

from compelling them to do that? The Minister has not given us any reason to warrant us in doing this. The hon. gentleman no doubt thinks it will be a good thing to have these plans. The Minister has seen maps of various places hanging in offices; he has seen, no doubt, plans of the Zoo, and he wishes to have some plans of the mines to hang about his offices. The Minister seems to have a disease; he has an idea that for every Act that is passed there should be an amending Act. How inconsistent has the hon. gentleman been in regard to the registration of engineers! and if the House wished to be consistent it would have to strike out the clause in reference to granting certificates to engineers. The Minister said it was necessary that the men appointed as underground surveyors should pass a thorough examination; but what do we find? When the Underground Surveyors Bill was before the House, I argued that the men who were carrying on business should not be interfered with, and I see that clause 12 of the Bill before the House introduces this very principle that I strove to have incorporated in the Underground Surveyors Bill. Clause 12 says:—

The said Board shall grant a first-class certificate of competency to every person who satisfies the Board that he has been in charge of and has efficiently managed, upon a mine, winding machinery worked by steam, by which men were raised and lowered in cages, for a period of 12 months prior to the application for such certificate, and shall grant a second-class certificate to every person who satisfies the Board that he has been in charge of and has efficiently managed upon a mine machinery worked by steam for a period of twelve months prior to the application for such certificate, and such certificate shall confer the same privileges as a certificate of competency of the same class.

Was that not all I asked for the surveyors? The House, to be consistent, should strike out the clause, but I shall support it. The hon. gentleman has given no reason why the Bill is necessary, and in the absence of any reason I cannot support the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### MOTION—LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

HON. H. BRIGGS, without notice, moved that 14 days' leave of absence be granted to the Hon. H. G. Parsons.

MR. PRESIDENT: Before I put this motion, I must again draw the attention of hon. members to this question of leave of absence being given. I think the rule for leave of absence has been strained to its utmost degree, this session. Those hon. members who are away from the colony, of course, cannot help it, but members residing in the colony I think should certainly make some effort to attend. Suppose a case of emergency arose, and it was desired to suspend the Standing Orders, the work of the Council might be stopped. I think it my duty, as President, to call attention to this matter.

Motion put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9 o'clock p.m. until the next Tuesday.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 25th November, 1897.

Message (appropriation) re Supply Bill—Papers Presented—Question: Post and Telegraph Offices for Northampton—Question: Inspector of Mines for Knowna and Bulong—Stock Diseases Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Return: Perth Public Hospital—Sale of Liquors Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Employment Brokers Bill: third reading—Industrial Statistics Bill: third reading—Immigration Restriction Bill: third reading—High School Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Dog Act Amendment Bill: Legislative Council's Amendments; in committee—Local Inscribed Stock Bill: Legislative Council's Amendments; Speaker's Ruling; in committee—Annual Estimates: Debate on Financial Policy; in Committee of Supply—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### MESSAGE (APPROPRIATION) RE SUPPLY BILL.

A Message from the Governor was received and read, recommending an appro-

priation of £350,000 out of Consolidated Revenue Fund, for the service of the current financial year.

Ordered, that the Message be considered in Committee of Supply at the next sitting of the House.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: (1.) Amendments of Regulations under Goldfields Act, namely: New Regulation 16A. (registration of alluvial claims), and Amendment of Regulations Nos. 40 and 41. (2.) Comparative Returns of Imports and Exports of Colony, 1892-96. (3.) Returns of Land Selections in connection with Lands and Surveys Department.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION—POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICES FOR NORTHAMPTON.

MR. MITCHELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Minister of Education:—

(1.) What was the date of the purchase by the Government of the premises at Northampton for the purpose of new post and telegraph offices. (2.) Whether these premises were being so used. (3.) If not, why not. (4.) Whether the said premises, or any portion of them, were being used or had been used by other than Government servants. (5.) If so, by whose authority.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) replied:—(1.) The purchase was completed on the 5th May, 1897. (2.) Not yet. (3.) The delay occurred owing to certain fittings and alterations being required; but the building will be shortly ready for occupation, the work being in hand. (4.) The premises have been used by the postmaster and another. (5.) On the authority of the late owner granted before the sale of the building.

#### QUESTION—INSPECTOR OF MINES FOR KANOWNNA AND BULONG.

MR. VOSPER, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, Whether, in view of the large impetus recently given to mining in the Kanownna and Bulong district, it was his intention to appoint an inspector of mines to supervise workings in those places.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the matter was under

the consideration of the Mines Department at the present time.

#### STOCK DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by HON. H. W. VENN, and read a first time.

#### RETURN—PERTH PUBLIC HOSPITAL.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in accordance with notice, moved:—

That there be laid upon the table of the House—(1.) A report from the Committee of the Perth Public Hospital, containing an account of the working of that institution during the year ending 30th June, 1897, including detailed and audited accounts of the expenditure from public funds and also of private subscriptions towards the upkeep of the hospital. (2.) A copy of the rules under which medical practitioners are permitted to attend their patients in the hospital.

Put and passed.

#### SALE OF LIQUORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### EMPLOYMENT BROKERS BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### HIGH SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: I have much pleasure in asking hon. members to assent to the second reading of this Bill, the object of which is to increase the subsidy paid to the High School under the Act of 1876, from £500 a year to £1,000 a year.

MR. A. FORREST: The subsidy ought to be £2,000.

THE PREMIER: I may inform the hon. member that the Treasurer of this colony never gives away more money than is asked for.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And not always that.

THE PREMIER: The governors of the school inform me that if the subsidy is increased to £1,000 a year, and a grant made of £2,000 to pay off existing liabilities and do other necessary things, the institution can be put on a much better footing than it is at present. Being anxious to assist education in the colony, I propose to carry out exactly what has been asked by the governors of the school. A grant of £2,000 appears on the Estimates, and this Bill provides for an extra £500 a year in subsidy. The High School Act has been in force since 1876, and when the measure was passed, the school was very popular in the colony. It was felt then that the colony ought to be self-sufficient in the matter of education, rather than dependent upon other places. I do not know whether the High School has been very successful or not. There is a good deal of difference of opinion on that point. We must recollect, however, that the funds at the disposal of the High School authorities have been very small. The sum of £500 a year is not large for the administration of an institution of the sort. The land and the old buildings were originally given to the governors of the school by the Government, but beyond that the institution has had to pay its own way. When the buildings required enlarging, the governors undertook to carry out the work. They borrowed money for that purpose, and the small amount of debt then incurred has been a mill-stone round their necks for many years. The headmaster informed me not long ago that there was great difficulty in obtaining and retaining the services of efficient masters. The salaries are so low that those who do undertake the duties of masters in the school leave at the first opportunity. "High School" is a well-sounding title, and the institution should be what its name denotes. We expect the school to be controlled by university graduates. I believe the Act has a provision to that effect; at any rate the school has always been in charge of university men. All the head masters have been graduates of one or other of the great English universities. It is expected that the masters at this school shall be men of some attainments. They should be Bachelors of

Arts, at least, of some recognised university; and when I inform the House that the highest salary given for a junior master is £120 to £130 a year, it will be seen at once that there is not very much inducement for a Bachelor or Master of Arts to take service in this institution. It is a great pity that the matter dealt with in the Bill has been neglected so long. I must plead innocence, because I have never been approached on the subject by the governors since I have been in office. It may be the governors have felt loth to ask the State for further assistance; but had I been approached sooner, and had I understood the exact state of affairs, I would before now have taken into consideration the advisability of introducing a measure such as that now before the House. It is a fact that residents of this colony send their children to the Eastern colonies, and also to England, for education. I will leave out of consideration those children who are sent to England, because they are not very numerous, and would perhaps, under any circumstances, be sent Home for their education. But there are dozens and hundreds of Western Australian children at the present moment receiving their education in Adelaide, Melbourne, and other colonial cities. That is not what we desire in this colony, where there ought to be as good a high school, or nearly as good, as there is in South Australia. We cannot, of course, arrive in a moment at the standard attained by South Australia, which colony has been noted for its educational institutions for a long time; but we must make an attempt to make our school equal to any in the other colonies. The people of Western Australia should not be compelled to send their children away for education which ought to be provided in the colony. It is a very small subsidy, and I quite agree with the member for West Kimberley that it should be more, for I think the colony could afford to pay more at the present time; but the governors of the school know their own business best.

MR. A. FORREST: I do not think they do.

THE PREMIER: Well, that is all they have asked for at present; and if they had asked for more, I think I should have been inclined to give more, because I am anxious indeed that we should have

a really good school for higher education in the colony. I have much pleasure in asking hon. members to assent to the second reading of this Bill.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): This small Bill is very important to those parents who are supporting the High School, by sending their children to it at the present. It has been well-known for many years that the present High School has not come up to the standard we expect for higher education in this colony; and it is well-known that, as the Premier has told us, the majority of parents who have boys to send there are sending them out of the colony to be educated. The reason is that the teaching staff of the High School is comparatively starved; for when we find that the assistant masters are receiving small salaries of £100 or £150 a year for educating the young of the colony in the higher branches of learning, it is natural that those teachers should, on the first favourable opportunity, leave the school to take employment in the public service or in other positions. We cannot blame them for doing so, for they are educated gentlemen, and they cannot be expected to remain in positions where they are so poorly paid. The High School has become a by-word in the colony. Only a few parents here, and I am one of them, are sending children to this High School; for the majority of parents find it necessary to send their boys to other countries for an efficient education. I hope the day will come when this High School will be so improved as to be worthy of the colony; and for that purpose we should not only grant more money, but we want a higher standard of teaching, and then the parents will not be likely to send their boys elsewhere to be educated. I know parents who are sending their children out of the colony to be educated, and are not doing it willingly, because they can ill afford the expense of maintaining their boys in Melbourne or Adelaide. We should have a High School here where our boys can receive an education equal to that which is given in any part of Australia. Those who have large means, and wish their boys to be educated in England, will probably continue to send boys there; but many parents in this colony wish their boys to be under their own observation, and have them

growing up under parental care, while receiving efficient instruction in a High School. I like to have my boys educated here so that I may watch their progress, promote their interest, and have them trained under my constant care. I have no wish to send my children out of the colony to be educated; but, on the contrary, I think the State should provide a high-class education in the colony; the same as other countries do for those boys whose parents can afford to send them to a high school. The grant of £1,000 a year, as proposed in the Bill, is ridiculously small for working the school efficiently; and when we know that among the board of governors of this High School there is not one who sends his boys to be educated there, and that one of those governors sends his boy to another institution in the place, it cannot be expected that the parents of children who are sending their boys to the High School will feel confidence in it. I mentioned in the last session the fact that one of these governors was sending his boy to another institution to be educated; and, though I feel the highest respect for him personally, yet he must have some good reason for the course he has taken. It cannot be that the difference in the rate of charge is sufficient to account for his action. I do hope the Premier will see his way to increase this vote; and I think also some steps should be taken for effecting a radical change in the board of management. Most of the members on that board have been too long connected with it, and the sooner we have new blood imported into the board, the better will it be for the school. We want men on the board who will not be afraid to say what they think is necessary in the interests of the school; and, by making a change of that kind, we shall be doing a good work in the interests of Western Australia. Parents are quite prepared to pay whatever fees are necessary for securing efficiency in the High School; but we do expect the Government and the country will provide some place where our boys can obtain that higher education which will fit them for professional pursuits; and where boys, after having gone through the ordinary course of primary school education, will be able to get finishing instruction during the last two or three years before entering on

a professional or business career. I must again say a radical change in the board of management is necessary, and the sooner the Government bring about this change, the better it will be for the school, for the parents, and for the boys. A larger sum of money should be placed in the Bill to enable the head master, who is a first-class man, to have an efficient teaching staff for assisting him. The grant of £500 a year, given hitherto, would not pay the salary of a second master of high attainments, and how all the rest are to be paid out of the small grant, I cannot see. I am pleased indeed that this Bill has been introduced, because I do not consider the High School is a place for obtaining a first-class education for intelligent boys.

MR. SIMPSON (Geraldton): I have no intention of opposing the second reading of the Bill. I heartily concur in the words which have fallen from the member for West Kimberley in regard to this question; and we may safely say this is the one institution in the land, supported by a Government grant, that has not been improving with the advancing condition of the colony. I have the report of the board of governors before me, and there is in it evidence of the lamentable fact that the attendance is decreasing. We have another educational institution here, which was started in St. George's Terrace some three or four years ago, commencing with an attendance of thirteen children, and now having a roll of 170. These figures suggest a remarkable contrast between these two educational institutions. While I have a high personal respect for the members of the board of management of the High School, I do say the time has come for an entire reconstruction, and that the school, as an institution supported by Government, should be either mended or ended. Not one of the governors has a boy being educated there; that is to say, out of six members of the board, not one sends a boy to the High School. I have heard complaints from all parts of the colony about the High School in Perth, and about the large expense parents are put to in sending their boys here and having them separated from home influences, while the educational results are not satisfactory. It seems to me we are putting into bricks and mortar what we ought to be putting into

brains. I have had complaints from persons in various parts of the colony; and I have heard it said, also, that you must send your boy to the High School if you want him to get into the civil service. I do not believe anything of that sort, but that is commonly said; and when such remarks get abroad, we know there is a want of confidence among the public as to the management of the High School. What happened a few years ago in connection with that school did damage it very much, and I know several parents who sent their boys to other countries to be educated, rather than keep them at the High School in Perth. While one feels the highest respect for the examiners, one can see from the reports that the examiners do not record any serious improvement made in the school, but content themselves with saying the tone of the school is well maintained. I do think the Government should make an effort either to end or mend this educational institution, as one that has not advanced with the progress of the country.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, as a parent of boys attending the High School; and I certainly concur, on the whole, with the remarks made by hon. members with regard to the school. I notice that there has been an improvement during the past year, and that is satisfactory in itself; for when I first sent my boys to the High School, I felt much inclined to take them away and send them to some educational institution in the Eastern colonies, as I was so disappointed with the educational results here; but believing as I do that we should support our own educational institutions, I have up to the present continued to send my boys to this school, for the reason that I hope to see an improvement in regard to its management. I hope also to see an improvement in the payment of the teachers, with the object of getting better men to carry on the work. The trouble lies in the fact that the teachers are under-paid; and I hope that, with the increased grant proposed in the Bill, we shall see an improvement in the educational results, and in the management of the school. Most people will agree that it is very much to the detriment of children who might be sent to such an

institution, that we have not a better school in the colony. We know the reason of the falling off in attendance is that several other schools have started here lately, particularly the school in St. George's Terrace mentioned by the member for Geraldton, in which the teachers are noted for the energy they put into their work. We have also what is called the Scotch College started recently in Perth, and that has taken away a number of boys from this school. But I think that if the same energy were put into the work of this school as we see in other institutions of the kind, a great change for the better might be expected in the immediate future. Of course the difficulty has been principally the lack of funds; but now that it is proposed to augment the funds, and as there is also a vote on the Estimates, as pointed out by the Premier, which will liquidate the existing debt on buildings, it is to be hoped a change for the better will be made in the next year or two. I feel that we ought to patronise our local educational institutions, and I shall continue to send my boys to this school; but I am also aware that parents do need some encouragement for sending their children to it, and unless those responsible for the management will show a little more interest in the school, I am afraid we shall not see that progress made which we all hope for. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill; and in regard to the debt in connection with the building, I think the building for which the debt was incurred was for a gymnasium. Although one hon. member said he would prefer the money put into brains rather than into bricks and mortar, it must be admitted that physical training is a necessity, for you may try to put too much learning into a boy, and unless you give him physical training as well, he will not take that interest in his studies which he will be likely to do if exercise is provided for his physical development.

MR. SOLOMON (East Fremantle): I agree with hon. members in saying it is necessary something should be done to improve the High School. With regard to another institution which has been mentioned, the Christian Brothers' College, I may say that at the last examination, out of 14 boys sent up, 12 were

passed, and that proportion, I believe, outnumbered nearly all the boys throughout the schools of the colony. If such results can be attained in another institution, why cannot they be attained in a High School which has so much help and receives such facilities from the Government grant? I concur in the Bill, with a view to helping this institution as much as possible.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): I shall support the second reading, and I trust that what we propose to do will operate for the benefit of this institution. I have two boys attending the school, but I regret to say the progress they make is not quite as good as I should have expected, and as I hoped it would be. It is one of the regrets of my life to think that facilities are not afforded in this colony for the efficient education of boys after they leave the ordinary schools; and I can assure hon. members that, if I could afford it, I would send my boys away to-morrow to be educated out of the colony. The mere fact that adequate arrangements do not exist in Perth, and seeing that one great drawback this colony labours under is the fact that there is no play-ground attached to the High School, I think something should be done in that direction. There is nothing but a sand-heap for these little fellows to amuse themselves on when out of school; and nobody can deny that one of the principal adjuncts of a good school, and one of its greatest educational influences, is a good play-ground. The report of the governors for the past year says:—

A piece of ground in the Perth Park Reserve has been allotted to the school as a playground, in exchange for the land resumed for the purposes of the Observatory. This is now being cleared and levelled by the Public Works Department, in accordance with a promise given by Sir John Forrest at the time of the resumption of the former ground.

That is all very well, as far as it goes, and the Government have done all they can in the existing circumstances; but unfortunately that ground is not attached to the school building, nor can there ever be a proper play-ground attached to this High School because of its situation. One of the principal objects we should have in view is the removal of this institution from the present site—to what place I cannot say. I hope hon. members will not think I am dealing lightly with

the subject when I honestly consider it would be to the advantage of the colony if we were to remove the High School to a place like Albany, where there is a first-class climate, where the surroundings are good, and where the boys would have the advantage of being a short distance from home, and yet not too far from it. We should urge on the Government to select another site in some salubrious spot, where the boys can have ample freedom. If Ministers see their way to propose an addition to this grant, I will support it up to as much as £2,000. We cannot expect an institution like this to prosper if we starve the teaching staff, and that is one of the most serious difficulties which the High School at the present has to contend with. I do not know sufficient of the internal economy of the school to express a positive opinion; but when we hope to receive boys from the country, we should provide first-class boarding accommodation at the school. I know, as a fact, that people in the country complain that there are not sufficient comforts at the High School for the boys sent there, and particularly is this complaint made in regard to the play-ground. The boys must be allowed to run about pretty well at their sweet will when there is no play-ground attached; and I urge strongly on the Government the necessity for securing a considerable space in or near Perth, or at some other suitable centre, and hand it over to the control of the Education Department for the purpose of a High School. The present board of management, as has been said, comprises gentlemen whom we all respect; but it is a pity that some member of the board does not happen to have a boy at the school, as that circumstance would place him in touch with the working of the school, the same as parents have to learn through their children who are there. Of the gentlemen who are on the board, four have no boys at all, one other member has boys grown up, while the remaining member sends his boy to an opposition institution. I regret that circumstance, and I regret that we have to admit in this public place that the Perth High School does not come up to its requirements.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I concur to a large extent in

what hon. members have said about this school, not from personal knowledge, but from information received. My observation leads me to this conclusion, that it is exceedingly undesirable to make any further building additions on that site. I strongly urge on the Government to obtain some more suitable site, and to reserve the money they are going to expend on buildings, in order that it may be expended on a more suitable site when obtained. I am willing to support the Bill, and would do so if the amount of grant were increased. The point I wish to impress on the Government is that I am much opposed to this kind of institution, so far as it is spending Government money without Government control; but now that we have come to a stage when we have a large educational staff, and a Minister of Education in this House, I think this High School ought to be placed under the control of the Education Department, with the Minister in this House responsible for this and other educational affairs. In placing this school under his control, it should not be tied with all the rules of the common schools, but should be under the Minister's direct control. Further, the two things I wish to urge on the Government are, firstly, that they should not spend any more money on that site, but get a better one; and, secondly, that this institution should be placed under the control of the Minister of Education as soon as possible.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): I heartily concur in the expressions of opinion that have fallen from hon. members with regard to this institution. I am very pleased indeed to think that there is such a strong feeling in this House with regard to increasing the subsidy to the High School; and I am almost surprised that the feeling is so strong, because I have never heard expressions of opinion, during the time I have been in the House, advocating an increase of this subsidy. Under the High School Act, this is distinctly recognised as a Government institution; that is to say, it should be fostered and helped in every possible way by the Legislature. An Act for this purpose was passed in 1876, which provided for the establishment of a High School for the purpose of giving the best kind of education, similar

to that given in the grammar and the advanced schools of the Eastern colonies. I am quite certain hon. members will agree that this object has not been carried out in the past in regard to this school. The fault lies chiefly in the manner in which the school has been starved as to the payment of its teaching staff. It is impossible to get good men to come here as masters, unless they are sufficiently paid; and it is no good having masters staying at the school for only twelve months or so, as a stopgap until they can find something better elsewhere; but we want men who, as teachers, will take up the work of the High School as a profession; men who, while feeling a real interest in it, will continue as teachers and feel a pride in the position and progress of the school, and will induce the boys to feel a pride in it also. The member for Geraldton has said that all he had ever heard by way of praise of the High School was its "tone." I cannot agree with the hon. member, because, in my opinion, "tone" is what the school requires to a large extent.

MR. SIMPSON: I was speaking from the examiners' reports, and not giving my own opinion.

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION:** My own opinion is that the school requires "tone." Every boy who walks about the streets of Perth with the colours of the High School in his hat ought to feel that he carries the honour of the school about with him, and should do nothing to bring discredit on it. I do not think that feeling has been inculcated in the school in the past, owing in a great measure to the fact that there is not a sufficient staff of masters who remain long enough at the school to create an interest amongst the boys in the matter. I do not wish for a moment to cast any reflection on the head master. It is impossible for the head master to conduct the school exactly as it should be conducted, unless he has a proper teaching staff. He cannot carry out all the work himself, and without money a staff cannot be secured. The want of a playground has also materially interfered with the progress of the school, which will never be what we hope and wish it to be until it is removed to some other site. I hope the Government, after the expression of views given this evening,

will, for the sake of the present and future generations, take into serious consideration, the advisability of changing the site of the school. The standard of the High School is too low. The boys ought to be able to matriculate, not only in any university in the colonies, but in any university in Great Britain. Without adequate funds, that will never be possible in the High School. I hope that wealthy people may arise in this colony able to give funds, for the endowment of a scholastic institution of this kind. But the public must not wait expecting something of that sort, but should establish an efficient High School themselves. Every possible means of education should be given to the people of the colony. It is the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill providing free education for the masses of the children in Western Australia, and it is only right that some small amount of the educational vote should be set apart for higher or secondary education. I trust some means may be found of placing the High School in a better position. This Bill provides funds for the improvement of the staff, and, as I said before, I trust that the question of moving the school to some other site will be considered as early as possible. The present site is surrounded by sand; and it is impossible, unless at tremendous expense, to form a good playground on such a foundation. I do not wish to express an opinion on the question whether the school should be placed under Government control. I feel sure, however, that if the school were placed under the control of Government, it would be very much to the benefit of the institution.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### DOG ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The following schedule of amendments, made by the Legislative Council in the Dog Act Amendment Bill, received on the previous day, was now considered:—

No. 1.—On page 2, Clause 6.—Add to the clause the following words, "and the Roads Board out of the money so received shall add to the reward offered by the Government for the destruction of wild dogs."

No. 2.—On page 3, Clause 9, line 1.—Between "place" and "it" insert "within a Municipality."



No. 3.—Add the following new clause, to stand as No. 11:—"Section twenty-three of the Act 47 Victoria, No. 13, shall be and the same is hereby repealed."

No. 4.—Add the following new clause, to stand as No. 12:—"Section five of the 'Dog Act Amendment Act, 1885' (49 Vict., No. 10), is repealed, and the following provisions are hereby substituted in lieu thereof:—"It shall be lawful for any adult aboriginal native to keep one dog (which shall be registered free of charge); provided always, that such dog shall be kept free from mange or other contagious disease. Upon representation being made by any person to a justice of the peace or a chairman of a Roads Board that such dog is liable to spread disease by reason of its neglected state, such justice or chairman, as the case may be, may order the destruction of such dog."

No. 5.—Add the following new clause, to stand as No. 13:—"Section thirteen of the principal Act is hereby amended by striking out the words 'not belonging to an aboriginal native,' in the second line of the said section."

No. 6.—Add the following new clause, to stand as No. 14:—"Every dog registered under this Act shall, on or before the 31st day of January, 1898, be furnished with and wear a collar with a metal plate affixed thereto, which shall bear in plain figures the registered number and the number of its district, such plate to be supplied by the officer registering the same; and any dog found in a public place in any municipality or roads board district without such metal plate and registered number thereon shall be deemed to be unregistered, and may be destroyed by any police constable forthwith."

#### Amendment No. 1:

MR. BURT moved that the Council's amendment be amended by striking out the word "shall," in line 3, and inserting in lieu thereof the words "may, if the board think fit."

Put and passed.

Amendment No. 2—agreed to.

Amendment No. 3:

MR. BURT: The section of the principal Act which the Council sought to repeal provided that, in an action for damages for dog bite, it should not be necessary for the plaintiff to show previous mischievous disposition or propensity in the dog, or the owner's knowledge of such mischievous disposition, or that the injury was attributable to neglect on the part of the owner. The Legislative Council were not acting wisely in repealing this section, and he moved that the amendment be disagreed to.

Motion (Mr. Burt's) put and passed.

Nos. 4 and 5—agreed to.

Amendment No. 6:

MR. BURT: The Parliamentary draftsman reported that he drafted the South Australian Act, from which the proposed clause was adopted. The discs were found to irritate the dogs, according to the experience in South Australia, and were very often removed at home for that reason. The discs were also often catching in some fence or place through which the dog passed; and, partly from this cause and partly from wear, the discs got lost and did not last the year. In time, therefore, the absence of the discs ceased to raise a presumption of non-registration in South Australia. To the best of the Parliamentary draftsman's recollection, as time went on, if a dog was registered, the owner did not trouble about the disc. In conclusion, the draftsman's report suggested that inquiry should be made as to how the South Australian Act was working now. He (Mr. Burt) was afraid that people would object to their dogs wearing these discs, especially in the summer weather. He moved that the amendment be disagreed to.

Motion (Mr. Burt's) put and passed.

Resolutions reported to the House, and report adopted.

The following members were appointed a committee to draw up reasons for not agreeing to certain amendments made by the Legislative Council:—The Premier, Mr. Leake, and Mr. Burt.

MR. BURT, on behalf of the committee, brought up the following report:—

*Reasons of Committee for disagreeing with Amendments by the Legislative Council in the "Dog Act Amendment Bill."*

Amendment No. 3.—The law as it at present stands makes the owner of a mischievous dog responsible for injury to another person, and the amendment would have the effect of relieving the owner of practically all responsibility, inasmuch as a person injured by a dog would have to prove that the dog had a previous mischievous propensity, and that the owner knew it.

Amendment No. 6.—It is impracticable in this country to carry out the intention of this amendment. The collars and discs would constantly be removed by the owners and would also be often torn from the necks of the dogs by contact with fences and other obstacles, and in the end no notice would be taken of the absence of the collars and discs, and the law would become a dead letter.

Report adopted, and a Message accordingly transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## LOCAL INSCRIBED STOCK BILL.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The following amendments, made by the Legislative Council, received on the previous day, were read:—

*Schedule of amendments made by the Legislative Council in the "Local Inscribed Stock Bill:—"*

No. 1.—Page 3, Clause 9, in the third line.—Between "colonial" and "securities" insert "Government."

No. 2.—Page 6, Clause 15, last paragraph, line 5.—Between "published" and "shall" insert "and not inconsistent with this Act."

## THE SPEAKER'S RULING.

THE SPEAKER: When the Message from the Council first came down, it appeared to me to be an interference, by the Upper House, with a money Bill, and an invasion of the privileges of this House; but, having since considered the matter, I find the amendments made are such as may be made by the Legislative Council, if the Legislative Assembly approves of them. Bramwell says on this point:—

It is frequently matter of nice and difficult discrimination to decide what particular amendments to money Bills do or do not affect the privileges of the Commons. These questions are usually determined according to the opinion of the Speaker. In such cases, where the Lords' amendments are agreed to, the Commons frequently direct a special entry to be made in their journals, explaining the particular nature and effect of the amendment, to prevent their being drawn into precedent in cases differently circumstanced. These special entries are in the General Index (1820), classed under the following heads:—To rectify mistakes apparent from the context or other parts of the Bill; to rectify mistakes in amendments made by committees on Bills; to rectify mistakes in recitals; to rectify mistakes in description of persons; to rectify clerical errors; to amend surreptitious alteration of Bill; being for alteration of dates elapsed, or nearly elapsed; being for clearer explanation of the intention of the Bill; being for greater caution, and no alteration of the intention of the Bill; being a particular proviso in the matter already provided for generally in the Bill; being a transposition of a proviso in a Bill.

I think, looking at this Bill, we may say that one of these amendments is for clearer explanation of the intention of the Bill, and therefore it is within the power of the Legislative Council to send this amendment down for our approval.

## IN COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, both amendments were agreed to.

Resolution reported to the House, and report adopted.

Ordered, that a Message in accordance therewith be transmitted to the Legislative Council.

At 6:22 p.m. the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30 p.m. the SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES—DEBATE ON FINANCIAL POLICY.

The Financial Statement having been made by the Premier and Treasurer, upon introducing the Annual Estimates on Tuesday, 16th November, and the first item having been moved, the debate was now resumed.

## IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): Sir, it is the privilege, I understand, of all hon. members to criticise the Financial Statement with which the Premier was pleased to favour this House a few nights ago. After indulging his fancy for rhapsody and retrospect for a few moments, the Premier launched into his statement and told us he based his estimate upon the population of the colony. In that regard I find myself in complete agreement with the Premier, for I am impressed, as indeed others must be, with the fact that population is the true basis of wealth. We may gauge our prosperity by the degree of increase which that population is making. If our population is decreasing, it is, at any rate, *prima facie* evidence of retrogression. I regret to think that population, which has hitherto been attracted by the glitter of our goldfields, is not increasing at the great rate at which it was increasing, or at which we expected it would continue to increase during this year. Signs of the times show us that this coming year will leave us, if not with less population than we have at the present moment, at any rate with an increase which is not in proportion to that of former years. The Financial Statement for last year was based, as the Premier has told us, on an increase of population of 3,000 persons per month. On that basis he estimated a revenue of £2,425,000, which was exceeded at the end of the financial year by

£417,000 odd. For the year ending 30th June, 1896, the increase of population was 32,870 persons. These figures I take from the Premier's own statement. For the year ending 30th June, 1897, there was an increase in the population of 35,371 persons. That showed an excess in 1897 over 1896 of 2,501 persons only. It will be seen, therefore, that in the year ending 30th June, 1897, the rate of increase of our population showed signs of falling off. Whilst the Premier's estimate of 3,000 persons a month was substantially correct, the rate of increase was not maintained. For the first three months of this year the increase is only 4,575 persons, or at the rate of about 1,500 per month, as against 3,000 per month last year.

MR. A. FORREST: The Christmas holidays affect those figures, because people are going away intending to come back.

MR. LEAKE: I would remind the hon. member that Christmas is in December.

MR. A. FORREST: But the people are going away to come back again.

MR. LEAKE: The chief increase in population is, of course, the excess of arrivals over departures; and the comparison of the figures which have been placed before us, both in Parliament and in the press, is interesting. In September the excess of arrivals over departures was something like 1,336. In the following month of October the increase had fallen to 797 persons. I am told on reliable authority that in the first 18 days of the present month of November, 900 more persons went away than came into the colony.

MR. A. FORREST: They are going away for the Christmas holidays.

MR. LEAKE: Well, they have gone away, and I regret it exceedingly; and it is a fact with which we have to reckon.

THE PREMIER: Do you blame the Government for that?

MR. LEAKE: I do not wish to be unfair. I would not accuse the Government of driving population away, although I know there are some people who are so ungenerous as to make such a suggestion. I quote these figures because the Premier himself said that he took population as the basis of wealth, and last year based his estimate on the probable increase of 3,000 persons a month. I

wish to show hon. members that the same advantageous possibilities are not before the Premier now that were before him last year. Notwithstanding the unfortunately possible decrease in population, there is no corresponding decrease in the estimated expenditure. That is the point I wish to direct hon. members' attention to. Here is the "writing on the wall." Here is the caution which I ask hon. members of the House to point out to the Government. All I ask is that the Government should put a curb or check upon what is regarded in many quarters as extravagant and excessive expenditure, if indeed we may not call it reckless expenditure. As to this increase of population—or, as it promises to be at the present moment, decrease of population—I have heard doubts thrown on the accuracy of the Government returns. Persons who have taken the trouble to check for themselves the records or reports of the arrivals and departures of persons at the ports of Albany and Fremantle tell me their calculations do not correspond with the Government returns. I do not want to go so far as to say the Government returns are false, but the fact I have mentioned shows, at any rate, that the official figures are open to question and must not be accepted as too correct. When those returns show against the Government, then we may be certain there is "something in it."

THE PREMIER: We do not prepare the returns.

MR. LEAKE: Who does?

THE PREMIER: The Registrar General.

MR. LEAKE: The Registrar General is a Government servant.

THE PREMIER: We get the Registrar General to cook his returns, I suppose?

MR. LEAKE: No, I do not suggest that; but I say there may possibly be mistakes made. No less an authority than the *Morning Herald* has questioned the returns of the Government Statist. I do not know whether the Premier will dispute that local authority, but if he does, he should be very careful, because the *Morning Herald* has been very kind to him in the past. The proud boast of the Premier has always been that we should make this country attractive. Steps have hardly been taken to accomplish that end; at any rate we heard in a

debate, not so many evenings ago, that people who come here find they cannot live cheaply enough, and are forced to go away again. I honestly think that the cost of living has a great deal to do with preventing people remaining in the country:

MR. A. FORREST: We had enough of that the other night.

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member had enough of it, I know, but I have not had enough of it. When I think I have made a good point, I never hesitate to reiterate and emphasise it. On this question of the cost of living, I shall "float the flag" whenever and as often as I can—*ad nauseam* if necessary. No less an authority than one of the leading men of Kalgoorlie is reported to have said, a few days ago, that some of the best miners are leaving the colony because they find living here so dear that they cannot bring their wives and families over.

MR. MORGANS: That is the water difficulty.

MR. LEAKE: That is not quite the same tune the hon. member sang a short time ago: But, in any case, I am not going to discuss the water difficulty to-night, I can promise him. Whatever we may say in this House, we find the working men themselves asserting they cannot live here cheaply enough. They ought to be good judges; indeed they ought to be the best judges, and whether their statements are right or wrong, we find that men do leave the colony. What then are we going to do to keep the people here, and thus have a sound basis for our financial position? If we lose our people we shall undoubtedly lose our revenue. And what are our principal sources of revenue? Undoubtedly the Customs and Railway receipts. The bulk of the revenue is from the pockets of the people. Our best endeavour, therefore, should be to keep the people here when we have them. Is indulging in a reckless and extravagant policy of public works the best way to keep people here? I submit it is not. To attempt to maintain a temporary and fictitious prosperity by a public-works policy is not sound and good finance. The Public Works Estimates placed before the House amount to £1,028,118, and of that, £553,664 is to be spent on works and buildings.

The Director of Public Works has over a million pounds to play with. Judging from that hon. gentleman's transactions in the past, do hon. members think it safe to give him all that money? [MR. A. FORREST: Yes.] I wonder if hon. members on the Opposition side of the House think so. [MR. SIMPSON: No.] I wonder if the people outside think so. Undoubtedly, no. When the vote for the Public Works Department is before the House, I have no doubt an attempt will be made to reduce it, and those hon. members who have the best interests, the best financial interests, of the country at heart will, I trust, vote with members on the Opposition side of the House. The capacity of the Director of Public Works for spending is undoubtedly great. Of the amount voted last year, namely £483,924, he spent all but £62,000 odd. Now he is asking for another million; and the chances are that, with the staff at his hand, and with the capacity he seems to pride himself on for spending money, he will be able to get rid of the greater part of that large sum. What I dislike about the policy of the Public Works Department is the reckless way in which the Director indulges his fancy for public buildings. He has more than half a million of money to spend in that direction. We are told that one plank in the financial policy of the Premier is that there should be no more loans for several years to come.

THE PREMIER: I did not say that.

MR. LEAKE: You did not say it?

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. LEAKE: Well, somebody else said it who must have been sitting on one side or the other of you, or immediately behind you. I know the hon. members behind you never make such reckless statements. We were told that the loan policy of the Government must stop, and that there is to be no more expenditure except on works that will pay. What is our outlook?

THE PREMIER: We have £5,000,000 more to borrow, you know.

MR. LEAKE: The Premier said there would be no more expenditure except on works that would pay. No doubt there is £5,000,000 more to borrow, but all that is allocated. [THE PREMIER: What does that matter?] I am speaking

now of revenue, and do not want to be led off on a false scent about loan money. I ask hon. members not to forget that the whole of the £5,000,000 to be raised is already allocated, and cannot be diverted from its proper course, unless we do what we did the other night and take money allotted to one work and spend it on another. Throughout my observations this evening I am attempting to deal with revenue. I would very much rather see the efforts of the Government directed towards the reduction of taxation, than towards a continuance of this public works policy. The extravagant spending policy, which seems to have beset them, worries the department and the Minister, and in turn the Premier and his colleagues are worried. The Government have got so far on this easy downward grade, that they cannot put on the brake and stop; indeed they are fearful of stopping. I am afraid they may stop too suddenly, and when they do, the Director of Public Works will stop too. This public works policy means the glutting of a fictitious labour market. A sudden pause or cessation in these works means the dismissal of employees; indeed, it is possible such a thing is meant now in the Public Works Department. The policy further means the equally dangerous crippling of private enterprise. A policy of public works takes people away from their legitimate employment, with the desire to get, for a short time, the increased advantages which the Government offer. But, above all, this extravagant policy means the annual cost to the colony of a very considerable amount. One of the most short-sighted features of the public works policy is the attempt made to spend all the money within a few months. Everything is kept going at high pressure, instead of the expenditure being spread over a considerable period, and people thus encouraged to engage on the works quietly and permanently. Unnecessary expenditure and extravagance must be caused by the rush made to commence and complete public works.

**THE PREMIER:** What about your statement at the Town Hall meeting some time ago, when you said the Government were not going fast enough?

**MR. LEAKE:** You have been immoderately slow, very often. You are immoderately slow now—slow to learn.

You learn neither by precept nor by experience. As to this permanent annual charge, if hon. members have glanced carefully through these Estimates, they will, I can promise them, be astonished at a little item which appears as "additions and repairs to existing buildings." That item is scattered throughout the Estimates, under nearly every head in the Public Works Department. The amounts are not totalled and put down as one sum, but throughout the Estimates you will find this item exists; and, astonishing as it may appear to you, you will find that the item for "Additions and repairs to existing buildings" amounts to no less a sum than £41,250; and, mind, that item is not based upon the expenditure which it is now proposed to make, nor can it be said that it was based upon the expenditure of last year, because those works which were built out of last year's revenue have not yet required to be added to or repaired, but the item relates to buildings which existed before the Premier made his last Financial Statement; and if on that basis you make a calculation, you will find that when this year's expenditure is finished, that item added to last year's "additions and repairs to existing buildings" will amount to at least £100,000. That is what we are building up for ourselves by way of annual charge, by reason of this works and buildings policy. I ask hon. members whether the circumstances justify us in encumbering the colony's finances to that extent; whether we could not expend the money in another direction. We find also that, under this item "Additions and repairs to existing buildings," the estimate was exceeded by at least 50 per cent. Does that reflect great credit on the Director of Public Works? I can hardly think so, but I notice the hon. gentleman is taking notes, and may perhaps justify himself when I have finished. If that is to be thrown at us as good finance, as good government, and as good administration, all I can say is it is not good enough for me.

**MR. A. FORREST:** You don't understand it.

**MR. LEAKE:** No; I do not. It is beyond my comprehension, and it must be beyond the comprehension of the great financiers opposite. If you can justify this vast expenditure and this huge annual

charge upon this growing, or shall I say "groaning" country, I shall be glad to hear your justification. To justify these works would really mean, what? A huge unestimated revenue; and unless you get this unexpected or unestimated revenue, it will upset the Government arrangements, for the works which have been undertaken in the last two or three years and are not yet finished must stop, or cannot be properly completed for want of funds. Looking at the Estimates of previous years, we find that none of them have been above the mark; and as these works are constructed out of revenue, to revenue alone must you look for money to carry them to completion. And did we not in this House, the other evening, practically discount our revenue for the next few years to the extent of £395,000? If, then, the Premier's estimate for the current financial year is correct, when he says he will have a balance of only £4,000 in the Treasury chest, how is he going to meet that annual charge of £100,000 a year which is imposed by reason of the works policy, and how is he going to repay the loan of £395,000 which we practically borrowed the other night? He will be forced to prove the fallacy of his own position by declaring that he will launch the colony into the loan market once more, notwithstanding his protest that there shall be no more loans added for the next few years; but we have an opportunity of placing a check on that, and I hope hon. members will endeavour to do it. This huge, unexpected, unestimated revenue has been the colony's financial bolster. The Government have been relying on what may be called the colony's good luck, by depending on a large unestimated surplus of revenue; and, unless you get that financial bolster, that unestimated revenue, where will you be? You tell us now you do not expect to get it, and that you will have only £4,000 of a surplus at the end of your financial year; and yet at the same time you base your Estimates on that unexpected revenue. I say that is not good finance. In the year ended June, 1896, you had an unexpected balance of £984,056; and in the next year, ended June, 1897, your unestimated balance was worth £417,751. These are enormous figures, but the right hon. gentleman tells us there will be no

bolstering this year, for he expects only a surplus of £4,000.

**THE PREMIER:** I never told you we had this amount, surely.

**MR. LEAKE:** That is what I complain of. You do not know what is going to happen, and you are really relying on prophecy. Prophecy will play you false some day, and although you have been lucky enough hitherto to get your unexpected balance, yet if you do not get it this year, you will find yourself in a very pretty hole. The position of Ministers has hitherto been, not one of good finance, but good luck. We have reason to assume that the Estimates for the coming year will be more nearly accurate than those of either of the two preceding years; for whereas in respect of those years the Estimates were made up before the end of the then coming financial year, we find that on this occasion at least three months of the financial year have gone by, and the Premier has, therefore, had a fair index of what is going to happen in this financial year. He has based his calculations on a population basis, which is the proper basis; but unfortunately in this year, instead of an increase at the rate of 3,000 persons per month, there are signs now of an unfortunately heavy decrease. When we consider that heavy decreases have exhibited themselves in the revenue from Customs, from Lands, from Mining, and from Stamps—these being four of the principal sources of revenue heretofore—surely we have a right to say we ought to be careful; and, owing perhaps to the fact that the people are not coming here as quickly as they were formerly, it shows there is something wrong, for if people go away, there will be less imports, less land sold, less mining, less stamps, less travelling, and less trade. Pessimistic as it may appear, I honestly think that hon. members, in the interests of the country, ought to pray for a substantial deficit at the end of the financial year, as that is the only practical way I see of placing a check on the Director of Public Works. He grabs everything, and what he grabs he spends, and what he does not spend he will waste. We were told that at the beginning of our financial year we started with a credit balance of £315,362.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Not money, though.

MR. LEAKE: Not money. I thank the hon. member for that interjection, for it was the very point I was coming to. It will be interesting to know how much of that credit balance is actually cash.

MR. A. FORREST: Stores are cash.

MR. LEAKE: Stores are cash! Oh, are they? humph! You know stores can be destroyed by fire, and by rats. Cash can not.

MR. A. FORREST: Stores are insured.

MR. LEAKE: We may take it, from a supporter of the Government, that the £315,000 of credit balance represents stores.

MR. A. FORREST: I said stores represent cash.

MR. LEAKE: If you examine those Estimates, you will find you are living in a fool's paradise. This is the way the position is put in the Estimates:—Credit balance, 30th June, 1897, £315,362 4s. 7d. But what does this credit balance mean. What would any ordinary man believe that to mean? He would understand it to mean £315,362 of cash in the chest and available for current expenses: but that is not the state of affairs.

MR. A. FORREST: You know it, too.

MR. LEAKE: Of course I know it, and am emphasising the fact, and applying my knowledge in criticising the financial policy and the recklessness and extravagance of the Director of Public Works. Does he expect to build works and public buildings out of stores? Is he going to turn this colony into a huge warehouse. Is he going to sell these stores and convert them into cash?

MR. A. FORREST: They may be rails.

MR. LEAKE: Of course they may. You may show rails as an asset, if you like; but what I object to is showing this credit balance as cash. It is a bad system, and a bad policy.

THE PREMIER: It is the system in South Australia; supposed to be the best in the Eastern colonies.

MR. LEAKE: In the right hon. gentleman's speech, he used these words: "We have therefore £315,362 to our credit, instead of, as I had estimated, £16,673 when I introduced the Estimates on the 17th August, 1896." But I ask, how much of that was cash? I am going to insist on an answer to that question.

THE PREMIER: We had more cash than that in our hands.

MR. LEAKE: But it was all allocated to particular works. You bring this forward as available cash, and you cannot help admitting those figures are misleading. Then, if we turn to the railway receipts, according to a return put on the table yesterday, all these railway receipts, something like £100,000, amount to mere book entries.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Nothing of the kind. Only £47,000 are book entries. The other revenue was received from the public for wharfage.

MR. LEAKE: Say there was £40,000 of it which you never received. That is right enough. I am not objecting to your showing that as an earning for your railways. That is legitimate finance. But what I object to, and what other hon. members object to, is that you show that as actual cash, and it is by this means you are enabled to grandiloquently proclaim to the House that your railways are paying interest and sinking fund on all the loans of the colony. I repeat, there is no reason at all why those figures should not be shown as earnings; but they should be distinguished as actual cash earnings. That is all I ask for. Another unfortunate circumstance is the disparity between imports and exports. What were we told the other evening?—that our imports at the end of December, 1896, were £6,493,000 odd, whereas the exports were only £1,650,000; showing a balance in favour of imports of over £4,840,000. What is the question we naturally put to ourselves, when we see those things? True, we may be pleased with the idea of the enormous trade the country is doing. It marks a certain degree of progress. But, when goods come into the country, they have to be paid for, and how is this to be done? The imports are, as a rule, paid for to a certain extent by the exports; but there is a difference of £4,843,000 between them. What pays for these imports?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The money goes in the building of railways and machinery for the mines.

MR. LEAKE: What pays for it? It is the loan money, and that only, which pays for it. This shows we ought to be cautious, and that, if we are not careful, we will "overrun the constable." It is loan money—there is no doubt about that;

and we should feel much more comfortable if our exports were nearer in value to our imports.

**THE PREMIER:** Suggest a plan to carry it out.

**MR. LEAKE:** Encourage private enterprise. Take away half-a-million from the Director of Public Works and give it to the Lands Department. That is how I should encourage it. I will harp upon the same string that the right hon. gentleman is never tired of playing on—that is, the settlement of the land. As he told us, there is no scheme second to it in the country. But how has he proposed to settle the people on the land? Merely by spending! Is it to be done by spending one million in public works, half-a-million of which goes in permanent public buildings? It would be better, if you want to encourage settlement on the land, to deal with your pastoral leases. No doubt we are going to do that. I think the Government intend to reduce the rents. Encourage the farming industry? No doubt that would be a good thing. With regard to the pastoral leases, it is proposed to assist the pastoralists; and I do not suppose that even we on this side of the House will be unreasonable when we come to consider that question. I am not prepared to accept the suggestion that the rents should be permanently reduced; but I think that, if circumstances justify it—and it would seem that they do, to a certain extent—we might possibly suspend the payment of those rents for a limited time; because, if a good season comes, then the rents will not bear heavily upon the pastoralists; but if once the rents are reduced, and that by statute, and if good seasons come, there will be no offer made by the pastoralists to increase the rents, or to pay the old rents. We may be quite sure of that.

**MR. DOHERTY:** You would have to classify the runs.

**MR. LEAKE:** Of course you would. The right hon. gentleman proposes to encourage the farming industry; but the farming industry, as I say again, will not be encouraged by the expenditure of this million of money by the Director of Public Works. Do everything you can, undoubtedly, to attract people to the colony; and those who cannot find employment on our mines will

perhaps find occupation in the settlement and the cultivation of the soil. Let those who come to mine remain to plough. That is what we should like to see. But the hon. the Director of Public Works is not going to attract people of that sort.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** What about Katanning?

**MR. LEAKE:** I am going to show directly how they have really starved the unfortunate Commissioner of Crown Lands to feed the Director of Public Works. If this question of land settlement is of paramount importance, then we ought not to starve the Lands Department. Now it is an open secret—of course we know that anything I say here goes no further—that, when the Estimates were being prepared a short time ago, the pruning knife was applied to each department pretty freely. The hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands was told, among others, that he must reduce expenditure; and of course he understood that the other departments would be reduced. The Ministers retire to the seclusion of their offices; and, with generous consistency, the hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands puts his pencil through his increases. He cuts down this, that, and the other item—of course I do not know exactly which; I can only guess—and then, when they meet in Cabinet again, to the dismay of the Commissioner of Lands he finds that he is the only man reduced, that they have cut him down, as I say, to feed the other departments. And if you take these Estimates, and compare the increase in the Lands Department with the increases in the other departments, you will find how shabbily the Lands Department has been treated. Its increase is only some £16,000 over the estimate of last year, notwithstanding the fact that the hon. the Commissioner has had to take over the administration of the Great Southern Railway line. He has had nearly a million acres thrown upon his hands, and has been told to develop them: "Develop this great industry for the benefit of the country; this great industry to which none other is second." The director of Public Works takes everything; and, so far from having used his pruning-knife freely, he has been increasing salaries all round. Why, it is something cruel—the way in which he has forced his men



up and allowed the Commissioner of Lands to cut his down. Therefore I say we should be doing justice to the colony, and to a good and efficient administrator, if we took one or two hundred thousand pounds away from the Director of Public Works, and gave it to the Commissioner of Crown Lands. And when I say that, I am only following up the argument of the right hon. the Premier, who says that the settlement of the land is of paramount importance; that we must do nothing to prevent it and everything to encourage it. The only Minister who really has covered himself with credit is the Commissioner of Crown Lands. Look at the vitality that he has infused into his department. Look how active people are now in securing land for themselves, and how interesting it is to note the progress of land settlement. And yet the Commissioner is cut down in his service, in his staff, and in his advertisements; in fact, his administration is almost starved at the expense of the great devouring element, the Public Works Department. I do not propose to enter into the consideration of details, unless it is by way of illustrating the position I am taking up; and while on this question of the Lands Department, you will notice one little item—and here I would particularly appeal to the pastoralists and the farmers—of £1,000 for the extermination of rabbits. Now I ask hon. members if that is enough. I wish to ask the hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether he thinks £1,000 would do more than buy powder and shot for a few men engaged in shooting these interesting rodents. It would hardly pay the travelling expenses of a staff of men to the locality where the rabbits are. Yet this is all we are asked to grant to meet this coming scourge! It is monstrous to talk like that; and yet the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House will get up on a public platform and say: "Look what we are doing in the interests of land settlement!" "Yes;" I say, "Look how you are hoodwinking the farmers!" That is my reply to them. I do not propose, in these general remarks, to refer to each department. I think there is food enough for reflection when we come to deal with the Director of Public Works, and I am going to concentrate all my energies on his department during this session. Possibly I

may make a passing reference to the Treasury or the Post Office, where they lose so much money now and again; but the Public Works Department is the department which we want to keep our eyes upon. That is the great spending department. Amongst other items which will be under the control of the Director of Public Works is an item of £30,000 for the Bunbury Harbour Works. In considering this item it is interesting to note that no reference whatever is made to the Collie coal. Hon. members who were in this House when this question of the Bunbury Harbour Works was first mooted will remember that the great argument in its favour was that this would be a harbour for the export of the Collie coal. [MR. A. FORREST: And timber.] The great argument was that it would be a harbour for the export of the Collie coal. Timber was undoubtedly referred to incidentally. Why, the export of coal was mentioned in the Governor's Speech; and the hon. member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) knows perfectly well that if Ministers had come down here and said, "We will build a harbour at Bunbury for the export of timber," they would have been laughed to scorn. But now, after the happening of certain unexpected events, they find that they are bound to rely upon that argument; and why? Because their experts have told them that the Collie coal is not a fuel that can be profitably exported. It may be useful for local consumption; but it is never likely to become an article of export. All the difficulties which were, from the first, in the way of the development of that coalfield have lately been emphasised by the discovery that it is a huge artesian bed. The most substantial thing they have struck lately is water; and so much of it that there is a possibility that they will be unable to get rid of it, and it may materially interfere with the development of the field. The Collie railway was a mistake from the first. It was a railway to an undeveloped field. It led to the extravagant Bunbury harbour scheme; and now we have to perpetuate all these troubles. It would have been far better for the colony to have allowed the timber merchants to haul their timber from Bunbury to Fremantle—the natural port of export—for a merely nominal sum, if not for nothing, for a generation to come,

rather than expend so much on the Collie railway and the Bunbury harbour works. All these works—as in the case of other public works, and particularly buildings—mean an increased charge upon the revenue of the colony. Of course when we do discuss this question of the Bunbury harbour works, we will be told that the country is committed to it; and that, having been committed to it to the extent of £30,000, we cannot now stop until we have spent £100,000, which it is hoped will complete that work. Amongst other matters which are under the control of the hon. the Minister for Railways and Public Works, I want to remind him that, when we are discussing the item, I shall ask for information on the resumption of land for railways and public works; and I hope that hon. members will turn their attention to that item, as possibly some interesting light may be thrown upon the recent arbitrations which have taken place in connection with these land resumptions, where huge sums have been extorted from the Government. Somebody, undoubtedly, must be to blame. We find there is a special officer told off for this particular work; and he is amongst one of the fortunate men who get a substantial increase, so I suppose he has important duties to perform. I cannot allow to pass observations made by the Premier when comparing our financial position with that of other colonies. It is rather ungenerous to attempt to extol ourselves at the expense of our neighbours. It is bad enough when we have accurate figures and reliable data to go upon; but such comparisons become unpardonable when based on fictitious figures, or figures which are not strictly accurate. Comparisons of the kind should only be made in defence. We are told that on the basis of our debt of £7,000,000 we owe £45 per head; that Victoria owes £41 per head, and that South Australia is the greatest debtor with £69 per head. These figures may be technically accurate for the moment. But if to the £7,000,000 which we now owe there be added £5,000,000 which the Government are authorised to borrow, and which they would borrow to-morrow if they could, our liability, instead of £45 per head, is £77 per head. The comparison then is against us instead of in our favour. When the figures of

the Premier come to be criticised by our neighbours, what will the people of South Australia say to his dropping the £5,000,000 out of all consideration? Are we to be hoodwinked by the statement that to-day we are liable only for £45 per head, whereas we may be liable in a short time for £77 per head?

MR. A. FORREST: You cannot charge the money until it is spent.

MR. LEAKE: But the Government would raise the £5,000,000 to-morrow if they could, and small blame to them.

MR. DOHERTY: The population will have increased when the Government raise the £5,000,000.

MR. LEAKE: What warrant has the hon. member for saying that? Does the hon. member know—I believe he was not in the House when I referred to the matter—that the departures have exceeded the arrivals in the colony by about 900 persons during the first three weeks of this month? If an increased population could be relied on—if we could rely on an increase of 3,000 people per month—then perhaps there would be some force in the hon. member's remark. But unhappily the population shows signs of decreasing rather than of increasing, or, if the population be not decreasing, it is increasing only at a very slight rate indeed.

MR. A. FORREST: The people are going away for Christmas and are taking return tickets.

MR. LEAKE: You can make use of that argument directly. I think I have replied sufficiently to it already. The Government are falling into the very errors committed in neighbouring colonies some years ago, namely, over-borrowing and over-building. An excessive public works policy brought Victoria down to a very low ebb. Instead of learning a lesson from the experience of the people of that colony, we here are rushing blindly along the same road which led them to the brink of ruin. I am very sorry to think that, even at the present moment, the thin end of the wedge of log-rolling has got into our Parliament. If we can judge from what has taken place lately, and from what has induced the Ministers to frame these Estimates, it is a case of "If you support us we will give you so much for your district." That is not sound finance.

A MEMBER: It is sound common sense, though.

MR. LEAKE: It is sound common sense, if the first ambition of common sense is to keep in power. We are not doing the most we can, either to attract population or to keep it here when we get it, nor are we encouraging private enterprise, which is of first importance to the community. If we rely upon capital brought in purely and simply through our loan policy, we are doing that which is wrong. The best source of income, the best method of attracting capital, is to encourage private enterprise. I suppose other hon. members will have something to say on many subjects which I have left untouched. I hope whoever speaks will deal with the Works Department. We are threatened with a financial crisis, unless something is done to put a check upon the ambition of the Director of Public Works to spend money. We are forced to this conclusion when we know from the Reappropriation Bill passed the other night that the country is now committed to at least £395,000 over and above the estimated revenue. No allowance has been made for an excess of expenditure over the estimate, an excess which may be put at some hundreds of thousands of pounds. In the face of that, we have only £4,000 to meet contingencies. *Primâ facie*, those brilliant financiers on the Government side of the House have, in a moment of great prosperity, got our finances into hopeless muddle. They have either done that or they are keeping back information which the committee is justly entitled to. It is easy enough to score, when you hold all the trumps in your hand. But that is not skill: it is luck. We want something more than luck brought to bear on the management of the country's finances, particularly at the present time. It is in times of great prosperity that care should be taken to husband resources and anticipate the rainy day which must come sooner or later. I conclude, as I began, by saying I agree with the Premier that the basis of wealth is population. If our population is increasing rapidly, or in due proportion, then we may fairly regard ourselves as likely to be prosperous at the end of the year. But when we have the warning that the population, instead of increasing, is decreasing,

it behoves us to take more care of ourselves, of our money, and of our surroundings. I ask hon. members seriously to consider this question of public expenditure, particularly the expenditure by the Works and Railways Departments. If, when the proper time comes, hon. members are true to their views, they will be with me in taking from the Director of Public Works a very substantial sum and giving it to the Lands and other departments where, no doubt, it is far more required. I have made my observations on the financial position of the colony; and I appeal to hon. members to do whatever they can to reduce reckless and extravagant expenditure by the Government.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay): I rise at this stage of the debate to suggest to the Commissioner of Railways the advisability of reducing the rates for the carriage of goods, more particularly the rates for the carriage of live stock, meat, and perishable goods. This is a matter well worthy the attention of the Government, in view of the desirability of encouraging production by cheaper means of transit. This is not the first time the railway rates have been brought before hon. members, and I should like to make a quotation from a speech delivered on this question in 1894 by the present worthy Chairman of Committees, the hon. member for Beverley. That quotation will be sufficient to show the railway rates in this colony are excessive. Now that the Government have occasion to feel proud of the percentage returned on the capital invested in the railways, the carriage of stock and produce might be made easier, with substantial benefit to producer and consumer alike. The hon. member for Beverley is reported in *Hansard* of 1894 as submitting the following motion:—

That inasmuch as the cost of conveying sheep by rail (as shown by the Schedule of Rates on the table of the House) in this colony is £3 6s. 8d. per truck carrying 60 sheep, in South Australia £3 6s. 8d. per truck carrying 100 sheep, in Queensland £4 4s. per truck carrying 140 sheep for the distance of 100 miles; and that for the distance of 350 miles the charge in this colony is 2s. 10d. per head, in South Australia 1s. 5½d. per head, in Queensland 1s. 4½d. per head, it is apparent that the charges levied in this colony are far in excess of those levied in those other colonies, and that the best interests of the colony will be served by an immediate reduction of the

live stock rates on the Government railways.

It will be readily seen that the rates in Western Australia are somewhat high, and the attention of the Government should be directed to the matter. The hon. member for West Kimberley has suggested to me that this is not an opportune time to move for a reduction of railway rates. I am not moving for a reduction, but merely bringing the matter under the notice of the Government. Then, there is very much complaint in the Eastern districts, and to some extent in my own district, that sufficient care is not given to perishable goods in transit. I see, however, by the report just laid on the table by the Railway Department, that more care is to be taken in this direction in the future. The manner in which some perishable goods have been handled during transit on the railways has caused considerable loss to producers. Reference has been made to the cost of land resumed by the Government. I took part in some of the arbitrations between claimants and the Government as to the prices to be paid for this land, and I must admit the Government were slaughtered to the tune of thousands of pounds. I am glad to see provision is to be made during this session for preventing a repetition of that state of affairs. In regard to salaries in the public service, I am in favour of paying men well, and would suggest that an extension of the hours of working, with proportionate increase of pay in the public service, might be adopted with some benefit. This plan would lessen the present enormous staff and get better value for the public money. The departments of Works and Railways are the two departments the public come mostly in contact with. I know a little bit about the building business, and I am aware that considerable sums might have been saved in connection with public buildings. The two departments of Works and Railways are too much for one man to control. The Commissioner of Railways is recognised as one of the hardest workers in the Government: indeed, his whole family have the reputation of being hard working people. He has not spared himself, but, as I have said, the two departments are too much for one man. If the control of the railways was the sole work of an

administrator, the salary of such an official would be more than ten times saved to the country.

MR. SIMPSON: Offices cannot be found for all of you.

MR. QUINLAN: Thank you; I do not want office at present. Other hon. members will, no doubt, refer generally to questions of revenue and expenditure; but I hope that some of the country members, at least, will confirm my remarks on the question of railway rates, and that the Government will deem it wise to afford some relief in that direction.

MR. A. FORREST: I do not intend to detain the House long, after the speech of the member for Albany, who has been laying bare the whole of this colony's financial position and picking out all its weak points, by representing that its affairs are in an almost insolvent position, that our population is decreasing, and in fact that everything is as bad as it can possibly be. From my knowledge of the hon. member, and knowing that he wishes to see fairly the bright side of the picture and not the dark side only, I was surprised to hear him speaking of this colony as being in the bad position financially which he has to-night represented to the committee. One would think, from what he has said, that this colony is on the downward grade, and that there is no hope of its getting back to a prosperous position except by curtailing the expenditure of public money in the department of the Director of Public Works. If works have been undertaken, I can only say that many of them are absolutely required; and, having been begun, they must be completed by the Government. A great deal of the blame placed on the Director of Public Works is attributed to him unfairly; because members of this House have been, to a large extent, responsible for this expenditure, and no one more so than the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), who has been before the Ministers of various departments, squeezing money out of them right and left for requirements in his district, and then, when the money is put on the Estimates to be spent under the direction of the Works Department, the member for Albany and others complain of it as extravagance. This colony is large, and requires a large expenditure in public works; and

when we find hon. members on both sides of the House appealing to the Government for works required in every part of the colony, and urging particular works in the interests of their own districts, I do not think it is a fair thing to charge the Director of Public Works with being extravagant in carrying out those works which many hon. members, including the member for Albany, have been urging the Government to undertake. That hon. member has made a great point to-night by setting the Lands Department against the Works Department. I am not going to argue the point as to who is right in that matter, but the Lands Department is entirely different from the Works Department; for, in the Lands Department, the estimated expenditure can be ascertained within a few pounds, and the demands of the department are known pretty accurately at the beginning of the financial year. It is not so with the Public Works Department, where the demands are large and continually increasing. The question of salaries is one we can deal with on the individual merits, when the vote is before us for each department; and I do not intend to occupy time in saying whether the chief clerk in the Lands Department, or the chief clerk in the Public Works Department, is entitled to an increase of salary or not. I have always said that members of Parliament are unable, practically, to know whether one officer is worth more than another in a department, because the officer who may come prominently before members of the House and before the public may have chances to make himself popular which other officers, who do not come into contact with them in the same way, cannot have, although those other officers may be doing equally good work. So we are not in a position, as members of this House, to know whether one officer is entitled to an increase of salary more than another. Until we get some scheme of civil service reform, in which the various officers may be drafted from one department to another, on a certain scale of salaries, this question of increases of salary from year to year will always crop up. Some of the members of this House dread the idea, when the salary of an officer who is known to us comes before the House on a question of increase, for we do not like to say the officer shall not have an

increase, because he is known to us. I for one will never take that course, because not only does that officer, when he meets you, consider you are an enemy, but he will even walk on the other side of the street when you are coming along. No member who wishes to associate and stand well with his fellow men will desire to be put in such an unpleasant position. I am sorry to find the Commissioner of Crown Lands has been led into a trap, and has cut off the intended increases in the case of his officers, while other Ministers have not done so. Another question, raised by the member for Albany, was in reference to the item of £1,000 for stopping the invasion of rabbits on the border at Eucla. I have not heard of rabbits coming over the border in any large number, and, if we have a few dry seasons like those lately, the rabbits are not likely to trouble us seriously. If a few useful men can be stationed at the border, they may easily destroy all the rabbits that come over. I do not think many rabbits can live there, if they do come, for it is a dry country, with very little top feed. They will certainly not increase there quickly, and £1,000 is enough to spend on that object for this year. If a few rabbits do come along to the south coast, as suggested, I do not think they will do much damage, and they may, on the other hand, be of some use to people on the goldfields. There are three or four hundred miles of barren country for the rabbits to pass over before reaching our settled districts, and I do not think they will pass that country under ordinary conditions. The question of these Estimates is very important, and if we take the advice of the member for Albany and cut off, say, half a million of money from the amounts set down for expenditure by the Public Works Department, I do not see how that will benefit the colony. If the damaging speech made by the hon. member this evening is read in the newspapers by heads of financial institutions to-morrow morning, I do not think the hon. member will have improved the position of affairs in Western Australia. As a body of men representing the interests of the colony, we should do all we can to impress on the people outside that the colony is moving, that it is prosperous, and that we are not going back. I may inform the hon. member also, on the

authority of the representative of a large shipping company trading with this colony, that the majority of people who are taking passages from here to the Eastern colonies at the present time are taking return tickets, thus showing their intention to return to this colony. We may hope that they will not only return themselves, but most of them will bring their wives and children with them to settle here. I am truly sorry that the hon. member has made the damaging remarks he did, because I have a great respect for him, and I do not like to find that a member who has the same interest in the colony as some of us, having been born here and having all his interests here, is yet trying to make things worse than they are.

MR. LEAKE: I want to protect my interest.

MR. A. FORREST: But the hon. member proposes to do that by taking away a large sum of money from one great spending department of the Government, and he objects to the money being spent on works, many of which have already received the support and sanction of numerous deputations who have waited on Ministers during the recess. The fact is that a large number of the amounts placed on the Estimates for this year are put there through deputations, supported, as they have been, by various members of this House, in urging particular works to be undertaken in their districts. The Government are only carrying out the wishes of members of Parliament. With reference to increases of salary, when the votes come forward for the several departments, I shall speak on the question whether those officers who have been badly treated should be put into a better position.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): The Financial Statement we are debating is perhaps the most unique of those placed before this Parliament by the Premier, inasmuch as this is the first time the colony has known the pinch of adversity. In saying that, I am aware that the little reverse that the colony has gone through of late is magnified a great deal too much in certain quarters, that a great deal is made of it; although it is just that something should be said as to the fact that the population is not increasing as rapidly

now as it was about 12 or 18 months ago. Everybody is agreed that finance and population go hand in hand. I think that the basis taken by financiers in London is that of *per capita*, but I want to point out—and especially I am going to make reference to the Public Works Department—that the one great industry to-day which gives promise of increasing by leaps and bounds in the near future is the gold industry. It is a remarkable fact that, although we are turning out more gold in Western Australia than any other Australian colony, we have not half as many people directly engaged in that industry as compared with any of the other colonies. It is true that we have to-day beaten Victoria in our gold returns, and that we are distancing Queensland. It is equally true that there are less people by one half engaged here in the gold mining industry, directly or indirectly, than is the case in the other colonies. That goes to show we are producing double as much wealth per head as any other Australian colony in regard to the gold-mining industry. I believe the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) will confirm what I say as far as Victoria is concerned, that there are more than three times the people engaged in the gold-mining industry of Victoria as compared with those engaged in that industry in this colony. That is to say, for the 70,000 odd ounces per month we are producing in Western Australia, we employ only one-third the number of people who are dependent, directly or indirectly, on that industry, as compared with Victoria. There must be some reason for this great difference, and it will be plain to anyone who thinks over the matter that the difference consists in the fact that we have not yet got the women and children belonging to the workers on our goldfields. I will submit one or two plain home truths, which ought to remove any doubt that in the future our population is going to increase. Take the case of the colony I know best, that is Queensland, and referring particularly to Charters Towers as a goldfield which may be compared with Kalgoorlie, I may point out that Charters Towers has not anything like the number of mines which Kalgoorlie has, and that its ores are not equal in richness by 50 per cent.; yet,

with the exception of Kalgoorlie and the Boulder, Charters Towers has up to date turned out considerably more gold per ton than any other goldfield in Australia. Charters Towers is to-day the most flourishing town in Queensland, and supports in comfortable circumstances, I might almost say in a flourishing condition, between 20,000 and 30,000 people, going as high as 27,000 people absolutely depending on the gold industry, directly or indirectly. The people on that goldfield are amongst the most prosperous in Queensland, and yet Charters Towers turns out less gold than Kalgoorlie and the Boulder to-day. Charters Towers has, of course, settled down as a town, and has its women and children as part of the settled population depending on the gold-mining industry; and I say the same is going to happen in our mining centres in Western Australia; that the women and children will come to Kalgoorlie and the Boulder, because the men are making a living there; and it must have been interesting to those members of this House who recently accompanied me through that district, to observe the change that is coming over the place by the increase in the number of women and children on the fields, giving evidence of a settled population. Our schools in that centre are filling rapidly. Two months ago an order was sent to the Education Department that at the Boulder school no more children could be received for want of room. It is not to be believed that men who are working on those fields, having wives and children living in other colonies, will consent to be long separated from them, but that they will do all they can to bring their families over here, and thus increase our settled population. Men are going to live on those fields permanently, and there the women and children will settle with them. We shall soon see each of these goldfield towns double and treble its population, and each worker on the fields will, on the average, be responsible for the support of two more people in this colony. Our working miners do not want to go on sending money away for the maintenance of their wives and children elsewhere, but are most desirous of bringing them over here to settle where the men are settled. When we get the residence areas question put on a satisfactory basis, as I

hope it soon will be, and seeing that this Parliament is going to give us a plentiful supply of fresh water, you will soon see the population on the goldfields treble in number. I say this on the assumption that we do not find one more good mine; and yet it is not to be supposed that this will be so. Those who know the mining centre around Kalgoorlie will know that there are comparatively few mines open yet, and that they are being worked only to a shallow depth. We have not yet sunk to the 300 feet level, and all our work has been done in shallow depths. Referring again to Charters Towers, in Queensland, I may say they are digging up stone from a depth of more than 1,000 feet; and, referring to deep mining in Victoria, we know that at Bendigo they are digging up stone at 2,000 and even 3,000 feet depth. The Gympie goldfield, in Queensland, has been supporting a population of 8,000 to 10,000 people in comfortable circumstances; and only the other day we had a report of a new line of reef being found at Gympie, at over 1,000 feet deep; a discovery which has given practically a new lease of life to that field. What, therefore, have we to fear in reference to the gold-mining industry in this colony? Our reefs are going down strong and rich and well defined, as far as we can follow them. Why should we suppose they will not go down to a great depth in Western Australia, the same as payable reefs are found at great depths in other colonies? Ballarat is still mining profitably at a depth of thousands of feet. Bendigo, Charters Towers, and Gympie have mines working at great depths, some of the stone being as rich as ever. Supposing, therefore, that every married man now engaged in the mines of this colony will bring over his wife and children to Western Australia, we shall have a family of six or seven in place of counting only one head as we do now. Will not that mean a great and beneficial change to this colony? I say it will, and I reiterate what I said over four years ago in this House, that we must be careful to give every possible encouragement to those miners to bring their wives and families here. I can assure the committee that our miners are not desirous of keeping two homes, but are mostly anxious to bring their

belongings to the place where they have settled ; but they do want the opportunity of getting residence areas on which they can form a comfortable home without great cost to themselves. I believe the Government are going to introduce a liberal measure for giving residence areas to people on the goldfields, and may I be dubbed a false prophet if, in twelve months after residence areas have been granted, there are not ten times as many women and children on those goldfields as there are to-day. In view of this fact, we would clearly be wrong to think for one moment that this colony has shot its bolt. In view of the fact that we are only scratching, so to speak, at the upper levels of our mines, and that we have all these illustrations in the other colonies before us, it would be foolish to imagine that the population of the colony is going to stand still. It cannot stand still. And now, to leave the gold mining industry for a moment, are we not told by the head of the Government and the leader of the Opposition that a great impetus has lately been given to the settlement of the lands of the colony—that there is four times the amount of settlement going on now to what there has been before? Will not these settlers on the soil bring with them their wives and families? The great majority of them are new-comers also, like those who are taking up claims on the goldfields. Our population is bound to increase. And may we not hope, as the years roll by, to see some manufacturing industries spring up in Western Australia? Is it conceivable that the reaches of this lovely river between Perth and Fremantle will be left idle? This colony is suitable for many manufacturing industries; and large numbers of artisans could find employment in making the implements and machinery that will be necessary for the people on our goldfields. I fail to see how any one can imagine that this, the youngest of the Australian colonies—richer in its resources than any of the others, and affording more scope for the energy of its people—can have shot her bolt, or that population will cease to come to her shores. I know, as surely as I am standing here, that our gold-mining industry is only in its infancy; that for every man employed here now there must be five employed within the next two or three years, and even in the

great mines that are only being opened up—and my friend, the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) knows that better than I do—you cannot employ a great number of men, for they are only down to the 200ft. level. When a mine is new, and you are merely driving or sinking, you cannot employ such a body of men as might be profitably engaged when you have got various levels opened up. Still, there are mines in some cases employing between 400 and 500 hands above the 200ft. level stoping out ore, and they have made no impression on it yet. The amount of stone taken out of the Lake View and Boulder mines is absolutely inappreciable. Day after day they go on sinking at these mines; new machinery is being introduced, and if they get that greatest blessing of all, a good water supply, the magnitude of their operations will be altogether incalculable. As has been said by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), Coolgardie itself, although it has been under a slight cloud for a time, could employ every miner working on the whole of the goldfields to-day. If the field and the town of Coolgardie have got a set-back, yet we see their energy being renewed. We see the people still working on, and we see that there is not only a probability, but in many cases an absolute certainty, that mines which have been hitherto regarded as non-paying will be placed upon a paying basis, and that the good old mother district bids fair to have a bright future ahead of it. I believe that the reefs there are richer than those of Gympie, and richer, as a rule, than those of Charters Towers; and there is no reason to believe that those beautiful quartz reefs, extending from the Londonderry as far north as you like to go, which have turned out so many specimens of rich gold-bearing stone, are not going to become good and payable mines. There are those who apparently like to gloat over the fact that the town of Coolgardie, which has displayed such wonderful energy in the past, and which has set such a noble example to this country, has got a set-back of late. Coolgardie has established a world's record for building up a city under difficulties; and the pioneers who did it, so far from meriting one word which would lead the outside world to suppose that their energy has been fruitlessly expended, are deserving of every encourage-



ment. I am speaking as the representative of the greatest goldfield in Western Australia, I am speaking of what I know. I have seen the first mine opened up, and almost every mine that has started since. I go to these goldfields week after week. Never a fortnight passes by in which I do not visit them, and every time that I do go I see that they are finding gold on new levels. Whether I go to Coolgardie or to the Boulder, I find a new mine added to those already in existence. In that centre alone there is but a handful of mines at work; and yet the dividends for the past year amount, I believe, to nearly £350,000, representing an absolute profit in the face of all the difficulties which that young field has still to contend with; in face of the fact that they have had to pay for machinery and heavy initiatory expenses of opening up big mines, that they have had to pay dearly for water, and have had to pay through the nose, as it were, for everything. In the face of all those difficulties here, we have this wonderful little patch of country turning out a profit of £350,000. I say, long may she reign! Our fields must at least reign as long as the fields of the other colonies; and, if that be so, they can go ten times deeper than the present levels before their mines are worked out. Perhaps I have been dwelling too long on this question, but I am very anxious to point out that in this country, in the goldfields alone, there is room for double the population that we have in the whole of Western Australia to-day. When we consider the richness of the gold-bearing belt which extends from the Norseman to Kimberley, and the number of mines opened up—you might almost say by one or two men—which could now employ one or two hundred, the great possibilities and probabilities of the future must become apparent to our minds. I will simply conclude by saying that ever since I have been a member for these goldfields I have always been in Perth at Christmas time, and it has always happened that large numbers of our people left the colony at that period of the year, simply because, as I have said before, their wives and families are in the other colonies, but a great many who have now gone away will bring back their wives and families with them. [A MEM-

BER: Two or three wives, perhaps.] The class of men we have up there are as well able to support two or three wives as some hon. members are to support one. Unfortunately, the law will not allow it: that is the only drawback. This is only a temporary exodus from the colony. They are simply going away for Christmas time; and, when the New Year comes, they will return again, many bringing back their wives and children. That will mean for each of them an addition of seven or eight pounds per annum to the revenue of the colony; and if the goldfields population doubles, we will have 20,000 more people there, which means an increase of £160,000 in the revenue of the colony from Customs alone. I think a little too much money has been spent on small and unimportant parts of the colony. I want it to be clearly understood that I am no grumbler, and that I am not in the habit of finding fault with the Government, but they seem to me to be erring principally from want of knowledge. There is no greater scandal than the pigeon boxes that have done duty in Kalgoorlie for three years as post offices. The Government have certainly not done justice to that town. They have not been backward, on the whole, as to the wants of the goldfields, but while they have looked after the Murchison and the Magnet fairly well, and have been liberal to towns on the goldfields of far less pretensions than Kalgoorlie, they have neglected Kalgoorlie itself. The Minister of Mines said on one occasion at Geraldton that if you wanted to get anything from the Government you must join the Opposition. It would seem as if my district has been overlooked because I have supported the Government. The absence of post office accommodation at Kalgoorlie reflects little credit on the Government. I have seen 400 men lying out in half moons awaiting their turn to approach the pigeon holes which do duty for a post-office, in order to get the letters from their wives and families in the other colonies.

THE PREMIER: The Government are going to alter that.

MR. MORAN: There is no reason why Kalgoorlie should not have had a good post office, and the Government would hardly feel complimented if they were to hear the remarks that are freely banded

about in Kalgoorlie about the way in which the Postal Department is conducted. The goldfields are not getting back a fair proportion of the money which they contribute to the revenue. There are far smaller and less important places having as much expended on them as the Boulder, which has 3,000 people actually residing in it, and there is only £400 down on the Estimates to be spent on it. These Estimates were prepared with a great want of knowledge, in my opinion. There is huge bungling where so little is put down for a place like the Boulder, which is a town of great importance, where we are hoping to settle our people, and where we are going to open up residence areas to induce the miners to send for their wives and families, and where the revenue of the Postal Department is ten times greater than that of towns on which ten times the amount of revenue is being spent. That is not right. The Government are encouraging business outside of the goldfields by building post offices and schools and other institutions where population may be expected to grow; but on the goldfields themselves, whence the revenue comes, very little is done. The goldfield I represent has turned out half the gold that the colony has produced. Its population is increasing by leaps and bounds. It paid in dividends—that greatest of tests—last year nearly £350,000, and its future is of the brightest; yet the post office is not big enough for any little agricultural place. People are surging round the post office in hundreds, and waiting for hours before they can get their letters from home; and yet we wonder why their wives and families don't come over here. In Kellerberrin, where the population may be numbered by tens, provision is made for a Mechanics' Institute to cost £250. I do not ask for ornamental buildings. There are already enough monuments of our incapacity throughout the colony without having any more. I hope the buildings throughout the goldfields will be as plain as stone or brick and mortar can make them; but I do ask that they shall be substantial, roomy, well-ventilated, and suitable for the purposes for which they may be built. The present system of lavishing money on unimportant places and stinting the towns whence most of the revenue comes, is

wrong in principle, wrong in finance, and antagonistic to the great cause which the Premier has so much at heart, of inducing population to settle in the colony. I understand the Commissioner of Crown Lands, in conjunction with the Minister of Mines, is going to introduce a thoroughly satisfactory system of residence areas on the goldfields. I am going to ask the Government to spare a few thousand pounds from the revenue and apply it to the construction of public buildings on a part of the goldfields where the money will be productive if only proper facilities are given. Compare the money earned at Perth, and even at Fremantle, with the money spent upon public buildings on the goldfields, and the result would be astounding. I think there is a disposition on the part of the Government to put matters right. The fault is not one of will. No one imagines that the Government wish to keep people away from the fields. They don't know the condition of things up there, but they are learning. Life on the goldfields is strange to them. They belong to a different order of things, and cannot imagine the huge strides that population is going to make there. We have a small passenger line between Kalgoorlie and the Boulder, which pays ten times the revenue in proportion to its size of any other line in the colony, and which is full of passengers every trip. I have drawn the attention of the Commissioner of Railways to this, but the Commissioner is simply an instrument of this House and can only carry out the wishes of Parliament. I am rather inclined to encourage the Minister of the department on this occasion. Any Minister who applies the same energy and attention that he does to his department must do a great deal of good to the country, in the long run. I do not intend to go into the general question of finance and loans. I am content to accept the assurance of the Government that the credit of Western Australia is good. It must not be forgotten that while the other colonies have built their houses, we have yet our house to build; and we must have a large revenue and a large expenditure. As the public works get completed, the expenditure will get less while our revenue will grow. The people on the goldfields are content to pay their fair share towards

the revenue, and support the Government in building up the country. Although a representative of the goldfields, it is my duty and my instruction to help agriculture in every way I can. All that the mining population ask in return is a "fair deal," and proper facilities for conducting their business. The Cabinet have not done exact justice to the goldfields in the Estimates, and I hope omissions will be remedied in the near future.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I am sure I shall not be expected to say much in support of the claims of the goldfields. There is an old saying that "good wine needs no bush;" but it is apparent the member for East Coolgardie is not quite of that opinion. I agree with that hon. member in his estimate of the auriferous resources of the goldfields; but I think these resources have already been sufficiently well advertised. I wish to refer to what has been said of me by the hon. member for West Kimberley. That hon. member paid me the compliment of saying I was one of the most active members of the House in the direction of asking favours of departments and concessions from the Treasury. I heartily and willingly plead guilty to the indictment; but I say I never yet formulated a request which had not come to me from influential and reliable sources in my electorate. So many requests have come to me that it is apparent there was a time when sufficient attention was not paid to the wants of that part of the country. With all the applications I have made—with which the hon. member for West Kimberley sees fit to reproach me—it is remarkable that on the Estimates £9,200 is the total expenditure provided for my district. I represent a population of 8,000 people, who contribute £25 per head per annum to the Government of the country, and it will be seen that after all they get back only about 5 per cent. of the money they pay towards the revenue of Western Australia. It is new to find a member reproach another member with having done his duty to his constituents.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member for West Kimberley did not mean that.

MR. VOSPER: I may have misunderstood the hon. member for West Kimber-

ley. I confess he is not always clear, and one is liable to misapprehend him. My object in rising is not to call attention particularly to grievances on the goldfields, but rather to grievances in the civil service. We see from the Estimates that a large number of increments are proposed in various branches of the service. It is a remarkable fact that the great proportion of the increases are given to superior officers. In almost every case, subordinate officers are totally neglected. In some cases the wages of the latter are reduced, and in other cases the wages, if not reduced, are at a lower rate than would be paid to the employees of any private tradesman or commercial firm in the colony. During the last month or two, I have asked the Government a series of questions bearing on the wages paid, and the treatment accorded to civil servants generally, and I have received a series of answers more or less of an unsatisfactory character. For example, a little while ago I raised the question of the annual leave granted to members of the Post and Telegraph service, and was told by the Minister of Education that no more difficulty was placed in the way of this annual leave than was felt to be necessary. That answer did not appear to me to entirely meet the case at the time. But it is impossible to raise an argument on the answer to a question asked of the head of a department in this House, and I had to wait until the present opportunity arose for placing the grievances of those public servants more fully before hon. members. When alterations are made in the salaries of Government employees, it is a time when, above all others, all their wants should be taken into consideration. This committee has a right to know exactly how the public service is being conducted. When public servants are suffering from what they consider to be grievances, the state of the service will not be so efficient as it otherwise would; but when they are happy and contented, the work of the branches in which they are engaged will be well conducted. When discontented, men become discouraged, and do their work in a perfunctory manner, from which the whole service suffers. My attention was drawn to this matter some time ago by a letter dated 27th October, in the present year, and addressed to me

by the whole of the post and telegraph staff in a very large goldfields town. I am not going to say what town, nor shall I read the signatures to any letters I may quote. Indeed, I shall take the precaution of removing those signatures, or of furnishing only copies to persons who may want to read the letters. At the same time, if I get the personal assurance or the word of honour of any member of the Government that the names will not be divulged, or that the writers will suffer no injury, I will submit to that member the letters for perusal exactly as they stand. Men have been "sacked" from various branches of the service for simply complaining of injury. I have received not only the signed documents now before me, but also a large number of anonymous communications dealing with grievances in the public service. From the paper on which these anonymous communications are written, and the knowledge of the working of the departments displayed by the writers, it is evident my correspondents are officers in the service. If a man, otherwise honest, withholds his signature, it is pretty clear proof he fears he may suffer if he make a public complaint. The first letter, of the date I have mentioned, reads as follows:—

You would confer a favour on the post and telegraph staff of the goldfields if you would take an early opportunity of drawing the attention of the House to the question of annual leave. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to remind you that annual leave is granted in the departments of other colonies, and the Coolgardie operators' strike in 1895 was settled when the promise of this boon was granted by the Postmaster General. He has, however, failed to keep his promise, and now positively refuses leave; and if a man falls ill, necessitating a trip, he replies that "So and-so is evidently unfit for our goldfields service." Our Kalgoorlie representative, although making abundant promises, has hitherto done nothing. We, therefore, appeal to you, knowing your readiness at all times to help to redress a wrong. Yours, to a man, Post and Telegraph Staff.

I may say, in passing, that at the time of the strike in the Coolgardie Post Office, a promise was made by the Postmaster General that none of the men who took part in the disturbance should be dismissed, or suffer for their action; yet some six of the men were dismissed within six months of the conclusion of the dispute. At the present time, in the Coolgardie Post Office, there is not a

single official who took part in the strike. Every man who was employed there at the time, and took part in the protest against the grievances under which the officials suffered, has been either dismissed or despatched to some remote part of the colony, where it is presumed he is out of mischief. An association was formed amongst the post office officials for the purpose of securing a remedy for their grievances. That association was foolish enough, or straightforward enough, to publish a list of its officers. The immediate result was that the men who had taken office were scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the association fell to pieces through inability to call the members together. Men are not allowed to defend themselves in the Postal Department. When men are thus treated, they are perfectly justified in applying to a member of Parliament; and I conceive it to be the duty of a member to bring such grievances before the attention of his colleagues as soon as possible. In regard to the answer given by the Minister of Education to me, in reply to a question a few days ago, I have a letter, in which the author says:—

The answers to your questions as reported in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* were found by us to be so unsatisfactory that it requires only one or two facts to show the feeble efforts they exercised to make things "possible."

I think the Minister said that leave was granted as far as possible, and what I have just read is evidently a reference to that statement. The letter goes on:—

First of all, you will probably recollect my telling you of Postmaster Knight's case, who was refused a holiday after four years' service. A man named Knight, it appears, was refused leave of absence for a few weeks after having served four years continuously in the public service of the colony. The letter continues:—

A brother operator at ——— this morning on the wire told me to relate to you a case of cruelty perpetrated by the Postmaster General upon a man named ——— in that office. The case is this:—after two or more years' service applied for a much-needed holiday, stating that his health was failing and he required a change for a fortnight or three weeks—a modest request indeed—and went so far, in order to assure a favourable reply, as to offer to pay the salary of his substitute. This was his reply:—The Postmaster General stated that he could not grant the request, as too much was being made already of sickness; and it was his opinion that the excuse of ill-health was only

a plea to deceive him in order to gain the desired end, and he intended to put a stop to such requests. Is there anything more plain and convincing required to show that the answer to your question *re* holidays was nothing less than dishonest and unstraightforward and a digression from the truth?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: You will give us the name of the writer.

MR. VOSPER: No; I shall not. If I did, his time in the service would be very short indeed.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: The letter cannot be of much value, without the name.

MR. VOSPER: I have already said that if I receive from any Minister his word of honour that the writer shall not suffer damage, and that the contents of the letter will not be communicated to any other officer in the service, that Minister may see the whole of the communication. I cannot make a fairer offer than that. The fear of consequences is the reason why the Minister does not hear of these complaints until they are brought under his notice in the House. The Minister has under him an irresponsible official who has the power to dismiss a man if he complains, and unless complaints are made through the channel of Parliament they are not heard of at all. My correspondent goes on to say:—

In the face of these two facts I am afraid our chances at the present of obtaining annual leave are very poor indeed, unless the man happens to be a West Australian native, or a pet of the Postmaster General. What we require is that a law be passed that all officers of the department are entitled to annual leave. Until this be done we shall be refused, because it will never be found possible.

The Minister will see what a high opinion is held of Mr. Sholl and the department generally. The letter goes on to say:—

What the Minister for Education meant by his answer *re* classification, when he said that "classification had already been done, as the present Estimates would show"—the Estimates show a few increments, two or three, where men had been suffering from the receipt of lower salaries than others who had been in the service less time, and were only wrongs rectified.

I congratulate the hon. gentleman on the fact that some wrongs have been rectified, and I hope the work in that direction will be continued until all wrongs have been righted. The writer continues:—

An annual increment to all officers to a certain maximum is what is needed. A man

should receive more salary the longer he serves and proves to be an efficient officer, otherwise we shall never be better off, of course.

On the question of medical attendance, my correspondent says:—

Medical attendance is provided in towns where there is a Government hospital. In Kanowna and all through your district the hospitals are only part Government hospitals. In Kalgoorlie the men have medical attendance, as the doctor at the Government hospital is paid solely by the Government and is termed a Government doctor. Unless something in the way of reformation in the department takes place very shortly, and these grievances brought thoroughly before the Government, and the heads of the department see that their men require a rest and change from their work, as all private citizens do, and until they introduce an inducement, by increments, to the men to remain and take an increased interest in the service, there will be a great falling off in the efficiency and number of hands required to meet the increasing amount of work to be done by them on these fields.

I most sincerely agree with the last paragraph. The efficiency of the service depends on the treatment the men receive: the better the treatment of the men, the greater the efficiency.

A MEMBER: What is the date of the letter?

MR. VOSPER: November 23. On November 19 I received, in reply to inquiry made by me, this letter setting forth what the men require:—

According to promise I furnish, herewith, particulars of the systems in vogue in the other colonies for the working of the staffs of their respective post and telegraph offices, and which you said you would be pleased to receive from me. I also quote the English system. England—Annual leave, three weeks, exclusive of public holidays, which, when worked, time and a quarter is paid for hours on duty or a day in lieu of each occasion. Postmasters receive a calendar month per annum. Increments—An appointment clerk receives, on appointment, £52 per annum, and an increment of £5 4s. per annum in the second class. In the 1st class he receives £130 on appointment with an annual increment of £10 to £182; thence, in superior appointments by various amounts his position is improved according to ability. Classification—In the clerical branch, there are two classes, 2nd and 1st. On appointment a man receives £52 per annum, and as vacancies occur in the first class the senior, or in some cases where the senior is incapable and unworthy, the next worthy senior fills the vacancy, and receives the minimum, £130 per annum. Medical attendance—Free in all cases, and the salary goes on as though the unfortunate man were on duty.

[MR. DOHERTY called attention to the state of the House. After an interval, quorum formed.]

MR. VOSPER: I regret very much that hon. members are not inclined to listen to a matter of this sort, but I know the cry of the oppressed is not a pleasant thing to listen to even by sympathetic ears, and to those who are unsympathetic, which I understand most hon. members are, it must be tiresome. But I am determined that the grievances of the civil servants shall be heard, if I have to stand here all night, and if attention is called to the state of the House every five minutes. If I have to talk to empty benches, I will say what I have to say. What I want to do, if I cannot convince the House or make hon. members hear me, is to get a statement placed on the records of the House. I will leave it there as a record of disgrace to the Government, if I cannot do more. My correspondent goes on to say in reference to Victoria—and I may say, for the information of hon. members who have just come into the House, that the complaint is that no annual leave is granted to the employees of the post and telegraph office, and I am endeavouring to show that in other places leave is granted as a matter of course, and is not at the will of the Minister or the head of the department:—

Annual leave—Clerical staff is allowed three weeks, non-clerical staff two weeks, but after five years' service receives three weeks. Classification and annual increment. There are five classes, each carrying minimum and maximum salaries. The clerical staff receives an increment of £20, the non-clerical £10. The maximum of the clerical staff is £200. Queensland and New South Wales. Much the same systems exist as in Victoria. The annual leave in these two colonies is two weeks. In the case of New South Wales it is allowed to accumulate for two years. South Australia. Much the same as in other colonies. The difference is of no moment. As I stated to you personally that we in Western Australia have no system at all, but things are happening merely by accident according to the pleasure of one man, who is allowed to cater for our requirements without having one set rule to guide him, and is empowered to discharge men from the service for ever, and has done so, when a man who was forced to seek his favour for a holiday and was refused. There are numbers of men who have come into the service as mere green youths—new to the work of the department, and all other depart-

ments, receiving higher salaries than skilled operators; and there are operators who have had much less experience and service in this department in Western Australia receiving higher wages than those who have been in the department a much longer period and possessing the same amount of skill. This is on account of the lack of classification and system. There is no inducement to the men in the service to remain loyal to it. There is no increment for a man to work for, nor annual leave to look forward to; no pension to fall back upon if he remains sufficiently long in the service to require assistance when he can work no longer; and no anything to attach his interests in the service at all. At present a man has just about enough interest in the department to work for the wages paid him until he can see a way out of this great uncertainty and eternal worry for the future.

THE PREMIER: There is a pension.

MR. VOSPER: For those men on the temporary and provisional list? A great many of these men are on the temporary list.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: They do not stop there for ever.

MR. VOSPER: Everything depends on the will of the Postmaster General. If you would say that after a man has been in the service for some time he shall pass from class to class, and receive an increment, he would have some encouragement to go on working. But at the present time a man has to depend on the will of a despot, and that despot is the Postmaster General. I will not read the rest of the letter, as it refers to details.

THE PREMIER: He is a great writer.

MR. VOSPER: Yes, this man's literary ability could be turned to better account in a newspaper office than in the Government service. It is just as well that I should quote what is done in connection with classification in the case of New Zealand. I will refer to another letter written from Coolgardie. It is dated November 19th, and the writer says:—

The New Zealand staff is composed of men who have, as lads, begun at the bottom rung of the ladder and have worked on through the various stages of the classification list, whereas in Western Australia senior men, junior men, good men, and otherwise have been appointed, at least I should say engaged, at one and the same standard. Thus in New Zealand seniority

must have a greater claim for promotion than in a service of this description. Their conduct being approved, officers step up the classified ladder with little or no fear of their lack of ability holding them down. Here merit will have to be the main spring of a successful classification. Of course seniority must not be disregarded, you know, for we could hardly be classified were length of service not taken into consideration. At least, if such were the conditions of the Bill, there would be a very radical change of the heads of departments upon its adoption. One important fact which you appear to have forgotten is the present grievous wrong in regard to the manner of our appointment. At present the Postmaster General holds the right to dismiss any of us at a moment's notice and to deny us an appeal or inquiry. The time when the words "provisionally and temporarily" were necessary adjuncts to an appointment has passed, and until we are legally "appointed" as civil servants we have but a poor chance of bettering our position. Could this not be remedied? A term of probation may be deemed necessary, but is not six months, or say 12 months, sufficient time for the heads of our departments to decide whether our services are desirable or otherwise? And, once approved, why should the officers of our department not be on the same footing as those in other colonies?

In reference to the question of appeals, the New Zealand Appeal Board consists of the secretary of the department, a similar office to that held by the Postmaster General here, the superintendent of Government Insurance, the Minister for Telegraphs, and two officers of the department who are elected annually by the staff. If something of the kind was done here it would put an end to a great many troubles. That concludes all I have to say in reference to the grievances of post and telegraph officials. There are many more grievances in the department that I might mention, but they are of a small kind. I have said sufficient to show that wide discontent exists. The letters I have read come from two or three places in my electorate, and suggestions have been made to me from post and telegraph men in the southern part of the colony. A reign of terror exists in the department, and there is a fear that the miserable pittance that men are receiving under the Postmaster General may be withdrawn at any time, and that they will be turned out into the world to starve. The Minister of Education, by endeavouring to remedy the grievances which exist in the Post and Telegraph Department, would do a great deal to make his

term of office a very valuable one. I come to another department perhaps a little nearer home, one that affects Perth and Perth only, but it is a very serious matter. It was brought under my notice as far back as August 26th last, and then by a body independent of the institution attacked. A letter was sent to me by Mr. A. T. Lindsay, secretary of the Western Australian Typographical Society, requesting me to ask certain questions as to the wages paid in the Government Printing Office. The question I was asked to put to the Premier was: "Will the Government, when its Printing Office estimates are being prepared, establish the minimum of £2 15s. for compositors employed in the office?" I did not ask that question, but I asked certain others with a view of eliciting facts. The facts elicited by me are sufficient for my purpose. I was not aware, at the time I asked the question, that the employees of the Government Printing Office in this city had already sent a petition to the Executive. To that petition I understand they have received no reply, beyond a mere acknowledgment of its receipt; and it has never seen the light of day from that time to this. It has never been published in the press. I can quite understand, of course, that the Executive Council is not bound to publish its correspondence.

**THE PREMIER:** We sent it back to the Government Printer, and I never heard of it again. I told them they should address it to the Governor through the head of their department.

**MR. VOSPER:** How does the right hon. gentleman account for the fact that the petition has not been heard of since?

**THE PREMIER:** Simply because they never approached the head of their department.

**MR. VOSPER:** That was because they were afraid of the consequences.

**THE PREMIER:** They have no right to address the Executive Council, except through the head of their department.

**MR. VOSPER:** I can quite understand that the Premier is right in insisting on the observance of the rules of the civil service; but it is a peculiar and ominous thing that a petition like that should be sent back to the head of the department and never heard of again. The grievances still exist. They have as much reason to

petition to-day as they had last week. Why did they not send it in through the head of their department? Simply because they believed the consequences would be fatal to themselves. What I am saying has reference not so much to the permanent hands as to the casual staff. These men say in their petition :—

We, the employees of the Government Printing Office, respectfully lay our petition before you for an increase in the rate of wages. We take this unusual method of approaching you in consequence of our being unable to obtain fair consideration of our requests from the head of the department, the Government Printer.

There is the reason for not sending their petition through the Government Printer.

THE PREMIER: The Government Printer is bound to send it on.

MR. VOSPER: It may be so; but he can please himself as to whom he employs. The petition goes on to say :—

The Government Printer, in an interview with us in June last, gave us his positive assurance that he fully appreciated the justice of our plea for an increase in wages, and promised that he would do his best to better our condition. In spite of this, however, no general rise has been recommended, and we therefore respectfully beg your consideration of our claims. We would urge upon your notice the appended Schedule A of the ruling rates of pay in the Government Printing Offices in the other Australian colonies, and would point out that the Western Australian Government, in this the time of their prosperity, is paying less than the other Governments whose financial circumstances are far less sound. The difference in the cost of living, rent of houses, &c., will be sufficiently known to you to need any amplification from us, other than shown in the schedule. The great majority of the employees, a large portion of whom are married men, have been struggling under these difficulties for years past, and we are now asking for nothing but what is just and reasonable, not only for ourselves, but in the interests of trade in general. Governments in other parts of the world, and especially in the Australian colonies, have always led the way in the matter of wages in the times of their prosperity, and even now, as you will see, still set that example. We would especially beg your attention to Schedule B, showing the number of men employed in the Government Printing Office, and the rates of pay received by them. It will be seen that the average wage paid in the Government Printing Office is far less even than that paid by private printing firms in Perth. In conclusion, we respectfully pray that you will so order and revise the Estimates for the Government Printing Office, that the wages paid may enable your employees to raise the general

status of comfort and well being under which they at present have to live.

This is signed by the great majority of the employees in the office. This is the first schedule referred to :—

Colony.	Wages paid in Government Printing Offices.		House Rent.	Necessaries of Life.	Remarks.
	Casual Labour.	Permanent Labour.	per cent.	per cent.	Percentage taken on lowest wage paid.
New South Wales	£ s. d. 2 16 0	£ s. d. 3 1 4	12½	45	do.
Victoria	2 17 6	3 0 0	10	45	do.
Queensland	3 0 0	3 10 0	10	45	do.
South Australia	2 15 6	and over. 2 15 6	12½	45	do.
Western Australia	2 11 0 and 2 14 0	3 10 0 2 11 0 3 5 0	40	55	do.

So, according to that, by the time a man has paid for his house rent and the necessities of life, and has served the country faithfully in the printing office for twelve months, he will find himself in the Insolvency Court.

THE PREMIER: They prefer the Government Printing Office to private establishments.

MR. VOSPER: I have some acquaintance with the printing trade, and, at various times since I came to Western Australia, I have had men under my supervision who have been employed in the Government Printing Office; and I have known dozens of men who have left the service in disgust. I have been hearing about this thing for years past, but have been utterly helpless until I came into this House. The best place in this colony for printers is on the gold-fields. If a man could get work at his



trade on the goldfields, he would much rather be there than in the Government Printing Office. The second schedule to which these men refer is as follows:—

Approximate Return showing the number of men employed in the Government Printing Office of Western Australia (exclusive of foremen and apprentices) and the rates of wages received by same.

*Rate per Day.*

	7s. 10 7s. 6d.	8s. 6d.	9s.	9s. 6d.	10s. and over.
Compositors ... ..	...	50	24	4	5
Machinists ... ..	2	3	8	2	1
Bookbinders and Warehousemen	...	10	6	...	1
	2	63	38	6	7

57 per cent. receive £2 11s. or under per week. 33·33 per cent. receive £2 14s. per week. 90·35 per cent. receive £2 14s. per week and under.

These people, who have sent me this copy of the petition, have formulated a series of complaints in writing with regard to the way in which the business of the Government Printing Office is carried on generally, and I contend that there is matter here for a considerable amount of debate, to say the least of it. First of all, they complain of a lack of system; of matters very small in detail being personally attended to by the Government Printer, involving great waste of time and serious loss to the public service. I suppose he governs the country much in the same way as the Sultan of Turkey governs his empire. Everything that is done—from a massacre of Armenians to the opening of a new hotel—has to be ordered by him. The head of the printing office has to attend to everything, from the appointment of officers down to the buying of a new can of disinfectant.

A MEMBER: That shows he is a good man.

MR. VOSPER: A good man! What sort of a business man would people consider the hon. member, if he undertook every kind of work in his office? [A MEMBER: There must be one head.] Yes; but the one head need not be the feet also. The complainants say:—

Recently the compositors were waiting for copy for some while. On the foreman going to the Government Printer to procure copy, of which there was a quantity lying in his office, he was told, in the Government Printer's usual brusque manner of dealing with his sub-

ordinate officers, that pressure of business prevented his request from then being attended to. On returning, half-an-hour later, he was told that the Government Printer was still busy, and found that the important business on which the Government Printer was engaged was that of measuring out towelling, recently ordered for the use of the employees! If anyone tried to run a daily newspaper on the same lines, the only course they could pursue would be to turn the thing into an almanac, for it could only come out once a year. Anybody who has seen the inside of a printing office must know that this sort of thing is a rank absurdity, and a gross waste of public money. The letter goes on:—

This is but one of the many instances of the trivial details to which the Government Printer thinks it necessary to devote his time. In consequence, many hours are often wasted by the men when waiting for copy; more especially so when Parliament is not sitting. Perhaps that will account for some of the difficulties that occur in getting our Bills printed, and for the trouble we have had over *Hansard*. We can understand it readily enough when we come to see the compositors there twirling their thumbs, while the Government Printer is measuring out towellings. The letter continues:—

No authority is given to the subordinate officers, and an employee when requiring leave of absence for an hour, or a quarter-of-an-hour, has therefore to apply for such leave to the Government Printer himself. In almost every instance, however trivial or less important, type, after composition and printing, is kept standing, whether likely to be required or not, a very small percentage being distributed; the subordinate officers having no power to order distribution of this matter.

When you have a stock of type, it is important that the type should be kept in use.

This involves a constant supply of fresh material, also a great waste of time on the part of the compositors in looking for sorts. Tons of type are kept standing in this way, much of which will never be required again.

THE PREMIER: What about linotypes?

MR. VOSPER: It is well known that, even in those offices where they have the linotype, they still retain the hand compositor for the more important work; and I will defy you, or any Government Printer, to set up a parliamentary Bill by means of a linotype. If the country is going to have linotypes in the Government Printing Office, a still greater loss must be the result.

**THE PREMIER:** I think we pay the printers when they are sick, and that is more than private offices do.

**MR. VOSPER:** Well, I am only speaking of the casuals; not of the permanent hands. Then they go on to complain of favouritism.

Favouritism is more marked in the Government Printing Office than in any other department of the public service. Even the oldest employees are loud in their protestations against the unequal treatment meted out to them and to all. The Government Printer has frequently stated that the men are treated *pro rata* simply according to seniority and long service, as stated in the answer given to you by the Premier in Parliament. This is not the case, as several men whose term does not exceed 3½ years already rank in pay with senior employees of 15 years' service. In Government Printing Offices in the other Australian colonies, employees are properly graded and paid in accordance with their ability, which goes for nothing in the W.A. office.

**INCOMPETENT OFFICERS.**—Owing to the fact that the Government Printer requires all minor details of the working of the office, both in the past and now, to be submitted to him, the various subordinate officers have been rendered virtually incompetent to manage the different departments under their charge. It is more by force of circumstances that the department has struggled on so far as it has done, rather than by any ability in the management.

**TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUALS.**—Sickness is not allowed in the Government Printing Office among the "extra labour" men, who constitute 90 per cent. of the employees in the office. Frequently when men have been forced to be absent through illness, the Government Printer has held out the threat that their position will be filled if they did not speedily return, even when the absentee has offered to supply a substitute, a method which is occasionally allowed. Leave of absence (without pay) is daily refused with no reasonable grounds to employees desirous of attending the funeral of a relative, bringing relatives from the other Australian colonies, and many other reasons for absence which would be promptly recognised by private employers of labour.

**SANITARY.**—No regard is paid to the health of the employees. The office is rarely cleaned and swept, and is in a dirty, disgraceful condition. On such occasions, when the place is swept or cleaned, it is invariably done while the men are at work, causing considerable annoyance. For a staff of over 120 men, only 3 (three) closets are provided, and these are in a filthy and dirty condition.

No wonder that the Perth Council cannot cope with the insanitary condition of the city, when a Government department is kept in this condition.

**PRINTING VOTE.**—We would respectfully draw your attention to the Printing Estimates for the current year. You will find over £25,000 placed on the Estimates by the Government Printer. Yet in spite of this large sum, the Government Printing Office only turns out about one half of the printing required for the Public Service. To emphasise this fact, we would point out that there is an estimate for £11,000 for printing on the Railway Estimates alone. The only work for the Railway Department done in the Government Printing Office is the printing of all tickets, and an occasional time table and book of regulations. We believe these items are not calculated for in the amount above-mentioned. Very little of the printing required by the Educational Department is performed by the Government Printing Office. We also call your attention to the fact that no accounts or report on the working and expenditure of the Government Printing Office is submitted to the Houses of Parliament. This point was raised by Mr. George, M.L.A., during a discussion on the Printing Estimates for the financial year 1894-5. See *Hansard*, 1894-5.

The following tabulated information is also appended:—

*Rates of Wages paid in Government Printing Offices in Australasia.*

Rate per Week.

Casual Labour.	Permanent Staff.
New South Wales £2 16s.	£3 and £3 5s.
Victoria £2 17s. 6d.	£3 and £3 5s.
South Australia £2 15s.	£3.
Queensland £3.	£3 and over.
Western Australia £2 11s. and £2 14s.	£2 14s., £2 3s. 6d.

Cost of living and rent in Western Australia 25 per cent. higher than in the other colonies.

Ability goes for nothing in the Government Printing Office in Western Australia. Men are paid according to length of service only, save in a few favoured cases. In the other colonies the men are graded and paid according to ability, but none receive less than minimum shown above.

Minimum rate of wage in private printing firms in Perth and Fremantle, £2 15s. per week.

Approximate return of number of men employed in Government Printing Office in Western Australia.

Number of men employed exclusive of foremen and apprentices and clerical staff, 125.

	Per week.
53 per cent. receive only	£2 11s.
33 " "	£2 14s.
7 " "	£2 17s. 6d.

The remaining few receive different sums varying from £3 to £3 5s. per week.

I know that a very large amount of printing is done outside the Government office, because it is supposed the Government cannot cope with it; yet tons of type are kept idle, and there is a large

amount of machinery unused. A case came to my knowledge in which two outside printing offices tendered for certain work which the Government Printer wanted to put out. One of these offices charged 50 per cent. more than was a fair price for printing, while the other charged 25 per cent. less than should have been paid owing to a blunder made by the printers themselves. The tenders of both offices were accepted, which shows how much the Government Printer knows about printing. In the face of this there is a sum of £4,000 on the Estimates for new machinery. Before that money is voted there should be a thorough and complete investigation into the affairs of this office. The question the Government have to ask is: Is the money spent on the Government Printing Office being wasted? Before any more money is voted towards the Government Printing Office, that question should be answered one way or the other. I hold in my hand the programme of a smoke social given on July 8, 1897, by the Lands and Surveys and Titles Departments, and not bearing any imprint is a breach of the law. I am informed, I don't know whether it is true or false, that this programme was surreptitiously set up in the Government Printing Office, probably when the Government Printer was measuring out towelling or something of that sort. I am not blaming the Government Printer for this, but it certainly shows a lack of supervision somewhere. I have received a letter from an employee in that office informing me that recently

Over 25 hands have been taken on at 8s. 6d. per day, 21 of whom are compositors. The reason for this extra employment to an outsider would be, increase of work, but I assure you, sir, we are no busier now than we have always been, besides which fact the machine-room has received no additions of machinery since the above took place, which, in itself, is significant inasmuch as the old staff could fully keep all the machines running. The place is in a deplorable state, and if an inquiry were held, an appalling amount of waste would be disclosed. Not that the place is overmanned, for, were the Government Printer to do his duty, and perform all Government work, more hands would be employed than there are there at present; but, I am afraid, the place would be so blocked by mismanagement that in a short time all work would stop and confusion would reign. The men have assumed great unconcern during the past years in the management of the place, and the slovenly way

everything was done had little or no effect upon them. Their best efforts were not put forward, and the work done was in keeping with the management, useless and indifferent. Why? Because the wages that have been paid by the Government were of the poorest, less even than the ordinary labourer employed in road-making. All increase appeals to the Premier were in vain; the Government Printer being the autocrat from whose judgment there could be no demur. During the last six months, however, things are becoming really unbearable, and the waste and extravagance shown by the management is growing larger and larger. Tons of type continue to come in, fresh machines to lie about and rust, while we already have enough type of all kinds to sink the largest ship afloat. The position of the men, too, is really bad. If one wishes to take a day off, he cannot do so, and if he does so he is promptly discharged. Men who have been here two and three years, and have made their home in the colony, wishing to see their people in the other colonies on six weeks' leave of absence without pay, are told if they go, it is their dismissal. A head of the department getting £285 per annum has been away drunk, etc., for a week (of course being paid for it), while a decent, sober, married workman getting the miserable pittance of 8s. 6d. per day, cannot go off for the afternoon to meet his wife and children (coming from the East) at Fremantle. Such is the state of affairs here, and the only way we see of altering the matter is by a Parliamentary inquiry.

These complaints are about the most distasteful things one can bring before the Government, but I was determined the matter should be placed on the pages of *Hansard*, so that if the Government will not make any investigation, there will at any rate be an enduring monument on the records of the House, which can be quoted at any future time. A point that strikes me as very unfair is that while there has been a very large increment in the salaries of superior officers, the wages of contingency men are being reduced. In one case already referred to, the men have had their wages reduced one shilling a day. In the face of the enormous revenue which the Premier tells us he has received, and in face of the fact that we can afford to give large increases of salary to the higher officers, why should these men have their wages reduced by the paltry sum of one shilling a day? What was the reason for it?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): It is a question of regulations.

MR. VOSPER: Then why were the regulations broken in the first instance?

Wages for this kind of labour, which is really skilled labour, should be the last to be reduced. Yet, at the moment increases of pay are being made in every other department, this reduction was made. It is a disgrace and a shame.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: There are only three of those men.

MR. VOSPER: It does not matter if only one man was affected. If 500 or 600 men were affected there would probably be a strike, and the whole country would hear of the injustice. The Minister may think he can do an injustice to three men with impunity, but I shall not let such a thing pass without protesting as forcibly as I know how. Why is it that the Government Printer may, if he sees fit, pay less than current rates for casual labour, and this in a confidential office, where more is expected of the men, and where, if anything, the pay ought to be higher than that which rules under ordinary circumstances? Why are these casual hands paid less than the rates of the Typographical Association? For the simple reason that the Trades Union organisation cannot be brought to bear on the Government Printing Office as it can on a private establishment. If the Government pay the men less than they are worth, it is a deplorable example of administrative meanness, considering the helplessness of those concerned. If the men are worth anything they are worth the full rate of pay. If they are not worth the full rate of pay, they ought not to be employed in the Government Printing Office. The correspondence I have submitted to the committee shows that tyranny, oppression, and parsimony are the three guiding principles of the civil service of Western Australia. I challenge anyone to successfully deny the statements made in that correspondence. The evidence I have submitted is only a very small proportion of the vast amount which could be elicited in support of the charges. The complaints are not merely written. I have documents from men who are prepared, if they are protected and not subject to dismissal, to come forward at a proper inquiry and give evidence in support of the allegations contained in the communications which the committee have heard read. It is the duty of the Government to inquire into the matter,

and bring about a state of things which will place the employees of the Government on, at least, the same level as those of any private tradesman. In every other country the Government, as employers, set the example in the matter of wages. Otherwise, how can there be maintained the standard rate of wages, on which depends the spending power of the people and the trade of the storekeeper—on which depends the standard of living and the standard of civilisation itself? In this colony the Government set an example which greedy employers are only too glad to follow. The action of the Government demoralises private employers and damages the labour market. I may be told that the Government are obliged, on behalf of the taxpayers, to make the best bargain they can with their employees. I do not believe a majority of taxpayers could be found in all Australia who would consent to Government servants being underpaid. The inefficiency of the civil service is mainly due to the fact that good men escape from it as soon as they can, and only the worst class of men remain permanently in the public employment. I do not apologise for occupying the attention of the committee so long. The time has not been wasted. I have dealt with grievances and evils which ought to have been exposed years ago. I do not know why those evils have not been exposed before now. My contribution to the debate to-night shows, I think, that the disabilities of the service would have been made public before now had the men had a medium of communication within this Chamber.

MR. SIMPSON: You will have to go over the same ground next year. Yours is a hopeless task.

MR. VOSPER: Never mind; I am prepared for that. The letters I have read were placed in my hands, no doubt, because the writers know of my connection with labour interests in other parts of the world. That, I suppose, is the only reason I have been made the means of communication with the Government and the outside public. I want to show that I am not unworthy of the confidence placed in me. It is necessary that such evils should be thoroughly ventilated. The charges made in the correspondence are so wide, so far-reaching, and so serious as to demand

an exhaustive inquiry on the part of the Government. If the Government want to efficiently and properly govern the country, the civil service must be managed to the best advantage. Government employees assert that the departments are ill-managed, that the wages are lower than those paid by private employers, that even proper sanitary conveniences are not provided, and that favouritism is rampant. It is asserted that the Postmaster General and the Government Printer at least are placed in positions of absolute despotism, and that there is really no system of classification. Whether those assertions be true or false, it is the duty of the Government to institute inquiries and let this Chamber know the result. The Government are asking for money, to carry on the country—to support those departments and expand their operations. How can the Government come down with a clear conscience and ask for money when they know how money has been squandered in those departments in the past? If expenditure has been reduced, the economy has been at the expense of the employees. I may have spoken somewhat warmly; but I trust I have furnished food for thought, and that the committee will not allow what I have said to pass over in absolute silence. The statements I have made are very serious, and in any other country—in Victoria, for instance—a committee of inquiry would be appointed straight away. Not long ago, when similar charges were made in Victoria, an inquiry was held which lasted a long time and brought some very ugly facts to light. I need only remind hon. members of the inquiry into the post office scandals and the Marine Board administration in that colony. In those cases similar charges to those I have referred to to-night were made on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, and the inquiries held proved highly beneficial. In one case it was proved the men were suffering serious grievances, which were, in consequence, remedied. In the other case it was shown there were really no grievances at all. But in both cases investigation restored public confidence in the management of the departments. It was demonstrated, in the one instance, that grievances had only to be ventilated to be remedied, and, on the other hand, the general feeling of security

was strengthened by the exoneration of public officials. The charges I have made to-night are still being whispered amongst the public outside. It is true the charges may not find their way into the Press, because perhaps the Press does not care to publish allegations too antagonistic to the present Government.

THE PREMIER: What are the charges, after all?

MR. VOSPER: If the Government have no inquiry into the charges made, it will just suit the Opposition. The votes which these men are likely to give for the Opposition, swelled by those of "their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts," will hasten the time when the Forrest Ministry will be a thing of the past. I am doing the Government a service in bringing these matters up.

THE PREMIER: Do not do that.

MR. VOSPER: The Government may take my action in a hostile spirit.

THE PREMIER: Not at all.

MR. VOSPER: If the Government take my action in a friendly spirit, I shall ask them in making the inquiry, not to trust too much to officials. If the Government want to know the facts, they must find out the facts for themselves. Civil servants get into certain grooves, and nothing is so devastating in any department as that red-tape worm which eats into the very vitals of good government. That creature is rampant in this country. I ask the Government to go to those who can tell them the facts, untrammelled by custom, prejudice, or habit. I have no desire to deal in detail with the various Government departments. I shall wait until the departments are particularly before the committee. I have pointed out grievances in the hope the Government may find a remedy. In that hope I leave the matter in the hands of the committee.

MR. OLDHAM moved that progress be reported.

Put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

MR. LEAKE suggested that the House at its rising should adjourn till the following Tuesday. To meet on Monday would give to hon. members no opportunity to examine the large number of Bills which had been introduced.

THE PREMIER said there were no Bills on the Notice Paper of such importance as to demand very deep study.

The House adjourned at 10-58 p.m. until the following Monday.

## Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 29th November, 1897.

Papers Presented—Jury Act Amendment Bill: Report of Select Committee—Public Notaries Bill: Report of Select Committee—Circuit Courts Bill: Report of Select Committee—Motion: Leave of Absence—Message: Temporary Supply: Suspension of Standing Orders: in Committee of Supply; in Committee of Ways and Means; Supply Bill passed all stages—High School Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Imported Labour Registry Bill: second reading; Division—Workmen's Lien Bill: second reading—Bills of Sale Bill: second reading (moved)—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 7-30 o'clock p.m.

### PRAYERS.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER:—(1.) First Annual Report of the Inspector of Explosives; (2.) Meteorological Report for the year 1894.

Ordered to lie on the table.

### JURY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

#### REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report of select committee brought up by MR. BURT, and read.

Ordered to be printed.

MR. BURT moved that the report be adopted.

Put and passed.

### PUBLIC NOTARIES BILL.

#### REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report of select committee brought up by MR. BURT, and read.

Ordered to be printed.

MR. BURT moved that the report be adopted.

Put and passed.

### CIRCUIT COURTS BILL.

#### REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report of select committee brought up by MR. BURT, and read.

Ordered to be printed.

MR. BURT moved that the report be adopted.

Put and passed.

### MOTION—LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, leave of absence for one fortnight was granted to the member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor), on account of urgent private business.

### MESSAGE—TEMPORARY SUPPLY.

A Message from the Governor received and read, requesting provision to be made (temporarily) for the public service.

#### STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), according to notice, moved that the Standing Orders be suspended so as to permit of a Supply Bill being passed through all stages in one day.

Put and passed.

THE PREMIER further moved that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply. The Government, he said, required temporary supply in order to carry on the business of the country, until the annual Estimates now before the House had been passed. There was no reason whatever why hon. members should not give the supply asked for, because they now had before them the Estimates, in which could be seen the provision proposed for the public service. For the service of this year the Government had already had to ask twice for supply—once during the short session in April last, when supply was given for two months, and again during the last short session. Now, he regretted to say, the Government had to ask hon. members for further supply, in order to provide for the public service.

Put and passed.

#### IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

THE PREMIER moved "That there be granted to Her Majesty, on account of