

appeared to be in the minds of members—it would be well for progress to be reported.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 22nd January, 1909.

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

QUESTION—PRISON LABOUR AND PRINTING.

Mr. BATH asked the Treasurer: 1. Is the Minister aware of the fact that there are more men employed at the bookbinding trade within Fremantle prison than are employed at the trade outside the prison? 2. Is it a fact that £1,000 worth of printing work has been given to the Fremantle prison printing branch during the expired portion of the financial year? 3. On what basis is the value of printing work performed in the prison computed?

The TREASURER replied: 1. No. One prisoner is employed on book-binding at present, and two re-binding prison library books. 2. No. The value of printing done and in hand is £401 11s. 5d., representing material £201 19s. 4d. and labour £199 12s. 1d. In addition, cards have been cut and printed

for the Fremantle Harbour Trust and other departments to the value of £295 11s. 11d., representing material £110 3s. 2d. and labour £185 8s. 9d. 3. The amounts to be charged are fixed on the basis of cost of material and labour in the Government Printing Office.

QUESTION—RAILWAY COAL SUPPLY, COLLIE.

Mr. BROWN asked the Minister for Railways: In what proportion did he recommend to the Government that their order for Collie coal to be used on the Railways during the ensuing year should be distributed amongst the four collieries?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: It is not usual to make public any recommendation made by Ministers to Cabinet, but in this case, without desiring to create a precedent, I may inform the hon. member that the allocation was entirely the result of the consideration of Cabinet after all the aspects of the case had been considered.

QUESTION — PHOSPHATIC DEPOSITS, STATE CONTROL.

Mr. WALKER asked the Minister for Agriculture: In consideration of the fact that the State will for all time require mineral fertilisers, has the Government given consideration to the advisability of securing control of all phosphatic deposits so as to avoid the control of the industry falling into the hands of monopolists?

The PREMIER (for the Honorary Minister) replied: Yes. The Lands Department have for some time past had this under consideration; further, provision will be made in Crown grants of leases reserving to the Crown the right of these deposits in the same manner as is the case with mineral deposits.

QUESTION — ROTTNES. HOTEL ACCOMMODATION.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1. Does the Government intend to provide hotel accommodation for visitors at Rottnest Island? 2. Have the Government

sold or leased any portion of Rottnest Island to any person for the purpose of providing hotel accommodation? 3, Have the Government under consideration an application for the purchase or lease of a portion of Rottnest Island from any person? 4, If so, what is the name of the person or persons?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. But as soon as the improvements now being carried out by the prisoners are finished it is proposed to close the penal establishment and utilise the buildings for public accommodation. 2, No. 3, No. 4, Answered by No. 3.

QUESTION — MEDICAL OFFICER FOR PLAGUE.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1, What are the duties of the Medical Officer for Plague? 2, Could not the duties of this office be attached to the duties of the District Medical Officer, Fremantle?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Medical Officer for plague receives a retaining fee of £52 per annum to advise the Government generally in connection with plague matters; to attend patients at Woodman's Point during an outbreak of plague at a prescribed fee; and when necessary to conduct bacteriological examinations of rats. 2, This question is under consideration.

QUESTION — STATE BATTERY, LENNONVILLE.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: What was the estimated expenditure necessary in order to repair the boiler lately in use at the Lennonville State Battery?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: £200. The state of the boiler did not justify this expenditure.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Balance-sheet of Fremantle Government Workshops for 1907-08.

By the Minister for Railways: 1, Reports and Returns under Sections 54

and 83 of "The Government Railways Act, 1904."

BILLS (6)—THIRD READING.

Health Amendment (No. 3), transmitted to the Legislative Council.

Local Court Act Amendment, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

Roads Closure, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

Fire Brigades Act Amendment, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

Permanent Reserves Rededication, passed.

Fremantle Disused Cemetery, passed.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

On motion by *the Premier*, Order of the Day discharged.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price) in moving the second reading said: This amending Bill had passed another place and its object is to amend the existing Act. The introduction of this measure has been asked by deputations consisting of representatives of employees who seek employment through agencies. Like other persons there are many men employed in carrying on the business of employment brokers who are perfectly trustworthy and who can be relied upon to deal fairly with those in search of employment. On the other hand there are those who are not too scrupulous in their dealings with people in search of employment and cases have arisen where unscrupulous brokers have victimised applicants for employment by the charges they have made. The present Act does not deal at all with the charges in connection with employment obtained through brokers, and this Bill in Clauses 15, 16, and 17 provides that a scale of charges shall be prominently exhibited in each employment broker's office so that those who are seeking the assistance of the broker in obtaining employment may know the

exact amount they are going to pay, and entirely what they are going to pay. At the present time it is left to the broker's own sweet will to charge what he likes, nor is he obliged to exhibit any charges. Under this amending Bill he will have to exhibit his charges and to deposit with the Minister a copy thereof; and should at any time an alteration be made in those charges he must also deposit with the Minister a copy of the altered list. The penalty for the non-observance of these provisions is in a sum not to exceed £20. Clause 17 provides that no broker can contract himself out of the liability imposed upon him under this measure; he can make no arrangements with anyone in search of employment, whereby these provisions shall not apply to the contract between them. Clause 9, I should have mentioned, empowers the inspector of factories to object to the issue of a licence. At the present time this can be done by the police, but it was felt to be desirable that the inspector of factories should have the same power. In Clause 25 provision is made to ensure the giving of correct information by the employment broker as to the situation which an applicant may be desirous of taking. At present the department has reason to believe that in certain cases—fortunately it is the exception and not the rule—but in some cases there has been misrepresentation, involving considerable suffering to those who have been seeking employment. This clause makes it an offence to knowingly give incorrect information. This amending Bill also gives power to the Minister to make regulations. These are necessary in order to secure proper returns from the brokers as to the business they may have been doing, and in respect of any inquiries which it may be desirable to make in the interests of the public. Regulations to be made under the Bill will enable the Minister to insist upon the keeping of certain books by the employment broker. I think I have fully explained the object of this short Bill, and I am sure no one can take exception to the very reasonable provisions therein contained. We have to recognise that many people seeking employment, especially

domestic servants, are not versed in business matters and that certain restrictions should be made on their behalf. I trust the measure will be allowed to go through without amendment. I have pleasure in moving the second reading.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): This measure, although not very different from the Act which it is sought to amend or replace, has certain new clauses which mark a departure in the Bill. In my opinion the Government might just as well have gone the whole hog, as it were, and taken power under the Bill for the Governor-in-Council to prescribe a maximum scale of fees to be charged by the employment broker. There is a provision in the New Zealand Act which confers this power. Section 15 of the New Zealand Servants' Registry Office Act, 1905, reads as follows:—

"The Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe a maximum scale of fees, chargeable by and payable to licence-holders in respect of the engagement of persons in search of employment."

If the fees charged in this State are exorbitant, it is no redress or no advantage to the person seeking employment that the particulars of the exorbitant scale of fees have to be posted in a prominent position at the office of the broker, seeing that they have to pay the fees just the same. While it may have the effect of preventing the broker from taking advantage of a servant somewhat simple and ignorant of the conduct of affairs, and charging perhaps a higher fee than that charged to others more wide-awake, still the great grievance with those who use these registry offices, is that the fees are altogether too high; and in nearly every instance brought under my notice on the goldfields the whole burden of paying those fees was imposed upon the person seeking employment, who perhaps was the least able to bear it. There is another matter in the Bill before us: that is in regard to the licence fees to be charged the employment brokers. So far at least as our experience goes, the provisions which have been inserted in this Bill will amply ensure the good conduct and respectability of employment brokers.

They will act as a check against malpractices or misrepresentation. That being so I fail to see the reason why we should charge so high a fee as £5 for an employment broker's licence. It seems to me that a fee of £1 would be ample; and it is my intention when in Committee to move that the fee be reduced to £1. There is still another point. In Western Australia we should do what they have done in New Zealand. We should so improve the Government Labour Bureau, so extend the influence of that institution that the work of finding employment could be widely expanded and a systematic arrangement made by which those out of employment could be transferred to those districts where employment was available with the least possible loss of time and inconvenience. If this were done the private registry office, with its abuses and evils, would gradually diminish; and the time would come when, without any attempt to penalise private employment brokers the Government Labour Bureau would meet all requirements, both of persons seeking employment and of employers seeking labour. Of course we have a Government Labour Bureau in Perth, with offices throughout the country; but there have been many complaints made against that institution, and to-day we have a motion on the Notice Paper, under which the member for Guildford seeks an inquiry in respect to the grievances, real or alleged, charged against the Government Labour Bureau. With the amendment which it is my intention to move when in Committee I will readily support the Bill.

Question put and passed
Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair: *the Minister for Works* in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—List of charges to be posted:

Mr. BATH moved—

That the following paragraph be added:—“The Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe a maximum scale of fees chargeable by and

payable to licence-holders in respect of the engagement of persons in search of employment.”

It was, he thought, advisable that the Government should fix the fees. If, under the Bill, the employment brokers were to prove reasonable in their demands such provision might not require to be put into operation; but without it it might yet be found necessary to re-introduce the measure, involving considerable waste of time.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When first the Bill was introduced in another place it had contained a provision to the same effect as that proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. However, if the matter were carefully considered it would be seen that it would be scarcely fair to impose upon any reputable trader carrying on business a restriction of this sort.

Mr. Taylor: They do it in New Zealand.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The point was that another place had amended the Bill as we now found it. The public exhibition of the lists of charges and competition would tend to keep the charges at about a fair and reasonable level at which an employment broker might make a reasonable living. It would be useless for a man to expose in his office a set of charges considerably higher than those ruling among the majority of employment brokers. In view of the attitude of the Council the hon. member should not press the amendment.

MR. TAYLOR: The amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition had been passed in New Zealand in 1895; and that it had continued in operation since that date showed that it must have worked no hardship and that it was beneficial, for it would not have stood the test of time had it been objectionable. But the Minister was much opposed not so to the wording of the amendment as to the fear of a rebuff from another place. It was time to bid the devil good-day when we met him, and it was a sign of weakness on the part of the Minister to fear the strength of another place.

The Minister for Works: I think that the same result will be obtained by the clause as it stands.

Mr. TAYLOR: Of course, if they were all reputable people in this business there would be no need for the Bill, but the trouble was that there were people in the Fremantle gaol who were ladies and gentlemen compared with some of these employment brokers. Individuals had repeatedly complained about the treatment they received from them. It was putting no indignity on the reputable section by fixing a scale of fees. Putting a penal clause in a Bill was not a blow against upright people. The Minister claimed these employment brokers were reputable people.

The Minister for Works: I said there were some reputable men among them.

Mr. TAYLOR: Very few; if counted up the "sum" would not be two figures. It was a most scandalously conducted business. For rascality it was next to the business of pawnbroking. The amendment which meant the inclusion of the provision from the New Zealand Act would make this Bill up-to-date.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was with considerable diffidence one supported the amendment in opposition to another place, but he would take the risk. He admitted the Council's mandate had gone forth, and that it was for the Assembly to obey; but seeing this was a serious matter, we might supplicate the Council to pass the amendment. The member for Mount Margaret was right in claiming that these reputable people came next to pawnbrokers. If he were asked for a classification he would say racecourse touts came third. These employment brokers had no compunction whatever in taking a man's last shilling and sending him out into the bush to a job that never existed, and they applied the same nefarious practice to a greater extent to domestic servants. We would not err in putting stringent clauses into a Bill relating to these people. His experience was that they charged what they thought they could get.

The Minister for Works: They have to submit their scale of charges.

Mr. Bath: But they will make a combine.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The fact that they had done it in the past was sufficient proof that they would do it in the future unless a scale of charges was made by the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Mount Margaret at some future date might take up one of these employment agencies, and it would be an indignity for a gentleman of the hon. member's reputation if we were to say that his scale of charges was to be so and so. Of course, it was always desirable to limit the charges made by disreputable people; but in this class of business there was a section of reputable men and their scale of charges would be drawn up, and the "sharks" so eloquently spoken of by members would have to compete with the charges drawn up by the reputable brokers; therefore the reputable brokers would rule the charges in the business. There was no competition now, because an applicant going into a broker's office did not know what he was to be charged, there being no obligation to exhibit any scale of fees. He did not desire to see the Bill jeopardised, and honestly thought the clause as it stood had practically the same effect as that sought by the Leader of the Opposition. The gentleman who amended the Bill in the Council was one we all respected, one who would not play into the hands of the unworthy, and one who thought of the reputable people in the business, and that it would be an indignity on them to say to them, "You shall only charge so much."

Mr. Underwood: We say it to cabmen.

Mr. COLLIER: In every walk of life charges were fixed. Was it an indignity to the employers of labour when through the Arbitration Court we fixed the wages they should pay? Was it an insult to the reputable lawyer that we laid it down that he should charge only certain fees? There were only about half a dozen employment brokers in the City, and considering the fact that they had come to an understanding as to charges before an Act of Parliament fixed a scale, there was no doubt they would come to an understanding if the Bill were brought into

operation. Scandalous instances of injustices perpetrated by such people had been brought under his notice. The present practice was to charge half a week's wages for a situation, and it happened frequently that employment brokers sent men and women to situations for which they knew the applicants were in no wise suited, as before very long the applicants would be back again with another fee trying to find another place. With regard to the action expected to be taken by another place as to the amendment, surely members were not afraid to adopt a certain course merely because it might not meet with the approval of the other branch of the Legislature. The suggested amendment had worked well in New Zealand and Victoria for very many years, and should be tried here.

Mr. HEITMANN: The amendment should be passed. Recently several cases where domestic servants had been victimised by the agents had been brought under his notice. There was one case in particular in which a supposedly reputable firm, after receiving a fee of half a guinea, sent a girl to a situation. The position did not suit, and she called at the office again later on, and had to pay a fee of 10s. 6d. before they informed her that there was another situation vacant which would suit her. After the money had been paid she learnt that the vacant situation was the very one she had just left. Strict regulations should be framed for the control of these offices. Many cases had occurred where servants had been sent from the City to situations on the Murchison, and on arrival there, had found they were not such that a respectable girl could work in.

Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 16 to 26—agreed to.

Progress reported.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: Additional by-laws, Yilgarn Road Board.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 21st January, Mr. *Daglish* in the Chair.

Department of Mines (Hon. H. Gregory, Minister).

Vote—*Geological Survey*, £6,522:

Mr. HUDSON: When progress was reported on the previous day, he was dealing with the subject of assisting geological schools in the Ravensthorpe and Kundip districts. Much good work in the direction of gaining information as to the geological conditions of those districts had been obtained, and it would be wise if in many districts of the State there were similar schools with the object in view of teaching the prospectors and others something about the theory of their work. Last year the sum of £50 was placed on the Estimates for this particular school, but was not expended. He hoped the Minister would allow the sum to be spent in the current year.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was a good idea to establish these geological schools in the mining districts, but their success to a great extent depended upon there being those in a district who took an active interest in geological survey work, and would assist in working up these small schools. If the State Mining Engineer recommended that the amount should be given, he would be glad to continue the policy, as the work would be of great value to prospectors.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Geological Department should pay more attention to the practical portion of the work. At present there was too much regard for technicalities. If the miners in the various parts of the State were shown the exact position of affairs in connection with geological formation in a manner which they could understand, an excellent work would be achieved. The present work was altogether too highly scientific. There were several excellent geologists in the department who were men of great experience, and if they went into the various centres and gave practical illustrations to the prospectors and miners as to the best way to work lodes and leads, the result would be most beneficial, not only to the men, but to the State generally. It was all very well to prepare these highly scientific reports if they were needed for sending away to other countries, but what we wanted was, for the

geologists, who had a practical knowledge of the work of mining, to give actual illustrations to the miners as to the best way of working, and explain to them the theoretical branch of their work in a manner that could easily be understood. At one time members were supplied with the reports of the geologists, but at the present time they saw nothing of them. Speaking for himself he looked forward to receiving reports from the different departments, for, when travelling through the districts the reports, especially those of the geologists, were found to be very useful.

The Minister for Mines: Do you not get all the reports that are issued?

Mr. HOLMAN: Only one or two reached him now and not only had the reports of the geologists been stopped but the reports of other officers and even the *Government Gazette* was not sent to him now. The returns of the Mines Department were published quarterly in the *Gazette* and that was information that he liked to have.

The Minister for Mines: Surely hon. members received the *Government Gazette*?

Mr. HOLMAN: No, that had been stopped also. He did not see why members should be called upon to pay for the *Government Gazette*.

The Minister for Mines: It should certainly be sent.

Mr. HOLMAN: He was of opinion that very much better work would result if some of these geologists instead of writing so much scientific matter gave the mining community something to read which they could understand. In this way the department could be made much more useful than it was. With regard to assays, more assistance might be given in that department. In travelling through the country he had found on more than one occasion that men had samples of ore that they desired to have assayed.

The Minister for Mines: There is no country in the world doing as much as we are in that direction.

Mr. HOLMAN: We could not do too much for mining in Western Australia.

The Minister for Mines: I am talking about free assays alone.

Mr. HOLMAN: In connection with these free assays so much had to be done in connection with the application which had to be forwarded to the department that many men were prevented from sending down their ore. As far as the new fields were concerned, the Minister should instruct the geologists to point out to the miners the most practical way to pick up lodes. The reports which were written and the maps and the drawings which were attached, were he admitted of very great value but were not understood by the ordinary man and something simpler, something which could be readily understood ought to be prepared by the department. He hoped the Minister would make inquiries as to why hon. members were not receiving these reports.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Free assays were carried out by the Geological Department and by the School of Mines. He was not in possession of the figures showing the number of free assays that were carried out last year by the Geological Department, but the School of Mines alone carried out 495 for prospectors. The department also carried out free examinations of ore, subject to certain conditions. A person who made a discovery was asked to give the location of that discovery, not necessarily the exact spot, and not necessarily for publication. It was not right, however, that the department should continuously carry out all assays for everybody free of charge. If they did that there would be no need for public assayers in the State. The department however desired to do everything it possibly could in the direction of assisting prospectors, but there was no country in the world which did so much as Western Australia in that direction. He was reading a report from California recently and from that he found that in no case did they carry out assays free of charge. In connection with the issue of geological reports and reports from other departments it was the rule to supply every member with copies.

Mr. Underwood: I have never received the report on the Pilbara district by Mr. Montgomery.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Instructions would be given on Monday that all reports should be sent to hon. members. He was under the impression that they received them all.

Mr. Walker: Not even the *Government Gazette*.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Many members did not want the *Government Gazette*. He would give an assurance that all the publications of the Mines Department at any rate would be sent to hon. members. With reference to the Geological Department generally, he could not claim to have any special knowledge of what should be the duties of a department of that sort. The department under Mr. Maitland was essentially very highly scientific, and Mr. Maitland claimed that the work should continue to be highly scientific, and that they should continue the work of examining various parts of the State, the various classes of rocks, the question of disintegration, and the disturbances of those rocks. It had been generally recognised that the work of this department had been of wonderful assistance to the mining industry here. That work was anything but complete and last year the department unfortunately had been at a disadvantage through the absence of Mr. Maitland from the State. He concurred with hon. members that we should try as far as possible to have the reports published in such a way that they would appeal to the ordinary individual. It was useless reading a report if one did not understand its phraseology. The special object the Government had when they appointed a State Mining Engineer was that he should go about the country, prepare reports with regard to each district that he travelled through, and if possible to give what assistance he could to prospectors. There were many old fields in the State which were deserving of some attention at the present time. If we could get hold of some person, not only with technical knowledge but with practical experience, to go through these dis-

tricts, obtain the old reports and learn something about the development work which had been done there, and then write small articles or prepare a pamphlet showing what had been the history of those old fields when first discovered; by adopting a plan of this description a great deal of good would result. Members would know that some 10 or 12 years ago a large amount of shallow mining was done throughout the State and when it came to crushing poor stone, the charges being from 20s. to 40s. per ton, carting being expensive, and the cost of living being expensive also, the workings were abandoned. About 12 months ago he had instructed the State Mining Engineer to see if it would not be possible to get hold of some qualified person who could go round the old districts with a view to writing up their records and collating all the information that could be obtained with regard to their early history. That idea had not yet been lost sight of. What was wanted was a report such as the State Mining Engineer himself might write; a report showing scientific knowledge and practical experience, and yet written as one man would write to another. The Geological Department had published a great many valuable pamphlets last year, and he would be very sorry indeed to have to instruct Mr. Maitland to depart from the course which that gentleman had mapped out for himself.

Mr. HOLMAN: All would agree with the Minister that it was very necessary that reports of the highest scientific character should be available for perusal by scientists and geologists in other parts of the world. At the same time some consideration ought to be given to the local people engaged in the industry. Would it not be possible for the department to issue separate reports, one for the scientists and the other for the men on the workings? He knew many old centres in this State on which there were scores of properties that in the old days had returned as high as 30 dwts. and 2 oz. to the ton. There was nothing to show that these properties could not be again profitably worked. But the people who might be prepared to work them had no idea

of where to start, nor, in fact, could it easily be determined which of these old abandoned workings had been rich and which would be scarcely worth while bothering about. If returns could be secured, reliable and couched in simple language, it would lead to the opening up of old properties, with a result that might possibly revolutionise the industry. Many of these properties had been abandoned, not so much because of the high costs that ruled in the early days as because of some newer and more promising find, to which the prospectors had rushed off. The compiling of the histories of these places could result in nothing but good.

Mr. WALKER: With a view to securing information he would ask whether the work of the Geological branch was purely confined to mining matters, or whether the State Geologist had other duties to perform in regard to geological research and investigations? Again, was that officer and his department exclusively under the control of the Minister for Mines?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The department was under his control, but its work was not confined exclusively to mining. For instance, when a dispute had arisen in connection with the initial work at Mundaring Weir, Mr. Maitland had made a geological examination of the site and reported to the Works Department. Again, Mr. Maitland frequently had occasion to report to the Lands Department as to certain mineralised areas occurring in agricultural districts. However, this work was always done under the control of the Minister for Mines.

Mr. WALKER: Was the system not unsatisfactory? For instance, if a phosphatic bed were to be discovered—a matter of world-wide interest—Mr. Maitland would be engaged upon the necessary examination. But, supposing that at the same time the Minister for Mines wanted him for certain important mining work, to which would the Government Geologist first give attention? It might be that the Minister for Mines would consider that the mining work was of the greater importance, although as a matter of fact, most people would give precedence to the phosphatic discovery. For the utilisation

of these natural manures might create untold wealth to the State. The very possibility of such divided duty was unsatisfactory. Clearly the Mines Department should have a geological staff of its own to deal exclusively with mining work; in addition to which there ought to be a second geological staff at the service of the State for general purposes. There were two or more separate branches of geology, and it was not every geologist who was *au fait* with every branch of his science.

The Minister for Mines: It should all be done in the one office.

Mr. WALKER: Not necessarily. The geologist would be of as much service to the farmer in opening up new pathways in agricultural development as he was to the miner.

The Premier: An analyst would be of more value to the farmer.

Mr. WALKER: There were many things, such as the analysis of rocks and kindred matters, that were dealt with by the geologist. There could be no question of greater importance than locating subterranean water supplies. In this direction the geologist could save a great deal of money to the State, as he now did in indicating where it would be useless to mine for gold. But that would be outside the sphere of the Mines Department, and there was quite enough work for a branch distinctly confined to mining and attached to the Mines Department, other matters being attached generally to the geology of the State. We had no proper geological survey of the State. There was nothing known definitely as to this country's age. Information of that character might have some bearing on future development, and it could not be effectively secured if the geologist was at the beck and call of every branch of the public service. There was ample work for a branch attached to the Mines Department to keep it going for years. Old workings might be examined and perhaps reopened with considerable profit to the State.

The Minister for Mines: Take the discovery of telluride at Mulgabbie, for instance; that might be followed out.

Mr. WALKER: It was unfortunate there were no reports or documents issued

from that department laid on the Table this session. These documents were most interesting and most valuable, and generally were not in that class of language that one anxious to study mining would find dry or obscure. It was to be hoped we would have a supply regularly in the future.

Mr. BUTCHER: Certainly more attention should be paid to this particular phase of the mining question. We could not too highly appreciate the advantages to be gained from dividing the work of the Geological Department. It was reported eight or nine years ago that there was a possibility of a large area of artesian water existing in our Northern areas, and he had been instrumental in inducing the Government to make certain tests. The present Minister, who was then in charge of the department, placed a small sum on the Estimates for the work, and it was carried out, and geologists were afterwards sent out to define the boundaries of the artesian basin, giving those engaged in pastoral pursuits an opportunity of further testing it after the Government had proved the existence of the supply. It was absolutely impossible to gauge the value to the State at the present moment of the work then done. There was a large area of country in the Northern portion of the State of a Carboniferous formation. He had urged the Government on several occasions to let a geologist to go out to that country, to ascertain whether it was worth while making tests to see if the country carried coal deposits. This district was away from the coast, but it was close to some valuable iron deposits, and was of enormous extent. If it was shown that it was worth while making tests by boring or otherwise, the value to the State might be enormous.

The Minister for Mines: I hope next month to have the report of the examination of all that field.

Mr. BUTCHER: It was regrettable that the reports promised were not available.

The Minister for Mines: The report is not yet to hand.

Mr. BUTCHER: It was to be hoped that this was going to lead to some discovery of value to the North as well as

the State generally. A friend of his, who had visited different parts of America where large oil deposits existed, expressed the opinion that parts of our Northern country were absolutely identical with the American country, and that there was every indication of oil being found. If we had a branch of the Geological Department for the specific purpose of exploring or otherwise investigating reports like this that were made from time to time, the best results might be obtained. He hoped the Government would shortly see their way to set aside a vote for the purpose.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Minister could not fail to be impressed with the need for the geological reports getting into the hands of those anxious to go out prospecting. The Minister would remember that early last year some prospectors from the Eastern fields on the way to the North-West were surprised to know that the Geological Department could supply the information they furnished in their reports. They had no knowledge these reports were issued from time to time. There was much in the reports of benefit to the prospectors, and it was unfortunate they were not to hand now as they were formerly. Another thing, members did not receive the *Gazette* they formerly received.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

Mr. TAYLOR: Prospectors should be furnished with the geological reports which would be of great value to them when going through the back country. They would be able from the reports to obtain knowledge as to the most likely localities for prospecting for gold and other metals. These reports should be furnished to the prospectors, when applied for, free of charge, for a very few finds would more than pay the cost. Every consideration should be given by the departmental officials to exploit further the natural resources of the country, and the officers should be utilised to the full in the interests of the State.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was generally known that almost the whole of the North-West was mineral-bearing, but up to the present the country had not received the

attention from the State geologists which it deserved. Mr. Gibb Maitland had been through the Pilbara district and made a fairly exhaustive survey, but the trip of the State Mining Engineer while useful to a certain extent was too short for him thoroughly to attend to so large a district. A geologist should be stationed in the northern part of the State. There were four geologists, and all were located in the South, whereas if one were sent to the North, most beneficial results would follow. There were thousands of miles of mineral country in the North which had not been visited by white men. One of the difficulties experienced by persons up there, was to find out the value of minerals that might be met with. Stone could be sent to the Geological Department for assay, but this work would be greatly facilitated if an assayer and geologist were stationed nearer at hand. The North-West would yet be the great mineral part of the State, particularly in regard to the baser metals.

Mr. HEITMANN: While recognising the importance of the department, still, it was frequently found that the prospectors gave more information to the geologists, than they received from them. At the same time, however, he must speak highly of the work of the department and he did not agree with the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) when he said that but little information was published by the officials. Pamphlets which had been issued by the geologists were full of information and of the greatest importance.

Mr. Collier: Where can you get them?

Mr. HEITMANN: At the Mines Department. He had never experienced any difficulty in being supplied with all the information available as to geological work. A report issued by Mr. Woodward was very interesting and full of information. Among other things it showed that there were very many old properties in Western Australia, which had been neglected in the past owing to the cost of treatment. With regard to these shows, there was no doubt many of them would now prove to be very valuable propositions if taken up and worked. With regard to the as-

say branch of the department, there might well be an enlargement of the scope of work. At present free assays were made under certain conditions, but this convenience had not been very largely availed of as only about 400 prospectors took advantage of it last year. Was it not possible for the department to assay for the general public at the cost price? At present it was necessary very frequently for prospectors to obtain an independent assay of their sands. On the Murchison it was difficult at times to get sands assayed and if the department could assay samples at cost price and let the fact be known to the prospectors, it would be taken advantage of to a very great extent. If assistance were given in that direction considerable benefit to the industry generally would follow.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: With regard to the question raised by the member for Kanowna as to the advisableness of appointing a geologist at the Lands Department or at the Agricultural Department, the matter was one entirely for those departments to deal with. If either of those departments considered that they required a specialist to deal with geological work, that work should be carried out under the control of the Government Geologist. With regard to assays whenever any person sent the Department any rock for analysis or determination, as long as it was from a new district or it was a new discovery, under ordinary circumstances the department would treat that free. Beyond that he did not think they could very well go. The member for Pilbara had referred to the extended tour through the whole of the Pilbara field made by the Government Geologist. The Government Geologist occupied three winter seasons in carrying out this tour and a most exhaustive report on the whole of that country from Bamboo Creek through 20-mile Sandy, Nullagine and Roebourne was the result. In addition last year the Government Geologist started from Carnarvon and went through the North-Western portion of the State to North of Onslow. The programme of the Government Geologist

this year included an examination of West Pilbara, then South to Meekatharra and if possible the Murchison Goldfields generally. In addition to the reports presented by Mr. Maitland on the Pilbara field the department had a report from the State Mining Engineer.

Mr. Underwood: It was a galloping report.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yet it was of exceeding value to anyone who was desirous of prospecting in that country. It was not his intention to lose sight of the necessity of having printed reports which might be of assistance in connection with the opening up of abandoned shows. There was one thing that was badly needed in connection with the Mines Department and that was a mining bureau, an office where information could be readily obtained by the public. There had been no possibility of establishing one in the present building. If there were a bureau it would be necessary to make it compulsory for all reports to be sent there.

Mr. Heitmann: They have that in New Zealand.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The fullest information available was wanted to give to the public. He regretted that he had not been able to establish this institution; it was a work for the future. With regard to the Geological Department he was satisfied that under the control of Mr. Maitland we would have in a few years time the whole of the auriferous areas properly mapped out and it would then be found that the work which had been done by that branch of the Mines Department would be of very great value to the country.

Item, Draftsman, £180:

MR. HEITMANN: There was a footnote to be read in connection with this item which showed that this officer was also in receipt of £150 as Sergeant-at-Arms in the Legislative Assembly. What were the duties of this officer who received one part of his salary from the Legislative Assembly and the other part from the Geological Department?

The Minister for Mines: This is a practice which has been carried out for the past 10 or 12 years.

MR. HEITMANN: The work could be better carried out if it were separated and given to two officers. It stood to reason that the Sergeant-at-Arms, after having spent many hours in the Legislative Assembly would not be able to do justice to a day's work in the Geological Department. He worked in the Assembly for many hours on several days of the week.

Mr. Scaddan: Seventeen hours sometimes.

The Minister for Mines: He has to make up the hours at the Geological Department.

MR. HEITMANN: Then the House was sweating this officer.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Inspection of Machinery*, £6,592:

MR. TAYLOR: The file of papers dealing with the permit which had been granted to Mr. Brimage was in his possession and it disclosed certain things which he intended to place before the Committee. Mr. Brimage was granted two permits by the inspector of mines for the driving of an engine. The first permit was granted on the understanding that Mr. Brimage should submit himself later on for examination. Mr. Brimage refused or neglected to go before the board and at the expiration of his first term he renewed his application for six months' extension. The inspector of mines opposed the application because Mr. Brimage broke the conditions under which the permit was granted and as manager of the mine he also violated certain rules and regulations under the Inspection of Machinery Act by allowing someone named Keegan to raise and lower men working below. Keegan did not even have a permit and he was a man who had practically no knowledge of the business of engine-driver. The inspector of mines and Mr. Brimage apparently did not get on well together. The inspector believed that the reason why Mr. Brimage was riding so high a horse was because he was a member of the Legislative Council, and a personal friend of the Minister for Mines. In the end the inspector had sued Mr. Brimage for his offence against the

Act. The inspector had since declared that he had received instructions from the Mines Department in Perth not to put Mr. Brimage to any unnecessary expense, and only to ask for a nominal penalty.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. Brimage acknowledged the offence, and all we wanted was a nominal penalty.

Mr. TAYLOR: That acknowledgment had been made only after a great deal of discussion and many communications between the inspector and the head office. So strong a case had the inspector presented that Mr. Brimage had no option but to acknowledge his offence. Had he defended the action and the inspector pressed it Mr. Brimage must have lost his case. The inspector had told him (Mr. Taylor) that Mr. Brimage had gone to Perth and interviewed the Minister, and that as a result it had been arranged that Mr. Brimage should plead guilty, in which event the department would only ask for a nominal penalty. But before all this had been fixed up the inspector had consulted solicitors, although on hearing that the case was not to be pressed he naturally had ceased his vigilance in the matter. The very fact of Mr. Brimage pleading guilty could only be accepted as full justification for the inspector's action in prosecuting him. The inspector had declared that when Warden Burt came to the court to hear the case he had bid good-day to Mr. Brimage and had taken him into one of the rooms at the back of the court, where they remained until the court opened. The inspector of mines had complained of this, and in his report Warden Burt had admitted it, explaining that he and Mr. Brimage had not been discussing the case. Then when the case was called on Mr. Brimage had handed up a letter to the warden, saying that he had received it from the Mines Department in Perth, where it had been determined that the charge should not be pressed. Having read that letter the warden had fined Mr. Brimage 5s. on each of two charges. Presumably because they knew of the turn affairs had taken, and concluded that their presence in court would not be required, the solicitors engaged by the inspector of mines had not put in an appearance.

The Minister for Mines: How would they know that the case was not to be pressed?

Mr. TAYLOR: In all probability Mr. Brimage had foolishly given it out to the people of Malcolm that he was on velvet, and that he was not going to be bluffed by Mr. Beaumont, the inspector. He (Mr. Taylor) had been told that Mr. Brimage had boasted that he was in a position to get the inspector the "sack."

Mr. Collier: That was because he was a M.L.C.

Mr. TAYLOR: As a member of one branch of the Legislature Mr. Brimage might have thought that that circumstance would help him. He (Mr. Taylor) knew that Mr. Brimage had boasted that not alone would he get out of the difficulty, but that he would get another permit and, moreover, get the inspector moved.

Mr. Collier: He was a good prophet, for he got the second permit.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was true that he had got the second permit, notwithstanding that the inspector had opposed the application on the score that the first permit had been granted on the understanding that Mr. Brimage would come up for examination, which he had failed to do. In spite of this the Minister had taken it on himself to grant the second permit. But the point he (Mr. Taylor) wished to make was that because the solicitor engaged by the inspector were not in court the warden had declined to allow any costs; and so Mr. Brimage, after having broken the law and broken his word too, had pleaded guilty and had been fined only 5s. on each of two charges without costs.

The Minister for Mines: The solicitor takes his instruction from the person who engages him.

Mr. TAYLOR: After the case had been heard Messrs. Maxwell, solicitors of Leonora, had put a bill in for £17 0s. 6d., and this the Government, and not Mr. Brimage, had paid.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. Brimage should have been made to pay it.

Mr. TAYLOR: The inspector had had an exceedingly difficult task, because apparently all the department had been against him. Even Mr. King,

the Under Secretary for Mines, in writing to the Minister on the 19th June had pointed to the discrepancy between the statements of the warden and of the inspector, and had formally and officially declared that he would prefer to take the warden's version of the affair. Right through the piece, seemingly, the department had shown an inclination to discourage and discountenance, and indeed, to frustrate the desire on the part of the inspector of mines to carry out his duty. Mr. Brimage was a member of Parliament, but Acts of Parliament ought not to be stretched in favour of any member.

The Minister for Mines: You would give him justice?

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, he would give justice to any man, but he could not help thinking that the inspector had hardly got it. Certainly the inspector of mines was of that peculiar temperament that would irritate where there was no occasion for it, though one would not say he would be in any way lax in his duty. However, the officer was not now in the department.

The Minister for Mines: Not over this matter.

Mr. TAYLOR: We would always have complications if the department interfered with inspectors in carrying out their duties under the Act, and we should take steps to stop any Minister preventing any of his officers from carrying out their duties by giving an ear to any individual, especially a member of Parliament, and helping that individual to fight the officers of the department. Though an engineer, Mr. Brimage was so deficient in that work that he would not go up for examination, even for a second-class certificate; and in the matter of raising and lowering men in shafts no inspector of mines could be too strict. The department would have been wiser if they had allowed the inspector to take the matter before the court, because the court would have seen that Mr. Brimage got justice; and then if it were found the officer had been too zealous, the department could have told him not to harass employers so much. It was true Mr. Brimage was armed with a letter to the effect that the case should

not be pressed. It was said that a letter was handed up to the bench purporting to be a letter from the Minister to the warden.

The Minister for Mines: You do not believe that? The inspector was instructed by the department to prosecute and ask for a nominal fine.

Mr. TAYLOR: The case was postponed from time to time, and there were negotiations between Mr. Brimage and the department. Mr. Brimage was so unwise as to say that he was on velvet, and that he would get the inspector sacked, and the general impression when the inspector was dismissed was that this was the case. Probably it caused some friction between the inspector and the department that might have coloured some subsequent transaction necessitating the inspector's dismissal.

Mr. TROY: Did not the Minister intend to reply to the statements of the member for Mt. Margaret?

The Minister for Mines: I want to hear other members speak. I do not want to reply to each member.

Mr. TROY: Members wished to hear the Minister's defence. It might be necessary for them to take exception to some of the Minister's remarks. The matter referred to was one of those acts that made the administration of the department so obnoxious to members of the Opposition. There could be no doubt Mr. Brimage was shown considerable courtesy and leniency in regard to the charge he was guilty of, that of working a winding engine and lowering and raising men in a shaft by virtue merely of a permit which did not allow of his doing this, because only holders of first-class certificates could carry out this work. After the inspector had taken action against Mr. Brimage the latter defied the inspector for nearly six months, and considerable time elapsed before the department sanctioned the prosecution. Then on receiving notice of the prosecution Mr. Brimage had interviewed the Minister and made the statement that he was guilty of this misconduct, upon which the inspector had been instructed by the department not to allow any costs to be incurred, to refrain from calling

witnesses or further engaging the solicitors instructed to prosecute, out of consideration for Mr. Brimage alone, because Mr. Brimage, if found guilty, would have had to pay the costs. It appeared, also, that the warden got word that the costs were to be kept down.

An incident.

The Minister for Mines : On a point of order. That has no foundation. The warden got no word from us.

Mr. Scaddon : It has foundation.

The Minister for Mines : I say the statement is absolutely untrue.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member must not say that.

The Minister for Mines : I withdraw ; but I object to hon. members implying that I gave instructions or sent the warden a letter in connection with this case. It has no foundation, and it is a reflection not only on myself but on the warden.

The CHAIRMAN : The proper time for the hon. member to deal with this is when the member for Mt. Magnet has concluded his remarks, unless on a point of order.

The Minister for Mines : I asked that the statement be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN : A similar case occurred the other night. If an error or misstatement is made it does not constitute a point of order, but can be made clear subsequent to the speech of the hon. member who makes it.

Resumed.

Mr. TROY : The warden must have received instructions, as he was so considerate in regard to the costs awarded against Mr. Brimage, amounting only to 7s., though Mr. Brimage, who should have known better, had put the department to considerable cost before the case came on. There was another side to the question, and probably the fact that certain persons were ardent supporters of the Minister during the recent election campaign would show why they received consideration. The inspector of mines was instructed to put the case in the hands of a firm of solicitors at Menzies and Kookynie, Messrs. Maxwell and Ackland. That firm advised instead of the

Crown Law Department. The result was that the Mines Department, through the illegal action of Mr. Brimage and despite the fact that he had for months denied he was guilty, and only admitted his guilt when forced to do so, had to pay Maxwell and Ackland £17 0s. 6d. Mr. Brimage who was the cause of all these costs had only to pay a fine of 7s. Why was this case given to Maxwell and Ackland ? Mr. Maxwell was the chairman of the Minister's electioneering committee at Menzies. Mr. Ackland was the chairman of the Kookynie committee. There were many examples of the Minister's favours distributed through the district, and this was one of the least. If the Attorney General went through the bill of costs he would find there were many items which should not have been charged. The department had asked the inspector to withdraw the witnesses and solicitors, and not to urge the case on ; the result was that the people of this State had to pay the costs instead of Mr. Brimage, who got off scot free. Although Mr. Brimage was fined for working a winding engine and splitting a man's head open, and despite the fact that the inspector said the permit should be cancelled and that the inspector of boilers adopted a similar attitude, yet that permit was not cancelled, but was now possessed by Mr. Brimage. The inspector of boilers in reporting on the case said—

“I consider this case a peculiarly flagrant and wilful breach of the Act and as the inspector of the district wish to make the following strong recommendation :—(a) That the permit recently issued to Mr. T. Brimage by the Minister for Mines be cancelled on the ground of wilful disobedience and disregard of its provisions. (b) That T. Brimage be prosecuted forthwith both for hauling men himself and for permitting and instructing E. Keegan to work the winding and mill engines without being the holder of a certificate. The witnesses examined by the inspector of mines state emphatically that E. Keegan has often raised and lowered men. (c) That E. Keegan be also prosecuted for habit-

ually working the winding and mill engine without being the holder of any certificate or permit whatever. Unless some strong action is taken in this case, it will be useless to attempt to enforce the provisions of the Act in this district."

Members were justified in saying that some favour had been shown Mr. Brimage, who had used his position as a member of Parliament to secure privileges for himself which would otherwise have been denied him.

Mr. Jacoby : You must not say that ; it is wrong.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member must not reflect on a member of another place.

Mr. TROY : The statement he had just made had been made by him right through the Menzies district. However, he would not reflect on Mr. Brimage now. The complaint was, that certain persons had received undue treatment and extraordinary consideration from the Mines Department. The provisions of no Act could be enforced if members of Parliament were given consideration denied to others.

Mr. SCADDAN : The inspection of machinery branch had got out of the control of the Minister. On many occasions he had referred to the administration of the branch, for it was growing to such an extent that the head officials were now looking upon it as a department instead of a branch. There was room for considerable economies in the branch by compelling some of the inspectors who were now in the head office to go into the districts and do inspection work. The system in vogue there did not exist in any other department. The work of the chief inspector seemed to consist solely of receiving correspondence, opening it, sending it to a clerk, and on to the technical officer, who if satisfied, passed it back again, and the chief inspector perused it. If action were to be taken, the chief inspector noted it and the correspondence went through all the same channels again, and then on to the district officer. It was the central office in Perth that cost all the money, for there were several inspectors practically kicking

their heels in the City. They should be out in the districts. The chief inspector himself should do inspection work. If the technical officer were qualified he should be able to act on the district officer's report without sending it on to the chief inspector. Some attention should be paid to the question of amalgamating the Machinery and Mines Inspection branches, not in the manner outlined by the Minister, for that was impracticable, but by putting the two offices under the State Mining Engineer. An inspector of machinery should have just as much responsibility thrown on his shoulders as an inspector of mines. In the latter case, the inspector ordered a certain course to be followed, but the inspector of machinery had to submit reports to the head office, and these were gone through first by the technical officer and then by the chief inspector before action was taken. When dealing with the items he intended to move to strike out the item of chief inspector, as the position was unnecessary. He would like the Minister to inform him also whether he had taken notice of the statements made by the Chief Inspector of Machinery and the district inspector in the report of the Mines Department for 1907, statements which reflected upon the character of engine-drivers and members of this House. His opinion was that the chief inspector was biased against engine-drivers and had always shown it and in one or two instances also against members of Parliament. However that did not concern him in the slightest degree. The chief inspector was at liberty to criticise him whenever he liked. The statements that he (*Mr. Scaddan*) made he always made publicly and the chief inspector could read them in the Press or in *Hansard*, but he certainly objected to the chief inspector writing in his report that in his opinion members of Parliament should go to him first and make complaints instead of going to the House. He had no desire to deal with the chief inspector. Whenever he had any complaints to make he would make them to the Minister or to the House, and if the Minister would only take some notice of them some advantage

would follow to him and to members. Another complaint that he had against this department was the defective system of examination of engine-drivers. The Chief Inspector of Machinery was chairman of the board of examiners and he boasted that the cost of examination was less in this State than it was in any other State of the Commonwealth. That might be so, but like the Scotchman he (Mr. Scaddan) had his "doots," because while the salary as chairman of the board was not shown, in the other States the chairman was paid as a member of the sitting board. Further, the expenses of the chief inspector in Perth when travelling to make examinations of half a dozen persons who offered themselves were charged against the incidental vote and not against that of examination of engine-drivers. Thus members could not get at the true position. On one occasion it required the Chief Inspector of Machinery, who received £450 per annum, and an inspector of mines from Southern Cross, an officer receiving £350 per annum, to proceed to—and he said it with all fairness to the member for Dundas—an insignificant place like Ravensthorpe, insignificant from the standpoint of engine-drivers. These two officers proceeded there to carry out an examination of four or five persons. The expenses of this trip had to be taken into consideration, and yet we were paying a member of the board of examiners who had to kick his heels around Perth while the other two proceeded to Ravensthorpe to carry out the examination. That kind of thing went on every day, and the cost of the examination of engine-drivers was not really known to anyone, and it was useless for the chief inspector to boast that the amount was less than in Victoria and New South Wales. The chief inspector by saying that was not making a correct statement. The Minister should certainly pay some attention to this department. The Estimates showed that there had been a reduction of one inspector, but a good deal more remained to be done. At the present time inspectors were travelling and going full steam in the outback districts trying to catch up their work while the

chief inspector did little else but ride about in the trains on a free pass. The Minister and members, he hoped, would pay some attention to this department and see whether it was not possible to make further reductions.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: With regard to the statements which had been made by members concerning the Brimage prosecution he would like to explain a few matters if only for the benefit of members on the Ministerial side of the House. Under the Mines Regulation Act there was power to grant permits to enable persons to drive engines, but there was no power to grant these permits to enable the people in question to raise or lower men in a shaft. Amongst various applications which were made was one from Mr. Brimage. Mr. Brimage told him that he had bought the Richmond Gem mine and it had turned out poorly and that things were exceedingly bad, and he wanted to know whether he could have a permit to work his own engine. He asked Mr. Brimage what his qualifications were and Mr. Brimage presented his papers and showed that he had served an apprenticeship as a fitter and as engineer for five years, that he had gone through the Government workshops, the loco, carriage and wagon departments and was employed in the drawing office and subsequently as a journeyman draftsman. The papers he (the Minister) had before him gave all this information about Mr. Brimage and Mr. Thomas Roberts, Chief Mechanical Engineer for the South Australian railways in referring to the services of Mr. Brimage while employed in the South Australian Railway Department spoke of the work which he had done and said that he was leaving that State of his own accord. Mr. Brimage then came to Western Australia and got employment on Bayley's Gold Mine in charge of a winding engine, the principal winding engine on the main shaft.

Mr. Troy: Who told you that?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon member had seen those files he would know that the information was contained in it.

Mr. Scaddan : Is there no other evidence besides Mr. Brimage's own statement ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : There was the statement by Mr. Brimage that he was employed in the capacity which had been mentioned, under Captain Matthews, now of South Australia, and Mr. Brimage also mentioned Mr. Tom Brown and Mr. Hector Griffiths now of Greenbushes, who he said would verify his statements. He (the Minister) would not go behind Mr. Brimage's back to ascertain whether he was speaking the truth or not. Hon. members opposite might have done so, but he never thought of it. He certainly did not ask for any corroboration of Mr. Brimage's statement ; he accepted it and believed it to be correct and assuming it to be correct, had Mr. Brimage applied—in fact he could have demanded a certificate of service under the Machinery Act—it would have been granted to him. The fact that he had been in charge of a winding engine would have compelled the board to agree to his request unless there was something with regard to his character which justified them not granting a certificate.

Mr. Scaddan : Not on his own statement.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Yes, on his own statement. The statement showed that Mr. Brimage had the qualifications and the mere fact that Mr. Brimage was a member of Parliament should not debar him from getting a concession that any other person might have obtained. Believing Mr. Brimage's statements he (the Minister) granted him the permit. He put in that permit a provision that at the end of six months Mr. Brimage was to apply to the board and pass an examination if he wanted a certificate, but that was not carried out. While Mr. Brimage was working under this certificate a complaint was made by the inspector that Mr. Brimage had raised and lowered persons in the shaft and the inspector asked that he should be allowed to prosecute. Instructions were given for the prosecution and the inspector consulted the local solicitor Mr. Maxwell. The solicitor was never on

his (Mr. Gregory's) committee, although he honestly believed that he supported him in the recent election. Mr. Beaumont had been advised not to issue the summons until he was sure of his witnesses. In a letter to the department Mr. Beaumont had stated that both Messrs. Maxwell and Ackland, and Warden Burt had said it would be better not to issue any summons until he was sure he could get his witnesses. A delay had ensued, owing to the difficulty of finding those witnesses. Mr. Brimage had come down to Perth and interviewed him (the Minister) with the object of vindicating his neglect to conform with the conditions under which he had secured his permit. He (the Minister) had pointed out to Mr. Brimage that he was wrong in the action he had taken, and declared to him that the department was determined to prosecute him, but that if he were to plead guilty nothing more than a nominal penalty would be pressed for. To this Mr. Brimage had agreed, whereupon he (the Minister) advised the State Mining Engineer, who in turn advised the inspector of mines, that nothing more than a nominal penalty and costs were to be asked for. No member of the Committee would seriously believe that he (the Minister) would write to a magistrate directing him as to how he should find in a matter that was to come before him. He (the Minister) was convinced that if Warden Burt were to receive any such communication, whether from the Attorney General or from any other Minister, he would at once make the matter public and so show that he would not be dictated to in respect to his judicial findings. The member for Mt. Margaret who had had a long acquaintance with Warden Burt knew full well that that gentleman was above suspicion and would be one of the first to resent any interference by Ministers. He (the Minister) had insisted upon the prosecution of Mr. Brimage; for notwithstanding that Mr. Brimage had shown himself fully qualified to do the work, he had not the certificate necessary under the Act. The department had since been compelled to dispense with the services of the inspector of mines, but the reason for

this had no connection with this case. If any hon. member desired to know exactly why the inspector had been got rid of he could discover the reasons on the file. In respect to this prosecution against Mr. Brimage the inspector had done nothing wrong, although he had not appeared to know anything about the costs of the case when spoken to on the subject by the warden at the time of the hearing.

Mr. Taylor : What costs could there be when there was no case ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Had there been no case Mr. Brimage would not have been fined. As a matter of fact the warden would have been quite justified in giving full costs. The department had fully expected that Mr. Brimage would be mulcted in the whole of the costs.

Mr. Scaddan : Should not the solicitors have said what the costs were ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : The inspector had no solicitors in court.

Mr. Taylor : Where did the costs come in ? What did Maxwell do to earn the £17 ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES had not seen the bill.

Mr. Taylor : He prepared the evidence but did not appear in court.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : It was not known to him how the costs were made up. The warden had subsequently reported that on Mr. Brimage pleading guilty he (the warden) had asked the inspector if he had anything to say, whereupon he had replied that he had been instructed not to ask for anything more than a nominal fine as it was the conviction the department desired rather than any punishment of the offender. The warden had then said that as the costs would be heavy he considered a fine of 5s. in each case would be sufficient, after which he had asked the inspector what was the amount of the costs. To this the inspector had replied that he did not know ; and in answer to further questions he had repeated that he knew nothing about the costs. The warden had then formally asked him if he applied for costs, and the inspector in reply had said that he had not been instructed to do

so. The clerk of the court had then intimated that there was 2s. court charges to pay, and Mr. Brimage at once paid this. On leaving the court the warden had told Mr. Brimage that he was exceedingly lucky ; that when he had fined him 5s. on each charge he had expected that he would have also to pay costs amounting to £10 or more. In this case there had been no reason why the department should act vindictively or maliciously. It had been the first case of the kind, and all the department had desired was to make it clear to holders of permits that they must come up for examination at the appointed time. Mr. Brimage had certainly come to his office and interviewed him on the subject ; and he (the Minister) had assured him that the department intended to prosecute him in the matter. Mr. Brimage had explained that he was working under a first-class certificated man on the mine with a view to qualifying himself for the examination ; but he (the Minister) had repeated that the case must proceed, but that if he (Mr. Brimage) pleaded guilty nothing more than a nominal penalty would be asked for. That was the whole history of the affair. As to the case of the engine-drivers, mentioned by the member for Ivanhoe, it would be remembered that in last year's report of the chief inspector there had been a paragraph dealing with engine-drivers. This paragraph had read—

“Drunkenness is frequently complained of, but I cannot get anyone to come forward to substantiate a charge in a specific case, notwithstanding that I have frequently tried to do so. I know scores of worthy drivers, but more who, without certificates, could not earn a living.”

As a matter of fact this paragraph had been written, not by the chief inspector but by Inspector Jones who, in a letter to the department had expressed surprise at the publication of his report, which he had understood to be confidential and for the use of the Minister only. He had also asked that the word “more” should be excised, explaining that what he had meant to say was “many.” Inspector Jones claimed that the whole of his report

should have been published, especially that part dealing with the fact that not being able to employ any but certificated drivers in the back country placed the drivers in a position of being able to coerce the employers. The inspector had qualified this by a statement that had not been published in the chief inspector's report, to the effect that in large centres where engine-drivers were plentiful and competition was keen it might be another thing, but that elsewhere the employer was very much at the mercy of the engine-driving staff, and put up with a great deal of poor work for the sake of not being left without an engine-driver. The mines in the outback country were not allowed to carry on without a certificated man being in charge of the engines, and there were instances in which these drivers would not do work which they would otherwise do if the mine owner was not compelled to employ them because of the scarcity of drivers in the district.

Mr. Bolton: What was the motive of the chief inspector for suppressing that portion of the report?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was questionable whether any of the inspector's report should have been published, but it was particularly regrettable that this particular extract under consideration should have been published.

Mr. Bolton: The chief inspector will be more sorry yet that he published any of it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That was a matter of opinion. On the South Carbine mine there were four men working below, and in order to raise and lower them an engine-driver had to be employed; and as it only took him a couple of hours a day to do this, the management asked him in addition to sharpen tools, but the driver left the mine straight away, and had it not been for the driver from the Carbine mine giving assistance, operations would have had to be suspended below. Probably engine-drivers were the finest type of men on the goldfields; they were clever, and in every respect a most worthy class; but, like every other class, there were a few black sheep among them, who frequently got out in the back country because they

could not get work in the large centres. Nevertheless it was certainly unwise to attack a class of men because one or two did wrong. It was wrong to say that the majority of them were bad characters, but there were a few who were bad, as in the case quoted. On some mines the drivers had to be fitters as well and must know how to dismantle engines and put them together again. But if it was desired to charge one or two men it should not be done in a report; it could easily be done by the board of examiners questioning these men why their certificates should not be cancelled. That was the best way to deal with a man who was a drunkard.

Mr. Scaddan: A man under the influence of drink who takes charge of a winding engine should have his certificate taken from him.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Attorney General, at his request, had asked the licensing magistrates not to grant licences within a quarter of a mile of the shaft of any mine; because, with temptation so near, engine-drivers might leave their work to visit the hotel, and the result might be a serious accident.

Mr. Scaddan: What explanation has the chief inspector for putting that matter in his annual report?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was a report sent to the chief inspector, showing the difficulty experienced in the back country, and it was the chief inspector's duty to frame his annual report as he thought wisest.

Mr. Bolton: There was a lack of brains shown in excising that latter piece.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The secretary to the engine-drivers' association had written to the department on the 8th December complaining that the department had been penalising drivers twice over for the same offence. The department denied this, and said there was no second penalty other than dealing with the certificate. Where a small fine was imposed the board had cancelled the driver's certificate for a period or altogether, according to the merits of the case. The association had also complained that in certain specified factories drivers had been employed without certificates, but a

report to the department showed that no uncertificated men had been employed in the places mentioned. However, inquiries were being made into the charges. Remarks concerning the department generally he would defer, as he understood the member for Ivanhoe intended to move to strike out the salary of the chief inspector. He would then have an opportunity to deal fully with the matter.

Mr. SCADDAN: Had the Minister made any inquiry into the statement of the chief inspector in his last report concerning "misrepresentations made in Parliament intentionally and otherwise"? The Minister had promised to bring it under the notice of the Under Secretary for Mines and ask for an explanation.

Mr. TROY: In regard to the Brimage case, one rarely heard a weaker defence than that made by the Minister. Leniency was shown to Mr. Brimage because that gentleman had purchased a mine which turned out badly. If that was a reason for leniency it was strange it was shown in this case, while prospectors on the Murchison, who had pioneered the country and spent the best part of their lives in developing it, had their property taken from them, though they were legally entitled to it, and handed over to a company. In one case a prospector named Carter had a lease, which he had found and pioneered, given him by the warden, but the Minister took it away and gave it to a mining company. The Minister had said Mr. Brimage had served his apprenticeship at engineering in South Australia. Only the previous day he had seen a certificate from the Railway Department that a certain man was competent at his work, but he had been discharged from the service. It was surprising that the Minister should leave the Chamber at this stage after the statement he had made, but it was evidently because he was afraid of the whole transaction.

The CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. TROY: It was a personal insult to him that the Minister who had made a statement in justification of certain action should leave the Chamber when he was being replied to. There were papers in his possession which proved his charges against the Minister up to the hilt. Mr.

Brimage had received extraordinary consideration. We were told that Mr. Brimage had been an engineer on a mine in Coolgardie in the early days, and that he had charge of a winding engine. The Minister considered that sufficient justification to grant him a certificate. The Minister had also said the permit was granted because Mr. Brimage had worked in a machinery shop in South Australia, and could therefore demand a certificate from the board. That was incorrect, for no such demand could be made. Again, we were told the inspector of mines made no application for a heavy fine before the court. What instructions did that officer receive? The Minister said he had seen Mr. Brimage and gave an order for the prosecution. The following minute was sent from the State Mining Engineer to the inspector of mines:—

"Herewith please find a statutory declaration by Mr. T. Brimage admitting his offence against the Machinery Regulation Act, 1906, and Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904, in himself raising men on the winding engine at the Richmond Gem mine and in employing Keegan, an uncertificated driver. As Mr. Brimage now takes full responsibility for the employment of Keegan there is no necessity to go on with the charge against the latter, Keegan, and the information against him had best be withdrawn. You should, however, lay a further information charging Mr. Brimage himself with breach of Section 31 of the Machinery Regulation Act, 1906, in winding men without a certificate. This was the main complaint against him, and as he now admits its correctness it can be proved on his own declaration without necessity for bringing other witnesses. Mr. Brimage has undertaken to the Minister and myself to plead guilty to both the charges of winding men himself and employing Keegan on the engines, and if he pleads in court accordingly there will be no need to bring any evidence. The enclosed statutory declaration will serve as evidence if from any cause he should change his mind when the case is brought on. It will, therefore, be quite unnecessary to

employ the solicitor in the court or to bring any witnesses, and to avoid expense as much as possible you should withdraw the subpoenas served on the witnesses, and notify them that they need not attend. There is no desire on the part of the department to harass Mr. Brimage beyond vindicating the law, and therefore, we need not press for much more than a nominal penalty, as he now admits that he was wrong."

After having defied the inspector for four months, Mr. Brimage admitted he was guilty of the charges. Evidently, notwithstanding the declaration, the Minister was doubtful whether Mr. Brimage would plead guilty as he had said he would; for in a minute he used the words, "the enclosed statutory declaration will serve as evidence if from any cause he should change his mind when the case is brought on." It was because Mr. Brimage interviewed the Minister that he received such extraordinary consideration. When the inspector was asked at the hearing of the case what the solicitor's costs were, he said he did not know, because the bill had not been sent in and the solicitor was not there. All Mr. Brimage was fined was 4s., whereas the department had to pay £17 solicitor's costs. In addition there were other expenses. The reply by the Minister was very weak. There were instances of corruption in regard to mining administration, and it was such cases that made the administration so obnoxious to members on this side of the House. There were numberless cases, and he took strong exception to such administration. The Minister had stated that he told the inspector to place the case in the hands of local solicitors. The letter of instructions said that the case should be placed in the hands of Messrs. Maxwell and Ackland. Despite the Minister's denial it was a fact that Mr. Ackland was chairman of the Minister's committee at Kookynie. Mr. Maxwell, if not the chairman, was a prominent member of the Minister's committee at Menzies. Besides this extraordinary act of leniency towards Mr. Brimage, there was another case which needed mentioning. Hardly had Mr. Brimage got through the first case than the inspector was informed by the miners on

the mine that the rope on the cage was rotten. The inspector condemned 150 feet of the rope, and Mr. Brimage put in a claim against the Mines Department for the cost. It was only natural that he should make a claim seeing that he had got off so well on the previous occasion. The inspector stuck to his guns and said that the rope was bad. The Mines Department sent Mr. Greenard, another inspector from Menzies, to make inquiry about the rope, and Mr. Greenard condemned the whole of it. Then Mr. Brimage put in a claim for the whole lot.

Mr. Angwin: Is there not some influential gentleman in with him in that mine?

Mr. TROY had never inquired about that. Mr. Brimage had done exceedingly well so far by using his own influence. The Minister informed the Committee that Mr. Brimage could have got a certificate. Then why did the Minister give him another permit? Perhaps because Mr. Brimage said that he had driven a winding engine some years ago. He (Mr. Troy) would not be prepared to take Mr. Brimage's own statement for that. He knew nothing with regard to the inspector but he knew sufficient of the case to regard it as a scandal and felt satisfied from the papers that he had seen that nothing that the Minister could say would justify the action he had taken. If Mr. Brimage was still pursuing the policy he had adopted and was not only working the winding engine but was raising and lowering men without a certificate, he hoped the department would take action.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was with regret that he heard the hon. member reflect upon the character of Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Ackland. The hon. member insinuated that they were capable of being placated.

Mr. TROY: On a point of order, he made no reflection upon those gentlemen. What he said was that they had received some consideration as Ministerial supporters.

The CHAIRMAN had pointed out a little earlier on a question raised by the member for Mount Magnet that these interruptions to members who were speaking in order to contradict their statements were entirely wrong and he wished again

to repeat that statement. There was no point of order in this case.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If he had done the hon. member an injustice he would be the first to make amends. He had interpreted what the hon. member had stated as being to the effect that he objected to Mr. Maxwell being employed by the Mines Department because Mr. Maxwell was the chairman or was interested in the committee of Mr. Brimage when a candidate for Parliament.

Members: Not Mr. Brimage, but Mr. Gregory.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Well, whether it was Mr. Brimage or Mr. Gregory, Messrs. Maxwell and Ackland were charged with having taken some part in politics and shown their political bias in favour of some individual. After all we must adopt some rules of conduct in this House, and it was absolutely wrong to reflect upon professional men, by supposing them for one moment to be untrue to their professional duty because of the opinions they might hold with regard to politics. If the hon. member did not mean that, he did not mean anything. Having known Mr. Maxwell for a great many years he (the Attorney General) could say without hesitation that there was no more honourable man in Western Australia. He did not know Mr. Ackland, but there was no doubt he was an honourable man too.

Mr. Taylor: He was a very decent fellow; I know him well.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was easy to deal with other people's reputations and damage them to a great extent by making statements the gravity of which one did not at the time appreciate. These gentlemen had the right to be protected as much as anyone in the land. It was not right to suppose that lawyers were people without a conscience and that they would allow themselves to be influenced by opinions they held in any matter outside their profession. He (the Attorney General) entirely repudiated a charge such as that, and speaking for the whole profession he could say that no man who had been asked to act for a client had ever shown himself to be wanting in his duty because of the political opinions he held.

Mr. Angwin: I wish I could believe that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member who had made the statement was wholly and entirely inaccurate. If the statement was not made as an innuendo, then he could not say what the words conveyed. Having regretted that the hon. member should have thought it necessary to use the language he had done he would pass on to what the hon. member had stated with regard to Mr. Brimage. The hon. member made it a point against the Minister that instructions were given to the inspector for mines that as Mr. Brimage had admitted in a statutory declaration that he was guilty of a certain offence against the Mines Regulation Act, the inspector should not bring into court witnesses to prove the case. He (the Attorney General) did not know of any advice which was more proper under the circumstances. Why should expenses be loaded up against a person who had admitted his guilt? Why should they pile up the costs against him unless they wanted to be vindictive? In no case would it be tolerated where an accused party said "I offer no defence" that one should then pile up the costs against him by bringing along witnesses to prove what had been admitted. Yet the hon. member made that a charge against the Minister. Surely nothing was more unreasonable. With regard to the other aspect it was beyond any question that Mr. Brimage in the early days of Coolgardie acted in the capacity of engine-driver. He came here from South Australia, having certain certificates and diplomas which were issued to him there. He was employed in the early days of Coolgardie at Bayley's mine and everyone who was there in those days would remember him.

Mr. Bolton: Had they any machinery at Bayley's in 1894, when he claims to have been a driver?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, there was machinery there in 1895.

Mr. Bolton: But in the early part of 1894?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There was machinery there in 1895 when he (the Attorney General) went to Coolgardie and it had been there for a consider-

able time. Mr. Brimage was employed there driving an engine.

Mr. Scaddan: A windlass, probably.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Mr. Brimage held a certificate, and if he did not hold a certificate entitling him to drive an engine he committed an offence, and it was the duty of the department to vindicate the laws of the country. We should show consideration to every man placed in the position that Mr. Brimage found himself. He (the Attorney General) knew that Mr. Brimage had fought an uphill battle and he had gone back from a position of considerable ease to battle again in the back blocks where he started in 1893, and he was working now on a property in which he had invested every penny that he had, and he was using his skill to make ends meet. Although our laws must be enforced, especially where they applied to the lives of men, we should not approach a subject such as this in any vindictive spirit. We should remember that this man held a diploma obtained in South Australia.

Mr. Bolton: Not for driving an engine.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: He had a diploma which entitled him to drive an engine.

Mr. Scaddan: Not at all.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Mr. Brimage might be in the position of a number of other engine-drivers in this State who, were they asked to pass an examination, might possibly fail. These men however would be recognised in the State as competent engine-drivers. Instead of saying as we might well say to a man in Mr. Brimage's position that the laws which had been made must be enforced and that we could not allow him to take any risk where human life was concerned in working his mine, it would appear as if there was some desire to hound the unfortunate man out of the only existence which was left to him. He (the Attorney General) deprecated that kind of thing. He was not for one moment saying that if a breach of the Act was committed we must not carry out our laws, but consideration might be given to a man like Mr. Brimage who had attempted to retrieve a fortune which had passed away from him.

[*Mr. Taylor took the Chair.*]

Mr. COLLIER: Members had witnessed the indignation of the Attorney General on previous occasions. Members had also heard him as a special pleader, but he ventured to say that the Attorney General had quite excelled himself as a special pleader on the present occasion. He had pleaded almost pitifully for Mr. Brimage who, according to his statement, hon. members on the Opposition side were endeavouring to hound out of the country. There had been no attempt whatever to deal unfairly with Mr. Brimage. An attempt had been made to see that the men engaged in his mine were getting the protection which the Act said they were entitled to receive. He (Mr. Collier) had never listened to a more lame or impotent defence than that of the Minister for Mines with regard to this case. He had gone back to South Australia and taken Mr. Brimage's record in an attempt to show that Mr. Brimage was a competent engineer and fitter. He had declared that the papers showed Mr. Brimage to be fully qualified to do the work of engine driving. As a matter of fact there was not one tittle of evidence to show that Mr. Brimage was so qualified. Where was there any evidence of his ever having driven an engine in his life? The Minister had accepted Mr. Brimage's own statement that he had driven an engine in Coolgardie in 1894; but would the Minister be prepared to accept such a statement from any ordinary man, or would he not ask for some evidence of the fact? The Minister had stated his belief that Mr. Brimage, as an engine-driver, was better qualified than any man on the Opposition side of the House. This, in face of the fact that among the members of the Opposition were two, if not three, holding first-class certificates.

Mr. Osborn: Still, they may not be competent to drive an engine.

Mr. COLLIER: They were men who had passed the board of examiners; yet the member for Roebourne suggested that possibly they were not so competent as the man who had not been able to obtain a certificate at all. If Mr. Brimage was so well qualified why had he not obtained

his certificate? Why had not the Minister insisted upon the carrying out of the conditions under which the permit had been granted, namely, that at the end of six months Mr. Brimage should go up for examination? Instead of this the Minister had given Mr. Brimage a fresh permit; and further than that, he (Mr. Collier) was informed that Mr. Brimage was still raising and lowering men on that mine. Where was the warrant for the Minister reading into an Act of Parliament certain conditions and considerations having no relation whatever to that Act? Was the Minister to be permitted to take into consideration the fact that he believed the man who had broken the law was a deserving man, and that he had bought a mine which had not turned out to be a payable proposition? What right had the Minister to take such matters into consideration? There was the Act, laying it down specifically how, where, and why a permit should be granted. It was not within the province of any Minister to read into that Act considerations which were not there laid down. Again, the Minister for Mines had endeavoured to place the blame on the shoulders of the inspector. What other action could the inspector have taken when the case was before the court in view of the letter read by the member for Mount Magnet? How on earth could the inspector have had any knowledge of the costs? Why had not the lawyers, who had received £17 from the Government for doing nothing, and whom the Minister had so warmly eulogised—why had they not instructed the inspector as to what the costs were? All that the inspector had known was that he had been instructed from Perth not to press the case.

Mr. Troy : The whole thing was fixed up.

Mr. COLLIER : The blame certainly lay with the firm of solicitors to whom the department had since had to pay some £17 in costs. Moreover, one would have thought that the Minister would object to granting an interview to a man against whom the department was taking legal proceedings. Why should that man have been allowed to go into the Minister's office and privately interview him on the

question of that very prosecution? The only straightforward course which had been open to the Minister at such a juncture was to refer Mr. Brimage to the solicitors in charge of the prosecution. Any one who had listened to the discussion this evening could have no other view than that it was an absolutely scandalous case. Was it usual for a man against whom a charge was laid to be granted access to the Minister in order that he might plead his case before him? Again, why should the Minister have issued instructions so specific as to the desire for nothing more than a nominal penalty? Surely the matter might have been left for the warden to decide.

The Minister for Mines : I sent no instruction to the court.

Mr. COLLIER : The Minister had sent instructions to the inspector who was attending to the prosecution. Why had not the case been left to the magistrate?

The Minister for Mines : Because it was the first case of the sort.

Mr. COLLIER : Although the first case of the sort it had involved a very serious question. In a civilised country it was unheard of that a man without an engine-driver's certificate should be permitted to raise and lower men in a shaft. The treatment meted out to Mr. Brimage was in striking contrast to the attitude of the department towards other delinquents. During last year there had been 19 prosecutions under the Mines Regulation Act, and it was noteworthy that of these 15 had been against employees.

Mr. TROY : The Attorney General had said that he (Mr. Troy) made accusations against the character of certain professional gentlemen because of their leanings. The Minister must have dreamed it. What he (Mr. Troy) had said was that the inspector of mines had been instructed to place this case in the hands of Messrs. Maxwell and Mr. Ackland; that it was strange that the Crown Law Department had not itself attended to the case and that possibly it was because the solicitors were personal friends of the Minister for Mines. The Minister had asked why costs should be piled up against Mr. Brimage when Mr. Brimage had pleaded guilty; but it was to be remem-

bered that Mr. Brimage had defied the inspector and the whole of the Mines Department for four months before he pleaded guilty. Indeed, he had only pleaded guilty on the advice of the Minister for Mines and Mr. Montgomery. Mr. Brimage had occasioned the Mines Department a big expenditure, and in face of this the Attorney General said he should receive preferential treatment. Mr. Brimage's excuse was lame and inconsistent. Writing to the inspector, Mr. Brimage confessed his guilt, but urged that he was not aware he was committing any abuse, seeing that he drove the winding engine in the presence of a first-class driver and that he was a first-class fitter and held a permit from the Minister to drive the machinery. Mr. Brimage held the belief that this permit also allowed Keegan to drive under his supervision. There was inconsistency. The permit issued by the Minister exempted Mr. Brimage from the operation of the Act by allowing him to take charge of the winding machinery on the Richmond Gem mine for six months, but the certificate stated that it did not empower the holder to raise or lower men, and that before its expiration the holder was expected to present himself for examination for his certificate. The Minister explained that Mr. Brimage could have demanded a certificate.

The Minister for Mines: Not at present; but he could have done so two years ago.

Mr. Scaddan: Not on the papers on the file.

Mr. TROY: The permit was dated the 27th December, 1907. It was not two years ago. But after Mr. Brimage was found guilty the Minister issued another permit under which Mr. Brimage was at present working. Would any other man receive such favourable treatment? The more one perused the papers the more excuses one saw, and the more one noticed how the inspector had to fight the Minister, and recognised the favourable treatment Mr. Brimage received. One could not come to any other conclusion except that Mr. Brimage had some extraordinary influence. It was not surprising that the Attorney

General tried to justify the Minister. The Attorney General always rushed to a forlorn hope. One could esteem the Attorney General for his loyalty to his colleague, but could not give him credit for much discretion. If the Attorney General continually made exhibitions of himself in this way he would lose any respect members might have had for him as their legal leader.

Mr. SWAN: There were men who had served their time as fitters, as Mr. Brimage had, and who had 20 years' experience as fitters, but could not, if given five years in which to study, pass the engine-drivers' examination. He spoke with some knowledge on the question. The Minister had not made out a good case why Mr. Brimage had been given this permit and been dealt with so leniently after breaking the law.

Mr. SCADDAN: There was no desire to pursue the argument. He had no complaint about Mr. Brimage breaking the law; his complaint was that Mr. Brimage was granted a second permit after being found guilty of raising and lowering men which he was forbidden to do by the very words of the first permit. The Minister would not have granted the second permit to any other man in similar circumstances.

The Minister for Mines: I explained the reason, Mr. Brimage gave. He desired to obtain a first-class certificate, and thought he was competent to do it by serving under a first-class engine-driver.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Minister was restricted in the granting of these permits. They could only be issued where it was not practicable to obtain first-class drivers. The Minister had, apparently, overlooked the words in the section prescribing this.

The Minister for Mines: In this case we had the report of the inspector recommending it.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Richmond Gem mine was not one of those prospecting shows the Minister desired to protect. The Minister somewhat abused the section in granting permits of this nature. Several were granted, according to a return presented to Parliament, for dis-

districts where qualified engine-drivers could be easily obtained, and in nearly every case they were for mines where men were employed below. In this particular case, just prior to the prosecution of Mr. Brimage, when Mr. Brimage or the other person in his employ without a certificate was on the winding engine, a man nearly lost his life owing to the driver making some mistake. In spite of what the Minister said, engine-drivers were always willing to do extra work. Mining engine-drivers should not be allowed to leave their places while men were below. The Minister had been very unwise, after Mr. Brimage had betrayed his trust, to grant him a further permit. He had also been too lenient in connection with the action against that gentleman.

Mr. ANGWIN: Recently the Press congratulated Mr. Brimage and two other gentlemen concerned with him upon the success they had achieved in a venture in which the Attorney General now said he had a difficulty in making both ends meet. Was special consideration given to Mr. Brimage because he held a public position in the State, and had that gentleman been served the same way as any other man would have been in the circumstances? He could come to no other conclusion than that, if any ordinary man in the State had broken the law in that way, had led the Minister astray, and had not kept the trust reposed in him, his permit would not have been renewed. One had to consider who was associated with the man whose case was being dealt with. We must bear in mind that at times a vote was very necessary in a certain branch of the Legislature, and that therefore some consideration might be paid to a certain individual; but of all men in the Parliament of this State, considering the criticism he had hurled at the head of one of his colleagues, Mr. Brimage was the man who should have refrained from asking for consideration from the Minister. Those who had followed Mr. Brimage's career more particularly of late—perhaps as he saw the Chairman was about to call him to order he had better not continue this line of argu-

ment; anyhow undue favouritism and consideration had been shown to Mr. Brimage, particularly in connection with the granting of the second permit.

Item, Chief Inspector of Machinery, and Chairman of Board of Examiners, £450:

Mr. SCADDAN moved:

That the item be struck out.

In respect to the inspection branch, recently the Minister had said he was considering the possibility of amalgamating the work of the inspectors of mines and machinery.

The Minister for Mines: I said that a suggestion in this direction had been made by the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. SCADDAN: While it was true that the inspection of mines and machinery was costing a considerable sum, still, if double the amount were spent in the inspection of mines, it would not be too much. Economies could be effected in connection with the inspection of machinery by bringing the district inspectors under the State Mining Engineer. Some might object to that as a great portion of the machinery in the State was not connected with the mining industry. At present, however, the branch was controlled by the Mines Department. The figures of the Public Service Commissioner showed that the cost of inspecting machinery was practically the same as the cost of inspecting mines.

Mr. Butcher: That is not correct.

Mr. SCADDAN: As a matter of fact the cost was greater for the inspection of machinery. Included in the expenditure for the inspection of mines was £800 for the salary of the State Mining Engineer. That officer made no inspections from the standpoint of the Mines Regulation Act; by the direction of the Minister he supplied reports of the progress, or the possibilities, of a district. At all events £600 of this sum should be deleted from the mines inspection item.

The Attorney General: The inspection of mines costs £3,205.

Mr. SCADDAN: The inspection of machinery cost £3,050, so that the difference was very small. If we had to take the totals supplied by the Public Service Commissioner there would have to be in-

cluded the £800 paid to the State Mining Engineer who was not an inspector of mines. What he would like to know, too, was where this officer got his title of Chief Inspector of Mines. As a mining inspector was usually understood, the State Mining Engineer was not one. The Chief Inspector of Machinery had with him nine other inspectors.

The Minister for Mines: We have 3,330 boilers.

[Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.]

Mr. SCADDAN: There was no comparison between the work of an inspector of mines and that of an inspector of machinery. He would urge on the Minister the advisability of further considering the question of amalgamating the work. It was not possible to get a qualified inspector of machinery who was a qualified inspector of mines; the two positions could not be worked satisfactorily, but it was possible to amalgamate the two branches. If the district inspectors were given some responsibility it would be found that they would do better work. It was his desire to test the feeling of the Committee on the question of the amalgamation of the two branches and that was his reason for moving that the item be struck out. He did not intend to take exception to the chief inspector's qualifications.

The Minister for Mines: I will deal with his personal qualifications.

Mr. SCADDAN: If the Minister was going to rush that point he too would say something about the qualifications, but what he was most concerned about was that the Committee should recognise that if there was any possibility of amalgamating the two branches economies would be made and the work would be more effective. With regard to the inspection of boilers, and the only inspection ever made by the chief inspector, it had been proved by a select committee that this officer had been largely responsible for the only explosion which had ever occurred, that at the Gwalia mine. All the inspectors who were examined said that they would never have granted a certificate knowing the condition that the boiler was in; yet the

chief inspector granted it, with a knowledge of the condition of that boiler. The inspectors would prefer in every case to take the responsibility of their actions without having to submit everything to the chief inspector in Perth. The position to-day was that they could hardly recommend the pressure under which a boiler might work without acquainting the chief inspector in Perth and receiving his agreement either by wire or by letter. With regard to the chief inspector's qualifications he had never shown that he possessed any as far as the inspection of boilers and machinery was concerned. The Minister himself had admitted that the officer had never yet made a report; he (Mr. Scaddan) would be very much interested in seeing the first he did make. The officer had not been inside five boilers since his appointment as chief inspector of boilers, 10 years ago. In order to test the feeling of the Committee on the matter he (Mr. Scaddan) was going to press this to a division.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Any one conversant with the inspection of machinery in this State, and with the conditions under which boilers were worked, would realise that it was absolutely necessary that there should be someone at the head of the department to supervise and control the various inspectors. That being the case, the question was as to the qualifications of the present chief inspector. Mr. Mathews had served an apprenticeship of 5½ years to mechanical engineering in New Zealand, after which he had been employed for nearly two years as boiler inspector and in charge of a marking-up table. Subsequently he had been transferred to the locomotive superintendent's office, where he remained for 2½ years before coming to Western Australia and entering the office of the Engineer-in-Chief. At a later period Mr. Mathews had been employed in Mr. Jobson's office in connection with the Goldfields Water Supply, and it had been upon the recommendation of the late C. Y. O'Connor that he received the appointment of Chief Inspector of Boilers, to become later on Chief Inspector of Machinery. During last year 3,330 examinations of boilers and 2,622 examinations of

machinery had been made. He (the Minister) admitted with the member for Ivanhoe that in respect to the detail work of the department more responsibility should be thrown upon the district officers. There should not be necessity for sending details to Perth. By correcting this economies could be effected, and it might even be found possible to do away with several inspectors. Only a little while ago the department had asked that another inspector should be appointed; not only had he refused the application but he had reduced the number of inspectors. The chief inspector still held that additional officers were necessary, but he (the Minister) on the other hand contended that the department could be run at reduced expense. Not being in a position to put his opinion against that of the chief inspector he had done the next best thing by arranging for a board of a couple of departmental engineers to examine into the work of the department and report to him. He thought it would be wise if more responsibility were thrown upon the officers on the goldfields, and if they were allowed to keep their own records in their various offices. It then would be the duty of the chief inspector to go from district to district and examine the work done by these officers, and by that means expense would be saved and a good deal more work done. He (the Minister) desired to correct the member for Ivanhoe in the statement made in connection with the engine-drivers' examination board and the charges which were being made, namely, that the cost was much greater than was shown on the Estimates and that the travelling expenses of the chief inspector were not there shown. He (the Minister) wanted to assure the hon. member that all travelling expenses, in fact all items properly chargeable, were so charged, and that consequently the information he (Mr. Scaddan) had received was absolutely incorrect. In regard to the department, he thought it could be claimed that particularly good work was being done. There had been one explosion at Leonora, fortunately unattended by any serious results. That was the one accident in connection with the department during all the years of inspection in Western Australia.

In no other State in Australia were the difficulties and dangers in connection with the use of boilers quite so great. The waters in Western Australia were charged with salt and other chemicals, which had a very harmful effect on the boilers; yet there had not been a single instance of loss of life, or even of serious accident. In the other States there were many accidents, though, as a rule, better water could be obtained for the boilers.

Mr. Scaddan: The credit should be given to the inspectors.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We must in the first place give the credit to the chief inspector for having appointed good men. The chief inspector was rather too fond of detail, and this fondness increased the expenses of the department, but we could not do without a chief inspector. We must first prove that the officer was unfitted to fulfil his duties, or that he was incompetent, before we could accept the amendment the hon. member brought forward. The records of the office showed that the work had been efficiently and well carried out.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was regrettable the Minister found it necessary to deal with the qualifications of the chief inspector. One had no desire to deal with that aspect of the question, but simply to confine the issue to whether we would abolish the branch and attach the duties to the work of inspecting mines. The select committee that inquired into the accident at Gwalia found that the chief inspector was largely responsible for it. If anything went wrong the chief inspector shifted the responsibility on to the inspector, and did so in this case in spite of having issued instructions to give certificates on working inspections. These inspectors carried out their work under great difficulties in the outback districts, and it was to them the credit was due for the absence of serious accidents. However, the chief inspector took all the credit and where there was any responsibility shouldered it on to the inspectors, dismissing one man for carrying out the instructions he (the chief inspector) issued. There was no evidence that the Minister had censured the chief inspector over the Gwalia accident. The chief

inspector came here from New Zealand, and it was evident from his papers that from a practical standpoint he was not qualified; there was no evidence that he had done any practical work, because after getting his theoretical certificates, he had obtained a position as record clerk, with which qualification he came to Western Australia, being immediately pitchforked into the position of Chief Inspector of Boilers of this State. It was not long before the officer gathered power and became Chief Inspector of Machinery and Boilers, and now he was down for a maximum salary of £600 a year.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. C. Y. O'Connor recommended him.

Mr. SCADDAN: One would not pit his opinion against Mr. C. Y. O'Connor's, but Mr. O'Connor did not recommend this officer as Chief Inspector of Machinery; only as Chief Inspector of Boilers.

The Minister for Mines: And that is of more importance.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was an important branch, but on some of the mines at Kalgoorlie inspectors were required to have a greater knowledge of machinery than boilers. It was said the winding machinery at Kalgoorlie was not excelled in any other part of the world. The chief inspector had not that knowledge fitting him for the position. This was shown by some of the evidence given before the select committee appointed to inquire into the accident at Gwalia. The evidence given by the chief inspector showed clearly that he was not a practical man at his work. If he had to take over a district Mr. Mathews would fail miserably, for he would be unable to discover the weaknesses of a boiler or make a proper report. If the changes he (Mr. Scaddan) had suggested were made someone could be retained in Perth under the State Mining Engineer to control the inspectors. The chief inspector should be given outside work to see if he were practically, as well as theoretically, qualified for his position. Certainly all information as to boilers could be obtained in Perth, but it was not needed there.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	18

Majority against .. 3

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Belton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Holman	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hudson	

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Barnett	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Brown	Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Carson	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Draper	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Price
Mr. Gregory	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Gordon

(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item, Inspectors, £2,412:

Mr. ANGWIN: Provision had been made for eight inspectors, but if it was true that one of these inspectors spent a good deal of his time in the office, could not a clerk be given the clerical duties so that the inspector might be enabled to go out and perform inspection duties. Then, too, if that were done it might be possible to do with one inspector less.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The Committee had already been informed that it was his intention to have an inquiry made to see whether it was possible to prevent the detail work from being sent to Perth. If that was possible he hoped to be able to make a big reduction.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.27 p.m.