leave the matter to be determined when the Budget Speech was delivered why enter into a discussion of it at all in his pre-session speech. That was the position he placed before the electors at Bunbury, and, through those electors, the people of Western Australia. With regard to the increase in revenue we find that the railway receipts accounted for an increase of £128,943, and looking at it from the first point of view that might seem a substantial increase, but we find that in order to earn that revenue there was an increase in expenditure of £124,955. Therefore the increase in revenue was almost entirely eaten up by the increase of expenditure, while the bounty of Nature, in the shape of a good season, which we enjoyed last year, has, so far as the Railways are concerned, gone by the board.

The Premier: There was a bad fire which had to be paid for.

Mr. BATH: It is true that there was a fire at Midland Junction involving an unforeseen expenditure of £30,000, but I would remind the Premier that in the Estimates the Government reduced the expenditure on the Railways by the very simple process of transferring £30,000 of expenditure, which had always previously been provided for the replacement of obsolete stock, from revenue to Loan Fund, so that sum counter-balances the extra £30,000 it was found necessary to expend owing to the fire. In my opinion that transfer of expenditure was not justified. It is not justified at the present time, and there can be no doubt that the Railway Department will be in a critical position during the forthcoming

season, which I hope is to be a good one, simply because they have refrained from making provision, as in previous years. The £30,000 would have done something to provide extra rolling stock to replace obsolete stock and, although it would only be a drop in the ocean, still the sum is a considerable one. As to the question of land settlement and the development of the various resources of Western Australia, we have also had a great deal of advertisement in regard to what has been accomplished by the present Government. My objection to that advertisement is that it is sought to bring glamour to the present Government by the deprecation of the work of those who went before them. One would imagine on reading the reports in the Press, and more particularly on reading the speeches of Ministers with regard to land settlement, that the development of our agricultural resources began when the present Minister for Lands took occupancy of that chair. I say that is a libel on the men who preceded him, a libel on many of those who have been loyal supporters of the Government in the past, a libel on those who sit behind the Government now. I have been in the House since 1902, and know there has always been a belief in the agricultural resources of Western Australia, and that it is not necessary that the present Government should arise to teach the people of Western Australia that they have agricultural and pastoral resources in this State. I cannot understand a vanity which seeks to secure credit by deprecating the work of those who went before. What about the work of the gentleman who preceded the present member for Katanning? What about the work of an hon. gentleman who once occupied an honourable position in this House and who now fills an honourable position in another Chamber? I refer to the Hon. George Throssell. Those men believed in the agricultural resources of Western Australia, and it seems to me it comes ill for an attempt to be made to boost up the present Government by obliterating all remembrance of those gentlemen who preceded them. For myself, although

I came to this House as a member of a goldfields constituency, and although through lack of experience I was not able to speak on agricultural matters, yet since I have been in the Chamber I have always given a loyal and generous support to those who have been working for the development of our agricultural and pastoral industries.

Mr. Collier: So have the whole Party.

Mr. BATH: The member for Canning refers to the proposal for cutting up our pastoral areas so that they will support a much larger population than they do at the present time; but I would remind him of the fact that some years ago in this House I advocated that step and, further, that during the brief time I was Minister for Lands I drafted a Bill in which a provision of that kind found place. Unfortunately, however, I was not able to introduce that Bill to Parliament. The position at the present time is that the work of administration is, to a considerable extent, neglected because Ministers seem to find it necessary to go about the country proclaiming their own virtues. From my own knowledge of those men who have made any mark in the history of politics in Australia, I realise that they have been content to do the work, to work hard and unceasingly, and to leave it to others to pay a tribute to them. The position here is this: We find, perhaps, a Press notice to this effect—The Minister for Mines accompanied by the hon. member for ——— visited Mr. Jones' hen-roost last night, and was shown over the premises. After the Minister had lifted some of the fowls and admired their ample proportions the owner, Mr. Jones, invited him to partake of a bottle of Swan beer, and then the Minister enters into a disquisition on the raising of poultry, which occupies two columns of a report in the daily newspaper the next day. Mr. Jones, the owner of the fowls, refers to the great work which has been accomplished by the Ministry, what a great effect it has had on the egg-laying capacity of the fowls, and then the Minister in his turn describes what a great assistance to the development of the State has been the work of men like Mr.

Jones. That is the sort of thing we have repeatedly day after day. It is worse than that. The members of the Ministry have even taken to themselves the credit for the season which Providence bestowed on us last year. They absolutely take credit for it and, when, owing to the bounty of nature, either twin lambs are born or eggs with double yolks are laid, the Minister goes round the country saying, "Alone I did it." This appears more like comic opera than government of a country, and it seems to me that during the recess we want a little more attention to the work of administration and a little less travelling round the country advertising the virtues of the Government. If the work is done the people will find it out for themselves. The position at the present time is that whilst we are seeking to place people on the land, there is a tendency to forget them after they are there, and there is a good deal that remains to be done before we can say our land settlement policy is all that it should be. In the first place there is need for some more forward policy than is being undertaken at the present time with regard to the supply of settlers' requirements. I believe the time has arrived when the Government should take up seriously the question of the State manufacture of machinery for those engaged in the agricultural industry. I suppose the Minister will tell us whether anything has been done with regard to the provision which was placed in the Agricultural Bank Act last session. In my opinion, however, that will be inadequate. I believe that the farming community of this State have been educated up to the possibility of the State being in the best possible position to supply them with durable agricultural implements at cheaper rates than they have hitherto paid. I hope that the question of vested interests will not prevent the Minister for Lands or the Government from dealing with the matter and ascertaining whether it is practicable. In another direction, too, I believe that the State of Western Australia has missed a great opportunity. I refer to the possibility of amalgamating the Savings Bank and the Agricultural Bank and making

them into a State bank and extending their functions to a considerable degree. We have lost one opportunity, in that the Commonwealth have taken up the question of a note issue. Western Australia was in the position years ago with the institutions she had at her command, to undertake this.

The Minister for Lands: Queensland had a note issue and the Commonwealth Government stepped in.

Mr. BATH: If other States had followed the example of Queensland there would have been less argument, and probably less possibility of the Commonwealth stepping in and undertaking it. The fact that only one out of six States had a note issue gave the Commonwealth their opportunity. We have missed our opportunity in converting these two institutions into a State bank, and unless we bestir ourselves and take a more energetic and forward view of the duties of Government, the Parliament of the Commonwealth will step in and undertake many other things which are in accordance with the general opinion of the community. The member for Fremantle in his speech, and in his reference to the work of the present Government, dealt with the question of population, but I notice that he was careful to say that he had no intention of referring to the statistical returns for the information which he was going to supply to the House. He said that he would be content to deal with the question since the present Government came into power. Perhaps it was just as well for his own arguments that the member for Fremantle did not go into the statistics, because if he referred to the population returns he would find that the increase in population since 1906 has been nothing like the rate of increase in the preceding years, and that as far as Western Australia is concerned the State has fallen behind the good work of those former years. For instance in the year 1904/5 the increase was 12,500; in 1905/6 the increase was 7,000; in 1906/7 the increase was 2,000; in 1907/8 the increase was 7,000, and in 1908/9 the increase was 6,000. These increases it must be borne in mind included the increase

by excess of births over deaths, so that in recent years we have not been keeping pace with the history of the State in the years preceding 1906. I commend that return to the member for Fremantle as being something worthy of his study before he again indulges in felicitations regarding the present position of the Government. We are also being informed that good work is being done by the Government in regard to securing immigrants from the mother country. I have always contended that given the opportunity in Western Australia we can welcome with open arms those who come from elsewhere in order to take up the work of the development of the resources of the State. I have naturally had a preference for those who have come from the Eastern States, because from their knowledge of Australian conditions they can more readily adapt themselves to the conditions as we find them in this State; nevertheless there is a possibility of securing desirable settlers from outside, and we certainly cannot but welcome those who come from outside with money in order to settle upon our land. I do think, however, there is altogether too much fraud and too much deception about this question of the introduction of farm labourers, and in this direction I am speaking from knowledge and a certain amount of experience. I repeat what I have said on previous occasions in this House that the Government of the day controlling immigration is being made the vehicle for the importation of cheap labour into Western Australia, and that a policy such as that is in no sense to the advantage of Western Australia, because we will only be building up a position such as unfortunately exists in older countries of the world, in which we have on the one hand the owners of the land, and on the other hand the cheap labourers who have no earthly hope of ever rising above their positions. Speaking of the particular district in which I hold land, I have never myself, nor have others in the vicinity, experienced any difficulty whatever in obtaining labour without the necessity of applying for immigrants, as long as we have been prepared to pay a fair rate of wage: but I

find that the men who by their wealth and by their positions are able to pay fair wages are the first to resort to the Immigration Department of the State because they can get men at 10s. or 15s. per week. I notice in this morning's paper that the Colonial Secretary replied to a statement or complaint made by the Secretary to the Miners' Union at Boulder, Mr. Dodd—

Mr. Bolton: Not a courteous reply either.

Mr. BATH: Mr. Dodd stated that assisted immigrants were finding their way to the goldfields and competing in overcrowded mines, and the Colonial Secretary asked him to state the names of some of them. Mr. Dodd refused. The Colonial Secretary apparently thought that settled the matter. He carefully avoided the issue as to whether the statement was true or not. It was the place of the Colonial Secretary to find out whether it was true or not, and whether assisted immigrants were going to the goldfields and competing for these positions. As a matter of fact I do not think that he could say that the statement was not true, but he coolly placed the onus of proving that it was true upon Mr. Dodd. I issue this challenge and say that at the present time farm labourers are being sent out as emigrants, and that they are finding places simply because they are content to work for lower wages than those who follow the same occupations in Western Australia. That statement is borne out by the report of the Select Committee of this House which was appointed last session.

Mr. George: What part of the district do they go to? In the South-West you will find that the rate of wages is 7s. and 8s. per day.

Mr. BATH: Another matter upon which I think that the Government have misinterpreted the voice of the people of Australia is with regard to the Trans-continental Railway. I do not think the people of Western Australia support the Minister for Works in his statement that the Western Australian Government will undertake the construction of that railway. I say that the whole statement was entirely bluff, and I wish to take strong

exception to the attitude which was adopted by the Minister for Works when Acting Premier, with regard to the Federal Government on this particular matter of the Trans-continental Railway. What has been the position of Western Australia with regard to this railway? Sir John Forrest declared that Western Australia must have the railway; that was promised as a condition of the entrance of this State into the Federation. Holding that view so emphatically Sir John Forrest went into the Federal Ministry, and from 1901 to 1910, with brief intervals, he remained a member of the Government which did absolutely nothing towards the proposal, and the majority of whose supporters were opposed to it.

The Premier: You will not dispute that he did all he could.

Mr. BATH: I am going to say exactly what he did, and it was very rarely that ever a comment or criticism was raised against Sir John Forrest because of his inaction with regard to the project. I say here that if Sir John Forrest felt so strongly on that proposal it should have been a condition of his entrance into the Ministry, or, failing some favourable consideration, he should have been out of the Ministry. But whatever may have been his interest there has never been an criticism of his attitude, either from the Minister for Works or anyone else in Western Australia. Later on, when the matter was being discussed and it was found that there was a public feeling in South Australia adverse to the railway, members of the Labour Party representing this State went to South Australia itself to tour through the various districts and address meetings in favour of the Trans-Australian railway, and I say that had considerable influence in turning the feeling from an adverse one into one favourable to the project. Strange to say, in Western Australia very little has ever been said in the way of credit for the action those members took. Later on it was the Federal Labour Government that passed the Survey Bill, and provided the necessary money in order to carry out the project. During the Federal election the only reference we had from Sir John Forrest's chief was to the

effect that he would be disappointed if the railway were not constructed in three years. That was the full extent of his announcement.

Mr. Bolton: No, is was if the Bill were not passed within three years.

Mr. BATH: Later on, after the advent of the present Federal Labour Government, we find Mr. Fisher stating that it is to be a part of their policy, one of their proposals; and a month after the Federal Labour Government assume office we find the Acting Premier, the Minister for Works of this State, going through the country, and, at a function where we were guests, seizing the opportunity of attacking the Federal Labour Government in the presence of the State Governor; and although I replied to the statement not a word of it was mentioned in the Press of the State. Now the attitude right through has been absolutely unfair, and it has been not so much a question of securing the Trans-Australian railway, as it has been one of seizing any and every opportunity to discredit the present Federal Labour Government. I object to the project being utilised in that fashion, and I repeat the people of Western Australia will not support any member of the Government who tries to advance the project by those means. Now, amongst the proposals which we are told it is the intention of the Government to introduce is one dealing with the redistribution of seats. That is a matter fraught with a very considerable amount of interest, both to the members of the House and the electors generally. We have no index whatever as to what the intentions of the Government are, but if we may accept the views of a gentleman who is seeking return to Parliament as a supporter of the Government, the proposals will prove to be very objectionable. They will be in no sense a redistribution, but rather a jerrymandering of seats.

Mr. Jacoby: Who is the candidate?

Mr. BATH: Sir Walter James. Sir Walter James' project for redistribution is that in respect to some electorates—I think he referred particularly to agricultural electorates—we are to have regard

to what may be the population of those districts in the future. Now that seems to me altogether an unreliable basis of redistribution, and one which would give opportunity to a Government to make any redistribution in order to suit their own party interests. If the project is to be attacked in that fashion this Parliament ought to refuse to have anything to do with such a proposal; because I would like to point out that in constituencies like Dundas, Mount Magnet, and Murchison, there have been just as great increases in the number of electors and in the population, as there has been in any agricultural districts in the State. If we turn to the particulars of the number of electors in the constituencies, as provided in the returns, we will find that in the goldfields constituencies, averaging them out throughout the whole number, the number of electors is equal to the average in any of the other electorates of the State; and in those circumstances there will be no justification whatever for taking away seats from the goldfields in order to give them to agricultural districts. Then again, taking the seats represented by hon. members on this side of the House, and averaging the total number of electors by the number of constituencies, the quota represented by members on this side of the House is higher than is that represented by members on the other side; so that there is no justification whatever under these figures for any attempt to dish opponents by a redistribution of seats. I say the best way of attacking this question, and also that of Constitutional reform would be by the giving to the people of Western Australia an opportunity of electing a convention, as was done in the case of the Federal Convention, for the express purpose of drafting an amended Constitution for Western Australia, and also of dealing with the question of redistribution of seats. I think this would be infinitely preferable to tinkering with the constituencies as we have them at present; because we would then not only have a Constitution up to date, and in touch with the sentiments of the people as we know them, but we could make provision for a democratic amendment of

that Constitution, and mould the Constitution of the State to something that would bear comparison with that of the Commonwealth. The two questions of redistribution and amending the Constitution could well be left to a convention of that kind. Anyhow, on this one question of redistribution of seats I think, if it is to be done, it is a matter that should be taken outside the party purview altogether; that we should follow the example of the Commonwealth and of New South Wales, and leave the matter to a commissioner who would deal with this question of redistribution and present his plan to the House. Now there is another matter to which I wish to refer, and that is to a railway project which is at the present time agitating the mind of the public in a light, favourable or unfavourable, as the case may be. I refer to the proposal for the construction of a railway to the port of Esperance. It is, perhaps, interesting for me to state that the first speech which I delivered in Parliament, when first returned as member for Hamans, was a speech in support of a motion moved by Mr. Thomas, the then member for Dundas, in favour of a referendum on the question of the construction of the Esperance railway. The proposal for a referendum was put forward because those who were opposed to the construction of the line said it was an agitation fomented by a few, that it did not express the desires of the people and, therefore, was not worthy of consideration; and Mr. Thomas was willing to test the feeling of the people, not only those on the goldfields area, but of the people throughout the State, as to whether this railway should be constructed. Now, at that time I made these remarks—

“Those who are acquainted with the politics of the other States know full well that the policy of centralisation is a crying evil, and we know that in Western Australia the evil of centralisation has been accentuated to a high degree. In discussing questions of this kind I shall be able to free my mind from parochial prejudice; and I say whether it be a question of building a railway or providing convenient railway facilities for the gold-

fields, or building a railway to provide facilities for any other large and influential section of a community, my vote will always be found on the side of those who seek to provide those facilities, irrespective of the portion of the State I reside in.”

At that time I, and I think other members of the party, took a stand against this question being considered from the parochial standpoint. And since I have been in the House I have always endeavoured to avoid taking that standpoint in viewing the matters that come before us; and whether it has been a question affecting the goldfields or any other part of the State. I have always endeavoured to ascertain what were the wishes of the people most concerned, and what were the resources of the portion of the State supposed to be affected, by travelling through them and seeking to come into contact with the people, in order that I might be able to say that I was not only a member for a constituency but a member also for the State. It is true that there are those on the goldfields, as well as on the coast, who seek to create this division of feeling between one community and the other, and I know that I have often been attacked for my attitude in this House when I have sought to look at a question from the standpoint of the interests of the State and not of those of one portion of the State alone. I remember when I was attacked on the question of the construction of the dock at Fremantle, and I have been attacked also in regard to the collective provision of facilities in the way of art and literature for the people, such as are to be found in our public library and museum. However, I only quote this by way of prefacing my remarks with regard to the project for the construction of the Esperance railway. I advocated it when I entered Parliament, and have not wavered in my support of it since then. I supported the then member for Dundas and have supported the succeeding member for Dundas in any proposals he has brought forward for the advancement of that part of the State. I take my stand in support of this project because I believe that the development and prosperity of a community

is extended and increased by the more ports it has available through which to transact commerce with other parts of the world. What would be the position in the United Kingdom if there were there adopted a selfish policy of trying to centralise the shipping trade in the port of London, and seeking in every way to discount, and to prevent the opening up of, other ports such as Bristol, Liverpool, Southampton, Hull, Glasgow, and the rest. A person who advocated a policy of that kind would be regarded as a lunatic and, more than that, as one who was advocating a policy altogether inimical to the future of the country. But yet in Western Australia we have those who say that new ports should not be opened up because they fear some possible disadvantage to ports already established. That has never been felt by other communities. There may be a slight temporary disadvantage; but, as a matter of fact, with the opening up of new ports and with the opening up of contiguous territory, we have increased prosperity, and we find that no other port suffers from that fact. So far as that part of the State is concerned for which the railway communication is required, I declare that the project is justifiable even if we only consider it from the point of view of the agricultural possibilities of the district. It is a matter of surprise that the Minister for Lands, who should look beyond the interest of his own district, or of any portion of the State, should be found discounting and discountenancing projects for the opening up of the agricultural resources of that part of the community. It is useless to argue that the reports that have been made as to delays in applications are not justified. I find in regard to areas of land available in existing districts there are possibilities of putting applications through in a very short time; in fact, applications have been put through in a week; the Premier will bear me out that they have been put through in less than that; but we find in the area taken up north of Esperance it is, in some instances, a month before applications are put through. I do not think that is justified. When it was proposed to lay a

complaint before the Minister for Lands in regard to the delay in applications, the Minister refused to receive the deputation, giving in excuse that it sought to interview him on a Sunday. Now, if that attitude were taken up from conscientious scruples one could understand it; but at the same time, when that interview was refused, the Minister for Lands received a deputation from those engaged in the butchering trade, those who were interested in changes being made in the abattoirs; and he could go to Boulder and deliver lectures, and he could meet others on Sunday and supply information in regard to land; and there was something invidious in delivering speeches and receiving deputations and imparting information, while refusing, on the other hand, to meet a deputation that desired to interview him with regard to delay in applications for land in a certain area. It is a remarkable thing to find the Minister for Lands, who has never been known to declare that there is one acre of inferior land in what is called the South-West area and who declares it is all fit, more or less for cultivation and settlement, going down to another part and certainly discrediting the quality of the land in that area, while at the same time an officer of his department was declaring that it was all of good quality and capable of producing 20 bushels to the acre. To my mind that should not be the attitude of a gentleman administering the office of Minister for Lands. He is there to administer the affairs of the State for the whole of the State without fear or favour, he is supposed to forget, while occupying that position, vested interests in any part of the State for the time being, and he is supposed to deal fairly with the whole of the State. He was not dealing fairly with the whole of the State when he refused facilities to that part of the country simply because there are others in other parts of the State who raise objections on account of vested interests. I have not been from Norseman to Esperance, but I know a gentleman now residing in Northam who lived many years in that area, and he tells me that for 80 miles north of Esperance there is land, good land, and land which

is capable of agricultural settlement, and which will afford a good livelihood for those who settle upon it. If that is the position, I say the people there are just as much entitled to receive railway communication as any other part of the community; and I trust that members of the House, after having the details as to the possibilities of that district placed before them, will rise above parochial considerations and give a fair deal to that part of the State. There is another matter which is perturbing the minds of those residing and obtaining a livelihood in the mining districts of Western Australia. They complain that there is a tendency to overlook the mining industry in favour of the new-found love of agriculture. I hope members of the House will never forget what the mining industry has done for the development of Western Australia, will never forget what an impetus it was, in fact, how it was almost responsible, we might say, for the birth of the agricultural and pastoral industries throughout the State. There is no doubt that the influx of population, the ready money which it placed at the disposal of the community, and the market which was opened up for the agricultural and other products of the State through the mining industry, very materially influenced, in fact for a number of years was the sole influence in creating, the marvellous development of the State lifting it from the position in which it was termed the Cinderella of Australia to a position of prominence in the councils of the Commonwealth. If we remember this, we must regard the mining industry as still worthy of encouragement and still worthy of the favourable consideration of members of the House regardless of whatever part of the State they represent. As a matter of fact, there is no question of a decline, no question of a dying industry in the mining industry of the State. Where fields are undoubtedly failing we have others springing into prominence and showing promise of developing into even better gold mining areas than the existing fields. I need only refer, for instance, to the field at Meekatharra and the development of the new and rising

field at Youanme, and also to the revival of mining at Southern Cross. All these point to the possibility of the mining industry doing as much and providing as good a market for those in agricultural areas as it did in past years. But if we once convey the idea to the minds of those engaged in our mining pursuits that we are losing faith in the industry and that we are losing interest in it, then we are going to discourage it and harm the industry irretrievably. Those engaged in the industry deserve encouragement. There is no class in the community deserves it more, because there is no class which is involved in greater hardships than those engaged in opening up new fields; so I hope members will still believe that we have something in our mining industry in Western Australia which is worth encouragement and worth consideration, and worth the expenditure of a considerable amount of money so that it will be as valuable to us in the future as it has been in the past. I desire to point out to the Government that while they have followed on the course laid down in previous years regarding the developing and opening up of various areas of land, the construction of railways and other public works, there is another and more important point on which the administration of any Government is tried. We have had good seasons in Western Australia, and because of them we have had a very big growth in the production of the State, but the test of capable administration is in the measure those benefits bestowed upon us are enjoyed by the great mass of the community. Judged in that way the present Government will fall short of the ideal, at least, short of my ideal. The improvement which has been made in the development of industries has not been felt by the great mass of the people, it has not made their lot any easier, it has not given them higher wages or a greater measure of comfort. We still have a large section of our community, the workers in our factories, and the girls and men employed in our shops, whose conditions are just as objectionable as they have been in past years, who

need just as much a helping hand to-day as in past years; and unless the Government are prepared to see that the development of our resources is to bring to these people happier and better conditions, then inevitably we must be content to see this power slip from our hands and see it accepted by the Parliament of the Commonwealth who are prepared to look to the interests of these people. It is true that that power is slipping away, and unless we are prepared to take up the cudgels on behalf of these people, I say it is well that it should be in their hands. I only hope that in our felicitations as to the future of the State, and in our rejoicing at the development of our prospects, at our better seasons and the development that is taking place, we shall not lose sight of the fact that we are the trustees of these people and that we must have regard to their welfare in every act we do and in every piece of legislation we pass.

Mr. GORDON (Canning): It has been my custom in speaking to the Address-in-Reply to say something complimentary in reference to the Government, but I do not feel inclined to do so on this occasion, because I feel confident the people have every trust in the Government, and no words of mine will add to that belief. In my brief remarks I desire to refer to one Act of Parliament that, like others in existence, is not put into force. It is an Act that to-day should take a prominent place in connection with the strike in the tramways and coal mines. I refer to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. It seems to me that the penal clauses therein—and experience has shown it—are there for the employer to fulfil, while on no occasion has the employee had to do so. I feel confident there is danger in this to the men as well as to the employers. The fact that the Act has not been put in force in its entirety lulls both employer and employee into a false position. The Act has gone on from day to day and from year to year without these penal clauses being enforced, and I consider the Act should be amended and these penal clauses obliterated altogether, because then we should have an Act capable of being carried out. The Leader of

the Opposition was very definite when referring to what he described as parochial legislation, but I intend to be parochial on one matter and that is in connection with the proposed railway south of the Swan River from Midland Junction to Fremantle, and of which Belmont to Burswood is to be the first section. The heads of the Railway Department, I am assured, are in favour of the work and say it is very necessary. I want to tell the Government definitely that I hope they will carry out this work as quickly as possible for by doing so it will be so much the better for Western Australia as a whole. With regard to the question of the licensing of racecourses, I understand the House wish me to say something on that point. I would impress on the Government to bear in mind when they bring the Bill forward, one or two matters—one is that no Act of Parliament can make a country moral, and another that they should not give one racecourse the monopoly. There is still another point, which is that they must guard the vested interests, they must guard the interests of those people who put their money into the concerns simply owing to the fact that the Act had not been enforced in the past as it should have been. The opening of the Sandstone railway recently enlightened me, and I am sure enlightened many other members who made the trip, as to the value of the pastoral country between Mullewa and Sandstone. I have had a good deal of experience on such matters and I was very considerably impressed with the country. I feel confident that it is the absolute duty of the Government to establish in that part of the State one or two experimental plots to determine the value of, and to preserve, the grasses indigenous to the State. In all leasehold country in the other States this question has become an acute problem for it is found that a great many of the indigenous fodders are being eaten out. Efforts are being made in New Zealand to bring about a remedy for this state of affairs. Pastoralists being only leaseholders and having but a limited term of occupancy, naturally carry all the stock they can and burn as much as they can so as to ensure good feed for the fol-

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 3rd August, 1910.

lowing year. In countries inclined to be arid and where the rainfall is not great the natural fodders, as a result, die out. The stock themselves always choose the natural fodders. In all parts of Australia the salt bush is one of the standard stock fodders and this is now being eaten out. I am told that if one wants salt bush seed now it is necessary to send to America for it, although the seed originally was sent from Australia to the United States. It is the duty of the Government to deal with this question of the preservation of natural fodders. There is no other part of the country so good as that to which I have referred for the purposes of subdivision into small pastoral areas, and unless something is done to preserve the indigenous fodders the position will soon be that the subdivided country will be held, as it is to-day, by the large holders. While this question is being dealt with the Government might take into consideration that of providing large endowments there for our university and educational system. I do not intend to claim the attention of the House any longer and I hope that what I have said is worthy of the note of the Government, particularly with regard to my advice as to the railway south of the Swan River.

On motion by the Premier debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.50 p.m.

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Paper Presented | 64 |
| Bills: Electoral Act Amendment, 1a. | 64 |
| Public Hospitals Endowment and Management, 1a. | 64 |
| Supply, £1,053,875, 2a. Com. 3a. | 65 |
| Chairman of Committees, Election | 64 |
| Address-in-Reply, third day | 65 |

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: By-laws of the Cottesloe Beach Roads Board.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Electoral Act, 1907, Amendment.
- 2, Public Hospitals Endowment and Management.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES, ELECTION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): It is necessary this afternoon for the House to elect a Chairman of Committees. As hon. members are aware Mr. Kingsmill, who has occupied the Chair for the last four years, had to submit himself for re-election this year and, consequently, the position of Chairman of Committees became vacant with his seat as a member of the House. I have very much pleasure in proposing that Mr. Kingsmill be appointed to fill the position of Chairman of Committees of the House. Mr. Kingsmill has occupied the position, as I have previously stated, for the past four years with every credit to himself and with entire satisfaction to members of the House. It was thought at one time that we would not have the opportunity of electing Mr. Kingsmill to this position again, and it was considered that he might be occupying a seat in the national Parliament. His failure to secure a seat, however, was, in my opinion, a loss to that Parliament, but his re-election to this Chamber was a distinct gain to the State Parliament, and we are now once more