

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 22nd November, 1904.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY:
1, Imprisonment of Ticket-of-Leave Man Clarke.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS:
2, Water Supply of Subiaco and Leeder-
ville, Return of Charges.

MESSAGE—ASSENT TO BILLS (5).

Message from the Governor received and read, assenting to five Bills, namely—Supply £250,000 (No. 3), Street Closure (Kanowna), Fremantle Municipal Loans Validation, Friendly Societies Act Amendment, Bush Fires Act Amendment.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE WATER SUPPLY, DISMISSALS.

MR. WATTS asked the Minister for Works: 1, The number of men dismissed from pumping stations on the Coolgardie Water Supply since the Government took the works over? 2, The reasons for such dismissals? 3, Have the men a right of appeal; and if so, to whom?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Five. 2, One man, employed at No. 2, on account of absence from duty; two men, employed at No. 4, on account of unsatisfactory conduct; one man, employed at No. 6, on account of drunkenness; one man, employed at No. 7, owing to incompetency. 3, In accordance with the terms of his engagement, the Machinery Superintendent has the Minister's authority to engage and dismiss all pumping station employees at his discretion. Only one appeal has been

made to me, and this is now receiving my consideration.

BILL, FIRST READING.

BRANDS' BILL, introduced by the Colonial Secretary.

PAPERS, RETURNS.

WHEAT, FLOUR, AND WHEAT OFFAL.

On motion by MR. NANSON, ordered: That a return be laid upon the table of the House, showing—1, The yield of wheat in Western Australia from the last (1903-4) harvest. 2, The consumption of flour in Western Australia from 1st November, 1903, to 31st October, 1904. 3, The consumption of wheat offal in Western Australia from 1st November, 1903, to 31st October, 1904. 4, The importations to Western Australia from 1st November, 1903, to 31st October, 1904, of—(a) Wheat, (b) Flour, (c) Bran, (d) Pollard. 5, The shortage of local production on a wheat basis of flour and of wheat offal from 1st November, 1903, to 31st October, 1904. 6, The approximate area of additional land that will have to be put into cultivation before the above-mentioned shortage is overtaken.

FLOUR MILLING INDUSTRY.

On motion by MR. NANSON, ordered: That there be laid upon the table of the House all reports by officers of the Department of Agriculture dealing with the flour-milling industry in this State.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1904-5.

DEBATE ON FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The Financial Statement having been made by the Premier and Treasurer in introducing the Annual Estimates, 17th November, and the first item moved, debate now resumed; MR. BATH in the Chair.

HON. C. H. RASON (Guildford): In criticising the Estimates and the speech the Treasurer delivered to the House on Tuesday last, I wish in the first place to congratulate the hon. gentleman on having taken a much more rosy view of the position of Western Australia generally than he appeared to have done when he made his Ministerial statement or utterance of Ministerial policy at Subiaco. Especially do I congratulate him upon his opening remarks when he said, "It is

well at the outset to assert that the prosperity of this State rests on a firm foundation." That is very gratifying news, and indeed the whole of the Treasurer's opening remarks were one long praise, if I may be allowed to say so, of past administration—at least it was testimony to the good effect of past administration; and whereas but a few months ago he declared that the condition of Western Australia was worse than at any time during the past five years, we now find that he has been able to discover that the prosperity of the State rests upon a firm foundation. That is very gratifying news to all sides of the House, I am sure. We on this (Opposition) side never had any other opinion on that subject, but we are gratified indeed to learn that the Treasurer has altered his opinion, and now is convinced that there is nothing very wrong with Western Australia, after all. I congratulate the Treasurer also upon the excellence of his returns, the manner in which they were prepared, the lucid style and the very satisfactory way in which they were presented. It is true that I had a suspicion myself that whilst the voice was the voice of Jacob the hand was the hand of Esau unmistakably, and that one could recognise the hand that prepared those returns. Still I may be wrong, and if I am, of course I shall have done the hon. gentleman no harm if I have compared him—

MR. NELSON: You are making a false insinuation.

MR. RASON: I am making no insinuation. When I have anything to say, I am like the member for Hannans (Mr. Nelson), I say it; and if the hon. member accuses me of making a false insinuation, I shall ask the Speaker to rule him entirely out of order and call on him to withdraw.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order in making that statement.

MR. NELSON: I withdraw it.

MR. RASON: I hope the member for Hannans will curb his impetuosity if he can, and not indulge in foolish interjections. I should like to have been able to congratulate the Treasurer upon the style in which he delivered that speech. Those of us who have been in this House for many years will well remember that Sir John Forrest, and indeed the succeeding Treasurers, when they made Budget

speeches entered upon the subject with an enthusiasm that conveyed to their hearers some of that enthusiasm, until people who came to listen to those Budget speeches went away convinced of the sincerity and the earnestness of the Treasurers who had delivered the speeches, and convinced that it was good to be in Western Australia after all, and that there was a great future before this country. I make every allowance for the Treasurer. I know the difficulties under which he laboured.

MR. NEEDHAM: You must be short of argument.

MR. RASON: If the hon. member had as much sense as the Treasurer has argument, he would be a great deal more intellectual than he is. I was about to say that the Treasurer was in this difficulty, that he thought it best to read his speech. That always places one under a great disadvantage; but I understand the Treasurer's reason for adopting that course was that he wished the speech to read well. I should like to remind the Treasurer of a statement made by an eminent statesman, a statement attributed to Mr. Gladstone. He was asked if he had read a certain speech, and he said, "Does it read well?" The gentleman who asked him said, "Yes, very well indeed"; and Mr. Gladstone was supposed to have said "Then, depend upon it it was a very bad speech." I say the remark was attributed to Mr. Gladstone because "very bad" were not the actual words used: much stronger words were used, and therefore I have grave doubts as to whether Mr. Gladstone used them or not. At any rate, it is a statement of an eminent statesman, and it is remarkably true. In the majority of cases, where a speech reads well, depend upon it it was a speech that did not touch the hearts of the hearers very much, and did not have much effect upon those who listened to it. If we turn to the Estimates themselves we find the Treasurer coming down with an estimated deficit of £52,721. A Treasurer's action in submitting to Parliament Estimates which show an estimated deficit of no matter what sum can only be justified under very exceptional circumstances, when the State concerned or the country concerned is in such a manifestly bad condition that it is im-

possible to arrange the Estimates so as to avoid a deficit. That cannot be said of Western Australia. By the Treasurer's own showing and by his own admission, affairs in Western Australia are prosperous and good; and it is little short of absurd to say it would not have been possible to bring down Estimates to this House which would avoid showing a deficit of £52,721. The Treasurer must surely recognise the immense amount of harm it does to any State when it goes forth to the world that, strive as you may to adjust the finances, it will be impossible to so adjust expenditure as to have it covered by revenue. There is, as I say, but little justification for the Treasurer's action. Justification can exist only where things are so bad that no amount of administration, no amount of care, and no amount of forethought can avoid such an unhappy result. The Estimates themselves show that, with a little care, forethought, and courage, it would have been easily possible to avoid even this apparent deficit of £52,721. But why should such a state of affairs arise? We find that the actual revenue for the last financial year was £3,550,016. There was a surplus brought forward from the previous year of £231,659, making available for expenditure £3,781,675. There was actually expended £3,698,312, leaving a surplus of £83,363. Now the estimated revenue for 1904-5, the present financial year, is £3,677,739, which with the surplus brought forward gives available for expenditure £3,761,103. The actual expenditure last year, as I have previously pointed out, was £3,550,016, so that the Government have available for expenditure £211,087 more than was actually expended last year. Surely that is sufficient; but it seems that it is not, that it cannot be made sufficient, and that on the top of this there is necessity to incur a deficiency of £52,721. I cannot myself see that such a course as this is justifiable. There has been no attempt so far to justify it. It has been said, it is true, by the Treasurer that he hoped that when Ministers got time to do their duty—to put it bluntly—some portion of that deficit might be avoided; but for my part, I am afraid, very much afraid, that the Treasurer has over-estimated his revenue. The

Commonwealth estimated revenue for 1904-5 is £1,036,259. Let me point out to the Committee that in 1903-4 the estimated revenue was £1,135,000, while the actual revenue was only £1,065,245. If the Treasurer estimates, as he does, to receive £1,036,259 this year, it is only £28,986 less than the actual receipts of last year. In 1902-3 the Commonwealth receipts were over-estimated by £31,802, and in 1903-4 they were over-estimated by £69,755 although estimated at £120,731 less than the actual revenue of the previous year. Between 1902-3 and 1903-4 there was an actual drop in the Commonwealth revenue of £190,486—the difference that actually occurred in one year, whereas this year we have only allowed for a drop of £29,000. I cannot for myself see by what process of reasoning we can arrive at figures such as these. If in one year we experience in the Commonwealth revenue a drop of over £190,000, why should we in the following year, with the reduction of the sliding scale still operating, only anticipate a drop of £29,000.

THE TREASURER: This is net revenue.

MR. RASON: I am dealing with net revenue, the revenue returned to the State. While in one year we find a drop in the net revenue returned to the State of £190,000, it is fair to assume that there will be a greater drop than £29,000 in the year immediately following. I sincerely hope that I am wrong, that the Treasurer's estimate will be realised; but I am afraid it will not be, and I conceive it my duty to point that out. Let me point out also that the Treasurer himself inadvertently adduced arguments which tend to show that the drop will be even greater. He congratulated the country—as no doubt the country may be congratulated—on the fact that we are to experience a most bountiful harvest—that we are to overtake our demands in respect of cereals, etcetera; consequently, he argued, we shall have a greatly increased railway traffic. Let me point out that if we do have that blessing on the one hand, we shall have fewer imports, less customs revenue; and that the deficiency in the amount returned to us by the Commonwealth will be ever greater than was experienced last year. If we analyse these Estimates, a great increase of expenditure

Department and in the Lands Department; and in this connection I should like to point out that the expenditure of both these departments has been rapidly increasing during the last three years. I shall in each case deal with the estimated expenditure, so that we may have a perfectly fair comparison with the estimated expenditure shown on these Estimates. For the financial year 1902-3 the Mines Department estimated expenditure was £132,354; for 1903-4, £191,755; for 1904-5—on these Estimates now before us—it has reached the gigantic sum of £281,307. Between 1902-3 and 1904-5 it has considerably more than doubled. The same holds good of the Lands. In 1902-3 the estimated expenditure was £124,547; in 1903-4, £174,927; whilst this year it is shown as £205,323. That would not matter very much if the revenue had increased accordingly; but such is not the case. We find that the estimated revenue for 1902-3 was £120,000; 1903-4, £123,000; and for 1904-5 it is estimated to be £182,850, including the extraordinary item of £75,000 from the smelter, to which I shall presently refer. Therefore we are asked to expend in the Mines Department £281,307 to obtain a revenue of £182,850; and in the Lands Department we are asked to expend £205,323 to obtain a revenue of £190,200. But I submit that the Mines Department, and indeed a few other ventures on which the State has embarked, should be treated as trading concerns, and that we have no right whatever to load up our expenditure and our revenue by items which after all are really fictitious. Any one glancing at the extraordinary revenue and the extraordinary expenditure of Western Australia may well say that we are extraordinary people. But if one comes to analyse that revenue and that expenditure, after all it really amounts to that very many thousands of pounds under the head of expenditure in—analyse a profit of a very few—of revenue. Let me, if—a little more fully—revenue we find smelter, £75,000;—total revenue of—expenditure of—£74,650;—total

expenditure of £139,750. So that all this swelling of revenue is for the purpose of showing a net gain of £5,000. Surely it would be far better to treat the State batteries, and the smelter, and the Gwalia hotel as being what they undoubtedly are—trading concerns only, and to bring to account every year the profit or the loss on these trading concerns; not to bolster up and unduly inflate our Estimates—for this is really an undue inflation of the Estimates—with regard both to expenditure and to revenue. Indeed, the same argument holds good as to railways and tramways. There we have on the side of revenue £1,622,500, and on the side of expenditure £1,286,509. The Railway Department also is really a trading concern. I do not quite perceive at the moment how it could actually be treated as one in the same way as the other trading concerns I have alluded to so easily can be; but undoubtedly it would be to the advantage of this State if such a method were possible.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (HON. J. B. HOLMAN): You ought to have made a start years ago.

MR. RASON: Because certain things were not done years ago, it does not follow that they should not be done now or in the future. And a lot of things we did not do years ago my friend finds it advisable to do now.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: And a lot of things one could do in two years one cannot do in two months.

MR. RASON: I should like to point out that the total revenue to be collected by the State is £2,641,480. Out of that revenue £1,767,500 is collected from those sources to which I have referred; so that over and above the batteries, the smelter, the Gwalia hotel, and the railways—revenue received for nought but services rendered or for value given—the whole amount collected by the State is £873,980. Yet in consequence of this swelling of revenue and expenditure we are constantly being told that the people of Western Australia are tax-ridden almost to death. Nothing of the kind; because even in that £873,980, I can very easily point to many more items of both revenue and expenditure which belong to trading concerns, or which represent money received for services rendered, and not taxation at all. As to the expendi-

ture of the Lands Department, the Treasurer said, "Lands and Surveys account for an additional estimated revenue of £36,741." It as well to be accurate; and so far as I can I have checked these figures of the Treasurer, and find some extraordinary discrepancies. There is a discrepancy in regard to this item—the vote "Lands and Surveys," on page 49 of the Estimates, shows an estimated expenditure of £35,040 only, as against £36,741, the amount stated by the Treasurer. However, we may allow that to pass. But the Treasurer went on to say: "Under the heading of Rabbits an additional provision of £12,329 is made, due to necessary increases of staff owing to the larger extent of country to be covered by inspectors and other officers." Now I find when I do turn to the heading of Rabbits, instead of an additional provision of £12,329, there is a decrease of £15,671.

THE TREASURER: I was dealing with last year's expenditure which was transferred to Works.

MR. RASON: I am dealing with the items of expenditure as given by the Treasurer; and if I do turn to Rabbits I find, instead of an increase, a decrease of £15,671. I find moreover there is absolutely no provision for the continuation of the fencing; so that either the Government intend altogether to drop the fencing, or they intend in future to charge the fencing to loan. I submit that either course, whichever they propose to adopt, is bad; and if they propose to charge the work of fencing against rabbits to loan account, then in my opinion at all events the proposal is most improper, because it can never be held that rabbit fencing is a reproductive work. [Interjections.] It is undoubtedly a proper charge against revenue. The country is under an obligation to protect settlers; and, as a member says, there is cause. There is cause; but there is no justification whatever for charging that work against loan account: the work should be undertaken from revenue. However, it is to the discrepancies that I wish to draw attention. The Treasurer said: "Agriculture has demanded an increase of £3,266, which is fully justified by the natural expansion of the department." The increase shown on the esti-

mates is £7,775 instead £3,266. I submit that it is the duty of the Treasurer, when he gives us figures, to give us correct figures, or at all events figures approximately correct; and not figures showing so wide a margin of inaccuracy as those to which I have just referred. Then again, while dealing with Lands and Surveys, and immediately following the reference to the Agricultural Bank, the Treasurer went on to say that "the Gaols vote is £4,069 in excess of the estimate of last year." That is correct as to figures; but why the expenditure for gaols should be shown in such intimate connection with the expenditure on the Agricultural Bank, I fail to see. I should have thought reference to the expenditure on gaols, instead of being included in Lands and Surveys, might more properly have been referred to in connection with the Police Department. To pass on to the Works Department, it is estimated to pay from revenue in salaries £30,000 to administer an estimated total expenditure of £387,850, as against the previous year's estimated salaries of £25,000 to administer an estimated expenditure of £682,978. In other words, it is estimated to cost £5,000 more to administer £215,000 less. I am dealing with actual figures in each case. We were always told there was to be no interference with roads boards whatever; whatever the Government failed to realise, they did not realise that it is absolutely necessary to extend the roads boards throughout the State, and to give them the same encouragement and assistance that they have received in the past. That is hardly borne out by results, as directly afterwards they reduce roads boards by £5,000 less than last year. The expenditure for roads is £13,296 less than last year. The expenditure for harbours and rivers is £11,214 less, and in water supply generally £6,000 less than last year. If we come to railway construction, we find the amount devoted out of revenue for railway construction is £7,167. Curiously enough, that is just the amount of the liabilities accrued; so that the Government have not found a penny towards railway construction out of revenue more than they would have had to find because the liability was created. This £7,167 is as against £118,000 voted last year out

of revenue for railway construction. It is manifest that if the Government intend to undertake any railway construction at all, no help is to be given from revenue. The construction is to be entirely from loan moneys. Whether that principle be right or wrong, it is a very great departure from the principles which I understood the members of the Labour party held so dearly at heart. I understood that every possible work was to be constructed out of revenue, and there was to be nothing, if anything at all, done out of loans. It appears we have the complete reverse of the policy. Nothing is to be done from revenue, and all is to be done from loan. Incidentally I would like to remark that although we find reference to the Jandakot railway and the short length of the Collie-Narrogin railway starting from Narrogin, made by the Treasurer, we find no reference to the Pilbarra railway or Coolgardie-Norseman railway—both very important works. If the member for Coolgardie wishes to assert that the Coolgardie-Norseman railway is not an important work, I shall listen to his proposals and arguments with the greatest of interest. I notice after the delivery of the Treasurer's speech, that gentleman is reported to have said that the absence of any reference to the Coolgardie-Norseman railway was a mere inadvertence—that he fully intended to refer to that railway. If that be so, it only makes the case of the Northern goldfields railway, the Pilbarra railway, so much the worse. Whilst the non-reference to the Coolgardie-Norseman railway might have been an inadvertence, there was no inadvertence as to the other railway to which I have referred. In regard to schools and school buildings, we find an estimated expenditure of £41,761, as against £45,545 last year. Police stations and quarters £12,022, as against £21,781 last year. In the Education Department we find £17,170 more in administration expenses, but yet we find very little provision, to my mind too little provision, for technical education, and hardly any provision at all for manual training. I did hope every member of the House had realised that nothing was of greater importance to the youth of Western Australia than a sound system of technical education; and whilst that appealed to members other

than Labour members, it would specially appeal to members of the Labour party and the Labour Government; and if they erred at all, they merely erred on the side of liberality in providing for technical education. Yet I am disappointed in that respect. The provision is totally inadequate—a provision little if any more than was provided last year. I did hope to have seen provision for technical schools at Cue, Menzies, Leonora, Morgans and other similar places, where children labour under great disadvantages in regard to ordinary education, and labour under still greater difficulties as to technical education.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You would not do anything for Boulder?

MR. GREGORY: That was done before you started.

MR. RASON: I find in the Mines expenditure this remarkable item: Cue-Day Dawn water supply, £17,060. The Premier gave no explanation of that item. I hope that if he condescends to reply to the remarks of myself and other members, he will give us distinctly to understand how it is that this expenditure is shown as a charge against revenue. Are we to understand that it is a present made to these two towns of that amount of money? Or is it to be recovered? Or do they anticipate some profit from the expenditure, or what is the position in regard to this matter? The Treasurer, amongst other things, was good enough to say, in regard to the price of Western Australian stocks, and I am very much surprised indeed that he had the courage to make the statement he did:—

Changes of Government seem not to operate, although interested persons sometimes seek political capital by a contrary assertion. I was careful to watch the market operations in Western Australian stocks in August last, for the purpose of settling that question, and the result of my observation was to show that no variation occurred.

I say with all respect, I am afraid the Treasurer's powers of observation are somewhat limited; for I find in dealing with a reference to colonial stocks, dated London, August 5, which date was immediately before the unhappy decease of the late Government, colonial Government stocks were quoted as follow:—
 South Australian 3 per cents., £86;
 South Australian 3½ per cents., £98;
 New South Wales 3 per cents., £96;

New South Wales $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents., £95; New South Wales 4 per cents., £109; Victoria 3 per cents., £87; Victoria $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents., £96; Victoria 4 per cents., £103 10s.; Queensland 3 per cents., £86; Queensland $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents., £95 15s.; Queensland 4 per cents., £104; Western Australia 3 per cents., £86—equal to South Australia, equal to New South Wales, £1 lower than Victoria, and equal to Queensland. Western Australia $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents., £96—equal also by comparison to the other States. Tasmania 3 per cents., £87; Tasmania $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents., £99 10s. Therefore Western Australia $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents. were quoted at £86, and a week before they were quoted at £87. Allow me to say here that on 5th August it was very well known that a change of Government was imminent. What do we find to-day? The latest report I have, dated London, November 18, reads: South Australia 3 per cents., £85 10s., a drop of only 10s.; South Australia $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents., £98; New South Wales 3 per cents., £85; New South Wales $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents., £96 10s.; New South Wales 4 per cents., £108 10s.; Victoria 3 per cents., £86 10s.; Victoria $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents., £97; Victoria 4 per cents., £105; Western Australia 3 per cents., £84; Western Australia $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents., £95. So that Western Australia 3 per cent. stock dropped from £86 to £84 during the period I have named, and from £87 to £84 a week earlier than August 5. The $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents. dropped from £96 to £95. I mention these facts because it is at once apparent that there has been a considerably greater decline in the value of Western Australian stocks than in the stocks of the other States. Although it is true the stocks of the other States have fallen, yet Western Australian stocks have fallen beyond that previous comparison; whereas prior to August we held our own equally with the other States, and since that date they are considerably lower. I may here allude to the reference the Treasurer made to the fact that he had succeeded in floating some Treasury bills in London; that he had made arrangements for an increased overdraft to the extent of a quarter of a million, to be subsequently replaced by Treasury bills, and the issue of a subsequent quarter of a million of Treasury bills at 4 per cent., for which I under-

stand him to say the State would receive £97 7s. I believe the Treasurer congratulated himself upon the success of that financial undertaking. Honestly, I cannot regard it as any brilliant financing. Let me point out to the hon. gentleman that he gave us a report showing the local subscriptions, and he pointed out that in four months since the 1st July we had received £122,245 from the other States in inscribed stock; and he was careful to point out that only last month we received £40,245. He gloried in the fact that last month we received more than we had done for many months past. That was issued at 4 per cent. par, and whatever the hon. gentleman may say to the contrary, I am prepared to prove that, allowing a very wide margin indeed, 2 per cent. would cover the whole of the cost of raising that money and passing it to our credit in London. Far less would cover it; far less has covered it in the past. Allowing that very wide margin of 2 per cent., still that money was worth £98 in London. And there is a more disappointing feature to my mind even than that. It seems to me we have to a certain extent broken faith with our friends the lenders in the other States, those who were prepared, willing and anxious to lend to Western Australia money at 4 per cent. at par. We had offers from them, offers which we refused to take. We refused to let them take up more of that stock at £99 10s., and we said "We cannot accept anything less than £100 from you." Yet we go to London and accept £97 7s. That seems to me hardly keeping faith with our good friends in the other States, and it seems strange also that in the London Press this very transaction is referred to. The *Times* and the *Standard*, both papers which as a rule are very careful in what they say and generally have reliable information, refer to this loan as having been placed at £97 15s., and they say that now there are transactions in it at £98 5s. If that be so, it clearly shows that in taking £97 7s. we have not made such an excellent bargain as has been suggested. Also let me point out that New Zealand's 4 per cent. stock is quoted at £105 10s.; Victoria 4 per cents., £105; Queensland 4 per cents., £105; New South Wales 4 per cents., £108 10s. Those are the figures of to-day. Yet are we to under-

stand that Western Australian 4 per cent. stock can only obtain £97 7s. ? Are we to glorify the brilliancy of the finance which gets for West Australia's £100 £97 7s., whilst the stocks of other States, at an equal rate of interest, are quoted at from £105 to £108 10s. ? Then we find that the railways are estimated to spend £58,000 more than was expended last year in order to earn only £10,000 more than was earned last year. Surely there at least there is room for improvement. If members can attempt to argue that it is good administration to spend £58,000 more money than was spent last year in order to earn only £10,000 than was earned last year, I should say it would be far better not to worry about earning the £10,000 and not to spend the £58,000, because it seems to me, according to my limited capacity, that by that process we should save £48,000.

MR. SCADDAN: You are advocating "marking time."

MR. RASON: Oh, no; I am not advocating marking time, but to spend money to the best advantage. It seems to me that the followers of the marking-time policy should be held accountable for the fact that although very little is being done in the way of public works, in the way of public buildings, in the way of improvements generally, yet the administrative expenditure is going to remain practically the same if not more than it was last year. We find generally, wherever we look, take almost any department, there is increased cost of administration. If we look to what that department is going to do, we find it is going to do very little, but that it is going to cost a great deal more to do that very little than it did before. I will not refer at greater length to the question of loan funds nor to the proposal which the Treasurer brought forward in regard to the raising of loans in England in the future. But there is one subject which, before I sit down, I should like to refer to, namely, that in regard to railway construction of the future. I understand that the Government wish to appoint a non-political board; that the question of railway construction, whether it is advisable or not to build a railway in a certain direction, shall be referred to a non-political board. That seems to me—I do not say it with any offence, with any intentional offence—to be a very

happy way of shelving one or two rather difficult problems. If Government are being approached in different directions to build railways and have not the courage to make up their mind to say "We will build it," or "We will not," it would be a very convenient way of getting rid of the question by saying, "All questions of that sort we are going to refer to a non-political board. When Parliament gets the advice of that board, or when the Government get the advice of that board, then will be the time for us to say whether or not we are going to submit that question to Parliament." The only guide I have before me as to what this non-political board is to be, how it is to be formed, whom it is to consist of, is conveyed in these words: "such board consisting of experts in railway construction, railway traffic, and either land settlement or mining development according to the country to be traversed by the railway." It is plain that this sort of non-political board will consist of the officers of the department, the very men—

MR. MORAN: You have already.

MR. RASON: The very men who are at the disposal of the Government already, who do report, who are paid to report upon every railway project that comes before the Government. It means that a certain man, we will say he is a railway engineer—shall we say for the purpose of argument an engineer?—who is in the habit of reporting on railway projects, who has been so in the past, will still remain an engineer to report, and he will go as a member of the non-political board to report also. He goes in any case, and you get his report in any case. What is the advantage in merely saying, "Brown is a member of a non-political body, and therefore we have the utmost confidence in his report?"

MR. GREGORY: I suppose it would mean giving an extra fee.

MR. RASON: I suppose that is what it would amount to, that for his services as a member of a non-political board he would receive an extra remuneration; and although that might be an advantage to the individual, I do not see that it would be any advantage to the State. The reports of these expert officers can be obtained at the present moment. They

are to be experts in each branch. The Government have them at their disposal now. They can be called upon now just as well as they could be called upon if they were members of a non-political board. Therefore, it does seem to me that this suggestion as to the appointment of a board of this description is a mere subterfuge to get rid, for the time being, of some rather difficult questions. Then in relation to the civil service, we are told by the Premier in regard to the question of retrospective increases, and indeed increases of all kinds, "It is hoped before the next Estimates are submitted the whole of the public service will have been classified by the proposed Commissioner. For this reason it would have been injudicious if not impossible for the Government to attempt to deal with any of the numerous anomalies which have been alleged to exist in the salaries of the public servants." I will admit that to a very great extent past Governments were sinners in this respect. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I want to be perfectly just, if I can. Civil servants, a good many of them, have to my mind just cause of complaint. First of all we had the bogey, or excuse, of the Royal Commission. We held then that it would be improper, injudicious, and unwise to grant increases whilst inquiry was being held by that Commission into the fitness of certain civil servants for the positions they held, and they were to make recommendations as to the salaries. Therefore no advances were made, or very few. Then the service was told that where those Commissioners made recommendations for increases and the increases were given, they would be made retrospective. But unfortunately nothing came of that Commission. We heard then that the Government were going to tackle the matter themselves. Now the civil servants are told, "We are going to appoint a Public Service Commissioner. Whilst we have not recommendations of the Civil Service Commissioner, it would be improper for us to do anything for you. You must wait until we have the report of the Public Service Commissioner."

MR. A. J. WILSON: That is a tangible advance, anyhow.

MR. RASON: People were under the impression it was a very tangible advance when a Commission was appointed. Every civil servant was perfectly satisfied

then; and some of the civil servants are satisfied now. I submit that it is very little satisfaction to a civil servant if this sort of thing is going to continue; if for ever and ever there is always going to be someone appointed or some body appointed that will preclude the possibility of even consideration of the servants' claims, then their position will be an unhappy one.

MR. F. F. WILSON: There is a possibility of reaching finality now.

MR. RASON: Oh, there always has been. The principal part of the remarks of the Treasurer to which I take exception is this: "The subject of retrospective increases is one which is of considerable interest to public servants, and which received a great deal of attention from our predecessors, and I believe was dealt with finally by them." I wish to say that so far from being dealt with finally by the late Government, it was not by any means dealt with finally by them, as the papers which have already been moved for, and which will doubtless be laid upon the table of this House, will clearly prove. [Interjections.] In answer to those interjections, I say I think the claims were just as near, if not nearer, being dealt with then than they are at the present moment, or are likely to be in the immediate future at all events. In regard to the various departments which I have previously referred to, I have said that all through the service, in every one of them almost, you find increases in the cost of administration. Take the Charities, Gaols, Fisheries, Gardens, Harbours and Lights, Lunatics, Medical, Observatory, Health, Registry, Land Titles, Audit; in fact I am correct in saying that with very few exceptions indeed we find the administrative costs of each department largely increased, and we find the work which these departments are expected to do is very materially decreased.

MR. A. J. WILSON: They want efficiency, that is why.

MR. RASON: I do not intend at this stage to take up the time of the Committee any longer. I shall probably have an opportunity of referring to these Estimates again; and perhaps then I may go into them at greater length than I have done, and perhaps criticise them

more strongly and more fully than I have done on this occasion.

MR. A. J. WILSON : Is that all you have got to say ?

MR. RASON : I should like, before leaving the subject of estimated revenue altogether, to refer once more to that £75,000 extraordinary increased revenue we are to receive from the erection of a smelter at Ravensthorpe.

MR. MORAN : I hope it will turn out correct.

MR. RASON : The Estimates themselves show that, in order to get this revenue of £75,000, it is proposed to spend £74,650, so that in any case there is only a profit of £355.

MR. MORAN : That is eminently satisfactory.

MR. RASON : Eminently satisfactory as regards the £75,000 increased revenue ! Eminently satisfactory ! But it would be much more satisfactory to me if I had seen some reference to the fact that the previous Government had already purchased £11,800 worth of copper ore ; and that is included in this asset. Am I therefore to understand that, instead of spending £74,650, the Government are going to spend £74,650 plus £11,800 already spent, in order to have this wonderful increased revenue of £75,000 ? In any case, this is money advanced as against copper ore, and more money has been spent. The expenditure of £74,650 to earn £75,000 does not strike me altogether as being too forceful. It is nothing for which a man would get on to the housetops and declare himself a born man of business. On an expenditure of £74,650 to make £350 out of ore is not a matter to be proud of.

LABOUR MEMBER : We do not get our money back on our public batteries.

DR. ELLIS : What about the improvement to the industry ?

MR. RASON : For my part I am quite willing, and indeed anxious, to do everything that can possibly and legitimately be done to encourage the copper ore or any other industry. We have made that manifest in the past when we had the opportunity of doing so ; but what I do urge is that operations of this kind should be regarded as trading concerns, and that our revenue and expenditure should not be inflated by items such as this, and that we should not have the Treasurer getting

up and saying that we will have £75,000 more revenue from the smelter at Ravensthorpe, when we have to expend nearly £75,000 to get it.

MR. MORAN : The same applies to the railways.

MR. RASON : I have held the same argument with regard to our railways, and to our State batteries, and to the Gwalia State hotel. They are all trading concerns, and might very well be treated as such. Dealing with the returns, I have congratulated the Treasurer upon the admirable manner in which the returns he presented to this House were prepared, and I have suggested that, although the voice was the voice of Jacob, the hand was the hand of Esau. I commenced by a reference to Holy Writ, and I see it is the natural order of things to endeavour to be Biblical as far as possible in concluding speeches on such an occasion. The Minister for Works, if I may depart for a moment from a study of the Estimates—

MR. MORAN : What is in that glass ?

MR. RASON : It is "wine that gladdens the heart of man," but this is hardly a quotation that one can make use of in connection with the argument I wish to advance. The Minister for Works said the other day that he and the Government had fallen into a pit which I and my late colleagues had prepared for them. Therefore, I should like to conclude my remarks by likening the Treasurer and his colleagues to Joseph with his coat of many colours. Undoubtedly their political garment is of a varied hue. We had one colour of that political coat at Subiaco, which was different from the colour of the coat which the Treasurer wore when presenting the Budget speech on Tuesday last. But as Joseph when in that pit found someone to come to his relief and drag him out of it, so I assure my friends opposite that at an early opportunity we will adopt the same expedient in regard to them.

MR. NELSON : Thank God, we are quite safe !

Question—That the first item in the Estimates "His Excellency the Governor" be agreed to—passed, and the vote agreed to.

[Estimates discussed in detail for each division of a department ; first generally on the vote as a whole, then on items.]

Executive Council, £110—agreed to.

Legislative Council, £2,097—agreed to.

Legislative Assembly, £5,916 :

MR. GREGORY : Members were under the impression there was now a possibility of having a considerable reduction in the cost of administration in regard to both Houses. We heard a great deal about the necessity for reduction in the cost of administration, and we heard so much from this pure and immaculate Government who always paraded on public platforms the political necessity of making the cost of administration a good deal less. It was the custom of Parliament to maintain certain symbols in parliamentary procedure. One did not quite understand the usefulness of some of them, but there was a great desire not to get away from them. However it was not necessary that the duties of certain officers of Parliament should last the whole year round. An increase was given to the Sergeant-at-Arms. In the past the Sergeant-at-Arms carried out his parliamentary duties while the House was sitting, and also carried out his work in the Mines Department, where he was a most efficient officer. Had the Government seen fit to increase the salary of the Sergeant-at-Arms as an officer of the Mines Department, he (Mr. Gregory) would have been pleased; but for what purpose was the Sergeant-at-Arms to be at all times about this House, during the seven months Parliament was not sitting? Was he to be an additional secretary? Was he to be the secretary to the Chairman of Committees? Had the Chairman of Committees raised himself so high that there should be a secretary to him? Was he to be secretary to the Speaker? The increase should be justified. It appeared to be unnecessary, just as unnecessary as was the expenditure of the Minister for Works in connection with the parliamentary lodging-house. One expected, when the two Houses were brought together in one building, that we should have some reduction in these charges; but apparently it was not to be the case. He intended to move for a reduction when we came to the item of Sergeant-at-Arms.

RULING ON PROCEDURE.

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was on the item now.

MR. GREGORY claimed to be dealing with the vote for the Legislative Assembly.

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was dealing with Item 5 (Sergeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees).

MR. GREGORY claimed to be dealing generally with the items. The rule was to deal first with the vote in bulk.

THE CHAIRMAN : The hon. member was dealing with Item 5.

MR. GREGORY : When these debates came on, could members deal with the vote as a whole, or must they single out an item and deal with it?

THE CHAIRMAN : The practice had always been in dealing with the Estimates to deal generally with the division first, and afterwards with any particular item. The hon. member did not deal generally with the items of the Legislative Assembly, but singled out Item 5 (Sergeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees), and was dealing with it. The hon. member was therefore dealing with a specific item.

MR. RASON : Was the general discussion on the Estimates now closed?

THE CHAIRMAN : The general discussion on the Estimates as a whole was closed. The discussion always closed with the passing of the item, "His Excellency the Governor." When that discussion was closed, each succeeding division of the Estimates was taken by itself. Members might then discuss each division generally, taking for instance the vote "Executive Council," or "Literary and Scientific Grants." But when any member proceeded to discuss an individual item, that was the item under discussion unless another member rose and signified his intention of discussing a prior item. The hon. member selected the item "Sergeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees." No other member rose; therefore it appeared that the hon. member was dealing specifically with that item.

MR. GREGORY : The intention was to deal with the vote generally.

MR. MORAN : The Chairman's ruling was strictly correct, and in accordance with the general practice for the last 11 years; but the member for Menzies was evidently referring to the item by way of

illustration of his purpose in dealing with the vote as a whole. The Chairman would not desire to limit the general discussion because of a misunderstanding, even though an hon. member had stretched his privilege.

THE CHAIRMAN: There was no desire to prevent or to limit discussion. In dealing generally with a division of the Estimates, an item must not be particularised unless it was intended that the preceding items should not be discussed. The hon. member spoke at great length on this item.

MR. GREGORY: In future, he would be very specific; but he had stated it was his intention, when he came to separate items, to deal with this item.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would have been better if at the beginning of the discussion he (the Chairman), for the benefit of new members, had explained the procedure. A member could discuss the general vote "Legislative Assembly;" but he must understand that this did not permit of his discussing specific items in the general discussion. If an item were particularised, the discussion was instantly confined to that item.

MR. HARPER: Would not this ruling prevent members, when speaking generally, from mentioning an item? If so, there was no sense in discussing any more than the general condition of the Legislative Assembly. Presumably the hon. member (Mr. Gregory) did not require to deal with any item prior to this one, nor had any other member expressed such a desire; hence there was no reason why the hon. member should not proceed with his amendment.

MR. GREGORY: Was the discussion confined to item No. 5?

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

RESUMED.

MR. GREGORY: The desire was to draw attention to the increased cost of the joint services for the Houses of Parliament, with a view to ascertain whether reduction was possible. This seemed a very improper method of increasing the salary of a certain officer, by allowing his duties to appertain wholly to the Legislative Assembly, and preventing his any longer working for another Government department, thus increasing the cost to the Assembly by

about £180 a year. The cost of upkeep of Parliament was increasing considerably; yet some members thought that when the two Houses came together there would be a reduction in that cost.

DR. ELLIS: Surely the proper way of economising in the matter of Houses of Parliament was to abolish one of them. No doubt if the preceding speaker felt we were spending too much money on Parliament, he would help Labour members to do their best to abolish the Upper House.

Item - Sergeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees, £270:

MR. GREGORY moved an amendment:

That the item be reduced by £120.

The amount proposed to be struck out should be replaced under Department of Mines. There was no desire to injure this officer, who had been particularly efficient not only in the House but in the Mines Department, and one would gladly seize any chance of increasing his salary. But there was no occasion whatever for a Sergeant-at-Arms on these premises while Parliament was in recess. During seven or eight months of the year little work attached to the Houses. Right through the Estimates extravagance was shown by increases in administrative expenditure. The increase of this item was a only a fad of somebody's; and it should not be tolerated.

THE CHAIRMAN: If a member called for a certain item, any other member desiring to discuss a preceding item must immediately say so; else preceding items could not subsequently be discussed.

THE PREMIER: This was not an increase of salary of the officer concerned. As to administration, the Government exercised less control over the Houses of Parliament than over a department; because the Houses were altogether outside the control of any individual Minister, their control being largely vested in the respective heads of the Houses. The change in regard to the Sergeant-at-Arms was made on a strong recommendation from the hon. the Speaker. It seemed very unsatisfactory that the Sergeant-at-Arms should hold a dual position, half his time being devoted to the Mines Department and half to the

service of this House. His efficiency in both places must thus be considerably impaired, especially as the House was liable to sit all night, and the Sergeant-at-Arms must remain till it rose. It could not be expected that next day he could give that efficient service which might be expected from him after an ordinary night's rest. During the last session of Parliament heavy demands were made on the officers of the House by the select committees appointed.

MR. GREGORY: These sat during the session only.

THE PREMIER: They needed a secretary while sitting. That secretary was usually an officer of the House, and it was desirable that he should be. The hon. member implied that part of the time of the Sergeant-at-Arms was to be devoted to acting as clerk to the Chairman of Committees and the Speaker. This did not appear. The title was, "Sergeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees." During the parliamentary recess there were almost invariably one or two Royal Commissions sitting. These commissions generally needed secretaries, who were frequently appointed from without the public service. By utilising this officer during recess as secretary of Royal Commissions, a considerable saving would be effected, and the apparent increase in the cost of administration would be turned into a satisfactory saving.

MR. NELSON: Could we not altogether dispense with the Sergeant-at-Arms? True, he admirably performed his duty. Possibly the most eloquent speech ever delivered in the House was that by which he prefaced the entry of the Speaker. It might be wiser to send the officer to another department, where he could efficiently and continuously discharge his duties, and Parliament could get on without his services in the same way that other Parliaments in the Australian States had abolished the office of Sergeant-at-Arms. Some other person might be found to lift the "bauble" at the end of the table.

THE SPEAKER: The responsibility of this appointment rested on his shoulders and not on the Government. In making up the Estimates in connection with the Assembly, he had to inquire from the Treasurer whether he would be

able to spare the funds which, after looking into the details, it was thought were necessary for the work of the House. During the events that had happened recently there was a heavy demand on the services of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and although certain portions of his duties might be abolished, following the precedent set in one other Parliament in Australia, still it would be necessary to have an officer to carry out the duties which he might be called upon by the House to carry out. It was found unsatisfactory for the officer to carry out duties in two departments. Although Parliament and the Mines Department paid certain sums to this officer, it was doubtful if either department got the value of the money paid. Shortly after the House started sitting a large number of committees was appointed, and the clerks found themselves overburdened with work, and it was found necessary that some of the accounts that had to be kept should be relegated to the chief messenger because the clerks were not able to give the time to them. It was found necessary to appoint an outsider to do work in connection with one select committee. As to the amount of salary, he did not think it would be fair to deprive the Sergeant-at-Arms of the salary he had previously received; that was why the amount stood a little higher than it otherwise would have done. In regard to the statement that this officer was only employed during the time Parliament was sitting, that applied equally to every other officer of the House; but it must be remembered that every officer worked exceedingly long hours during the session of Parliament, and the time they had in recess was some compensation for the long hours worked during session. If that were not so we could not ask the officers of Parliament to work such long hours unless they received overtime. Sometimes the officers of the House might be called upon to work 24 hours without intermission; therefore we should make no cavil at the small duties officers were called upon to perform when the House was not sitting. As to the dual control of this officer it would have been awkward if the Speaker, in carrying out the recent mandate of the House, had not an officer upon whom he could call. No one could

say that similar occurrences would not take place in the future. Members would see there was justification for the appointment.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES: The argument of the Premier applied only when Parliament was in session. The Premier refrained from saying a word as to the duties of this officer in recess. It was well known that the House did not sit for more than six months; which meant that for six months of the year there would be no work for the Sergeant-at-Arms to do. The Speaker had chivalrously taken on his shoulders the responsibility of this increase; but the responsibility for the Estimates rested with the Government, and they must accept that responsibility. It was true this officer had carried out work in the Mines Department, but when Parliament was sitting he had no duties to perform in the Mines Department. The Speaker had the first call upon his services. There was no fear of any contingency arising such as the Speaker thought might arise, for it could be easily arranged with the Mines Department that the Speaker should have the first call upon the services of this officer. There was very little work for the Sergeant-at-Arms, but his work was tedious. Reference had been made to the Sergeant-at-Arms acting as Clerk of Committees; but these duties were not arduous, consisting chiefly in sending circulars out notifying members when the committees would meet.

MR. MORAN: The clerk had to be present.

MR. FOULKES: That was not onerous work. The Premier had said that the clerk could act as secretary to Royal Commissions; but it was to be hoped that we should not have many Royal Commissions in the future. In the past the Labour party had opposed Royal Commissions, and the Colonial Secretary was very angry with the Minister for Justice for accepting a seat on a Royal Commission last year. Hitherto Royal Commissions had taken care to appoint as secretary a person having knowledge of the subject to be inquired into, and it could not be expected of the Sergeant-at-Arms that he should have knowledge of the various subjects for which Royal Commissions would be appointed. There

were many civil servants who had claims for increase of salary, and if this increase were granted it would be the duty of the House to see that other officers received increases.

MR. BOLTON: This was not an increase.

MR. FOULKES: It was an increase, for another officer in the Mines Department would have to be paid.

MR. BOLTON: It was a decrease to the individual of £50.

MR. FOULKES: It was to be hoped that members would decide not to allow the increase.

MR. NANSON: It was surprising that the Treasurer should have sanctioned increases when face to face with a deficit. We were told the Government intended when in recess to effect economies. They might or might not do so, but it could not be doubted what was the duty of the Committee. When face to face with a deficit the Committee should immediately begin effecting economies in this Chamber, and if we were unable to effect economies we could at least prevent increased expenditure. He would have thought members of the Labour party would have protested against this increase. One could not take up the Estimates without seeing on every page increases in administration which did no good to the country. Was it suggested that by giving an increase to the Sergeant-at-Arms there would be a decrease of expenditure in the Mines Department? The Sergeant-at-Arms had done his work in the past satisfactorily in this Chamber, and when he had time during recess his services were available for the Mines Department. We had to recognise that not only in regard to this vote, but in relation to all these votes we must exercise most rigid economy. It was something appalling to consider the way in which the cost of administration had increased since Federation began, and he was glad indeed the member for Menzies had struck what he hoped would be the key-note throughout the whole of these Estimates. There should be the most rigid scrutiny of any expenditure which imposed additional burdens on a revenue not too well able to bear those burdens.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In regard to the Mines, last year the sum voted for administration was £2,000, the amount spent was £1,814, and it was

proposed this year to expend £1,652; so the vote would not be increased.

MR. NANSON wished to know what it was proposed the Sergeant-at-Arms should do during the six months Parliament was not in session.

MR. RASON: The expenses of Parliament were increasing beyond all expectation. We were led to hope that when the Houses of Parliament were brought together there would be a reduction in the administration expenses; but we found that whereas the total cost of both Houses of Parliament last year was £12,363, this year the estimated cost was £13,620, an increased expenditure of £1,257 in the administration of Parliament. He had not one word to say against the Sergeant-at-Arms or the necessity for the Sergeant-at-Arms; but he thought for six months of the year it would be very difficult to find any employment for him in connection with Parliament. During those six months there would be absolutely nothing for him to do which could not very well be done by the other members of the existing staff; had been done in the past, and could be done in the future. The expenses of Parliament were mounting up in an alarming way, and undoubtedly there would be a loss created in other institutions connected with Parliament, which would have to be made up by a vote of the House.

MR. GORDON: Apparently the member for Guildford did not fully consider this matter. During the coming six months the Sergeant-at-Arms would be required to keep guard over the Labour cottage opposite.

MR. FOULKES: The Minister for Justice gave no reply to the question by the member for Greenough; presumably because the hon. gentleman was not able to do so.

THE TREASURER: The occupation by members of the staff of the House was a matter over which he had no control; therefore it was impossible for him to tell what particular duties would be allotted to any particular members of the staff.

MR. NANSON: Could the hon. gentleman obtain the information?

THE PREMIER said he would apply for the information. He had already given the full extent of his knowledge,

when the hon. member was out of the Chamber. Perhaps there could be plenty of occupation found for the Sergeant-at-Arms during the recess. If this vote were reduced, that of the Mines Department would have to be increased, and he did not see that there was much saving in cutting off £120 in one item and adding £180 to another.

MR. N. J. MOORE suggested, in view of the duties the Sergeant-at-Arms had recently performed, that officer might be appointed a special constable during the recess.

MR. GREGORY: The Treasurer should not try to get away from the responsibility for these items. The hon. gentleman was responsible to Parliament. If this officer were also placed on the staff of the Mines Department the country would be getting the value of the gentleman's services when Parliament was not in session. He was a good officer in the Mines Department; the Under Secretary had always spoken well of him, and the officer had always done his duty conscientiously and well. This new departure would mean a reduction in the amount of the vote. The officer's salary in the Mines Department was £180, and here he received £150. One had known him to put in overtime in the Mines Department to make up for the time he had been working as an officer of this House. Under this new system we were going to have a Sergeant-at-Arms perpetually about the Chamber. That must be a loss to the country.

MR. MORAN: One learnt with pleasure from the Minister for Mines that so far from the drafting department increasing this year it had decreased. Did we wish to take £100 a year from this gentleman?

THE SPEAKER wished to make it clear that the Sergeant-at-Arms was not losing anything by the transfer, as the extra amount on the Estimates only represented a portion of the present financial year. The £120 on the Estimates represented eight months extra salary. The Estimates were prepared practically on the South Australian system, where they had reduced the cost of their Parliament Houses to the lowest possible level. There, however, they found it impossible to get on with less than three clerks, and he believed that in Victoria there were no less

than thirteen clerks, who really did not do more work than the gentlemen connected with this House. As to what officers could be employed in during the recess, he was equally at a loss with other hon. members to answer that question. A peculiarity attaching to work in Parliament House was that during the time Parliament was in session officers had to work undue hours, and it was made up to them in the recess. The duty of the Sergeant-at-Arms was to act as clerk to the House Committee, and as clerk to as many select committees as he could undertake. We had some six or seven committees sitting at the present time, and he did not think it needed much argument to show it was absolutely impossible for a clerk to be supplied to each select committee sitting, with the staff even at present in existence.

MR. RASON understood that the Sergeant-at-Arms, with the salary he enjoyed as such and the salary he drew from the Mines Department, received a total emolument of £330 a year. It was understood the Sergeant-at-Arms was to suffer no loss; but the Estimates only showed that he was to receive £270. The information supplied by the Speaker was sufficient for him (Mr. Rason), and that showed that the officer was to receive £330 a year as Sergeant-at-Arms. One had not the slightest objection to that if the sum was the same amount as the officer received for a full year's work; but that officer was not fully employed here. He had been employed with great satisfaction in the Mines Department. Now this £330 a year would really be for six months' continuous employment, and for six months probably there would be no work at all to do. The Mines Department would lose the services of a capable and good officer for six months wholly and for some part of the other six months.

MR. MORAN doubted whether we wanted a Sergeant-at-Arms paid £330 a year. The Sergeant-at-Arms had now thrown on his shoulders during this Parliament very heavy duties in connection with select committees; but although the officer had those heavy duties, he (Mr. Moran) had had experience of two of the committees, and he regretted to say that while sitting to-day in select com-

mittee he (as chairman) was deprived of the services of the officer allotted to him as secretary for that committee, because the officer had other duties in attending to the Speaker of the House; therefore it was impossible for Mr. Kidson to satisfactorily perform, during the sitting of Parliament, the duties of secretary to its committees and attend to Mr. Speaker. To-day the committee was much inconvenienced in being left to do without a secretary, who had charge of all the documents and all the files in connection with a certain matter. Since he (Mr. Moran) had been in Parliament it had been thoroughly understood that the Assembly estimates were prepared in deference to the Speaker, and that the Government had never been held—he thought members would bear him out in this—responsible in the same sense as they were responsible for departmental items. That was one of the traditions of Parliament.

MR. NANSON: The estimates were kept low.

MR. MORAN did not know they were. We had had discussions over and over again. Unfortunately parliamentary bias came out on these matters which did not affect any party, and the Speaker of the House was being made a stalking horse in order to attack the Government. We should attack the Government on bigger items.

Amendment put and negatived.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Joint Houses of Parliament, £5,607 :

Item—Typist, £200 :

MR. GREGORY: This typist was employed for the convenience of members. Was it the intention of the Government to keep him regularly employed for this purpose? Fewer members called at Parliament House for meals now, and the House was not the meeting place the old Assembly building used to be, so that the caterer suffered, and his profits were less. In addition, there was a reduction in the price of drinks and meals.

HON. W. C. ANGWIN: An increase.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It depended on what members drank.

MR. GREGORY: Members could now get a meal for 1s. in the parliamentary dining room.

MR. BOLTON : Then the hon. member got his meals cheaper than others.

MR. GREGORY : Members were, perhaps, unaware of the rules, and had not taken advantage of the special facilities given. Formerly 2s. was paid for a meal; now the price was 1s. 6d., and the caterer was compelled to provide a meal for 1s. if necessary. There was also a reduction in the price of drinks. Of course some members took a hop beer amongst them, costing fourpence. Did the Government intend to keep the typist employed? There was no necessity for the officer, because members could write out their own notes of speeches. Also, was it the intention of the Government to reconsider the question of the amount of subsidy paid to the caterer?

THE SPEAKER (Hon. M. H. Jacoby) : A request had been made by members of both Houses that a shorthand typist should be employed, shortly after this House made the appointment of Speaker; and recollecting that in the previous Parliament a similar request was made by a large number of members, he submitted the matter to the late Premier (Mr. James), who said that a typist should be employed for the convenience of members, and arranged to provide an amount on the Estimates for the purpose. The matter was also referred to the new Treasurer (Hon. H. Daglish); and in consequence it was determined to make a trial of this officer for one session, and if by that time his services were not fully utilised, to transfer him to the first vacancy that occurred in any other department. The officer was transferred to the service of Parliament Houses from the Railway Department; and he (the Speaker) believed the officer was giving very good satisfaction, and that the work he had in hand to the present was almost sufficient to keep him going to the end of the session. It was also proposed to see if this officer's services could not be utilised in connection with *Hansard* type-writing in time of pressure, in order to bring about a reduction of cost.

DR. ELLIS : What were we going to do with the typist during recess? Would his salary go on for the whole year?

THE TREASURER : The officer would do the same work during recess.

MR. NELSON : The employment of a typist was a valuable addition to the services of the House, not only in assisting members to transmit letters with sufficient expedition, but in connection with the typing of reports of committees. In that way there should be a saving in printing, for a great amount of the printing done for the House was absolutely unnecessary. Frequently reports of select committees were set up in type; but if a few copies were typewritten for members, it would save a foolish waste of money on a report which, in its very nature, was a temporary matter.

MR. GREGORY : This officer did not do work for select committees.

MR. NELSON was not sure. If we employed an officer we should see that we got a reasonable amount of work out of him; but if the officer did not have sufficient work in typing letters, he might get work in the matter of typing reports of committees, so that he would be of service throughout the year.

MR. KEYSER : The officer was unnecessary if engaged in doing work that individual members themselves ought to do. At times members were at a disadvantage in intelligently corresponding with their constituents, and they engaged the typist to do their work for them. For this reason he opposed the item.

MR. TROY did not favour the retention of the item. He made no charge against any member of making use of the officer's services to transact private business, as he thought the officer was mostly engaged in doing the work of select committees; but he thought his services should not be retained during recess, and he moved an amendment

That the item be reduced by £100.

MR. NELSON : The Government should explain exactly what were the duties of the typist. The officer had once typed a couple of letters for him (Mr. Nelson), but otherwise he (Mr. Nelson) wrote all his own letters. It was understood the typist did a lot of work in connection with select committees. If the typist did not do that work, the fact would influence his (Mr. Nelson's) vote.

THE SPEAKER : It was intended to employ the typist on select committees if he had spare time, but up to the present

the typist had to work overtime to cope with the work members had already given him. Members availed themselves freely of the typist's services, so that there was no spare time on his hands. Instructions were given that the officer should be employed on select committee work. The typist saved a considerable amount of printing. Notices which were previously printed were now typed, and as far as possible it was intended to make a saving in that direction. Already a considerable saving had been made.

MR. RASON: If the typist was employed on *bona fide* work in connection with the House, there would be no objection to the item; but from his (Mr. Rason's) knowledge, members made use of this typist for their private correspondence. We thus merely afforded an extra facility for an institution which would shortly become, if it were not now, the very best club in Western Australia.

MR. N. J. MOORE: The cheapest.

MR. RASON: We had all sorts of provision made for the comforts of members.

MR. NEEDHAM: Did the hon. member avail himself of any of these comforts?

MR. RASON: Certainly; but not of this comfort.

MR. NEEDHAM: The hon. member might or might not in the immediate future.

MR. RASON: That was so highly intelligent an interjection that he (Mr. Rason) found it impossible to reply to it. Where the services of the typist were required for members' parliamentary work, it was quite legitimate that the typist should be paid by the State; but where it was really only one more advantage held out to members of Parliament who had their billiards free and all sorts of things free, and now had free typewriting of letters, it was going too far, and it was time we brought it to an end. No injustice would be done to the officer if he lost his position, because he would be retransferred to the Railway Department whence he came. If members of Parliament wished to have letters written for them, they had a perfect right to pay for it. He moved:

That the item be struck out.

THE SPEAKER: It was not altogether certain that the officer could be

transferred to the Railway Department. He (the Speaker) had no desire to influence the Committee in any way, but would point out that the item was really put down for the convenience of members; but he was anxious not to do injustice to the officer. He, however, was afraid the officer's previous position had been filled, and he would not like anything to happen to him.

MR. MORAN: This was another impersonal matter on the recommendation of the hon. the Speaker. If members did not want the typist, the best thing was to do away with the office; but we ought to consider the officer himself. No injustice should be done by leading him to believe he had a permanent position, causing him to leave a department where he had a permanent position and then leaving him stranded. The Speaker might make some inquiries as to retransferring the officer to the department whence he came; and that would settle the matter. Nobody wanted to throw the officer out on the street.

MR. NANSON: A good typist would always get a billet.

MR. MORAN did not believe in chucking a man out on the score that he could get a billet somewhere. The officer ought not to be fired out on the street. We were told that his previous position had been filled by another.

DR. ELLIS: During the session this officer was invaluable. By his typewriting for the Empress of Coolgardie Select Committee he saved several times the amount of his salary; and he did considerable business typing for members. Documents sent by members to public bodies were better typewritten. In every business office there was a typist to whom letters could be dictated. Whether it was wise to pay the typist during the recess was another matter.

MR. NELSON: The Speaker assured us that the typist had already effected considerable economies in printing. If so, it would be foolish to increase expenditure by dismissing him.

MR. NANSON: No increase of expenditure was ever advocated without a statement that it would effect a saving. Years ago he, then a new member, was induced to vote for the new Houses on the ground that great economies would result. The Leake Government stated

that £2,700 a year would be saved; and he unfortunately believed that statement. We were told this typist's employment effected a saving in the printing bill; yet the printing estimates showed the large increase of £2,600. It was an old saying in English Government departments that the most expensive of all reforms was economising in and reorganising a department. That was often the rule here. Let us wipe out the item, feeling confident that the officer would, if necessary, be reinstated in the Railway Department.

MR. MORAN: He was picked for his superiority.

MR. NANSON: Then no doubt his superiority would lead to his reinstatement.

THE SPEAKER had been informed by the clerk (Mr. Lee Steere) that a saving of £50 in printing had already been effected this session, owing to the typist doing work previously done by the printer.

MR. WATTS: While, according to the Speaker, the typist's work minimised the printing bill, there should be some understanding as to members using the typist to do their private work. If the typist was to do members' private work to the neglect of public work, the item should be struck out and all such luxuries abolished. If it was true that the typist had saved three times his salary by working for the Empress of Coolgardie Select Committee, that Committee must have been most expensive. Some consideration should be shown the officer if he had accepted the position in the belief that it would be permanent.

MR. NELSON: The Speaker could issue an instruction that the typist's services would be available for public work only. The Committee had no right to oppose what was undoubtedly an economy.

MR. DIAMOND: If the officer was largely employed in typing select committee evidence so as to save printing bills, and if his services were not available for members' private work, possibly the amount of his salary might be saved in the printing bill; but so long as he was continually harassed by members requiring him to do work which might or might not be public, the saving effected was dubious. It was not reason-

able that he should be utilised to type letters to members' constituents. He should do parliamentary typing, and should assist the *Hansard* staff if necessary.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	21
Noes	...	...	...	22

Majority against 1

AYES.	NOES
Mr. Burges	Mr. Angwin
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Carson	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Ellis
Mr. Diamond	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Heitzmann
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Henshaw
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Holman
Mr. Harper	Mr. Horan
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Isdell	Mr. Lynch
Mr. Keyser	Mr. Moran
Mr. Layman	Mr. Needham
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Nelson
Mr. N. J. Moore	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. S. F. Moore	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Nanson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Rason	Mr. Watts
Mr. Frank Wilson	Mr. A. J. Wilson
Mr. Gordon (Teller).	Mr. F. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gill (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. TROY moved an amendment:

That the item be reduced by £100.

The services of the typist should be retained during the session only.

MR. MORAN: The complete striking out of the item would involve the officer's instant suspension. This amendment would signify that if members required temporary type writing assistance, that it should be got, and a permanent position would not be created.

MR. RASON: Those members who voted for the item being struck out would not have inflicted any injustice on the officer, because he could have been paid out of the Incidental vote for the services which he had rendered. We were told that if the officer was paid £100, members would have the services of a typist during the session. The £100 could be paid out of the Incidental expenditure.

MR. MORAN: One of the greatest objections in the old days was the item "incidental." It was better to have the items set out in full.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Was the typist doing work necessary for Parliament, or was he doing private work for members? If the typist was doing work which was saving expense in printing,

then he should be kept; but if his time was principally occupied in doing private correspondence for members, the office ought to be abolished at once. There were rumours of articles for newspapers being typed by this officer, and that evidence for the Arbitration Court was prepared by the typist. There were also rumours of private correspondence and business letters not connected with Parliament being typed. All this was very irregular, and should not be done at the expense of the House. He did not know if there was anything in the rumours, but members knew well enough themselves. If that was so, members ought to vote to do away with the officer. We could support the reduction of the salary of the typist by one-half, and then his services could be done away with when opportunity occurred. No injustice should be done to the person occupying the position, and the Government could see that he got a position in one of the departments. If he were a good servant, he could be transferred and then earn the full salary set down for him. If the services of this officer were employed wholly in the interests of Parliament, and his full time was occupied, then his services should be retained.

MR. MORAN: What was he to do for six months?

MR. FRANK WILSON: There was no work connected with Parliament during the recess. If this officer's time was profitably occupied, then his services should be retained, but if he could not be profitably occupied, and he (Mr. Wilson) thought he could not, and if his time was occupied in carrying out the private correspondence of members, then his services should be done away with.

MR. NELSON: It would almost appear that the member for Sussex had cast a reflection on him.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Did the hon. member have articles type-written?

MR. NELSON: Only two letters had been written by the typist for him, and both dealt with subjects of public interest. He had never had any article type-written. He was informed on good authority that many members on the Opposition side who voted against the employment of this officer used his services for their private correspondence.

MR. MORAN: That was true.

Members: Name.

MR. NELSON: There was no desire to do so, and members would appreciate his lack of desire to hold up any member to the infamy of the House. He was opposed to the proposal to give the typist only £100, for if we were to employ his services for only half the year, then the remuneration should be somewhat higher in consequence; for if he was worth £4 a week when his services were being continuously employed, he ought to get a higher salary if he was only employed for a limited period.

MR. RASON: The member for Hannans had accused members on the Opposition side of being responsible for the amendment to reduce the item to £100. The amendment emanated from the member for Mount Magnet. As the member for Hannans had said that the typist had done private work for members on the Opposition side, it seemed necessary that every member should say whether that was so or not. He had not employed the typist to write any letters of any kind either public or private, and it was hardly necessary for him to add that he had not written any leading articles.

MR. TROY: Having had some work to do in connection with arbitration matters, it was necessary to say that the typist had never on any occasion done any work for him in that connection. Every matter with which members on the Government side were associated was brought up, and to-morrow morning probably one would see in the *Morning Herald* a statement that Ministerial members had voted for an officer to attend to their private correspondence. Such things had occurred in the past, and there had been deliberate falsehoods in regard to the boarding-house. Soon members would have to explain their every action. The leader of the Opposition had said that this officer's salary could have been provided for out of the incidental vote. That was what the leader of the Opposition would have done.

MR. RASON objected to the member saying what he should or should not have done, as the hon. member of all others was the least capable of judging.

MR. TROY: Only on one occasion had he used the services of the typist. It was right that those engaged on the select

committees should have the services of this officer when necessary.

MR. NANSON : When we found every member of the Labour party with one exception voting solidly for increased expenditure in order to add to their comforts, thus indirectly increasing the amount of their emolument, one could scarcely blame the outside public or the newspapers from drawing conclusions.

MR. LYNCH : The typist had done no work for him in connection with arbitration cases.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.
At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. LYNCH was prepared to retrace the steps he had taken already and to vote for the retention of this typist as an officer. At the same time he hoped that the Government, or whoever was responsible, would take it as the opinion of the Committee that this officer, being an expert in his particular calling, should be retained during the session of Parliament, and if his services could be used in other departments during the recess, arrangements should be made to that effect. One was disinclined to get rid of this officer, seeing that the officer had been induced, on account of his special ability, to join the staff of the House, and one would not like the officer to find himself out of employment. Unless we had an assurance to the effect suggested, he would vote for £200.

MR. HORAN : The Premier had power to arrange for the supply of a typist to the House. Persons had been accustomed to dictate to a typist. This typist was a very able officer, and should be an adjunct to the House all the time. He hoped the persons responsible for the appointment would arrange for a security of tenure. He considered the officer entitled to £200 a year.

THE PREMIER was much surprised that there had been any attempt whatever to give this the appearance of a party discussion. He was not aware on which side of the House the hon. members sat who applied to the hon. the Speaker for the services of this officer. He had, however, heard the statement from the Speaker that members of both Houses had made requests. He thought, therefore, it was improper that members

on either side should make it appear there had been a special action on the part of those sitting in opposition to them to secure this man's services. One desired to see the retention of this item to a sufficient extent to provide for the payment of the officer until the end of the year, because he understood that the officer had been engaged, and in his opinion after the engagement reasonable time should be given for an endeavour to be made to find him other employment in the event of his not being retained here; but unless the officer's services were required for public use in connection with the work of this House, one did not think it necessary that he should be retained. He wished to emphasise the fact that really the Estimates, so far as they related to Parliament, were the Estimates of the House as given expression to through the voice of the gentleman who presided over the deliberations of this or the other place; and therefore no single item of them could be made a justification either for praise or attack on those who for the time being occupied the Ministerial chairs.

MR. GREGORY : It should be clearly stated, more especially as some members said they never brought any private business to this typist, that the typist was not a lady typist but a gentleman typist. He (Mr. Gregory) had nothing to do by request or otherwise in connection with this typist. His protest had been more in regard to the expenditure going on, not only in connection with these few officers, but with the place generally, the appointments and the huge expenditure taking place in connection with Parliamentary buildings. At present we were keeping an office down in the old Parliamentary buildings. A messenger was kept there to attend to members, and to look after that place for them; and there were the different expenses here, all for the convenience of members. He (Mr. Gregory) always found he could write out his own notes, and he was satisfied other members ought to do the same. A statement had been made amongst members—he did not know whether it was true or not—that even private business had been brought to this typist. It could easily be ascertained whether such had been the case. If we were going to retain the services of this officer it should be

distinctly understood that he was being retained for the work of the House and not for the private business of members. If he was required for the purpose of the House, committees, and other things, it might be right; but one did not think it necessary, and he certainly thought we were getting too many of these little appointments about the place. Therefore he hoped that during the year efforts would be made to get rid of all these expenditures. They amounted to very little as far as money was concerned, but it was always a source of reproach against us to increase expenditure at a time like this.

THE SPEAKER: Before making this appointment, he made inquiry about the matter from every member he met, and they unanimously advised him that such appointment would be of great value to them. In view of this fact, and also in view of the fact that a considerable majority of members in the last Parliament made a request to the then Premier for such an officer, but that the Premier was unable to make the appointment because there was no room in the old Houses for such officer, he (the Speaker) was under the impression that members had been acting in good faith in advising him that this appointment would be necessary, and he still considered they acted in good faith in so expressing their opinion. He was surprised to hear to-night that this officer had been used for the conduct of private business. Such was never contemplated, and had his attention been drawn to it previously he would have issued instructions that it should not be done. The officer was required to carry out correspondence of a public nature for members. We had also been able, as he explained earlier this evening, to make a considerable saving on our printing bill this session. Already £50 had been saved us in that respect, and he presumed that before the end of the session a still farther sum would be saved. Anyhow, we hoped to be able, later on, to make arrangements for other saving, and to more fully utilise this officer in connection with the work of select committees. We had, he had already been informed, been able to make very considerable use of him. He would suggest that the mover of the amendment should not press his amend-

ment, and at the end of the session members would be circularised by him as to their views on the subject, and if they thought after farther experience it would be desirable not to retain the typist's services, arrangements would be made to transfer him at the first opportunity to some other department. The officer had been of considerable use to the House, and a considerable saving in printing had been made.

HON. F. H. PIE 'SE: Was the officer a shorthand-writer as well as a typist?

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: That fact should have been shown. The item as it appeared was misleading. The salary was not too much for a shorthand-writer and typist.

Amendment (to reduce by £100) put and negatived.

Item—Caterer, £120 :

MR. NANSON: What were the financial arrangements in regard to catering? Were we at a loss in regard to the item?

THE SPEAKER: The caterer was paid a salary, and had to supply food and such things as near as possible at cost price, being allowed to make a profit on refreshments of a liquid nature. The caterer was appointed by the Joint Houses. Our total liability in regard to food was the salary of the caterer, any loss being borne by the caterer.

MR. RASON: The House Committee fixed the tariff for refreshments which the caterer was bound to provide, and the caterer bore any loss. In view of the sweeping reductions made in the tariff, and in view of the small attendances at meal hours, especially at lunch, it was absolutely certain the caterer must be making a large loss. It bordered on unfairness to fix an arbitrary scale for refreshments. It would be fairer to allow the caterer to fix the scale subject to the approval of the House Committee, than for the House Committee to fix the scale.

MR. MORAN: That was always the case.

MR. RASON: Circumstances entirely differed now.

MR. MORAN: Members were not rushing the cheap tucker.

MR. RASON: Charges were now reduced, and owing to the distance from town there were small attendances at meals, but the amount of refreshment provided must always be sufficient to provide for a full attendance. In the old House this matter was not so pronounced, and the caterer had a chance of making a profit. Here it seemed that he would suffer a severe loss.

THE SPEAKER: The practice was, before any alteration was made to call the caterer before the House Committee. The recent alterations were put before the caterer by the chairman, and the caterer said he would have no difficulty in meeting the desire expressed. Had the caterer objected on the ground of the tariff being too low, no reduction would have been made. The House Committee might reasonably be trusted to deal with him and do everything that was fair. The caterer only had to provide food, the Houses providing everything else. If any loss accrued to the caterer, the House Committee would have no hesitation in making it up, and members he felt sure would support the committee when the Estimates afterwards came on.

MR. MORAN: Nothing was more calculated to create disgust in the mind of a man of the world than the late criticism in connection with the carrying on of this House. The inference of that criticism and some of the insinuations were that, since the Labour Government had come into power, all sorts of mean devices had been resorted to in order to eke out at the State's expense the small pittance members received. He had never heard of more unworthy conduct. If the truth was to be told about the caterer, it was undoubtedly a fact that the caterer was not doing so well as he used to do; but to enable the caterer to do that now, we would have to teach the Labour members to drink as much as the old hands used to do in past days.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Complaints had been made about the miserably low wages paid to the attendants. The wages of some of the men were very small. The matter should be considered by the House Committee.

MR. H. BROWN: As to the remarks of the member for West Perth, it was impossible for the caterer to supply meals at the prices fixed by the House Committee. By what might be termed a subterfuge, these subsidies to caterers and this increased expenditure on waiters had for their object the provision of meals in Parliament House at a price far lower than that charged by any hotel or restaurant in the city. Let members pay for what they got. If the catering or the bar were thrown open to tender, both would be promptly taken over by a contractor.

MR. MORAN hardly concurred with the preceding speaker. In spite of the subterfuges of which he complained, it was the duty of the State to give its legislators enough money to live respectably, and then to abolish parliamentary catering. The clean straightforward method would be for the State to pay its members as well as members were paid in other States, where the cost of living was lower; and then members might distribute their favours amongst the restaurants of the city. He (Mr. Moran) seldom used the refreshment rooms; and the leader of the Opposition informed him that this applied to many other members. Frequently the contractor prepared luncheon for a large number, and only two or three turned up. The innuendo of the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown) could hardly be intended to reflect on more than one party in the House. The member who insinuated that an honourable body of men were scheming to get a reduction of 3d. in the charge for meals, forgot that he was a legislator, and had not commenced to rise to the proper standard of a member of Parliament.

HON. W. C. ANGWIN: As a member of the House Committee, he was justified in contradicting the statement that the Government or the Labour party had induced the caterer to reduce the price of meals and drinks. As the member for West Perth said, if the caterer were to get the profits he was accustomed to in the past, members should induce the Labour party to drink more. The House Committee, doubtless reflecting that many of the Labour party were total abstainers, raised the price of drinks 1d.

per bottle, thus benefiting the caterer. As to the price of food, the committee consisted of eight members, of whom he (Mr. Angwin) was the only Labour member; hence he would have had difficulty in influencing the committee. The caterer had always been properly treated. He received a salary; he had only to provide food and drink; and the profits went into his own pocket. There was no foundation for the statement that the charges fixed were unfair to the caterer. He (the caterer) was asked by the President of the Legislative Council whether the charges were reasonable; and replied that he was quite satisfied. The House Committee now consisted of the President of the Council, the Minister for Lands, Sir Edward Wittenoom, Hon. R. F. Sholl, Hon. W. T. Loton, Mr. Speaker, and himself (Hon. W. C. Angwin). When the alteration was made in the charges the Committee consisted of the President, Hon. W. Kingsmill, Hon. W. T. Loton, Hon. R. F. Sholl, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Diamond, and Mr. Angwin. The Labour party was thus in a minority of one, and had no influence in altering the scale of charges. Every alteration in the charges for meals had been made with the consent and the approval of the caterer.

MR. NELSON protested against the ungenerous observations of the member for West Perth, who had been insinuating that Opposition members acted ungenerously in this discussion. If the hon. member took all the facts into consideration, he would perceive that considering the deplorable plight of the Opposition, they were entitled to sympathy, having practically told the country that they were coming here to-night to fight the Government, and having contented themselves with striking at a typist. The other night the leader of the Opposition, in opposing payment of members, mentioned all the good things members enjoyed in this club; and then to show his consistency he complained of these good things being given at all. Considering that Opposition members and their Press hirelings outside had so often, in order to get a little political *kudos*, defamed Government supporters, the time had come to protest; and the member for West Perth was to be congratulated on his courage in protesting. Govern-

ment supporters should with adequate indignation repudiate the mean suggestions of the other side.

MR. RASON protested against the remarks of the preceding speaker, who attributed to the member for West Perth motives by which that member could never be actuated. Only by a great effort could the Committee take seriously the member for Hannans. That hon. member dared to speak about the hireling Press of the Opposition. Was there no section of the Press with which the member for Hannans was connected—a section hired by Government supporters? Such accusations ought not be made in a discussion of this kind. He (Mr. Rason) protested against these insinuations, whether they came from this side of the House or the other. The discussion had already justified itself. It had been inferred and freely stated outside that the reduction in the price of meals had resulted in a loss which must be borne by the State. It now appeared that if there were a loss, which was doubtful, the State would not suffer, and the loss, if any, would fall on one able to protect his interests if he thought fit. There was no accusation that Government supporters had sought for their own advantage to reduce the price of meals. It was not fair to hold members responsible for anything suggested outside. The tone of the debate was regrettable. The member for Hannans said the Opposition attacked a typist and his salary. An amendment of the same sort emanated from the Government side.

MR. NELSON: On the Government side there was only one black sheep.

MR. RASON: It was clear that the hon. member must be joking; for all could see that the number was more than one.

MR. HORAN: Much had been said in the Press about members who inhabited a Government cottage. He had heard that those members got free linen and many other luxuries. It might surprise the public to know that the members had to make their own beds—a duty to which they had not previously been accustomed. As to the expense incurred in connection with Parliament Houses, he fancied there were good grounds for

raising objection. The expenditure on cutlery was said to have been £560, which was far too much. He believed the leader of the Opposition was responsible for this.

Item—Cleaners, £300 :

MR. NANSON : Why was there such a large additional expenditure required for cleaners? In the Estimates for previous years no specific sum was set down, but this year £300 was provided. He presumed some expenditure was incurred in the old building, but it seemed that an additional £300 was too much.

THE SPEAKER : It was likely that the amount of £300 would be reduced ; but on coming into the present building, and during the time building operations were in progress, a considerable amount of cleaning was necessary. Up to the present time there was a difficulty in carrying out the cleaning work with the present staff. When the Library and other rooms, now in progress of being fitted up, were furnished, it was proposed to make an exhaustive examination, and it was hoped that the House Committee would be able to allocate the work differently and arrive at a reduction. Last year the cleaning might have been paid for out of a different vote, but this year it was thought desirable to set out the various items, so that members would know how the money was being expended.

MR. H. BROWN : Did the amount of £300 include the cleaning of the Government cottage?

THE SPEAKER : This matter, he believed, was being arranged for by the President, who was chairman of the House Committee. He fancied the cleaning was being done by the cleaners or the caretaker of the House.

MR. H. BROWN moved an amendment :

That the item be reduced by £30.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	2
Noes	...	...	...	44
				—
Majority against	...			42

AYES.
Mr. Brown
Mr. Foulkes (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Angwin
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Burgess
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Carson
Mr. Connor
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Diamond
Mr. Ellis
Mr. Gill
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Harper
Mr. Hastie
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Heilmann
Mr. Henshaw
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Holman
Mr. Horan
Mr. Isdell
Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Kayser
Mr. Layman
Mr. Lynch
Mr. McLarty
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Moran
Mr. Nanson
Mr. Needham
Mr. Nelson
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Rason
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Troy
Mr. Watts
Mr. A. J. Wilson
Mr. F. F. Wilson
Mr. Frank Wilson
Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item—Kitchen and Dining-room wages :

MR. NANSON : Last year for kitchen and dining-room wages £785 was expended. An amount of £950 was estimated for this year. Surely it was possible to keep the amount within the vote of last year. If the dining-room was being conducted as it appeared, at a loss, an endeavour should be made to charge for meals at a rate which would considerably reduce the amount. Members did not wish to get their meals at less than cost price, and if the country provided kitchens and all the accessories, the country was doing well. The same charge might be made for the same class of meal as at a hotel or restaurant.

THE SPEAKER : The item as it appeared on the Estimates had been wrongly stated. There had been a slight saving, the result of the amalgamation of the two Houses ; and he was surprised to see an increase set down. One or two increases in the staff had been made, owing to the appliances provided being on an extensive scale and inconveniently arranged, and a larger staff had to be

kept in the kitchen in consequence of the way in which things were fixed there. The House Committee has been in a difficult position, and not able to lay down the exact expenditure that would be necessary; but the amount which it was thought at first would be required had been set down. As experience was gained, reductions could perhaps be made and the vote in the future might be reduced. Members could fairly leave this matter in the hands of the committee appointed to deal with it. Everything was being done to keep expenses down to the lowest limit; at the same time keeping up the efficiency.

MR. FRANK WILSON: The member for Greenough suggested that the price of meals should be raised. If that were done it would only be putting so much more into the pocket of the caterer; for the kitchen and dining-room wages were paid by the country. He could understand why the item was increased in the new Parliament buildings, because there were not the ordinary facilities. The kitchens were so very far away from the dining-room, and all the foodstuff had to be carried up a narrow staircase. It followed, therefore, that some two or three waiters were required to do this extra work. And then members had to put up with half-cold food. Hot dishes were served in a disgraceful manner. He had no fault to find with the caterer, but the facilities when the place was being built ought to have been seen to by the Building Committee. When they were supervising the plans this matter was not properly looked after. He believed that he now had the honour of being a member of the House Committee, and he hoped that when the House Committee could find time to go into the matter thoroughly, they would be able to make some alterations in the kitchen arrangements, which would permit cooking to be done directly under the dining-room, so that the lift should be utilised and the food sent up hot, without the extra labour of so frequently going backwards and forwards. If that were done members might, he thought, look forward to some reduction in this item.

MR. GORDON: These arguments seemed to savour a good deal of corn-beef and cabbage. Now we had the two Houses together we should naturally

expert a big saving in respect of expenses in the direction referred to, but instead of that we saw an increase of over £1,000 a year. However, even that had its redeeming feature, because we already heard from the Speaker that these items were over-estimated.

Item—Incidental, including printing, telephone rent, uniforms, water, etc., £3,850:

MR. FRANK WILSON: From some remarks which fell from the member for Menzies he took it there was a room kept at the old Parliament buildings in Barrack Street. [MEMBERS: That item was passed.] Uniforms would come under the heading. There was, he understood, an attendant in uniform.

MEMBERS: No.

MR. GORDON: Telephone.

THE PREMIER: There was no telephone.

MR. FRANK WILSON had not been aware that members had a room down there at all. For what reason was it kept? Why was the House to be put to the expense of that attendant and the telephone in that room? Who occupied the room? Was it of any utility to any member? [Two or three members indicated they used the room.] He hoped the Government would take speedy steps to close up that room.

MR. DIAMOND agreed with the remarks of the last speaker.

THE SPEAKER: After the beginning of the session, he tried to close up the room, but found such a unanimous protest of members that it was necessary to keep the room going for their convenience. He was, however, glad to say that arrangements had now been made to close it. The attendants had been dispensed with, and the room would shortly be closed. The room was kept in order to gradually lessen the break that occurred. Members got into the habit of going there. Such a lot of them went there for their correspondence, and did not get into the habit of coming up the hill to Parliament House. He believed we now had so many select committees that no members were left to go to the room in the old building. The item would be decreased.

MR. NANSON asked for information as to how this item, amounting to nearly

£4,000, was made up. We were told it included printing, which he presumed could not be a very heavy expenditure if it related purely to this House of Parliament, and did not include *Hansard*. It included also telephone rent, uniforms, and water. The greater proportion of the whole vote for the Joint Houses of Parliament was to all intents and purposes unspecified. In regard to the Joint Houses of Parliament, it would be seen that this vote alone of contingencies, with the item of cleaners, kitchen and dining-room wages, etc., amounted throughout the year to an average of £100 a week, which was excessive for these few items. There might be some explanation. In a time of financial stringency when we were faced with a deficit, if we were to economise we should begin by setting our own House in order and try to reduce this enormous weekly expenditure on these few items.

THE SPEAKER: This item was a little less than previously. It was a matter over which the Speaker had absolutely no control. *Hansard* ran away with a large amount of money, and that was entirely under the control of members. If the session were short and the speeches brief, the printing of *Hansard* would be considerably less. He was particularly anxious that we should not have an overdraft at all, and in putting down our estimate, we took into account that last year's estimate was considerably exceeded in the case of printing, and we anticipated the estimate this year would just about cover the total cost. Since that estimate had been made up there were six or seven select committees appointed, and the printing in connection with those committees was extremely expensive work. It was for the House to decide whether all reports of select committees should be printed. If the House said that they should be printed, the Speaker had no option. Last year we expended £3,400 for such printing alone, and he did not think anybody anticipated we were likely to expend less this year than last. In his opinion we should spend considerably more. In the matter of our telephone rate, that was likely to be a little increased, because we had a larger service of telephones necessarily in this large building; and in regard to uniforms there would be some

increase; also in water, owing to the fact that we had a sanitary service here which required the use of considerable water in order to keep that system working properly. That would account for the increase in the amount we paid for water. If there was any other explanation under this head which members would like, and he was able to give it, he would be glad to afford it.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The item of uniforms was, he thought, entirely unnecessary. There was too much of what we might term *fal-de-ral* about the uniforms. Certainly the uniforms were very nice to look at, but, as he had said, they were entirely unnecessary. Every member would, he was sure, share in the anxiety of the member for Greenough to curtail the very heavy and elaborate expense in connection with the printing for this House. The hon. member himself would only be continuing to indicate the patriotism with which he seemed to be animated if he would himself effect a very considerable saving in that item alone.

MR. CONNOR hoped it was intended that some provision should be made whereby members could bring their friends here to dine or take tea.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not discuss that under this item.

MR. CONNOR: There was the word "etcetera."

THE CHAIRMAN: We had already discussed these details in Item 6.

MR. CONNOR wished to have done what had been effected in other Parliaments in Australia. He wanted to have a place to which members could ask their lady friends. It was a reflection that after spending all the money we had in connection with these huge buildings no provision was made for what he suggested. He thought that with this increase of £285 provision could possibly be made.

THE SPEAKER understood the arrangement asked for by the member for Kimberley had been made. [MEMBER: For ladies?] No. The matter would be brought before the House Committee by him (the Speaker), and they would deal with it. They would have a meeting to-morrow, and he would mention the matter on behalf of the hon. member. As to uniforms, he hardly thought the House would care to have the

duties carried out by persons wearing any clothes they chose.

Vote put and passed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCHES (Hon. H. Daglish, Treasurer).

Vote—*Treasury, Generally* £12,524:

MR. GREGORY: We could deal generally with all the items under Treasury, with a view to enabling the Treasurer to make some statement in regard to the working of the department. It might save time if the Treasurer would deal with the whole vote, and then we might get on with the items; or we might refer to the items generally, and deal with them singly afterwards.

THE CHAIRMAN: The procedure followed in the past was to put each separate division as it appeared on the Estimates; and members entered into a debate without touching on the items particularly. When members touched upon items particularly, the discussion had to be confined to the items discussed, and it was impossible to go back on previous items. There was no specific procedure laid down in the Standing Orders, but he knew no case in the past where the whole vote of any division had been put *en bloc*.

MR. GREGORY: It was usual to deal generally with the department, and then to start on the items. We could deal with the subdepartments under the Treasurer, and then pass through the items, and unless a member dealt specifically with an item, we would be speaking generally. One was pleased the Treasurer had seen fit to consider the question of the appointment of inspectors of liquor—a departure which he (Mr. Gregory) had long advocated. If good men were appointed, the result would be that the people would purchase better liquor, and there would be an increased revenue; but the salaries provided seemed too low. The officers would have to face a great deal of temptation. In Victoria where there was a good staff of inspectors, higher salaries were paid. It would be wise in making the appointments for the Government to promise an increase next year. It would be the duty of the officers to go into the various hotels and seek for improper liquors; so

they would be placed in the way of a good deal of temptation.

MR. MORAN: Were these officers under the Health Act?

MR. GREGORY: No; under the Wines and Beer Sales Act, but when the Health Bill passed they could be appointed under that Act. In connection with the Tender Board increases, he noticed in all Government departments a tendency to get together speedily as big a department as possible. The secretary of the Tender Board was a particularly energetic man, who did good work; but one must express displeasure at the increased expense in connection with the administration of that department. There was an increase of about £800.

THE TREASURER: Compare estimate with estimate.

MR. GREGORY: No; the Treasurer would find that the estimates of previous years were considerably more, but reductions were made each year in regard to administration. The advertising clerk was not long appointed before he wanted a boy to assist him, and a clerk also. There was little reason for any increase in the Treasury, except in the case of the liquor inspectors.

MR. FOULKES regarded the proposed appointment of liquor inspectors with pleasure. For the last two sessions he had brought the matter forward and had moved for returns. According to the last return, inspection of liquor was a complete farce, there being practically no inspection at all. On the goldfields only three inspections had been made over a large area on the Murchison. In the Eastern Districts not a single case of examination of liquor was shown. One case came from Bunbury. The sergeant of police sent up a quantity of liquor for analysis; but the analyst replied that the quantity sent was too small to be analysed, and the sergeant seemed so exhausted with the one effort that he sat down and took no farther steps. He (Mr. Foulkes) had suggested an amendment to the Licensing Bill last year to provide that there should not only be inspection of liquor but inspection of licensed houses. The Government should see their way to make these inspectors inspect the management and control of licensed houses, and see that licensees carried out the conditions under which licenses were granted. Repeatedly

licensees neglected these conditions and made no provision for travellers, their whole attention being devoted to the sale of liquor. It was the duty of publicans to see that proper accommodation was provided for the travelling public; but publicans did not regard it as a duty, and openly scamped the Act. This was a public scandal, and it was time some steps were taken to see that licensees did perform their duties. It was not within the province of police officers to make inquiries as to how hotel businesses were run. The appointment of an inspector of licensed houses was of the nature of an appointment of a factory inspector. These inspectors should furnish reports periodically to licensing benches. It was no one's duty at present to acquaint licensing benches as to whether public-houses were carried on in a proper manner, though it was a matter of notoriety in many cases that some licensees were not fit and proper persons to carry on the hotel business.

MR. DIAMOND: Were we not discussing the item of "Inspectors of liquor," which had nothing to do with the licensing of hotels?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was in order. This was a general discussion; but it would facilitate matters if members wishing to deal with any particular item waited until the item was reached, for then we would not duplicate discussion.

MR. FOULKES: The Premier, who had often heard him speak on this question, might see his way to adopt these suggestions.

DR. ELLIS: The liquor question should be dealt with in the Health Act. That much bad liquor was sold in the State he knew; for though a total abstainer he, as a doctor, noticed its effects. This matter was important and urgent. In certain hotels the bar attendants were obliged to show a certain profit. Good and bad liquors were supplied; and it was to the attendants' interests to sell the bad. The salaries of the inspectors should be as high as possible, to put them above temptation, and to make them value their positions. The increase in the estimate for the tender board seemed to be about £500. However, if the tenders were more carefully inspected and the

results were better than those of last year, the money would be well spent.

THE TREASURER: The member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory) was mistaken as to the increased cost of the tender board. For salaries and wages £1,000 was provided, and £1,000 for contingent expenses; whereas last year nearly £1,300 was spent in contingent expenses, and about £700 in salaries and wages. While the money was differently distributed, approximately the same allowance was expected to cover the cost of the board.

MR. RASON: Only £1,100 odd was spent last year.

THE TREASURER: No; £1,250 was spent on contingent expenses only. True, there was always a danger of office staffs increasing; but after careful inquiry he had found beyond all doubt that the secretary and the staff were much overworked, and that the increase was unavoidable. It appeared that night after night the officers had to work overtime. True, other officers were similarly situated; and on the whole, public servants did such work willingly. However, if a man did a fair day's work, to expect him to carry on similar work through the night was unreasonable. As to the appointment of two inspectors of liquor, it was not clear how they could, without being overworked, likewise inspect licensed houses. Their inspection of the many licensed houses must be inefficient.

MR. GREGORY: That ought to be done by the chief of police in each district.

THE TREASURER: Probably every inspector of police, or every police officer above the rank of sergeant, and some sergeants, would be appointed by statute to inspect all licensed houses. The regular inspection of these was essential. The licensing court, before granting a renewal, should have the testimony of the inspector as to the character and the efficiency of the licensee. But the object of the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) would surely be defeated if this duty were thrown on the inspectors of liquor. In several States the practice of utilising the higher police officers in this fashion had worked satisfactorily.

Item—Secretary to Premier, £268:

MR. CONNOR: This seemed a new office.

THE TREASURER: The item previously appeared in the Colonial Secretary's Estimates, the title being "Clerk to the Premier." Just before he (the Premier) took office, his predecessor arranged for the change of title, which was a more correct description, though the duties were not changed. The officer was now attached to the Treasury instead of to the Colonial Secretary's Department, because the present Treasurer was likewise Premier.

MR. GREGORY: Such items as "office cleaners" ought not to appear on the Estimates. These used to be included in "Incidental" or "Temporary labour." If placed on the Estimates, when a cleaner resigned, his resignation must be approved by the Executive Council.

MR. A. J. WILSON disagreed with the last speaker. Most cleaners were women, whose wages might be augmented if they did work for other departments. They had as much right to protection as other State servants.

Items (2)—Chief Inspector of Liquor, £150; assistant inspector, £125 :

MR. KEYSER: These salaries appeared inadequate. Were there any allowances for expenses ?

THE TREASURER: Public servants were entitled to travelling allowances, and to subsistence allowances when travelling. This was in proportion to salary. The intention was to station one of these officers in Perth, and another on the Eastern Goldfields.

Item—Secretary to Tender Board, £275 :

DR. ELLIS: Here was an increase of £25. We had been led to believe that there were no increases.

THE TREASURER: The general rule was that increases should not be allowed on salaries over £200 a year. In this instance the officer was recommended by the tender board for a salary of £300 a year, but he (the Treasurer) struck off the increase entirely. The tender board protested strongly, and the matter was reported on by the departmental head and such a strong case was made out for giving the officer an increase, owing to the responsibilities of his position, that it seemed the circumstances were special and warranted special treatment; but he

(the Treasurer) reduced the increase recommended by 50 per cent.

MR. C. C. KEYSER: Personally he was opposed to increases in salaries over £200. The Premier led members to believe that in no case where the officer was receiving over £200 a year would an increase be allowed. There were ten officers receiving over £200 a year set down for increases. Many civil servants complained that increases due to them, and which they were led to believe they would receive, were not granted on the ground that financially the Government were not in a position to allow increases generally. He objected to any officer, no matter in what department or how long in the service or what his capabilities, receiving an increase when the salary was over £200 a year. He moved an amendment :

That the item be reduced by £25.

[**MR. QUINLAN** took the Chair.]

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

Ayes	...	...	16
Noes	...	...	27

Majority against ... 11

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Angwin
Mr. Burgess	Mr. Brown
Mr. Carson	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Ellis	Mr. Connor
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Henshaw	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Horan	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Keyser	Mr. Gill
Mr. S. F. Moore	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Nelson	Mr. Harper
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Watts	Mr. Hayward
Mr. A. J. Wilson	Mr. Holman
Mr. F. F. Wilson	Mr. Isdell
Mr. Troy (Teller).	Mr. Johnson
	Mr. Layman
	Mr. Lynch
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. Moran
	Mr. Nanson
	Mr. Needham
	Mr. Plesse
	Mr. Reason
	Mr. Taylor
	Mr. Frank Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Item—Inspector of clothing, £175 :

MR. A. J. WILSON: If the Government were going in for economy, instead of having an inspector of clothing it was about time they started a State clothing factory for the manufacture of the uniforms required. If such an

establishment were created it would not be necessary to pay the salary of an inspector of clothing.

MR. GILL: What were the duties of this inspector? Was he to inspect uniforms supplied to Government employees? Before there was such an officer the employees in the Railway Department considered they were treated badly in the matter of uniforms. Reform was promised in the shape of an inspector, when it was said everything would be all right; but in the Railway Department, at any rate, there had been no improvement whatever. The inspector was simply a figure-head. He came along and saw the uniforms tied up in bundles, looked at them, passed them, and gave a certificate.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Were the bundles opened?

MR. GILL: To his knowledge they were not. The uniforms did not fit. In regard to the supply of oilskins, in many instances the seams were open from top to bottom. The position was a farce. Whether the officer had sufficient authority or not he did not know, but he was of opinion that the officer had not sufficient authority to reject the uniforms.

THE TREASURER: The duties of the officer were to inspect clothing in order to ascertain if the material was up to the sample, and if the manufacture was of good workmanship. The usual custom in regard to contracts of this description was to have a sample suit of clothing supplied or sample goods made up, and the contractor was required to work up to the samples, both in regard to quality and style of workmanship.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Any protection against sweating?

THE TREASURER: The inspector had nothing to do with the rates of pay or the conditions under which goods were manufactured. He was simply required to see that the Government got a fair article in return for the money expended.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Had the officer ever condemned any clothing?

THE TREASURER: Off-hand he could not say how many suits of uniform the officer had condemned. It was not always the number of suits condemned which gave evidence of the efficiency of an officer. Very likely if an officer showed himself vigilant and was fully on the

alert, he would have a tendency to discourage the class of article which would need condemnation, and a number of deficient articles would be *prima facie* evidence that in the immediate past the work of the inspector had not been well performed. The position was a very necessary one. The member for Balkatta referred to uniforms he had come in contact with; one supposed the hon. member referred to the police uniforms, which always seemed to be very suitable and of very fair material and workmanship. He (the Premier) did not come into close contact with them. This officer had no concern with the manner in which the garment fitted; his duty was simply to see that it was properly made up and of standard material. He (the Premier) could not give the member for Forrest any information with regard to the advantages which would result from the establishment of a State clothing factory. Since he had been Minister he had not had an opportunity of considering the question. He would give the suggestion every consideration.

MR. TROY would vote for the retention of the officer at the sum named.

MR. HORAN had no objection to the item, but thought it a scandalous shame that things which were of absolutely rotten material should be passed by the Government officers from time to time. It would be interesting to know how much was on the Estimates for the contractor's firm.

Other items agreed to, and vote passed.

Vote—Audit, £9,230:

Item—Chief Clerk, £450:

MR. KEYSER: It was a scandalous shame that a man receiving a salary of £425 should have that salary increased to £450, whilst other men were debarred from getting any increase. Hundreds of men had been notified that no increase would take place on account of the present state of the finances. He moved an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £25.

MR. NELSON: A large number of men receiving from three to four and five pounds a week would get no increase whatever, yet this gentleman who had £25 more than double his (Mr. Nelson's) salary was going to have an increase.

Four hundred pounds was an exceedingly handsome salary as times were. We might well vote for the reduction of £25.

MR. BOLTON wished to protest against the expenditure in the Audit Department; but not specially in regard to this individual item. If we reduced this sum by £25, that would help to make up the deficit supposed to be coming. As to auditing, it was deemed necessary for stock to be taken each year in the Government stores at Fremantle. It was an absolutely absurd idea. When this stocktaking took place the clerks were brought back night after night. They had to sign an order issued by the head of that branch to come back—at present it stood at three nights a week.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was scarcely in order. The question before the House was the reduction of £25.

MR. BOLTON was explaining why he supported the reduction. The object he had was to protest against the expenditure in the Audit Department, some of which was useless.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member ought to propose to reduce the payment of those members who passed the Audit Act.

MR. BOLTON: Yes; he would do that.

DR. ELLIS: The Premier in his speech stated that there were no increases to officers receiving over £200 unless there was an obligation on the Government. He (Dr. Ellis) would like to know the obligation on the Government in this case.

THE PREMIER: In regard to this particular vote he intended to ask the Committee to report progress. He had not his notes available to-night. The information would be furnished by him.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

MOTION—NANGEENAN LAND SETTLEMENT.

TO DISCONTINUE.

Debate resumed from the 2nd November, on the motion by Mr. Watts.

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish): In regard to this question I obtained a

report from the Lands Department, from which it appears that as far as the department is advised there is not sufficient justification for the attack which has been made on this settlement or its possibilities. The settlement is of course entirely in its infancy at the present time. There has been no opportunity yet of proving the value of the land for the purpose of settlement; that is, there has been no opportunity of proving it on the settlement itself. The real cause, therefore, I assume, of any dissatisfaction that exists can be found only in the fact that some of the settlers have not regarded the price paid as remunerative, or there may be, in addition to that, some of them who regarded the possibilities of their being able, without the possession of means, to bring the land under cultivation as somewhat remote. The information I have of these settlements is: No. 1 consists of 3,175 acres and No. 2 of 4,217 acres, of which there are occupied 2,432 acres in No. 1 and 3,633 in No. 2, leaving only 1,327 acres not yet occupied. All of this area, it is said, would be readily taken up by good men who are well acquainted with the local conditions. The soil is good and is timbered with morrell, gum, salmon gum, and gimlet wood; the latter predominating. According to the report I think Mr. Growden—who has a holding of about 1,000 acres under C.P. near the centre of the settlement—last year had a return of no less than 30 cwt. per acre of hay over a large area, and 16 bushels per acre of wheat for 80 acres. He thinks that this season his hay crop will average nearly two tons per acre for upwards of 300 acres, while his wheat crop, sown on sand-plain country, will go about 12 bushels per acre for newly broken up land. Of course it is impossible to have at the present any results at all from the actual settlements themselves, but the land held by Mr. Growden in the immediate vicinity ought to be a very fair criterion of the value of the land in the settlement. The report goes on:—

In the immediate neighbourhood, R. D. Braysheer has from 60 to 70 acres of crops equally good. Also C. C. Mackey has 30 acres of wheat which will average up to 20 bushels per acre.

So much for the productiveness of the

land, so far as it has been tried. The report proceeds :—

The grass in the district reaches to four feet high, and is abundant where the timber is killed.

Then with regard to the soil, the report goes on to say :—

Where the salmon gum and gimlet wood grow, the soil is of a red loam for five or six inches, with a deep red subsoil of a very retentive nature. The morrel country is of a lighter nature, varying from a greyish loam to a red loam, and is easier worked than the stiffer salmon gum and gimlet wood country. At Doodlakine, only 18 miles west of the centre of the settlement, there are many good substantial holdings under C.P. conditions, and people are taking up land readily. Also at Bodallin, 41 miles farther east, there are applicants for land of the same quality under C.P. conditions.

A water supply for stock and domestic purposes is available from the goldfields scheme for this settlement. I think the present price is too high for irrigation purposes. It is at all events possible that, for development work, it may be ultimately brought down sufficiently to be utilised so far as is necessary to enable the settlers to grow fruit and vegetables. Only three pumping stations are used to this point, so that the cost of pumping water would not be so great as to pump it farther on. I am not prepared to give the exact figures as to the cost of pumping water to that stage; but it is not so great as pumping to the goldfields. Another important point in regard to the prospect of this settlement is the rainfall; and the figures for 17 years past show that the average is 10·80 inches.

MR. WATTS: Where were they taken?

THE PREMIER: I presume in the immediate vicinity.

MR. BURGESS: At the railway station, I expect.

THE PREMIER: They were supplied to me by the department, and I presume they are to be relied upon. Last season the rainfall was much higher; but I am told that if only 10 inches fell it would be sufficient to produce fairly good crops, providing the settlers would put their crops in early and avail themselves of the whole of the season's rainfall. There is also a considerable quantity of good land still available for settlement in this locality, for which there are applicants almost daily, who are acquainted with the

local conditions. This, it is reasonably argued, goes to prove the value of the soil in the district. That is information, so far as it has been supplied to me, from the Lands Department. I have a lot of details in regard to the contracts and the different areas held by the various settlers, and the details of work they have done; but I do not think it is necessary for me to take up the time of the House by giving all this special information. As far as I am advised, there are altogether 23 settlers; and of these 23 settlers I am assured that there are only four who are dissatisfied with their circumstances on the settlement. Of course, if that be so, then the position is considerably different from that put forward by the member for Northam. It has, however, been suggested, and I think pretty generally understood by members in different parts of the House, that the greatest advantage would be likely to follow from allowing the select committee which has undertaken an investigation of the conditions at the Hamel settlement to extend their inquiry to Nangeenan as well. I have no objection whatever to this inquiry being so extended, because I think it is most important that we should, as this work of experimenting in closer settlement goes on, in order to assure success in the experiment satisfy ourselves that there is a reasonable prospect of success. Therefore, I would welcome an efficient inquiry on this matter, although the information which I have at present is that the great bulk of the settlers are entirely satisfied with the conditions, and satisfied with the opportunities offered in their particular settlement for their future prosperity.

MR. N. J. MOORE (Bunbury): I think this is a case of "much ado about nothing." After the explanation of the Premier the House should be satisfied that the settlers in this locality have been treated quite as well as any other settlers who have taken up land. I think, after receiving the information from the Premier that the land is capable of producing at least 30cwt. of hay, that they have had a crop averaging over 12 bushels per acre, and that the rainfall is over 10 inches, we should not consider the place such a very inhospitable region as the member for Northam would lead

us to believe. I am very glad to have heard the information given by the Premier; and I feel sure that the officers connected with the Lands Department are men with knowledge of what they are talking about. I think it is a great pity that the time of the House should be taken up by a needless inquiry.

MR. W. NELSON (Hannans): There should be no objection to inquiring more particularly into this subject. Whatever may be the view taken by members, it seems quite evident that a little farther information is desirable. I would suggest that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the whole matter, and to report to the House, though I admit that we have a large number of select committees at the present.

MR. F. WILSON: We have too many already.

MR. NELSON: We might get out of the difficulty if we appoint the committee sitting on the Hamel Settlement.

MR. BURGESS: That has nothing to do with this question.

MR. N. J. MOORE: It is a different locality, and there are different conditions altogether.

MR. NELSON: If we could enlarge the sphere of operations of that committee to include the other settlement, it might preclude the necessity for forming another committee. At any rate, I leave the matter entirely in the hands of the House. There seems to be some difference of opinion, and I think the House would be none the worse for a little more information on the subject. I move an amendment:—

That all the words after "that" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu: "The question of the condition surrounding the Nangeenan Settlement be referred to the select committee dealing with the Hamel Settlement."

MR. A. J. WATTS (as mover, speaking to the amendment): In referring again to the Nangeenan Settlement, I should like first to deal with the remarks that fell from the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) when criticising my statement in regard to this settlement. I am not surprised at the attack made upon me by the member for Boulder, who I am sorry is not present to-night to hear what I have to say on this subject. I am not surprised that the hon. member

should have made that attack upon me because I dared to disagree with his scheme, which I consider is a wild one; and I should not be surprised, should the hon. gentleman ever again be in the position which he occupied a short time ago in regard to this State, to find that we should have some of the arid districts in the centre of Australia opened up for this class of settlement. I must say that the hon. gentleman's regard for the unemployed is indeed pathetic in its intensity. He settles the unemployed in such a place as this settlement, in a district from which they cannot escape, and in which they cannot clear sufficient out of their contracts to enable them to live in a respectable manner. There is a chance of starving these unfortunate settlers in this settlement, and so hushing their importunities for an opportunity to make a living and to get on the land for the purpose of making a living. I have no doubt the hon. member has been a close student of books which describe the condition of Siberian exiles; and this settlement, owing to its unsatisfactory condition, the hardships inflicted on settlers, and the tortures which they suffer, is somewhat akin to a settlement in Siberia.

THE SPEAKER: Is the hon. member speaking in favour of the abolition of the settlement, or of the appointment of a select committee? I think the hon. member is wandering slightly from the subject matter of the amendment.

MR. WATTS: I am dealing with my motion.

THE SPEAKER: The question before the House is the amendment. The hon. member cannot now deal with his motion. He may speak to the amendment; and if the amendment is negatived he may then speak to the motion, which will be again before the House.

MR. WATTS: I consider it absolutely necessary that some inquiry should be made into this settlement. It has been asserted that very few settlers are dissatisfied; and the member for Boulder said the other night, and I think the Premier mentioned to-night, that only four settlers were dissatisfied. This I absolutely deny. I have here a list of the names and holdings of the selectors. I am prepared to show it to any member who cares to look at it. No less than 16

settlers, only two of whom are not married, waited on me when I visited Nangeenan, and expressed their dissatisfaction with the place, and their conviction that it was impossible for them to get a living there.

MR. BURGESS: How long have they been there?

MR. WATTS: Since about the beginning of July.

MR. BURGESS: Good gracious! They want a gold mine.

MR. WATTS: The hon. member appears surprised that the men should make such a statement after being there for so short a time. They have been there quite long enough to find that they are unable to make a living in the place. They have taken contracts for clearing at a certain rate not sufficient to keep them in food and to keep them out of debt.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: Can they not leave?

MR. WATTS: No; they cannot leave. They have scarcely any money. Their little all is now sunk in their properties; and most of them are unable to pay over their railway fares, so as to leave the settlement. With regard to the letters read by the member for Boulder, one from a person named Cadwallader, expressing his satisfaction with the settlement—

MR. RASON: Is the hon. member in order? He is dealing with matters arising out of his motion. There is an amendment before the House; and I think it only fair that the hon. member should give us some idea as to whether he intends to support or to oppose that amendment to appoint a select committee to investigate the grievances which the hon. member alleges exist. If the committee is appointed, it will establish whether there is dissatisfaction, and if so whether there is ground for dissatisfaction. The hon. member is replying to remarks made on his motion. He is therefore dealing entirely with his motion, and not with the amendment.

THE SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is hardly in order in attempting a general reply on his motion when the question before the House is the amendment. Considerable latitude may be allowed in debating even this question; but I have stated the question before the House, and I think the hon. member should endeavour to refrain from a

general reply on his original motion. The proper time for that will come if the amendment be defeated. He will then be able to reply in the ordinary course; for the motion will be before the House. The question now is the appointment of a select committee; and though the hon. member's remarks may cover a fairly large area even on that question, I hope he will not go too far.

MR. WATTS: I ask your ruling, sir, as to whether I am in order in drawing attention to the need for the appointment of a select committee.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. WATTS: The member for Guildford (Mr. Rason), who objects to my speaking, should know well that I was attacked, and attacked severely, when I had no chance of replying; and though I am not attempting to reply now, it seems as if the hon. member would preclude the possibility of my replying or of justifying myself in respect of some of the statements made previously and made to-night also as to these settlements. Am I in order in drawing attention to facts which show the need for farther inquiry?

THE SPEAKER: It is difficult to decide whether the hon. member is in order or out of order. I shall allow him full latitude; and I hope he will not make too definite a point of replying to speeches made on his original motion.

MR. WATTS: I wish to draw attention to the need for inquiry. It has been stated, and it appears from the report read to-night by the Premier, that the settlement is to a certain extent satisfactory. I will read several letters received by me from settlers who desire an inquiry into the settlement. A letter dated Nangeenan, November 13th, 1904, states:—

I arrived in the settlement about the middle of July; and as there had been a lot of rain, everything looked well, so I went round and inquired about the place; and as everything was praised up so well, I thought I should give it a trial. The first thing I did was to build a two-roomed house so that I could get my wife and family with me. Being about 3½ miles from the station and 1½ miles away from any water, the next thing I had to do was to see about an old turnout to get my supplies and water. I had a few pounds when I came down here; so I bought an old turnout for £15, and having got settled, started ring-barking, for which I am paid 2s. an acre, which is more than half scrub. I cannot do

more than two acres per day of 10 hours. I asked to be allowed to start grubbing, which I find is no better, as you will see by the amount of pay I have received since I have come here. I have had £15 16s. for three and a half months' work. You allude to a letter which Cadwallader sent to Mr. Hopkins. Knowing a little about this man, I should like to say a few words, seeing that he is the oldest man on the settlement. I should like you to ask Mr. Hopkins how much this man has had since he has been here. He has been here six months, and has had £20. Seeing this man does not pay anybody, not even a poor old widow woman trying to make a living out of a store at Merriden—

MR. KEYSER: Is this relevant to the question at issue?

THE SPEAKER: It is quite in order.

MR. WATTS: The letter continues:—

These are the kind of men who are trying to throw cold water on us for trying to better ourselves. Many thanks to you for the way you are fighting for us.

That is one letter out of no less than ten which I have here, all in a somewhat similar strain. I will read several letters, though I have read enough to show that there is some dissatisfaction. Another letter, dated Nangeenan, 12-11-04, states:

Re Nangeenan contracts, I as a contractor here wish to inform you that under the conditions I cannot do any good at same; and I do not see anything to look forward to in the future. Trusting you will do your best on behalf of the settlers here (etcetera).

Another letter states:—

Block 29, 92 acres. Myself and brothers arrived here in July, and started and rung 42 acres in about three weeks. Then started clearing 50 acres at £2 per acre. Have cleared about three acres. If the price is not improved must give up contract. Impossible to get a living at it.

Another letter states:—

Arrived at Nangeenan August 23rd, 1904. Started ringbarking at once. Rung 165 acres. Commenced clearing end of September. Find it impossible to do more than two acres per man per month. Heavy green timber.

Each of the 10 letters deals with the same subject, and expresses the dissatisfaction of the settlers, and their conviction of the impossibility of making a living at the place. The Premier stated that according to the evidence supplied to him only four settlers were dissatisfied. The whole of the names on this list and the letters also are available for the Premier; and they support me and the House in demanding an inquiry. There are only about 30 settlers alto-

gether at Nangeenan. I have 10 letters from them; and 16 settlers have also expressed their dissatisfaction with the settlement, and their intention of leaving it if the conditions are not altered. The Premier says there is supposed to be a large area of land there which could be immediately taken up and settled; and the department give that as a reason why the settlement should be continued. The fact remains that this land has been available for a considerable number of years. The previous settlers in this district, except one man, have been starved off the land, and have given up their holdings and gone away. The settlement is in a very dry district, where the rainfall is not as stated by the Premier and repeated by the member for Bunbury (Mr. N. J. Moore), but considerably less; or insufficient generally to grow crops. For some years past, till last year and this year, it has been utterly impossible for the settlers to grow payable crops. Most of them have forfeited their holdings and have left the district. One man who is there has made a living by getting mining timber.

MR. BURGESS: Is that the man who had 30cwt. to the acre?

MR. WATTS: The 30cwt. to the acre has been got this year, and good crops last year also; but I would remind the hon. member that good crops have been got this year and last year at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. Only a day or two ago the statement appeared in a newspaper giving details of a satisfactory crop harvested at Kalgoorlie; but no one in his ordinary senses would expect settlers to make a satisfactory living from land in Kalgoorlie in the way of farming. The member for York says that I should be the last man in the country to condemn land in this locality, but it has been proved that men going on the land have not been able to get a living, and that they have been starved off. We have the right to make the fullest inquiry before we expect men to put in their time and spend their energies in a useless way and when the State will not get any advantage. While I am a member of the House I shall consider it my duty to oppose the spending of public money in this or any other district which can be of no good as far as the State is concerned, and which must result in

financial loss to the State, bringing nothing but misery and wretchedness to settlers going into the locality. Although members have thought fit to say that I should not have opposed this scheme, I consider it my duty to do so, and as long as I am in the House I shall move that such settlements as this be fully inquired into before settlers are duped into going there. There have been thousands of acres available at Nangeenan for many years past, and if the land was satisfactory, people would not be found rushing 30 miles off the railway line for land if they could get suitable land at such places as Nangeenan. It has been said that Mr. Growden, one of the settlers, had a good crop this year, and that the grass is exceedingly good. I have seen grass on the goldfields, also crops there; I have seen splendid grass-fed on the goldfields, but it would not pay to utilise the land for the purpose of close settlement. With regard to the rainfall which is supposed to have been taken for 17 years, I submit it is utterly ridiculous for the Lands Department, or whoever is responsible for providing the figures, to attempt to gull the public by making such statements. There has been no possibility of taking the rainfall at Nangeenan for 17 years. No settler has been in the locality for that length of time, and as to the railway station at which the member for York intimated the rainfall was probably taken, I think the member for York should be aware that that station has not been built for more than seven years.

MR. BURGESS: I have not spoken yet.

MR. WATTS: The member made an interjection to that effect, and he should know perfectly well that the station has not been erected for 17 years. It has been asserted that there are applications for land in this locality almost daily. Applications are also made for land as far inland as Coolgardie, also around Kalgoorlie, and even farther than that, at Menzies and around that district. Applications are made for land under conditional purchase conditions, but no one would attempt to say that because applications are made for land in that way and in these districts that the land is suitable for the purpose of close village settlement, such as we have at Nangeenan. I hold with the Premier that

we should satisfy ourselves that there is a possibility of settlement in a district like Nangeenan being successful before we continue the settlement. Consequently we should make inquiry to see if there is any chance of success. What is the use of spending thousands of pounds of the public money and wasting the settlers' time and energy and then making inquiry. If the settlement goes on for 10 or 15 or 20 years, it will still be found necessary, at some time or other, to abolish this settlement. I now voice my protest against it, and I speak with a knowledge of the district for many years, and a knowledge of this class of settlement and farming in this State and in the Eastern States. I have had experience of similar settlements to this in Victoria and South Australia, in dry districts. The member for Bunbury asserted that apparently there was much ado about nothing. Probably some members may consider it is nothing that some settlers would waste their all and give perhaps the best years of their life in working on an unsatisfactory settlement. Unfortunately there are too many members in the House who are content to see the public funds squandered over such unsatisfactory business.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot make that statement.

MR. WATTS: I withdraw it; but I say with regard to this settlement the much ado that is being made about it is for the purpose of saving men's time and energies and also the public funds. I hope an inquiry will be held, and that practical men will look into the settlement, and without fear or favour not attempt to justify any action of a past Minister. There seems to be a great reluctance to condemn anything that has been started by the member for Boulder, who was the last Minister for Lands. Whether he is deserving of condemnation or not, there are members in the House who are prepared to uphold anything good, bad, or indifferent which has emanated from him. I hope this settlement will receive just consideration and decision, irrespective of the originator of the settlement. I do hope an impartial inquiry will be held, and that if this is done, no attempt will be made to continue a settlement of this kind which cannot be made a success, but must

end in failure and ruin to those settlers on the land.

MR. R. G. BURGESS (York): I wish to speak briefly on the amendment. The time the settlers have been at Nangeenan is so short that they have hardly had time to know if they can do anything, or whether what they have done will prove satisfactory to themselves or to the country.

MR. WATTS: What is your experience of the district for years past?

MR. BURGESS: The hon. member has already spoken, and can speak again if he likes. The member for Northam said that settlers have been at Nangeenan since July. Any member of the House who has had any farming or pastoral experience must know, if he has common sense, that it is impossible for anyone to go on the land and prove land to be any good or suitable for close settlement in a short time. The hon. member has made the statement that the settlers have been sent there to be ruined and to waste their energies, but the men are paid to clear the land, and if they are not satisfied they can go away again. My contention is that if the men are not satisfied, the sooner the Government clear them of their contracts and give them something to go away the better.

MR. WATTS: That is what they want.

MR. BURGESS: These men will never make successful settlers. With regard to the amendment that a committee be appointed to visit this settlement, I contend it is almost premature to decide on this settlement at present, or to condemn the settlement. We have a report from the Lands Department on this matter, and if the Minister is not fit to administer the Lands Department, the Government had better resign. The Minister for Lands has made a report that the men are satisfied, therefore the settlement should go on a little longer. Men ought to have sufficient confidence in the Ministry and sufficient confidence in the public, and give the settlement a fair chance to see if it can be made a success or not. In regard to what has been said as to the late Minister, we know that if any Minister in the House brings up any scheme, it has to be approved of by Cabinet before it can be carried out. It is all very well for Parliament to blame the member for Boulder,

for although he may have initiated this settlement it was approved of by Cabinet, so that member is not to blame. It is about time we had Ministers who will introduce some new ideas in this country, for we have an enormous extent of country lying idle, and the Government should put some money into the country to try and prove it. The member for Northam says that the time and energy of settlers at Nangeenan are being wasted. That is nonsense. If the men who have gone there are dissatisfied, the Government had better give them something at once and allow them to go to some other occupation which will suit them. That can be done without the appointment of a select committee. The Minister can go there, and if he finds that the men are not contented under their contracts, then he had better send them away, for such men will never make the settlement a success. Unless Parliament is going to sit for ever, running on from one year to another, select committees cannot make these inquiries. There is no need of a select committee. At present all the time of members is taken up, nearly every day, Sunday included, with the work of select committees.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Hand the work of the country over to select committees.

MR. BURGESS: The late Premier used to object to the country being run by select committees, and I think there is too much inquiry by select committee altogether. The Government should take some responsibility. The Minister for Works has been to some of these settlements and made a report. I think it is a reasonable report, although he has not had much experience. I am sure the Minister for Lands and the Lands Department are competent to deal with this matter, and afterwards if necessary a committee can be appointed to inquire farther into the matter. The member for Northam states that one man at Nangeenan only managed to live by getting mining timber, and in the next moment he said that this same man got 13cwt. of a crop. That man has a better crop this year, I think an average of eight bushels of wheat to the acre. If a man can get that, the land is worth doing something with, and it will prove to the people that it is worth settling on. We should

not discourage these experiments without giving them a fair and reasonable trial.

MR. WATTS: What kind of crop do they have most years?

MR. BURGESS: I have told the hon. member before now. What was Meckering a few years ago? It was tried and people gave it up; but what is it to-day? One of the most successful places in this State; and that has been the case all over this country. Do we want to give up everything? Are we going to give up the goldfields because one or two men have put up bogey places and squandered money here and there? Are we going to give up settlement because we have had a drought in the North-West once or twice? Are we going to give up sinking wells or putting down bores because we cannot get water everywhere we go? If we had had such a lot of cowards in the early days in Western Australia we should have had the French flag flying over this country. We must try to push on, and it is the duty of this House above all to spend money judiciously. We must speculate; we must try to push this country. We have millions of acres. When we talk about the unemployed in this country and we have the country to work, let us put our energies together and push the country ahead, making work for the people here and in other places. Any man who goes about in this country and looks south, north, east, or west, must know if he knows anything, if he is looking ahead at all, if he has any energy, enterprise or love for his country, that the sooner we develop this country and get the population which it can carry and should carry, the sooner we all pull together—particularly the Parliament of this country—and cause the spending of money by settling the people on the land, the better it will be. We want to have population, and we want to help our industries. There are portions of land in the southern part which the Government are improving, but which will never go ahead until we have a larger population. It is the duty of every member in this House to try and push on land settlement in every part of this enormous country, so that we can settle the unemployed about which they talk. We can take people from the other States and settle them in this country, and

prove to the outside world that people can go on the land, make comfortable homes, and become useful citizens; and by degrees the burden of taxation often cast in our teeth will be lessened.

[Conversation going on behind Ministerial bench.]

THE SPEAKER: I think that if members wish to carry on conversation, it would be better for them to retire. It is very difficult for me to follow the debate whilst I have close to my ears three or four members carrying on an animated discussion. I hope it will not be necessary to call attention to this again. I think that as we have gone to the trouble of providing retiring places where members may consult each other, they should take advantage of that, and not interrupt the discussion in the House.

MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. BURGESS (resuming): I have a good mind to speak till to-morrow morning on this amendment. Members may laugh, but it will be no trouble to do it, because a member who has a knowledge of this country could speak till half-past three, and I should not be afraid to do it if the case warranted it. It is time we marched onwards, proved this country, and spent out money. We tried to prove our goldfields, and we put down bores, and then when we could not get water, what did we do? We mortgaged the whole of this country to prove our goldfields and carry them on, and make the conditions of life better for those people living there. We got them on our goldfields, and the industry has been of great benefit not only to the people in this State but to people of the other States. Our gold production is not increasing, but it has left a mark on the wealth of this State. Now it is our duty and the duty of everyone in the State to try and foster the industries we have; to try and develop the country to the south, north, east, and west wherever we go. We have millions of acres down here that have never been touched. There are only a few cattle and things. I have myself traversed that part of the country. With reference to the country eastward, a man came to me I never saw in my life, who had sent a letter last year in reference to the rabbit question. He wanted to see the Minister for Lands and to occupy

country. Are we east of the present goldfields —

MR. WATTS: The hon. member is not discussing the Nangeenan Settlement. I presume that is the question before the House.

THE SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. member is a little discursive, but I think he is in order.

MR. BURGESS: It is not necessary nor is it altogether fair to condemn this country when it has not been given any time to prove whether it is satisfactory or not. And it is premature to have a select committee before anything has been done there. I will not take up the time of this thin House to-night. It is of little use. In reference to this amendment I hope it will not be carried, and I also hope the motion will not be carried if it goes to a vote, because, as I have already said, we should give this settlement more time to let the people develop the place, and see for themselves whether they will be satisfied, or if not, as I have already stated, if dissatisfied people are there, it will be better for the Government to buy them off their contract and send them to some other place.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Kutanning): After the earnest speech of such a practical farmer and settler as the member for York (Mr. Burgess), I think the member for Northam (Mr. Watts) should be convinced that to carry out his proposal to stop the settlement altogether would be a mistake. I feel also that it would be a mistake to appoint a select committee to inquire into the matter at this stage. We have a body administering the affairs of this country, with a Minister for Lands responsible for the administration of that important department, and although this settlement is the outcome of the policy of another Government through its Minister for Lands, still the time seems so short since this matter was put into training and since this experiment was brought about, that I think it would be preferable to give a little longer time to see the results. I am quite confident, knowing as I do the farmers of the country—a body of men for whom I have every respect—that amongst any set of men, and especially men who have gone on that land from the goldfields and other parts of the country, there will be some men dissatisfied. You will never find a

body of men like those who will be entirely satisfied with the condition of things. There must be some dissatisfied men.

MR. WATTS: They took the land up six years ago.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I quite agree with the member for Northam that caution should be exercised in the settlement of districts. This morning I had an opportunity of passing through Nangeenan and seeing some crops close to this settlement, and the crops I saw were equal to anything I have seen in the country. At the same time I feel that we are not quite certain yet about the rainfall of that portion of the State. I have known the country in dry seasons. Certainly we have seen other parts of the country in dry seasons also, but we may be confident of a continuance of seasons we are now experiencing. I am confident that much of the land being cultivated is land that will grow wheat with a six inch rainfall, and grow it to perfection, because from the climatic conditions, owing to the heavy dews and the cool temperature at night a larger quantity of rain is not absolutely necessary to develop wheat crops; so that perhaps under certain conditions success would follow the efforts of the people. However, I should prefer to see them settled in what are known as the more temperate districts, so far as climate is concerned, where there is a more certain rainfall; but as settlement has commenced in this district, it will be of benefit to the people settled there if we let this experiment go on; but let the responsibility be on the heads of those who have control of the affairs of the country; and let us not take so much into our own hands by appointing committees to inquire into these matters, when it is clearly the duty of the Government to do so. There has been a tendency, not only on the part of the previous Government but on the part of this Government also, in fact it is a growing tendency, to delegate much of the responsibility and business to committees and boards. The Government's duty is to carry on the administration of the country. The Government are the representatives of the House, and the administrators of the affairs of the country; and having had their attention drawn to these circumstances by the member for Northam, they will, no

doubt, inquire fully into the matter. We have heard to-night a report by a responsible officer of the department giving certain statements which, if accurate—and I take it they are accurate—shows there must be no cause of complaint. I am confident that in any body of men put upon the land there will be discontents; and as they go on the land without knowledge and without means, that makes it harder for them to make a living, so that in many cases they suffer hardship. In many cases they should never have gone on the land; but so far as the land is concerned, if the people had a little means to help them and more experience, there would be a good result from their labour. I have seen the land, and am more than satisfied with the results obtained. I am pleased to see such a change brought about in that country by recent development for a distance of 100 miles from Northam. It is land which at one time I thought could not be cultivated with success. It is well to make experiments such as are being made, and they should be watched; but let the responsible heads, the controlling department, watch the experiments and see that the work is properly carried out. If they find later it is not judicious and safe to continue this settlement in the interests of the country and the settlers, they will withdraw the people from the land. Under the circumstances, I cannot support the appointment of a select committee. It is the duty of the Government to look after this matter, and I do not see why the time of members should be taken up in looking to it.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): After what has fallen from the members for York and Katanning, if the Government had any idea of supporting the amendment to appoint a select committee, they should see the advisability of not persisting in that course. Undoubtedly the position is that we have the Government represented by the Minister for Lands who has made inquiries, and we are told that he is perfectly satisfied with the work going on. To appoint a select committee under these circumstances would be asking this House to undertake something which it is the duty of the Government to perform, and which the Government

are quite able to perform. The Premier was satisfied with the information.

MR. WATTS: It does not say that the Minister for Lands was satisfied.

MR. RASON: The Premier was satisfied, and he said he had made inquiry from the Lands Department. I presume that inquiry would be made of the responsible head of the department; and I think I am right in inferring that the Minister for Lands is satisfied on the point. I do not think anything is to be gained at the present time by the appointment of a select committee.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): I do not desire to speak at any length on this question at this late hour. I simply rise to say that I deprecate the immoderate and intemperate utterances of the member for Northam in regard to this matter. I should certainly have thought that one of the last men in this House to deprecate such a movement as this in language such as has been used would be a member of the Labour party. The hon. member's position as a member of the Labour party, even if the conditions of the settlement were unsatisfactory, should not be to condemn them wholesale, but to find some means of improving them. What we have been striving for in social reform is not to discontinue existing conditions, but to solve many of their difficulties. I hold that the effort put forward in this connection by the previous Minister for Lands (Mr. Hopkins) is a step in the right direction. We have also to recognise that, as the late Minister started out practically as a pioneer in this particular scheme, it might have naturally followed in the ordinary course of events that many of the details of the scheme would require to be remodelled or extended or modified, as the case might be, upon what might subsequently be proved as development proceeded. Under these circumstances our duty is first of all to give the existing experiments an adequate opportunity of proving whether they are utilitarian or otherwise; and when we find they are not utilitarian, our course is not to entirely abolish them, but so entirely prove them that we can put ourselves in the position of testing one of the most vital and burning social questions of the day. We want to provide for everyone in this country unfortunately compelled to beg the leave of some

other person in the community to be employed at a wage if he can get it, but unable to find some person willing to employ him, a convenient opportunity of going on the land for employing himself and getting some remuneration in the occupation. We have had a paternal Government initiating a scheme, not for the purpose of primarily providing work for people, but to provide those who have some grit and backbone an opportunity of making for themselves comfortable homes on the soil. With all due respect to the member for Northam, I care not where a scheme comes from, whether from the member for Boulder or any other member of this House who may be objectionable to me, so long as the scheme initiated is good, I welcome it from whatever source it comes. I hope in the circumstances that this experiment, begun some considerable time after the settlement which a select committee is now investigating was started, will be given at least some opportunity of proving itself; and if some of the statements of the member for Northam are true—if some settlers are not satisfied with the conditions—then their course is perfectly clear. They are not bound to complete their contracts; they are not rooted to the soil itself; and clearly the remedy is, not to abolish the settlement, but to give them an opportunity of getting away and providing themselves with some congenial employment. I therefore hope that, after what I consider the sound and logical arguments of the members for York (Mr. Burges) and Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piessé), neither the amendment nor the motion will be carried.

On motion by **MR. F. F. WILSON**, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at nine minutes to 11 o'clock, until the next afternoon.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 23rd November, 1904.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT.

MR. NELSON presented a petition, praying that certain amendments be made to the Legal Practitioners Act and Local Courts Act.

Petition received and read.

QUESTION—RAILWAY DIFFERENTIAL RATES.

DR. ELLIS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it the intention of the Railway Department to do away with the differential railway rates against the other States of Australia this coming year? 2, Is it the intention of the department to do away with the differential rates between the inland and coastal traffic; and if so, when?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The Rate Book in course of preparation will extinguish the rates which differentiate between W.A. produce of all kinds and similar produce from Eastern States. 2, If port to port rates are meant, no.

QUESTION—RAILWAY FINANCE.

DR. ELLIS asked the Minister for Railways: Are repayments under loans taken off the railway loan capital or not?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Railway accounts recognise the actual loan expenditure as far as it has been possible to obtain it. Folio 4 of the Commissioner's report explains this. Repayments and adjustments as named are Treasury matters, and do not affect the