

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

| | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 15 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 5 |

Majority for 10

Ayes.

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hon. H. P. Colebatch | Hon. W. Patrick |
| Hon. J. D. Connolly | Hon. C. A. Plesse |
| Hon. F. Connor | Hon. A. Sanderson |
| Hon. J. F. Cullen | Hon. C. Sommers |
| Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett | Hon. T. H. Wilding |
| Hon. V. Hamersley | Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom |
| Hon. A. G. Jenkins | Hon. D. G. Gawler |
| Hon. R. D. McKenzie | (Teller). |

Noes.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Hon. R. G. Ardagh | Hon. J. W. Kirwan |
| Hon. J. E. Dodd | Hon. F. Davis |
| Hon. J. M. Drew | (Teller). |

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN moved an amendment—

That Subclause 6 be struck out.
Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.50 p.m.

mica. (2) Papers bearing on the Mines Regulation Bill introduced in 1906 (ordered by Mr. Foley).

QUESTION — GERALDTON ELECTION, REPORTED IRREGULARITIES.

Mr. FOLEY (for Mr. B. J. Stubbs) asked the Attorney General: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the reported violation of the Electoral Act in the recent Geraldton election by persons voting who have ceased to reside in that electorate for a period of over three months? 2, If so, what action does he intend to take?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Attorney General) replied: 1, The official report on the election has not yet been submitted by the returning officer. 2, If cases of illegal voting are reported, investigation will at once be made and prosecution instituted in all cases where the law officers report that a breach of the law appears to have been committed.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS, ADDITIONAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): The motion which appeared on the Notice Paper in his name proposed to increase the sitting days by the inclusion of Friday of this week, but since the motion had been tabled several members representing country constituencies had requested that it should not apply to Friday of this week because they had made arrangements to transact certain business, and it would inconvenience them to attend. There was no desire on his part to interfere with the private affairs of hon. members, and he recognised that when it was proposed to increase the sitting days fair notice should be given. Therefore he was prepared to receive an amendment to make the motion apply from the sittings of next week. So far as the hours were concerned the Government proposed to add one to each day by commencing business at 3.30 instead of at 4.30 o'clock. Seeing that the House would not sit on Friday

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 19th November, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: (1) Mines Development Act, 1902, Regulations 1-9, Extension of Subsidy *re* production of

of this week it was hardly worth while to add the extra hour to only one day of this week. Therefore one of the hon. members who made the request that the alteration should begin from next week might move an amendment which would be accepted.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member could, with the permission of the House, move the amendment himself.

The PREMIER: Then with the permission of the House he would move the motion in an amended form as follows:—

That after Monday, the 24th November, and for the remainder of the session, the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, at 3.30 p.m., and sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved—

That for the remainder of the session Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day on all days upon which the House is sitting.

It might be explained that the effect of the motion would be to exclude the consideration of private members' business, but if any private member introduced any matter which it was considered should receive consideration, the Government would not do anything to prevent a discussion taking place. Under existing conditions the discussion of private members' business prevented other matters of importance receiving attention, and now that we were approaching the close of the session, it was thought that private members' day might be abandoned, unless, of course, as he had stated, matters of urgency came up which it was desired should receive attention.

Question passed.

PETITION—UNIVERSITY SITE.

Discharged.

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the petition of the Perth City Council against ceding portion of King's Park to the University.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is my intention to ask the House to discharge this Order of the Day from the Notice Paper, on the ground that a motion in favour of the granting of the petition which has been laid on the Table of the House by the member for West Perth, would be a direct negative to a motion which is already on the Notice Paper. When the petition was submitted on the previous day, I did not have an opportunity of perusing it. That was not the fault of the hon. member who presented it, because he himself had had little opportunity of doing so, but having been presented to the House, and a motion having been carried that it should be considered at the next sitting of the House, I allowed it to be placed on the Notice Paper. However, I ask that it shall now be discharged for the reasons which I have given.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): In accordance with the ruling given by Mr. Speaker I move—

That the Order of the Day relating to the petition of the Perth City Council against ceding portion of King's Park to the University be discharged from the Notice Paper.

Those who were responsible for the petition will recognise that the matter will receive consideration when the Bill is before the House. The object of the motion which I am now moving is merely to comply with the rules of the House.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth): In seconding the motion I would like to explain that, as Mr. Speaker has stated, I did not have an opportunity of perusing the document which was handed to me yesterday afternoon. I am quite satisfied, however, that the course which is being taken is the right one, and that there will be an opportunity of discussing the matter when the Bill is before the House.

Question passed; Order discharged.

BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of 26 amendements made by the Legislative Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

No. 1.—Clause 2: Strike out the definition of "bed":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proposal in the original Bill was to declare the ownership by the Crown of all natural waters, and it naturally followed that the receptacle which contained the water should also be the property of the Crown. The Council, whilst prepared to give the Crown the right to the water in a limited sense, was not prepared to give the Crown property in the channel in which the water flowed. It was impossible to agree to the amendment, because if it was good that the Crown should have property in the water, it was necessary that the Crown should have the channel in which the water flowed. If the Government were refused the right to the bed, Parliament would be only creating a difficulty in regard to the water. There were other amendments consequential on this one, because the Council desired to delete all reference to "bed." It had been laid down by all authorities on the question that the bed of a creek was not alienated. Whilst he did not desire to go into the question as to whether the Government should not take the bed of every stream, still he wanted in this Bill to limit the right to those streams where they formed the boundary of a holding. He desired to emphasise that point to hon. members, that the Crown was only taking the bed of the stream where that bed formed the boundary of a holding. Hon. members would realise that even now the bed of a stream did not belong to the individual where it formed a boundary. For instance, to utilise the bed each adjoining owner would have to fence right in the centre of such bed. That was never done, and consequently one holder

was robbing the other, because if the boundary was put on one side of the bed the man on that side was losing his right to half the bed. So that even if it were admitted that the bed had been alienated, the Government were not taking away anything from the owners, because they could not utilise the bed to-day. The Government were simply proposing in a practical way to take the water and the bed or channel where the water was found. In the circumstances he could not understand why the Council had suggested the amendment. He therefore moved—

That the amendment be not made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment not made.

No. 2.—Clause 2: Definition of "irrigable." After the words "means land" insert "which the Commissioners certify to be suitable for irrigation and":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill provided that all land should be ratable which was capable of irrigation, but there might be land which, whilst capable of irrigation, would not be profitable to irrigate because of its nature. The amendment had been made in another place at the instance of the Government. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 3.—Clause 5: Strike out this clause:

No. 4.—Clause 7: Strike out this clause:

No. 5.—Clause 12: Strike out "the bed whereof is by this Act declared to have remained the property of the Crown":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These amendments all dealt with "bed," and consequential on the objection to amendment No. 1 he moved—

That amendments 3, 4, and 5 be not made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment not made.

No. 6.—Clause 15, line 30 of page : Strike out "not less than two years":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill provided that certain consideration

should be extended to those who have been irrigating for two years previous to the passing of the Bill. Another place had suggested that the limitation of two years should be struck out and that the consideration should be extended to all those who were irrigating at the time when the Bill was passed. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 7.—Clause 18: After the words "penalty of" insert "not exceeding":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill provided for a penalty of £5 per day, and the amendment was simply to provide that the penalty should not exceed £5 per day. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 8.—Clause 23, Subclause (1), line 9: Strike out "five" and insert "six":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment was to increase the rate of interest from 5 per cent. to 6 per cent. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 9.—Clause 23, Subclause (1): After "area" in line 12, insert "not exceeding 40 acres":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Clause 23 dealt with the taking of land in connection with artesian bores. The Council desired to insert a limitation that the area should not exceed 40 acres, as had been proposed in the original draft of the Bill. The original wording had been amended in this House, but the Council was of opinion that the original wording was better, and he agreed with another place. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Mr. MALE: The provision in the original Bill was for the reservation of an area of at least 40 acres. The amendment was certainly an improvement on the original draft.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 10.—Clause 25: Strike out Subclauses (3) and (4):

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was a proposal to strike out the reference as to how the regulations should be made under the Act. The object of another place was to strike out the proposal as contained in the Bill with a view to inserting a rather lengthy provision contained in amendment No. 26. As he could not agree to No. 26 on the ground that the provision contained in Clause 25 was a better method of dealing with the matter and gave Parliament the control it was entitled to, he moved—

That the amendment be not made.

Mr. MALE: The amendment of the Legislative Council was preferable to the proposal of the Government. It provided more safeguards and gave the people concerned better knowledge of what was happening.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the Interpretation Act provision was made to meet practically the whole of the points contained in amendment No. 26. The mover of the amendment in another place must have got his idea from the Interpretation Act.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then you cannot object to it here if it is in another Act.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But the amendment was altogether superfluous. The Interpretation Act was passed with a view to obviate the necessity for going into details in Bills of this description.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: All the measures which had been passed were along the lines of the provisions contained in the original Bill, and moreover, the Interpretation Act contained a similar provision which applied to all legislation. As a matter of fact, all that was needed in the Bill was to take power to make regulations, because the Interpretation Act provided that the regulations should be valid or might be disallowed. If the Committee accepted the amendment of another place, they would be going contrary to the Interpretation Act, which was applicable to all measures.

Mr. McDONALD: The main point of difference between the amendment and the provision in the original Bill was that where one provided that the regulations should be laid upon the Table of both Houses within 14 days, the Legislative Council's amendment provided for them being Tabled within 30 days.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The difference in the two methods of procedure was that in the Interpretation Act and in nearly all our legislation it was provided that before a regulation could be disallowed it must be taken exception to by both Houses of Parliament. In the proposal now sought to be introduced by the Legislative Council a regulation could be disallowed by either House of Parliament. This was giving one House the power to disallow a regulation although the measure itself had been passed by both Houses.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The amendment, if made, would permit either House of Parliament to disallow a regulation. That, in his opinion, was the proper course. It should not be necessary for both Houses to disallow a regulation, as regulations were not part of the Legislation passed, but something drawn up at the will of the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: They must be in accordance with the Act.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, but we might have regulations framed such as those under the Food and Drugs Act. Those were in accordance with the Act, but were disallowed. If it took both Houses of Parliament to pass an Act it ought to take both Houses of Parliament to pass the regulations.

Mr. Thomas: That is what is desired here.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, to disallow. If either House of Parliament disagreed with regulations they ought to be disallowed. In other words, they ought to be passed by both Houses. In the Traffic Bill the Minister had adopted this proposal. Clause 29 of the Traffic Bill contained a proposal that either House of Parliament should have the power within one month to disallow

a regulation. What right had any body of Ministers to extend legislation for that was what it meant, and if the Government had a majority in both Houses they could enforce those regulations. The amendment ought to be accepted more especially as the Minister for Works had approved of the principle in the Traffic Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: One had only to put the other proposition before the House to see the sophistry of the leader of the Opposition. Regulations were provided for the purpose of carrying legislation, which had already received the sanction of both Houses of Parliament, into effect, and without those regulations in many instances important Acts would have no effect. Under the proposal of the Council which was supported by the leader of the Opposition, it would be possible for an Act which had already received the assent of Parliament to be rendered of no effect and practically abortive by the disallowance of regulations by one House of Parliament. That might be done in connection with important measures such as the Mining Bill or the Health Bill, where much of the administrative work of the Bill was left to regulations, but regulations which must be within the covering power of the parent Act. If regulations were gazetted by any Minister which were contrary to the provisions of the parent Act, those regulations could be vetoed in a court of law: it did not need disallowance. Cabinet were prevented from framing regulations which were against the wording and spirit of the Act. The danger suggested by the leader of the Opposition was therefore non-existent. If we accepted the amendment of the Council we would make it possible for them to render void important provisions of measures which already had received the assent of both Houses of Parliament and the King. It would be a dangerous innovation.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It could not be an innovation, because it was in existence to-day. Seldom or ever did either House of Parliament interfere with regulations. The Honorary Minister's

patent medicine regulations was a case in point. Another place had the power and disallowed the regulations, and the disallowance was accepted by the Minister, and the regulations cancelled. Why deprive any portion of Parliament, which had to be consulted when passing the original legislation, from having the right of the review of regulations framed in accordance with the Act of Parliament? These regulations were approved by Cabinet and laid on the Table of the House for any member to take exception to, and if a member thought that a regulation was unjust he could move that it be disallowed. The House decided if the regulation should stand. If there was no clause of this sort it would be of no avail for another place to consider the regulations.

The Minister for Works: Was the amendment in accordance with the Interpretation Act?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: One could not say.

The Minister for Works: Then why amend the Interpretation Act if that is so?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister for Works on the one hand said it was, and the Minister for Lands on the other hand said it was not. The Minister had admitted that this was a just provision, because he had inserted it in the Traffic Bill. Either House of Parliament had the right to refuse and endorse regulations, but we must not consider another place altogether in this connection, because it might be that this House desired to take exception to some regulation and perhaps might not be able to annul regulations because there was not the power. If either House had the power to stop legislation, surely either House ought to have the power to stop regulations that were drafted outside of Parliament but under the legislation.

Mr. THOMAS: When a Bill was before Parliament it needed the consent of both Houses before it became law. One House could not carry it through without the other. Ultimately when the Bill became law it might occur to one House that it would like to make an amendment

in that Bill which had previously received the consent of both Houses, but one House could not do that without the consent of the other. If we carried this amendment, one House of Parliament, while it could not carry an amendment of the Bill, would be able to block the working of the Bill which had received the consent of both Houses. While there was not the power to carry an amendment without both Houses approved, if we were to carry this proposition it would give one House the power to stultify the legislation of both Houses, which would not be fair, logical, or just.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the amendment had been taken from the Interpretation Act it was unnecessary to put it in this Bill. The Interpretation Act had been passed to govern this sort of thing, and we should be guided by that measure. If the amendment was in accord with the Interpretation Act it was superfluous, and if it was not in accord with it, it was absolutely wrong.

Mr. DWYER: What was proposed was a very dangerous innovation. The Interpretation Act seemed to have stood the test of time, and to say that we should make an alteration now seemed to be rather an extraordinary proposition and amounted to this, that the amendment, small and innocent as it looked, was nothing more nor less than an attempt on the part of its introducer that another Chamber should have additional powers of legislation. The position at present was that a Bill after passing the usual formalities in this Chamber was sent along to another place, went through certain formalities there, and having received the Governor's assent it became law. It might contain provision for regulations to be made under it. It was certain that these regulations must be under the purview of the Bill. If they were outside the scope of the Bill they would be *ultra vires*. They must also be reasonable. It seemed to him that once we legislated we laid down the big, broad principle, and regulations were purely machinery for carrying into effect a law laid down by Parliament. If the amendment proposed in this Bill was carried

into effect it would simply mean that after a law had been passed and placed on the statute-book, even in the case of such a necessary Act as the Municipal Corporations Act, the mere vote of any one Chamber could nullify the whole of that Act, render it of absolutely no effect. Section 11 of the Interpretation Act, which it was proposed to amend, provided that these regulations should be laid before Parliament within 14 days after publication, if Parliament was then sitting, and if Parliament should not be sitting, then within 14 days after its next meeting, and enacted that all such instruments when so published should have the force of law and continue in force unless repealed or altered under the power given by the Act or disallowed by both Houses of Parliament. In other words every Bill introduced dealing with the establishment of regulations could have legislation contained in it, providing for the repeal and alteration of regulations made under it, but in the absence of any such special provision, the regulations must be disallowed by both Houses. In many Acts it had become customary to say how regulations should be repealed or altered and the Traffic Bill was one of these. There was already ample provision in the Interpretation Act, and no necessity for alteration. The present legislation under the Interpretation Act was that where a Bill made no provision to the contrary, the regulations had the force of law unless disallowed by both Houses, but in every case where regulations might be made under an Act, such Act also could go further and say these regulations might be disallowed by either House of Parliament. In other words, we had perfect liberty at the present time to say that regulations should be allowed by both Houses of Parliament or either, and if this proposal was carried it would restrict that liberty and give to each of the Chambers a power which was never contemplated they should possess.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: One could not see where the perfect liberty came in under the Interpretation Act. There it was laid down very clearly what the

course was. The power to disallow regulations must be exercised by Parliament as a whole, unless we legislated in the Bill itself. We had perfect liberty to legislate notwithstanding the Interpretation Act. That was the liberty we were asked to exercise now. That was the liberty exercised in the Traffic Bill. The Upper House simply said "We send this Bill back to you and as you have done this in the Traffic Bill, we ask you to do it in this." If it was desirable in the Traffic Bill it was certainly desirable, or more so, in the Irrigation Bill. He could not imagine any piece of legislation under which it was more necessary to have careful supervision than this new legislation in the Irrigation Bill. There we were interfering with all sorts of rights and liberty, justly no doubt in most instances, but we might have the regulations creating very serious hardships indeed, and if there was any piece of legislation passed during the last two or three years where it was necessary that there should be due supervision over the acts of Cabinet and the Executive Council, it was in legislation of this description. He could not understand why there should be any objection at all. It seemed to him that when two Houses of Parliament had to be consulted to pass the original legislation, the regulations themselves ought to be subject to both Houses of Parliament. We were not warranted in taking away the right of another place to disallow regulations if they ought to be disallowed. The patent medicine legislation was an example, and he did not think that even Ministers would take exception to the fact that another place disallowed them and they were influenced to withdraw them. Those were regulations which were absolutely illegal and would have created terrible hardship on the people of this State. Those regulations were disallowed and Ministers were got out of the corner they had been put into by the impetuosity of the Honorary Minister in this House, and were only too glad to have an opportunity to climb down. He hoped the Committee would agree to the amendment suggested as he saw nothing objectionable in it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The leader of the Opposition would admit that we could not make regulations contrary to an Act, because even if Parliament did not disallow them, they might be questioned in a court of law. If we made regulations contrary to an Act and outside the power given by the Act they could be either disallowed by Parliament or questioned in a court of law, and of course they had been questioned, and regulations which were outside the power and intention of an Act had been rendered void by legal decisions. Therefore there was no danger in that particular direction. On the other hand there was danger, and the very case cited by the leader of the Opposition illustrated that danger. The reason why the Government gave another place the further opportunity of dealing with the regulations referred to was not that they desired that they should be withdrawn—that was far from their intention—but rather to remove any possible impression that owing to an adjournment for a month the Government were attempting to force the regulations through without the other House having had an opportunity of objecting. That had been the sole reason, and not because the Government desired to withdraw from the position they had taken up.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But they had the power to disallow.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, that had been provided under the Health Act.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And is it an innovation?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was an innovation in recent years. It occurred in only a very small proportion of all the many statutes passed since the inception of Responsible Government. In the case of the Health Act the disallowance of those regulations had practically rendered void a number of very important provisions in the Act, had rendered it impossible to carry those particular provisions into effect.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why not bring in fresh regulations, omitting those objected to?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The provisions alluded to were the most important in the Health Act, dealing with pure food and drugs, and vitally influencing the food of the people. It would be absolutely dangerous to accept this requested amendment. Rather should attention be devoted to making alterations in those few Acts in which this innovation had been introduced.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister had put a wrong colouring on this question when he said that because the regulations had been objected to by another place certain provisions of the Health Act were rendered valueless. It was only necessary to bring in further regulations omitting those to which exception had been taken.

The Minister for Lands: But it is the very one necessary to bring the provisions into effect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The only objection taken to these regulations had been that by them the sale of certain patent medicines was restricted.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There was no restriction.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why, the Minister had been prosecuting certain houses for exposing certain medicines for sale.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): No, because they would not say what those medicines contained.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And so they had been prosecuted for refusing to disclose information to the Minister.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I did not want it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This which the Minister had called an innovation was a very necessary rule in most of our big Acts affecting the public generally, and under which extensive powers were provided for the framing of regulations. It was no innovation, because it was not only in existence in our own statutes, but it was in the Commonwealth Interpretation Act, and therefore stood there for all Commonwealth Acts.

Mr. Turvey: But there is a big difference in the Houses there.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If either House of Parliament disallowed a regulation that regulation was thereby thrown out. There was something underneath this objection on the part of Ministers, who were making some point which they would not disclose to the public. They desired to crib the rights and powers of one section of Parliament to refuse to endorse regulations. The Committee would be doing a wrong thing in refusing to pass the amendment, which was already a law of the Commonwealth.

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

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|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 24 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 11 |

| | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|
| Majority for | .. | .. | 13 |
|--------------|----|----|----|

AYES.

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. McDowall |
| Mr. Bath | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Bolton | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Carpenter | Mr. B. J. Stubbs |
| Mr. Dwyer | Mr. Swan |
| Mr. Foley | Mr. Taylor |
| Mr. Gardiner | Mr. Thomas |
| Mr. Gill | Mr. Turvey |
| Mr. Green | Mr. Walker |
| Mr. Johnson | Mr. A. A. Wilson |
| Mr. Lander | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. Lewis | (Teller.) |
| Mr. McDonald | |

NOES

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| Mr. Allen | Mr. Moore |
| Mr. Broun | Mr. S. Stubbs |
| Mr. Harper | Mr. F. Wilson |
| Mr. Lefroy | Mr. Wisdom |
| Mr. Male | Mr. A. E. Piesse |
| Mr. Monger | (Teller.) |

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment not made.

No. 11.—Clause 26, Strike out this clause:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause referred to dealt with the definition of a channel through a swamp, etcetera, and had been introduced by the member for Northam. The clause was regarded as superfluous, but the hon. member had thought it made clearer the intentions of the Bill. The Legislative Council now desired that the clause should be struck

out. However, as the clause did no harm in the Bill he moved—

That the amendment be not made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment not made.

No. 12.—Clause 30, Strike out Subclause (1) and insert "(1) A board shall be constituted by the appointment of one of the members by the Governor, and the election of the other members by the occupiers of irrigable land in the district."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This provided for altering the constitution of the boards. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 13.—Clause 30, Subclause (3), Strike out all the words from the beginning down to "shall" in the third line of the subclause, and insert "The Order in Council for the constitution of the board shall declare the number of members of the board, the time and mode of election of the elective members, their term of office, not exceeding three years, and the time at which they shall":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was very much involved. After having gone through it carefully with the assistance of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly he had found that it was due to a printer's error. The proposal was to strike out all the words down to "shall" in the third line and to insert others. There was no "shall" in the third line, but evidently the fourth line was meant.

The CHAIRMAN: It could be accepted as a clerical or printer's error, because there was no sense in the amendment the other way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Subject to that, he moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 14.—Clause 32: Strike out this clause and insert in lieu thereof a clause dealing with construction and maintenance of works:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The desire of the Council was to substitute a clause which went into more detail

and made clearer the obligations of the Minister before he started the construction and maintenance of works. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 15.—Clause 35, lines 6, 7, and 8: Omit the words "the Minister or the Board, as the case may be, has taken the steps or done the thing," and insert the words "the alleged injury has occurred":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment would make the clause clearer. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 16.—Clause 39, line 3: Strike out the word "all":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The word "all" was superfluous. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 17.—Clause 39: Add at the end of Subclause (1) the following words:—"Provided that land shall not be ratable if the Commissioners certify that such land is, in their opinion, unsuitable for irrigation, nor until works are constructed from which the Board is prepared to supply water to such land":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proviso was necessary, and he moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 18.—Clause 44, line 6: After the word "other" insert "unavoidable":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This would make the clause clearer, and he moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 19.—Clause 50: Strike out this clause:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was consequential on the striking out of the provision for local governing bodies to be constituted boards. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 20.—Clause 51: Add a new subclause to provide for a poll in respect to proposed loans:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This would improve the Bill, and he moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 21.—Clause 51, Subclause (5): After the word "fund" insert "of one pound per centum":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment defined the amount of the sinking fund. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 22.—Clause 61, Subclause (1): Strike out "irrigable."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause empowered the Minister to acquire land, but the Minister would be limited to acquiring irrigable land. That was undesirable because there might be other land which it would be only fair for the Minister to acquire in conjunction with irrigable land. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 23.—Clause 61: Strike out Subclause (8) and insert a new subclause providing for the determining of compensation:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment went into greater detail, and would assist the court to come to a fair decision. It practically meant repeating in this measure the provisions of the Public Works Act of 1902, which it was assumed would be taken into consideration when compensation was being granted under this measure. Perhaps, however, it would be better to include the provisions as requested. He moved—

That the amendment be made.

Question passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 24.—Clause 61, Subclause (11): After "regulations," in line 1, insert the words "sell under any of the provisions of the Land Act, 1898, or any amendment thereof; or may":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause gave the right after land was acquired to grant it under lease in perpetuity. The amendment suggested that in addition to leasehold the land might be sold. He could not agree to that because the object of acquiring land was to get a guarantee that it would be used for irrigation in small areas to encourage intense culture and closer settlement. There was only one way to guarantee a continuation of that and it was by the leasehold system. If the land was sold there would be nothing to prevent it from being gathered up into large estates again. In an irrigation district it was essential that the holdings should be small and that they should be cultivated. The leasehold system alone would give that guarantee. One of the main objects of the Bill would be defeated if land was acquired and then sold. He moved—

That the amendment be not made.

Hon FRANK WILSON: The Minister's argument was not convincing. Why should he not have the power to sell as well as to lease irrigation farms? The public would prefer to purchase holdings. The argument that leasehold would prevent large estates fell to the ground. There was no law to prevent a man from acquiring a number of leases and it could even be stipulated that no individual should own more than one irrigation block. The proposal would carry out a small portion of the policy of the Government, a policy which had been made notorious by their abandonment of it to a large extent so far as agricultural farms were concerned. The amendment of the Council was desirable. Every man and every farmer should be his own landlord. By all means let them restrict the area which a man could acquire, but let him be the owner of his plot and build up his fortune on his own ground the same as Ministers who had taken up farms were doing. He had yet to learn that any one of the Ministers had taken a step to convert his farm into leasehold. The Minister for Works some years ago converted a lease he held on the goldfields into freehold.

The Minister for Works: You tried to rob me.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That would be impossible even if he had the inclination.

The Minister for Works: You did do so.

The Premier: Could we convert into leasehold if we desired?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: A special lease could be granted.

The Minister for Lands: No, there is no power under the Land Act.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: A special lease under the Land Act had been held by himself.

The Minister for Lands: Only up to 20 acres.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But a dozen could be granted. If Ministers brought down a Bill to convert their own freeholds into leasehold, both Houses would be glad to pass it.

The Premier: Will you guarantee to pass a measure to convert freeholds into leaseholds?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: When the Bill was before the House, he suggested to the Government that the tenure should be made optional.

The Minister for Lands: You should induce your friends in the Upper House to pass a measure which will enable us to convert from freehold to leasehold.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What he would do would be to bring all the pressure he could to bear to induce the Upper House to pass a measure which would make it optional. The Minister for Works was persistent in his desire to get his goldfields block converted into freehold. What we wanted now was to see the country go ahead, and it could not go ahead under the system proposed by the Government. Hon. members opposite all liked freehold.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It had already been pointed out by him that the object was to get an absolute guarantee that these holdings would be held in small areas, and by such means we would bring about intense culture. It was essential that every inch of land that could be profitably worked should be worked in irrigation districts. We could

not afford to waste anything, and there was only one way in which we could bring about the desired end, and that was under the leasehold tenure.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not at all: What about France, where there are the smallest holdings in the world?

The Minister for Lands: They have divided up the land in France on three separate occasions.

Hon. Frank Wilson: All small freeholds.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, but by revolution.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The leader of the Opposition had repeated the story with regard to his (the Minister for Works) land at Kalgoorlie. He held this leasehold block for years, and paid the annual leasehold fee. There were improvements on the block, and, as a matter of fact, he lived on it before he was married, and then the Government of the day came along and gave him notice that he should either convert the block into freehold or forfeit it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did you not stand to your principles and fight it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The leader of the Opposition wanted to rob him. The improvements on the land were worth in the vicinity of £100, and he had either to forfeit that amount or convert the land into freehold.

Hon. Frank Wilson: If you had sold the improvements, you would have passed them on to the other fellow.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was what the leader of the Opposition would do as a land jobber, but it was not what he (the Minister for Works) would care to do. It did not matter so long as it was transferred to some other poor fellow.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And directly you get the freehold you sell it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was not so.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, immediately.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When he became associated with the coast, as distinct from the goldfields, he sold his interest on the goldfields, and settled on the coast. The fact remained that the

block was held for a considerable time under leasehold, by virtue of a miner's right, and if he had not completed it, he would have been compelled to forfeit it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You made every pound you could out of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was astounding to find the leader of the Opposition retailing this story at Geraldton. The hon. member had nothing better to talk about than tripe of this description, and both the hon. member and Mr. Colebatch talked drivel, which was simply appalling.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No doubt he was out of order.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Were you surprised at the result of the election?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not have been so bad if the facts had been truly represented, but the hon. member distorted them to suit his own ends. The desire of the Government was to get a guarantee that the land would be held in small holdings in perpetuity, and for that reason it was proposed to give a lease in perpetuity, and a lease only.

Mr. MALE: It was his intention to support the amendment made by the Legislative Council, and if the Minister was earnest in his desire that the irrigable land in the State should be worked to advantage, then he should support the amendment. In failing to support it, he failed to be consistent with his desire to carry out the intentions of the Bill. The Bill should be drafted in such a way that everyone who desired to take up land in irrigable areas would go along and do so. In any case if it were deemed necessary and advisable, a clause could be inserted to guard against one person owning the whole of the freehold of one irrigable area. If we were to make this Bill such that it would commend itself to the people, and induce them to come here and build up homes for themselves, we should enable them to acquire the freehold of the land. Unless we did that we would find that those people who came from oversea would go to the places where they could obtain freehold.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The only incentive that the settler would have was to secure land which he could utilise, and if in an irrigation settlement he had fifty acres under irrigation, he would have the maximum that he could satisfactorily cultivate. There was nothing in the contention that there was no desire to pass this Bill, because hon. members had only to look at the attitude taken by the Minister for Works in regard to the other amendments. Most of them had been agreed to, and would be incorporated in the Bill. The biggest irrigation scheme in Australia, the Barren Jack, was being settled under this system, and settlement was going on apace, and already the preparatory work was being undertaken to make water available in that scheme.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Even at this hour the Minister ought to agree to the amendment made by the Legislative Council.

Mr. Thomas: No hope.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It should be the desire of every hon. member to see the Irrigation Bill passed. At the same time we should consider what inducements would be offered to investors to come here. We should induce people to come here and develop this land, and do something to which they might look forward, rather than they should have their land subject to reappraisal every ten or twenty years, as would be the case under the leasehold tenure. We ought at least to make it optional. Where would land settlement be to-day if we had had to depend on leasehold tenure?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nowhere.

The Minister for Lands: Twenty million acres in South Australia are settled under leasehold.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It was all very well to make comparisons with other countries, but the lands there were not similar to our own.

The Minister for Lands: South Australia is very similar.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: We had our own special difficulties, and who was better able to understand them than the people who lived here, and who knew the coun-

try? It would be unwise for the Government to insist upon the leasehold tenure.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Minister for Lands, in his statement that the leasehold system had been adopted in an irrigation settlement in one of the Eastern States had not proved that the system had been successful. As a matter of fact it was only on trial, and he found fault with the Minister for endeavouring to bring about a change in the system which we knew was acceptable to the people of the State. He could not understand why the Government wished to take such a drastic step in the alteration of the tenure of our lands when it was known that such a step was likely to be detrimental to the best interests of the country. It was admitted on all sides that already a serious blunder had been made by the Government in introducing the leasehold tenure of land in a Bill brought forward last session. This information became spread abroad, and to a great extent people would be prevented from coming to the country to take up land if they had the idea that the leasehold system was the only system available. That might to some extent account for the falling off in land settlement. It was to avoid such a happening that he wished to impress upon the Government the wisdom of accepting the amendment. It had been proved, both at Mildura and Renmark, where the freehold system was successfully in operation, that there had been no undue aggregation of land in the hands of individual owners. He would impress on the Committee the advisability of the State offering the best means possible to encourage settlement. We wanted to encourage closer settlement in the South-West, and to retain that large sum of money which was being daily sent away to the other States to build up in those States industries which should be flourishing in Western Australia. If it was desired to do that, we should be slow to interfere with those methods of settlement which had been so successful in the past. If there was a danger of these lands falling into the hands of a few people surely there

was some other means by which that could be prevented. No doubt there were difficulties which were purely local and applied especially to some lands, difficulties that had to be overcome in the initial settlement, and special encouragement should be offered to people to take those lands up and improve them. We should let them know that after they had spent years of work and all their capital in developing and improving their holdings, perhaps losing a great deal of money by way of experiment in the early stages, they would be able to obtain the freehold and not be subject to reappraisal at the end of every ten or twenty years. He hoped the Minister would see fit to accept the amendment.

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

| | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 23 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 11 |

Majority for .. 12

AYES.

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. McDonald |
| Mr. Bath | Mr. McDowall |
| Mr. Bolton | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Carpenter | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Dwyer | Mr. B. J. Stubbs |
| Mr. Foley | Mr. Swan |
| Mr. Gardner | Mr. Thomas |
| Mr. Gill | Mr. Turvey |
| Mr. Green | Mr. Walker |
| Mr. Johnson | Mr. A. A. Wilson |
| Mr. Lander | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. Lewis | (Teller) |

NOES.

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| Mr. Allen | Mr. Moore |
| Mr. Broun | Mr. S. Stubbs |
| Mr. Harper | Mr. F. Wilson |
| Mr. Lefroy | Mr. Wisdom |
| Mr. Male | Mr. A. E. Plesse |
| Mr. Monger | (Teller). |

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment not made.

No. 25.—Add the following new clause to stand as the last clause of Part III., as follows:—(27.) This part of this Act shall have effect only within such areas as the Governor may from time to time, by proclamation published in the *Government Gazette*, declare:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was a proposal to limit the operations of Part III. to certain areas to be proclaimed. The object was to limit the scope of the

measure, as far as the ownership of the natural waters was concerned, to that portion of the State which might be proclaimed. He did not agree with the proposed amendment for the reason, in the first place, that it was undesirable to have dual ownership. If this amendment were carried, unless the Government proclaimed the whole of the State, portion of the people would be under the impression that they held the ownership of the natural waters, whereas those in other parts that had been proclaimed would realise that the State had taken over the ownership of such waters. That was altogether against the spirit of the measure. The spirit of the measure was to proclaim State ownership of natural waters, and he could not see why the scope of the measure should be limited. In actual practice the ownership of these waters would only be assumed as they were required for irrigation purposes. But under this proposal before we did that we would have to proclaim. Hon. members might argue that this did not limit at all, that we could proclaim the whole of the State, but if we were to do that we would be ignoring the spirit of this measure, as by adoption of the amendment it was an indication that we would only proclaim in certain districts. The measure should once and for all settle this question of the ownership of natural waters. Under common law to-day they did belong to the State, but some people were under the impression that they owned them. While they had to a certain extent the free use of them, they could not do it as they liked. It was beyond argument that the alienation of water was not possible. The proposed amendment was so impracticable and so out of step with the general spirit of the measure that he thought hon. members would agree with him that it should not be made. He moved—

That the amendment be not made.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was not easy to follow the Minister in his contention that the suggestion of the Legislative Council was one that would undermine the whole of the Bill.

The Minister for Works: What I said was that it was out of step with the Bill.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It seemed a reasonable request to make that the Governor should declare by proclamation the areas that would be affected by this portion of the Bill.

The Minister for Works: It would only mislead the public.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That could be easily got over by proclaiming any portion or the whole of the State if necessary. Why put obstacles in the way of getting this legislation through? People would know full well that they could at any time during the currency of the measure be brought under it by proclamation, and he could not understand why the proposal of another place should have a detrimental effect. If the amendment was not accepted it would be another barrier to the adoption of this Bill, which he believed the country wanted.

Mr. MALE: Apparently the intention of this Bill was to provide machinery and means for the purposes of starting irrigation works. The intention of the Bill was not purely for the purpose of defining that all natural waters right through out the State should be the property of the Crown.

The Minister for Works: One is the natural corollary of the other.

Mr. MALE: That was not really the object of the Bill. The Bill was to give the means and machinery to carry on irrigation works wherever it was possible to carry them on, and if Part III. of the measure was proclaimed from time to time in any districts where it was necessary to carry on that work, it would be quite sufficient; otherwise we might prevent people from continuing with work they were going on with to-day for fear the Government might come along and stop that work and interfere with what they were doing. There were quite sufficient powers if the amendment suggested by another place was made. It would not interfere in any way with the work the Minister wished to do. The very fact of people knowing that the proclamation could be issued at any time for any district would to a very great extent in it-

self define the ownership of the natural waters right throughout the State.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not made.

No. 26—Add the following new clause:—(1) Any regulations or by-laws made or purporting to be made or by virtue of this Act shall—(a) be published in the *Gazette*; (b) take effect from the date of publication or from a later date to be specified therein; and (c) be judicially noticed, and unless and until they are disallowed as hereinafter provided, or except in so far as they are in conflict with any express provision of this or any other Act, be conclusively deemed to be valid. (2) Such regulations and by-laws shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within thirty days after publication if Parliament is in session, and if not, then within thirty days after the commencement of the next session. (3) If either House of Parliament passes a resolution at any time within one month after any such regulation or by-law has been laid before it disallowing such regulation or by-law, then the same shall thereupon cease to have effect, subject, however, to such and the like savings as apply in the case of the repeal of a statute.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The question of regulations had already been discussed and decided here. The Legislative Council desired to make provision for the operation of regulations. In accordance with his intention already expressed he moved—

That the amendment be not made.

Question passed: the Council's amendment not made.

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

BILL.—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Seaddan) in moving the second reading said : It is not my intention to detain the House at any great length in introducing the second reading of this Bill, because it will be remembered that last session a measure of a similar nature received consideration at the hands of this Chamber. It reached another place, but on the grounds that hon. members there had not time to properly consider its provisions, it was rejected. The Bill on this occasion is to all intents and purposes similar to that then introduced. One or two minor alterations have been made. These, however, do not materially affect the principle of the measure. The Bill itself repeals and re-enacts with amendments the Land and Income Tax Act of 1907 and also repeals the Divident Duties Act of 1902, and extends its provisions relating to income to public companies so that while we repeal the Dividend Duties Act we do not repeal the provision that dividend duty shall be paid to the revenue of this State by companies declaring dividends. So far as the land tax is concerned the principle has already been adopted and placed upon our statute-book by Parliament, and has been endorsed by the people at two subsequent elections, so that from that point of view we have already accepted the principle of land values taxation. I admit at once that while all parties are agreed with regard to the equitable nature of the land tax, yet we differ with regard to some of the essentials, particularly with regard to the incidence of that tax. For instance, the Government and those supporting them on this side of the House believe that a tax on land values should be levied against all landowners without exception and thus we have provided in this Bill that all land shall be subject to a land tax and that the land tax shall be of uniform rate so far as it affects land that is held by residents within the State. Absentees, however, will be called upon to pay an additional 50 per cent. as they have to do under the existing law. The only exemption of any importance provided in

the measure now is to continue the exemption to those who take up conditional purchase lands for the first five years, but this will only apply to those who have taken up such land prior to the passing of the measure. I have previously explained that the policy of the Government is to make the tax leviable on all owners of land irrespective of whether it is conditional purchase or freehold, and to make any abatement by dealing with the land in a different way so far as rents are concerned. Of course until we have this provision on our statute-book we are not prepared to introduce the other, but eventually the provisions will fall lighter on the new-comer than under existing conditions. We provide that land at present exempt within municipal boundaries—that to the value of £50—shall come under the operations of the Bill. It will be urged perhaps that the small landholder should not be levied upon in this direction, but I claim that from the point of view of the incidence of the tax and the principle underlying it that it is not wise to have any exemptions, because everybody knows that in this State as elsewhere a considerable amount of town lands as well as country lands are dummed and by this means a great number of people are able to avoid having to pay their just dues by way of taxation. If the amount is made uniform, as we propose, for all lands then it will not be necessary for the purpose of avoiding taxation to dummy land. Again, the exemption of country lands up to the amount of £250 has been removed for exactly the same reason; but the tax is so light that I hold it will not be a burden, and in any case the position, as I explained in the Budget speech, is that we are called upon each year by every member of this Chamber and of another place and by the public generally to continually expend increasingly large sums of money for the purpose of carrying on the services of the Government. More particularly may I refer to the discussion which took place only last night on the question of the educational system. Each member vied with his fellow members in showing that he was desirous that more

money should be spent on education; but none touched the vital point, namely, that while prepared to urge the expenditure of money he was prepared also to urge the taxpayer to find the money. I hold that as we have to find the additional money, it is better to find it by means of a just system of taxation than to call upon those who by their energies and pluck are developing the country to pay a greater sum for the different services rendered by the Government. Again, it is not to be forgotten that under conditions where a person is providing his labour and his capital also to develop his land in the interior he has to pay a greater sum to the Government for the purpose of getting the wherewithal to develop his land. The more land he has under crop the more manure does he require, the more will he take off at harvest time, and the greater amount will he have to pay for the carriage of his goods over the railways. All this is an additional burden on the man who is developing his country, as against his neighbour who is content to hold his land for increased values. A great many are doing that. A great many are holding their land, complying with the terms of the Land Act for the purpose of making it freehold, with a view to disposing of it at the enhanced value given to it by the expenditure of public funds in the construction of costly railways, in providing which we are adding to our public debt. These people merely sit down tight and do nothing but comply with the terms of the Land Act, which in my opinion are not sufficiently broad to enable a man to properly work his holding and make a living from it, but only just enough for the purpose of getting the enhanced value which comes from the expenditure of public funds. Under the circumstances it is a just claim that those who are not developing their holdings should contribute something to the revenue by way of a return for the enhanced value given to their land by the expenditure of public funds. The same thing applies to our towns and cities. A great number of town and city blocks were obtained almost for nothing in the early

days, and while I am not going to detract from those who had the hardihood to come here when the place was looked upon as a sandy desert, still one has to remember that we have progressed since then, and that those people, notwithstanding the hardships with which they had to contend in the past, have in most instances done very well through the expenditure of public money and the introduction of population. The town and city blocks have increased tremendously in value, and the landlord, if he has been able to hold his land, is in a position to obtain a greater return from that land than otherwise he would have received. A block in Perth is not more valuable from the point of view of being land than it would if it were out on the borders of the State. Its greater value is due to the population surrounding it, a population which is bringing business to the whole of the property in Hay-street, Perth, and I claim that we have a right to ask the holders of that land to pay something in return for the presence of that population which is due undoubtedly to the expenditure of public money. A feature of it is that at present we are, and probably for many years to come we will be, compelled to find huge sums of money for the purpose of assisting in the development of the country. No one I have ever yet heard has complained of any Government finding money for this purpose. We do hear at times statements about extravagance, although never yet have I been able to pin our critics down to anything definite.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Hundreds of times.

The PREMIER: I have heard a weary old tale about State steamers, without which the hon. member would have nothing to discuss. I am prepared to forgive him that, seeing that he is so denuded of anything fresh or worthy of discussion. Outside of that there has been no direct statement of extravagance in any one direction. I have endeavoured at different times to explain how we have expended the money we have raised, and for which we have pledged the assets of the State, on the London market and in

Australia, and no one has been able to show me that we have expended that money unwisely. Just whether we have attempted to do more than the population of the State can fairly carry is another point. We have to remember the fact that we have a tremendous area to develop, and that when under our old method of settlement people were permitted to go out in all directions and pick the eyes out of the country—that was prior to the system of survey before selection being introduced—it meant that to provide those people with facilities to get that produce to market it was necessary to build railways in all directions through sparsely populated country. We have recently reached that stage at which we have one mile of railway for every 108 of population. That is a condition of affairs which requires serious consideration. In my opinion, the one method to pursue in providing the cost of the railways which we construct to assist in the development of our country, is to place a tax upon those land values which will compel those who will not use their land to return something directly to revenue for the loss sustained on a railway through that railway having to run past big undeveloped holdings. In our cities the same thing applies. We expended a large sum of money in the purchase of the Perth Tramways for the convenience of the general public. What does this convenience of the general public mean? It means that those living well out of the business centre require from time to time to visit the heart of the City in order to transact business. Is it not to the material good of the man carrying on business in the heart of the City that these tramways should be run out in different directions for the purpose of bringing people to the centre of the City so that he may be permitted to do good business? The general taxpayers' money was pledged for the purpose of purchasing these trams, and we should not call upon these people alone to carry the burden. In my opinion, it is not a proper system of government to make the people living far out of the City pay all the charge for providing that convenience,

for the man carrying on business in Hay-street is reaping just as much advantage as the person travelling on the trams. Under existing circumstances we are compelled to provide that our railways shall pay working expenses, interest, and sinking fund on the charges and moneys raised. It has been found in other parts of the world that the system of taxation on land values is the most equitable method of providing the wherewithal for the carrying on of the development of the country. I could, if necessary, furnish sufficient evidence to show that wherever land values taxation has been put into operation the system has been continued. Exactly the same thing applies to Western Australia. We had a memorable election in 1905, when the then Government went to the country opposed to the introduction of the land tax; but eventually they found that, owing to the financial stress they were in, it was necessary to raise further revenue. This they admitted by the introduction of that Bill. I remember no better speech made in support of land values taxation than that made by the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) sitting on the Government cross benches on that occasion; in fact, I could repeat that speech, and it would serve to say all that was required on the question of land values taxation. On that occasion the then Government, although returned in opposition to the system, placed it on the statute-book; but to show that they were not pledged to the system they divided it into two Bills, the Assessment Bill and the Machinery Bill. That was to provide the machinery by which the land tax could be levied each year, and to provide that unless a Bill was put through each year and passed, the land tax would not apply. In this way did they try to make the public believe that it was only to get them over a trying period; but neither that nor any subsequent Government have ever yet been able to do anything other than to continue the operation of the land tax. I do not think the State is ever likely to repeal that provision. It has never yet been repealed in any part of the British Dominions, so far as I know, and I can mention other parts of the world

where its operation has been extended because it has been found to be of tremendous value. The main alterations in the Bill as compared with the present Act are not many after all, although in some instances they have far-reaching effects. The tax proposed is one penny in the pound, and it is applied to all lands, improved or unimproved. On the face of it that may not be agreeable to some hon. members, as being opposed to what they consider the best method of land taxation. Immediately we introduce a system of land values taxation with exemptions for improvements we undermine its very principle, which is to levy on all lands a certain specific sum each year. If in the circumstances a person holds his land out of use he has to find the wherewithal—

Mr. Broun: A tax on unused land will make the owners improve it.

The PREMIER: Not necessarily.

Mr. Broun: Rather than pay double tax they will use the land.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is only proving that land values taxation is of tremendous value to the community, in that it compels a person to use his land, and so returns to the community some of the increased value given to the land by the community itself. But as I say, there is no just ground why a person, because he has improved his holding, should be compelled to pay something more than the person who has not; because if that were just we ought to make provision that when a person takes up a block of land, unless he improves it he will be severely penalised. But the fact remains that under present methods the improvements themselves practically exempt all lands in agricultural areas and indeed in towns as well, because the necessary improvements are of such a nature that it does press very hardly on the owners to comply. To-day we have holders of large areas in different parts of the State who obtain a rebate equal to their improvements in the aggregate.

Mr. Broun: Improvements to the extent of £1 per acre.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will appreciate the fact that that might easily

take place on a very small area where all the improvements are taken into account, and all the rest of it remains out of use. I admit that something can be said from the point of view of compelling a person to utilise his land, but the imposition of a proper tax on a proper basis will bring about that condition of affairs and place all holders of land on exactly the same footing.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You do not give any provision for exemption.

The PREMIER: I disagree with the principle of exemption entirely. The absentee owners will be called upon to pay an additional 50 per cent. That is a fair imposition upon a person who is an owner of land in Western Australia and who resides out of Western Australia. If the owner resides here, he has to pay additional taxes to the public purse in many ways. Whether he uses his land or not he is continually paying taxes in different directions. Under these circumstances it is a fair charge in view of the fact that an absentee owner is undoubtedly getting the same advantage as the person who lives in Western Australia, who is staking his all in the country and who is engaging himself and frequently others too, in developing the State and bringing added value to the land held by the absentee. The absentee should contribute more.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But he does according to the schedule.

The PREMIER: That is correct. I should have said that the land tax is being doubled for the holders who reside in the State and is being made 2d. in the pound for absentees. The rates are set out in the schedule and this is a departure from the existing law—that instead of having to introduce a Bill annually the measure fixing this amount will remain in force unless it is repealed or amended. The consideration of a fresh Bill every year will not be required for the purpose of imposition of a land tax. Miners' homestead leases which are really cultivable or grazing land, have, through a defect in the existing Act, been exempted from tax, but provision is made to tax them under this measure. The

name conveys quite a wrong idea. They are called miners' homestead leases simply because they are on mining areas and I believe they are controlled through the Mines Department. In any case they are in the mining districts and they are used just the same as similar homesteads in different parts of the State. By an oversight they were exempted under the existing law, but we propose to bring them under this measure as similar lands in other parts of the State. There is another departure which I think is just and reasonable. Land which is resumed by the Crown is exempt from taxation, and our land tax provisions under the existing law provide that the tax shall be paid by the owner as at the 31st December. The result is that if we resume land on the 30th December, notwithstanding that the owner has had the use and benefit of the land during the 12 months with the exception of one day, he is entirely exempted from the payment of any tax for that year. That is quite unfair. I could mention instances where land has been resumed in December, for instance, in connection with the resumptions in Perth for the purpose of improvements to the railways; huge areas of valuable land were resumed and not only had the Government to make provision for the payment for the land, but we lost the whole of the land tax which would have been paid if the resumption had been held over for another month.

Mr. Male: You should have resumed in January.

The PREMIER: The previous Government and not the present Government were responsible for that.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There is nothing in that.

The PREMIER: I am not complaining about the date of the resumption, but am pointing out that, on account of the Government resuming the land in December in lieu of January, they not only had to pay the same price, but also lost the land tax which would have been paid by the holders from whom the land was resumed, because they were not in possession on the 31st December.

Mr. Taylor: That actually increased the price to the holders.

The PREMIER: Yes, we propose to levy the land tax against the land owner on a pro rata basis for the period during which he is in actual possession. If we resume land when six months of the year has expired the owner will pay one-half of the land tax levied on the land.

Mr. S. Stubbs: There is nothing unfair in that.

The PREMIER: On the other hand it is quite just to the owner who had had the benefit of being in possession of the land during the six months. We are not asking him to pay more than a fair charge and we might easily, perhaps, compel the owner to pay as though he held the land for the whole of the year. We have also inserted in this measure the Commonwealth provision for the compulsory resumption of land when it can be proved, and proved of course to the satisfaction of the courts, that the owner of the land has deliberately under-stated the value of the land in order to escape paying his fair share of taxation. That is only where it can be proved and when we resume we have to pay the price according to his own valuation plus the value of the improvements on the land and again plus 10 per cent. for compulsory resumption. That provision is very seldom put into operation. I do not know whether it has happened, but it is in the Commonwealth Act and it has the effect of causing taxpayers, sometimes against their will, to be honest.

Mr. Brown: If you are going to do that why do you require the Land Valuation Bill?

The PREMIER: If the Land Valuation Bill becomes law this provision will never operate.

Mr. Brown: You are incurring an extra expense through having the land valuation officers to value the land.

The PREMIER: Not at all. I do not propose to re-discuss the Land Valuation Bill more than to say that the hon. member is quite wrong in that statement. On the other hand we will be saving money. The Land Taxation Department have already made valuations in different parts

of the State and we have saved money through doing it, although it has involved the expenditure of some money. We have discovered land which was not previously assessed and which should have been assessed because the owners did not come under the exemption. The owners asserted that the land was not of more than £50 value whereas when the valuation was made it was found to exceed that amount. In country districts owners have asserted that the value was not over £250 and have claimed exemption, but when a valuation was made it was discovered, in some instances, that the amount was very much over the value of £250 and those people have been brought under the operation of the Act and have paid more in the first year than the cost of making the valuation. The same will apply to the Land Valuation Bill, if it is passed, when it comes into operation. Perhaps I may explain the interpretation of some of the terms used in this Bill. We have had the same difficulties as in most places to give a clear and easily understood definition of the term "unimproved value" of land, but we have already adopted an interpretation in the Land Valuation Bill and we have made a provision in the existing Bill to comply with the interpretation in the Land Valuation Bill. We, however, have made a slight change in the existing interpretation by causing the valuation of timber leases and concessions to be limited to 5s. per acre in order to conform with the Roads Act. Under the existing law, not being particularly specified, the road authorities impose a tax on one basis and the State on another. We propose to make it uniform by bringing it into line with the Roads Act. We have recast the definition of an owner although it is substantially in accordance with the present law, but it also agrees with the definition in the Land Valuation Bill. The existing provisions for assessment are re-enacted, but the valuations in the Land Valuation Bill, if it becomes law, will operate in lieu of those contained in this measure. We also provide what I think is a step in the right direction,

that the Commissioner may exempt taxpayers from making annual returns. We hear more complaints about having to make returns than we do against having to pay the tax.

Mr. Moore: Those are the lazy people.

The PREMIER: If that was so, there must be quite a number of lazy people in the community, but people justifiably complain, for where is the purpose of annually making a return when there has been no change in the ownership of the land and when the owner has not secured other land?

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is only necessary to declare that it is the same as in the previous year.

The PREMIER: That is permitted, but it is not in accordance with the law. The Commissioner may exempt taxpayers under this measure from putting in annual returns if he is of opinion that the existing return will suffice. Those are the chief alterations affecting the land tax. There are some alterations affecting the income tax. Income tax will now be imposed by the third schedule of this Bill, in lieu of the annual Income Tax Bill necessary under the existing law. The rates are the same as at present. When I say the same as at present I mean the same as those adopted last session, for the first time it is true. They are on the graduated scale with a 50 per cent. impost on absentees. Companies, however, will be required to pay income tax on the profits or net income as prescribed in the Dividend Duties Act. They will pay under the same conditions as taxpayers, but the impost will be 1s. in the pound as against 4d. in the pound or the graduated rate provided in the schedule. It has been proved conclusively that there are many local companies which have evaded taxation by refraining from declaring dividends. They have made profits, but have not declared dividends. There are fairly large institutions in this State privately owned or held by two or three persons which cut up all their profits by paying huge salaries. I have one mind, the two pro-

prietors of which cut up between them something like £17,000 a year by way of salaries. I do not know of any individual who is worth anything like a half of that sum per annum.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I thought it was £500 a month each.

The PREMIER: The hon. member evidently has some idea of what is happening. It was £500 a month to start with but it has been increased and they left a little to pay a dividend.

Mr. Male: They had to pay income tax.

The PREMIER: Yes, at the rate of 4d. in the pound, whereas under this Bill they will pay a dividend duty or the graduated rate—

Hon. Frank Wilson: They will pay 1s. under this measure.

The PREMIER: Yes, and if they declare dividends they will pay 1s., so that there will be no inducement for them to pay those huge salaries as in the past to evade their fair share of taxation. The interpretation of "business" it will be seen includes the business carried on by any club by virtue of a license granted under the Licensing Act of 1911. If a club does not make a profit it will not pay; if it does, then the club as well as any other institution should pay a tax on its profits.

Hon. Frank Wilson: A club does not declare dividends.

The PREMIER: But the club makes profits just the same. We have attempted to make more clear the law by which the profits on wool, timber, etcetera, produced in this State and sold outside this State is taxed. There have been difficulties in that direction and lawsuits as well. We want to avoid this kind of thing, and we have attempted to make the position clearer. We have provided also in the measure that profits on sales of freehold or leasehold estate shall be taxed, and the law is made clear as to taxing the profits on the sale of any business or undertaking. The provision to which exception was taken last year has been omitted. On further consideration I decided that it was preferable that that provision should

be omitted from the measure. It prevented loss being set against profit. For instance, a person carrying on the business of a land and estate agent might sell a property at a profit of £1,000 and next week he might dispose of a property which would show a loss of £500. Instead of each standing alone, we permit anyone to set the loss of one transaction against the profit of another, and thus, only the profit resulting from the business is taxed, and not the profit on one occasion and the loss on another. We have increased the deductions allowed to taxpayers other than companies from £200 to £300. We have already had lengthy arguments on the question of the wisdom of having an exemption in regard to income tax and no exemption in connection with land tax, but there is no analogy between the incidence of the two forms of taxation, and I do not propose to again argue the matter. We have made provision also for the deduction of the cost of development work in mines, and of any premium paid by a taxpayer for the lease of his business premises. This is a new provision. So far as the deduction for development work on a mine is concerned, we have had complaints from prospectors in different parts of the State. They might have been engaged in the opening up of a mine and the Commissioner of Taxation has refused to permit them to set against their profits, expenditure on development work in some other part of that mine, or in some other part of the mining area. That, in my opinion, is much the same as is carried on in any other form of business. Business operations wherever they may be should be taken as a whole and not in part, and thus we provide for the deduction to be made. A deduction of 4 per cent. on the value of a taxpayer's interest in business premises of which he is the owner, is omitted, because that privilege was by a judgment of the High Court last year extended to the leasehold lands held by pastoralists to which the concession was not intended to apply.

Mr. Male: Why make everyone suffer?

The PREMIER: I do not know that many will suffer. It will not be a great

hardship on anyone, but it will be a great deal when it was spread over a great number who were brought under its provisions by the High Court judgment, and the only method of adjusting it, was by omitting it altogether. We also provide for a deduction of donations to public charities, subject, of course, to verification. Some of our institutions are largely maintained by donations made by large firms, and even small firms, as well as individual members of the public. We were told by many traders in the State that owing to the Commissioner for Taxation not permitting them to make a deduction for those donations which were made to the institutions, they were not going to continue making those donations. The Government were not prepared to permit that to continue when it was brought under notice. In view of the fact that the amount we would lose would be only trivial, shillings in fact, as compared with the many pounds the institutions would lose, we thought it better to ask the general taxpayer to suffer this slight loss, and we have made provision, therefore, that *bona fide* donations to the charitable institutions, which, of course, must be verified to the satisfaction of the Commissioner, shall be deducted from the income. The concession to taxpayers whose income is derived from land is preserved so long as the land is used by the taxpayer for cultivation and grazing purposes, but it does not apply to land held for grazing purposes under leasehold tenure, without a right to acquire the freehold. We also fix a basis for the taxation of the business of shipping companies. I believe we are operating to-day on the same basis as it is proposed to do in the Bill, a basis which was accepted after a good deal of conferring between the shipping companies and the Commissioner of Taxation, and the companies are prepared to agree to this provision being made statutory. It will be provided that a sum equal to £5 per cent. of the gross profits of outward traffic, including passenger fares, shall be the amount of the tax payable. The tax on debenture interest is made payable under

the Bill at its source. That again is a change. The present law is not clear on this matter. Debentures frequently change hands and it is difficult, if the interest on these debentures is taxable, to find out who actually receives the interest. We intend to provide that where a local authority or company is paying interest on debentures, the local authority or the company, as the case may be, shall deduct the tax before making the payment. This system is in operation in other parts of the world, and is not new. It is, however, an innovation, so far as this State is concerned. Then, again, there is growing into existence a system by which a company buys its stock not direct from the English manufacturer, but from another company carrying on business outside the State at such a price as to show no profit, and it is found that the shares in the two companies are practically all held by the same persons. Thus the company is in effect buying from itself under another name. This is clearly a scheme to avoid showing a profit and thus escape taxation. This scheme it is proposed to circumvent by taxing the first named company as if it had bought direct from the manufacturer, thus ignoring the intermediary company which is doing business in the State. A percentage of the amount of tax by way of penalty is payable if the returns are not furnished within one month after the date prescribed with a discretion on the part of the Commissioner to remit. There is also provision for a minimum tax of 2s. 6d. both on income and land. I claim that this measure as compared with the existing law is infinitely preferable; it is more just in its incidence. It is essential that we should obtain further revenue for the purpose of complying with the public demands, the extension of the educational system and other directions, and I know of no better method of deriving that revenue. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Frank Wilson debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1913-14.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Public Works Department (Hon. W. D. Johnson, Minister).

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £439,809:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): In presenting the Estimates of the Public Works Department I would like to emphasise at the outset that these are the Revenue Estimates. I am inclined to think that hon. members forget sometimes that there are such Estimates as the Loan Estimates which deal with loan expenditure, and I regret to notice with regard to the Estimates and other moneys that some hon. members have been prone to mix up the Loan and Revenue Estimates. This of course makes it absolutely impossible for the public to follow the debate and I think from the public interest point of view we should endeavour to confine ourselves to the Revenue Estimates as presented, and then we would have ample opportunity of replying to some of, shall I say, the ridiculous statements made recently by the leader of the Opposition in connection with loan expenditure.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the good of preaching about it? Go on with your Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will reserve my remarks in regard to those statements until the Loan Estimates are before the Committee. The Estimates for last year totalled £301,158 and of that sum £14,900 was for salaries, £177,478 for public works and services, and £108,780 for public buildings, the total expenditure being £253,449 or an underdraft of expenditure of £42,709. The principal items making up this underdraft were salaries, £2,007; incidentals, £485; maintenance of main roads £3,700; construction and repairs to bridges, £3,756, additions and improvements, and repairs to harbours and rivers, £1,407, Boya quarries, £4,368 and public buildings, £26,188. I will deal with this underdraft later on, but I want to draw

the attention of hon. members to the vote for salaries. The total amount voted was £63,707 and the actual expenditure amounted to £57,697. This is a substantial decrease on the actual vote authorised by Parliament and, of course, represent economies effected in regard to administration. It is interesting to give these figures, in view of the fact that we hear from hon. members opposite and from the Press charges levied against this Government for extravagance, yet the actual figures of administration show that there is no comparison between the administrative costs of the present Government and those of their predecessors, or any comparison at all with those of their critics. For instance, the percentage of salaries to the total expenditure in the Works Department for last year was 4.007, absolutely the lowest on record.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Loan and revenue expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the total, of course. The previous best was 4.70 per cent., and the percentage when the member for Sussex was Minister in 1909/10, was 6.50. Those are interesting figures and are a complete reply to our critics.

Mr. Broun: Are they correct?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If they are not correct the accountant and others in the Works Department are supplying incorrect figures, and I do not think it is fair to question the correctness of figures that are supplied by the officers of various departments.

Hon. Frank Wilson: For what year is that 4.007?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Last year, and the percentage for the hon. member's year was 6.50.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And what is the 4.70?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was the year before last.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will you give us the expenditure in those years?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will give it in my own way. The hon. member has the Estimates before him and he can work it out for himself. I know

the hon. gentleman has been particularly lazy of late, and evidently, by his administration of the Works Department, he was very lazy then, because a man who would allow his administrative costs to get so high in comparison with the expenditure was evidently not too active in administering his department. Evidently the hon. member is too lazy to-night to check the figures I am quoting. Dealing with these underdrafts, I would like to point out that the item of £685 for incidentals is another evidence of economy in the administration of the department. There is another underdraft in regard to roads and bridges, made up principally by the necessity for delaying the actual construction of main roads and bridges provided on the Estimates until after the winter rains. Hon. members know, of course, that we cannot construct bridges during the rainy season, but these have been put in hand by contract since, and, of course, will be completed, and the amount to pay for their completion is on the current Estimates. Other savings have been effected in regard to bridges generally. The underdraft in regard to main roads was purely because of the attitude of another place in regard to the Traffic Bill. Hon. members are aware that a Bill was introduced last session providing for a scheme for the maintenance of the main roads. That scheme was that the license fees should be devoted to the maintenance of the main roads and a subsidy should be paid by the Government over and above the subsidy usually paid to the roads boards in regard to maintenance and general administration in their roads board districts. But as the Legislative Council did not see fit to pass the provision in that Bill to provide for the maintenance of main roads we were unable to pay the subsidy over, as had been provided on the Estimates. The main underdraft in regard to harbours and rivers has been in connection with North-West work. A new system has been organised in that part of the State by which the various ports are taken in rotation. One engineer has been appointed to look after the whole of the coast and he works by taking on the whole of the work for various departments in one port, com-

pleting that work, and going on to the next port. In regard to this system we were unable to expend all the money provided, but the total expenditure amounted to £17,490. To show the necessity for the huge expenditure on that coast during the term of office of the present Government. I have only to draw the Committee's attention to the small amount provided by our predecessors. I will quote these figures for the special information of the member for Kimberley. He has been prone to state that the present Government had made a lot of promises but had done little or no work in the North-West. That statement is so contrary to fact that I trust the hon. member will make a note of these figures, firstly for his own information and later on for the information of his constituents. In the year 1909-10 an amount of £7,693 was provided for the North-West and in 1910-11 £4,903. That was the year when determined efforts were being made to wipe out the deficiency, and, as I have said, on many occasions, that deficiency was avoided by starving the maintenance of works and not going on with necessary works in the way of school buildings, etcetera, throughout the State. The part of the State that particularly suffered in regard to the starving of maintenance was the North-West. This is clearly proved by the figures for 1911-12 when this Government took office, for we had to provide £11,848 for maintenance works, as compared with £4,903 in the previous year. Then in 1912-13 an amount of £19,626 was provided but the expenditure amounted to only £17,490. Those figures speak volumes as to the Government's attention to the North-West portion of the State. The Boya quarry vote shows an underdraft and that was due to the fact that there was a falling-off in orders for the last three months, and that, of course, reduced the cost of wages, materials, etcetera. In public buildings an amount of £1,341 has been saved in the furniture vote alone for the various Government departments. We found that gross extravagance had been going on for some considerable time in connection with the

supply of furniture. Any public officer could requisition for a piece of furniture and, regardless of whether it was really wanted or not, or whether he could discard other furniture he had, he received that for which he requisitioned without any question, with the result that the cost of furniture throughout the various departments was going up at an enormous rate. The Government decided to have an inventory taken to show what furniture was available for transfer to other places and to then closely scrutinise all requisitions in order to see if the furniture asked for was really required. By this means we have brought about a considerable reduction in the expenditure on furniture and have a complete check over all furniture ordered. There were other works on which an underdraft was shown, such as the Northam lands office, the construction of which was delayed owing to an argument as to the question of site. That difficulty has been overcome now and a contract has been let. There was also delay over the Collie court-house for a similar reason, and there were savings on other buildings, making up the total I have already referred to. Turning now to the revenue, the total revenue received by the department was £51,697 made up as follows:—Traffic receipts from railways under construction £3,778, Fremantle workshops £26,204, quarries £5,273, rents from various Government buildings and lands £4,376, reimbursements in aid £6,734, a big percentage of which is made up by the Commonwealth Government for services rendered in connection with architectural work done for the Commonwealth, water supplies £104, hire of plant £56, and miscellaneous £172. The only two trading concerns operated by the department are the Fremantle workshops and the Boya quarry. The workshops were mostly confined during last year to doing work for the various Government departments. Those workshops, of course, do practically all the work for the sewerage, and a considerable amount for the harbours and rivers, and other departments of the State. This trading concern, consequently, cannot be compared with the

ordinary trading concern that is operated by the Government in the interests of the public generally, but still we laid it down that a balance-sheet should be prepared in regard to this concern. The balance-sheet has not been prepared and this is due to the fact that great difficulty is experienced in getting a basis to work on. The previous Government, of course, kept no check at all. There was practically no cost-sheet kept. As a matter of fact it was utterly impossible to get the hang of that particular department.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What department is that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Fremantle workshops. The hon. member will not know anything about it because I do not think he knew it existed, otherwise he would not have allowed it to drift to the extent that it has drifted. It is interesting to know that those gentlemen on the Opposition side who prate so much about their business experience, had absolutely no business methods. There was no check at all and no cost sheets; the concern was run in a happy-go-lucky style, and the leader of the Opposition who prates about his commercial knowledge when addressing the Women's Liberal League had evidently not put his commercial training into practice in connection with that trading concern.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I suppose you have done so now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The concern now is on a proper business basis. We have true cost sheets kept, it is operated on proper trading lines, and a balance sheet will be prepared in accordance with the measure passed through Parliament by this Government last session. I might state that the difficulty I mentioned has been overcome and we have got a statement prepared, and after allowing interest and depreciation the receipts from the work done for the various departments show a small credit balance. It is undesirable that we should do more. So long as it balances it is sufficient, seeing that we are working for other departments. In regard to the Boya quarries, the expenditure is made up of wages £5,073, materials £1,203, interest

and depreciation £353, making a total of £6,629. The receipts amount to £6,534, or a net loss on the operations of the Boya quarries of £95. That, of course, is a small loss, but we realise that the work is mainly for other departments and for the local governing bodies within the metropolitan area. We have been effecting improvements at the Boya quarries and when these improvements are in operation and a different system of working inaugurated, we will have no difficulty in running the concern at a profit, in which case I think it is undesirable to attempt to make large profits, seeing that we work for local governing bodies and Government departments. For the last four months the revenue received for the sale of stone has been £2,600. This is a considerable increase over last year, and if maintained of course will show a big increase at the end of the financial year. To come to the current year's Estimates: I wish to draw attention to the fact that a further saving in salaries of £1,465 has been effected, or a total saving on both revenue and loan of £4,971. This is of course a big saving compared with last year, and is another evidence of the close attention that is being given to the administration of this department. Might I just here pay a tribute to the officers of the department for the attention they give to effecting economies in all directions. Loyal support is given to the Minister and the Government to see that not one penny piece is expended unless it is absolutely necessary, and no officer is retained unless he is giving good service and his services are absolutely required. Among the economies effected have been the retirement of Mr. Farrar, who for a large number of years was engineer for roads and bridges, and acting engineer for harbours and rivers. Also the retirement of Mr. Muir as a surplus officer, who was for a long while chief engineer for railway surveys. There have been other economies effected in the departmental staff by giving closer attention to the administration. The retirement of Mr. Farrar was rendered possible by the fact that the Water Supply Department having been created relieved the Engineer-in-

Chief of a lot of responsibility in connection with the engineering works generally, and it was considered that Mr. Thompson, the Engineer-in-Chief, could devote special attention to the harbours and rivers branch of the Works Department, and prevent the necessity of continuing the employment of a special engineer for that branch. There has been another decrease in regard to rents, amounting to £839. This is largely due to the re-organisation of affairs in the metropolitan area by the Government devoting special attention to this question. There has been an increase of £2,392 on the annual subsidy to roads boards. I would emphasise this point, that although we have economised and cut down expenditure wherever possible in order to meet the demands of the State, yet we say as a Government that it would be false economy to in any way hamper the operations of the roads boards throughout the State. The increase provided on this year's Estimates is mainly due to the fact that we have an increased number of roads boards, and the fact that the roads boards are collecting more, and consequently will earn more subsidy. It is interesting to note the work done by the roads boards as evidenced by the increased revenue that is collected by the various roads boards. For instance, in 1903-4 they collected the amount of £13,117, whereas in 1912-13 it increased to no less a sum than £73,156, and it is estimated for the current year, 1913-14, that the amount will be £80,000. This is an evidence of the growth of local government and of the increased settlement throughout the State. For the purpose of paying roads boards subsidies the various roads boards were classified some time ago and a subsidy paid ranging from 7s. to 16s. in the pound. When that classification was put into operation I think I told the Chamber that while it was as near perfection as we could get it on the evidence submitted to us by the experts of the department, still we were not going to say it would meet with absolute approval, but it was generally considered it should be given a trial, and after experience we could remodel it if

it was thought necessary. I am prepared to admit that based on experience there are several instances where an alteration should be made, and it is proposed this year to revise the whole thing and alter the classification so as to give it a more equitable basis than applies at the present time. It will be noticed that the municipal subsidy is also provided on the Works Estimates this year. This is due to the fact that the Government have concentrated the administration of local government in the Public Works Department. When the present Government took office they placed the administration of the Roads Act and the Municipal Act under the one branch and now they have concentrated the control in the same branch. The sum of £17,500 is provided for subsidies to municipalities. This is £500 less than last year, but it is due to the fact that a number of municipalities have gone out of existence. The subsidy paid is 7s. 6d. in the pound. There is a slight increase made in anticipation of the proposed subsidy under the Traffic Bill. The sum of £1,500 more is provided this year than last year, and a total of £5,200 is placed on the Estimates. This is placed on the Estimates in expectation of the passage of the Traffic Bill and is an evidence of the sincerity of the Government in desiring to see that the main roads of this State are properly maintained. We have laid down a definite and practical scheme by which we can get a guarantee that the main roads will receive special consideration and that a special vote will be provided for that purpose. The Legislative Council it is true disagreed with the Government proposal but did not submit an alternative. I propose to deal with this matter in connection with the Traffic Bill at any early date, but I desire to draw attention now to the fact that this provision is made on the Estimates and is provision over and above the ordinary subsidy to municipalities and roads boards. The amount has not been taken off other subsidies in order to provide for this main road subsidy, but is a special vote for that purpose, and will be paid over if the Traffic

Bill goes through. The special grants to roads boards amount to £1,700. The amount provided for bridges is £5,502, for harbours and rivers the amount is £31,600, and with the exception of £15,000 that is annually set aside to a suspense account to eventually redeem the expenditure in connection with the Victoria quay at Fremantle, the whole of the amount is to be expended in the North-West in continuing the maintenance and repairs of the various jetties in that portion of the State. As I have already stated, £15,000 is provided to go to a Suspense account in regard to the Victoria quay. The amount expended on repairs to Victoria quay up to date is £68,308. It is to be regretted that this amount has been necessary but it is due to the ravages of the teredo in the jarrah piles, and I have to express my extreme regret that the leader of the Opposition did not see his way clear to treat the jarrah piles before they were put in the Victoria quay during the term that he had control. We find now that the teredo eat out the jarrah piles in about eight years without treatment, but the hon. gentleman for some reason or other, evidently thinking it might do his beloved jarrah export trade some harm, refused to allow treatment of the jarrah piles. These piles went in without treatment, and they went in with the concurrence of the Minister. Since I took control that has been altered, and we are treating all the piles which we put in at Victoria quay and the North quay.

Hon. Frank Wilson : How are you treating them ?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : We have a process of our own, and if the hon. member will pay a fee we might give it to him for his information. The expenditure on Victoria quay has amounted to £68,300 and on the North quay up to date £22,863, and it is estimated that another £20,000 is wanted. The amount charged up to the 30th June, 1913, was £46,600, leaving an amount of about £64,000 still to be pro-

vided into the Suspense Account that was created for the purpose by the leader of the Opposition during his term of office. In regard to the brickyard, this is going along very well indeed. We have a wonderfully good deposit of shale, possibly one of the best deposits there is to be found in Western Australia. The siding into the deposit is now just about completed and we hope to be able to supply bricks for the workers' homes and other Government buildings by June next. Before that time we will be making bricks. Some, of course, will be available for Government buildings, but the principal portion of those that will be made will be used for building the Hoffman kiln, which will be necessary before we can make really good compressed bricks. With regard to the sawmills, there has also been some delay in the matter of erecting them. This is solely due to the abnormally wet season they have had in that part of the State. It became impossible for us to continue operations at all. The construction of the siding had to be postponed altogether because it was impossible for the men to work or for the horses and drays to be kept going. Exactly the same difficulty was experienced in regard to the erection of the sawmill, but while we will be a little late in starting operations we can soon make up the leeway, as far as the Commonwealth contract is concerned, and we do not anticipate any difficulty in keeping them supplied with the number of sleepers necessary to the progress of the line. Coming to the details in connection with the sawmills which it is expected under these Estimates to expend, the working of the mills will run into £177,000. This is made up of, operating costs of the karri mills, £120,000; then there is an amount of £48,000 provided for the cutting of 200,000 jarrah sleepers, the contract for which we secured from the Commonwealth Government. Then there is an amount of £90,000 to pay the balance of 100,000 sleepers already supplied to the Commonwealth Government, making a total of £177,000. It is estimated that the receipts will be £199,000. Since we find

we will be a little late in starting, it is quite possible that there will be a decrease in the anticipated expenditure and a corresponding decrease in the estimated receipts. For traffic inspection on the lines under construction there has been provided £15,000, an increase of £2,000. This is due to the fact that we will be operating more lines. For instance, the Wongan Hills-A.ullewa line will be connected right through before Christmas, and both parts of that line are being operated to-day. The same thing applies to the Wickepin-Merredin line, and we are pushing on with the laying of the rails for the Yillimining-Kondinin and Brookton-Kunjin lines. These lines will be operated under construction conditions until finally completed.

Mr. Lander: What about the survey beyond Kondinin?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The survey beyond Kondinin will be provided for in a Bill shortly to be presented, when I shall be able to give all the details. On public buildings the amount of £97,979 is provided, being a decrease of roughly £10,000 on the figures of last year. The vote for education, however, is £1,000 more, an evidence that while economy has been effected it has not been done at the expense of providing for education throughout the State.

Mr. S. Stubbs: And I hope it never will be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To show the hon. member that the Government do not intend to economise there, but that the full necessities of the State in that regard will be attended to, I will give him some figures. The vote for new schools, additions and maintenance, that is the total vote in regard to education, in 1909-10 was, from Revenue, £14,287; from Property Trust Account, £9,714, making a total of £24,001; in 1910-11, just before the election, the vote was, from Revenue, £24,816; from Property Trust Account, £16,449, or a total of £41,265; in 1911-12, being this Government's term, the vote was, from Revenue, £32,389, from Property Trust Account, £14,610, or a total of £46,999; in 1912-13, the vote was, from Revenue, £35,289, from Property Trust

Account, £24,072, or a total of £59,361, and this year the total vote is £72,753. These figures are a clear indication of the policy of the Government in regard to facilities for education. Under the vote, "Sale of Government Property Trust Account," the credit last year amounted to £41,838, and this year it is reduced to £36,137. It is expended, as hon. gentlemen will see, by perusing the Estimates, on salaries, bridges, schools, and a small amount for police stations. We have altered the expenditure in regard to this particular account from the procedure adopted by our predecessors, who expended it on works which it was questionable should be constructed from a vote of this description. As far as the Government are concerned we are voting this amount of money towards building substantial bridges and the erection of substantial schools of brick and stone in the more permanent and settled portions of the State. The small vote of £100 for the Tambellup police station is a matter of merely cleaning up a vote from last year. I do not know that I need take up any more time of hon. members in regard to the general discussion on the Works Estimates. I claim that the Estimates show an evidence of close application by the officers of the department and by the Minister. Many economies are shown, which is an evidence of that application. A comparison of the administrative cost with the expenditure—it being a record for the State—is sufficient to demonstrate that our efforts in this regard have given a good result to the State, and I think should meet with the approval of hon. members.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): With others he had listened to the Minister for Works reeling off his columns of figures, making his usual innuendoes with regard to his predecessors in office and bringing charges of neglect and lack of attention against the officers of the department. Of course the Minister had not intended to do that altogether, but in his egotism he could not avoid casting responsibility upon the shoulders of others, even though he roped in some of his departmental officers, in order that the glorification might rest upon his own head, in

order that he might take to himself the credit of transforming the Works Department, of putting all that was wrong right, of adjusting even engineering difficulties, and of practically saving the State. He (Hon. Frank Wilson) would not be replying in these terms to the Minister's speech if the Minister had not been so offensive in his bitter denunciation of those who had done better service to the State than had the Minister himself. The Minister had set out to preach that hon. members must not venture to debate Loan expenditure when the Revenue Estimates were before the Committee. The Minister had chastised even his own colleagues in this connection, and then immediately set to work to point out what a great boy he was, what a splendid administrator. The Minister had given the percentage of his department in regard to the total expenditure, showing that it was less than it had been on a previous occasion. Why, the very essence of that percentage basis was loan expenditure which the Minister had asked hon. members to pass by to-night and not to take into consideration. The Minister had claimed to have reduced that expenditure from 6.5 per cent. to 4.7 per cent. And well the Minister might. For, remembering the millions of money which the Premier had been raising during the past two years, and remembering that the bulk of it was expended through the Minister's department, was it to be wondered at that the Minister could bring down the percentage of his department's expenditure as compared with the gross expenditure in the past? The Minister's expenditure on second-hand machinery for his implement works, for which he was responsible—

The Premier: He has nothing to do with it, it is not in his department.

[Mr. McDowall took the Chair.]

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was all in the Minister's department. The Minister's expenditure on his sawmills, running into huge sums of money, including the building of railways to couple up the mills with the existing system—all was in the Minister's department and all

was charged up, making the grand total on which the percentage was calculated. The purchase of rails and fastenings, amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds, the purchase of rolling stock, the building of works, the wharf construction of which we had been told—after all that had been said and done, was it any wonder that he (Hon. Frank Wilson) had asked the Minister to give the details of his expenditure when making comparisons?

The Premier: Has he really done all these things you have referred to?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course the Minister had. The Premier was not likely to know about it, because the Premier did nothing but borrow money at any price. The Premier went to the Jew, the usurer, the pawnbroker with the tale that he must have money, while of course the Minister for Works merely expended that money. And then the Minister came here and patted himself on the back and said what a great fellow he was and how splendidly he was managing the affairs of the department. The Minister had altered the accountancy in connection with the Sale of Government Property Trust Account. The Minister had forgotten to take away the item of depreciation on the dredge "Parmelia." He would be well advised to go into that account again and readjust it and perhaps he would arrive at a correct balance. The Minister had talked about under-drafts.

Mr. S. Stubbs: What are they? I only know of overdrafts.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course the whole country was groaning under overdrafts. But the Minister had talked about underdrafts in connection with roads and bridges and explained that it had been on account of rain, that rain had prevented the Minister from erecting the bridges. But the Minister had forgotten to tell the Committee that he had been over two years in office before making all these alterations. Surely he had had time enough. Why had he not made these alterations in his accountancy and administration 18 months ago instead of waiting till the present time?

Mr. Swan: Was your system so bad that it required to be changed at once?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister would say so. However, the Liberal party would change it again next year.

The Premier: You have a nice chance.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier did not like the chance.

The Minister for Works: Who will be the Premier?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It mattered not to him who would be Premier; one thing certain was that it would not be the present Premier. As regarded the bridges the Minister said he would soon get them built. Some £3,000 had been voted for bridges in his district for the last 18 months, and it was not rain which had prevented them from being built, but a lack of the supply of the wherewithal by the Treasurer. Notwithstanding that he had raised seven millions of money in two years and notwithstanding the revenue he had derived these bridges could not be constructed.

The Minister for Works: You know they are under construction.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, but it was 2½ years ago. The vote had appeared on two sets of Estimates to his knowledge. The reason the bridges tumbled down was old age. The Minister was getting that ancient that he himself would tumble down. Presumably white ants had affected some of them.

The Premier: They will not affect you; you are too tough.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister claimed that subsidies on main roads had not been paid over. If the Minister had to travel home by road as some hon. members did when the House sat late he would be anxious to expend the subsidies in order to put the roads in order.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Whose fault is it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister's fault. Why did not he spend the money? He asked the Minister to do his duty and to pay the money over.

The Minister for Works: Arrange with your friends to pass the Bill.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Never mind the Bill; let the Minister pay the money over; it had been voted. That was always the excuse. We were not to have irrigation because the Bill was not passed as the Minister introduced it. We were not to have main roads looked after because the Traffic Bill was not passed exactly as the Minister desired.

The Premier: That is the dictum.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Presumably if the Liquor Bill and a few other things did not go through then the Premier would stop the refreshment bar at Parliament House. Ministers should refrain from using threats of what would happen if these measures were not passed. It was foolish and the electors would not long put up with dire threats of works to be suspended and left undone because legislation was not passed. The Minister spoke about the North-West and had the audacity to say that he (Mr. Wilson) had neglected the North-West because there was a paltry increase of expenditure of £3,000 or £4,000 on the amount expended during his term of office.

The Minister for Works: Seven thousand pounds.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister would not allow him to refer to the loan expenditure; it was all part and parcel of the expenditure.

The Minister for Works: You maintained jetties from loan?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, he had built jetties from loan.

The Minister for Works: This is maintenance.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In the public accounts there were such sums as £14,000 for lighthouses in the North-West in 1910-11, and £16,000 in 1909-10; jetties, £6,000; Port Hedland railway, £77,000, and a couple of thousand pounds for jetties, and in another year he remembered a new jetty was constructed at Port Hedland, before the railway was commenced, at a cost of £12,000 to £14,000. The whole of the North-West demands were attended to during his term of office. The tramways were re-constructed, a railway from Point Sampson to Roebourne, 12 or 13 miles, was re-built; all the train-

ways were re-laid, wharves were re-constructed and new ones built; a railway to open up the Pilbara district was constructed—

The Premier: Put down.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, put down, if the Premier preferred that term, and lighthouses were erected. Every demand of the North-West was attended to better than ever it had been attended to since. What had the Minister done? He had not given an instance of anything he had done except to spend £17,000.

Mr. Male: He pulled up a tramline.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, and a willy-willy blew away one of his jetties, and he had to repair it. One of the State steamers had run into another jetty and it cost a certain sum to repair the damage. So far from there being gross neglect of the North-West in his time there was nothing but commendation for the work done. To-day, however, we did not hear the same thing, notwithstanding that the Minister was fond of prating about the enormous amount of money he had expended, £17,000, in that portion of the State. It was a history of delayed works that the Minister had been telling, of calmly standing by and in his evident desire to throw some stigma upon his (Mr. Wilson's) administration of the department which, by the way, was some four years ago, the Minister had given a history of his own incapacity and neglect by delayed works, delayed, he thought he was safe in saying, because of the financial exigencies of the Premier. According to the Minister, the Fremantle workshops and the Boya quarry balance-sheets were not prepared in his time, no cost-sheets were made out and there was no check. The Minister had been two and a half years in getting this altered. To-day he had the cost-sheets; to-day he had actually a balance-sheet, but it was not presented to Parliament; presumably it was in the hands of the Auditor General. It was like the Premier's accounts for his trading concerns which we were led to believe were in the hands of the Auditor General, and which the Auditor General said he had not seen yet, notwithstanding that most of them were ready.

The Premier: He does not say anything of the kind.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Department of Agriculture was one of them. The Auditor General in his report stated—

The profit and loss account and balance-sheet for the meat trading concern are completed and awaiting inspection.

The Premier: What has that to do with accounts?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Let the Premier sit quietly and squirm. The report goes on—

Profit and loss accounts and balance-sheets can be prepared for all the other trading concerns if desired.

The Minister for Works: I desire to get through my Estimates; we are not on the Department of Agriculture.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We were on the balance-sheet of the Fremantle workshops and the Boya quarry. The Minister introduced the subject.

The Premier: What has that to do with the Auditor General's report?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Auditor General's report had to do with all these accounts, and he was perfectly right in asking for these balance-sheets.

The Premier interjected.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the Premier could not refrain from interrupting, which was the usual method employed on the Government side, we would be here until morning. The Auditor General's report stated—

The profit and loss account and balance-sheet for the meat trading concern—

The Minister for Works: I must press my point, Mr. Chairman. The meat trading concern has nothing to do with the Works Department.

The CHAIRMAN: It was necessary to listen to the hon. member for a minute or two to see if he used the argument as an illustration. He did not intend to allow the hon. member to go too far.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Ministers did not like to be shown up.

The Premier: Oh, shown up! What are you talking about?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The report states—

The profit and loss account and balance-sheet for the meat trading concern are completed and awaiting inspection. Profit and loss accounts and balance-sheets can be prepared for all the other trading concerns if desired. In addition to the meat stall statements I can submit the land clearing and Albany cold stores returns at very short notice. (Note.—Although a draft statement of accounts had on 20th September, 1913, been prepared for the Government meat stall, the supporting accounts were not finally closed. At date of writing, 31st October, 1913, no statements have been received by the Auditor General for any of the concerns controlled by that department.)

The Colonial Treasurer was written to on the 16th September informing him of the position of each concern. This did not apply merely to the Department of Agriculture, but to every department. The Auditor General said—

Where in the course of business it became known to the Auditor General that accounts were in preparation for the purpose of producing statements, viz., the State steamships, meat supply, and State hotels—also the Water Supply Department, to which the Act does not apply—action has been taken to accomplish as much of the checking as possible, so that the statements when received can be dealt with expeditiously. The procedure has not proved economical in regard to the State Steamship Service, owing to the state of the accounts.

The Premier: Who has been doing the checking?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Auditor General had been doing as much of the work as possible when he knew the balance-sheets were required.

The Premier: I said the accounts were in his hands.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier did not understand the system of auditing. An officer was sent month by month to compare the books and vouchers and audit as far as possible, but the final ac-

counts were sent to the Auditor General for him to go through and certify as being correct.

The Premier: Can they make up their final accounts until he finishes checking?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, the Auditor General pointed out that he could not get the accounts and had notified the Premier.

The Premier: He did not.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Owing to the Premier's statements from time to time that as soon as the accounts were audited they would be placed before Parliament, he had taken time by the forelock and had tried to expedite the work by checking—

The Premier: That is nonsense.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That was the Auditor General's statement—

At date of reporting (31st October, 1913) no statements have been received, and outside the concerns mentioned the Auditor General is not aware what action has been taken to prepare them. That was dated 31st October.

The Premier: He knows the officers are in the departments the whole of the time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why were not the accounts put before him?

The Premier: Because he has not finished his checking.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Auditor General said he had not received them, and that was the reason. They would not be brought down to the House. Why? Because the Premier did not want to produce them for Parliamentary inspection. We were to drift on through this Parliament, and then would prorogue without having these balance sheets. He wanted to know when the Premier would make them public. When would we get the balance sheet for the Fremantle workshops; when would we get the balance sheet for the Boya quarry, which showed, according to the Minister's statement—and we wanted to know how—some £95 loss? It was satisfactory to know that the country was going to be saved by a trading concern like the Boya quarry, and he would say with all earnestness that it was about time the balance sheets

and accounts were placed on the Table of the House, so that hon. members responsible to the electors and taxpayers, would be able to peruse them and comment on and criticise them, as it was their bounden duty to do.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Did you ever produce a balance sheet of the Boya quarry?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was never run in his time as a trading concern; it was run in connection with the Public Works Department. Neither did he run the Fremantle workshops as a trading concern; they were conducted in conjunction with another Government department. The Government he was associated with never ran the railway saw-mills as a trading concern. They were built as an adjunct to the Railway Department to supply State requirements. If the present Government had been trading for themselves they would have found themselves long before this in the bankruptcy court.

The Premier: Did you ever get there?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Never. He had always been solvent and had often been the means of keeping others out of the insolvency court. He had squared the finances of the country and put them on a sound footing, while he occupied the position of Treasurer, notwithstanding the inaccurate statements made by the Premier.

The Premier: And Sir Newton Moore turned you out.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There was another of the Premier's inaccurate statements.

Mr. Thomas: Why did he turn you out?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was he who had suggested to Sir Newton Moore that he (Mr. Wilson) should take charge of the Works Department, and that it would be more convenient for Sir Newton Moore, as Premier, to take charge of the Treasury.

The Premier: You wanted to introduce Japanese methods of finance and Sir Newton Moore would not stand it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would have to confine his remarks to the Public Works Department Estimates.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Was it possible to do so with so many interruptions? If the Premier went to Japan he would learn something of finance which would suit his system of raising money. The Minister for Works had told the Committee that at Victoria Quay the work of restoration was going ahead swimmingly, because he had devised some system for the treatment of the jarrah piles. The Minister, however, would not disclose the system without the payment of a fee. If there was any kind of successful treatment being carried out it belonged to the department, and the House was entitled to know what it was. Members were entitled to have some explanation and to know what tests had been made.

The Minister for Works: Let your timber companies find out for themselves.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If it was good, why not let the country have the benefit of it. The Minister could have it patented if it was good so that the timber companies could not take advantage of it, but the country should have a knowledge, and the whole of Australia and the world should have a knowledge of the system, if it was as good and as excellent as the Minister declared it to be. Then if that was the case why were we paying £4,000 as a minimum to the powellising company for the right to use their system? If it was good for jarrah piles it ought to be good for jarrah sleepers.

The Minister for Works: It might be.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why were we saddled with the incubus of the powellising agreement for 10 or 15 years to come when the Minister in the repository of his own heart had this excellent treatment? This, however, was on a par with the usual bounce and boast of members opposite. The system had not yet been tried properly and it would be time to cry out about it in 10 years. There was no desire on his part to decry it because he had no knowledge of the system, but the Minister should take the House into his confidence and inform members, as far as he was able to do, why he pinned his faith to that system. We should know what it was without having to pay the department a fee for the information.

The brickyards were another of those bright transactions which were going to cause the Treasurer some sleepless nights. The Government had been trying to get the brickyards into working order for the past 12 months, and it was a monument of the incapacity of the Minister, that he had not been able to push forward works of that description in an expeditious manner. It was understood that the Government bought a secondhand plant in Victoria, but it would take until next June before it would be possible to supply bricks for workers' homes. Considering the time this undertaking had been in hand the Minister surely could not claim any great credit for the expedition which had been shown. The Minister for Works claimed some credit for the retirement of Mr. Muir. Mr. Muir was an able officer of the State, who had to his record some 20 years of continuous service. He was a man of about 55 years of age, and he had been dismissed as an excess officer, with nine months' leave on full pay. Mr. Muir, whatever he might be to-day, had been of excellent service to this country and had done good work.

The Premier: The service always paid him well.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Not too well. Mr. Muir came to the State under an agreement at £700 per annum, and that was reduced by a reclassification to £600 per annum, and he was receiving that amount when he was retired. But the State had had 20 of the best years of that man's life, and it seemed a cold sort of appreciation to fire him out at an age when he could not be expected to go and compete with younger men in his profession. If Mr. Muir had served the State well he was entitled to some consideration, just as other servants who had been given consideration after many years of service, and he should have got some consideration by way of pension, just as others in a similar position were entitled to receive and did receive from time to time.

Mr. Bolton: You only apply this pension business to officers; you would not apply it to the working classes at all.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It should certainly not be applied to the men who came to-day and went to-morrow.

Mr. Bolton: A wages man after 20 years service does not get a pension.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Did the hon. member suggest that we should give a pension to every wages man in the country?

Mr. Bolton: I would not give any at all.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member should assist to bring in a national insurance scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The discussion was entirely out of order.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: With regard to the sawmills, the Minister came along with the admission that the erection had been delayed. Again Providence was to blame. The wet season had interfered with the expeditious carrying out of the work. Everyone anticipated delay in the winter months in connection with the erection of saw mills or the carting of logs, but when the mills were erected, as he had pointed out on several occasions, during the past 12 or 18 months, the Minister was going to get into a hole because he would have no hope of executing the contract for the supply of karri powellised sleepers within the contract time, unless, of course, he went back upon his party pledges and party principles.

The Premier: Your Federal Government could not pay us even if we supplied them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Let the Premier try them. The Minister for Works, regardless of his party principles, proposed to employ three shifts on these mills. The manager had declared his intention to follow that course. The miners on the goldfields, it was proposed, should not work on the night shift, but directly the exigencies of a contract which the Government had, came into the case, the Government were going to employ a night shift. The manager of the State mills, when he appeared before the Arbitration Court the other day, asked to be kept clear of the award, for fear that night work might be abolished, and he

would not then be able to employ three shifts so as to get through the contract. The Minister reckoned that he could make up leeway in the delivery of the sleepers. Of course he could if he adopted the ordinary commercial methods and was not hide bound by the policy of his party. But where did his consistency come in? The State sawmills were to work night and day if necessary. The State railways worked night and day, which was necessary, but the mine owners and the workers who were employed by them were to be denied the same liberty to work as they thought fit in their own interests. The other fellow was doing wrong and he must take the blame of our maladministration and errors of judgment. The Premier represented at Geraldton that he (Mr. Wilson) was responsible for the emptying of £200,000 into the Swan River in connection with the dock.

The Premier: I did not say anything of the kind.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was reported and the Minister for Works was also reported as having said so.

The Premier: I challenge you to prove that I said so.

The Minister for Works: I said that the expert's advised you against the work.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And the hon. member in spite of the expert's advice, persisted in carrying it on.

The Premier: Go on, I challenge you to show me that I said that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was impossible to lay his hands on the report in five minutes.

The Premier: It does not exist.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was easy to say that he could not produce it.

The CHAIRMAN: This had nothing to do with the debate.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: One statement made was that the Premier had practically threatened Geraldton that certain public works would be stopped. Here was the proof of that.

The Premier: No, read what I have challenged you to produce.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This was an extract from a newspaper report which read as follows:—

If they saw that they were against the Government then they must be against their policy as it affected Geraldton, and they must naturally assume that the majority of the people were not desirous of the construction of workers' homes, improvements to the harbour, and other matters.

The Premier: But where is the Fremantle dock statement?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: When he succeeded in finding it he would read it.

The Premier: I tell you I made no reference whatever to the Fremantle dock.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister for Works would not deny having accused him (Hon. Frank Wilson) of emptying £200,000 into the Swan River. He would bring to the House the Premier's endorsement of these words.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The discussion had nothing to do with the Estimates.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Ministers were inconsistent. They would not do to others as they would be done by. When it suited their convenience they would cry out and denounce others and actually legislate to prevent others from doing something which, to suit themselves, they would do without compunction. Was that consistency? Then we had the admission from the Minister that he was going to have a decrease in the estimated receipts. He (Hon. Frank Wilson) had pointed out to the Treasurer in reply to the Budget Speech, that it was hardly possible to get the anticipated revenue from the State sawmills, whereupon the Treasurer had said that it did not matter, that if they did not get the revenue they would not spend the money, and the Minister for Works had declared that it was the same thing. Men who had had experience in running big concerns of this nature knew that it was not the same thing, that one could not cut down expenses to accurately balance a shortage in receipts. It was just like the percentage which the Minister

had given on his Public Works administration. As the turnover went up, so the administrative costs came down, and as the turnover came down up went the cost of administration; and it would be found that they could not cut down from outgoings to actually balance any decrease in estimated revenue as set forth by the Treasurer, and now by the Minister for Works, in connection with these sawmills. These were the small things that required personal attention, and if the Minister would more closely concern himself with looking after matters of this description rather than interfering with the passage of a powellising tank to one of the sawmills, he would be filling the role of Minister controlling his department in a statesmanlike manner, leaving details to his subordinates, who were much better qualified to carry them out. We had been told that schools were to cost some £59,000, as against £40,000 in 1910-11. This was merely a natural increase when we considered the increase in our population, and more especially in the juvenile population. It was not to the Minister's credit. Parliament had more right to claim credit for it.

The Minister for Works: We are building schools which you neglected to build.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister was not correct in that, but was inaccurate as usual, and was trying to take credit to himself by casting a slur upon what had been done by his predecessors. Clearly £40,000 three years ago was a natural equivalent of £59,000 at the present time. The increase was only to be expected in view of the 4,000 increase in the number of scholars which the Minister for Education had told us of on the preceding night. With new schools increasing year by year the expenditure also must increase. This was a natural corollary. The increase in the juvenile population had to be taken in connection with the increased expenditure in this department. If that were not so we would be justified, not in supporting this huge increased expenditure in the Education Department, but in criticising it severely and insisting that it should be reduced. If

the Minister was right in his contention that it was his excellent administration which had brought this about, that it was the neglect of the late Government which had caused him to build these schools, then the Minister for Education had no right to have his estimated expenditure increased by over £100,000 per annum in the same period. All that remained to be said in connection with these Estimates was that, though the Minister might boast about his expenditure from revenue, about his roads boards grants, municipal grants and buildings which he constructed out of revenue, roads and bridges that he constructed in some instances, and did not in others, the renovation of the Victoria Quay, and all such works, the fact remained that the whole department was working on a deficit, and the deficit was loan moneys and not revenue. It was idle to hide the fact from oneself, as the Minister had done to-night, that, notwithstanding the Minister in good faith put these items down for revenue expenditure he was absolutely powerless to see that carried out, because the Treasurer's financing had put him in the false position in which he was every hour of the day, compelling him to spend loan moneys on works which undoubtedly should be carried out from revenue. This being so, it was needless to further labour the question; but he did resent with all the power of which he was capable the constant charge by the Minister of neglect on the part of his predecessors. It was a bad habit that had grown on the hon. member.

The Minister for Works: And you will have it perpetually.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, until the hon. member was fired out. The hon. member could not be fair.

The Minister for Works: You were unfair to the State.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That was not so, but he had been too fair to the Minister. The Minister did not know what the term meant. He had not a spark of generosity in the whole of his composition.

The Minister for Works: This great commercial genius who could not run a workshop!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It would be sorrowful indeed if he could not handle the commercial undertakings or the finances better than could the hon. member.

The Minister for Works: You made a nice mess of the Works Department.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We had only the word of the hon. member for that, and all knew what his word was worth. The public knew how to estimate these garrulous statements. The fact remained that the country was solvent when he (Hon. Frank Wilson) had left office, whereas now, with the present Government for two and a half years in office, we were on the verge of insolvency, so far as Consolidated Revenue was concerned. The Minister did not like it, but he had not the manliness to attend to his own concerns and leave those of his predecessors alone. In season and out the Minister sought to cast slurs on those who had done better than he. The Minister arrogated to himself the power to judge on every subject. He had been going to cheapen the cost of meat, of food supplies. He had travelled to the far North and condemned out of hand the suggestion that chilling and canning works would have a beneficial influence upon the pastoral industry.

The CHAIRMAN: That was not in the Estimates.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was all in connection with the administration of jetties and tramways up the North-West, and the Minister had been convinced that everybody else was wrong and he alone was right, and so we had him interfering with the details of his department, and creating resentment in the breasts of his engineers, practical men; so we had him firing out old servants who had done their best to give a fair return for the wages which they had drawn; so we had him, regardless of consequences, rushing up the Eastern Railway when a strike was on and immediately granting his friends,

the day workers, all that they demanded. The State's interests were not there. It was all party interests that swayed the Minister every time. It was to be hoped that we would never again have an exhibition such as had been listened to to-night from the Minister for Works. The Minister should endeavour to contain himself in all due humility, recognising that even the greatest man ever born had his limitations, that there was no one who could be an expert in every direction of a huge Public Works Department such as the hon. member administered; and notwithstanding that he might differ in opinion from his departmental officers and from those who from time to time had had the honour of filling the position before him, that there might be just grounds for that difference, and that the mere fact that he did not think as others thought did not condemn their schemes and their administration as he would have the Committee believe.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): It was deplorable that the leader of a great party could do nothing better than the speech made by the leader of the Opposition on the Estimates of the Works Department. This was the big spending department of the State, and yet the leader of the Opposition rose and delivered a speech without voicing one word of criticism of that department. No wonder the people who were behind him were becoming dissatisfied and were looking for a new leader, when their present leader could give the Committee nothing better than he had given to-night. It was deplorable that a man who had held the portfolio of Minister for Works was not capable of dealing better with the public works expenditure than the hon. gentleman had attempted to-night. He had no hesitation in saying that the hon. member's speech would not do credit to any one of the members sitting behind him, let alone the leader of the party, and an ex-Minister for Works. What did hon. members hear from the leader of the Opposition? He ventured the opinion that the hon. member had never opened the Estimates. He was paid £500 a year, which was specially voted to him as leader of the Opposition.

to study these questions, but he was too lazy and too indifferent to try to provide a few facts.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I must protest. I must deny that I am lazy. That is a wrong expression, and should be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I think I must ask the hon. Minister to withdraw that remark.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The word lazy was withdrawn, but it could be said again that the hon. member had failed to go into the question in order that he might be in a position to criticise the administration of the Works Department and the expenditure of the public funds. The hon. member went about the country prating about the Government expenditure and extravagance, and had no hesitation about boasting of his own commercial training.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I never mentioned my commercial training.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member had never made a speech without mentioning it, or without casting a reflection on the occupants of the Government benches because they were simply carpenters and engine-drivers, whilst he was the man who had the great commercial training. But when it was pointed out what had been the hon. member's administration of the Works Department he squirmed as he had squirmed this evening. Of course there was nothing to reply to in the hon. member's speech. He had simply made a few notes while he (the Minister) was speaking and in order to hide up his incapacity to criticise the Works Department had simply ridiculed the statements made in introducing the Estimates. He did not propose to waste the time of the Committee by following up the attitude adopted by the hon. member, except to say that the leader of the Opposition had shown himself very prone of late to make inaccurate statements. He could say more if the Standing Orders would permit, but he would warn the leader of the Opposition that one member on the Opposition side had earned the reputation of being a man who was in the habit of uttering "Mitchellisms." He did

not want the leader of the Opposition to follow in the footsteps of that hon. member, but he found him accepting the figures of the member for Northam as absolutely correct without taking the trouble to check them. The hon. member had stated that he (the Minister) had interfered with the engineers in regard to the carriage of the powellising vats to the sawmills. That statement was absolutely incorrect. He had never directly or indirectly interfered in any shape or form in regard to the carriage of those vats. The hon. member knew that perfectly well, but he would continue making an inaccurate statement in his earnest desire to discredit him (the Minister for Works). If the hon. member would do his duty he could no doubt criticise the administration of the Works Department, but he ought to criticise it on facts and not on fallacies. In regard to the retirement of Mr. Muir, he was criticised because he had retired a public servant who had been receiving a high salary, and he was blamed for effecting economy in that way. The economy effected by the hon. member had been to cut out the men receiving 8s. per day, and when the present Government picked on one of the highly paid officers of the department, a man who had a good position and had had the opportunity of putting aside a sum to keep him going in his old age, they were attacked and criticised. The poor wretch who had to struggle for 8s. a day, or 6s. as had been suggested by the hon. member on one occasion, and had no means of providing for his old age, could be cast out on the streets in order to give effect to the hon. member's desire to bring about economies. Another inaccuracy had been stated by the hon. member in regard to the sawmills. It had never been stated directly or indirectly that it was proposed to work a night-shift on the sawmills. But it had been stated that the Government proposed to work two shifts. In connection with the mining industry the Government were proposing to abolish the night-shift, but in order to cast a reflection on the Ministry, regardless altogether of the facts, the hon. member dragged in the statement that it was proposed to work a night-shift

on the sawmills. That statement was inaccurate like many of the others the hon. member had made. Then again the leader of the Opposition had stated that he (the Minister for Works) had gone to the Woorooloo job and given his friends the increase they had asked for. That was another inaccurate statement. The hon. member knew when he made that statement that it was absolutely untrue, because it had been reported in the Press that he had refused the increase asked for by the carpenters on that job.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did you not give any increase at all on that job?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No increase had been given except that the extra amount paid for concreting had been made general. The foreman had elected to pay an increase to a few men working on the concrete board and he had simply been told that the increase was to be general. That was the custom throughout the State; the men working on the concrete board received 1s. per day more. The main question, however, had been in regard to the extra 1s. per day to the carpenters, and that request had been refused as the hon. member well knew. What protection had one against an hon. member who would make inaccurate statements of that description? And they were only made because the hon. member would not take the trouble to prepare a criticism of the Government's administration. He endeavoured to find something to criticise, and failing to do so he resolved that he must say something and so said the first thing that came to his mind. It was deplorable, he repeated, that an ex-Minister for Works should be unable to make a better criticism than had been given by the hon. member to-night, and when so many inaccurate statements came from the hon. member it only went to show that he was neglecting his duty to the Chamber and to the country, a duty that he was specially paid for as leader of the Opposition, and it further showed that the Liberals were wise in their day and generation in trying to get a new leader who would be a little more accurate and more attentive to his duty.

This concluded the general discussion on the Public Works Estimates; votes and items were discussed as follows:—

Vote—*Public Works and Buildings, £439,809*:

Item. Under-Secretary for Public Works, £550:

Mr. TURVEY: Was it not possible to make this officer's salary compare more favourably with the salaries being paid to under-secretaries in other departments, in which the under-secretaries had less arduous duties than those performed by the Under-Secretary for Works.

Mr. Underwood: He does his work well, too.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It was pleasing to find there were some members on the Government side who realised that managerial brains counted for something, and that an officer fulfilling the important position of under-secretary to this huge department should be fully remunerated for the services he rendered. A salary of £550 was totally inadequate for the position that officer was called upon to fill, especially considering the fact that large undertakings of a business character were now under the control of the department.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The remarks in regard to the Under-Secretary were very gratifying. He held a very high opinion of Mr. Munt's ability and application to duty. That officer was well entitled to an increase in salary, but the condition of the finances was such that the Government could not extend the consideration they would like to give to a number of the more capable and earnest officers of the service. However, they realised the work being done by Mr. Munt and proposed as soon as opportunity offered to give him the increase he was justly entitled to.

Item. Engineer-in-Chief, £1,300:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: What decision had been arrived at in regard to the reduction of freight on railways now being constructed? He regretted that he was not in the House when the member for York (Mr. Monger) moved his motion some weeks ago. He would have supported the motion for a reduction.

Mr. Monger: A number of members on your side supported it but did not vote for it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Had he been present he would have voted for it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What has that to do with this item?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Engineer-in-Chief was responsible for the construction of those lines. A charge of 4d. per ton per mile could not be borne by the settlers.

The CHAIRMAN: What had railway freights to do with this item?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Minister gave an assurance that he would confer with certain officers and one of them, he understood, was the Engineer-in-Chief.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was a matter of railway construction, but, for the information of the hon. member, a conference had been held between the Working Railways and the Railway Construction branch of the Works Department. A recommendation was now before Cabinet for consideration.

Item, Inspection of railway surveys, (4 months), £207:

Mr. MONGER: Had it been definitely decided to dispense with Mr. Muir's services after he had occupied the position for 16 years? We had been told that his services had been dispensed with because there was no longer any necessity for the services of an officer in this direction. Mr. Muir had done valuable work for the State, and his work in connection with the Trans-Australian railway would cause his name to be associated with one of the biggest engineering propositions with which this country had ever had to deal. Mr. Muir was brought over at the instigation of the late Mr. O'Connor, a gentleman who had introduced some of the best engineering talent into the State, and should such an officer after 20 years of splendid work have his services dispensed with at the whim of the Minister?

Mr. Underwood: Do you think they are to be kept on for ever?

Mr. MONGER: More tangible reasons for the dismissal should be given than

those which the Minister had offered. If this officer was incompetent, let the Minister say so, but to say that on the ground of economy a country like Western Australia should dispense with the services of its chief railway surveyor demanded further information than had been given. Those with whom Mr. Muir came into contact had always spoken of him in the highest terms, and it appeared that someone was required to fill the office from which Mr. Muir had been retired. Did the Minister intend to give the position to another person, and if so what tangible reasons had he for Mr. Muir's retirement?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The retirement of Mr. Muir was purely in the interests of economy. It had long been felt that there was no need for a highly paid official to attend to engineering surveys. The man who could build a railway could survey a railway. It was nonsense to have a highly paid man to survey a railway and a man drawing considerably less to construct it. The important man was the man who built and not the man who surveyed a railway. He believed that if the hon. member turned up the report of the reclassification board he would find the opinion expressed that it was questionable whether there was any need for this office. The position would not be filled again, but the engineer for railway construction would look after the comparatively small part of railway surveys. The position had been a sinecure for years and should not have lasted so long as it had done. It could have been dispensed with ten years ago, and the State would have gone along just the same as it had done since Mr. Muir's retirement. He ventured the opinion that we would get better results by combining railway construction and engineering surveys in the one officer.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: With the Minister he did not agree when he said that the State could have got on just as well for the last ten years without Mr. Muir. He had seen some of that officer's work, and was glad of the opportunity to say he was a very capable servant who had done good work for this country, particularly in connection with the Railway

Advisory Board. He was sorry that Mr. Muir's services had been dispensed with. That officer had still many years of life and vigour before him, and could have continued to do good work. Who would report now on the direction of new railways?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The man who constructs a railway can survey it.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: If a public works committee were not appointed such an officer as Mr. Muir would be required.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Is not the Engineer-in-Chief a more capable man than Mr. Muir?

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: It was doubtful if the Engineer-in-Chief had the same knowledge and experience of Western Australia. He reminded the Minister of the opinion he expressed when the Bill for the construction of the Narraggin-Wickepin railway was before the Chamber. The Minister said on that occasion that if he had had the opinion of Mr. Muir instead of the opinion of Mr. Stoddart, who was the construction officer, he would have felt satisfied to accept that opinion. That was the view of the Minister for Works at the time he was sitting in opposition. The Minister said he would have been prepared to accept Mr. Muir's report as against Mr. Stoddart's.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Stoddart was only a surveyor and not a construction man.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: In his opinion the Minister was quite right at the time, and that expression from him was a tribute to the value of Mr. Muir's opinions.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I never said anything against Mr. Muir's work, but that Mr. Thompson could do the work done by Mr. Muir.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: If it was decided to dispense with Mr. Muir's services he hoped that that gentleman would be treated generously and every payment that could legally be made to him under the Public Service Act would be made.

HON. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): He will get what is due and no more.

MR. UNDERWOOD: Pleas were being put up throughout the consideration of these Estimates for the retention of highly

paid officers. He was surprised at another place appointing useless select committees in view of the cry that had been made by the Opposition from one end of this State to another about the extravagance of the Government. It seemed that so long as a person got into the civil service the Government, Parliament, or anyone else was absolutely powerless, according to the philosophy of the Opposition, to dismiss him, no matter whether or not he was competent to do his work, or whether he was wanted or not. He had been convinced that for some considerable time, and even now, the civil service was over-manned. We could get on with a considerable reduction in the officers in our service and the work would be done with equal efficiency, and possibly more efficiency than was the case to-day. It did seem the height of hypocrisy for the Opposition to claim that the Minister must not dismiss a servant because he had been in the service for 19 years. Some hon. members claimed that because a man had been in the service of the State for 19 years the State should go on paying him, notwithstanding that the State might not have two pennyworth of work for him to do, and that he might be getting in the way of others and hindering them in their work.

Mr. HARTER: He has rendered the best years of his life to the State.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member would not listen to a claim that a miner who had worked 20 years in a mine should get a pension from the mine, or he kept there at top wages all his life. If the hon. member wanted officers to be kept in the civil service, whether there was any work for them to do or not, then he (Mr. Underwood) claimed that any navy who had been working say 20 years for the Government ought to be similarly kept on and his payment increased. He wanted to compliment the Minister on the way he had handled the civil service. The Minister had put several officers out of the department and he would earn appreciation from those on the Ministerial side of the House if he passed some more useless men out. He wanted to

protest against useless men being kept by the Government, whether they had been in the Government service 10 months or 10 years, and whether it was a navy or an engineer. An engineer had no more right to be kept in the pay of the people because he had had a good and regular job for 10 years, than a navy who had had only a bare living and work of the worst possible kind. All the navy could expect was a ticket to go into the old men's home.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Notwithstanding what the hon. member for Pilbara had said, it would be an ungracious act on the part of this Committee to let the item go past without having the fullest explanation, in the first place as to the reason why the Minister thought fit to dispense with the services of this gentleman, and in the second place the Committee had a right to know what the Minister intended to do in the way of compensating him for the excellent services he had rendered this State. It was moonshine for members to get up on the other side of the House and make comparisons as to what a navy might get as compared with what a professional man might get from the department. If we were going to pursue that argument to its logical conclusion we might say that the Minister for Works and the Premier, who were receiving fairly high salaries to-day, should receive no more than a navy.

The Premier: We receive these salaries only while we fill the positions, and get no compensation if we are put out.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: We must have heads to all departments.

The Minister for Works: There is no need for this head at all.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: If we were going to bring everything down to the one level we would have no one aspiring to get on.

The Minister for Works: We did not want an engineer for railway construction and an engineer to tell him how to survey a railway.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Exception could be taken to some of the remarks which had fallen from the member for Pilbara, as in discussing a matter of this kind we did

not want for one moment to cast the slightest suspicion upon the work carried out by the gentleman who had been dismissed or retired.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The less you say the better.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There was an inclination to do that and it was to be regretted as there was not the least doubt that this gentleman gave very valuable services to this country and may have saved it hundreds of thousands of pounds. Where it was proved that such a thing had happened, that we had men in our service who had saved the country hundreds of thousands of pounds—

The Premier: Are you aware of the fact that the classification board reduced his salary because they thought so much of his position?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There had been a good deal of discontent occasioned by the reductions that had been made by the classification board, many of which it was considered were not justified. It had already been mentioned that this gentleman had been brought here under engagement and he had served this country for nearly 20 years. Therefore some consideration should be given to him outside his nine months' retiring allowance.

The Minister for Works: He will get a pension.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Minister should give the Committee some idea of that pension.

The Minister for Works: He will get his pension just as any other civil servant, no more and no less.

Mr. HARPER: It was a great hardship on Mr. Muir to be retired at his time of life.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It is a pity he was not retired long ago.

Mr. HARPER: Mr Muir filled a very important position in Western Australia.

The Premier: And he was well paid for it.

Mr. HARPER: His ability had been recognised by one of the most capable engineers in Western Australia. A wire which was sent to Mr. Muir on 30th

March, 1901, by the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, who was then Engineer-in-Chief, might be read—

Heartiest congratulations on the very successful completion of your important expedition. That it has been carried through without any hitch and that all have returned in safety is due I feel sure to your skilful and courageous leadership assisted by the loyal and able efforts of all your party.

Then when Mr. Muir was going out in charge of the survey party which was engaged in exploring the country between the railway terminus of the goldfields and the South Australian border, he was given a send-off at which the engineer-in-chief, the late Mr. O'Connor, referring to Mr. Muir's services to the State, spoke of the improvement of the grades on the Eastern railway between Guildford and Northam. Mr. O'Connor said that Mr. Muir had been brought to the country to specially undertake the work and had succeeded in an incredibly short space of time in finding a route which was very much better than the existing one.

The Premier: We have spent thousands of pounds in deviating it since then.

Mr. HARPER: There might have been improvements since, but that was no reason why Mr. Muir's merits and the good work he had done should not be recognised.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): He should have looked after himself.

Mr. HARPER: There was no doubt that Mr. Muir had done good service to the State and had been a valuable officer, and the pension he would receive would not be adequate for what he had done. When Mr. Muir undertook the trial survey for the trans-Australian railway he took his life in his hands practically, and with the members of his party experienced great privations and hardships. It would be possible to speak for hours on the qualifications of Mr. Muir and the valuable services he had rendered to the State. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Muir was not brought into prominence probably because of reasons over which

he had no control. Mr. Muir should receive generous consideration at the hands of the State.

Mr. FOLEY: It was difficult to understand what hon. members had to complain about. This gentleman had served the country for a number of years and had been well paid, and now he was to get the ordinary pension which every civil servant was entitled to receive. Therefore it could not be said he had been treated harshly. Speaking personally he would like to see pensions done away with altogether. The member for Pingelly had said that Mr. Muir had given valuable services to the State, but there might be contrasted the action of the hon. member and other private employers, when those who had been in their service for a number of years had become grey-haired. Then there was nothing for those unfortunate men but the old men's home or an old age pension. If a pick and shovel man gave 20 years of his life in doing good work, he too should get some recognition just as the man who exercised the talents that nature had endowed him with. He knew of a case in the public service of a man who had been doing manual work for 16 years and who lost his arm while in the service, and because that man was not on the salaried staff he had to depend upon the charity of the State and the Commonwealth. If any reform was made it should be in the direction of doing away with pensions altogether.

Mr. GREEN: It would be interesting to contrast the opinions of the members for York, for Pingelly, and for Katanning in respect to Mr. Muir as against their opinions of that gentlemen's judgment when the Esperance railway was last under discussion, and Mr. Muir had furnished a minority report. At that time Mr. Muir's judgment had no weight among the Opposition, but to-night for political purposes Mr. Muir was boosted to the skies by those hon. members.

[Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.]

Mr. MONGER: If the Esperance railway were under discussion now he would vote just as he had done last session. He had never adversely criticised Mr. Muir,

although not seeing any reason for holding him up as an authority on agricultural lands. As a surveying engineer perhaps Mr. Muir had few equals.

Item, Engineer for dock construction, £500:

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It was understood that Mr. Ramsbotham had been temporarily engaged reporting upon harbours at out-ports. Had Mr. Ramsbotham finished his work at Albany, and if so were his reports prepared? The people of Albany were anxious to know whether that report was completed. To a very great extent the plans previously prepared did not meet with the approval of the people of Albany.

The Minister for Works: The proper place for that information is on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The only information asked for was as to whether the engineer's report was completed. It was understood that the plans prepared provided for only 1,000 feet of berthing accommodation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The question of the Albany harbour would be dealt with on the Loan Estimates. As far as the scheme was concerned, Mr. Ramsbotham had prepared a complete project and had completed his report on the requirements of Albany for many years to come; and not only in respect to Albany but in respect also to Bunbury and Geraldton. The various schemes proposed by Mr. Ramsbotham for these harbours were now under the purview of the engineering department and a working drawing of his scheme was under preparation, while quantities were being taken out, as far as Albany was concerned.

Mr. PRICE: Could the Minister give the Committee any idea as to when the engineer was likely to proceed with the works for which he had been appointed?

The Minister for Works: The proper place for this question is on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. PRICE: The point was that the people of Albany were anxious that certain works which had been approved should be proceeded with.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They will all be proceeded with in good time.

Mr. PRICE: No doubt the hon. member in his usual parochial spirit would oppose the project. If the work was proceeded with at out-ports the hon. member would be eased of a good deal of trouble.

The CHAIRMAN: It was necessary to keep to the item.

Mr. PRICE: It had been stated this evening that Albany and surrounding districts were not satisfied with certain things. As a representative of that district he thought he might be allowed to say something upon the subject.

The CHAIRMAN: The question had already been asked and answered and such repetitions could not be allowed.

Mr. PRICE: If one was not to be allowed to follow the lines which had been followed by other members—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not reflect on the Chair.

Mr. Gill: I think consideration might be allowed to the hon. member because he came in late.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Albany would have an opportunity of discussing the matter when the Loan Estimates came down. The hon. member had been allowed to ask a question and the Minister had taken exception to it.

Item, First-class assistant engineers. £3,470:

Mr. MONGER: Mr. Anketell was down for a salary of £432, whilst other men occupying similar positions received salaries ranging up to £528. Mr. Anketell was the best known engineer on the staff, and why was he the lowest paid man on the list?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was a matter over which the Minister had no control. The classification was in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. Monger: I do not say any of them are too well paid.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One could agree to a large extent with the remarks of the member for York. The classification of the engineering division of the Works Department was not in accordance with the work performed, but

that matter was in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner. Mr. Anketell was undoubtedly a very capable officer, but there were others on railway construction doing similar work who had a better record. No one would compare Mr. Anketell to Mr. Ripper as a railway construction engineer. Mr. Ripper was receiving a higher salary because he had greater qualifications and longer service. There were in the department second-class engineers doing practically the same work as Mr. Anketell, who were getting considerably less salary. In his opinion they should be receiving the same salary, seeing that they were doing just as good work.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I would remind the Minister of the good work Mr. Irvine is doing.

Item, Roads and bridges throughout the State, including subsidies to roads boards, £45,500:

Mr. MONGER: Had special provision been made for a number of new roads boards which had been formed? In the district in which the Minister was interested as a landed proprietor a new roads board had been started without any funds. The roads board which had formerly controlled that portion of the State had collected every penny due at the time they handed over and the new board had not sufficient money in hand to make arrangements for the secretary's first month's salary. Some little assistance had been arranged by the Works Department, but he considered that greater assistance should be given by the Government to newly formed roads boards.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Quite recently a board had been formed in his electorate and the sum given to the board by way of an initial grant should have been much greater. The Minister might take into consideration the special difficulties under which roads boards started operations in new districts, and some additional assistance ought to be given to them.

The Minister for Works: That is done.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The amount was very small, in the case of the Gnowangerup board only £150. More liberal

assistance should be given to new boards in their initial stages.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): When is this extravagance going to cease?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Extravagance of this character might be overlooked, because there was some practical work carried out which might be of permanent use. Public funds could not be expended to better purpose than on the construction and maintenance of roads.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): A resolution from your district the other day said something about stopping expenditure.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That must have been in connection with State steamers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They do not know anything about State steamers.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: They were live people and knew more than the Minister gave them credit for knowing.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And they are told some exaggerated stories, too.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: They did not go to the hon. member's district to dig them out, anyhow. He appreciated the Minister's remark in connection with the work of roads boards. It was pleasing to note the increased amount collected in rates during recent years. It spoke volumes for the way in which the roads boards did their duty. The Government should remember the rates being collected by the boards when considering the new land and income tax proposals. People in the country would contribute by way of direct taxation, under the Roads Act this year, no less than £80,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The people have increased in numbers.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: But not in proportion to the increase in the revenue they contributed. The Government must have overlooked this fact when considering the imposition of further burdens on the people. He was sorry that the vote was not larger. The money expended by roads boards provided an enormous amount of work and many conveniences for the people in the newly settled dis-

tricts. He regretted that the Minister had not made provision on the Estimates for the clearing of a road from a point on one of the railways running out from the Great Southern, eastward to Ravens-thorpe. This was a very necessary and urgent work. It would bring the mining centre, which was also an agricultural centre, into touch with the more settled portions of the State, and considering the small amounts involved—it would run into £250 for the Phillips River Roads Board and £250 for the Katanning Roads Board—the road should be cleared. This road would be the forerunner of a railway which would open up from 500,000 to 700,000 acres of good wheat land, and some day would add another province to our already large and extensive wheat areas.

Mr. BROUN: It was regrettable that the Minister had not made provision for a larger sum. Although the item represented an increase of £2,392 this year it included travelling expenses for roads board officers, salaries, and other items.

The Minister for Works: Those items were included last year.

Mr. BROUN: The Minister realised the difficulty of raising money to build roads to the new railways constructed in agricultural areas. Most of the settlers were not in a position to be heavily taxed and their holdings were not as valuable as those in the older areas. Therefore, the roads boards had not the same opportunity to raise revenue in order to construct roads as older established boards had. Such boards should receive greater help because they had to construct the roads to the railways. There were practically no old roads in these districts.

The Minister for Works: We make them.

Mr. BROUN: But the Works Department took the money for them out of the Estimates.

The Minister for Works: Oh, no.

Mr. BROUN: There was a great need for bridges throughout the State. He had asked during the last two years for a sum for different bridges in his constituency, but no grant had been made.

The Minister might well have increased the amount.

Mr. TURVEY: While recognising the necessity for roads throughout the agricultural districts, it must be patent to everyone that in the horticultural districts in the hills the growers of soft fruits required good roads in order to convey their fruit to market. It was essential that a constantly increasing amount should be spent in these particular localities. He had no desire to complain so far as the Minister was concerned, neither were there many complaints so far as the growers were concerned in the localities to which he had referred. He wanted to emphasise the fact that on Saturday last he had an opportunity to take the Minister into one of the richest fruit-growing districts in the Swan electorate, and there the Minister had the opportunity of seeing—what was a rare thing—where the settlers themselves, without a penny grant from the Government, had built one and a half miles of road and constructed five culverts and one bridge. The settlers met and expressed their gratification for all the present Government had done, notwithstanding that these settlers had shown their earnestness in co-operating with one another and not being entirely dependent on the Government. He did not wish to say that these fruit growers had all that could be desired so far as roads were concerned, but they recognised the depths of the Treasurer's purse and were content so long as their district, in common with the rest of the State, was getting a fair deal. They felt that the present Government had doled out to them as fair a deal as had been given to other parts of the State, but, personally, he did not think they had received all the assistance that was required.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The vote to which attention had been drawn was an excess over last year and was a considerable excess over the year 1910-11. In his general remarks he had drawn attention to the fact that wherever the Government had cut down expenditure he had always turned his face against cutting down the expenditure to the road

boards, so as not to hamper their operations. So far as this vote was concerned, it was a subsidy on rates collected; there were more boards and consequently there was more subsidy to pay. It was fixed on a definite basis and if hon. members wanted to argue for an increased amount they must argue on the matter of an increased subsidy, as this money was paid on the definite subsidy as existing to-day. The hon. members for Katanning and Beverley had referred to the new boards being established, but on the establishment of a new board they got a special subsidy. It must be borne in mind that when we created a new board we created an established district. They had got good rating powers, and what was more they got a percentage from the board from which the territory was taken.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Not always.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In a majority of cases that applied. While he was prepared to admit that we could extend this vote and distribute it with advantage to the State, he wanted to draw attention to the fact that there must be some limitation, and while members on the other side were urging the necessity in this Chamber for increasing this expenditure, they went out and condemned the Government for not economising. The hon. member for Beverley said it was the Government's duty. We had recognised that, but it did not apply to our predecessors. When the past Administration did economise they cut expenditure so far as the roads boards were concerned. He (the Minister for Works) said this was unwise, and the present Government had endorsed it and had refused to cut down the expenditure so far as the roads boards were concerned.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: You cut down the loan vote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We cut down the loan vote so far as grants were concerned for general or subsidiary roads. We had taken the attitude that it was absolutely unsound to expend loan funds on the maintenance of roads generally. We had limited loan expenditure absolutely to feeder roads, and we had

not cut down the expenditure so far as the feeder roads were concerned. The policy adopted by the present Government was that a genuine feeder road leading into a railway was as much entitled to loan expenditure as a railway itself, but to build subsidiary roads on loan expenditure was a doubtful policy. The hon. member spoke of the road to Ravensthorpe, but an officer of the department, a man who knew the whole district, had said distinctly in his report that it would be absolute extravagance to spend money on a road of this description. According to the officer's report the use of the road was limited to two or three people. There was no hope of anything being done in connection with this road until settlement increased and officers of the department who knew the country recommended the matter for serious consideration.

Mr. A. E. Piesse : If you would clear the road you would allow the country to be opened up.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : There was practically no settlement at present between Ravensthorpe and Ongerup. There was a track now, and as a matter of fact motor cars had been there.

Item, Subsidy to municipalities on general rates, £17,500 :

Mr. ALLEN : Would the Minister explain whether there was any chance of the Perth municipality coming under this item. At the same time he desired to thank the present Government for what they had done for the city council.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Exactly the same would be done as was done last year.

Item, Perth Causeway, lighting and maintenance, £500 :

Mr. LEWIS : The necessity for keeping the Causeway in order in view of the approaching Christmas traffic might be emphasised. It was in a very bad state of repair, and unless something was done an accident might occur at any time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The maintenance of the Causeway was purely a Government responsibility, and it was admitted that it deserved attention. So

far as tar paving was concerned, there was a only a certain time of the year when it could be carried out, and we had now arrived at that stage. It was intended to put the work in hand immediately, and in fact the material was there now.

Item, Onslow jetty, repairs, £400 :

Mr. GARDINER : Would the Minister explain why it was necessary for the expenditure of this money on the Onslow jetty at the present juncture in view of the fact that a sum of money would appear on the Loan Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : There was great difficulty in getting suitable jetty or harbour accommodation at Onslow. Provision would be made on the Loan Estimates for the survey of a new site which had been recommended. This amount of £400 it would be noticed was voted last year, and the expenditure of the sum was delayed in the hope that it would be possible to arrive at some decision in connection with the proposed new harbour. That had been impossible as we had not been able to locate a suitable site. The jetty had been allowed to drift for many years, and unless something was done to it, it would probably tumble down.

Item, Perth Government House and Albany Government Cottage, Incidental, including maintenance of houses, out-buildings, furniture and fittings, china, glassware, etcetera; also fuel and light, water and sanitation, £1,150 :

Mr. TURVEY : In the past this expenditure had been debited against the vote, "His Excellency the Governor," but it was now transferred to the Works Department. It would be fresh in the minds of hon. members that last year he took the opportunity in connection with the salary of the Governor and the upkeep of Government House to move that the item be reduced by £1,000, and that the amendment was carried. The vote on that occasion was £2,746 exclusive of the £4,000 salary of the Governor and £350 salary of the private secretary, which were paid under special Acts. It had been found that instead of the total being reduced the actual amount spent last year was £3,694.

The Premier: The amount was reinstated afterwards.

Mr. TURVEY: The amount was reinstated during the early hours of the morning when there was only a small attendance of members, but the amendment for the reduction of the salary was carried in the earlier portion of the night. He was not in the House when the amount was reinstated, but he learned afterwards that that had been done. Last year though only £1,300 was voted for incidentals, there was spent no less a sum than £2,225. It was found also that last year £236 was spent on the upkeep of Government House grounds in Perth, and that this year the sum had been increased to £250.

The Premier: What has that to do with the item?

Mr. TURVEY: What he desired to refer to was the upkeep of Government House in Perth and the Albany institution. If the Albany house had been substituted for that at Rottnest there would be no objection, but what he was complaining about was the constantly increasing expenditure in connection with the upkeep of the gubernatorial establishment in the State. The total vote on the Estimates last year exclusive of the salaries of the Governor and his private secretary was £2,746, and there was expended £3,694. This year the total amounted to £2,851, and in view of the vote which was recorded during the consideration of the last Estimates in favour of the reduction of the item, the growth in the expenditure was not justified.

The Minister for Works: The hon. member is discussing generally the Government House vote which has been passed by the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would have to confine his remarks to the item.

Mr. TURVEY: The vote which the Minister referred to had been already discussed. To that vote there was a footnote explaining that the balance of "incidentals" was to be found under the Public Works division. He was now discussing that item which had been transferred to the Public Works, and therefore he was in order in discussing

the upkeep generally of these institutions. The incidentals had been constantly increasing, and whereas last year the Committee had given an indication of a desire that this item should decrease, it had actually increased. The present occupant of the position—

The Premier: That is not in the vote, anyhow.

The CHAIRMAN: The item referred to the upkeep of the buildings, and had nothing whatever to do with the occupant of the establishment.

Mr. TURVEY: Although our population was so small, the cost of Government House was greater than in some of the Eastern States where there were bigger populations to carry the burden.

The CHAIRMAN: This was a question of maintaining the buildings. This was not a question affecting the position of the Governor nor his expenses; it was purely a matter of keeping the buildings in repair.

Mr. TURVEY: There was the footnote at the bottom of the previous vote explaining that the "incidentals" had been transferred to the Works Department.

The CHAIRMAN: That was included in the item.

Mr. TURVEY: Then he would confine himself to the question of maintenance. The upkeep of this institution was far heavier in Western Australia than in the Eastern States, and was costing this State considerably more than a State like New South Wales, which had a population of a million and a half.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should have addressed himself to the earlier vote; he could now only discuss the question of the maintenance and repairs and upkeep of the actual buildings.

Mr. TURVEY: Still it could be claimed that "incidental" included the maintenance. However, he would test the feeling of the Committee. He moved—

That the item be reduced by £1,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment would simply penalise the buildings, which would be allowed to go into disrepair and decay. We had in these buildings a valuable asset, and even the hon. member would scarcely urge that

that asset should not be used. The buildings were valuable and must be maintained and repaired. The hon. member failed to realise that there had been an alteration as far as this expenditure was concerned.

Mr. Thomas: Why this continual increase?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no increase at all. The vote had been transferred to the Public Works Department so that it might be under the control of the officers of that department. The item was absolutely necessary to the due maintenance of the buildings.

Mr. McDOWALL: As one who was in favour of doing away with the post of Governor, he did not feel inclined to give a silent vote upon this question. At the same time there was reason in everything. This was not a question of principle, but simply of the maintenance of the Government House buildings and furniture. Only a week ago in a long discussion it had been pointed out that if Parliament House buildings were allowed to get into disrepair it would cost a considerable sum to restore them. The same argument applied to Government House, and it was an ordinary business precaution to keep the buildings in a state of proper repair, so that, if at any time it was desired to sell them, they would not be sold at too great a loss. It was ridiculous to ask the Committee to divide on this question in which no principle was involved. If a principle was involved he would vote with the hon. member as he had done on a previous occasion.

12 o'clock midnight.

The PREMIER: It was to be hoped the member for Swan would not make himself look absurd in endeavouring to establish himself as champion of a reform by submitting an amendment that did not touch that reform at all. The question of the upkeep of the premises did not affect the principle of the appointment of State Governors.

Mr. Turvey: There is no necessity for an increase.

The PREMIER: There was no increase.

Mr. Turvey: The figures prove it.

The PREMIER: The figures did not prove it. The hon. member knew that there had been a change of Governor during the last financial year, and naturally renovations had taken place and there had been the expenditure incidental to one Governor moving out and another moving in. Last year, knowing that the Government were to take over the cottage at Rottnest, no provision had been made for its maintenance and it had been allowed to go into such disrepair that the Government were unable to use it this year. In accordance with an agreement with the Imperial authorities the Government had now made provision for a summer residence for the Governor at Albany. The provision of a summer residence was a matter of agreement between the State and the Imperial authorities, and did the hon. member for Swan expect the Government to break that agreement? The control of Government House buildings was being transferred to the Works Department in order that there might be control over them in the same way as the Parliament House buildings were controlled. Government House was a public building and it had been placed under the Works Department for the purpose of having it properly controlled. There was no increase except when the total vote last year was placed against the total vote this year. As had been explained, no provision had been made for the maintenance of the Governor's cottage at Rottnest, and the Government must put the residence at Albany into proper repair. The Government had communicated with the Imperial authorities on the subject of the appointment of State Governors and they had received a reply which would be presented to the House before Parliament went into recess. The Imperial authorities had declined the Government's proposal, and what position was he in? There was a number of agreements in existence, of which he, as head of the Government, did not approve, but because he disapproved of them he was not going to flout them. So long as

we were compelled to have a Governor appointed by the Imperial authorities and were called upon, in accordance with an agreement, to maintain a summer cottage for the Governor, it should be maintained in the same way as any private person would maintain it. The condition of Government House was no credit to the State, but the buildings were now being placed under the Minister for Works so that there might be proper care and control. Previously they had been under the Governor and his staff.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The expenditure in this direction really showed an increase of nearly £300. He did not want to allow the buildings to depreciate for lack of paint, or for want of looking after, if those buildings were of any use, but he contended that the Government House buildings as used at the present time were of no use. They were a continual source of expense which could be done away with by altering our system of State Governors.

The Premier: Why not close up the Legislative Council, you are opposed to it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If it were possible to abolish the Legislative Council by allowing the buildings to go into disrepair, into disrepair they would go, so far as he was concerned. If they allowed Government House to fall into disrepair it might call the attention of the Imperial authorities to the fact that the Parliament of Western Australia wanted an alteration in the system.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot, in Committee of Supply, deal with a question that requires legislative action.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Presumably he would be in order in saying that if those buildings were allowed to fall into disrepair possibly the Governor would not come here, and if that was so the country would be better off.

Mr. Wisdom: That is not the opinion of the country.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Legislative action by Parliament was not required. We should bring under the attention of the

authorities in England the desire for an alteration of the system—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could do that by a direct motion in the House, but could not deal with the matter in Committee of Supply.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: This item should be cut down. The expenditure was unwarranted, and if the amount was reduced the result he desired would be brought about. It was all very well to say that the State might want to sell these buildings. That was not likely while the buildings were kept in repair. The only possible chance would be to let them get out of repair.

The Premier: You might desire the abolition of the Council, but you do not attack their vote on the same ground.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Possibly it would not be effective.

The Premier: It would be just as effective. We control that vote the same as this.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: As a member he was entitled to independent thought.

Hon. Frank Wilson: As long as you keep it to yourself it will be all right.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The country was paying too much for the upkeep of Government houses, and he would support the reduction. The State could do without those buildings altogether, and that being so it was not necessary to expend this money for their upkeep. He again protested against the continual increase in the item.

Mr. TURVEY: The Premier had said that this amount referred only to repairs and maintenance to residences. Even that item alone exceeded similar expenditure in the Eastern States.

The Premier: Give us the figures.

Mr. TURVEY: In New South Wales, which had a population of a million and a half people—

The Premier: That has nothing to do with it. If we had a million it would not cost any more.

Mr. TURVEY: It had a good deal to do with it. The constantly increasing cost affected the people, because there was a smaller number here to bear the burden.

In New South Wales the cost was £1,144; in Queensland £1,011—

The Premier: I will bet you a new hat you are wrong.

Mr. TURVEY: And in Western Australia the cost was £1,150. His only regret was that he was not able to give the comparative results so far as the upkeep of the whole of the position was concerned. If he had been able to, an even more glaring anomaly would be shown.

The CHAIRMAN: Already he had said that this could be done only in the House by a direct motion.

Mr. TURVEY: As he had stated, he regretted he could not refer to it.

The CHAIRMAN: This would not be tolerated by him any longer. The hon. member said he regretted he could not refer to the matter and then had referred to it. It was not fair to him as Chairman or to the Committee.

Mr. TURVEY: It was his desire to claim that he did not refer to it. His statement was that he regretted he could not refer to the comparative cost.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must proceed to debate the question before the Committee.

Mr. TURVEY: Might he say that he did not make the statement attributed to him by the Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member did make the statement, and he must withdraw the remark that he did not. The hon. member said he regretted he could not refer to that matter, and then had referred to it. Before proceeding any further the hon. member must withdraw the remark that he (the Chairman) had made a statement which was not correct.

Mr. TURVEY: If he had made such a statement he would withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw without any qualification at all.

Mr. TURVEY: Then he would ask what the Chairman desired him to withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw the statement that he (the Chairman) had made a statement which was not correct.

Mr. TURVEY: It was not his desire to disobey the ruling of the Chair, but he

repeated that he had made no such statement.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw the statement he made.

Mr. TURVEY: Then he would withdraw the statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Now the hon. member could proceed.

Mr. TURVEY: It was regrettable that according to the Chairman's ruling he was confined to discussing the maintenance and upkeep of the Perth Government House and Albany Government cottage. Once more he had drawn attention to the increase, just as he had last year called attention to the increase over the preceding year. He trusted this would be an indication to the Minister controlling the vote that a reduction should, if possible, be made in future.

Mr. THOMAS: If there was any increase and the increase was likely to be continuous he entirely disapproved of it. With the member for Swan he held certain principles in this regard, but as far as the item was concerned he would accept the assurance of the Premier and the Minister for Works that there was no increase. He could not see any good purpose would be served by voting for the hon. member's amendment. Were it one of principle he would vote for it no matter what the circumstances might be, but as it was not likely to serve the end the hon. member desired, and because he (Mr. Thomas) did not want to cause the Government any inconvenience, because he presumed it would be a difficult matter to amend a vote they had provided for, therefore somewhat against his own inclination he supported the item as it stood.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It had been stated that there was an agreement to provide a summer residence. Where was that agreement, who made it, and when was it made?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Sir John Forrest in 1891.

The Premier: It is in the archives. Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage* £232,900:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This division needed only a brief introduction because in regard to this department a great deal of detail was given when he submitted a Bill to the Chamber recently in connection with the amalgamation of various offices. It was then considered necessary to give detail in order to justify the continuation of the measure providing for the amalgamation. The increased expenditure proposed under these Estimates was small when one considered the large expansion of business and extension of the various water supply, sewerage, and drainage operations controlled by the department. The amount of increase ran into £29,422. It was made up of £4,143 salaries, £15,494 under goldfields water supply, £1,931 under metropolitan water supply and sewerage, £1,082 stock routes, and £6,772 on other hydraulic undertakings. The item of salaries included reclassification of the clerical division of the goldfields water supply, which had to be made retrospective, other anticipated increases, and increases generally in regard to the extension of the various systems. The £15,494 increase under goldfields water supply was, he regretted to say, almost solely confined to the increased maintenance of the 30-inch main, which was causing the Government a great deal of concern. At the present time the department was opening up, taking out, and relaying practically the whole of the length between No. 2 pumping station and Sawyer's Valley. Money was being expended in trying to reduce the salinity of the water, and generally to improve matters. He was pleased to say that before the winter there was, speaking from memory, 40 grains of salt per gallon and it was reduced now by flushing from the bottom to 20 grains, a marked improvement indeed, and the engineer proposed to divert some of the creeks which were running salt, principally through ring-barking, and hoped to overcome the main difficulty, which was in regard to the supply to the Railway Department, as salt had a very disastrous effect on the boilers. The £1,931 increase under metropolitan water supply was a very small amount in view of the expansion of business in

the metropolitan area. The £1,082 in connection with stock routes was fairly large, but expenditure was necessary in connection with the watering stations, and it was expected that these would be utilised to a very fair extent this year on account of the better season. The amount of £6,772 in connection with other hydraulic undertakings was purely on account of the operations at Ora Banda, Albany, Geraldton, Pingelly, Roebourne, Leonora, and the various drainage works. These were being operated by the department instead of boards as heretofore. With regard to revenue items, although the printed Estimates showed an increase of £12,792 this did not convey the true position, as the operations owing to the change brought about by the amalgamation altered the increase from what was actually earned. If we compared the estimated total income with the amount actually earned last year we saw that for the goldfields water supply the revenue in 1912-13 was £254,919. It was estimated this year to be £260,000, an increase of £5,081. The metropolitan water supply income last year was £92,866, and the income estimated this year was £107,000, an increase of £14,134. For other hydraulic undertakings the income last year was £18,054, and was estimated this year to be £20,000, an increase of £1,946; or a total increase of £21,161. The decreases in revenue anticipated in the goldfields water supply were chiefly in regard to Coolgardie and Kanowna, and to a smaller extent Kalgoorlie and Boulder. But this would be compensated for by extensions in the agricultural districts and increases in the agricultural towns. In regard to the metropolitan water supply the increase was made up of £6,600 under the water branch, and the balance in extension of the sewerage system. He did not know that he need give any more details. It was originally proposed to establish a chief engineer to take charge of the whole of these hydraulic undertakings, but that idea had been abandoned, and three separate engineers appointed, one to take charge of the goldfields area, including the goldfields water supply, and what was

originally known as the mines water supply, at a salary of £636, an engineer for the agricultural areas at the same salary, and an engineer for the metropolitan area at a salary of £600. The classification of the balance of the engineers was now being continued by the Public Service Commissioner, and when that was accomplished we would have the staff well organised and generally speaking everything in good working order.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Departments of Works, Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage.

Progress reported.

BILL — ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER AGREEMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

House adjourned at 12.32 a.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 20th November, 1913.

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| Bills: Supply (No. 3), £687,770, 3s. | 2811 |
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| Mines Regulation, Com. | 2820 |

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. Sir J. W. HACKETT leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. E. McLarty on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 3), £687,770.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-West) in moving the second reading said: This short Bill of a single clause, if Parliament is good enough to enact it, will have considerable influence in raising the prestige of a great number of our fellow citizens who are administering local government in this State. The system of roads boards practically covers this State; there are something like 115 boards, including over one thousand members, and I would like hon. members to think of the debt that the State owes to these men. Members of Parliament are fortified by the kudos connected with their position, and in a smaller degree by some little allowance, to compensate them for loss of time and money. But the members of roads boards are on honorary duty and they get little thanks and little credit for what they do. Some of these men travel enormous distances, often 50 miles from where they reside; they have to do this great amount of travelling to look after the local governing concerns of the people living around them, so that they deserve well of the Legislature of the country. Therefore, anything that can be done in a legitimate way to encourage them in their work and clothe their positions with some little prestige, I think Parliament should gladly do it. The Bill proposes to confer on these honorary workers titles of courtesy which will be entirely in keeping with the duties they discharge. The Bill proposes that the chairman of a roads board shall be called mayor of his district, and I intend, if the Bill gets into Committee, to follow that with a further proposal that the members of the board shall be called councillors. Hon. members are aware that up to 1911 the local governing legislation offered inducements for the overlapping of powers. The system provided for municipalities and roads boards, but it gave roads boards such limited powers, that as they grew stronger they naturally