

Legislative Assembly, Tuesday, 24th November, 1908.

	PAGE
Address-in-Reply, Presentation	321
Paper presented	321
Question, Early Closing Proclamation	321
Bills, Wines, Beer and Spirit Sale Amendment, 1b.	322
Upper Chapman Railway, 1a.	322
Limited Partnerships, 1a.	322
Local Court Act Amendment, 1b.	322
Early Closing Act Amendment, 2a.	322
Chairman of Committees, Election	329
Annual Estimates	340
Financial Statement for 1908-9	340

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—PRESENTATION.

Mr. SPEAKER reported that he had received the following reply from His Excellency the Governor:—

“Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, I thank you for your Address-in-Reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament, and for your expression of loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign.

Fred. G. D. Bedford, Governor.”

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Statement of expenditure under “The Mining Development Act, 1902.”

QUESTION—EARLY CLOSING PROCLAMATION.

Mr. BATH: I have given notice to the Speaker of my desire to move the adjournment of the House on a question of urgency, but before doing that I would like to ask the Premier whether he will postpone the proclamation in regard to the alteration of the Early Closing Act, which is to come into force on 1st December, until this House has come to a decision on the half-holiday question; or failing that will he give us an opportunity to discuss the question before the proclamation comes into force.

The PREMIER: The proclamation comes into force on the 1st December.

I was approached recently and I said there would be an opportunity for the House to decide the question, as the measure would be one of the first dealt with; as a matter of fact it is the first on the Notice Paper for to-day.

Mr. BATH: The reason why I brought the matter forward is that to-day is the last chance there will be of asking that the regulations be disallowed or postponed, or that members will have an opportunity of carrying a motion objecting to the proclamation. I notice the Bill is the first on the Orders of the Day, still we may not complete the measure and come to a decision upon it before 1st December. I would like to know if we shall be given an opportunity to decide the question, or whether the proclamation will be postponed until a decision is arrived at by the House.

The PREMIER: I regret that the hon. member did not give me notice of this question, for I have not had an opportunity to go into it and see whether his request can be granted or not. I have already intimated to several who have approached me that the Government propose to adhere to the proposal to make the proclamation on 1st December, and the same answer has been given to other petitions which have since been presented. There was one, for instance, from Fremantle.

Mr. Angwin: It was presented after pressure.

Mr. Bolton: Forced by the Government.

The PREMIER: That is an absolute mistake. I do not feel disposed at the present time to grant the request, for I would like to hear a discussion and to have the opportunity of consulting the Minister in charge of the department.

Mr. BATH: If the Premier desires to go into the matter I am willing to postpone asking for the adjournment of the House until to-morrow afternoon. It is a very important matter, because we may not come to a decision, and the proclamation would come into force before Parliament decides what attitude to adopt on the question.

BILL—WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

First reading.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) moved for leave to introduce a Bill for "An Act to amend the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act, 1880."

Mr. FOULKES (Claremont): I take it this is a Bill to stop the granting of any more licences. We have already on the Notice Paper a Bill which is practically to the same effect. I should like to get the Treasurer's promise to do his utmost to carry the Bill through both Houses as speedily as possible. I would remind him of the fact that the ordinary quarterly licensing session begins on the 6th or 7th December, and I hope steps will be taken to have the measure passed before that session meets. I would also remind him that during the last session of Parliament a similar Bill was introduced at a very late hour, on the last day but one of the session, and the result was that it never reached the Upper House. I would like the Treasurer to promise that this Bill will be the first put forward this session, and be sent up to another place as speedily as possible, so that it might become an Act within two or three weeks from now at the latest. The result then would be that the general public would know the Act was in force, and sufficient notice would thus be given to everyone applying for licences.

The TREASURER: In reply to the hon. member I may say it is the intention of the Government to endeavour to put the measure through before next licensing day. We will do our best in that direction. The Bill includes another small matter, as the member will see on reading it.

Question put and passed.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

(1) Upper Chapman Railway (introduced by the Premier); (2) Limited

Partnerships; (3) Local Court Act, Amendment (introduced by the Attorney General).

BILL—EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan) in moving the second reading said: The Bill I have the honour of submitting to the House really comprises but a few clauses, and deals with a subject of limited magnitude. The Bill is for the purpose of determining who shall be the selectors of the day of the week which shall be the early closing day, and which shall be the day of the week on which shops shall close at 10 o'clock. I would remind hon. members that under the Act of 1902 it was therein decided under Section 4 that there was to be one day of the week on which shops were to close at one o'clock, one day of the week on which they were to close at 10 o'clock and four days on which they were to close at 6 o'clock. That was the object Parliament wished to attain. It is true under a sub-section provision was made for that time that would intervene between the passing of the Act and the selection by shopkeepers of the day on which closing would take place at one o'clock and the day on which they would close at 10 o'clock. In that interim it was provided that it must be either Wednesday or Saturday, and the shopkeeper was obliged to exercise that choice, and, moreover, he was not at liberty to vary his choice for a period of three months. The whole scheme of the Act was to secure one day of the week on which shops were to close at one o'clock. Subject to this provision it was left entirely in the hands of shopkeepers who were entitled to vote in each early closing district, and to determine what the day of the week would be on which the closing would take place at one o'clock, and what day they would close at 10 o'clock. I may be permitted to point out that had the shopkeepers selected Monday as the day for closing at 10 o'clock and Tuesday as the day for closing at one o'clock they would have been quite

entitled to do so. For a long period of time no action was taken whatever in pursuance of the rights conferred on the shopkeepers, and it was not until 1907 that the shopkeepers themselves in the metropolitan area desired to change the half-holiday from the Wednesday, which then prevailed in the greater number of cases, to Saturday. This proposal was taken up, and a petition being necessary, it was prepared. Naturally, the employees taking the same view, there was no difficulty in the matter, and consent was obtained from a majority of the shopkeepers in each of the several districts comprised in the metropolitan area. When this consent was obtained, together with the petition, it was presented to the Colonial Secretary, who had the same verified, and being satisfied that a majority in each district desired a proclamation to be issued he authorised it to be issued accordingly.

Mr. Angwin: He would not do it until there was a majority in the district.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I was informed there was no question about there being a majority in each district. It was well known it was only a matter of taking round the necessary forms, because at that time there was no divergence of opinion between the parties, and the Colonial Secretary had before him evidence that in each district there was the necessary majority. A proclamation was issued accordingly on the 2nd October, 1907, bringing the change into force on the 1st January, 1908. It appeared after that proclamation came into force that a number of shopkeepers in the municipality of Perth, one of the early closing districts formed by statute, took strong exception to the effect that the alteration had on their trade. I am not prepared to state what that effect was; if I did say so it would be only giving what was hearsay, and others in the House would contradict it on equally good authority. I do not propose, therefore, to recite more than the transaction of events. The shopkeepers alleged that the alteration had a bad effect on their trade, and they accordingly presented a petition also under the Act for the purpose of having Saturday as the day on which

shops should remain open until 10 o'clock, and Wednesday as the day for keeping open until one o'clock. The Colonial Secretary had this petition verified by his officers, and in the meantime pointed out to those who presented the memorial that for a considerable period, almost since Perth became a trading centre, it had been the wish of certain shopkeepers to close at one o'clock on Saturday, and that if a petition were presented to make it compulsory to remain open on Saturday and close on Wednesday at one o'clock, it would mean not only a disarrangement of trade but imposing a condition on the employees that they had no desire to impose. Accordingly, the memorialists took away the petition for the purpose of altering it in the direction of making the half-holiday optional, and they afterwards presented it in the altered form.

Mr. Angwin: Under what section of the Act was that presented?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Under Section 4. The power and the right of the shopkeepers who were appointed in the electorates under this Act was not limited to one selection, and on the presentation of the petition it would be the duty of the Government of the day to give effect to the Act, and to do so by means provided by the Act. Under Section 5 it is provided that when a majority of the shopkeepers entitled to have votes in this matter presented a memorial in the form of the schedule of the statute, then the day for closing and the day for opening would be proclaimed in accordance with such petition. Hon. members will see these days may be altered from time to time, according to the wishes of the shopkeepers.

Mr. Angwin: The majority of the shopkeepers.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member wishes to correct me let him do so when I have finished. I hope I am making myself clear, because I am referring hon. members to the section. I wish to draw attention to that, because, by chance, I may leave out something unintentionally, and then they can see for themselves. It is perfectly clear that "majority of shopkeepers" are the first words of Section 5. I was pointing out

that the shopkeepers presented this petition, and on the 28th of last October a proclamation was made in accordance with the prayer of the petition. Considerable discussion arose as to whether the shopkeepers, who under this Act are constituted the parties to determine the question, were the right parties in whose hands to leave the decision, and accordingly the Government have brought down this Bill to entrust the decision to the votes of the ratepayers. Probably some question will arise when the Bill is in Committee, as to whether the matter should not be further widened and entrusted to the electors. I may be pardoned for pointing out the fact that the ratepayers after all, should, under ordinary circumstances, be the better judges of a trade matter of this kind, and not the electors, for the reason that ratepayers would mean the ratepayers in the municipality, the occupiers of property, and consequently, the parties who would determine this question would practically be those who had some permanent abode in the area affected. I am not prepared to say there may not be arguments advanced carrying some weight in favour of entrusting the vote to the electors, but I am pointing out that there are grounds for leaving it to the ratepayers, who would be able to do justice to the matter, and that is, after all, what we want to arrive at. There is one other matter in the Act, and that is in Section 4. Subsequent to the principal Act being passed in 1902, an amending Act was passed. In that amending Act certain municipalities were set out as constituting districts. It has been on a good many sides suggested that the determination of this question should be on a wider area than one single district; and in order to secure such wider area the power must rest in the hands of the Government of the day to unite districts. Hon. members will see that power has been taken under Section 4 for the Governor in Council to unite from time to time two or more districts; so that if it be wise to have the same set of conditions applied in three or four or more districts, although they have been constituted separate districts for the purpose of this

Act, they can be united by proclamation. Therefore the selection of the specific day would be determined, not by the ratepayers of any one district, but by the ratepayers of the united districts. I do not know if I am in order when moving the second reading, in anticipating any amendments that may be moved in Committee; but if I be in order, I would point out that the Leader of the Opposition has placed on the Notice Paper an amendment that would make a statutory half-holiday for the whole of the State. Speaking as a representative of a town, not the capital, but yet of sufficient importance, I am confident that this would not at all suit the requirements of the people of the goldfields. Men are working their own leases, and working on the surface of all mines. They knock off work at one o'clock.

Mr. Scaddan: Do they?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Nearly all of them at all events. Is that not so?

Mr. Scaddan: You say so.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At all events a large number of employees do leave work at one o'clock on the Saturday. This is a custom, and they come into town for the purpose of supplying their wants. Now if the shops are to close just at the hour at which these men are knocking off, they will be closed during the only time these men have for supplying their wants. And their wants are not merely of a personal character, but of a mining character for they come in for the purchase of tools supplies, etc. And we all know that on the goldfields the only place where one can obtain goods at a reasonable price, is in Kalgoorlie. For that reason whenever any agreement such as that recently fixed up is made to supply in the bush certain commodities, the Kalgoorlie prices are fixed as a standard, a certain percentage being added for the outlying centres. It would be, therefore, depriving the population within a reasonable distance of the metropolis of the goldfields of an opportunity of supplying their requirements at reasonable cost, if we were to make it compulsory for the Kalgoorlie shops to close at one

o'clock. Hon. members representing other country towns will be able to speak of the effect it would have in their respective districts. In Kalgoorlie it would have a very bad effect; a cruel effect on many who are working round about the town. For these reasons I personally can scarcely imagine circumstances under which I would vote for a compulsory half-holiday in a district such as Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Bolton: Would you for this district?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have no doubt that those hon. members who represent coastal districts will be able to inform the House as to what effect they anticipate the proposal made by the Leader of the Opposition would have in their respective districts. I do not know that I have anything further to say, except to move the second reading of the Bill. But at the desire of my colleague for whom I am acting, I wish to intimate to the House that the Government have no object whatever in bringing down this Bill except to bring about rational peace in the commercial world; and inasmuch as it may be said that the information in my hands is somewhat scarce, no opposition will be offered to any proposal to refer this Bill to a select committee which will be empowered to obtain information I have not been able to offer the House.

Mr. Walker: Can you give any information *re* the effect the change has had in the community?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think I informed the hon. member that I am not in that position. Any information I have is pure hearsay; in fact it is worse; it is what has appeared in the Press, and I do not in these circumstances wish to inflict it on the House. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): The Attorney General in introducing this Bill or, rather, in concluding the introduction of this Bill, said he hopes it will bring rational peace to the commercial interests which it will affect. But I can assure

him from the outset, and hon. members, whatever their opinions as to the respective merits of the Saturday or Wednesday half-holiday, will agree that this proposal will not bring about peace, but rather will mean confusion worse confounded. I join issue with the Attorney General on the point that there is anything in the Early Closing Act of 1904, Section 5, dealing with the right of the majority of shopkeepers to present a memorial to the Colonial Secretary which justifies the action taken by the Colonial Secretary in regard to this question of half-holiday. At the time the agitation was going on, the one demand made was that there should be a final settlement of the issue by the Government—that they should decide one way or the other as to whether the half-holiday was to be on the Wednesday or on the Saturday. And I do not think that any great body of shopkeepers or others, outside a few individuals, are at all satisfied with the way the Colonial Secretary finally dealt with the question. It was not a decision, it was a mere shuffling out of the situation. And to let the Colonial Secretary down as lightly as possible we have now this proposal to leave the matter to the ratepayers. When the amending Act was introduced in 1904, there was a clear demand from the shopkeepers in the whole of the metropolitan area, not Perth alone, but Perth, Fremantle, and the surrounding districts, that the half-holiday should be changed from Wednesday to Saturday. And it was a preliminary to that that this clause was placed in the Bill, providing that the majority of shopkeepers should be permitted to present a memorial in order to effect a change. There is nothing in Section 5 of the amending Act of 1904 which can possibly be construed as a justification, or a legalisation either, of the irregular petition which was presented by certain shopkeepers in the Perth area alone to the Colonial Secretary, asking that the holiday should be changed from Saturday to Wednesday. And to show how irregular that petition was, and how far it was removed from being an expression of feeling of the

whole of the shopkeepers, it has only to be remembered that when the first petition was presented to and referred back by the Colonial Secretary, the second petition was on the Minister's table in a very short time. It was absolutely impossible for those who presented it to secure the signatures of the shopkeepers therein to the amended petition. Even that fact should have convinced the Colonial Secretary that it was necessary to take more definite action, and to go into the question more deeply than he had done, before granting the prayer of the petition. Now when in 1907 the agitation commenced in favour of the Saturday half-holiday those who were preparing the petition, representatives both of shopkeepers and of shop assistants, secured a number of signatures from Perth, Fremantle, and the districts between. That petition was presented to the Colonial Secretary and was referred by him to the officials of the Shops and Factories Department. The then Chief Inspector of Factories (Mr. Vincent) referred the petition back and said it was absolutely essential that they should go to all the outlying districts included in the metropolitan area as specified in Section 5, and should secure signatures of a majority of shopkeepers represented throughout the district. And the petitioners had to go as far as Coogee, Jandakot, and other outlying places before their petition would be received. But when it is a question of seeking to change the half-holiday back to the Wednesday, the Colonial Secretary is satisfied with the signatures of shopkeepers within the Perth area alone. Now I say that if the majority of shopkeepers in the whole district or their signatures were necessary to alter the half-holiday to Saturday, I think the same petitioners should have been consulted before the change was made back to Wednesday. But that was not done. It shows the haste with which the thing was patched up, and it shows, too, that some influence was brought to bear other than that of a legitimate petition from those concerned in the first alterations. Now who is it that is behind this demand for a change back

to Wednesday? Beyond James Bremner I do not know of one shopkeeper who has been prominently associated with this movement for the change if we except the hotel-keeping and brewing interests which appear to be behind this demand for a change. And it seems to me that that influence having been brought to bear is one of the best reasons why this House should not consent to the change, and why hon. members should express their opinions emphatically in favour of the withdrawal of the application. Now as far as the Saturday half-holiday is concerned, I am satisfied that after all it is not a question merely of shopkeepers or of shop assistants, or of ratepayers alone, but it is a question in which the consumers, the buyers at the shops, are interested, just as much as those who pay rates and those who keep shops or are employed in them. Since the Saturday half-holiday was introduced there has been a general expression of opinion that the change has been a boon to the public generally. It gives in the first instance an opportunity not only for the shop assistants but for the shopkeepers to have a clear week-end holiday from Saturday midday until Monday morning, which in itself should commend it and should confirm members in their opinion or in their desire to make it a permanent institution. And not only is it a boon to the shop assistants and shopkeepers in this way, but the change has also proved satisfactory because their half-holiday now fits in with the half-holiday given throughout the metropolitan area to other employees and, naturally, employers also. That being so, I think that commercial economy demands that we should concede to the shopkeepers and shop assistants the same half-day, that is, Saturday, for a holiday as is enjoyed by other commercial interests. The Attorney General has referred to the amendment of which I have given notice, seeking to make the Saturday half-holiday statutory. I may say at the outset that I did not intend that amendment to apply to the whole of the State: the second amendment I have on the Notice Paper should have convinced the Attorney

General of that fact, and the error in drafting is one I intend to rectify; I will have the altered amendment on the Notice Paper for to-morrow's business. But I certainly do not want it to be understood that I am opposed to the Saturday half-holiday in other parts of the State. I believe that it will come about eventually. I believe it is just as feasible and just as desirable for the shopkeepers and employees of Kalgoorlie as for those in the metropolitan area; but I recognise that before we grant it a demand should first come from them by concerted effort among themselves; and when the request or demand comes from them this House will be doing well in granting them the Saturday half-holiday. However, so far as my amendment is at present concerned, all I desire is that the Saturday half-holiday should be extended to the whole of the metropolitan area; and my reason is that there is a general demand for the Saturday half-holiday, and that the majority of shopkeepers and the whole of the shop assistants are strongly in favour of the Saturday half-holiday. I believe that if any other course is taken, even the attempt at side-tracking by submitting the decision to the ratepayers, it will be against the expressed opinion of a great majority of those interested in the agitation in the metropolitan area. In these circumstances it is my intention to move the amendment and to confine its scope to the metropolitan area; and I maintain that if the proclamation just issued is permitted to come into force on the 1st December, it will not be giving a fair deal to those interested in this question; because it will mean that a great many shopkeepers in favour of the Saturday half-holiday will be dragged into adopting the Wednesday half-holiday, owing to the fact that the minority who presented the second petition were successful in having the change made. That is not a set of circumstances that is desirable. I think it is preferable that the members of this House should decide once and for all which half-day, whether Wednesday or Saturday, shall be selected as the half-holiday, and that when it is decided and placed in the Act the whole of the shopkeepers in the metropolitan area

should conform to it. A great deal has been said, and reference has been made by the Attorney General to the fact, that there is a falling off in business owing to the change from Wednesday to Saturday. I do not think there is any member of this House who will agree for one moment with that contention. The consuming public in the metropolitan area have to get their supplies. They are not going short of anything. They are not eating less bread, unless circumstances are worse with them than before; they are not buying less clothing or other things because the holiday has been changed. There may have been some dislocation of business consequent on the change, but it is only necessary for a fair trial to be given to it for business to flow into its natural channels, and for the Saturday half-holiday to become a fixed institution, just as fixed an institution as the closing of banks on Saturday afternoon. I think there is no need for this shuffling of the question on to the ratepayers; and if there is to be a referendum I think it should be a referendum of the whole of the electors constituting the consumers and the people who, in the last analysis, pay the rates; because the ratepayers naturally pay the rates and pass them on to those who buy from them; so that by limiting the decision to the ratepayers we exclude a large number who are interested in the settlement of the question. Consequently, I am opposed to the shuffling of this question on to the ratepayers, but I think it would be infinitely preferable for this House to say which should be the half-holiday in the metropolitan area.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): When the Premier promised to introduce a Bill to deal with the Saturday half-holiday question, most people looked forward to something being done for the express purpose of removing the difficulty that had been brought about in regard to it, but it appears to me after reading Clause 2 of this Bill that the first thing the Government have done is to try to re-enact Section 4 of the old measure for the express purpose of making legal what they have done by proclamation, something that in my opinion

and in the opinion of many others is contrary to the intention of the Act. The Attorney General took exception to an interjection of mine when I used the word "majority." Of course we cannot all be expected to know the exact legal phrase, but it appears to me and to a large number of people that Section 4 of the Early Closing Act gives the choice to the shopkeeper as to what day in the week he shall have for closing his shop. The section provides that any shopkeeper may inform the Colonial Secretary of the day on which he intends to close his shop and that the Colonial Secretary may grant his request. But we also find that Section 5 of the Act leaves the matter entirely to the decision of a majority of shopkeepers, because if a memorial is presented the right of choice on the part of the individual shopkeeper is taken away and all shopkeepers must close their shops on the day set out in the memorial, whether they like it or not. It has not been explained so far—and that is the reason why I interjected the word "majority" when the Attorney General was explaining Section 5—where the power exists for a majority petition to again request that each individual shopkeeper should have individual choice. The section says that the memorial must state the days on which it is intended by a majority to open or close their shops. Now we find the Government have by proclamation, which is to come into force on the 1st December, decided to again give the individual choice to the shopkeepers; and it appears—if some of the solicitors who have spoken publicly on the question are correct—there is no legal enactment existing to allow this proclamation to be made. But now we find that Clause 2 of this amending Bill gives the power that is absent from the Early Closing Act. If that is not so, perhaps the Attorney General will explain why the words of Clause 2 of this amending Bill are almost identical with the words of Subsection 2, Section 4, of the principal Act. Then we find at the close of the Bill that this subsection is to be repealed by this Bill. It appears to me clear that the Government

have made a mistake, that they have realised that they have made a mistake, and that to get over the difficulty they have re-enacted Subsection 2, Section 4, for the purpose of trying if possible to legalise their proclamation which is to come into force on the 1st December. It is true a great deal of discontent has been brought about in regard to the action of the Government in dealing with this question. It is well known that the Colonial Secretary distinctly refused to grant the people of Perth, when they petitioned, the privilege of closing their shops on Saturday afternoon unless every other district in the metropolitan area also agreed that such closing on Saturday afternoon should take effect with them. But we find it different when it becomes a request to open in Perth on Saturday and close on that day in the other portions of the metropolitan area. I maintain that the Government have acted rather hurriedly in this matter. If they have the power under the Early Closing Act to say that shops shall remain open on Saturday afternoons from the 1st December, they should also have the right under this Act to say that the change shall be put off until the 1st January, until an amending Bill be approved of by Parliament or until, as they say, the ratepayers have an opportunity of deciding on the issue. I find provision is made in this Bill for the matter to be referred to a majority of the ratepayers, but there is no machinery provided as to who is to vote. It does not say whether the ratepayers' votes shall be taken on the rolls prepared by the municipalities, or whether the same number of votes allowed on the municipal rolls shall be granted to each ratepayer. Again it does not say whether ratepayers are to have a vote whether their rates are paid or not. In Fremantle it is a well-known fact that we have two rolls in regard to the tramway elections, one roll representing the owners of property and the other roll representing the ratepayers, but every person is on one roll or the other whether he has paid his rates or not. But there is no similar provision in this Bill; and consequently, though the clause may be agreed to providing for

the ratepayers to vote on a referendum, there is no provision whether the ratepayer is to have one vote, or four, or eight, if he is representing a company. There is no machinery provided to arrive at the object aimed at by this clause. No doubt when this Bill goes into Committee the Minister will endeavour to make provision for the settlement of these questions. I realise his difficulty as to the adult suffrage principle for taking votes of this description. I also realise the difficulty in getting a fair expression of opinion from the ratepayers' roll. If the districts adopt an adult suffrage principle, either the boundaries outside of the area mentioned by the Bill will have to be included, owing to the fact that the electoral rolls will be used, or other provision will have to be made in the direction of special rolls for the particular districts. In my opinion, when the Bill goes into Committee, provision will have to be made for the municipal councils and roads boards to be empowered to prepare rolls either on the adult suffrage principle or even on the ratepayers basis, with the exception that there shall be one vote only.

Mr. Brown: Confine it to owners only.

Mr. ANGWIN: The hon. member would allow no other persons than the owners to vote on the question whether the shops should be opened or closed on Saturday. Surely the people who patronise the shops should be given the right to an expression of opinion. The Attorney General said that so far as Kalgoorlie was concerned it would mean almost ruination if the people of that district were prohibited from shopping on Saturday. If these people had the right, by their vote, to say whether the shops should be opened or closed, and agreed that they should be closed on Saturday, surely the Attorney General would agree that the greater number knew what suited them best, and would consequently vote accordingly. I intend to give notice to submit an amendment to the Bill, when it reaches the Committee stage, whereby the municipalities will be empowered to provide rolls for the carrying out of the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle): I do not think it is necessary to devote much time to the Bill that is introduced. The amendments mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition are more to my liking, and I venture to say, after the explanation of that gentleman that he proposes to limit the jurisdiction of the measure to the metropolitan area, that he should be entitled to a very substantial vote of the House. I admit that some of the arguments of the Attorney General as to the goldfields might apply, but if that gentleman knows the position on the fields, he certainly has not much knowledge of the coastal districts if he introduces such a Bill as this. It is provided that although one district can take a referendum and declare in favour of closing on Saturday, yet the district adjoining can also take a referendum and declare in favour of opening on Saturday. The result then would be to cause much trouble. Take Perth and Subiaco for instance. While provision is made that the Government might unite two or more districts into one, would it be possible to expect the Governor—who in this instance really means the Colonial Secretary—to unite Subiaco and Perth, when the latter would be expected to declare in favour of opening on Saturday, whereas Subiaco, a more democratic centre, would desire the shops to be shut on Saturday. What would be the position of Subiaco if the shops did shut there? It is an absurd idea to give these small districts the power to take a referendum for their own districts alone. If there is not to be a combination of the districts from Midland Junction to Fremantle, inclusive, the measure will be of no use at all. I disagree with the member for East Fremantle (*Mr. Angwin*) when he says it is necessary for the municipalities to prepare rolls on which to take the referendum. When the districts the Leader of the Opposition nominates in his proposed amendment are looked at it will be found that they include practically the boundaries of the metropolitan area. It would, therefore, be sufficient to have a referendum on the rolls of the electoral districts in the metropolitan area.

The Government are, I think, a little bit shaky on this question. The Premier, replying to the Leader of the Opposition, said a petition had also been received from Fremantle. I interjected that the petition was forced from the shopkeepers. I repeat that, and if the petition is read and the remarks accompanying it are seen, it will be found that my interjection was quite warranted. When the optional day was granted to Perth and the proclamation issued to bring it into force on the 1st December, it followed that unless Fremantle also petitioned for the optional day Perth shops would be open on the first Saturday in December and the Fremantle shops would close. It is absurd to expect that the Fremantle people, although favouring the Saturday closing, would stand by and allow that. Consequently the Fremantle people, in their own interests, had to prepare and forward to the Colonial Secretary a petition praying for an optional day. Accompanying this petition, however, was the statement that they were forced into this position by the action of the Government. It is absurd that there is any opposition to Saturday closing considering the united action by the shopkeepers and shop assistants—I refer more especially to Fremantle, but the remarks apply to all the centres between and including Fremantle and Midland Junction—for this half-holiday to be proclaimed on Saturday. All would be well, if the Government would but stand on their dignity and fight this question. It would have been better, considering this agitation has been going on for some time, if the Government had drafted the Bill so that it would cover the amendments of the Leader of the Opposition. The Attorney General said the first petition was lodged on the 2nd October, 1907, and that the proclamation was issued on the 1st January. I think it will be found there was a good deal more time allowed before the alteration was made in that instance than for the petition for the Perth district only. There is something more than hastiness in allowing the latest alteration to take effect on the 1st December, which is the Christ-

mas month, a time when the business of the metropolitan area is nearly all done in Perth. It was evidently well thought out by those responsible for the petition; they opened a trap into which the Colonial Secretary walked. I am not going to say the members of the Government as individuals, or the Government as Ministers, are opposed to Saturday closing, but I say they should show some backbone and agree to the wishes of the majority of the people in the metropolitan area. They, however, do not appear to be able to do that. I have not heard the least argument, and in fact I did not expect I would, from the Attorney General on the merits of the case. It is not a subject he is acquainted with. He has taken up the Bill for a colleague, and it seems that he knows very little about it. He must know this, however, that there has been a public agitation in regard to the question and that there is a demand from the shop assistants, the shopkeepers, and the general public that there should be a universal holiday on Saturday afternoon.

Mr. Brown: Do you advocate a universal half-holiday?

Mr. BOLTON: I expect the hon. member will refer to the necessity for a half-holiday in connection with the running of the trams and trains, but I do not take any notice of that. Doubtless he would stop all the electric lights at one o'clock on Saturday, and do what he could to make the holiday absolutely universal. He knows what I mean, and that there are a large number of retail shopkeepers who do not need to keep open on Saturdays, but who are being pushed behind by Brennan and others.

Mr. Foulkes: Would you close all the retail shops in the State?

Mr. BOLTON: This amendment only provides for the metropolitan area, from Midland Junction to Fremantle inclusive.

Mr. Brown: Let each district look after themselves.

Mr. BOLTON: It is not fair for one small centre like Perth to want to look after all the rest of the State.

Mr. BROWN: We do not desire to interfere with them.

Mr. BOLTON: If the districts are combined in one and a referendum is taken on the electoral roll, as could be done seeing that the area is that covered by the electoral districts in the metropolitan area, it will be found that a vast majority of the public, the shop assistants, and the shopkeepers, will support the Saturday closing. I do not know whether much time will be wasted, but I wish the Government would agree either to withdraw or postpone the proclamation. I do not charge them with any unnecessary delay, but when the proclamation was issued to come into force on the 1st December the Government must have known there would be no possibility of getting a Bill through before then. They surely must have known that certain amendments would be moved, if not by the Opposition, by members on the Government side who favour the Saturday half-holiday; in the circumstances, therefore, it would have been wise to delay the proclamation until the 1st January. The Bill has to be considered in another place, which at the present time is not sitting, and whatever haste is shown now in dealing with the measure will not make its passage through another place any more speedy. This proclamation is to come into force on the 1st December. It applies to Perth although I admit that there is a petition also from Fremantle, and if this Bill passes here and another place to make the Saturday afternoon holiday statutory, perhaps on the 3rd December another alteration will be required. It is absurd to have these alterations month after month. The public have not complained, but one or two shopkeepers and hotelkeepers have done so, and they have been able to rule the Government in the matter. I hope that to-morrow a promise will be made by the Government to withhold the proclamation until the 1st January before which date both Houses will have an opportunity to decide the question. If this is done, whatever the result is, there will be no complaints.

Mr. GILL: (Balkatta): I have no desire to say much on this Bill, although there are one or two aspects I wish to refer to briefly, as they have not yet been touched upon. First of all let me say my chief anxiety is to see some finality in regard to the Saturday afternoon question. Undoubtedly things have been very mixed for the past 12 months, for we have not known what would happen from week to week, consequently neither shopkeepers nor their customers in the metropolitan area have known what was going to be done. I believe the measure is good, for we shall arrive at some conclusion that will perhaps be more satisfactory than the present arrangements. The question cropped up very prominently during the recent elections, and those members in the metropolitan district must know full well it is a matter that has engaged a good deal of public attention right throughout their electorates. And I am satisfied if the Government had brought down a measure with the object of giving the whole of the people in the metropolitan district an opportunity of expressing their opinion on this question at the ballot-box, it would have been settled during the recent election, and Saturday afternoon would have been fixed as the holiday for all time. There is not a shadow of doubt in my mind in regard to that. If this Bill is carried as it is laid on the Table, all the shops will have to remain open on Saturday afternoon. There will be no option, because no man with any business acumen will attempt to keep his shop open on Wednesday night and try to do business while others are open on the Saturday; consequently, it will be absolutely compulsory, if the new Bill is passed, for shops to remain open on the Saturday afternoon. The proposal to let the ratepayers take a vote on the question does not meet with my approval in any way. The scope of the ratepayer is not wide enough; it will be unsatisfactory, and it is most unfair, and I contend that bricks and mortar should not be taken into consideration where human beings are concerned. I look on this question as

one concerning a large section to whom we should give some consideration. Why should we keep assistants in shops late on Saturday nights, and at the end of a long, hot and weary week? I do not consider it fair or just to those assistants, consequently I say the proposal to give the ratepayers, which would practically mean the owners of a bit of sand around the locality, the opportunity to decide this question will not be just. I hope the House will not carry out the proposal. There has been one matter particularly touched on by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for East Fremantle, and that is the haste that has been shown in regard to this matter, and the method of bringing about this new regulation which is on the Table of the House at the present time. In the first instance when this new proposal for the Saturday closing was mentioned, it was laid down that the petitioners had to get a majority in the whole of the metropolitan area, and they had to go from Bellevue to Coogee before they could have their wishes acceded to. Then, the peculiar part comes that it did not require a petition of that kind to reverse the verdict, and that is a matter that has not been cleared up. It was mentioned here during the debate on the Address-in-Reply, but perhaps the Attorney General did not know anything about it, or if he did he very wisely said nothing. There is another matter in connection with this same question, that in connection with the petition which was first presented, three months' notice was given before the change which was subsequently made was brought about. Now we find that only six or seven weeks' notice was given in connection with the latest alteration; consequently it looks as if there is sympathy existing between those in authority and the petitioners in the present instance. I am particularly anxious if a change is to take place, that it should take effect from the 1st January as was done on the former occasion, instead of on the 1st December as the Government proposes. We have been told by shopkeepers and one or two others who have

made most of the noise, as well as by a few of the publicans, that the people have not been doing the business they did formerly owing to the altered arrangement; but like the Attorney General, I am not in the position to say definitely of my own knowledge whether that is so or not. I have only second-hand information on the matter, and that is that business has not been materially affected in Perth. But coming as the change did immediately after the Christmas holidays, when the people had spent their money—that is if they had any to spend—the shopkeepers noticed the difference in the takings as compared with the previous month. Now we find that the proposed alteration is to take place on the 1st December, and it will be stated a month or so afterwards by those people who are making the noise that a great increase in their businesses followed; but it should be remembered that the Christmas trading will occur during that month, and subsequently this increased trade will be attributed by the shopkeepers to the fact that they were allowed to keep their shops open in that month on the Saturday afternoon and evening. That I claim will not be a fair test of the Saturday night or the Friday night opening. I hope the amendments that have been submitted by the Leader of the Opposition will be carried; they will be bound to give satisfaction to the majority of the people in the metropolitan district. The shopkeepers in the Suburban areas almost universally favour the Saturday afternoon closing, and I contend they should be taken into consideration with the shopkeepers in Perth. That being the case, I am certainly in favour of the amendments suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, which, I think, will bring about finality, and by bringing that about the business people will benefit, as they have not complained during the eleven months that the present arrangement has been in operation.

Mr. BROWN (Perth): This again I think is legislation run mad. I think it is absurd for Parliament to interfere and say how shopkeepers shall run their busi-

nesses. We hear of Australia being the land of the free, but it seems to me that in the near future we will be forbidding men to work. I think as long as shop assistants are protected, and as long as they are not compelled to work more than eight hours a day that should be sufficient, and that is as far as legislation should go. I am speaking with authority, at any rate as far as my electorate is concerned, when I say that the Saturday half-holiday has practically ruined several shopkeepers. Certainly considerably less business has been done. I am surprised to notice the interest that is being taken in the question by members on both sides of the House, and by members whose interests are outside the city of Perth. I have never before seen so many members taking such a deep interest in the welfare of the City, and I say, if it is good enough for the shop assistants on the coast to keep the Saturday half-holiday the same thing should be good enough for the shop assistants on the goldfields. There is not a single goldfields member here who would advocate the Saturday half-holiday for the shop assistants on the goldfields, or, I may say those members representing Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and the adjoining electorates. During the whole of the campaign not one goldfields member has advocated that the Saturday half-holiday should apply to the whole of the State, and surely if it is good enough for Perth it should be good enough also for the goldfields. We have heard the member for Balkatta speaking about the weary week that the shop assistants have to put up with in hot weather, but if it is a weary and hot week in Perth, surely that statement is ten times more applicable to the shop assistants at Kalgoorlie and the hotter places of this great State. I would support him and his party if they made this universal, but I object to Perth being singled out as the place where this pernicious system should be continued. Perth found to its detriment that a number of the shopkeepers were going insolvent, and I am sorry to say that my friends opposite cannot see that the Saturday half-holiday has played solely into the hands of the big monopolists and the

larger shopkeepers. A few months ago you would find in the streets of the City, particularly in the soft goods line, some small shops which were flourishing, but I believe to-day, outside five or six large stores, there are not half a dozen small drapery and haberdashery stores existing in the City. On the first day of the Saturday closing one of the largest firms here stated that the change would play right into their hands. They said that there were five large firms in the City, and if the change continued, in two years' time there would be four. As long as a person conducted his store himself, that is without employees or assistants, why should he not keep open all night if he chose, why should legislation interfere? I say give every protection to the assistant, but let the small shopkeeper live. Under the present trend of legislation the shop assistant of to-day cannot become the storekeeper of to-morrow. I would ask hon. members what earthly hope has the assistant of to-day of becoming the storekeeper of to-morrow; he is a shop assistant to-day, and he will die as a shop assistant; he will never have a chance of competing against the large firms we have in the City at present. I think even if we revert to the Saturday opening, we should say that 10 o'clock is rather a late hour to close. I would ask the Commissioner of Railways if he were here whether there has been any falling-off in the railway receipts during the present year as between the Eastern districts, say between Chidlow's Well and Perth, and South say from Pinjarra to Perth. We know that on every Saturday numbers of people were in the habit of coming to Perth from the stations along the railway line and doing their shopping in the metropolis and returning subsequently, prepared to follow their occupation on the Monday morning.

Member: Is not the present state of affairs then better for the shopkeepers in the country?

Mr. BROWN: I am speaking of Perth. In Perth they have to pay large rents, and they have to pay a large bulk of the land tax, and having to bear this greater proportion of taxation they are

entitled to some consideration. The values in Perth have come down quite enough already. I am prepared to state that within the last two or three years properties in Perth have fallen one-third in value, and if the system now in force is continued they will fall still lower. I do trust that the Government will have the backbone to stick to the proclamation they have just issued. Why should Fremantle and other places trouble about the interests of the City? You never hear other members interfere with the working of Acts as they affect other parts of the State. I do not believe that on the statute books of this State is there a single Act that is not made applicable to the whole of the State and not one particular district. Why should we go in for this legislation of town against town? It is a most unheard of thing. In Scotland a far better condition of affairs prevail. There, every three years the town clerk sends out a list to the various shopkeepers, and each particular class of shopkeepers selects the afternoon on which it will close, and a two-thirds majority of the shopkeepers will carry it. It is only reasonable that the shopkeepers who have to find the means to employ the shop assistants, should have some small say in this question of holidays. I venture to say that so long as hours of labour are not increased even the members on that side of the House would not allow their employees to dictate to them as to when those hours should be worked. Surely the employers should have some slight say in managing their own business. The Government themselves would not be dictated to by their employees as to what afternoon they should work. I think the Government should stick to the proclamation and allow the shopkeepers to have a small say in the matter.

Mr. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I regret that this Bill does not provide compulsory closing on Saturday afternoon, and I differ entirely from the last hon. member in regard to the effect of Saturday closing. As far as my knowledge goes,

there have been no figures whatever given to show that there has been a falling off in trade in any one direction either in Perth or in any of its suburbs as the result of Saturday closing. There have been certain statements made, unsupported by facts or figures; general statements of the same character as the hon. member himself has brought forward this afternoon. But, strangely enough he complains that we will build up big shops at the expense of small establishments by retaining the Saturday closing, overlooking the fact that these big establishments existed and were built up under the system which prevailed before we had the weekly half-holiday at all. Shops like Foy & Gibson's were not created by the Saturday closing. They existed long before the Early Closing Act found a place on the statute book, and year by year they grew, while the principle of unrestricted trade was recognised in Western Australia as in all the Eastern States. When there is no restriction on the hours of labour there is a tendency, whether from greater trade capacity of the few or the possession of larger capitals, there is a tendency to starve out a large number of shopkeepers, and to concentrate shopping among a few firms. But this is a product of the old system, and certainly in Western Australia is not a product of the Saturday closing. The hon. member began with a plea for the small shopkeepers and wound up with the complaint that the men from Yarloop and Pinjarra cannot come down to purchase their goods from the large emporiums in Perth, because they are closed on Saturday afternoon. And this is the gist of his complaints, that these large firms have been closed on Saturdays and their trade somewhat decentralised during the last twelve months. That is the complaint made against the Saturday closing. But even that complaint has not been made very effectively, because there is not one important establishment that has given any facts or figures to indicate a falling off in trade. And some of those who have been loudest as to the bad effects of the Saturday closing have been com-

pelled to admit that they have not suffered in their own businesses. I am aware that there may be some slight change in the venue of commerce as the result of any interference like this change of closing day whenever it may take place, but I believe that in this instance the effect has been to divert trade to its proper natural channel; and as an advocate of decentralisation I am always anxious to give the smaller shopkeepers their proper opportunities, notwithstanding that they have not the heavy rent and luxurious shops characteristic of Perth itself. But the hon. member for Perth has complained that no one outside the city of Perth should interfere with the hours of trade in that City. I desire to call the attention of hon. members who do not know to this fact: some years ago, when early closing was first established, it was provided that it should be at the option of the majority of shopkeepers in any district in the whole of the metropolis. Almost the only district which refused to adopt early closing was that which I have the honour of representing—the municipality of Subiaco. The shopkeepers there were averse to bringing themselves under the provisions of the Early Closing Act, and the consequence was that the people in Claremont, in Leederville, and in the city of Perth complained that they were being unfairly handicapped by the competition of the Subiaco shopkeepers. As a result when the amending Bill of 1903 was before this Chamber, a Fremantle member proposed an amendment to make the whole of the metropolitan area for closing purposes one district, to extend from Fremantle to Midland Junction. And the sole object of that amendment was to stop the serious competition of a handful of poor little Subiaco storekeepers with the big establishments of Perth, of Claremont, and of Fremantle. And the then representatives of Perth had not only not a word to say as to the trade right of these unfortunate suburban shopkeepers, but were most strenuous in their determination that the shopkeepers of Subiaco, whether they wanted to close early or to close late, whether they employed one assistant or many or none, should be com-

pelled to come under the provisions of the Early Closing Act. Outside the metropolitan area or outside Subiaco the Act was to be voluntary and optional; but inside Subiaco, in order to gratify the desires of the shopkeepers of Perth that none of the stray shillings of Subiaco people should be spent in Subiaco when the Perth shops were closed, it was decreed by Act of Parliament—and I was the one dissenter in the Legislative Assembly—that the shopkeepers of Subiaco must follow the same practice as that adopted by the shopkeepers of Perth. I do not think the contention of the hon. member for Perth, that the shopkeepers are the people to determine this issue, is a solid one. After all what do the shops exist for? For the shopkeepers or for the people? The hon. member for Perth spoke of the money found by the shopkeepers to pay the hundreds of assistants; but I was always under the impression that the public had something to do with the finding of the money to pay the assistants, and that when the public ceased to provide the money the assistants very quickly went to the rightabout. All the money to keep up these establishments is obtained from the pockets of the purchasers, and it is ludicrous to allege that the shopkeeper provides the money to pay the number of shop assistants that may be engaged in his business. Personally, I have a large amount of sympathy with the idea that we may go too far in regard to restricting the hours of trade, and I am more concerned as to the desirability of restricting hours of employment. But, although holding the opinions I do, the opinions I expressed six or seven years ago, that it is of no great advantage to the employee to restrict the hours of trade; still I would say this, that for the benefit of a universal half-holiday I am prepared to agree that there should be a uniform system adopted throughout the metropolitan district. I am prepared to listen with a large amount of respect to representations that may be made with regard to the goldfields centres of which I have not so great a knowledge, but just the same I am strongly in favour of making the Saturday half-holiday universal. I am not, however, in a position

to refute the statements of goldfields representatives like the Attorney General, who has already spoken on this question. I expect to be heard with consideration so far as I attempt to voice the opinions of the people in my electorate, and I am prepared to pay the same respect to views of others as far as they reflect those of their constituents in respect to this matter. I would have much preferred to see it made a statutory half-holiday. There has been no public complaint with regard to the Saturday half-holiday, no complaint by the purchasing body and, so far as I know, no harm wrought by the holiday. Possibly there has been a slight change in the venue of trade. A number of small shopkeepers of Perth have found their businesses increased since they have had Saturday closing. For that reason, and feeling it unnecessary to labour the point of the benefit of a day and a-half of holiday coming together in preference to a single half-holiday in the middle of the week and a single day at the end of the week—feeling it unnecessary to labour that point, I desire to say that in my opinion there has been no satisfactory ground put forward for the change from the system adopted. Although I do not know that the Colonial Secretary had any option but to consent to the petition when presented to him under our existing law. I believe it is a bad law, and that this Bill would be an improvement on it because it does give to the ratepayers, who form a section of the consumers, some voice in the matter. If, however, it be practicable to adopt the statutory half-holiday and embody it in the Bill, I shall be very glad to see that course accepted. And if it be not, then I trust that the shopping public, the people for whose advantage the shops exist; the whole of them, and not one section merely, shall have a voice in determining the matter. It seems to me that a referendum of the ratepayers would constitute an improvement on the present system under which only the shopkeepers have a say: but in my opinion it would be preferable to submit the question to a referendum of the electors on the roll in each district. In any case the metropolitan district should be dealt with as a whole. Because, after all, Perth can

force the suburban shopkeepers from Fremantle to Midland Junction to fall in with the wishes of the Perth shopkeepers.

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

Mr. DAGLISH: I was saying that every place within easy rail or tram communication with Perth is governed, so far as the hours and days on which shops are opened are concerned, by the procedure in Perth. Therefore there can be no option exercised by the district as a whole against the exercise of the option by Perth, nor can there be that option exercised by individual shopkeepers as provided by Section 2; because, after all, each shopkeeper must sell at the times, hours or days on which his trade rivals sell. It is strange, speaking in that connection, that the cry should be raised that Saturday closing injures the small shopkeeper as against the large shopkeeper. Seeing that all shops, small or large, are open on the very same days and at the very same hours and under the very same conditions, it therefore follows that the public have the choice of shopping at the large or at the small shops whether they be open on the Wednesday or on the Saturday afternoon. The public will surely exercise the same choice on the Wednesday as they would on the Saturday. I desire to say that it seems to me a very good proposition that this Bill should go to a select committee; but as a preliminary I would like the Premier to agree to the request made by the Leader of the Opposition to defer the change from Saturday to Wednesday closing until after the matter has been dealt with by Parliament. However, if there is to be a change made on the first Saturday in December, I would be unfavourable to any action that would delay the consideration of the matter by Parliament and its final settlement by both Houses. I wish to indicate that in my opinion Clause 3 of the Bill providing for a petition by ratepayers is entirely unworkable, an impossible provision, because it provides that the memorial must be signed by a majority of the ratepayers. In almost every metropolitan district a very large propor-

tion of the ratepayers consists of persons who do not live in the district, who do not know anything about its requirements, who know nothing of the management of business in it and are not available to sign a petition one way or the other. These persons not being competent to sign a petition, and in the absence of the possibility of getting the signature of ratepayers outside the district in relation to affairs in the district, it is obviously an injustice that before the matter can be sent to the ratepayers at all a majority of them must petition for that reference. I hope before the Bill goes through the Chamber that if in no other direction this particular provision will be so amended as to make it workable. I strongly urge the Premier to defer any change until the end of the year, until the matter shall be finally disposed of in the Houses of Parliament.

Mr. DRAPER (West Perth): I would certainly vote for the suggestion that this Bill be referred to a select committee, although I recognise at the same time that the difficulty in the way is the proclamation which is to come into force on the first of next month. I think it would be a wise thing if the Government saw their way to defer the operation of that proclamation until the end of the year, because it is desirable in the interests of all persons connected directly or indirectly with the shops that there should be a final settlement of this vexed question. It is not a Bill that should be passed on the spur of the moment; it is one that should be carefully considered and only passed in this House after there has been full discussion upon the facts which should be brought forward before members actually decide. As an instance of what we are in doubt about in this House to-night, we have one member stating that Saturday closing is in favour of the large shopkeeper, while we have had another member stating that Saturday closing is in favour of the small shopkeeper. If that be so, when we have conflicting statements it shows that there is a large amount of ignorance inside and outside this House as to what is the real effect of Saturday closing. Bearing that in mind, it appears

to me that in passing this Bill we are going to place upon the statute-book what may be regarded by many of us as a piece of class legislation. I recognise and welcome the principle that at any rate those outside the House, those intimately concerned with the question, those whose vital interests are bound up in it, should have considerable say as to what afternoon in the week should be the recognised half-holiday; but to submit that question merely to the ratepayers does not to my mind go far enough; and though I would certainly vote for the second reading of this Bill, in the Committee stage, unless the Bill be previously referred to a select committee, I shall vote against the reference to the ratepayers only, because I consider that the only satisfactory people outside the House to decide upon the question are the electors in the districts themselves. Unless the Bill is referred to a select committee I shall certainly take the opportunity of voting so as to amend the clause in question in the Committee stage. But I hope the Government will see the wisdom of, if possible, deferring the operation of the proclamation and submitting the Bill to a committee of this House.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (in reply): The Bill that has been entrusted to my charge, though small in its scope, has provoked a good deal of criticism, and I am free to admit that if the suggestions made on many hands be ultimately incorporated in the measure, I shall be in charge of a Bill the only original piece of which that would be left would be the title. I cannot say that I am particularly pleased at the prospect of being responsible for a measure of such doubtful parentage. What with suggestions from this side of the House and from that side of the House it is doubtful how many parents the measure will have altogether. The introduction of a non-party measure such as this is always taken as the occasion for everyone to air his fads, and though I am not entitled to complain of such procedure as that, it is an occasion when an hon. member who is seized

with a brilliant idea, according to himself, brings it up and lets it have a fly in the House. I trust that after all we will determine this matter from a commonsense point of view, and from the point of view of what we can agree would be a right thing to adopt and one we hope would ultimately succeed in achieving some useful purpose. I would not have replied at all before the Bill went to a division were it not that in the course of the debate some criticism was directed towards the conduct of my colleague, the Colonial Secretary, and towards the steps he was obliged to take under the existing law. The Colonial Secretary being the Minister appointed by law for the administration of the Early Closing Act, had no more option in the matter than any member of this House would have if he were in his place. He is compelled by law to carry out the intent of Parliament and that, as I have explained to the House already, is that the shopkeepers are to decide the days for themselves.

Mr. Gill: The criticism was in reference to the Minister's action towards the districts.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The intent of this Bill is stamped on the face of it. It is that the shopkeepers shall determine; and the shopkeepers having arrived at a determination, the Minister had to investigate the memorial presented and see that it possesses the necessary qualification of having been signed by a majority of those entitled to vote. The criticism was twofold. It was that the Minister did something of his own volition, whereas as a matter of fact he had no volition at all. He was compelled to do what he did by the terms of the Act. The member for Balclutha suggested that something wrong was done by the Minister as to districts. Surely it is clear to members that districts are fixed by Parliament. In the Act of 1904, Section 3 provides that the municipalities of Claremont, East Fremantle, Fremantle, Guildford, Leederville, Midland Junction, North Fremantle, North Perth, Perth, South Perth, Subiaco, and Victoria Park are each and severally consti-

tuted districts for the purposes of the Act. There are also a number of roads board districts, namely, Bayswater, Belmont, Buckland Hill, Claremont, Cottesloe, Fremantle, Peppermint Grove, and Perth, also declared to be districts for the purposes of the Act. Under the section of the original Act it is provided that the majority of these shopkeepers situated within any district under the Act have the right to present a memorial. There was no power on the part of the Minister to ignore the action of Parliament in fixing the statutory districts for each locality. Had the case been one where, say the shopkeepers of Kalgoorlie presented a memorial, the Minister could have said he would not take action on the memorial unless the Boulder people presented a similar memorial, for he had the power and the authority to treat the two together. He could have gone as far as Menzies or to any reasonable limit, for Parliament had not constituted those districts. It is grossly unfair when members know that the Minister's hands are tied by Parliament having proclaimed the districts in the metropolitan area, to say that he had the power or authority to ignore the actual explicit statement contained in the Act.

Mr. Bolton: He might have given reasonable notice as in the other instances.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: May I remind the House that the first agitation arose in June, 1907, to change the then existing practice. The change was given effect to in October, 1907. The agitation to change that which had been so fixed by that proclamation occurred in April, 1908, and no effect was given to it until October, 1908.

Mr. Holman: After the elections.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Here we have another suggestion. First of all the Minister is "too hurried," and now if he is not too hurried it is a case of "after the elections." It seems that the member has made up his mind that the Colonial Secretary is a sinner, if not on the one hand on the other. What is the use of offering a legitimate explanation when gentlemen of the calibre of my friends opposite are determined to find fault and have made up their minds that

the Minister is wrong. Why should I try and rob them of their convictions? I trust I have shown to reasonable members—

Mr. Holman : Your ignorance.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : That the criticisms against the Colonial Secretary are not justifiable. To show this was the only reason I interfered by replying to the criticisms made and the intentions announced in regard to the Bill. I hope that in the circumstances my interference is quite justified.

Mr. Bath : What about the proclamation ?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : Although I am in charge of the measure, the question is one, as I have said, with which I have personally very little acquaintance. I will ask the Leader of the House, although I have spoken in reply, to answer that question.

Mr. Bath : In the circumstances then I will leave it until to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES, ELECTION.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) : I beg to move—

That Mr. Daglish do take the Chair as Chairman of Committees.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) : I second the motion.

Mr. FOULKES (Claremont) : I rise to propose an amendment—

That Mr. Brown be appointed Chairman of Committees.

Mr. COLLIER (Boulder) : I second the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER : There is no Standing Order providing for any particular form in connection with the election of Chairman of Committees and, unless otherwise decided by the House, I shall put the question in the ordinary way, "That the word 'Daglish' be struck out with a view to inserting the word 'Brown.'". The question therefore is, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question." For the information, es-

pecially of some of the new members, I may say that those in favour of Mr. Daglish will vote "Aye," and those in favour of Mr. Brown will vote "No."

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

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	21
				—
A Tie	..	..	..	0

AYES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Davies	Mr. Monger
Mr. Draper	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Price
Mr. Keenan	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Layman	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Male	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Bath	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bolton	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Horan	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hudson	(Teller).

Mr. SPEAKER : In accordance with the practice followed in other English Parliaments, I shall give my vote for the ex-Chairman of Committees, Mr. Daglish.

Mr. Daglish thus elected.

Mr. DAGLISH having taken the Chair in Committee of Supply said:—I have to thank members for the honour they have done me in electing me Chairman of Committees. During the term I served in the past I endeavoured, and I pride myself with some little success, to show an absolute impartiality in all the decisions and the rulings I gave, as well as in the general duties of the Chairman. I shall endeavour during the term of the present Parliament in the same way to show an absolute impartiality, and to be guided solely by the rules of the House and by Parliamentary procedure.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 1908-9, and recommending appropriations.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR
1908-9.*In Committee of Supply.*

The House, having resolved into Committee of Supply for receiving the annual Financial Statement, *Mr. Daglish* in the Chair,

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) said: *Mr. Daglish*, this is the third occasion upon which I have had the privilege of introducing the Budget to this Assembly, and I think hon. members will concede that the duties of the office of Treasurer of this State during the past two years have not been of a very light description, and that it has required constant care and watchfulness, owing, of course, to the altered conditions of the finances and the shrinkage in revenue. In the olden days of the gold boom times when the departments of Customs and Excise were under the control of the State Government it was comparatively easy for the Treasurer to adjust the finances. A very slight increase in the customs tariff attained that object without any undue comment or outcry. To-day, unfortunately, we have to face changes in the incidence of our revenue and expenditure without this mighty aid; we have to face the disruption of the Customs and Excise revenue, consequent upon the establishment of the Federal Government and also the several increasing avenues of new expenditure which are altogether beyond our control. Then the uncertainty of future action by the Federal Government in connection with financial matters is another of the main factors calling for extra care in the handling of our finances. Our boom days of overflowing revenue and consequent free-handed and lavish expenditure, everyone must realise are gone; and perhaps that is well, for the change involves the necessity for economy, not only as far

as the Government are concerned but also the public bodies. Notwithstanding that we have these difficulties to face I am convinced that in the course we are pursuing we are laying the foundation of a marked and steady progress in the State of Western Australia. We have, of course, a duty to the State, and that is to raise sufficient revenue for its legitimate and manifest requirements; but we have also a duty to the people which we must not forget, and that duty is not to overburden them with taxation. The ramifications of our social system, including as it does education, law and order, and the public health of the people, must be maintained within moderate bounds, and the development of our vast territory must be pushed forward with boldness and confidence.

Financial Stability of the State.

The whole matter is summed up in the financial stability of the State. I cannot hold with those who can conceive one great cure for all financial ailments past, present, and future. I contend that we have to keep a watchful eye on the future. Yet we must inspire the people with the confidence that in Parliament they have a body of men who are not dismayed by difficulties and who are prepared to grapple with and overcome all problems of finance as they may arise from time to time. Having these objects before me I submit in all confidence the results of last year's transactions with the detailed statements of revenue and expenditure proposed for the present financial year. As has been customary on occasions of this kind the usual returns are presented together with the Estimates. These returns are compiled from the public accounts, and give in brief what is set forth in detail therein. I will ask hon. members to glance at these returns as I proceed, and they will readily understand the whole position when we get through. The first return is a synopsis of the balance sheet and shows on this occasion a comparison with the previous year, and sets forth the amount for which I, as Treasurer, am liable to the State. The total amount in 1908 was £6,514,443. It will be noticed that that amount has increased during the past financial year by £400,000. The

General Loan Fund has decreased by £250,000, but I might explain in passing that £650,000 of the last loan proceeds had not, at the closing of the accounts for the financial year, been received, since the last instalment of the loan which we floated in June last, was paid over on the 24th August.

Sinking Funds.

The sinking funds, hon. members will see, have increased by £304,000; this represents our annual payments to the sinking funds, as well as that which has been earned by the trustees by the investment of those funds. Full particulars of the sinking funds are given in the public accounts, pages 85, 90, and 91, presented with the Budget. These sinking funds are held by trustees, namely, the Agent General and the representative of our financial agents, the London and Westminster Bank, and they are invested in our own and other stocks. Prior to responsible government our loans were all domiciled with the Crown Agents, and the sinking funds were invested in securities of other British colonies. Since responsible government, however, our loans are domiciled with our own agents, the London and Westminster Bank, and they are invested solely in Western Australian securities, with the exception of £4,000, which in the early stages was invested in the National War Loan. The total Western Australian securities, represented by sinking funds, amount to £1,615,170, and those invested in other British colonies to £285,928. The Government Savings Bank deposits are the next item on the debit side and show an increase of £265,000, and the amount of deposits placed in that bank and the funds are invested in different securities, in our own securities. The principal investments of Savings Bank Funds are: Local Inscribed Stock, representing £733,000; Treasury Bills, £154,000; advances to the Agricultural Bank, £614,000; Metropolitan Water Works, £451,000; Goldfields Water Supply, £331,000; and freehold mortgages, £118,000. These are the investments of the Savings Bank, and show how the funds of that institution are utilised. Trust and deposit accounts have in-

creased by £80,000. The liability above referred to is balanced by assets as shown beneath. The deficit has increased by a little over £2,000, there being now a debit of £211,000; advances by £30,000; investments by £831,000; stores by £17,000; and cash in hand decreased by £480,000; thus accounting for the fund for which I am liable. The deficit, of course, is a debt which will have to be made good by future surpluses, we hope, and at present, although we realise that the deficit will have to be handled, my chief concern is not to increase the amount. The stores increase, which is an item that has had to be carefully watched, consists mainly of coal on hand for use on our railways; and the total of the stores account has since been reduced by £67,000 through the issue of permanent railway material for new lines. Every care is being taken to prevent the undue accumulation of stock and thus prevent us from becoming possessed of obsolete stock.

Revenue and Expenditure, the results.

The next return, No. 2, is a return of last year's revenue and expenditure. It will be seen readily that the revenue was over-estimated to the extent of £16,979; our expenditure on the other hand was also over-estimated to the extent of £91,932; the difference of £74,953 of course being to the good. This showed the deficit on the year's transactions to be £2,365, and this, I venture to say, is a very satisfactory result considering the times we have passed through and the difficulties we have had to encounter in connection with the amount we have received from the Federal Government. Notwithstanding the annexation of a considerable sum of money last June, which was withheld under the Surplus Revenue Act, we have been able to practically balance the finances so far as last year was concerned. The most important items of shortage in revenue as estimated were the dividend duties upon which we received £8,967 less than we anticipated; on stamp duty we received £1,383 less than we anticipated; on mining £3,616 less, railways £31,224 less, while the water supply was respon-

sible for £3,732. The increase in revenue was mainly contributed to by lands £6,145, and land and income tax £17,000. The policy of land settlement is steadily progressing, and this accounts for the increased revenue in that department. The expenditure for the year, as I have said, was over-estimated by no less than £91,932, showing that we have exercised every care to cut down our expenditure to meet the shrinkage in our revenue. Economy was exercised wherever possible.

Mr. Scaddan: Principally where?

The TREASURER: Principally in Railways—no less than £54,000, and in Works, £36,000. Perhaps the hon member when he addresses himself to this subject will point out where other economies could have been effected, where the other departments are which would provide means for economies better than did those in which they have been made. There has been some slight increase of expenditure. For instance, the Treasury spent £5,749 more than the estimated amount, and perhaps it is necessary, no doubt it is proper, that I should give a few words of explanation in regard to this increased expenditure. It is accounted for to a very large extent by the creation of the Taxation Department—this department cost £3,911 up to the end of the financial year—and also by increased expenditure on the Gwalia hotel to the extent of £1,527, although on the other hand, it must be admitted that the revenue from that institution increased to almost a like amount. Municipal subsidies were under-estimated by £1,380. So the hon. member can see at once that as far as the Treasury is concerned every care was taken and that the increased expenditure was due to outside demands which could not have been foreseen. The Colonial Secretary's department was responsible for an increased expenditure of £2,325 over the estimate. This was due to the cost of immigration—the total charge to the vote being £4,615—and also to some increase in the cost of provisions for our hospitals. Other items through this very large department do not call for comment.

Commonwealth Estimates.

Returns Nos. 3, 4, and 5 will give to the members of the Committee the particulars of the Commonwealth operations in connection with this State's finances. Of course, I am myself, and no doubt the Committee are more concerned with the amount returnable to the State than with the actual details themselves. But it is well that we should study these figures in order that we may be conversant with what is going on in the Commonwealth in regard to our own and other States' finances. The Commonwealth revenue came out very near to the estimated amount so far as this State is concerned. It was within £1,300 of the figures. Customs revenue was within £3 of the estimate, and the post office showed a surplus of £9,458, whilst defence also showed a small surplus of £1,859. Excise duty returned £10,075 under the estimate, making a net surplus of £1,245. The Estimates this year show that the Federal Treasurer expects from Customs a somewhat smaller amount than he did last year. He expects to get £43,000 less; in excise he expects an increase of £4,000, and from the post office an increase of £9,000, whereas defence is expected to decrease by £1,000, or in all, the Federal Treasurer estimates that he will get a net decrease in revenue of £31,000. The column on this Return No. 3 showing the Commonwealth adjustments is a very interesting one; it represents the amount of duty on goods imported through the other States into Western Australia, or manufactured in other States and containing articles upon which duty has been paid. The figures at the footnote to which I call the Committee's attention show that this amount is increasing year by year. In 1902-3 it was £38,000, whereas last year it had increased to £185,000, showing the expansion of Western Australian trade with the Eastern States, and the extreme importance of the bookkeeping system as laid down in the Constitution so far as the States are concerned. It will be readily realised that when these clauses are done away with, if they should be abolished without fair adjustment, there will be an en-

ormous loss resulting to Western Australia.

Commonwealth Expenditure.

Returns Nos. 4 and 5 are in connection with the estimated Commonwealth expenditure. The estimated amount as shown therein returnable to Western Australia is £697,373, as against last year £753,510, or a decrease of £56,000. Already this year we have received £57,000 less than during the corresponding four months of last financial year, largely contributing, of course, to what is to some an alarming increase in our deficit at the present time. During the first four months of 1907 we received £267,000 from the Federal authorities as against £210,000 for this year, or an average monthly decrease of £14,000. But if the Federal Treasurer's estimate is realised we shall improve our position to the extent of £64,000 during the remaining portion of our financial year. Of course, I admit there may be some doubt in regard to the ultimate result and when one views the falling off in customs and excise during the past four months it does tend to make one wonder whether this estimate will be attained. In the first four months of 1907-8 the customs and excise collections with respect to Western Australia amounted to £320,300 and for the same period in this year £290,932, or a decrease of £30,000. The total for the year 1907-8 actually received was £999,000, as against this year's estimate of £960,000, or a decrease of £39,000. This means £3,250 per month less than last year, or for the four months £13,000. But as we are actually £30,000 behind for the four months, the shortage in the estimate is to-day £17,000. Of course, this £17,000 may be made up later, and I must admit that the Federal Treasurer is in a very much better position to judge of this than am I. He has the assistance of his departmental officers, his collectors of customs, and his other experts in connection with the Federal Treasury; and not only had he all these officials and all their accounts at his command when he made up his Budget, but also the result of the first three months of Customs and Excise

revenue. Therefore, I conclude, and I think justly so too, that with all these aids in making up his estimate, and bearing in mind the fact that he has always been very near the mark in the past, we would not be justified in interfering with his estimate as far as our State is concerned.

Contribution to the Commonwealth.

Western Australia's contribution to the Commonwealth revenue for this year is estimated to be £1,235,840 as against what was actually received last year, £1,272,289 showing a decrease of £36,449. The expenditure which is set forth also in the return shows an increase of £19,688. The total expenditure on behalf of Western Australia is estimated by the Federal Treasurer at £538,000 as against £518,000 last year. The next return gives details of Commonwealth expenditure on new works and buildings. It is estimated that during the present financial year there will be an expenditure of £45,717 as against the actual expenditure for 1907-8 of £44,705. These are works to be undertaken on behalf of Western Australia, and will be debited up to our State as shown on the preceding page in the amount of £44,094. So Western Australia will be charged with an amount practically equal to the estimated expenditure within her own borders, and this, notwithstanding the fact that she still contributes very much more per capita through customs than any of the other States. New South Wales, for instance, contributes £2 17s. 7d.; per head; Victoria £2 11s. 6d.; South Australia £2 11s. 7d.; Queensland £2 15s. 3d.; Tasmania £2 4s. 6d.; and Western Australia £3 16s. 4d.; the average for the Commonwealth being £2 15s. 6d. The next Return, No. 6, is a comparative statement of Commonwealth revenue and expenditure, a study of which will well repay any hon. member. The points which appeal to me are that the total revenue has steadily decreased since Federation, up to the last three years, while the expenditure has just as steadily increased. The difference between the highest year and this year's estimate of revenue

is £382,000; and the increased expenditure since Federation amounts to £199,000. So it will be seen at a glance that so far as we are concerned to-day we are £581,000 worse off than we were during the best year since we joined Federation. The balance returnable to the State has gone down year by year until now only a little over one-half of the amount returned in 1902-3 is received.

Surplus from Commonwealth, Future Prospects.

The danger is that even if the revenue has now reached normal or will from now on gradually increase, the wants of the Commonwealth will be insatiable. The attitude of the late Government at any rate, and I say it with all due respect, seemed to me to be so hostile to the State, and the repayment of surpluses was done so begrudgingly, that I have little hope that after 1910, when the Braddon Clause will cease by will of the Federal Parliament, we will get anything like even the reduced amount we are receiving now. However, it is to be hoped that the new Government will view the financial stability of the States as being essential to the well-being of the Commonwealth. They may realise that the Commonwealth, if it is to be prosperous, if it is to be successful, must stand or fall by the States, which are the foundation of the Commonwealth. The conference of Premiers which is to be held early next year, I believe, for the purpose of trying to find a satisfactory solution of this question, is of the utmost importance. All other questions sink into insignificance compared with that of the financial relationship of the Commonwealth and the States. Generous treatment of the States means expansion of our national being, the development of our resources, progress and prosperity; in fact it is all summed up in the words "financial stability." A grasping policy on the other hand means the reverse. Either course must redound on the Commonwealth itself.

Loan Authorisations.

The next return to which I wish to call the Committee's attention is No. 7, and with it we might also take No. 8. These

returns are particulars of our loan authorisations, and the amounts that we have raised thereunder. On the 30th June last the balance available for flotation on authorisations given in previous Parliaments amounted to £19,535. This has since been reduced by £11,050; so that the net balance which we have authority to borrow is only £8,485. Practically our loan authorisations are exhausted, and fresh authority will be sought when the Loan Estimates are brought down for the consideration of this House. The total loan authorisations are the same as last year, namely, £20,740,253; and after deducting the redemptions to date as shown in these returns, amounting to £227,100, and the accumulated sinking fund which to-day amounts to the large sum of £1,904,433, and the balance to be floated to which I referred above, we have a net indebtedness left of £18,589,185. This represents £69 1s. 5d. per head of our population, and includes the million which was floated prior to the end of the financial year, but of which £650,000 had not then been received. Deducting this £650,000, we reduce the net indebtedness per head to £66 12s. 9d., as against £66 13s. 8d. on the 30th June, 1907. The figures for the other States as a comparison are respectively: New South Wales, £54 17s. 5d.; Victoria, £42 5s. 2d.; Queensland, £77 0s. 2d.; South Australia, £77 10s. 2d., and Tasmania, £54 12s. 11d. The recent loan floated on the 12th June last compares very favourably with the two previous loan flotations, those in 1905 and 1907, the net proceeds of this loan being £93 18s. 2d., as against £93 5s. 9d. in 1907, and £93 6s. 4d. in 1905. The rate of interest if the stock be held for repayment at the latest date of maturity is £3 13s. 5d. per cent., as against £3 14s. 1d. in 1907 and £3 14s. 9d. in 1905. The average rate of interest paid by Western Australia on the whole of our loans to the 30th June, 1907, is £3 8s. 9d. per cent., as against in the other States: New South Wales, £3 10s. 2d.; Victoria, £3 11s. 8d.; Queensland, £3 14s. 1d.; South Australia, £3 14s. 8d.; and Tasmania, £3 13s. 5d. So it will be readily seen the Cinderella State of the Commonwealth has been able to borrow the money she

requires for the development of her resources on an average at a lighter rate of interest than any of the other States. In addition to the million pounds referred to, we have issued during the year Local Inscribed Stock to the value of £77,130, and Treasury Bills amounting to £200,150. Of these Treasury Bills £145,000 were issued to the Savings Bank at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; and the money was remitted to London between September, 1907, and January, 1908. The reason I sent this money to London was that the London and Westminster Bank were then asking the bank rate with a minimum of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for an overdraft of a quarter of a million; and as the Bank rate was then 4 per cent., which I would have to pay at once, and rapidly increased to 7 per cent in November, 1907, I saved very considerably by utilising this money from the Savings Bank and sending it Home to meet our liabilities there. Of course it was a saving as far as the Savings Bank itself was concerned, because I used the funds they had lying to the credit of current account in Perth. The balance of these Treasury Bills, £55,150, represents the investment of trust funds, namely, municipal and other funds, the proceeds of these Bills being carried to current account to meet loan expenditure in the State. Of these Treasury Bills £194,150 bears interest at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and £6,000 I negotiated at 3 per cent. The Local Inscribed Stock was issued at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., with 10 years' currency, and amounted to £77,130. Of that £25,000 I issued at £97 when things were very high and money was scarce, I issued £4,000 at £97 15s., while £48,130 I was able to issue at £98 10s. After paying brokerage and expenses these Treasury Bills averaged £97 8s. 1d.

London Management of Loans.

I wish here, if I may, to bear tribute to the care and watchfulness of our Agent General (Mr. Rason) in connection with our finances, not only in bringing about the successful flotation of the loans which he has handled for us, but also in the arrangement we have entered into in regard to the management of our loans in London. The new agreement with the Lon-

don and Westminster Bank effects a considerable saving, and the credit is due to the Agent General. Under the old agreement which was entered into in April, 1901, the London and Westminster Bank was paid £350 per million for loans floated to that date and £250 per million for all subsequent loans. Under the new agreement the whole of our stock is managed at a uniform charge of £150 per million. This covers the whole cost of inscribing, registering, recording transfers, and payment of interest to bondholders, and all the multifarious duties in connection with the management of loans of this description. The other charges in the agreement remain as hitherto. For instance, on Treasury Bills the only charge is 2s. 6d. per cent. on all interest disbursed. For the flotation of all loans 5s. is paid on the total amount. The agreement also provides for the payment of 2s. 6d. per cent. should the management of the loans be removed from the care of our agents, or should we redeem in cash. This was a condition I would like to see eliminated, but of course it was in the old agreement, and ought to be inserted in the new. It represents a lump sum payment of £19,000 to our agents at maturity of loans, or when we should decide to take the management of the loans out of their hands; and though I would like to have domiciled the management of our loans at the Agent General's office, as is the arrangement made by the South Australian Government, who are able to manage loans at a cost of about £100 per million, I could not see my way to recommend the finding of this £19,000 at the present time, while in addition to this there would be increased expenditure in connection with additional office accommodation, etcetera. The term of the agreement was for 7 years, with 12 months' notice thereafter, and I tried to reduce this term in view of the fact that we might wish to take over the management of our loans ourselves, or, as will undoubtedly come about sooner or later, the Commonwealth would take them over. I was not successful in getting any large reduction in the term, but was able to arrange to make it six years with twelve month's notice on either side thereafter.

Of course if the agreement is terminated, we shall have to pay 2s. 6d. per cent. on the nominal value of the outstanding stock domiciled at the bank at the time of our removing it from the charge of the bank. The saving by this new agreement is more than one-half what we were paying under the old agreement. We paid £4,875 per annum under it, but under the new agreement we shall pay £2,363 per annum on loans existing as at the 30th June last, thus showing an annual saving of £2,512. All our new loans will of course be managed at the reduced rate. The advantage of this agreement given will be gauged by the fact that New South Wales has been negotiating for some time to get the charges made on their loans by the Bank of England reduced; and Sir Joseph Carruthers who was home recently negotiating this matter for the New South Wales Government was only able to succeed in getting the Bank of England to reduce the charge to that State to £350 per million on the whole of their £51,000,000 of loans domiciled at that bank. Sir Thomas Bent, the Premier of Victoria, on the other hand when he was at Home was able to arrange with the London and Westminster Bank, who are their agents as well as ours, to have the charges reduced to the same rate as we have obtained under this new agreement. As hon. members know, the Local Inscribed Stock is domiciled at our own Treasury in Perth. We have to pay 5s. per cent. on all interest paid in the Eastern States, and of course when we float Local Inscribed Stock, there is a brokerage charge to be deducted from the proceeds.

Treasury Bills.

In regard to the £500,000 of Treasury Bills we have maturing on the 1st January next, I am able to announce that we have made satisfactory arrangements for their repayment. We have sent home and sold £650,000 worth of Treasury Bills with a currency of four and a half years from 1st January next. This will make them mature on 1st July, 1913. Cable advices that I have just received from the Agent General announce that he has been able

to make definite arrangements for the disposal of the Bills at £100 10s., less of course the $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., usual charge for expenses; so that we shall net £100 2s. 6d. for the whole of the Treasury Bills. Payment of the money will be made on the 1st January, when the £500,000 worth of Treasury Bills mature. After providing for them we shall have £150,000 left which it is intended to utilise to retire a like amount of Treasury Bills held by the Government Savings Bank. Thus I intend to put this institution into funds in order to meet the heavy amount of withdrawals taking place month by month on account of the Agricultural Bank, the Goldfields Water Supply and the Metropolitan Water Supply, all of which are being financed from this source. The £500,000 worth of Treasury Bills issued in 1904-5, which these Bills are replacing, were issued at £97 15s., or £97 7s. 6d. net, so that the transaction we have been able to carry through is £2 15s. per cent. better than that of the year mentioned. The actual rate of interest paid on the bills about to be replaced has been £4 14s. 7d. while on those replacing them we shall be paying £3 19s. 4d., showing a saving of 15s. 3d. per cent.

State's Chief Trading Concerns.

Return No. 9 shows the net cash results of the four chief trading concerns of the State for the past year. Whereas in 1906-7 we showed a loss on these concerns of £3,534, this return shows a profit of £95,155. The railways, of course, are chiefly responsible for this profit, and I certainly think this is a proof of the Commissioner's able administration and it confirms the wisdom of his selection. The net profit from the railways is £90,545, after paying all working expenses and interest on capital invested both from loan and revenue. Against this profit there is a contribution to sinking fund of almost £90,000. The actual sum last year was £87,802. Members will see, the Goldfields Water supply shows a small profit of £263, against a profit of £238 made in the previous year. The Fremantle Harbour Works on the other hand

shows the very respectable profit of £10,455 as against a loss last year of £7,820. This is due to the increased tonnage of cargo, amounting to nearly 17,000 tons, and also to an increase in wharfage charges which came into force early in 1907 and which amounted to about £18,000 increase in the year.

Mr. Angwin : The increase in rates was by instructions from the Government.

The TREASURER: Well, why not? Does the member object?

Mr. Angwin : I agree with you.

The TREASURER: The State batteries show a considerable loss amounting to £6,108. The soundness of the position is realisable when we point out that the whole of the interest on the public debt last year amounted to, in round figures, £670,000. The balance from these chief trading concerns after paying all working expenses amounts to £665,000; so that the profit from them is almost sufficient to pay the whole interest bill of the State. So long as this State is compelled under Statute to maintain sinking funds, it is only right that the amount paid should be charged up to the departments concerned. On taking the approximate amount of the sinking fund into consideration we have this position, that our railways after paying all working expenses, interest on capital invested, and sinking fund according to Statute, show a profit of £2,743, whereas the Goldfields Water Supply a loss of £79,673, the Fremantle Harbour Works a loss of £8,198 and the State Batteries a loss of £7,404. Having dealt fairly exhaustively with the revenue and expenditure and with the other accounts for the past year, I would like to pass on to the estimates of revenue and expenditure for the present financial year. Before doing so I would remind the Committee that last year's Estimates showed an accumulated deficit of £286,251 or a net deficit for the year of £77,522. It will be remembered it was thought that this deficit would be covered by the land and income tax collections. It was estimated

that the total received from the tax would be £81,000, but the Bill as it eventually passed was for only half of the amount, that is for a six months' collection instead of a twelve months'. The sum of £17,000 was actually received by the end of the financial year from this source, although the assessments amounted to £40,000. In consequence of this we had to look to economies in administration and to a reduction in expenditure in order to balance the finances. These amounted to £91,932 contributed to mainly by the Railways and Works Department, and the result, as I have previously indicated, is I think highly satisfactory to all concerned.

Revenue and Expenditure for 1908-9.

Let me ask the Committee to follow me while I consider the Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the present financial year. This is of course the most important part of my Budget, and forecasts what the position will be at the end of June next. The Estimates for the present year were no light undertaking. I can assure members. Many weeks of very hard work were put in. days of thought and application, in order to enable us to balance our expenditure with our revenue, as shown by these Estimates. As I said in opening, with an overflowing and ever-increasing revenue the Treasurer's duty is easy. I cannot imagine a more pleasurable office to hold when there is any amount of money. But contrast that position with the one when we have to consider every pound, when we have even to refuse legitimate requests from members and others, when the pruning knife is always being applied. However, the duty has to be performed, no matter how distasteful and hard it is. Members have the result before them. On pages 2 and 3 of the Estimates will be found the usual general summary. The estimated total amount of revenue to be collected by the State is £2,693,206, while the amount to be returned by the Commonwealth, based on the Federal Treasurer's estimate, is £697,373, or a total revenue estimated at £3,390,579. Members

will see that on the other hand the expenditure under special Acts is estimated to amount to £1,033,155, while the other expenditure provided on the Estimates, as detailed, is expected to amount to £2,356,482. This added to the deficit brought forward from last year, amounting to £211,094, will leave us, after the total has been deducted from the revenue, with an estimated deficit on 30th June next of £210,152. Members will see that the surplus for the year is a very small one, estimated at £942. On page 7 the details of the Estimates of revenue will be found. Every care has been exercised in arriving at these figures, and not only have we taken into consideration the past twelve months' experience but we have also had the experience of the first quarter of this year, which has also received due consideration.

Taxation proposals.

In order, however, to reach the estimated revenue it will be necessary for Parliament to give its consent to a re-imposition of the land and income taxes for the full year, namely of 1d. and 4d. in the pound respectively.

Mr. Angwin: You are not going to increase them?

Mr. Brown: Is it to be collected by half-yearly instalments?

The TREASURER: The tax is not going to be increased, and it will be necessary for Parliament to authorise us to collect the tax in one sum as was done last year.

Mr. Brown: No hope.

The TREASURER: A Bill will be introduced immediately. We also propose asking Parliament to assist us in raising revenue by amending the Stamp Duties Act. We intend to fix the duties on receipts at 1d. for sums of £1 and up to £5, and 2d. for over £5. It will also be provided that all receipts for moneys paid away by the Government or other public bodies shall bear stamp duty.

Mr. Angwin: Is there to be an increase in the dividend duty.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to members that it is not the practice to interject when the Treasurer is making his

financial statement, nor is it advisable. The statement is a very important one from a State point of view, and the Treasurer should be given every facility in delivering it.

The TREASURER: It is estimated that this increased stamp duty will produce £8,000 for the half-year, instead of £3,000 as under the old system, an increase of £5,000 being shown. Then we propose to introduce a measure permitting us to impose a tax on amusements of one penny in the shilling; that is that theatres, concerts, sports, and race meetings—anywhere where an entrance fee is charged—will have to contribute one penny in the shilling to the Treasury on the amount collected. Of course entertainments of this description held for religious or charitable purposes will be exempted. It is estimated that by this tax the sum of £3,800 will be realised for the half-year. We are also going to ask authority to issue certain new licenses. We propose to impose a licence on land agents, charging them five guineas per annum. We propose to issue licences to tobacco vendors at two guineas, to issue licences to share and stock-brokers at seven guineas, and we also propose to issue a banker's license, charging £30 per annum for each bank or branch thereof. These licenses will bring £8,600 for the half year. The total increase in the amounts estimated by reason of these little amendments will be £17,450 for the half year, or for the whole year, £26,250.

Mr. Hopkins: Have you forgotten the book-maker?

The TREASURER: He is illegal now. We shall wipe him out.

Revenue for 1908-9, how estimated.

We show a decrease as compared with revenue received last year in regard to dividend duties. I estimate that we shall receive from dividend duties £100,000, or £8,033 less than last year. I may say at once that the recent improvements in some of our larger mines will, I hope, warrant increased dividends, and cause an expanding increase in the duty. Probate, hon. members will see, is estimated to give £20,688 less. Last year

the figures were swelled unduly by one or two large estates, but we cannot expect a recurrence of this. The totalisator tax, which showed a slight falling off last year, is expected to still show a falling off to the extent of £317. The Cossack-Roebourne tramway it is expected will show a falling off of £661. Batteries show a decrease of £8,019 through the falling off in the quantity of ore to be treated. Water supply shows a decrease of £3,063, and harbour dues a decrease of £5,896. These last two items have shown a tendency to shrinkage during the first four months of the present year. The receipts from the law courts it is also expected will show the slight falling off of £358, which makes the total decrease £50,035. On the other hand we have increases. From stamp duty I expect an increase of £5,383, due mainly to the proposed amendment of the Stamp Act. Land and income tax it is expected will produce £90,000, an increase on the amount collected last year of £72,827. The amusement tax should produce £3,800, while new licenses will give £8,046. From land we expect to get an increase of £14,755. Last year we received £6,000 more than the estimate, and as land selection is still going on apace, I have no doubt, and the Premier has no doubt, we shall be able to reach the revenue set down. The mining estimate shows a slight increase of £1,066, the railways an increase of £1,224, being practically the same as last year, and with regard to this revenue I may say that up to the present, although in the earlier months of the financial year the estimated amount had not been reached, the revenue has come up to the estimate. This is a favourable indication that we shall receive the amount which is put down against our revenue. The Royal Mint it is expected will produce £448 more than last year. Other public works and services an increase of £5,637; reimbursements in aid £2,914, while fees from public offices we expect will show the slight increase of £474, and miscellaneous £536, a total increase in our revenue of £120,110. From this of course has to be deducted the decrease, thus leaving a net increase

of £70,075. The amount returnable by the Commonwealth, as hon. members will see, as before stated, shows a decrease of £56,137, so that the net increase for the year in the total revenue is therefore only £13,938.

Expenditure for 1908-9, how estimated.

With regard to expenditure, this will be seen on page 15. We have had considerable difficulty in bringing this within our estimated revenue, and although we took into consideration very carefully the advisability of asking the civil servants to submit to a general reduction of salaries, we felt reluctant to take this course unless it was absolutely necessary; but we came to the conclusion that although we would not ask the service to submit to a reduction we could fairly ask them to forego all increases during the present year. This means of course the suspension of the Commissioner's classification, and increases under the Education Department and other regulations.

Mr. Johnson : You will continue making the decreases under the classification.

The TREASURER : Of course, one has no connection with the other. There is an exception with regard to officers drawing under £100 who are mainly cadets and are entitled to receive statutory increases; but otherwise no increases whatever will be given. The total saving under this head for this year is estimated to amount to £9,044. We have also made a further reduction of 20 per cent. in the municipal subsidies, which will show a saving of nearly £14,000. We have abolished all grants towards erection of town halls, and under our railways I have been obliged to eliminate £30,000 granted last year for the replacement of obsolete rolling stock. Exception of course can, and may be taken to the excision of this amount which has been a charge against the Railways vote; but as long as the State revenue could meet this demand I myself should take no exception to the amount. But it is quite impossible to make the payment out of revenue this year. It is doubtless a very good thing to make provision from current revenue

for these replacements; but I deny that it is obligatory on the part of Western Australia under the present circumstances to do so, or that it is an essential feature of sound finance. It may be argued that provision of this kind is made elsewhere, in the Eastern States and South Africa, where funds of this description are created from revenue. It is so to some extent, but under circumstances fundamentally different from those existing in our State.

Loan Sinking Funds.

Members must not forget that we alone of the States are paying annually large contributions to the loan sinking funds, and this year the payment has amounted to nearly a quarter of a million of money, £243,763 to be exact, and of this amount it is expected that £88,000 will be paid on account of our railways. Many people would maintain, and do maintain, that provided we maintain our railways in good working order there is no need for a sinking fund at all. It is assumed that paying interest on the cost of construction should be sufficient so long as the lines and equipment are maintained in sound running order. Of course I believe numbers of people cherish the ambition, that the railways and other great undertakings will yet be free from debt. Apart from a consideration of that sort, which after all has a considerable amount of sentiment in it, I see no reason, while we pay our present sinking fund, why we should provide this large sum of money from revenue each year for renewals and replacements of our rolling stock. We cannot alter our present sinking fund arrangements. They are statutory, and we have no decision in the matter. The money must be found year after year. The Government, however, is satisfied that it is an ever increasing and too heavy a burden for the State to bear in the future; that is, as it is at present constituted. We, therefore, intend to propose to Parliament that in all future loans the sinking fund shall be reduced from one to one-half per cent., an amount similar to that which has been fixed by the

Commonwealth in view of the transference of the State debts. This half per cent. will provide for repayment of the capital sum in 66 years, instead of as in 46 years as in the case of the one per cent. sinking fund. Having explained the position we have to consider where we have an option, as in the case of the replacement charges, whether we should exercise that option by wiping out this amount from our revenue estimates and making a provision to charge it against loans. I have considered this matter carefully and I think we should be justified, at any rate whilst our revenue is not buoyant, in wiping out this item and charging any replacement of rolling stock to loans. Such a charge will not exceed one-third of the amount which the State is paying under the one per cent. sinking fund on account of the railways which at present amount to nearly £90,000 per annum. So that we shall still be paying a two-thirds contribution from revenue to the sinking funds of our railways. Instead of paying one-half per cent. sinking fund which we shall propose in connection with new loans, we shall be providing a two-thirds per cent. sinking fund on the whole capital expended up to the present time on our railway system including rolling stock. The payments from revenue for this replacement fund commenced in 1901 and have amounted to £288,000. It will be noted that before 1901 no such provision was made, although ample funds in most of the years were available. It will also be noted that these amounts have varied according to the exigencies of the State finances. And when I point out that the £40,000 which was charged to revenue on this account the year before last is based on 4 per cent. of the value of the locomotives in our possession, and if we charge a similar percentage on the whole cost or value of our rolling stock it would amount to £112,000 per annum, not only would we be paying £112,000 per annum—and it is just as fair to charge it on the whole value of the rolling stock as on locomotives—but we would be paying off the whole cost of rolling stock, permanent way and equipment in 46 years by reason of the one per cent. sinking fund, which means

at present £88,000 per annum in connection with the railways.

Sinking Fund Burden.

The burden of this sinking fund is becoming too great, and as we find that we cannot and must not interfere with the sinking fund provided in connection with our existing loans which have been borrowed on those conditions, we can legitimately lighten the burden by providing in this way that a reasonable sum of money shall be expended from loan funds for the replacement of rolling stock. I think before leaving the subject, it is well that we should consider this position, that if we do by this or any other way bring down our sinking funds to one-half per cent. and still maintain our railways in good order, we shall be handing over the whole system free of debt in 66 years; a very good work, I think, so far as this generation is concerned, and all that can be expected of it for the benefit of posterity.

Increases in Expenditure.

A glance at the figures on page 15 will show the principal increases in estimated expenditure. These Estimates are under special Acts, which account for £42,016. The Lands Department show £3,414 more than last year. This is to enable them to carry out the increased work and earn the increased revenue. The Education Department shows an increase of £1,465, which would have been much greater had the annual increments been granted. In the Colonial Secretary's Department there is an estimated increase of £16,960, of which £6,758 is due to the transference of the Aborigines Department from the Treasury and the establishment of Lock hospitals at Bernier and Dorre Islands for the treatment of diseased aborigines. There is an increase in the Charities Vote of £2,152, and the transfer from other departments of the sanitary services to the Medical Department accounts for an increase of £6,600, while other departments are of course correspondingly reduced. The Department of the Minister for Agriculture shows an increased estimated expenditure of £5,982; of this £2,634 is in

connection with the Agricultural Bank, and as this institution has largely extended its operations hon. members will realise the necessity for the increased expenditure therewith. Of course this does not affect the revenue, because there is a corresponding credit, whatever the cost, for the bank is working at a profit. Agriculture generally shows an increase of £3,348.

Decreases in Expenditure.

On the other hand we have in these returns set down the decreases in expenditure, and these are expected to occur in the Treasury to the extent of £15,019, mainly due to reduced municipal subsidies; and in the Mines Department where it will be noticed there is an estimated decrease of £11,143, of which the State Batteries account for £8,035, being a reduction in working expenses to correspond with the shrinkage in revenue and the omission of £3,000 vote for last year for mining development. It has been felt that under the circumstances the loan vote, which bears the bulk of the expenditure in connection with mining development, might fairly be called upon to do the whole for this year. Railways have decreased by £30,973, being the vote for replacement of obsolete stock, to which I have already referred. The Attorney General's Department shows a decrease of £1,295, and the Works Department £870, making the estimated expenditure £10,631 more than was actually expended in the previous year. In connection with the Works Estimates hon. members must turn to the Sale of Government Property Trust Account, as shown on page 107. Here it will be seen that there is a credit balance of £31,230 17s. 1d., out of which it is proposed to expend on relaying the Northampton railway, £10,000; on bridges, £4,462; on schools, £8,767; on police buildings and gaols, £6,454; and on hospitals, £1,541. This accounts for nearly the whole of the money standing to the credit of that account, and explains, I think, pretty fully what the Government's intentions are as outlined in these Estimates now submitted for the consideration of the Committee.

Government's Policy of Development.

The policy of development and public works, which the Moore Administration has endeavoured, since its acceptance of office, to carry out, has been laid down by the Premier from time to time, and at a date as late as that of the Address-in-Reply debate, the Premier gave details of railways under construction and railways we anticipate taking in hand. The record of last year is again highly satisfactory and creditable to the department which has the control of these undertakings. Of new railways 176 miles have been constructed and 198 miles are now under construction, leaving only two railways of the original Bunbury programme yet to be commenced. Rails and fastenings to complete all the various lines authorised have been ordered, and the first deliveries will take place in January next and will be extended over the succeeding six months. Surveys of other new lines have been carried out, and the total expenditure has reached the sum of £190,000, surveys being £9,000. Improvements to harbours and rivers have been completed in different parts of the State at an expenditure of £100,000. The more noteworthy of these works were the completion of the Bunbury Mole, the Hope-toun jetty additions, and the enlargement of the swinging basin at Albany, which was so much appreciated the other day when the American fleet paid a visit to our shores, and when no fewer than nine of those large vessels of war were safely anchored in the inner harbour at one time. Improvements to Perth foreshore have been carried out, together with the erection of boathouses, the establishment of fish markets at Fremantle, erection of cranes and capstans, and the extension of the sea-wall and esplanade. The new jetty at Port Hedland, the starting point of the Marble Bar railway, is now completed, and roads and bridges have been constructed and maintained at a cost of £14,000. Artesian bores have been put down in different places, more especially in the North-Western portions of the State; at Derby, along the Eucla-Coolgardie stock route, at Gladstone, at Maud's Landing, and also at the Old Men's Home at Claremont, together with

many others in the agricultural districts, at a total cost of £24,798. The Perth-Fremantle sewerage scheme has been energetically proceeded with, but the work of house connections is awaiting the necessary legislation which it is intended will be brought down presently. Public buildings have been commenced and completed during the year to the number of 160 contracts for buildings and additions, out of which we have constructed 30 court houses, 30 additions to hospitals and new hospitals, and 77 additions to schools, and new schools and quarters. This of course has increased the departmental expenditure for maintenance, but so far as hospitals, schools and quarters are concerned I think no one will begrudge the necessary amounts. In addition to this expenditure, 27 buildings and additions to buildings have been carried out on behalf of the Commonwealth, 22 being in connection with the postal department, and 5 for defence, at a total expenditure of £61,000. The total Public Works expenditure from revenue was £175,302 as against for the previous year, £192,977. The total Public Works expenditure from loan amounted to £531,887 as against for the previous year £660,117. At any rate, although we have not been able to expend quite as much money as in the previous year, yet I think it will be conceded that something has been achieved for the benefit of the people generally. Further railways and works proposals to be taken in hand in the future will be outlined when the Loan Estimates are brought down for the consideration of hon. members.

Mining Industry.

Now may I briefly refer—I will not be very long—to the different industries of the State before I sit down. The gold mining industry still takes, as it must, in my opinion, for many years to come, the premier position among our industries, and is the first which one naturally turns to review. The total output has risen to £84,000,000 and dividends paid to almost £19,000,000; the output for last year amounted to £7,210,747, again showing a considerable falling off, namely £412,000, as compared with 1906. The record for the

first ten months of the present year, 1908, gives an output to the value of £5,826,000, indicating that it will take us all our time to keep up to last year's output. However, the developments which I referred to have inspired increased confidence, and are attracting very considerable attention from mining investors. More especially is this evident in Kalgoorlie. The developments in the deeper levels, and the discovery of lodes near the surface add materially to the life of that field. Large bodies of soft ore have been opened up in several mines at Wiluna, and the State Mining Engineer, who holds a very high opinion of the outlook of this district, states that although the ore is of low grade, yet so easily can it be mined and milled that it should be a highly profitable undertaking when worked on a large scale; and that Wiluna ought to provide employment for a very large number of men in the near future. Meekatharra is taking a prominent place in gold mining, and gratifying developments have taken place at Yallogindat, and at a place near Garden Gully, where promising reefs are now being developed. New reefs also have been discovered South of Youanme, in the Blackwood Range, and to the Eastward of Nullagine, on Eastern Creek, a trial crushing of 73 tons yielded 273 ounces. It is anticipated that this portion of our State will become a very important mining district in the near future. Encouraging reports extend from Kalgoorlie to the Pilbara fields, and the outlook in our mining industry can honestly be said, at the present time, to be brighter than it has been for several years past. With regard to baser metals, I am sorry to state that there has been a continued depression in the market, and that this has prevented any marked increase in this branch of the industry; latterly, however, there has been a slight rise in the price of copper which has stimulated the industry, and if continued it is thought will result in extensive copper deposits in the State being developed. Tin has been very quiet for the same reason, but dredging machinery has been introduced at Green-

bushes, and dressing plants have been introduced at Wodgina, and with these appliances it is expected that the cost of production will be cheapened very considerably. There is no doubt there exist extensive lodes in the Wodgina district, and there is every indication that tin mining in Western Australia will assume considerable proportions—of course, if the market is favourable. Another matter for congratulation is the fact that asbestos of the very finest quality, which, of course, has been known to exist in the Pilbara fields for some time, has at last been shipped for the first time. This asbestos is close to Marble Bar, and 40 tons valued at £1,600 has been shipped. It is making a beginning of that industry in that district, while extensive iron ore deposits have been discovered in the islands off the coast in the far Northern portion of the State. Five leases have been applied for, and the close proximity of deep water to these huge deposits give promise of cheap shipping facilities. I have read a report in connection with these iron deposits, and I must say they are of a most promising description. If they are as described and prove to be worth what they are thought to be worth, then there is undoubtedly the foundation for an enormous industry in the far Northern portion of the State in the mining and shipping of iron ore to other markets where it can be turned into iron and steel.

Collie Coalfields.

A very promising feature in connection with our mining industry is the fact that the much-despised and for many years struggling Collie Coalfields are at last forging to the front and making themselves felt outside the boundaries of our own State. The output of the last seven months—144,000 tons—although not showing any increase worth mentioning over the corresponding period last year, is, however, remarkable for the fact that a considerable quantity of coal—some 12,000 tons—has been shipped as bunker coal for steamers calling in at Fremantle and Bunbury. It is a new phase of the industry which undoubtedly

promises great results. Once we get our coal into the steamers and get them calling regularly and using it as bunker coal we establish our industry, and it is unlimited in its possibilities. Hon. members will remember the great efforts put forward in years gone by in this direction; how the coal was tried time after time, how owing to the fact that in some instances it resulted in spontaneous combustion the coal was tabooed for bunker purposes, and how large sums of money were expended in the manufacture of briquettes. These difficulties seem all to be overcome, and the strike in New South Wales last year was our opportunity. That opportunity was taken advantage of by those controlling our coal mines, and during the last 12 months no fewer than between 90 and 100 steamers have been bunkered with 12,000 tons of coal. The reports, of course, are favourable, and in some instances unfavourable, but this occurs with all coals, and I am happy to be able to state that the great majority of the reports are favourable to the use of local coal. This is proved also by the fact that steamers that have bunkered at Bunbury and Fremantle are returning for increased quantities, and at present we have steamers calling at Bunbury to take up to 1,000 tons. Last week three steamers bunkered 1,200 tons, and to-day there is a steamer lying alongside the jetty at Bunbury to take 400 tons. The average of men employed on the coalfields has been 275 during the year, as against 250 during the same period last year. If increased facilities are granted—and they must be granted if this trade is to expand—then undoubtedly a largely increased number of miners will be employed at Collie, and also there will be a considerable number of men to find employment at Bunbury bunkering the ships.

Goldfields Water Supply.

Intimately connected with the mining industry we have the Goldfields Water Supply, which not only continues to play an important part in the mining industry, but has been and is a considerable

factor in assisting the operations of agriculturists at different centres *en route*. The consumption last year was 837 million gallons, an increase of 149 million gallons on 1906-7; this year it is estimated that the consumption will reach 900 million gallons, and the gross profit, that is excess of earnings over operating expenses, it is expected this year will reach £100,000. Undoubtedly the advance is slow, but notwithstanding that fact it will be readily recognised that this is one of the most beneficent schemes that has ever been constructed in this or any other part of the civilised world. The indirect profits to the State are enormous.

Land Settlement.

Land settlement and agricultural and pastoral development during the past year show a most remarkable record. Indeed, I think it is the most remarkable record in the history of our State. No less than 1,190,554 acres of agricultural lands have been applied for by 4,504 settlers with a view to alienation. The area under cultivation has increased from 364,000 to 460,000 acres, and the increase of arable and cleared land was over 1,000,000 acres. The area under wheat last season increased by 30,000 acres, and the yield went up by nearly a quarter of a million bushels. This year the harvest it must be admitted is not so plentiful as last owing to the dry season, but the recent rains have improved matters, and the larger area under crop will to some extent compensate for the falling-off in the yield. The average consumption of wheat per inhabitant in Australia is 6 bushels, and if we allow 8 bushels per head and 500,000 bushels for seed requirements, last year 693,000 bushels were available for export. The agricultural railways have played a most prominent part in this great developmental work, and the agricultural railways projected last year and since carried out have been big factors whose influence must be felt during this and subsequent years.

Agricultural Bank.

This great onward movement with which the future of the country is undoubtedly

bound up would be impossible if it were not for the assistance of the Agricultural Bank. This institution last year loaned to settlers £218,000. These funds are disbursed on the performance by settlers of specific improvements, and the limit to any client is £500. It is estimated that £280,000 will be required to be disbursed from this institution this year, making a total sum advanced of £1,020,000, distributed among 6,000 settlers. This great work is done by the bank without any cost as far as the State is concerned, because in addition to paying interest on borrowed capital and all the expenses of maintenance and administration, it is estimated that the bank will carry some £6,000 profit on the year's operations towards the reserve fund for redeeming its loans. During the long career of this bank—and it is the most remarkable feature I have to announce and draw attention to—it has only made one bad debt—with the exception of course of one or two embezzlements, and that amounted to £7 10s. It is a truly wonderful record, and I am afraid it is too good to last.

Freezing Works.

Our policy of land settlement of course includes other auxiliaries, and more especially is the establishment of freezing works a necessity. I here express my regret that our proposals with regard to the establishment of freezing works at Wyndham appear to have fallen through. The economical absurdity of driving our stock across country to Queensland and having them treated there in the works established in that State and having portion of them returned to us as canned meat, and perhaps as frozen meat, is apparent, and it seems to me should be done away with at the earliest possible moment.

Export of Produce.

Facilities must be provided in our Southern ports with or without Government assistance, I do not care how it is done, for the export of our produce to the London market, and with a view to the exploitation of this market the Government have been introducing breeding ewes to produce lambs suitable for this trade. Last year 26,000 breeding ewes

were imported and sold on terms to farmers, and efforts have been made to create a dairying industry, and cows of dairy strain from established herds in the Eastern States have been imported and distributed to settlers. The importance of this move is shown by the fact that last year we imported £364,000 worth of butter. Another phase of the subject is that out of £472,000 worth of machinery imported last year, agricultural machinery represented £84,000 produced in the Eastern States. Our present rapid rate of settlement must increase this demand, and should in itself prove sufficient encouragement for enterprise in this direction. Fruit production has proceeded apace. Our orchards last year increased by 1,500 acres. Apple growing is receiving special attention due to the great attractions of the London market. This is particularly the case in the South-Western portion of the State, where the climate, soil, and rainfall are conducive to the production of this fruit. These, combined with the shipping and rail facilities, enable fruit to be grown in a cool climate and placed on the London market with the fullest bloom. This can be done in advance of similar fruit grown in the Eastern States by reason of our close proximity to Europe. Our flocks have increased from 2,211,000 in 1897 to 3,695,000 last year, an increase of more than 50 per cent. in the 10 years. Our herds have increased from 245,000 in 1897 to 759,000 last year, an increase of about 300 per cent. Our wool export shows a big increase, being £603,080 in 1906 and £812,088 in 1907. These striking increases are truly indicative of the great future of this State.

Education.

A few brief words in connection with our Education Department and other minor departments will conclude what I have to say to-night. An ever increasing demand in connection with the education of our people has, of course, to be met, and has been I can claim honestly wherever practicable. The expenditure per head of our population in connection with education is heavier than in any other State of the

Commonwealth. The cost throughout the Commonwealth ranges from 7s. 7d. per head of the population in Tasmania to 16s. 5d. per head in Western Australia, the Commonwealth average being 12s. 7d. per head of the population; showing that we are not niggardly in expenditure so far as the education of our children is concerned. No doubt to a great extent the large area of country to be served, and the large number of schools in sparsely settled districts, contributes to this increased cost; nevertheless during the last three years we have opened 100 new schools, making the total now 381 as against 281 three years ago. Of these new schools, 29 were opened during last year, and provision has been made for additions and extensions to 32 school buildings, and the erection of 18 new schools and quarters irrespective of the vote for "Miscellaneous Schools and quarters." It is hoped that a start will be made with the permanent building of the Perth Technical School at an early date, while the question of a University for Western Australia is now being referred for consideration to a Royal Commission who have been appointed, and I am happy to say have accepted their appointment in an honorary capacity. The result of their labours will, I trust, be that they will be able to recommend a scheme which will not only redound to the credit of the State, but will also be practically within our means, so that we may carry it out.

Trade Imports and Exports.

The general trade of the State shows a decrease of some £200,000 in round figures; the total being £16,400,000, as against £16,600,000 in the previous year. It is worthy of note that this falling off in the general trade is not in exports, for they have increased, but in imports. The exports have increased by nearly £100,000 in the twelve months, showing that the State is producing more of its own requirements than it did hitherto. During the nine months ended the 30th September, the falling off in the value of meats imported to Western Australia was £31,000, while in wheat, oats, flour, etc., it was £24,000. Between the years 1903

and 1907 the importation of food stuffs fell from £8 2s. 5d. per head of the population to £5 15s. 10d., all showing that the great end we are aiming at, no matter whether we agree as to the means adopted for its achievement; is gradually being attained. As far as our primary industries are concerned, we are by degrees meeting the local demand, and indeed we are getting beyond it and entering on the export trade.

Timber and Pearling Industries.

The great timber industry which received a considerable set-back last year owing to that unfortunate industrial strike, has greatly improved its position. It was never so prosperous as now, and the exports for the nine months, exclusive of those to the other States, totalled £474,000. The importance of this great industry can be illustrated by the fact that Western Australia exports nearly three-fourths of the total value of the timber exported by the Commonwealth. It is an industry that deserves every consideration at the hands of every member of this House, and surely it is an industry upon which so many are dependent, directly and indirectly, that we should all join in endeavouring to secure continuity of work, and to avoid industrial disputes, so that the prosperity it deserves can come to it.

Mr. Holman: They will have an opportunity very soon, I am afraid.

The TREASURER: I hope not, and I trust the hon. member will be first to put his back against stoppage of work.

Mr. Holman: I have done that for the past twelve months.

The TREASURER: The pearling industry in the North-West deserves passing attention. During the past year 1,294 tons of pearl shell of the declared value of £168,124 have been exported from the State. These figures represent an increase in value of £27,000. Taking the value of pearls obtained at an approximate estimate of £60,000, the industry represents a total value of £228,000 for the twelve months. There are 31 schooners and 352 luggers engaged, and 2,500 men are employed in the industry. At Sharks Bay, the total value

of shell and pearls recovered, amounts to £5,238.

Secondary Industries.

The secondary industries in this State such as factories, workshops, and mills, exclusive of mining, although they have not increased, continue to employ between 13,000 and 14,000 persons. The expansion of these industries which is undoubtedly so beneficial to any country is a problem still to be solved, and it would almost appear that some assistance by way of bounty will be absolutely necessary to the industrial progress of this State. We have such differences in the conditions of employment and labour as compared with the Eastern States, they have such large home markets to serve, it stands to reason that, if we are to establish these industries which I term secondary industries, in our midst, and to extend those industries already here, we must find some method of equalising the conditions.

Population and Immigration.

The population of the State has increased from 264,000, to 269,000 during the year, being an increase of 5,000. On the 31st October, the population was 270,915 persons, representing a net gain by immigration during the ten months of 2,989 persons. This is a very satisfactory increase, and represents much more to the State of Western Australia than is gleaned from the actual figures. The bulk of these immigrants went on to the land, and by that means have become permanent producers of wealth, permanent settlers, and undoubtedly one settler of that description is worth very much more to the State than the ordinary rouseabout who takes his swag on his back and goes from one end of the country to the other.

Savings and Thrift.

The Government Savings Bank shows a very satisfactory increase in its operations. The amount standing to the credit of depositors has increased from £2,633,000 in 1907, to £2,897,000 in 1908. It has since increased, at the end of Oc-

tober, to £2,984,000. There are nearly 70,000 accounts now open in this institution, and one half of them are for amounts of under £50; showing that the institution is serving its purpose in encouraging and granting facilities to thrift and the saving propensities of the people. The interest paid to depositors during the last financial year, amounted to £77,515, and the magnitude of this institution's operations can be gauged by the fact that it consists of a head office, five branches, and 204 agencies. Right through the length and breadth of the land are agencies connected with the Savings Bank, so that every man, woman, and even the children of the schools, are given facilities for paying their savings into this institution if they so desire. Notwithstanding the increased number of agencies, the management has been carried on economically, and the cost, calculated as a percentage on the balances due to depositors, has been reduced during the last four years from 11s. 9½d. per cent. to 9s. 11½d. per cent.

The Mint.

The Royal Mint has been highly successful. The total amount of gold coined and bullion used during the last financial year, was £5,494,056, as compared with £5,290,627 for the previous year. The profit on the year's transactions reached £7,051. Taking the interest and sinking fund at 4½ per cent. into consideration, the net profit is £4,464. The operations to date since the opening of the Mint in Perth in 1889 show a net profit to the State of £27,635 on a total capital expenditure, including the value of the land on which the Mint is built, of £57,000. This is a very gratifying result, and one of which we can all be proud.

Conclusion.

I have now practically completed my task of submitting these Estimates for the consideration of the Committee. I have endeavoured to explain clearly what has taken place during the past twelve months, how the money has been expended, and the economies we have endeavoured to effect. I have placed

before members as clearly as I possibly can the Estimates of the Government for the present financial year, and how we propose to decrease expenditure in order to meet our revenue. I have also explained in detail the means we propose to take in order to augment that revenue to some extent, and with this explanation I have completed my task again this year. I have shown that while care must be exercised, the financial position of this country is undoubtedly sound, the indications pointing clearly to increased results in the near

future. The unbounded possibilities which undoubtedly exist in connection with our mineral, pastoral, agricultural, and timber industries warrant us, I think, in fearlessly proceeding with our developmental policy, and also give an assurance that progress and prosperity must follow our efforts in this direction. I have much pleasure in moving the first item of the Estimates—

His Excellency the Governor, £1,148:
Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

APPENDIX TABLES Nos. 1 to 9, referred to in the Treasurer's Financial Statement.

[No. 1.]

Synopsis of Balance Sheet, as at 30th June, 1907, and at 30th June, 1908.

(The Balance Sheets are not the State's, showing its Liabilities and Assets, but the Treasurer's, accounting for the Funds placed at his disposal by the State.)

	1907.	1908.
DR.—(i.e., Amounts for which the Treasurer is liable.)	£	£
General Loan Fund	883,830	633,733
Sinking Funds	1,600,044	1,904,433
Government Savings Bank	2,639,173	2,904,963
Trust and Deposit Accounts Generally	991,124	1,071,314
	<u>£6,114,171</u>	<u>6,514,443</u>

CR.—(i.e., Assets held by the Treasurer.)

<i>Generally.</i>	£	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund Balance, being Deficit (i.e., Revenue claims paid by the Treasurer, but to meet which the State had not placed Revenue moneys at his disposal)	203,729	211,094
Advances to be recovered by the Treasurer—that is, by debiting votes, etc., of subsequent year	95,188	124,979
Investments on account of Savings Bank, Sinking Funds, etc.	4,155,081	4,986,289
Stores on hand, to be charged when issued for consumption to votes of succeeding years	408,516	426,293

Synopsis of Balance Sheet—continued.

Cash on hand and in transitu.

	£	£
At the Treasury	58,256	34,444
Current Accounts in the State	391,118	333,154
Do. do. Eastern States	58,096	21,851
Do. do. London	169,315	14,388
Government Savings Bank	519,485	318,030
Sinking Funds Municipal Loans	314	316
Agricultural Bank Redemption Account	5,645	5,027
Fixed Deposits on Trust Account	44,428	38,578
	<u>£6,114,171</u>	<u>6,514,443</u>

[No. 2.]

Revenue, 1907-8.

	£	
The Treasurer's estimate for the year was	3,393,620	
The actual amount received was	<u>3,376,641</u>	
Or a total net over-estimate of		<u>£16,979</u>
<i>The over-estimates were—</i>		
Dividend Duty	6,967	
Stamp Duty	1,383	
Totalisator Tax	83	
Licenses	896	
Mining	3,616	
Railways	31,224	
Cossack-Roebourne Tramway	39	
Water Supply	3,732	
Other Public Works and Services	660	
Fees, Public Offices	689	
Law Courts	1,642	
Miscellaneous	3,936	
Commonwealth	<u>2,336</u>	
		<u>£57,203</u>
<i>The under-estimates were—</i>		
Probate Duty	1,688	
Land	6,145	
State Batteries	3,819	
Harbour Dues	2,696	
Royal Mint	1,552	
Reimbursements-in-Aid	7,251	
Land Tax	11,140	
Income Tax	<u>5,933</u>	
		<u>£40,224</u>
		<u>£16,979</u>

Expenditure, 1907-8.

		£	
The Treasurer's Estimate for the year was	...	3,470,938	
The Actual Expenditure was	...	3,379,006	
		<hr/>	
Or a net over-estimate of	...	...	£91,932
			<hr/>
<i>The over-estimates were—</i>		£	
Special Acts	...	241	
Executive Council	...	5	
Legislature	...	846	
Minister for Lands	...	2,799	
Do. Education	...	4,812	
Do. Railways	...	54,296	
Attorney General	...	1,434	
Minister for Works	...	36,618	
		<hr/>	101,051
<i>The under-estimates were—</i>			
His Excellency the Governor	...	18	
Premier's Office	...	21	
Colonial Treasurer	...	5,749	
Minister for Mines	...	840	
Colonial Secretary	...	2,325	
Minister for Agriculture	...	166	
		<hr/>	9,119
		<hr/>	<hr/>
			£91,932

Summary of Revenue and Expenditure, 1907-8.

	£	£	
Estimated Deficit 30th June, 1908	...	286,047	
Over-estimate of Expenditure	...	91,932	
Do. Revenue	...	16,979	
		<hr/>	74,953
Actual Deficit	...		<hr/>
			211,094
			<hr/>
Deficit from 1906-7	...	208,729	
Expenditure as above	...	3,379,006	
		<hr/>	3,587,735
Revenue	...		3,376,641
		<hr/>	
Deficit as above, 30th June, 1908	...	...	<hr/>
			£211,094

[No. 3.]

Commonwealth Revenue.

Head and Sub-head.	Inter-State Adjustments 1907/8 a. Net Credits.	Actual 1907/8.	Estimated 1908/9.
	£	£	£
CUSTOMS—			
Stimulants	28,966	236,516	225,100
Narcotics	57,618	101,448	96,600
Agricultural Products and Groceries	5,695	89,989	80,400
Apparel and Textiles	15,611	134,518	131,670
Metals and Machinery	2,162	102,627	90,120
Oils, Paints, and Varnishes	1,736	14,893	14,100
Earthenware, etc.	827	26,315	23,950
Wood, Wicker, and Cane	604	22,871	22,950
Jewellery and Fancy Goods	1,360	17,423	17,700
Leather and Rubber	4,462	21,440	22,100
Paper and Stationery	1,430	13,957	14,300
Vehicles	250	10,917	10,000
Other	3,588	37,989	37,450
Total	124,309	830,003	786,440
EXCISE—			
Beer	6,007	56,527	57,200
Spirits	2,532	10,398	9,800
Sugar	6,072	46,238	47,100
Tobacco	45,881	53,128	56,790
Other	483	2,634	2,670
Total	60,975	168,925	173,560
POST OFFICE—			
Postage ... ..	...	140,088	144,000
Telegraphs ... ..	...	74,560	79,000
Telephones ... ..	...	32,787	34,000
Commission on Money Orders, etc. ... ..	...	9,991	10,000
Other ... ..	...	9,032	8,600
Total ... ..	...	266,458	275,600
DEFENCE, ETC. ... ..	...	5,289	3,919
Grand Total	£ 185,284	1,270,675	1,239,519

a These amounts are of course included in the next column. They represent results of the operation of the Book-keeping Section—duties collected in the other States on articles subsequently shipped to Western Australia for consumption. The importance of this Section to Western Australia can be gleaned from the result of its operation last year. To the 30th June last the amount accruing to us from this provision in the Constitution totalled £730,214. That it is a growing revenue is evident from the figures for each year since the Uniform Tariff came into operation, viz.:—1902/3, £37,813; 1903/4, £90,442; 1904/5, £123,805; 1905/6, £135,917; 1906/7, £161,923; and 1907/8, £185,284.

[No. 4.]

Commonwealth Expenditure.

Head and Sub-Head.							Actual, 1907-8.	Estimated, 1908-9.
<i>Transferred.</i>							£	£
CUSTOMS	...	...	...	...	...	...	33,376	33,924
POST OFFICE	...	...	...	...	...	...	300,567	306,302
DEFENCE	...	...	...	...	...	...	53,017	56,984
QUARANTINE	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,230
IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
<i>Other.</i>								
ORDINARY	...	...	...	...	...	...	77,204	95,933
NEW WORKS, BUILDINGS, RIFLES, ETC. <i>a</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	54,615	44,094
							518,779	538,467

Summary of Revenue and Expenditure.

Revenue	...	...	...	...	...	...	b 1,272,289	b 1,235,840
Expenditure	...	...	...	...	...	...	518,779	538,467
Balance returnable to State	...	...	...	...	...	£	753,510	697,373

a. Particulars given in No. 5.*b.* Adjusted by opening and closing balances.

A further analysis of our Estimated Expenditure for 1908-9 is the following :—

	Actual, 1907-8.	Estimated, 1908-9.
<i>Transferred.</i>		
Ordinary Maintenance Expenditure of—	£	£
Customs	31,341	31,769
Post Office	292,943	298,012
Defence	36,802	41,004
Pensions	2,240	2,246
Works and Buildings—Salaries (Supervision)	334	208
Do. Rent, Repairs, etc.	7,226	8,502
Audit Office	1,298	1,352
Thursday Island	928	1,114
King George's Sound	1,296	749
Naval Agreement	12,464	12,342
Quarantine ... ..	...	1,130
Unforeseen	88	12
	<hr/> 386,960	<hr/> 398,440
<i>Other.</i>		
“Caused by Federation :”—		
Governor-General, Parliament, and the Commonwealth Departments, i.e., External and Home Affairs, Attorney General, etc.	25,559	31,008
“Not caused by Federation :”—*		
Administration of Papua	1,563	1,234
Sugar Bounty and Expenses	36,435	32,450
Other Bounties	11	925
Iron Bonus ... ..	...	741
Repatriation of Pacific Islanders	302	92
Conveyance of Mails between Victoria and Tasmania	810	802
Subsidy on Abolition of Charges on Tasmanian Cables	416	288
New Works, Buildings, Rifles, etc., as detailed in No. 5	54,615	44,094
Old Age Pensions—Transfer to Trust Fund	11,925	25,352
Pensions and Retiring Allowances ... ..	...	34
Non-recurring	183	3,007
	<hr/> 181,819	<hr/> 140,027
Total	<hr/> £518,779	<hr/> £538,467

* That is, not a necessary consequence of the operation of the Federal Constitution Act, but of Federal Legislation.

The chief items of Commonwealth “Other” expenditure upon which increases are estimated this year are, with last year's expenditure in brackets, as follow :—Governor General, £11,377 (£8,882); Allowances to Senators and Representatives, £64,400 (£60,677); Old Age Pensions, £410,810 (£191,354); Bounties, £15,000 (£176); Transcontinental Railway Survey, £17,236 (£2,764); Iron Bonus, £12,000; Advertising Resources of Commonwealth, £20,000 (£3,946); Courts of Conciliation and Arbitration, £1,215 (£408); Meteorological Department, £19,959 (£9,146); Reception of American Fleet, £31,500 (£177); Administration of Australian Industries Preservation Act, £2,000; Government Analyst, £1,820 (£3,574); and Cordite Factory, £2,000.

[No. 5.]

Commonwealth Expenditure on New Works, Buildings, Rifles, etc.

Head and Sub-head.				Actual, 1907-8.	Estimated, 1908-9.
CUSTOMS—				£	£
Customs House, Broome	...	...	...	189	211
Customs House, Fremantle	...	...	...	6,776	3,050
Non-recurring	...	...	...	...	...
Total				6,965	3,261
POST OFFICE—					
General Post Office, Re-wiring in connection with the Electric Light installation	...	...	...	...	500
Northam Post Office	...	...	...	...	2,900
Fortescue Post Office	...	...	...	...	560
Meekatharra Post Office	...	...	...	...	490
Bamboo Creek Post Office	...	...	...	...	200
Beverley Post Office	...	...	...	...	a 700
Fitzroy Post Office	...	...	...	180	59
Sandstone Post Office	...	...	...	...	1,500
Collie Post Office	...	...	...	563	105
Eucla Post Office	...	...	...	460	40
Sundry Offices	...	...	...	942	1,809
Purchase of Sites	...	...	...	607	1,818
North Telegraph Routes—Catchment Sheds	...	...	...	...	500
Construction Telegraph Lines	...	...	...	4,532	1,742
Do. Telephone Lines	...	...	...	20,077	19,778
Non-recurring	...	...	...	1,797	...
Total				29,158	32,701
DEFENCES—					
Fortifications	...	...	...	...	120
Kalgoorlie Rifle Range	...	...	...	1,056	548
Bunbury Rifle Range	...	...	...	...	350
Other Rifle Ranges	...	...	...	10	495
Grants to Rifle Clubs for Ranges	...	...	...	...	1,300
Miniature Rifle Ranges for Cadets	...	...	...	...	620
Racks for Cadet Rifles	...	...	...	...	150
Drill Halls	...	...	...	41	592
Addition to Armourers' Shop, Perth	...	...	...	799	90
Fort and Site at North Fremantle	...	...	...	5,496	1,440
Fremantle Defences—Site for Barrack Accommodation	...	...	...	...	3,000
Barracks	...	...	...	308	650
Guns, Lights, and Emplacements for Fixed Defences	...	...	...	...	b 400
Non-recurring	...	...	...	872	...
Total				8,582	9,755
Grand Total				£ 44,705	c 45,717

a Estimated total cost, £1,600. b Estimated total cost, £1,200. c This expenditure is charged as "other"; that is to say, all the "New Works, Buildings, Rifles, etc.," of the Commonwealth, totalling this year £720,541, and of which the above will be defrayed in Western Australia, are charged *per capita* to the States. The estimated charge to Western Australia is £44,094. Of the £720,541 it is estimated that £25,000 will actually not be expended this year. Further disbursements under this head of "New Works, Buildings, Rifles, etc.," which cannot at present be earmarked to States (and which indeed in some cases will be expended outside the Commonwealth), are as follow:—Special Cables. £57,000; Special Defence Material, £48,200; Trawler, £12,577; Acquisition of Offices in London. £5,000; and Machinery for Government Printing Office, Melbourne, £1,000. The charge to Western Australia of this *per capita* expenditure, after allowing for our share of the £25,000 saving, will be £5,686; and this amount added to the £45,717 above will give the £51,403 shown in Return No. 6 as "Expended in the State."

Head and Sub-Head:	1901/2.	1902/3.	1903/4.	1904/5.	1905/6.	1906/7.	1907/8.	1908/9. (Estimated.)
REVENUE.								
Customs and Excise—Federal Tariff ...	£ 1,184,045	£ 1,162,535	£ 1,061,789	£ 1,029,515	£ 953,147	£ 935,841	£ 998,928	£ 960,000
Do. do. Special Tariff ...	201,569	233,467	196,936	142,549	77,666	16,776	...	...
Post Office ...	225,752	225,244	230,858	257,503	252,741	259,688	266,458	275,600
Other ...	172	716	828	2,057	3,549	4,111	5,289	3,919
Total	£ 1,561,538	£ 1,621,962	£ 1,490,411	£ 1,431,624	£ 1,287,103	£ 1,216,416	£ 1,270,675	£ 1,239,519
EXPENDITURE.								
<i>Transferred—</i>								
Customs ...	31,991	34,687	33,836	33,937	34,762	32,136	33,376	33,924
Post Office ...	256,392	269,757	278,994	277,835	283,005	281,378	300,567	306,302
Defence ...	33,693	31,320	41,967	40,368	45,261	49,172	53,017	56,984
Quarantine ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,230
Immigration Restriction Act ...	...	...	...	...	...	300	...	...
Other—Ordinary, i.e., Cost of Commonwealth Departments, etc. ...	14,061	17,524	26,559	28,112	31,996	48,551	77,204	95,933
<i>New Works, etc. a—</i>								
Customs ...	...	53	2,658	120	114	74	557	1,330
Post Office ...	2,178	10,547	26,910	8,016	9,214	17,521	26,566	4,123
Defence ...	1,274	1,150	13,571	12,177	10,791	12,401	27,489	38,262
Other ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	379
Total	£ 339,589	£ 365,038	£ 424,495	£ 400,565	£ 415,143	£ 441,533	£ 518,779	£ 538,467
Balance of Revenue returned to the State	1,225,076	1,255,732	1,065,244	1,027,898	872,992	780,166	753,510	697,378
Adjustments, etc. ...	- 3,127	+ 1,192	+ 672	3,161	- 1,032	- 5,283	- 1,614	+ 3,679
Total as above	£ 1,561,538	£ 1,621,962	£ 1,490,411	£ 1,431,624	£ 1,287,103	£ 1,216,416	£ 1,270,675	£ 1,239,519
<i>New Works, etc.—</i>								
Expended in the State ...	3,452	11,750	43,139	52,085	68,872	50,291	72,899	51,403
Charged to the State ...	3,452	11,750	43,139	20,313	20,119	29,996	54,615	44,094

a Since 1st July, 1904, calculated on population basis. Prior to that date charged as "transferred."

NOTE.—The "transferred" Expenditure of each State is charged in its entirety to that State. "Other" Expenditure is charged per capita, our share being about one-sixteenth.

[No. 7.]

Loan Authorisations, etc., as at the 30th June, 1908.

	£	£	£
<i>Authorisations and Flotations—</i>			
Authorisations to 30th June, 1907 ...	...	20,740,253	
Do. during 1907-8 ...	...	<i>Nil</i>	
Do. to 30th June, 1908 ...	...		<u>20,740,253</u>
<i>Flotations to 30th June, 1907—</i>			
General Loans ...	16,151,253		
Local Debentures ...	246,100		
Do. Inscribed Stock ...	2,546,085		
Treasury Bills ...	500,000		
		19,443,438	
<i>Flotations during 1907-8—</i>			
General Loans ...	1,000,000		
Local Inscribed Stock ...	77,130		
Treasury Bills ...	200,150		
		1,277,280	
Authorisations available for Flotation, 30th June, 1908 ...	...	19,535	
			<u>20,740,253</u>
<i>Actual Net-Loan Indebtedness—</i>			
Flotations to 30th June, 1907, as above ...	...	19,443,438	
Less—Redemptions ...	220,800		
Accumulated Sinking Fund...	1,600,044		
		1,820,844	
Actual Net Loan Indebtedness, 30th June, 1907 ...	...	17,622,594	
Flotations during year as above ...	1,277,280		
Less—Redemptions during 1907-8 £6,300			
Accretions to Accumulated Sinking Fund during 1907-8 ...	£304,389		
		310,689	
		966,591	
Actual Net Loan Indebtedness, 30th June, 1908 ...	...	...	<u>18,589,185</u>

[No. 8.]

Loan Flotations, Debt, and Expenditure, as at the 30th June, 1908.

Works and Services.	Flotations as charged to Works and Services.	Actual In-debtedness on Works and Services.	Actual Cash Spent.
	£	£	£
Railways	11,574,006	11,417,615	10,232,270
Harbours and Rivers	2,630,331	2,610,306	2,352,043
Goldfields Water Scheme	2,873,404	2,873,404	2,661,220
Water Supply generally	245,334	245,091	198,130
Sewerage	425,749	425,749	252,635
Erection of State Batteries	156,018	156,018	150,831
Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources	1,030,978	1,030,978	969,035
Development of Agriculture	890,424	890,424	818,400
Telegraphs	276,721	241,882	269,308
Roads and Bridges	175,954	163,656	166,818
Public Buildings	317,175	313,880	285,817
Immigration	28,670	28,670	28,085
Miscellaneous	95,954	95,945	85,897
Flotation Expenses	£ 852,936		
Unexpended Balance General			
Loan Fund ... 1,367,568			
Unexpended Balance Government			
Property Sales			
Fund 30,225			
	1,397,793		2,250,729
Debentures Redeemed		227,100	
TOTAL FLOTATIONS	£ 20,720,718	20,720,718	20,720,718

[No. 9.]

Net Cash Results of Working the State's Chief Trading Concerns during 1907-1908.

[Apart from Interest on Revenue Capital, this return deals exclusively with cash transactions recorded at the Treasury, and must not, therefore, be regarded as summarising the profit and loss accounts of the respective undertakings. It tells what the State expended in sterling on them, and the return in sterling paid into the State coffers. Hence, as matters in regard to which only the respective departmental accounting branches possess the necessary data, stores on hand are not considered; neither are moneys earned but not received, nor payments due but not defrayed.]

Trading Concern.	Capital Cost. a		Charge against Revenue.				Revenue paid to Treasury.		Net Profit or Loss after deducting Working Expenses and Interest on Capital.		Amount available, after paying Working Expenses, for payment of interest on Capital.	Approximate Contribution by State to Sinking Funds during Year.
			Interest on Capital.		Working Expenses.	Total.			Profit.	Loss.		
	Loan.	Revenue.	Loan at Actual Rates.	Revenue at 4 per cent.			Gross.	After paying Working Expenses.				
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Railways	11,417,615	637,094	380,857	25,484	1,022,940	1,429,281	1,519,826	...	90,545	...	496,886	87,802
Goldfields Water Scheme...	b 2,873,404	...	91,737	...	c	91,737	...	92,000	263	...	92,000	79,836
Fremantle Harbour Works	d 1,869,983	e 36,000	62,139	1,440	c	63,579	...	74,034	10,455	...	74,034	18,653
State Batteries	156,018	92,468	4,990	3,699	85,438	94,127	88,019	...	...	6,108	2,581	1,296
Total	16,317,020	765,562	539,723	30,623	1,108,378	1,678,724	1,607,845	166,034	101,263	6,108	f 665,501	187,687
									Net Profit £95,155.			

a. That is, so far as loan is concerned, debt existing on account of the undertaking; and as regards revenue, the amount advanced by the Treasury—including, for instance, £45,554 written off by the Railway Department as depreciation of rolling stock. Included in the Railways Loan capital above is the debt represented by purchase of land for Cottesloe-Fremantle deviation, lines under construction, surveys of proposed lines, and all Railways expenditure other than the Trans-Continental. It is held that the State's railway policy is one entity; that if interest is not received from the Railway Department on the capital sunk in these undertakings it will not be received at all, and that a Railway Company would charge to its income interest on all the capital invested in its undertakings whether revenue-producing or not. The traffic receipts from the railways under construction, the expenses incidental thereto, as well as the rents collected in connection with the Cottesloe deviation, have been brought into this statement. These amounts were respectively:—£626, £487, and £424. b. Exclusive of a subsidiary loan amounting to £331,823. Interest and Sinking Fund on this loan were paid by the Administration before handing over its surplus to the Treasury. c. Deducted from revenue, surplus only being paid to the Treasury. d. This is the total loan debt on the Fremantle Harbour, not the debt which the Trust accepts as its liability. e. Only approximate. f. The interest actually paid on the whole public debt of the State for the year was £670,838.