

the double fares for a day's outing for their families. Doubtless because of the increased fares the Como trams are paying to an extent which they would not otherwise do. Consideration, however, should be had for the convenience of the public. Mothers and children are so anxious to get an outing that even the unpleasant weed that is cast upon the river shores at Como does not prevent them from travelling to that suburb. At the sea beaches there is no offensive smell, but the cost of getting there is even greater. Something should be done to reduce the fares if possible. I fail to see why it is not possible in the best interests of the community to do this. The railways as well as the tramways belong to the people, who should be the first consideration. I would point out that the small body of men who have raised these fares are men who travel free in both trains and trams. Possibly that helps them to forget that there are other people who are not in the same position as they are.

Mr. Clydesdale: It ought to be given a six months' trial.

Mrs. COWAN: One wonders what has become of the railway porters. I would draw the attention of the Minister to the published letter of January 4th on this question. The absence of porters has caused great inconvenience to the travelling public. I was greatly surprised to hear the Minister say he did not approve of the recommendation of the Royal Commissioner that three commissioners should be appointed to control our railway system. I understood the Minister to say that the three commissioner system had proved a failure in the Eastern States. I have not read anywhere that it has been a failure. Even if one pays a little more by way of salary for two or three commissioners instead of one, it is far more satisfactory to do that if savings of thousands of pounds can be effected in other directions.

Mr. Lambert: We might get a lady commissioner.

Mrs. COWAN: In some respects we would be all the better for that, I think; or at any rate no worse.

Mr. Lambert: You can say that with safety.

Mrs. COWAN: In my opinion it is time for this State to apply the three commissioners system. Let us put in a man with practical experience to look after the traffic side of the system, and a man with financial experience to look after charges, and a man with statistical knowledge and training to look after that side of the Railway Department, and then there would be no great injustice done to anyone. It would then be a case of the cobbler sticking to his last, and that has always been a good plan both in business and manufactures. I fail to see why it should not yield equally good results in railway management. As one State which has tried the three commissioners system with success is now proposing the appointment of a fourth commissioner, perhaps the matter is worthy of more consideration than our

Minister appears to think. I would suggest to the Government that they do give the matter very serious and grave consideration, as a probable solution of some of our railway difficulties. There can be no question that in connection with our railways many things are unsatisfactory in various directions.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.15 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 10th January, 1923.

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

ACT—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

An Error.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.34]: Before we proceed with the business on the Notice Paper I desire, with the permission of the House, to read a statement which has been furnished me by the Solicitor General with regard to the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill—

Land and Income Tax Bill. 1, This Bill was read a third time and passed in the Legislative Council at 11.54 p.m. on the 21st December. 2, On the 22nd December, I received the Premier's instructions to see that the Bill and the Assessment Act Bill were presented to the Governor for assent at once. 3, I, therefore, attended at Parliament House and with the help of the Clerk Assistant settled the Assessment Bill as amended, and obtained a copy of the last print on vellum. 4, I was not advised or aware of the insertion of the word "net" in the Tax Bill at the request of the Council. 5, The Clerk of Parliaments certified on the vellum that it was a true copy of the

Bill as passed, without observing the omission of the word "net." 6, The Bill was assented to by His Excellency the Governor on Saturday the 23rd December. 7, The intention of the Governor being to assent to the Bill as passed by Parliament, His Excellency can, in my opinion, be advised to correct the vellum as an error in printing. (Sgd.) W. F. Sayer, Solicitor General. 10th January, 1923.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think it is necessary to move any motion in connection with this. It is only a notice.

Hon. J. Duffell: I think it as well to let the Solicitor General know that it is the desire of the House that the matter should be attended to forthwith.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It has been done.

QUESTION—WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, Has Item 74, Loan Estimates—Working Capital (£86,000)—been already spent? If so, how; if not, how is it proposed to be expended? 2, How much has been paid to Mr. Allen since the date of the report of the Select Committee, and for what services? 3, Who are the present selling brokers, and what is their scale of remuneration? 4, Have the advances to pastoralists on account of cattle during 1921 been repaid and have any further advances been made? 5, What was the rate of wage paid to slaughtermen during the past season and how many hours per day did they work? 6, How much is still due to the Treasurer in respect to moneys drawn by the works from the Treasurer's Advance Account, and is interest charged on these advances?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, The amount was spent in operating expenses, but has since been recovered from realisation of products. 2, £3,614 17s. 6d. (a) For services in connection with arrangement of fire insurance schedule, £63 12s. 6d.; (b) fee for estimate of depreciation, £11 5s.; (c) 3 per cent. on £118,000, on cancellation of agreement re construction of additional cold storage at Wyndham, £3,540. 3, Sheed, Thomson, & Co., Ltd., of London. Brokerage rates, 2 per cent. on frozen beef, hides and tallow, 2½ per cent. on frozen sundries and horns, and 3 per cent. on beef extract. Brown & Dureau, Ltd., local agents, 1¼ per cent. on all sales. 4, (a) Advances and interest amounting to £32,319 19s. 1d. have been repaid, leaving £14,089 19s. 2d. outstanding. (b) Further advances amounting to £616 6s. 8d. have been made. 5, The slaughtering and dressing is done by a contract gang at the rate of 3s. 0.765d. per head. 6, The overdraft at the Treasury at 31/12/22 amounted to £206,718 0s. 1d. Interest is charged.

QUESTION—ESTATE PURCHASED.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is it a fact that the Gov-

ernment have purchased the Buckland Estate near Northam? 2, If so, for what purpose has the purchase been effected?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, Closer settlement.

RETURN—WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.36]: I move—

That in connection with last season's operations at the Wyndham Meat Works, a return be laid on the Table showing—

- (a) The cost per bullock.
- (b) The cost of administration, slaughtering, and freezing charges.
- (c) The cost of transport and selling.
- (d) The cost of interest per head.
- (e) The cost of depreciation per head.
- (f) The amount realised per head.
- (g) The amount of charges per head.
- (h) The stocks on hand in Europe and at Wyndham.

I understand from the Minister that there will be no objection to this motion, and therefore I formally move it. It is really part of the question which I asked.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Agricultural Lands Purchase Amendment.

2, Busselton-Margaret River Railway Deviation.

Passed.

BILL—NORTHAMPTON RESERVES.

Second reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.41] in moving the second reading said: This is a very brief measure, and its purpose is to vest in the Northampton hospital committee a certain reserve. The Northampton old school buildings were erected on reserve 504, and a new school has been erected, so that reserve 504 is no longer required for the purposes of the Education Department. It was decided that that reserve should be handed over to the district hospital committee, thus saving the Government a monetary grant. The committee agreed to take this block instead of a monetary grant, and to establish a hospital. It is now found that the building is unsuitable. Accordingly it has been decided to grant the committee a title in fee simple to the property to enable them to sell, the selling price to be earmarked for the erection of a new hospital. Already the hospital committee have acquired £440, which is considered a very good price for the property; and it is desirable that the matter should be finalised in order that the work of establishing a hospital may be proceeded with.

Hon. J. Duffell: What amount do the committee anticipate realising?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: As I have said, £440. It is only a small block and not very centrally situated. It was given up as a school site, both because of its size and its situation. It is equally unsuitable for a hospital. A suitable site for hospital purposes has been obtained and all this Bill proposes to do is to vest this block, reserve 504, in the hospital committee and to use the money for the erection of a hospital on the ground secured by the committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—JARNADUP-DENMARK RAILWAY.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

New Clause:

Hon. G. W. MILES: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 9: "The construction of the whole or any section of the railway shall be carried out by contract."

All this Government work should be constructed by contract. Day labour work has cost the country considerably more than would have been the case had it been carried out by contract.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: While I am entirely in accord with the arguments in favour of contract work, I hope the Committee will not agree to the clause. It would be a most dangerous provision. I have already explained the reason why recent railway construction, when it was impossible to secure delivery of rails, could not be carried out by contract and had to be carried out by day labour. I have also given an assurance that tenders will be invited for every section of the railway. But to bind the Government to contract work would be to put a powerful instrument in the hands of any contractors who might lay their heads together. It is questionable whether we shall be able to get tenders for each of these sections, but if a satisfactory tender be received it will be accepted.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I support the new clause. It is all very well to say the Works Department compete against outside contractors. If the department put in a cheaper price than that of the contractor, the department received the contract, but do not carry it

out according to specifications. Thus we never know what a railway costs. The Wangan Hills line was built by day labour at enormous cost. The Commissioner of Railways has had to refuse to take over some of our railways constructed by the Public Works Department. Even if the contractors should put their heads together, the position will not be worse than when the Public Works Department put up an unsatisfactory job.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I support the new clause. For a long time past we have not known the cost of any new railway. Tenders are called, but I understand that is more or less of a hoax, and that the department always put in a tender at some figure within which they do not even intend to keep. Railway construction by day labour is always carried out in haphazard fashion. Works have been started and stopped, and started again, and generally a system of humbug goes on. The Esperance line has been under construction for a number of years. I believe there has been an enormous sum of money spent there, probably sufficient to have constructed the greater portion of that line, yet there is very little indeed to show for that expenditure. The State would get a very much better deal if a contract were let for the building of each railway. Frequently railway construction carried out by the Public Works Department has had to be gone all over again by the Working Railways. Many of us have come to the conclusion that the Public Works Department cannot carry out such work successfully. It would be better for the State if all work were carried out by contract.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: While I am entirely in sympathy with the new clause, I do not think it is fair to the Bill that we should accept such a provision. I hope the Committee will do nothing which may endanger the Bill in another place. If the new clause be agreed to the result may be disastrous to the Bill. I would be prepared to support the hon. member in a substantive motion, but why try the experiment on the Bill?

Hon. G. W. Miles: We shall have it in all future Bills.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Well, first let this Bill go. I should like to see everything carried out by contract but, as the Minister has pointed out, there is very grave danger in the clause. Insistence upon the contract system for the building of the line may result in greatly enhanced cost. I remember that because of their malpractices as contractors the largest firm of contractors ever in Australia were debarred in a certain State from tendering at all. If we have supervisors who can be bought, there is nothing more dangerous than the contract system. With the wretched wages frequently paid to inspectors in the Government service, we may be opening the way to fraud. If we would have good contract work we should

select as inspectors men of integrity, and pay them good wages. I hope the new clause will not be agreed to. Let us wait until the great railway to the North is being built. We can then insist upon the contract system being introduced. I ask the Committee not to insist upon it in the case of the Jarnadup-Denmark railway.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The Minister for Education says that certain contractors may get together and that as a result, the State may be called upon to foot the bill at a higher figure than would be the case under the day labour system. I am in favour of the contract system. The additions to a certain hall in Beaufort-street for a particular section of the community are being made by contract, because it was realised that the work could be done more cheaply.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Commonwealth Bank would not advance the money unless it was done in that way.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Trades Hall was built by contract.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: That is the building to which I am referring. To suggest that the contractors would get together and put up the price for this railway seems to me absurd. A sum of £5,000 only has been provided on the Loan Estimates for this railway, and one must conclude that it is not contemplated to commence the construction for a considerable time. We do not know what Government will be in office when the time comes to begin the work. The Committee would, therefore, be wise to pass the new clause.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Willmott may be referred to as "Mr. Facing-both-ways," in "Pilgrim's Progress." He is in favour of the contract system but does not want an embargo placed upon the day labour system in respect of this line. The new clause is analogous to the proposition to sell the State trading concerns. For seven years the slogan of the Government has been, "No State trading concerns and public works to be done by contract." Members now realise that unless a spur is applied to the tardy steed no change will ever be effected. If the Esperance line had been built by contract it would have been completed long ago without any battledore and shuttlecock business. Now we know not when it will be completed. I understand the the Public Works Department always submit a price for any railway construction, but the department is not in the same category as a private tenderer. If its tender is unsuccessful and the amount of the tender is exceeded it has only to draw upon the Government for more money, or hand the incomplete railway over to the working railways. No departmental estimate has been put up during the last 10 years that has not been subsequently exceeded by a considerable amount. It does not appear that this line

will be constructed for some time. When a commencement is made it will only be made in a piecemeal fashion. One must conclude, therefore, that the intention is to construct the line departmentally. No contractor would be likely to take on a work of this description on such a small mileage each year. I do not yet know whether to allow the Government to stew in their own juice in this matter, or to support the proposal to do away with departmental construction.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I support the new clause, for I believe it to be a right principle for the Government to adopt. Through the Government carrying out works departmentally we have driven contractors out of the State. I am of the opinion that this, being a fairly big job, should be built in sections, and if we can bring people to the State rapidly and quickly enough we can keep pace with their advent by constructing the railway. Moreover, I am hoping to see 300 miles of railway built in the wheat belt inside of the next three years.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Has 300 miles of railway been authorised?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: No, but I am hoping to see that mileage authorised.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: You do not include in that the Dwarda-Narrogin line?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: No. In connection with that line the Government estimate, on the day labour system, was £4,000 a mile. The Government began operations there and carried them on for a few weeks before Parliament met, and in those few weeks, under the day labour system, they spent £850 merely in chopping down 108 acres. The cost approximately came to £8 an acre and it was for work which farmers do for themselves for 10s. an acre.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is an illustration for you!

Hon. J. A. GREIG: If the farmers had had to do this job, being a long and narrow strip, perhaps it would have cost a little more than what it costs them to clear land in a square, but I am certain it would not have cost more than double the amount I stated, namely 10s. an acre. Moreover, if the work were being done by contract it would be done decently and the timber would be burnt down instead of being chopped down.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: A contractor would probably sublet the work.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I am in favour of subletting. We let contracts to build railways and the contractor will let out the work in petty contracts. For instance, men will get so much a yard. A man with a wheelbarrow can make 17s. 6d. and 18s. a day under a petty contract, and even though he is earning this much it is cheaper for the Government. The cost of constructing the Jarnadup-Denmark line in my opinion should not be more than £2,000 a mile. The Government estimate is £4,000 a mile.

The Minister for Education: Are you taking the cost of rails into account?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Yes.

Hon. E. ROSE: Only a few weeks ago we carried a resolution and sent it to another place giving the Government power to dispose of all our State trading concerns without consulting Parliament. It would now be inconsistent on our part to agree to the Government going in for further works on the day labour principle. I regret having to vote against my colleague, but I am certainly opposed to the day labour system. We have only to notice the manner in which our roads and railways are being constructed, and the time that is taken and the work that is put into them. I am altogether opposed to the State carrying out this work by day labour. We must sooner or later go back to the old system of calling for tenders. Works of this description can always be done better by contract than by day labour.

Hon. G. W. Miles: On this work we shall probably save £100,000 if we carry it out by contract.

Hon. E. ROSE: I intend to vote for the new clause. I am in favour of the construction of this railway because I consider it is necessary that it should be built, and it should be built as quickly and as cheaply as possible. My objection to day labour is the cost and the time that is involved.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I support the new clause. If hon. members want an instance of estimates prepared by departments, let me remind them of the evidence taken by the select committee on the Wyndham Meat Works last session. We saw from the files that requests were put up for certain sums of money, and within a few weeks the estimates were exceeded and the department wanted four or five times as much. In one instance a requisition was made to the Minister for £10,000 and in four or five weeks' time another requisition was put in to the same Minister, who was asked to add a nought to the £10,000, as it had been discovered that the department had already spent £60,000, or £50,000 in excess of the amount originally asked for. Hon. members will see some very sharp minutes from the Minister on the files dealing with this matter. Look at the work being carried out at Herdsman's Lake and see how the estimates of cost have been exceeded there. Against the arguments which I and others have used, it may be said that contractors will put their heads together and make the Government pay. But there is always a safeguard against that. The department has its plans and when tenders are found to be a great deal in excess of the estimate, or that the number may be limited, the matter is still in the hands of the Government, who need not accept the lowest or any tender. Mr. Miles' new clause does not go quite as far as it should. The Government may say to this House, "We will carry out this work by contract but we will

be the contractors." I suggest to the hon. member that he should add to the new clause something to this effect, "after public tenders have been invited." This will ensure that public tenders will be invited, and Parliament will be able to get possession of the tenders.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The new clause will be an indication to the Government that not only this work, but other works as well, must in the future be carried out by contract, as was done in the past. The argument used by the Minister that the contractors would put their heads together is hardly worth considering. Before the advent of the Labour Government in 1911 tenders were always invited, and officers of the Government were there to check those tenders, and the lowest or any tender was not always accepted. I have no objection to the suggested addition to the clause. If the hon. member will move it, I will accept it.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

That the proposed new clause be amended by the addition of the words "after tenders have been called."

Amendment on the new clause put and passed.

New clause, as amended, put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	3
Majority for				10

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. Bonn	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. F. E. S. Willmott	(Teller.)

New clause as amended thus passed.

Schedule:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I had an amendment to Clause 2, but unfortunately was not in my seat at the time, and I thought I might accomplish my object by amending the schedule. I understand that if Clause 2 is amended, the schedule will be consequentially amended.

The CHAIRMAN: That is so.

Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes, Bill re-committed to further consider Clause 2.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I move an amendment—

That the words "to Denmark" be struck out and the following inserted:—"in a south-easterly direction to a point on the Gardiner River about 30 miles from Pemberton."

I understand that a line of 16½ miles has been built from Jarnadup to Pemberton. Though it is called a tramway, it is really a railway. I think it was called a tramway in order to evade Parliamentary authority for building a railway. The Minister told us that it was proposed to build this new line in sections, and as each section of 10 miles was built, it was proposed to clear and settle the land before another section was started. Thirty miles from Pemberton would represent three sections. If there was any prospect of building this through railway within the next five years, I would not attempt to amend the Bill, but everyone knows there is no possible hope of building it within that period. The way to deal with this country is not to spend a lot of money on railways, but to build 10 or 20 miles of line and do something with the timber. Then the land would be sweetened for cultivation. Yesterday I directed attention to the fact that out of four millions on the Loan Estimates this year, only £5,000 was allocated for this railway. That is evidence that it cannot be started this year.

The Minister for Education: It is not evidence of anything of the sort.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Government having built the Como tramway and the 16½ miles of railway from Jarnadup to Pemberton without Parliamentary authority, can apparently ignore Parliament. If we sit down and permit this to be done, we must take the responsibility for our inaction. If we authorise the construction of the whole of this railway, we cannot consistently refuse to sanction the loan of £800,000 required. The Government have spent out of revenue account about 6½ million pounds more than they have received. Where have they obtained this money? It appears to me that they have been using loan money to pay revenue accounts, and the result is that works which should have been built have not been built. If we authorise this railway and the £800,000 necessary to build it, I am afraid that the money will be used to finance the deficit and to square up this year's shortage of three-quarters of a million. Parliament knows that this is going on and still permits it to continue. My candid opinion is that authority is required for this railway in order to assist the Government to finance the deficit. If we sanction the loan, we shall merely be permitting the Government to continue the extravagance which is going on at present. The Minister said it was proposed to build the railway in 10-mile sections.

The Minister for Education: I said sections.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Well, a 10 mile section would serve 800 settlers and the 30 mile section would provide for about 2,500 settlers. Allowing £1,000 per settler, we shall want about three millions of money to finance the 2,500 settlers. Members have told us what can be done in this country in parts more easy of access and more easily cleared. Mr. Greig said he expected to see 300 miles of railway built in the Wheat Belt during the next year or two. If we pass this Bill, according to an honourable understanding and a resolution of one House, if not both Houses, no other new railway can be built until this one is completed. Therefore, if we authorise the construction of the whole 131 miles, we shall be holding up the construction of every other railway required until this one is completed. If we provide for only a 30 mile section we shall not be holding up the construction of other necessary lines. If we make the amendment as I suggest, and grant the Government 30 miles, then another Bill could be brought down when the 30 miles are completed. Even on that section, according to the Leader of the House, it will take approximately three millions of money to settle the people. My amendment will not hold up the railway a single day, but will rather facilitate its construction. If the Government can do on this 30 miles anything like they say they can do, they will have my vote for the remainder of the line. But surely three millions to be spent on 30 miles is an experiment sufficiently large for the people of this country to embark on at present, especially in view of other settlements in process. All railways, it is argued, must make for a port. But that does not apply in the case of the Jarnadup-Denmark line. If we send out 10 miles from Denmark, the whole of the produce will drift into Albany. If we send out 30 miles from Pemberton, all the produce will drift to Bunbury. We know that in New Zealand, where the railway policy succeeded, the first thing to be dealt with was the ports. But here the ports are the last thing to be thought of. If we put through this railway and leave Bunbury unfitted to receive large oversea vessels, I do not see how we are going to improve our position with regard to harbours. After freezing works have been established at Fremantle, Albany will be the only other port where such works can be established, because it is the only other port fitted to receive large steamers. It is idle to say that steamers can go into Geraldton. They cannot do it unless they pay a higher insurance premium. The increase in premium on a large ship with a valuable cargo would be probably three times the amount of freight to be picked up. The steamer which took the engineers to Nornalup was wrecked there. Her insurance did not allow her to go into Nornalup, and I believe the owner lost the insurance money. If another member will move to construct the railway 10 miles from Denmark, I shall have no objec-

tion to that amendment. In that case there will be room for another 800 settlers at a cost of another million of money, and another 10 miles will mean yet another 800 settlers and yet another million of money. It seems to me that the problem has not been gone into at all. Apparently another loan authorisation is wanted by the Government, because when this railway has been authorised Parliament will not be able to refuse the loan authorisation. It seems to me that the magnitude of the thing has not been considered. I am satisfied that land settlement represents our only salvation, and I am also satisfied that there are places in Western Australia where railways can be built for less than £6,000 per mile and where the land can be cleared at shillings per acre for the pounds per acre which clearing will cost in the South-West. It seems to me that in passing this Bill we shall be tying up the development of all those other districts. I do not know whether the existing 16 miles of railway between Jarnadup and Bridgetown has been built to standard, or whether considerable expenditure will be required to bring it up to standard.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think the hon. member has advanced any good reason for the amendment. To say that the Government want the whole authorisation in order to enable them to finance is simply ridiculous. The matter simply cannot affect Government finance in any way. This year's Loan Estimates provide only £5,000 for this work, because it is not expected that any but preliminary work will be done between now and the end of June; but a further sum will appear on the following year's Loan Estimates to cover the cost of such section or sections as it may be considered desirable to construct during 1923-4. Mr. Holmes referred to a resolution as to order of precedence in the construction of railways. That resolution was carried by only one House of Parliament. I do not know that it has any binding effect. In any case, it could not apply to a railway passed on the distinct understanding that it would be constructed section by section, as required. If the House is satisfied that this project is a sound one, what advantage can there be in splitting it up into sections as proposed? It seems to me that unless we do build this line and get people into the country, things far more serious than the present financial position of the State may happen to us.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I trust that the House will not carry the amendment. Mr. Holmes raised a question as to the section of railway between Jarnadup and Pemberton, which is already constructed. That section cost about £3,000 per mile to build, and is therefore a fairly substantial railway, and up to standard. I trust the House will give the Government power to construct the whole of the proposed line. It may be necessary to construct a portion from Denmark first. Why

hold it up for further authorisation? Surely we can trust the Government to build the line in sections as required.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I oppose the amendment. It is going to upset the continuity of policy in respect of the group settlement. As the group settlements extend, the railway should be advanced in sections. What harm can there be in authorising straightway the construction of the whole line?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Mr. Holmes has made out an excellent case for his amendment. His statement bristles with reasons why we should be cautious before giving the Government power to go on with this huge expenditure on a railway through extremely difficult country. Mr. Kingsmill constantly referred to this Chamber as a House of second thought, pointing out that its predominant characteristic is caution. This is a proposal where the Chamber might well exercise caution, without doing the slightest harm. The amendment will not delay the construction of the line by one day, while it will embody the principle that we ought to think of safety first. We do not know whether this huge undertaking is going to be a success. Since the Government already propose to build the line in sections, why should we give them power to build the whole line without further authorisation? It is a question, not merely of building 113 miles of railway, but of opening up a huge extent of country. Why not just allow the Government to go on with the first section, or even with a section at each end? Apart from this line, the Government have authorisation for the construction of 240 miles of railway. In the circumstances, the check represented by the amendment is a most necessary one. There is no chance of the first section being completed before the next session of Parliament, and so no actual delay need result from the amendment. Although the Government might be proceeding in a most extravagant way with the building of the line, without the amendment we would have no chance whatever of calling a halt to them.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I cannot support the amendment, if only because it provides for the building of the line from one end alone. I understand there are group settlements near Denmark, at the other end of the proposed railway, and I assume the Government intend to extend the line from the Denmark end, because of the port at Albany. Apart from this, I must admit there seems to be some grounds for the amendment, for without it we are giving the Government power to build the line when and how they like.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I support the amendment. It will be an indication to the Government that we favour the line being constructed by sections. I do not think for a moment that it will retard settlement.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am opposed to the amendment. We should give the Government authority to construct the line right through. I should like to see it start at both ends. As for the point raised by Mr. Kirwan, namely, safety first, I think we shall be best studying safety if we people that country as

quickly as possible. If authority be given for the construction of the whole line it may be possible for the Premier to secure from the British Government on most favourable terms a loan for the purpose, whereas he could not hope to do so if he had authority for the construction of not more than 20 or 30 miles of the railway.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If the clause remains as it is the Premier will be better able to finance a scheme in London than if he goes there without the full programme. If the proposition is whittled down it will hinder the progress of the country. I hope the amendment will be defeated.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I had intended to move an amendment of this nature. It will leave to the Government the right to construct 30 miles of railway through heavily timbered country, which will take a long time to settle after the line is built. If the necessity arises for further extensions they can be dealt with when Parliament meets again. Many people have said that I am in opposition to the settlement of the South-West and the group system. That is not so. They are making these statements because of my objection to the over-capitalisation of the groups. Some members have said "why does not Mr. Baxter see the South-West." I have made several inspections of it and admit there is splendid country there. But it must be developed gradually and surely. We cannot pour millions of money into it and obtain a ready response. Apart from the cost of the railway, which may run into a million and a quarter, the cost of developing and opening up the country afterwards will run into £6,000,000 or £7,000,000. None of my critics has replied on the main issue. As a public man I am supposed to criticise nothing. One is not supposed to say a word against the Government programme. Were the Labour Government in office now they would have a worse time over this business than any Government of this State has had. I am always willing to assist in settling this country but wish it to be done on sound lines. What have I said to bring about this storm in a teacup? I have stated that the holdings which have been prepared will carry a debt of £1,200 at seven per cent. interest. The settler has a 100 acre block, a house upon it and the necessary buildings and plant, 10 cows, five acres cleared and 25 acres partly cleared and sown with grass. He has thus 30 acres to enable him to carry on. It is supposed that the settler will be able to work his 10 cows which will return say £200. grow fodder for them, and grow about £50 worth a year of other produce, making a total of £250 with which to pay interest, all expenses, and to keep his home together. By the time a man has done all this he will have very little time left for further improving his holding. I want these blocks brought into good order. There is a large number of them

in progress at present. Why are not more of them settled? Of course the people are satisfied at present on £3 a week, but what will happen when they are no longer drawing that amount?

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that he is getting beyond the scope of the discussion.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This is undoubtedly connected with the group system. We want to prove it right before we go too far. It is quite sufficient to authorise 30 miles of this line until the group system is developed and proved. I hope the day will never come when I shall shirk my responsibility in doing what I can for this State. It is, however, too late to speak when the damage is done. If my statements are incorrect I shall be the most pleased man in Western Australia. If they are not correct, why has not the Premier replied to me? So far I have had a reply only from his sponsor, in the person of his lieutenant, Mr. Angwin, and there has been a leading article in the "West Australian." I sent a reply to the "West Australian" last night, but through misadventure it did not appear this morning.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is straying from the amendment before the Committee.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am in favour of the group settlements, but there must be some curtailment of expense which is heaping up on the individual blocks. It is nonsense to suggest that I am opposed to the Premier personally. I endorse his policy provided it is carried out on sound lines. Many thousands of pounds have been lost through mistakes in land settlement.

Hon. J. Duffell: Have you been over this particular country.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, but I have been close to it. It is very heavy country. The Government will be doing well to settle that part of the State in three years. If necessary the line could be commenced from both ends. The Denmark area has taken a long time to develop. Although the Government guaranteed the price of some of the products of the settlers very small progress has been made because of the heavy nature of the country. There is no telling what may happen at the next election. Suppose a Labour Government come into office?

Hon. J. Duffell: The outlook is very promising. It will depend upon the tactics of the Country Party.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Once the line is agreed to there will be no delay in its construction. It would, therefore, be well to pass the amendment and give the Government the right to construct 30 miles to begin with.

Hon. J. MILLS: Mr. Holmes' arguments are based on sound lines. I do not wish to deter the Government in developing the South-West in a reasonable way, but I am sure this line will run into about a million and a-quarter of money. On top of that several millions will be required for the open-

ing up and development of the land. Twenty years ago we had as Premier, Sir John Forrest, who was born in the South-West, and being a surveyor he had a good knowledge of that country. He had no thought of developing the land there and went elsewhere. If we are going to pass this Bill, it will involve the expenditure of eight, ten or twelve millions sterling; then what about the rest of the State? Where is the money to come from for the development of that? I support the amendment.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: If we pass the Bill as it is before us it will be impossible for the Government to construct that line before the next session of Parliament. The amendment proposed by Mr. Holmes is in accordance with the views expressed in this Chamber. It would be cheaper to build the 300 miles of railway in the wheat areas as suggested by Mr. Greig. There would then be a reasonable ground for settling people at less expense than settling them in the south-west corner. It behoves us to go very carefully.

Hon. J. Cornell: There are men here today with money who cannot get land.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: Bearing in mind that the Government are out to increase traffic on existing lines, it does seem against the best interests to authorise the full expenditure in connection with the suggested railway. The House would be wise to support the amendment. If the position is such that next year we are justified in proceeding with the construction of a further section of the railway, that can be done by introducing a small measure.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I oppose the amendment because it is a test of whether we approve or do not approve of Sir James Mitchell's scheme, and whether we have faith in that wonderful country of ours in the South-West.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Not at all.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Because of what I know of the South-West, I support the Premier's scheme in its entirety. I feel that in that corner of the State we have one of the most desirable spots in the world, a place which will carry a large population of contented people. The climatic conditions cannot be excelled anywhere, and it is for the reasons I have mentioned that I have supported the Premier's scheme from the moment of its inception. This is a test as to whether we believe in that great scheme and whether we are prepared to say to the people of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, who are our partners, "We have confidence in it." We should show our confidence by supporting the Bill for the construction of the railway in the manner proposed by the Government. I trust the Committee will not nibble at the proposal.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I intend to support the clause. I agree with those who say

that we want a bold policy for this State. There is nothing more disheartening to the settler who is in doubt as to whether a railway will run in this direction or in that direction. The passing of a big work like this will attract the attention of those people who are only too anxious to come to Australia to invest their money. I believe the construction of this line will be the means of inducing people to come here and assist us to develop that area. We know, of course, that we are not going to get big results immediately. We also know that it is the absence of a railway that has kept back that part of the State. The railway is something that is absolutely necessary and will assist the South-West to forge ahead.

Hon. E. ROSE: It is my intention to support the clause as it is. I do not believe in having a work of this description carried out piecemeal. So far as Nornalup is concerned, that will eventually develop into a big township and will become a great pleasure resort. A number of our people who every summer go to the Eastern States will find the surroundings at Nornalup congenial enough to attract them to that part of the State. It has been said that the construction of this work will not improve Bunbury as a port, but I do not look at the proposal in a one-eyed fashion. I look at it from every point of view. I consider that it will be wise to start the work from both ends and leave it to the Government to decide how much shall be done each year until it is completed. We have a Government in power who are working for the benefit of Western Australia. We have confidence in that Government. Why not continue to show that confidence and allow them to construct the line as it is required?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We are dealing with a country of which many of us know little beyond hearsay. We are voting on a question which is largely experimental.

Hon. J. Cornell: We are betting on the blind.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Practically so, and it is essential to adopt a policy of caution. The amendment is designed to create that caution which will guide us to the wisest and best course. I favour the Premier's scheme of land settlement. It is not a matter of being a doubting Thomas as Dr. Saw said, nor is it a question of being bold enough to support the whole scheme. We should be bold when we are assured of our results. We want experience to assure us that success will be achieved within the estimates given. If authorisation is granted for 30 miles, we shall have some measure of test and will be able to say yea or nay to a proposal for extension.

Hon. J. A. Greig: Why not make it 30 miles at the other end which is nearer to a seaport?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I understand the group settlements are concentrated in the Pemberton district.

Hon. J. A. Greig: A start has also been made from Denmark.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But the greater number are centred in the Pemberton area. During the recess there will be an opportunity to visit the district and gain first hand knowledge. It would be wise if the Minister arranged such a visit.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I desire to give the Government the fullest support in their immigration policy, but I am sure this measure will not assist them with immediate settlement. It is proposed to bring out 75,000 people at a cost of six millions, and we shall have to carry the burden of interest at the end of five years. My knowledge of the country convinces me that five years will not enable that object to be attained, and instead of proving a relief to the State, this will be an added burden. It would be wise for members to travel from Pemberton to Denmark and judge for themselves the wisdom of this proposal. Once the country is cultivated it will be a very fine asset, but the cost causes me to doubt the wisdom of the project at present. I support the amendment.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This is not a question of supporting the Premier's scheme. The Bill has nothing to do with that. Dr. Saw's illustration rather cuts against his argument. He suggested that Joffre was utterly wrong when nibbling, but Joffre was in much the same position as the State is in at present. He had neither the men nor the munitions to carry out the whole policy. We have not the people or the finances to carry out all these huge projects. Therefore, we must behave as prudent business men and go slowly. If this were a proposal for the development of one of our known quantities, we could go ahead, but we must not forget that this is a new class of development. Many problems have to be faced before we can settle strangers in the extreme South-West with any possible hope of success. I do not want to be one of those who sit down and criticise the Premier.

The Minister for Education: That is about all a good many do.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I would even gamble a little in order to assist him. If the amendment is carried, I shall move to authorise the construction of a section of 30 miles in a westerly direction from Denmark which will give the Government 60 miles for this experiment. I think this will be going further than a prudent business man ought to go, but I am staking on one throw of the dice the whole of the six millions of money the Premier is getting under the scheme. Mr. Holmes has clearly demonstrated that to settle 30 miles will cost three millions of money. Another section of 30 miles will absorb the whole six millions which is the amount we are

to get on the payment of one-third of the interest for five years. If we sanction the construction of the whole of the line, the first-comers will pick out the front blocks.

The Minister for Education: They will not have an opportunity to do that.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: If we begin with a 10-mile section at one end, there will be competition for the frontage blocks, because a man will not take a block seven or eight miles back. If he had any sense he would wait until the next section was put in hand in order to get a block near to the railway.

The Minister for Education: He could not go into a group without agreeing to abide by the ballot.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: If a man was in a group he could get out and try another.

The Minister for Education: He would not be taken in another group.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Then we shall have people brought out from England and shall be unable to settle them. There being no guarantee that the intermediate sections will be built, the people will naturally select the blocks on the other sections. I shall take an early opportunity of inspecting the district for myself. In a business venture of my own I would not think of proceeding without some test and experience. If we get thirty miles at each end, we shall be going quite far enough to obtain a substantial test, and shall settle, according to the figures of the Government, something like 5,000 settlers. For the moment I support the striking out of the words.

Hon. H. BOAN: I know little or nothing about the locality under discussion, except that I am greatly impressed with its possibilities. I rely more on the advisers of the construction of this railway. Surely the Premier, before entering into the proposition, had the very best advice. Some members, while admitting that they have not seen the locality, dictate from what end the railway should be constructed. I would not be so conceited as to think that I could by a mere inspection of the district give an opinion which would be worth a rap as against that of the Premier's advisers. I much appreciate the boldness of the Government's policy. Let us have no more of the nibbling policy, as Dr. Saw said. I have much pleasure in giving my whole-hearted support to the Government's proposal.

Question (that the words proposed to be struck out be struck out) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	9
Noes	8

Majority for	1
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AYES.

Hon. C. F. Barter	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. W. Kierwan	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Boan

(Teller.)

Question thus passed, the words struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: The question now is that the words proposed to be inserted be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I understand that it is the desire of many members who voted for the amendment that some further words should be added, to permit of an extension from Denmark. In order to ascertain the best possible point to go to, it may be desirable to report progress and in the meantime frame an amendment accordingly. I move—

That progress be reported.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I was going to frame an amendment, but I thought it better to let the matter alone until I had visited the locality.

The CHAIRMAN: There can be no discussion. The question is that I do now report progress.

Hon. J. CORNELL: On a point of order, Sir, you cannot report progress until the question before the Chair has been finally dealt with.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we can report progress at any time.

Hon. J. CORNELL: This is unprecedented in my 11 years in this House. Certain words were struck out, with a view to the insertion of other words.

The CHAIRMAN: I decide against your point of order, on the ground that I have already put the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted." That question being before the House, it is competent to report progress.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Bill is complete. It is not a question of reporting progress, but one of reporting the Bill to the House.

The CHAIRMAN: This clause has not been decided. There are certain words proposed to be inserted, which question is now before the Committee. It is competent to report progress upon the question of the insertion of those words.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Is the Leader of the House going to stop my amendment half-way?

The CHAIRMAN: Your amendment is not being stopped at all. It will come on for discussion at the next sitting of the House.

Hon. J. Cornell: By way of recommittal?

The CHAIRMAN: No; there is no question of recommittal.

Motion (progress) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	9
Noes	8

Majority for 1

AYES

Hon. H. Boan	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Burvill
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)
Hon. A. Lovekin	

Motion thus passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—KOJONUP AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S LANDS.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

MOTION—WATER SUPPLY DEPARTMENT BY-LAWS.

To Disallow.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. A. Lovekin—

"That By-laws 69, 131, and 132 made under "The Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act, 1909," laid upon the Table of the House on the 28th November, 1922, be and are hereby disallowed, and that the department should be instructed to submit fresh by-laws providing as follows:—(a) exempting from branding all galvanised iron pipes and fittings, and eliminating the inspection fees except where testing or inspection is performed at the manufacturers or merchants' premises. (b) eliminating building fees and substituting charges for water actually supplied. (c) reducing the prices under by-law 132 (2), (a), (b), and (c) by at least 25 per cent."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan [8.31]: From what has been said in the debate, I gather that the question is practically limited to paragraph (c) reducing the price under by-law 132 by at least 25 per cent. I propose to restrict the motion simply to paragraph (c). I move an amendment—

That paragraphs (a) and (b) be struck out.

The Minister has pointed out that there is a deficit of £7,000 on the workings of the department and that if the 25 per cent. reduction be carried, it will mean a further loss of £4,500. If that be the case, and if it can be shown that the department is not in its accounts wrongly charging certain items, it is

clearly the duty of hon. members to vote against the motion.

The Minister for Education: Those figures are accurately based on the last half year's operations.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: On the other hand, if the department is wrongly debiting items and omitting to give credits which should be given in respect of the repayment of loans, one might be forced to vote in favour of the motion. At present I have an open mind on the question. The Minister said it would be unfair to charge the general taxpayer with the loss which would be occasioned if the motion were carried. Many water supply systems are being carried on at a loss at present, and that loss is being borne by the general taxpayer.

The Minister for Education: But some of them are charging 5s. per thousand gallons for excess water, whereas the hon. member who moved the motion is grumbling at 1s. 3d.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In the past there has been a great loss on the goldfields supply scheme.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Has the hon. member taken into account that the scheme has meant in saving of cost to the railways?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am merely quoting it as an instance. Clearly, that loss was borne by the taxpayers, the biggest proportion of whom are in the metropolitan area. If it was fair for the general taxpayer to bear that loss, surely the loss which might be occasioned by a fair and reasonable reduction in metropolitan charges, might also be borne by the general taxpayer. However, I propose to reserve my decision until I hear further views on the motion.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN. (Metropolitan)—in reply [8.40]: I first address myself to the question which the Minister stressed, namely, that the metropolitan water supply should pay its way and not become a burden on the general taxpayer. I see in principle no good reason why the metropolitan area should be treated differently from any other part of the State.

The Minister for Education: Not when you get excess water at half the price paid in other localities?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Neither am I going to argue that we ought to be treated as others are; that is to say that the general taxpayer should pay all the loss. I am going to concede that the people here must not only bear their own burden but must, in the interests of the State, help to bear the burdens of every other district; because whatever benefits accrue to the country, doubtless they will revert to the city. Our metropolitan water supply ought to pay its way. But I cannot admit as a principle that Perth should be singled out for treatment which is not applied to other systems. We have had many indirect benefits from the Goldfields Water Scheme. I have before me the Estimates for the current year. From those I find that £132,499 is the cost of run-

ning the scheme, and that under the general loan expenditure there is an interest bill of £179,000.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That does not make allowance for savings in running the railways.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It will not be wise for the hon. member to pursue that too far, because the Minister for Works says that if he could cut away that scheme and use his own dams he would get a cheaper and better supply of water for his engines.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Then the Minister does not know much of what he is talking about.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The estimated revenue from the scheme is £183,000, which leaves a deficit of £126,499. Last year the deficit was £116,898. We must bear in mind that half the population of the State is in and around the metropolitan area, and that it is said the people of the metropolitan area pay two-thirds of the taxes. Those people are quite willing that they should be taxed to make good these apparent deficiencies in the country. Apart from the Goldfields Water Supply, there is quite a number of other water supplies and drainage works, every one of which is a losing proposition. A statement was laid on the Table by the Minister dealing with public works and trading concerns, but excluding the metropolitan water supply. Members will find from this particulars of a number of small water supplies. For instance, in the case of Brookton there was a deficit of £533, Bridgetown £365, Collie £2,407, Cue and Day Dawn £15,990, Dangin £58, Derby £1,905, Geraldton £6,343, Harvey £2,500, Leonora £5,036, Meekatharra £3,166, Menzies £14,781, Ora Banda £18,260, Pingelly £2,368, Torbay drainage £2,411 and various other small supplies running into £4,464. All these amounts come out of the general taxpayers, and half of the taxpayers and two-thirds of the taxes come out of the metropolitan area. If the people in the metropolitan area are willing to meet the obligations of these losses and others, and at the same time insist that their own scheme shall pay its way, I think metropolitan members ought to have the full support of every country and goldfields member in the Chamber. There is a loss shown, as the Minister says, of £7,200 on the metropolitan scheme. This is where I want members to assist those representing the Metropolitan Province. The metropolitan scheme is carried out in an extravagant and wasteful manner. It is carried out unfairly to the ratepayers in the metropolis. The only way we can stop this is to curtail the building up of this huge octopus by limiting its income. The more money we give to the department the greater it becomes and curiously enough, as the Minister told us, the more water that is supplied the higher does the price become.

The Minister for Education: Nothing of the sort. There was a reduction with the extra water supply, and there has been a reduction in staff as well.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Two years ago the water rate was 10d. in the pound. It is now 1s. Two years ago the excess water was 1s. per thousand gallons. It is now 1s. 3d.

Hon. A. Burvill: How does that compare with the price paid by country schemes?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That is a different matter. If people in the country want to buy clothes they have to pay more for them. We pay more in Perth for our clothes than people in London. That is not a good argument. Hundreds of millions of gallons more of water is used, but as the consumption has increased so has the price gone up within the last two years. Not only has the department had the advantage of the increase in prices, but it has had the advantage of the increase in the assessments in the metropolitan area. The last time we had this matter before us I brought some rate notices here. My firm paid for water rates in St. George's-terrace last year £35. This year the bill is one for £50. At my own house last year I paid about £12, and this year I am paying up to £18 although I am not using any more or even as much water. I am told by the city authorities that the average assessments have increased by 24 per cent., on which increases the department collects its extra shilling in the pound whether the water is used or not. They have also the benefit of the new houses that have gone up; during the last year there has been an increase of about 50 per cent. More water has been sold and more water required, and yet the price has gone up.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The valuations have gone up. That is why you are paying higher rates.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes, but I am not getting more water. The only way to help us is to make the department more economical and insist upon better working methods. The only way to do that is to keep the price down to a reasonable figure, so that the authorities shall not year in and year out increase the size of the department and then add to the price. The department is growing out of all reason. The Estimates show that at present there is an engineering staff of 33 persons. For a long time past there have been no engineering works of any importance going on to warrant a staff of 33 engineers and assistants. The sewerage works have long since been completed. There have been few mains put in except one in connection with the Mundaring scheme, and that is all. To run this department there are 54 persons on the clerical staff whose salaries amount to £11,585. The salaries of the engineering staff amount to £9,193. There is also a temporary staff of about 50 per cent. of the size of the permanent staff, and their salaries amount to £6,145. There is a fixed rate for water in Perth of 1s. and a fixed storm water rate of 1s. 6d. If economy were desired these rates could be printed upon the ordinary municipal notices and the money collected with the municipal rates. It would cost practically nothing to do this, and would render

unnecessary the employment of this enormous staff to keep the books and send out the rates at a cost of about £17,600. I suggest that a large proportion of this expenditure is unnecessary. To show how even this is loaded, I would point out that there is a contingency account on the Estimates of £5,500. This consists of tea money, overtime for officers, motor hire, £650, train and tramway fares £500, etc.

The Minister for Education: It all has to be paid.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes, if the expenditure is incurred, but it surely cannot all be necessary.

The Minister for Education: Would it be incurred if it were not necessary? The officers must carry on the concern.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: What necessity is there for tea money for officers of the Water Supply Department?

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Why should they not have tea?

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: They ought to drink their own water.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It is too bad for that. Why should they have to work back and thus necessitate expenditure on tea money?

The Minister for Education: If they work back they must have tea money according to the regulations.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Surely there is no necessity for them to work overtime. There is a sum of £25 set down for newspapers and periodicals for these gentlemen.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You should not object to that.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: There is nothing personal about this. One day the Minister for Works was lamenting to me as to the manner in which this particular department was carried on. He asked me to visit it with him and I did so. He and I stood by the door for some minutes looking in. We saw several groups of clerks talking and yarning, and two officers in a room alongside at 11 o'clock in the morning with their feet on the table reading the newspapers. Mr. George asked me what I thought of it. I told him what I would do if I were Minister in charge. He replied that if I were Minister in charge I could do nothing, because the moment I made a complaint against them I would become the criminal, and would have to stand my trial as to whether I had acted improperly or not. These things are going on and there is a loss of £7,200. The only way to stop the loss is to give the department less revenue. Whenever we give more, the staff is increased.

The Minister for Education: The staff has been decreased and the cost has been decreased by nearly £3,000, as compared with the previous year.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I should say that is so.

The Minister for Education: Then why do you say the cost has been increased?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Of course it is so. All the sewerage work has been finished, and

there are no engineering works going on. Notwithstanding this there are still 33 people on the engineering staff, 52 clerks, and £5,000 worth of supernumeraries. This shows where the loss comes in and how necessary it is for them to keep on putting up the rates. A certain matter came before me through my connection with the King's Park Board. Out of the revenue of the water works a house was built close to the main reservoir. There was previously a cottage there for the caretaker who operated the valves. It was thought time that a more superior officer should take charge of the reservoir area and tenders were called for a house which cost some £1,500. There was also a large sum involved in extras. A sum of £1,500 was required for sewerage this particular house. The sewer was taken through the park to connect up with the sewer in Mount's Bay road. The sewer was not taken anywhere near the public latrines in the park, and later on a sum of £250 had to be spent to connect them. The department, however, wanted the board to contribute a sum of £850 for the sewerage, but that was refused. The sewerage was effected for the convenience of the house, which cost roughly £3,000. It is laid down in the departmental regulations officers who live in the Government dwellings must pay the usual terms, namely 10 per cent. on their salary. For this £3,000 house £60 a year was paid by the officer in question. He also had light, water, gardeners, and others to look after the place.

The Minister for Education: This is a very extraordinary reply to the debate on the motion.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The Minister suggested that there was a loss and thought the ratepayers must pay. I am going to show that this loss is due to extravagance on the one hand, and to the improper crediting of accounts on the other.

The Minister for Education: These statements should have been brought up when an opportunity could be given of answering them.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I should not like to put up anything the Minister could not answer, and I am quite willing that he should do so. I will give him the file which I have here. This shows that a minimum of three men were employed in the maintenance of the water reserve; that frequently five to seven men were employed; that men were employed pulling a heavy roller over a croquet lawn and others employed to cut grass around the flower beds that other men were employed to chop and carry wood a considerable distance to the house; that men were employed in a kitchen garden and attending to the fowls; that men were employed on Sundays and holidays to water the grass and flower beds; and that electric light was supplied free, also motor car, petrol, etc.

The Minister for Education: How long ago was all this?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Several years ago. I do not know what is going on to-day. I am merely stating what came to my knowledge. The same thing may be, and probably is, going on to-day. I cannot conceive how a concern of this description can possibly expend the money which appears on the Estimates. What I have described is what the Department has been paying for. The then Minister said it would have to be stopped and the result was that the men employed around the house were got rid of and the Park Board was given so much to maintain the grounds. Only a short time ago, for some reason which I need not mention here, the officer who occupied the house vacated it and to-day there is a caretaker in it, an ordinary employee in receipt of about £4 14s. a week. He, too, I suppose, is paying rent at the rate of 10 per cent. of the wages he is receiving, and I do not suppose he is able to occupy the residence properly.

The Minister for Education: When was the house built?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: About 1916 I think. This file is dated 1917.

The Minister for Education: Are you sure it was not built before the war?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: On turning up the file I find that the contract was let on the 13th April, 1911.

The Minister for Education: You are only five years out in your dates.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I had not looked at the dates; I thought the house was built at a later period. But apparently the Minister does not like anyone to suggest that there has been lack of economy. I have no wish to detain the House at any length. I only suggest that goldfields and country members can help metropolitan members in the matter of their water supply. The Minister told us that the actual cost of water was 11.10d. per 1,000 gallons, and that included interest, sinking fund, distribution and pumping charges, while the actual cost of pumping alone was 1.89d. I am surprised at the Minister putting that up to us because this motion is in relation to excess water, and it is obvious in the case of water, as in the case of electric light, that the more water you can sell above your pumping costs the more profitable it becomes once you have cleared your overhead expenses. Mr. Taylor of the Electric Light Department does that. He covers his overhead charges, interest and sinking fund and then gets to work and says, "All the current I can sell over my coal and oil costs becomes profit," and he is doing business for the State. Mr. Boan does the same thing with his third floor. He has all his overhead costs and capital charges made up below and he then says, "I can afford to sell very cheaply on my third floor—anything over cost."

The Minister for Education: Our water supply is not unlimited.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: There is ample water. It is running to waste. There are

two new bores, and on the hottest day those bores were not exhausted.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: You cannot get water in North Perth on a hot day.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That shows that the department is not capable of managing the business. After all these years in a city like Perth it does seem extraordinary that it is not possible to get water in a near northern suburb. There is plenty of water and it is running to waste. It can be pumped into the main for under 2d. and the people can pay 1s. for it. But the department is not equal to the occasion. It is said that there is a loss of £7,200. Money has been borrowed for water supply and sewerage, and under the practice of the Government, when loan money is borrowed, there is no recoup of that loan money. Let us take the water supply. Money is borrowed to purchase goods and those goods are sold and not used in the work. The money thus derived is not placed to the credit of the particular loan, but it goes into what is termed in the Estimates as "Sale of Government Property Trust Account." Hon. members will find these particulars on page 119 of the Estimates. In 1921 there was to the credit of the sewerage of Perth and Fremantle £233,423. An amount of £17,717 was added to it in 1922. I suppose for some repayment, I do not know what. The total account now stands at £251,140. I suggest that that money, being loan money, was borrowed for a specific purpose. Goods were sold or there were recoups and immediately they were credited to this fund and not to the loan. But they should be deducted from the loan standing against the department. In that way interest and sinking fund should be less and there would not be a loss. So far as I have been able to search the departmental files, there is not even an allowance for interest on this £251,000 to the Water Supply Department. The interest on that money alone would be more than sufficient to pay the department's deficit. I do not want to labour the question any further. I think I have shown the House clearly that with economy and care there would not be any deficit at all. On the other hand, if we cheapen the price of water, the natural law will prevail, and we will sell more water. Therefore, anything we can get over the 2d. will be profit, and will tend to make the scheme payable instead of a losing proposition which it is now. I am not representing a suburban province, but those members who are know well that during this summer and others many parts of Perth have been without water. People have had to go around with cans to those possessing windmills to get water with which to make tea. We know, too, that clothes have been spoilt through the discolouration in the water and that many have lost thousands of gallons through having had to let their taps run in order to try to clear the water so that they might be able to use it. For that waste they have had to pay excess at the rate of 1s. 3d. a thousand gallons. The least we can

do for those people is to reduce the price of water to 1s. per thousand gallons, the figure which existed a couple of years ago, when there was less consumption, when the rates were lower and when the assessments were also 20 per cent. below what they are to-day.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	..	4
Majority for					4

AYES.

Hon. H. Boan	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	

NOES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Burvill
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)
Hon. E. Ross	

Question, as amended, thus passed.

House adjourned at 9.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 10th January, 1923.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAYS.

Excursion Fares.

Mr. MONEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether he is aware that a difference of one-third in favour of excursion tickets to Albany was made in comparison to excursions to Bunbury and Busselton as per handbill No. 14? 2, Why was this difference made?