

temporary employment. A list of the officers and of the work they did, would be supplied to the hon. member.

Mr. Holman: Will you give an assurance that the vote will not be exceeded as previously?

The TREASURER: Of course if there was a rush of work the vote might be exceeded.

Item. Immigration, £1,000:
Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 2nd February, 1909.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: Return showing the cost of and profit derived from crushing of ores at the Menzies State Battery.

BILL—EXCESS. 1907 and 1908.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purpose of this Bill.

QUESTION—MEAT COMMISSION REPORT.

Mr. MONGER (without notice) asked the Premier: In view of the importance

of the evidence taken in connection with the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the meat question, will he cause the evidence and report to be printed; if not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: It is proposed to print the report.

QUESTIONS (2)—STATE BATTERIES.

Linden two-head Mill.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: 1. What amount of stone has been crushed at the two-head mill at Linden up to December 31st, 1908? 2. What amount of gold has been won therefrom over the plates—there being no cyanide plant there? 3. What amount of revenue has the Government derived from the two-head mill at Linden to December 31st, 1908? 4. What has been the expenditure on salaries, wages, fuel, stores, etc., to December 31st, 1908? 5. What has been the cost per ton put through the two-head mill at Linden up to December 31st, 1908?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1. 1,296½ tons. 2. 1,667.05 ozs. 3. £641 10s. 6d. 4. Wages, £1,088 12s. 11d; fuel, £410 12s.; stores, £465 19s. 3d. Total, £1,965 4s. 2d. 5. Cost per ton, expenditure, 30s. 3.78d. These costs, however, will be much reduced in the future, self-feeders having been erected; and a cyanide plant, which will take over a proportion of the management costs, will shortly be completed.

Devon Consols Mill.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: 1. What amount of stone has been crushed at the Devon Consols mill leased by the Government at Linden? 2. What amount of gold has been won therefrom over the plates? 3. What amount of sands has been treated by cyanide, and what quantity of gold won? 4. What revenue did the Government derive from stone crushed there? 5. What was the expenditure on wages, fuel, water, stores, and upkeep of the Devon Consols mill at Linden? 6. What

was the actual cost of leasing the Devon Consols mill? 7. What was the actual cost per ton of stone crushed there? 8. Does not the Minister think that the district of Linden warrants far better facilities for crushing than the present two-head mill?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, 480½ tons. 2, 533.58 ozs. 3, 261½ tons for 152.36 ozs., valued at £511 12s. 9d. 4, £244. 5, wages, £274 6s. 6d. fuel, £62 4s. 11d.; water, £91 10s.; stores, £132 4s. 8d. Total, £580 6s. 1d. 6, Leased at a rental of £5 per week. 7, Cost per ton, 24s. 2d. 8, I would prefer to wait a few months more before expressing a definite opinion.

QUESTION—RAILWAY FREIGHTS, STANDARD FRUIT CASES.

Mr. LAYMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture: Will the Government represent to the Commissioner of Railways the advisability of carrying fruit packed in standard cases at fixed rates per case, according to distance, in order to encourage the more general use of packages made of our native wood, and obviate the extra weighing and handling now practised?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: The matter of the adoption of a standard weight per case is now receiving the attention of the Commissioner of Railways.

QUESTION—FRUIT INDUSTRY, FACTORIES.

Mr. LAYMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture: Whether, in view of the rapid expansion of fruit-tree planting in this State and the periodical glut of fruit which is now being experienced, and is likely to be repeated, the Government will consider the advisability of offering some encouragement for the establishment of pulping, canning, and evaporating factories in the principal fruit-producing districts?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: Yes.

QUESTION—RAILWAY STATIONS. UNATTENDED.

Mr. HOPKINS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that a considerable amount of goods are being regularly lost or stolen by the present methods of leaving goods and parcels at unattended railway stations? 2, What guarantee can the department give that missing goods in such instances have been delivered at all? 3, Will the Minister have the matter investigated, and ascertain whether it is not practicable at stations and sidings of importance to arrange for the wives of fottlers to receive such goods, attend to telephones, etc.? 4, Will the Minister ascertain what success has attended these methods in Victoria, and what remuneration is usually paid?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, The signature of the guard that he has delivered the goods at the siding. 3, This is already done wherever practicable and where the business warrants it. In many cases, however, it cannot be arranged, owing to the introduction of flying gangs. 4, Yes.

QUESTION — ABORIGINES FLOGGED, ANDERSON CASE.

Mr. GILL asked the Attorney General: 1, Was a person named Anderson some time ago sentenced to imprisonment for life by the Supreme Court of the State for having severely flogged and thereby caused the death of several aborigines in the North-West portion of this State? 2, If so, in what gaol is the said Anderson at present incarcerated?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: I shall be glad to allow the hon. member to peruse the departmental papers connected with the case referred to.

QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVANTS' PROFESSIONAL TITLES.

Mr. NANSON asked the Minister for Works: What are the names of the 29 men now called "Assistant Engineers," and said on the Works Estimates to have been previously "otherwise designated," and in what capacity were they each first employed by the Government?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The following are the officers referred to:—R. J. Anketell, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, Superintendent Rabbit Proof Fence; Appeal Board designation, engineer surveyor; first employed 1st August, 1894 as surveyor. W. J. Hancock, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, Government Electrician; Appeal Board designation, Government Electrician and Inspecting Engineer for Central Board of Health; first employed July, 1894 as electrical engineer. R. A. Rolland, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, assistant to Engineer-in-Chief; first employed, 1st June, 1896, as engineer surveyor. J. Stoddart, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, resident engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 4th September, 1894, as engineer surveyor. W. Ripper, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, resident engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, April, 1891, as assistant surveyor. E. H. Carlin, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, resident engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer and engineer to Fremantle Harbour Trust; first employed, 13th October, 1894, as engineer surveyor. W. H. Castilla, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer, former designation, resident engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer and engineer to Fremantle Harbour Trust; first employed, 1st September, 1896, as assistant engineer. W. H. Shields, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, resident engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 30th January, 1893, as engineer cadet. W. Carrington, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, resident engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 13th January, 1897, as assistant engineer. D. O'Connell, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, resident engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 23rd October, 1896, as draftsman. J. T.

Burnett, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, engineer surveyor; Appeal Board designation, engineer surveyor; first employed, 27th April, 1896, as land resumption surveyor. C. H. Babington, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, engineer surveyor; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 13th August, 1894, as surveyor. H. Bennett, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, works manager; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 1st March, 1897, as workshops manager. G. F. Hickson, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, resident engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 6th July, 1896, as assistant engineer. J. W. Barker, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, resident engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 16th October, 1894, as draftsman. J. F. Wilson, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, engineer surveyor; Appeal Board designation, engineer surveyor; first employed, 16th October, 1894, as draftsman. W. T. Baird, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer, former designation, engineer surveyor; Appeal Board designation, engineer surveyor; first employed, 22nd November, 1895, as draftsman. W. T. Dartnall, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer, former designation, engineer surveyor; Appeal Board designation, engineer surveyor; first employed, 9th February, 1892, as draftsman. R. Taylor, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, surveyor; Appeal Board designation, engineer surveyor; first employed, 1st March, 1897, as surveyor. G. N. Simpson, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, supervisor; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 20th March, 1896, as supervisor. A. W. Henderson, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, surveyor; Appeal Board designation, engineer surveyor; first employed, 13th August, 1894, as field assistant. J. G. Duffy, designation on Estimates, assistant

engineer; former designation, surveyor; Appeal Board designation, engineer surveyor; first employed, 9th April, 1895, as draftsman. T. Lynch, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, surveyor; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, February, 1896, as assistant surveyor. A. S. Emery, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, surveyor; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 11th January, 1894, as draftsman. G. F. Shenton, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, junior assistant engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 1st April, 1897, as engineer cadet.

Mr. JOHNSON: Is not the answer the Minister is now reading a return? It is not a reply to the question. I understand it was always ruled that in cases of this kind the Minister has to supply a return.

Mr. SPEAKER: The information is asked for in the form of a question.

Mr. JOHNSON: Other questions have been submitted asking for returns, and members have been informed that the information cannot be obtained by that means.

Mr. NANSON: All I asked for was the names of 29 gentlemen, and the capacity in which they were first employed by the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister in his reply is giving information that was not asked for. If the answer had been restricted to a pure reply to the question the information would have taken a very much shorter time to read.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS continuing his reply to the question said: K. J. Paterson, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, junior assistant engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 1st July, 1896, as junior clerk. W. Irvine, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, junior assistant engineer; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 1st November, 1897, as engineer cadet. A. R. Kelly, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designa-

tion, draftsman; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 19th June, 1891, as draftsman. C. P. Summers, designation on Estimates, assistant engineer; former designation, surveyor; Appeal Board designation, assistant engineer; first employed, 25th September, 1894, as engineer surveyor.

BILL—LOAN, £1,445,000.

Appropriation Message

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with this Bill.

Bill introduced.

The TREASURER moved for leave to introduce a Bill for "An Act to authorise the raising of a sum of one million four hundred and forty-five thousand pounds by loan for the construction of certain Public Works, and for other purposes."

Question passed; Bill introduced and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) in moving the second reading said: I propose to follow the practice adopted in this House a few years ago and which has been the uniform practice for the past ten years. Immediately I have finished, I presume the Leader of the Opposition will move the adjournment of the debate, and then I hope by the time the debate is resumed, if not before then, the Loan Estimates will be distributed, and I may then move the House into Committee to consider them in pursuance of the Message from the Governor, which will be presented in due course. I am anxious to have the Loan Estimates here, because the Loan Bill and the Estimates are inseparably bound together, one being the natural corollary of the other, giving hon. members the fullest information, not only as regards the proposed expenditure for the present financial year, but also the expenditure for 1910, and ultimately the cost of the completion of the works enumerated. I am sorry to say that owing to a clerical error, I was obliged to have a portion of the Estimates reprinted; hence the reason of my in-

ability to supply them to members this afternoon. As soon as they come to hand they will be distributed. This Loan Bill gives me the necessary authority to raise money for the purposes of the works set out in the schedule, and the Estimates when we have them before us, are the authority to spend specific amounts on certain works during the present financial year. The schedules of the Loan Bill will be found fully incorporated in the general summary of the Estimates, and I venture to think when we have discussed the Estimates fully in Committee, there will be very little left to debate in connection with the Loan Bill with, perhaps, the exception of that clause which deals with the reduction of the amount of the sinking fund. The object of course, of this Bill as hon. members who have been in Parliament previously to this session are aware, is, that I should be able to put the general Loan Fund in sufficient credit to meet the expenditure of our public works and developmental policy to March, 1910. That policy of progress and advancement which hon. members will remember was undertaken some three or four years ago in the face of depression, is a policy which has meant, I venture to think, so much for Western Australia, having developed our agricultural resources, and put them on a firm foundation, so that progress and prosperity may be the result. It was a policy which, I think, fainter hearts might have held back from pursuing, and perhaps some might have lost heart even during the last two or three years in connection therewith. I think it will be admitted it is one which is slowly but surely placing our State on a solid and prosperous foundation. There cannot be the slightest doubt that Western Australia with its vast area and the vastness of its great possibilities, is destined to fill a foremost place in Australia. Everyone will admit that the policy of land settlement ought to receive consideration not only for our agriculturists, but also to open up and develop our mineral resources, and that it is one which is bound to succeed. I have only to point to the immense stacks of wheat awaiting shipment at Fremantle at present to show

that it is succeeding, and that while now it is in its initial stages, it points to a better result as years go on.

Mr. Underwood: Oh yes!

The TREASURER: I hope the hon. member will cheer loudly and long. He ought to do so if he has the capacity to realise what is going on in the out-back country, and I believe, he has. Those members who have taken up land in Western Australia are doing their little towards the State's advancement; and are doing their part in bringing about the result which I forecasted. With regard to the General Loan Fund itself, let me briefly explain to the House how it stands at the present time. I must of necessity to some little extent repeat what I stated to the House when delivering my Budget speech. The total loan authorisations at the end of June last year, as I then informed the House, were £20,740,253. Of this amount there was reserved for flotation expenses and discounts £686,003; leaving a balance of £20,054,250, to be devoted to works and services of the State. To the end of June last, we had expended out of this amount a total of £18,655,008, so that at that date we had an unexpended balance of authorisations, which hon. members will find clearly shown in the general summary attached to the Loan Estimates when they arrive, amounting to £1,399,242. Against this we have to set off the expenditure which has taken place between the 30th of June last year and the end of that year, which has amounted from Loan Fund to £308,400; and from Loan Suspense Account to £179,051. In addition to that, we have the expenditure from Loan Suspense Account during the last financial year which amounted to £88,902: a total of £576,353; leaving a balance at the end of the year of £822,889. Of course, the expenditure I have referred to here has taken place during the past six months, and has been authorised by Parliament in the Loan Estimates of the last financial year, and by Appropriation Bills which have been passed from time to time. The whole of our authorisations up to date have been raised with the exception of a small sum of £8,485. So

that if we deduct this small amount from the balance I referred to just previously, I ought to have in hand on account of loan funds £814,404. That is nominally the balance of cash that should be standing to the credit of the General Loan Account. Of course, hon. members are aware that these funds are merged in the general cash account of the State, so that they are outlined to cover such items as our ordinary deficit on Consolidated Revenue Account, and also Stores Account. These are the two main items. Together they amount to something like £650,000, and they are temporarily covered by loan funds, as well as of course the general revenue of the State and any trust funds which may be in the hands of the Treasurer. At present therefore, there is virtually very little cash available and it is quite necessary that we should in the near future take the first available opportunity of going to the market to raise further money. I have made arrangements as is customary when we want money for an overdraft, with our bankers in London. The position so far as our account in London is concerned is that £250,000 may be overdrawn at bank rate with a minimum of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The position of our account is approximately as follows:—At the end of the present month, the 28th February, I estimate we shall be overdrawn to the tune of £68,000, but on the 31st of March the overdraft will be £58,000. We will have during the month of April heavy payments of interest and sinking fund to meet, and our overdraft at the end of April, will, I estimate, be £232,000. If we go on and have not raised a loan in the meantime, we shall then have to receive further accommodation; and at the 31st May we shall require £314,000, and on the 30th June £310,000. I may explain the variation of these amounts—one month will occasionally show a decrease on the previous month—by the fact that we have £150,000 worth of Treasury Bills which have been redeemed from the Savings Bank by payments from general account at this end, this being equivalent to the remittance of a like amount to London at the rate of £30,-

000 monthly. The indebtedness per head of our population is always considered as being some criterion as to the soundness of our borrowing policy. I gave some figures in my Budget speech. On the 30th June last it amounted to £66 12s. 9d. in comparison with £66 13s. 8d. in June of the previous year, 1907. Since then the balance of our loan flotation of June last year, £650,000 has been received, so that by the 31st December the indebtedness per head had increased to £68 1s. 7d. This, although a considerable increase, does not by any means constitute a record so far as Western Australia is concerned. For I find on looking up the figures that on the 30th June, 1902—the highest point reached in this respect—the net indebtedness was £69 16s. 5d. per head of population. In 1903 it went down to £67 8s. 11d.; in 1904 it was £63 19s. 5d., in 1905 £61 19s. 5d., in 1906 £64 3s. 8d. and in 1907 £66 13s. 8d. It is still, notwithstanding the extra amount I have mentioned, very much below the neighbouring States of Queensland and South Australia, both of which States are over £77 per head of the population. The new Loan Bill makes provision, as I mentioned at the inception, to carry on the works policy of the Government and of Parliament until the 31st March, 1910. The Loan Estimates will naturally provide for expenditure to 30th June of the present year. It would be a bad policy for me to have just sufficient loan funds to carry on until the 30th June.

Mr. Johnson: You must consider your successor.

The TREASURER: Or ourselves at a later period.

Mr. Seaddan: You propose spending the money under the new Loan Bill by the 31st March, 1910.

The TREASURER: That is so. Now I wish to point out that if the population of the State continues to increase at the same rate as it has increased during the last calendar year the net indebtedness at that time, that is on the 31st March, 1910, will be £69 8s. 2d. per head of the population, or 8s. 3d. less than it was eight years ago. In my Budget speech I endeavoured to show—and I think I

succeeded in this—that the credit of Western Australia is perfectly sound and that we need have no fear whatever in applying to the London market, or if the money be there, even to the local market for the purpose of raising the necessary funds to carry on our works. I think I showed then that our loan flotations had been more favourably received during the past two years than for some time previously. And I would now like to point out to the House that these flotations were more favourable to the State than was the 4 per cent. Australian loans floated by the then Treasurer in 1903. I am not making any invidious comparison; I do not intend it as such. I know well what were the circumstances. I know there was a stringency in the London money market, and that at that time the Treasurer was quite entitled to avail himself of the Australian money offered to him, even though it cost considerably more than subsequent flotations. But those loans have cost us—making allowance for redemption at par at the end of 20 years, £4 1s. 5d. per cent. And if we allow, further, the exchange between Australia and London, where the money is required to meet our interest and sinking fund bills and in connection with incidents of railway and other material, it would have cost us £4 2s. 10d. per cent. as against £3 18s. per cent. for our last loan if calculated on the same currency of 20 years, or, taking the currency at 40 years, then it has cost £3 15s. 11d. This I think answers conclusively and at once the many arguments advanced from time to time in the Press and elsewhere in Western Australia, to show that Australian flotations are better in the interests of our State; better because, it has been argued, it keeps the interest payments within the Commonwealth. That is undoubtedly good, and I admit that the more money we can keep within the four corners of Australia the better for all concerned; and that if we could only keep it in the State of Western Australia, it would be much better again for our own people. But it must not be forgotten that the more Governments borrow from people ready to lend money in the Com-

monwealth, the less chance is there of private borrowers being able to raise the capital required for developmental purposes. Thus, by borrowing within the Commonwealth we to some extent place a restriction on private enterprise. Hence although we send the interest payments out of the country we are at all events not locking up the capital within the Commonwealth. Of course the question of finance is intricate in the extreme, and it is wise that we should bear in mind that money has its market value just the same as any other commodity. And I think it will be admitted that it is the duty of any treasurer to borrow the money required for the works of the State in the cheapest possible market. Now, turning to the clauses of this Bill, and particularly to that clause which will, of course, receive special consideration at the hands of members—the sinking fund clause—I may say that, as mentioned in my Budget Speech, hon. members will find that we propose to reduce the amount of the sinking fund on this loan to one-half per cent. I think it has generally been conceded of late years that whilst the Eastern States have been somewhat remiss in the matter of sinking funds, Western Australia has perhaps to some extent gone to the other extreme. In that connection, we have of course inflicted upon the people a burden which, whilst comparatively light in the early days, in the boom days of Western Australia, is now having its full effect; and I think it will be admitted that it is greater than we can ask our people to bear, more especially in view of the altered position of our finance and of the shrinkage, from various causes, in our revenue. I may mention that the sinking funds of the other States are not of any serious moment as compared with that of Western Australia, and the provision made for our loans aggregating some twenty millions of money, is almost as great as the provision made for the total indebtedness of the whole of the other States put together, a sum aggregating £226,000,000. New South Wales has standing to the credit of her sinking fund the small amount of £223,000. That is largely to be attributed to the fact that

her Commissioners are authorised to make payments to the general sinking fund of any sums specially voted and which are utilised to purchase or redeem stock from time to time as they think fit. This has been done, thus making it impossible for the sinking fund to grow to any large extent by investment. Victoria has to the credit of her sinking fund £612,000, Tasmania £305,000, whereas in our case the sinking fund amounts to £1,968,988. Queensland has practically nil. It must be admitted that we cannot interfere with the sinking funds already provided for by Statute on previous loan flotations; they are statutory of course, and must be maintained. But there is no reason whatever why what is considered by authorities to be a reasonable rate of sinking fund and what is suggested to be such by the Commonwealth authorities and the Commonwealth Government, should not be adopted so far as our future loans are concerned. Had our sinking fund contributions been at one-half per cent. instead of one per cent., one and a-half per cent., and three per cent. as they are to-day, we should have been paying £88,000 per annum towards the sinking fund, instead of £244,000 the amount of the contributions during this financial year. Now one-half per cent. invested at 3 per cent. compound interest will redeem itself in 66 years, whereas one per cent. takes 47 years to do the same. It will be seen therefore that there is not a very great difference between the two. It is only a matter of 19 years longer to redeem the total indebtedness, and I venture to think that hon. members will agree that if we pay off the principal in 66 years, considering the nature of our assets we are doing a fair thing by those who lend us this money. The Eastern States apparently considered that the nature of their assets did not make it necessary to create extensive sinking funds in the past and, as I mentioned just now, the Commonwealth proposes one-half per cent. as sinking fund. Evidently the consensus of opinion, not only of the Commonwealth, but of all our neighbours in the Eastern States, is at any rate that one-half per cent. is ample.

Mr. Collier: The Commonwealth have not considered the matter yet.

The TREASURER: The Commonwealth have considered it in connection with the transfer of debts question. The Commonwealth propose to take over the whole of the existing liabilities; and they say that in their opinion one-half per cent. sinking fund is the right amount to provide for the liquidation of these debts. It may be contended that to take this course will be to injure the credit of the State. I do not think that it will. Other States' stocks stand as high, and in some cases higher than Western Australia, and one has only to watch the market as I have done day by day, and to see fluctuations in the quotations and compare the price of our stocks with those of the Eastern States to come to the conclusion that it is not the sinking fund which controls the matter, but the permanency of population, and the settlement and cultivation of the land—which are greater factors in the nation's credit than any question of sinking funds. I do not for a moment wish to decry or belittle the sinking funds. I believe that they are a wise provision. So far as I am concerned I hope I shall never be called upon to be a party to float a loan without a sinking fund attached to it; but I do say that in the past we have made more than reasonable provision. more than is required in this connection. I hope the House will agree with me when I say that a half per cent. sinking fund will be sufficient.

Mr. Johnson: Do you propose it in connection with this loan?

The TREASURER: Yes. I say that the permanency of population and the settlement and cultivation of the land are the main factors, and in this connection we are fast coming into line with the Eastern States; and, as I said before, our land settlement that is coming on apace must bear not only the result I have referred to in regard to export, but also the result that the credit of the State will be more stable and less liable to fluctuation than it has been in the past. It is argued that the alienation of Crown lands has the effect of reducing our credit; but I cannot agree with that contention; I maintain that the alienation of Crown lands

does not reduce the value of the security one iota. It is of little moment under what title land is held so long as it retains its productive power and its ability to contribute to the revenue of the State; and the only way to make land revenue-producing is to put it in the hands of the citizens of the State: as Crown land it carries no value whatever as an asset.

Mr. Underwood: What is the value of the pastoral leases?

The TREASURER: The value of land is the amount of taxation we can raise out of it and the amount of wealth one can produce from it.

Mr. Underwood: Do you not get £60,000 a year from pastoral leases? They are Crown lands.

The TREASURER: I will ask members to turn now to the schedule of this Bill which sets forth the works for which it is proposed to raise money; and the first items, from 2 to 20, are those in connection with our railway construction. Among these items it will be observed on a close scrutiny that the only absolutely new propositions are three. The first is provision for the construction of a railway from Dowerin eastward for 90 miles. The survey of this line has been commenced, and it has been explained by the Premier that the route will run more or less parallel to and at a distance of about 30 miles away from the Eastern Railway. It is estimated that this line will open up a huge quantity of fertile country. I think the quantity of land to be tapped is estimated to be two million acres.

Mr. Underwood: It is already alienated.

The TREASURER: That does not matter.

Mr. Collier: Then you are providing for expenditure on a railway to which the House has not yet agreed.

The TREASURER: I am asking the House to agree to it now. We have not spent the money. I now ask Parliament for authority to raise the money. Then comes the next check, when Parliament is asked to pass a Bill for constructing the line. If that goes through, then the House is asked to pass a sum on the Loan Estimates for the construction of the line. I am merely pointing out the three new items embodied in this Bill, items that

have not yet received any vote. The next item is the Goomalling-Wongan railway, 36 miles, to tap the country in the neighbourhood of the Wongan Hills, and to develop an area which, to some extent, is already settled beyond Goomalling.

Mr. Collier: Only £5,000 for 36 miles of railway?

The TREASURER: This is only partial expenditure; but I will deal with that later on. The next new item in connection with railways is the Nannine-Meekatharra line, 25 miles. This needs no special mention on my part. The question has been fully debated in the House, and a Bill has already been passed authorising the construction of the line. Now, take harbours and rivers. There is a new item providing for coaling facilities at Bunbury. Hon. members have heard of the bunkering industry which has developed very rapidly during the last 12 or 18 months, and which received its impetus from the Newcastle strike in 1907. It has steadily progressed, until to-day over 100 steamers have been bunkered with Collie coal, principally at Bunbury, totalling something like 20,000 tons. There is also a proposal which members will see, and which I am deeply interested in, and that is the jetty extension and harbour improvements at Busselton. It is proposed to construct a new approach to the main jetty some half-way down its length, to strengthen the outer portion of the old jetty in order that locomotives may travel freely with loaded trucks over it, and also to extend the jetty 1,500 feet, and provide a depth of 23 feet of water at the end. Operations in the timber country along the Blackwood River are likely to assume considerable proportions as soon as these facilities are given; and in view of the near completion of the railway from Jarrahwood to Nannup, the W.A. Jarrah Saw Mills Company are already putting in branch lines and commencing the construction of large timber mills.

Mr. Holman: They should have had them completed by this time; they have had the land long enough.

The TREASURER: The hon. member must admit that we prohibited them from constructing their own lines any distance

to Jarrahwood, and decided to construct a new line to Nannup; and until our railway was there for them to couple up with, it was little use their putting up saw-mills and cutting timber. Further than that, it is of little use putting on hundreds of men to provide timber for export until we have the harbour facilities. I am sure they are prepared to push on as fast as the Government can get their work completed, and in view of the completion of the railway they are already putting in branch lines and commencing the construction of large mills, with an estimated output of 80 loads a day. It is estimated, so the company's attorney tells me, that they will be shipping from Busselton, providing the facilities are given, 30,000 to 40,000 loads of sawn and hewn timber per annum. They are prepared to guarantee the Government that the revenue from the jetty for shipping the timber and for the vessels they charter to utilise the jetty, will amount to £2,000 per annum for a period of 10 years. They are prepared to enter into a bond that we shall receive nothing less than £2,000 per annum from them for harbour and jetty dues. This in itself would justify the Government in promptly undertaking the extra facilities for the work down there, but I understand there is a considerable number of other leases held in that district—Millars' people have timber country and others hold leases—which will be worked, the timber from which will be shipped from Busselton; and I have no hesitation in saying that I honestly believe this is one of the best business propositions that has been placed before the Parliament of Western Australia for several years. In connection with the item, Improvements to Harbours and Rivers, there is £5,000 provided to give greater facilities and a greater depth of water at Geraldton. This has been rendered necessary in order to meet the rapidly growing trade in the export of wool and grain. There is also provision to increase the wharfage accommodation at Port Hedland, if it be found necessary, as it is anticipated it will be, when the Marble Bar railway is constructed. With regard to water supply and sewerage,

money has been provided—and this is the only new item under the heading—to put down deep bores on the Trans-Australian railway route. The bores will be put down adjacent to the surveyed route of the railway, and it needs no words of mine to point out that if permanent water can be found along the route it will open up an immense tract of country which can be utilised for grazing purposes. With regard to the other items, that for the development of goldfields and mineral resources will be best dealt with by the Minister for Mines when we come to it. It is a work of vast importance to our State, and notwithstanding the fact that I hope and believe, and every member hopes, that we will, as years go by, be more independent, to some extent, of this industry, that is that our agricultural industry will make such strides that we will not fear a slump in the mining industry, yet it is of such importance to us to-day, and will still continue to be of such importance to Western Australia, that we cannot but have confidence in making provision for its proper development. The same can be said with regard to the development of agriculture, and I might mention in connection with this vote that a sum of £10,000 has been provided for surveys before selection, which is intended to be spent for the purpose of establishing the policy the Premier has adopted in connection with land settlement. Items 45 and 46 will of course require special consideration at the hands of the House. They cover an expenditure of £56,000 for new roads and bridges in country and goldfields districts and for feeders to railways. The need for roads in our out-back districts has been voiced by every member of this Assembly; and it is the natural outcome of the development policy and also the development of our mining centres; nay, indeed, it is essential to our railway system. It stands to reason that if our railway system is to be successful and prosperous, that if our settlers are to succeed, we must give them means of transit by road as well as by rail; and I cannot admit the argument which is often repeated in this House, that reproductive works must ne-

cessarily be works for which a charge can be made, or works which will show a direct return. It is true that railways are directly reproductive, whereas roads are not, but there are many works indirectly reproductive which, perhaps, give a greater return to the State than some of those that give a direct return to the revenue. It seems to me that when we give roads boards power to borrow money to construct roads we recognise it is a legitimate means of expending loan moneys to provide these facilities. When we have not the revenue to provide for roads construction we should, with moderation and with due caution, be not afraid to spend loan money in providing what is an absolute necessity for the well-being of our people.

Mr. Bath: What does the term "Fremantle high level bridge" mean?

The TREASURER: It is to complete the high level bridge at Fremantle. Members must know there has been a considerable amount of trouble in connection with this work; there has been the cutting down of the bridge, the doing away with the low level bridge used for road traffic, and the widening of the high level bridge in order to carry tramways and vehicular traffic. There has been much difficulty. Money was provided on last year's Estimates and was given by the Government for carrying out this work; but those who had the duty in hand failed to complete it and now there is the position, I am afraid, that the Government will have to take possession of the bridges and conclude the work. It would be impossible to leave the work as it is at present. As to roads and bridges I might point out we have not gone anything like so far in providing these facilities from Loan Fund as our Eastern neighbours have done. New South Wales expended to the 30th June, 1907, £1,784,000 on roads and bridges from Loan Funds.

Mr. Johnson: We want to go one better.

The TREASURER: We do it.

Mr. Johnson: Why these comparisons?

The TREASURER: If I did not provide comparisons the hon. member would be jumping to hasty conclusions and

would vote wrongly on this measure. The percentage of the New South Wales expenditure on roads and bridges to the total loan expenditure of the State is 2.15. Victoria has spent from loan in roads and bridges £175,000, or .33 per cent. of the total loan expenditure. Queensland has spent £974,000 out of Loan Fund for roads and bridges.

Mr. Bath: It is only through a rigid policy of non-borrowing for three or four years that they have been able in Queensland to get square.

The TREASURER: That State has developed her resources, and she has a population of about double ours. South Australia, which the Leader of the Opposition often holds up for our example as an ideal State—

Mr. Bath: The Minister is wrong; I have only held up the attitude of the Price Ministry as ideal.

The TREASURER: South Australia has spent £1,464,000 on roads and bridges, all on roads with the exception of £16,000, the total being 5.22 per cent. of her total loan expenditure. Western Australia has spent £158,000, being .9 per cent. of her total loan expenditure. Tasmania has spent £2,430,000 being 25.51 per cent. of her total loan expenditure. Tasmania is a country which demands road construction and, perhaps, in many instances demands roads in priority to railways, hence the large expenditure.

Mr. Bath: And what position did it land her into up to three or four years ago?

The TREASURER: That State has had bad times as other States have. When I landed in Australia some 22 years ago a slump was taking place in Queensland, and it continued for some 15 years. In Victoria, after the boom burst, there were 10 or 12 years of depression. New South Wales suffered equally from depression, and South Australia had about 17 years of it. That is what we are trying to prevent here, and, I venture to think, had it not been for our progressive policy of land settlement, railway construction, water conservation, putting down of artesian bores

and the provision of other facilities, through the assistance of loan moneys, and in face of depression and with a shrinking revenue, we would have had 10 or 12 years of depression which would have been gradually getting worse and worse. The policy we enunciated three or four years ago and have attempted to carry out, the policy we are now asking Parliament to grant us power to continue, is going to set Western Australia on her feet, will prevent such a terrible depression arising as has existed at times in the other States, and will make her permanently prosperous. I cannot say this too often. My friends opposite are frequently so dense that it requires one to be constantly hammering at them, otherwise they would scout the idea that such is the case. They should support the Government in their proposals in this direction. The last item I have to refer to on the schedule is that of public buildings. The amount shown in the schedule is to provide for the completion of the whole of the buildings enumerated on page 23 of the Loan Estimates. Of this sum £74,148 is for works which have already been authorised on previous Loan Estimates, and £42,386 represents the proposed new expenditure on this year's Loan Estimates. The balance of course will have to be subsequently voted, but in the meantime we are asking for permission and power to borrow money when a favourable opportunity presents itself. The main portion of the expenditure is in connection with the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. The expenditure on this work has been heavy. On this year's Loan Estimates sufficient money is provided to complete the whole work so far as the asylum is concerned. In face of the returns which were received of the number of unfortunates who have to take advantage of that institution, and the report which we know was given very many years ago in connection with the condition of those who then occupied the old asylum at Fremantle, no member will be found anxious to strike any portion of this vote out of the Bill or interfere with the item on the Estimates. It is necessary we should attend to these unfor-

tunate people, and without doubt it will be found that the money provided for the work has been spent most economically and to have given the best results we could hope for. This item also covers a new laundry and kitchen for the Perth Public Hospital, and for new nurses' quarters there, which are now under construction, and also a new home for aged women. Provision is also made for a new women's block at the Fremantle gaol, and for the provision of a land titles office with proper strong room accommodation for the safe keeping of titles deeds and other papers of value. There is to be a laboratory for the Central Board of Health, and the completion of the Perth secondary school and other minor buildings, which members will find enumerated in the schedule attached to the Loan Estimates. Members will probably argue that we should not spend loan moneys on the erection of these buildings. I could again point out that Western Australia is very far behind her Eastern neighbours in this respect. New South Wales had expended out of Loan Fund on public buildings to the 30th June, 1907, £4,717,000, equal to 5.67 per cent. of her total public debt. Victoria has spent £1,912,000, being 3.54 per cent., Queensland has spent £1,523,000, being 3.95 per cent.; South Australia £868,000, being 3.09 per cent.; Tasmania £858,000, being 9.01 per cent.; and Western Australia, £179,000, being 1.01 per cent. of her public debt.

Mr. Collier : You will soon make a difference in the figures.

The TREASURER: No, I will not. We shall never approach their figures. It would be foolish on our part to prevent our people from having proper buildings and accommodation, especially in connection with the unfortunates to whom I have referred, and also the Educational Department, because we have not sufficient revenue to provide for those works, for surely it is legitimate when we are providing for the repaying for the whole of the capital in 66 years, to erect these buildings, which will serve a purpose beneficial for the welfare of the

people for hundreds of years to come. I have much pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by *Mr. Bath*, debate adjourned.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Estimates of Expenditure from Loan Funds for the current financial year.

In Committee of Supply.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Vote—*Departmental, £64,813 :*

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): In submitting the Loan Estimates for the consideration of members it will be unnecessary for me to detain the Committee at any length. I would ask permission to explain briefly the different sets of figures as set forth in these Estimates in order that members may fully grasp their meaning and readily understand the amounts proposed to be voted for the different works. The detailed information in regard to the different items will be supplied by the Ministers controlling the various departments under which they appear as we come to them item by item. The general summary which I had attached to these Estimates is, I think, most comprehensive, and covers a lot of ground which in previous years was not supplied. Members will see, if they examine the general summary, that column 7 is a new one, and gives detailed information as to the estimated amounts required to complete works already authorised or to be authorised under these Estimates. This will show at a glance how much Parliament has committed the country to in passing the Estimates as submitted: for it stands to reason even though there be only a progress amount voted on the Estimates, to a certain extent it commits the country to the completion of the work. Column 3 in this general summary shows the unexpended balances of authorisations to the 30th of June last as referred to when I was introduc-

ing the Loan Bill, and this added to column 11, the amount of provision in the Loan Bill, gives the total unexpended balance of Loan authorisations as shown on page 22 of the Loan Estimates. Column 4 shows the recoup to Loan Suspense Account which, of course, has to be provided for when voting the amount of expenditure for this year. Column 6 is the estimated expenditure from the end of the financial year to the 31st of March, 1910, also referred to by me when moving the second reading of the Loan Bill: and this amount, of course, is only approximate and will have to be included in the next year's Loan Estimates. The passing of these Estimates or Loan Bill does not mean that we are authorised to spend this money. It is set down for the information of members, and after June next fresh authority will have to be sought to spend the money represented in this column. Column 8 gives the estimated unexpended balance of existing authorisations at 31st March, 1910, and columns 9 and 10 give the reappropriations which require no explanation. If hon. members will turn to the Loan Estimates, they will find on page 3 a summary of the estimated expenditure from General Loan Fund for the financial year. The amount shown first of all is the vote for 1907-8, then the expenditure for the year, and the fourth column shows the expenditure incurred last financial year, but defrayed this year, and which under the thirty-sixth section of the Audit Act is made a first charge against this year's Appropriation Act. The fifth column shows the recoup to Loan Suspense Account: this being an amount for which there is no loan authorisation, but which was included in the Loan Estimates last year. On pages 4 and 5, the details of the different departments will be found, and on page 6, there will be found the details and certain salaries and wages of the different departments. The details of the items on page 6 refer to the Mines, Lands, Agriculture, and Colonial Secretary's Departments, while the details of Works and Railways Departments will be found on pages 53 and 64 of the Consolidated Revenue Estimates. On

page 8 will be found details in column 2 of the balance of Loan authorisations, inclusive of the new Loan Bill which I present to Parliament. In column 3 members will find the estimated expenditure comprising the totals of the two columns shown on pages 4 and 5. Column 4 gives the estimated unexpended balance on authorisations at the end of the financial year in contradistinction to the 31st of March previously referred to. Columns 5 and 6 give full details of the progress made last year, and the progress estimated to be made this year in the various works embraced by these Estimates. I do not think it is necessary for me to enlarge upon any of the works here enumerated. If we go through them item by item in Committee, full information will be supplied to members if they so desire to have information about the different works, and the progress proposed to be made.

Progress reported.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from 29th January, *Mr. Daglish* in the Chair.

Colonial Secretary's Department (Hon. J. D. Connolly, Minister): *the Treasurer* in charge of the Votes.

Vote—Office of Colonial Secretary, £7,518:

THE TREASURER: Before proceeding, he desired to present a return asked for by the member for Murchison, giving full information with regard to the extra clerical assistance, reasons for employment, and the duties to be performed by officers.

Item. Immigration, £1,000:

Mr. JOHNSON moved—

That the item be reduced by £500.

He did this to get an expression of opinion from the Committee, and to enable him to express his disapproval of the present immigration policy of the Government. He wanted to be distinctly understood that he had no objection to immigrants coming to Western Australia.

that was, those who were genuine agriculturists, but we found we were getting the minimum of that class and the maximum of those who entered into competition with the already overstocked market. Numerous illustrations had been brought before him with regard to competition by immigrants for the small amount of work which was offered. We found that these people were met on arrival at the wharf, and if the Government could not immediately place them, they were assisted by an influential organisation called the Immigration Reception Committee or something of that description, which body immediately endeavoured to make the immigrants welcome, and at the same time exerted themselves in order to secure employment for the immigrant. He could quote instances where men had been dismissed by private employers and immigrants had been put on in their places. A lot of this he believed was due to the influence of this organisation. For instance we found that Millars' Company were employing a considerable number of these immigrants. He knew of immigrants who had secured employment in Millars' joinery works when there was no work offering for the Australian mechanics, and, as a matter of fact, Australian mechanics had just previously been dismissed. It could not be urged in connection with the wood workers that the English workmen were superior to the Australian, and while it was generally recognised that it might be possible to get an immigrant in the iron trade just a little more skilled than the Australian, that did not follow in the wood trade, because the trade was entirely different in Australia from what it was in the old country. He knew from his own and from a general experience of the trade, that the English mechanic was not up to the standard of the Australian, yet we found all the competent tradesmen, men who had been in the State for twelve or fifteen years, men who did not know until recently what it was to be out of work, and who when they did get out of work were immediately sought by other employers, were now walking the streets of Perth trying to secure employment while the immigrants had taken their places. That was the

class of immigration against which he wanted to enter his protest. Immigrants were being employed in the Midland Junction Workshops, notwithstanding that considerable retrenchment had been going on there. Again, the Government had been guilty of giving preference to immigrants as against the Australian workers, as in the case of an inspector in the Health Department, who was recently dismissed, and his place immediately filled by an immigrant. The Perth Electric Tramways Company, too, was showing preference to immigrants assisted to Western Australia. It was a policy distinctly unfair, and if it were persisted in much longer it would tend to inflict the greatest discredit on the State. He did not mind telling Ministers that there was already on foot a movement for the formation of an organisation which would enter a vigorous protest against any continuance of this policy. Ministers could understand that such an organisation could do a great deal of harm to Western Australia; but the men who might yet find occasion to do this harm would be doing it in self defence, and their ranks would be filled largely by the unemployed who were determined, when work was offering, that those already in the State should have preference. Again he wished it to be clearly understood that he did not object to immigration for land settlement or to agricultural immigration. But he did object to so-called agricultural immigrants being employed at 5s., 10s., and 15s. per week under the pretext of getting colonial experience. In many agricultural districts Australians were being dismissed, and immigrants put on to do the same work for far less money. He objected to that class of immigration. The immigrants he wanted to see were those who would come out here with sufficient capital to take up land and become agriculturists themselves. Such a man would not require assistance to get to Western Australia—he would not be in need of any assisted passage. He (Mr. Johnson) believed that the inferiority of the immigrants that Western Australia was getting was due largely to the fact that the State was providing assisted passages. The time had arrived when these

assisted passages should be withdrawn. Again, Western Australia wanted a better type of immigration lecturers. Those representing her in the old country to-day had for their one object the securing of persons to come to Western Australia irrespective of whether they were going to be of any value to the State or whether indeed, they would do the State harm. The system of advertising was all wrong. The advertisements used by Western Australia in the old country were not a true reflex of the conditions of Western Australia. In those advertisements immigrants read that they had but to put their foot in Western Australia to find work offering in plenty.

The Treasurer: Where did you see that?

Mr. JOHNSON: The immigrants themselves had told him this.

The Treasurer: I do not believe there are any such advertisements.

Mr. Foulkes: Nor do I.

Mr. JOHNSON: Nevertheless the idea was conveyed to these immigrants that there was any amount of work offering, and that splendid opportunities were awaiting the workers. As a matter of fact, nearly every hon. member had in his electorate constituents who were looking for work and appealing to their members for assistance in this direction. Yet we were encouraging others to come to the State and get into competition with those already here. It was as a protest against that sort of thing that he had moved his amendment.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had moved to reduce the vote with a view to ascertaining the feeling of the Committee as to whether it was advisable to encourage immigrants; and he had intimated that unless some steps were taken to prevent immigration an organisation would be brought into being which would have the effect of drawing attention to Western Australia as an undesirable place for immigrants to come to. It was extraordinary that this strong objection to immigrants should come from those people not natives of Western Australia, who a few years ago had been outside the confines of this particular State, and who, had the doors been closed at that time,

would have been the first to protest against such an action which would have the effect of making Western Australia a close borough for those already within its confines.

Mr. Johnson: We had to pay our full passages.

The PREMIER: So far as passages were concerned, it was but a small matter. Provided the people brought here were able to obtain employment, and provided that they did not interfere with those already here he could see no reason to make any alteration in the existing policy. More especially so when it was realised that many of those who, a very short time ago, had been opposed to immigration were now beginning to realise that if we are going to keep Australia white, it is absolutely essential that we do all we possibly can to encourage immigrants to Australia generally. There was no occasion for him to emphasise the necessity for the closest supervision so far as the selection of immigrants for Western Australia was concerned. That, it seemed to him, had been the weak point of the policy in the past. At the same time there had been a considerable improvement during the past few months. As a matter of fact immigrants that had reached Western Australia since the 25th March last numbered 453, of which some 205 had taken up land, whilst 151 had obtained employment as farm hands, 71 as domestic servants, and 27 as gardeners in or near Perth. Those totals included women and children, nearly all of whom had been assisted.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about the numbers at the saw-mills?

The PREMIER: The information he had given was received from Mr. Neville, a clerk in the Colonial Secretary's office, who had given particular attention to this subject. While other States in Australia were in a position to absorb immigrants other than agriculturists, Western Australia and Queensland were not prepared to in any way encourage any other class of immigrants. Victoria and other manufacturing States were able to absorb large numbers of the artisan type, which it was not advisable to encourage to come to Western Australia. It was to be re-

alised that at the present Australia had 2,974,000 square miles of country with a population of 4,129,000 people, or 1.45 to the square mile. That being so, it had to be realised that if that land were to be retained it was essential that Australia should be peopled. Within two or three days of our own coast there was a small island of only 55,000 square miles, containing a teeming population of 30,000,000. It stood to reason, therefore, that it was only a question of time when the surplus of that island and of the adjacent Eastern countries would leave their home land with a view of settling in other portions of the world where they might have an opportunity of landing. It was our duty to encourage, as far as we could, immigrants of the right type to come to Western Australia, and to Australia generally, provided that in any scheme of immigration which might be put forward by the Commonwealth we should have the right to make the final selection. That was to say that after the question of immigration had been brought under the notice of those prepared to come to Australia, we should have the opportunity of saying whether or not they were suitable for Western Australia. He had given the immigration figures since the 25th March last; but during last year 1,200 immigrants had arrived from the old country, 500 of whom had been nominated by their relatives and others already here. Those people had brought with them a capital of £30,000. Farm labourers and domestics could secure passages for £5, provided they were nominated by someone in the State and could satisfy the Agent General that they were likely to make suitable colonists. He could only reiterate what he had said, namely, that the weak point in the policy in the past had been the selection. The gentleman now representing Western Australia at Home—Mr. Ranford—had most emphatic instructions in this respect. It was no advantage to the State or the Government to have people out of employment. It was not the nicest thing in the world to have people appealing for work, but at the same time, with judicious selection of immigrants, one could not see any objection why the

policy now in force should not be pursued.

Mr. HOLMAN: Listening to the Premier one would think everything was going on nicely, but the position was not so rosy as the Premier would like us to believe. It ill became any public man to raise at this juncture the question of people from the Eastern States versus the old residents of Western Australia. If it had not been for the people coming from the Eastern States in all probability Western Australia would have been marching on in the same state as it was 20 years ago. The Government had not adopted a wise immigration policy in the past, because it brought undesirable people to the State. Many cases had been quoted.

The Premier: I recognised there were bound to be some.

Mr. HOLMAN: There were many cases. The majority of immigrants were of the class members complained of. No one would complain of people coming to Western Australia to go on the land and make homes for themselves, but members of the Opposition strongly objected to artisans being assisted here to take the places of those already in the country. Happily the system that existed of introducing hands to work in the saw mills had been stopped, but to a lesser extent it was going still on. The Labour Bureau rendered immigrants more assistance than was given to the people already in the State seeking work; the railways took immigrants almost as soon as they landed, and the Police Commissioner issued licenses to foreigners, some of them not altogether desirable, to collect marine stores as soon as they arrived.

The Treasurer: We want domestics and farm labourers.

Mr. Bath: There is no need for bringing in farm labourers. I have seen dozens of them unemployed all over the State.

The Premier: We want domestics, because people are giving up housekeeping on account of the difficulty of getting them.

Mr. HOLMAN: There were many girls in the State willing to go as domestics if they could get proper treatment and reasonable wages. It was through

the fault of high-toned ladies trying to make the girls slaves that the scarcity existed; but there were enough girls in the Eastern States to more than supply the wants of Western Australia in this respect. Members condemned the Government for having been in the past, knowingly or unknowingly, a party to bringing people here to compete with artisans already in the State. The Premier well knew the number of unemployed in the State. There was a continual demand for work from men willing to do anything, or to go anywhere; and while that condition of affairs existed, we must exercise every caution before bringing any more people to enter into competition. It would be better to improve the conditions of the country and prevent the people leaving the State. It was deplorable to see the number of male adults leaving month by month. The increase of population barely covered the increase by births. Certainly many men were bringing their wives and families over from the Eastern States, but we were losing male adults. We gained in children and women but lost in male adults. He would support the amendment as a protest, not against immigration as a policy, but against the methods that had been allowed to creep in.

Mr. FOULKES: The item was not big enough. We had already realised that if we wanted to carry on the State successfully it was absolutely essential to increase the agricultural population. Much was said as to the difficulty of obtaining work, particularly among the urban population. That was true; but the great reason for this was that our agricultural population was not sufficiently large, and his reason for strongly supporting the vote now and in the past was that he realised we had repeated pledges from the Government that they intended the vote to be specifically used for the purpose of increasing the agricultural population. He believed that the Government had at last realised that greater attention was needed to establishing the principle that we only wanted agricultural immigrants. It was because we had sent men Home, who were not

competent to go among the agriculturists of the old country, that he had in this connection spoken in the past as bitterly as any Labour member. Fortunately during the past few months the Government for the first time in the history of Western Australia, had sent the right sort of man Home. He referred particularly to Mr. Ranford. He would, if in power, send at least a dozen farmers from this State to England to tell the people at Home what the results of their labour had been. These men would know what they were talking about and would have a considerable influence upon the English agriculturists. It was ridiculous to send Home a man like Mr. Scammell who knew hardly anything about Western Australia, having spent only about six weeks in the State. The result of the work of a type of man like that was that we got out here practically only townsmen. Such a man would never be able to influence the men we wanted to come to our shores. We were only trifling with the question, for if we spent £30,000, £40,000, or £50,000 it would not be too much for such an important work as this. He was in sympathy with what the Labour members had said on the immigration question, but he was glad to hear that they did not condemn bringing in an agricultural population. With a large number of agriculturists settled on the land it would mean a great deal of work for the unemployed, as more railways would have to be built and a hundred and one other works carried out. The Government were to a certain extent to blame for the present condition of affairs, in that they had not taken the proper steps to see that only the right sort of people came out here. It must be remembered, however, that a great many of the immigrants were not here on the solicitation of the Government. There was a certain amount of depression in England and some of those people out of work and desirous of going to a new country came out here and they could not be kept out. Some years ago he was in South Africa. This was soon after the war, and at that time an enormous number of practical agriculturists from England were going

out there with a large amount of capital with the object of settling on the land; but on arrival there they found that there was no land available, as nearly all of it was in the hands of the Boers who would not part with it. This showed that if proper steps were taken the best type of agriculturist could be induced to come to this State.

Mr. Collier: Where is the land for these new settlers?

Mr. FOULKES: The Minister for Agriculture would be able to show there were millions of acres of land available. It was to be regretted the Government had not adopted a more liberal policy with regard to the construction of further agricultural railways. He would like to have seen a much larger sum set aside for that work. At present one of the great drawbacks to settlement was that people wanting land had to go 30 or 40 miles from the existing railway lines to get it.

Mr. Bath: And they travelled through millions of acres of unused land.

Mr. FOULKES: There was a certain area of unused land, and some of the principal culprits in this direction were people who had taken up 1,000 acres or 2,000 acres. Many men had not the capital available to deal even with a block of land of 1,000 acres, for it took them time to get the land cleared and get a proper start; but they always had hopes that in 10 or 15 years' time they would be able to extend operations and utilise 'the whole of the block.

Mr. O'Loughlin: What area does the hon. member hold?

Mr. FOULKES: A very much larger area than the one he had mentioned.

Mr. Underwood: You are one of the type who does not go on the land.

Mr. FOULKES: Certainly he did not live altogether on the land, but in that he was following the example of the Leader of the Opposition who had shown him that it was unnecessary. The type required here was the man who went on the land and improved it; that was what he was doing, and possibly in that respect he might be setting an example which it would be well for the hon. member to follow. The Government had realised

the fact that agricultural immigrants were the only class we wanted here. In Great Britain and Ireland there were 10 millions of people carrying on agricultural operations, and it seemed trifling with the question to send one man Home to England to deal with that vast number of people. He would send Home 20 men, if he could, of the type of Mr. Ranford. A short time ago the Committee were dealing with the Agent General's Department and he had then pointed out there was not a single man in that office who had had any experience in this country. The Agent General had a certain amount of experience, but none of the staff had, and it was for that reason the other day he voted with the object of trying to establish a principle that the men in that office should be periodically brought out here so that they could keep themselves up to date with regard to the State. That was the Canadian system. On two different occasions when in London he had gone through the Canadian office and ascertained that their system was only to employ practical farmers to go about lecturing to agriculturists.

Mr. Underwood : They are now adopting drastic measures in Canada with regard to immigration.

Mr. FOULKES : Yes, and he was glad to see it. The population of Western Australia was pitifully small and every member should do his utmost to keep the Government up to the mark in the matter of introducing none but agricultural immigrants to the State.

Mr. BATH : The remarks of the Premier would lead us to believe that things now were quite right in connection with the Immigration Department. It was just about time that bubble had burst. For a considerable time past it had been nothing more than a fraud, and was fast developing into a scandal. The Premier had tried to assure us on the matter and had quoted the opinion of some underling in the civil service to prove that a very large proportion of the immigrants being brought out now were taking up land. As a matter of fact not 10 per cent. of the men brought here with the hardly won proceeds of the pawnshop—in other

words, borrowed money—were going on the land.

The Treasurer : What are they doing then?

Mr. Troy : Walking about the streets.

Mr. BATH : In order to avoid publicity and an unpleasant row about people being brought here and deluded, the Government had found them billets at the expense of men who had been working in the State for years. The result of using loan money to bring these men in, was that large numbers were being driven out. He knew of 30 men in one trade, that of pipe making, who had been here but had gone away. Then there were engineers, fitters, carpenters, and others of the best type of men in the State, who had been leaving it during the past few years. Many of these men had been forced to go because the Government had had to find places for the immigrants they were bringing into the State.

The Minister for Works : Is that the case with the pipe-makers?

Mr. BATH : It was the case in many other trades. It was a poor policy which brought in 10 or 20 people by the aid of loan funds, and at the same time drove 30 men out of the country. It was a policy which would occasion no surprise. The Government were in this position, that they had deliberately set themselves the task of acting as a sort of universal bureau for the importation of cheap labour for landowners in Western Australia.

The Honorary Minister : The land owners do not want cheap labour; they are willing to pay good wages.

Mr. BATH : Everyone could not be placed in the same category, but there were many who could afford to pay decent wages and who used the immigration policy of the Government to get cheap labour for their land, and he could give instances. This statement as to the need for farm labourers in Western Australia was a fraud, and a scandalous fraud, because anyone who travelled throughout the country districts would find that there were men available in the State without importing one man. Some of the reasons in addition to the question of low wages

had occasioned difficulty in some men getting labour, and if they resorted to the practices that he had heard related, it was not surprising to find the difficulties existing. The accommodation provided on some of the farms throughout the State for men employed on wages was absolutely scandalous, and there was only one system which would do anything in the State, and that was something of the style of that which existed in New South Wales, where, under the provisions of the Shearers' Accommodation Act, proper accommodation was ensured for shearers. Inspectors were appointed to report on the accommodation and see that it was up to the standard. Many of the places which were provided in Western Australia for the men to live in were such that one would not ask a self-respecting horse to occupy: in fact, some of the farmers provided better places for their horses, or even better sheds in which to store their wheat. Not only here, but elsewhere, if proper conditions of life were allowed to exist, no farmer or land owner need have any fear about getting a supply of men. If farmers would observe a fair standard in this respect there would be no need to spend loan money in importing men from the old country. He had had opportunities of speaking to various land owners on this question. The mayor of Beverley, Mr. Barrett-Lennard, had told him that men had been brought out under the system of assisted immigration, and they were certainly not capable. This class of immigrant could be likened to lascar or Chinese seamen in comparison with British seamen, and though such labourers might result in some saving to the farmer, the farmer derived no advantage in the long run. This House should be no party to the Government acting as a bureau for the importation of cheap labour for any man in this community, and he would not be a party to using loan moneys for this purpose. The Premier in this matter only followed the example of many other speakers by trying to convince the people with the platitudes he uttered. He (Mr. Bath) was getting quite tired of hearing so

much about the defenceless condition of Australia, and the immense territory in Australia which was unoccupied, as if all these unoccupied lands were capable of being settled by a large population. It was useless for us to delude ourselves into the belief that every square mile of Australia was available for settlement and was going to be made to produce in the same degree as more fertile countries in the rest of the world. If we were going to tell the truth we must bear in mind that in Australia we had a large area which would never bear a large population; the time would come, however, when the greater portion of it would bear some population. Such efforts as the opening up of the country by the Trans-continental railway would assist in that direction. Portion of that country might be made capable of partial development and of carrying a fair proportion of population. As far as Australia was concerned, looking through the returns of the population, the best time in its history, the time when we had the best class of immigrants and when we had the greatest growth of population, was when it had not been necessary to spend one penny of loan money or do one pennyworth of advertising or booming or misrepresenting in order to secure population. We would have to learn that we could do more to increase our population than by all these means which we had adopted to-day. The best of all means was the excess of births over deaths, and by closer attention to the development of our own country and making it the heritage of the many instead of the happy hunting ground for the few as we were trying to do at present. There had been a steady decline in the birth rate of the Commonwealth. Given good conditions under which all would be able to secure employment, we would have people coming here unsolicited from outside, we would have a natural increase, and a big increase. That was shown to have happened in Australia in the times that he had spoken of, when the birth rate was over 3 per cent.; to-day, unfortunately it was only 1.49 per cent. The member for Claremont referred to what Canada had

done. In Canada there was more deception and more misrepresentation than anywhere. Canada was getting her agriculturists from over the border of the United States, and she did not have to pay one penny for getting them. As a matter of fact the total growth of population in Canada from 1901 to 1906, including the excess of births over deaths, was only one-half that which she claimed had been brought into Canada through immigration. Where then had they gone to? The explanation was that Canadian steamship lines had been trying to secure some portion of the passenger traffic which had hitherto been going direct to the United States. alien population made up of Poles, Russians, and many others who, in consequence of the cheaper passages offered by the Canadian steamers had been taken to Canada, and then drifted into Chicago, New York, St. Louis and other large cities, to make up those slums which were so very characteristic of the American cities in common with the London of to-day. Here in Western Australia we were not getting the best class. If it were necessary to tickle the imagination of the suggested immigrant with glowing advertisements, to send a man to talk to him, to give him a cheap passage, to spoon-feed him when he came here and to turn a willing ear to all his complaints without allowing them to get out to the public, then that class of immigrant was not worth having. He (Mr. Bath) looked with suspicion on the immigration policy of the Government, more especially in its relation to the gentleman who had acted as immigration agent for Western Australia, but whom the Government had since repudiated. That gentleman had gone Home and represented that there were opportunities in Western Australia for 3,000 or 4,000 farm labourers; that their passages would be paid, and that they would find work just as soon as they arrived here. When it was found that on top of this the gentleman was in fact connected with the Government through the Agent General's office, then he (Mr. Bath) said that the Government could not wholly repudiate the misrepresenta-

tions indulged in by Mr. Lane. Mr. Lane had taken a body of these immigrants down to Brooks' Inlet where they found the land on which they were to have settled was under water. Only one individual had secured land, some 600 acres near Beverley, while one other showing a readiness to make a noise about the whole thing had been silenced with a Government billet. Under these circumstances it was little wonder if hon. members were inclined to be critical on the immigration policy of the Government. While some had declared the advisableness of encouraging agricultural immigration, he (Mr. Bath) was not sanguine as to the possibility of getting a good type of immigrant from this policy of advertising. The whole thing tended to distract our attention from these problems at home, the solution of which would make this country attractive to an immigrant without any monetary assistance on the part of the State. So many channels had been discovered in the past for the throwing away of loan money—the burden of which had been eternally placed on the shoulders of the people of Western Australia—that he did not like to see this added as another means of distributing the loan expenditure of the State. Under these circumstances he looked askance on the expenditure of this money. There were plenty of opportunities in local development where the money could be expended to much greater advantage, and in such a way that the general condition of things in Western Australia would serve to attract a population that would come of its own free will and without spoon-feeding from the Government funds.

Mr. NANSON: It was gratifying to notice that in this item there had been a considerable reduction as compared with the expenditure of last year. He was glad of that, not because he was necessarily at all times opposed to immigration, but because he was of opinion that before we could have an immigration policy that would give any degree of satisfaction either to the people already here or to the people whom it was proposed to bring here, we must have the ground prepared for them. What was the actual

position in regard to the introduction of new population to this country? There was a general consensus of opinion that the people who should be brought out here were not the persons who would help to swell the unfortunately congested labour market, but persons with a sufficient amount of capital to take up land and become cultivators on their own behalf. If the experience were taken of any hon. member representing an agricultural constituency or any member brought into contact, as probably most hon. members were, with persons already in the country and seeking land, it would be seen that in far too large a number of cases the utmost difficulty had been experienced by persons already in the State in procuring land suitable for the purposes of settlement and of cultivation. Only to-day he had come into contact with some settlers who had taken up land in his own constituency, and who after an experience of six months were very much poorer in pocket than when they started out on the quest for land, and who were not only poorer in pocket, but were very much discouraged with their experience of the Lands Department of this State. What folly could be worse than to send lecturers home to England pointing out the many advantages which this country had to offer; and knowing at the same time that if a large number of persons were to accept the invitation and come to this country with a desire to take up land they would not be able to obtain that land within a reasonable time, except indeed special efforts were made by the Government to secure land for them at the expense of persons already in the country and who were anxious to obtain suitable blocks for themselves? There could be no possible analogy between the conditions prevailing in Canada, and those prevailing in this country. As far as the policy of immigration in Canada had been a success in relation to land settlement, it had been a success because it was possible to take the people from the steamer and put them immediately on the land. There had been no sort of half-way house; no sort of delay in looking for land, no expenditure of scanty capital. The authorities in Canada had been able to take the

settler straight from the ship and put him down on his location. Surely, if we were to have a successful policy of land settlement in this State, so far as immigrants were concerned, we must have a sufficient area of land surveyed and ready for selection. So that immediately these people arrived and before they went up country they could be shown where there was land available ready surveyed and, where necessary, ready cleared in order that they might immediately get to work, and that there might not be that lamentable waste of their small capital which was inevitable under the existing system, or rather, want of system.

Mr. Scaddan: And within reasonable distance of a railway.

Mr. NANSON: Certainly, this land should be with reasonable distance of a railway. He was fully prepared to admit that no one was more capable of setting forth in glowing colours all that Western Australia had to offer to a farmer, supposing that he wanted to get upon the land, than was a gentleman like Mr. Ranford who had been sent Home to England for the purpose of enlightening the population of that country upon the agronomic conditions of Western Australia. But if there were in this country a Royal Commission inviting evidence from persons who had endeavoured to obtain land, and who were still endeavouring to obtain land; and from persons who after their search had obtained land—if that evidence were available, it would, he ventured to think, go far towards nullifying any efforts that might be made by the most successful immigration lecturer, whether in England or in the Eastern States. Another factor to be considered in inducing people to take up land in Western Australia was whether we offered to the people already upon the land those facilities that they were entitled to expect. If one went into the older agricultural districts where there were persons who had been settled on the land for a number of years, it would be found that in many respects, so far as the facilities offered by the Government were concerned, the position of those people was worse to-day than it had been ten years ago. Greenough, one of the oldest es-

established agricultural districts in Western Australia was a fitting example. Some ten years or more ago, and for many years previous to that time, that district had enjoyed the benefit of a resident medical officer. What was the position of the settlers there to-day? An epidemic of diphtheria was raging in that part of the State. Many of the people were down with the terrible disease; deaths had occurred, and only to-day he had received an urgent telegram asking him to represent the condition of affairs to the Government, and to beg that medical assistance and nursing appliances should be sent up immediately. What a fine advertisement that was when one thought of the way in which we treated our out-back people. And Greenough could hardly be called a back country. Yet in the policy of economy which had characterised the Government it was a district like Greenough, like the agricultural centres, and the mining centres such as that represented by the member for Kanowna—it was in all these places where there were small populations and where the people were leading a hard life—these were the people who were called upon to bear the burden of this economy, and of the hardships that sprang from it. Whereas in the centres of population, if there was one suggestion made as to reducing expenditure the hon. member who happened to make it was probably lampooned in the daily Press as a person small of soul and of mean instincts. He was one—and he believed there were members of the same opinion—who held that the very best advertisement we could have, and the best inducement we could hold out to people to come to this country to take up land was to show that we treated people already on the land as they deserved to be treated. He regretted to say that so far as his experience went, and it was borne out by different members on both sides, that those bearing the heat and burden of the day were not receiving that consideration from the Government in this respect to which they were entitled; and while that state of things continued, it was idle for the Government to talk of having a policy of immigration, and of

bringing people here before they were prepared to give facilities to people already here. He yielded to no one in his faith in the capacity, potentialities and abilities of the country, but the Government did not seem sufficiently alive to advertising the country in the best possible way, that while inducing people to go to the out-back parts of the State we should give them the facilities to which they were entitled.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	20
				—
A tie	..	..	..	0

Ayes.

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

Noes.

Mr. Barnett	Mr. Male
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mougier
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Keenan	(Teller).
Mr. Layman	

The CHAIRMAN: Following precedent, I give my vote with the Ayes for further consideration.

Amendment thus passed.

Casting Vote.

The Chairman: "Colonial Secretary's Department, £7,518." The question is, "That the vote stand as printed."

Mr. Holman: I thought the vote was now reduced by £500. You voted with the Ayes, stating that you were desirous of securing further consideration.

The Chairman: My intention was to give my vote in favour of the item for further consideration, which I regarded as my duty.

Mr. Holman: That being the case, I should certainly have raised the question of two members voting with the Noes who came in after you ordered the doors to be locked.

The Treasurer: They were inside the Chamber.

Mr. Holman: But when you gave your vote for the Ayes it rendered it unnecessary for me to draw attention to that fact.

The Chairman: My intention was to give my vote for the item as it stood, and the decision I gave was distinctly wrong when I said that I gave my vote with the Ayes. However, I recognise that having given my vote in error, the vote must be adhered to, and the question now is, "that the vote stand as amended."

The Premier: Do I understand that your vote is to be taken against your intention?

The Chairman: My intention was to cast my vote with the Noes. Through inadvertence I cast it against the item, and I do not think I am justified in recalling that vote, especially as the point has been raised.

The Premier: If you had simply given your vote with the Ayes it would be very well, but when you stated that your intention was to secure further consideration in accordance with precedent always adopted, I think I am entitled to claim your vote for the Noes.

Mr. Bath: Is the Premier rising to a point of order?

The Premier: I claim your vote because I maintain that having given it as your intention to secure further consideration, and as it certainly cannot secure further consideration if the item be reduced, I am entitled to claim the vote.

The Chairman: The matter so far as I am concerned is at an end. If the Premier chooses to disagree to my vote, he can only do so by appealing to the Speaker. The question is "the vote as amended."

The Premier: Am I entitled to ask that the Speaker should give a ruling in a case like this? I would like a ruling so that the correct procedure may be established.

Mr. Bath: The Premier must move to dissent from the ruling of the Chair be-

fore he can get the Speaker's ruling, and if that course be taken I give notice that I will take another point, that is, that is a question of this kind where it is a question of a larger or smaller sum on the taxpayer, the Chairman must give his vote for the lesser sum in order to protect the revenue.

The Chairman: Before any member moves in any direction, I would like to state the position fully to the Committee. First of all the Chairman has the absolute right to cast his vote in accordance with his own opinion if he chooses. In the second place the Chairman constantly casts a vote for further consideration, that is in favour of a clause or item in order that the clause or item may have further consideration before it be struck out, if it be a clause, or reduced or struck out, if it be an item. In the third place, the Chairman may give his ruling for the protection of the revenue, that is in favour of reducing any charge against the Consolidated Revenue such as this charge. There being these three methods of giving the casting vote, I voted with the intention of giving the matter further consideration, and stated that intention; but unfortunately, I also mentioned that I was voting with the Ayes, and thereby cast a vote with the Ayes. Had I so intended, I had the power to vote for the protection of the revenue, that is, to vote for the reduction of the item, or I had the power to prefer my own opinion as a member of Parliament had I chosen, an opinion I am not going to express. I chose, however, to cast my vote for further consideration. I am sorry that intention was not realised, but I desire to impress on the Committee that every one of these votes would have been justifiable and beyond all argument, as far as my parliamentary knowledge goes, and therefore the only question the Premier can discuss would be whether an expression of an intention had more force than the utterance of the word "Aye"—that is the whole point. Had I thought it out, I would of course have adhered to my "intention," but I do not think I would have been justified in announcing that I would give my casting vote for the Ayes. I would like the Committee to understand

this position clearly before any point of order is raised.

The Premier: This point might very well be settled once and for all. A question such as this might arise at any time when the Chairman might, unfortunately, give an expression of his opinion to vote "Aye" or "No," whereas he had notified the Committee he was desirous of the item securing further consideration. In such circumstances I would like the Chairman to inform me of the proper method of procedure in order that this point might be settled.

The Chairman: I rule there is no point of order. The way the Premier can settle the question is by bringing forward a written statement disagreeing with my ruling.

The Attorney General: I understand the Chairman rules there is no point of order; and says the vote has been recorded contrary to his intention. Standing Order 203 applies to a case of this kind, for it says—"In case of confusion or error concerning the numbers reported, unless the same can be otherwise corrected, the House shall proceed to another division." In the present case there is certainly an error in the number reported, as the Chairman's vote of "Aye" was in error, inasmuch as he had previously declared his intention to vote in the negative. One of two courses may be taken: (1) That the Chairman can correct the record by making it show that he had voted in the negative, and (2) That there being an error or confusion he can direct the House to divide again.

Mr. Walker: Standing Order 203 only deals with confusion or inaccuracy as to the number reported to the Committee. It refers to cases where tellers have incorrectly counted and there is a dispute as to the numbers which have been reported. The present case does not come under that category. The Chairman's vote is correctly counted. The division has been reported to him and he has reported to the Committee, so that nothing further can be done. According to the Chairman's explanation he doubtless gave his vote in error, but that vote went and a decision was given accordingly. Repeatedly members vote against their

own expressed intentions, and that is how some Governments exist. The matter can be taken no further before the Committee. Additional action can only be taken by a substantive motion put before the House.

The Premier: Will the Chairman give us his views on the point raised by the Attorney General, as to whether Standing Order 203 applies to the present position?

The Chairman: In my opinion the Standing Order does not apply.

Resumed.

Vote (as reduced to £7,018) put and passed.

Vote—Aborigines, £11,017:

Item, Chief Protector, £450:

Mr. ANGWIN: Since last year a new officer has been appointed to this position. That officer also held the position of Chief Inspector of Fisheries, and an increase of salary was provided. Would the Minister give some information as to the appointment.

The TREASURER: Mr. Gale, who was Chief Inspector of Fisheries, had been appointed to hold also the position of Chief Protector of Aborigines. He was put on his trial for 12 months, and at the end of that time, on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, received the dual appointment. The two offices were now amalgamated. Mr. Gale was finally appointed in October last at an increase of salary. He was now in charge of both departments.

Mr. Bolton: He knows very little about the fisheries.

Mr. Underwood: And nothing about the aborigines.

The TREASURER: It was about time Mr. Gale did know something about fisheries, for he had been in the department long enough. Evidently it was the opinion of the Public Service Commissioner that he was well up in the subject.

Mr. WALKER: Some information should be given on the appointment other than had been offered. Mr. Prinsep was away on leave.

The Treasurer: He has retired.

Mr. WALKER: How did it come about that Mr. Gale could be spared from the Fisheries Department?

Mr. Bolton: He could be spared from there altogether.

Mr. WALKER: It would be advantageous to the Fisheries Department if he were spared altogether, but what special qualification had he for the position of Chief Protector of Aborigines? If he had studied fish all the time he had been in the service, was it only because the aborigines management had hitherto been "fishy" that he had been appointed to the management now? What particular qualifications had he shown for taking charge of this department? It was a very important work and the reason why so much had been said in the past regarding the department had been because members of Parliament and the people generally believed that the previous Chief Protector was not qualified. How came it that Mr. Gale was qualified suddenly to step into the shoes of the previous protector? Was it an attempt to get rid of him from the Fisheries Department? Was the latter department so unimportant that a man could divide his duties between that and another department? Were the natives dying out so fast as to need no protector, or only, as it were, a slice of a protector?

The PREMIER: The Public Service Commissioner's report was not available to him at the moment, but he knew that Mr. Jull considered Mr. Gale made an excellent official for the position. One of the objections to Mr. Prinsep in the past was that he was too old, and very rarely got away from town. Mr. Gale in the course of his duties as Chief Inspector of Fisheries had to travel to the North-West, and to various other portions of the State, and it was considered that considerable economy could be effected if he filled the dual position. That was one reason why the Public Service Commissioner selected him for the post. Mr. Gale had been Chief Inspector of Fisheries for a number of years, and prior to that had some experience of the aborigines, for he had been connected with station life in the North-West for many years. He, therefore, should have a prac-

tical knowledge of what was required from the holder of the position of Chief Protector.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Mr. Gale knew nothing about the fisheries, and the State could profitably dispense with his services. If that official knew anything about the natives he did not use his knowledge. It was a most difficult thing to find that gentleman in his office. He (Mr. Underwood) had been in Perth for something like three years and had only once been able to see the Chief Protector, and that was by appointment. That would give some idea of the interest the officer took in that branch of his work. The Auditor General had made remarks on this department which needed explanation. The report stated—"The Act provides for a balance-sheet and income and expenditure account, showing the financial position of the department; also that such be submitted to the audit for examination and finally laid before both Houses of Parliament. The position is the same as last year. These statements have not been presented for audit neither are the books constructed to give this information." The receipts and payments for the year were then given. The report went on to say that the department had expended a great deal of money which they were not entitled to spend. Also that the books had been kept in a terribly bad manner, and generally speaking that the department had been totally neglected, and that the £16,000 expended on it had been practically wasted.

Mr. Butcher: What is the date of the report?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The report as to the department appeared on page 155 of the Auditor General's report for the year ended 30th June, 1908. The money spent by this department was practically wasted. We found that out of the £16,000 voted for aborigines, £1,879 was given as grants to missions, £9,800 went for provisions, and other expenses came to £4,500. An idea would thus be given of what the native received. He wanted once more to make a strong protest against the system adopted of distributing rations to these natives. He was convinced that the chief benefit was re-

ceived not by the natives but by those who supplied the natives. There were several instances and he could quote one particularly at Nullagine where the policeman in charge scoured the whole of the country for 20, 30, and even 40 miles around to collect the natives and take them into Nullagine so that he could secure the money for feeding these natives. It was known that there was a considerable profit on the lines supplied to the natives and he protested against a constable being allowed to go out into the scrub and collect these people and send them into a mining town so as to get a profit from feeding them. He desired to enter a protest also against the system of employing natives. It was laid down in the Act that a native could not be employed without a permit. He doubted very much whether Parliament had power to pass a law which would prevent any man from getting work if he was capable of doing it. His contention was that if a native was able to work, that native should be in a position to secure employment and get what wages he could. We found also that the police who were protectors under the Act were also prosecutors and in some cases were persecutors. In some cases the police travelled around the country and if they saw a prospector or miner or an ordinary poor man getting the assistance of a native in the direction of collecting some wood or getting some water or some other small thing, the policeman issued a summons against the man for employing a native without a permit, and he would then be taken some 20 or 30 miles to the town and charged with this offence. That was the way in which the Act was being administered in the Pilbara district. When one looked for the Chief Protector, that officer could not be found. No doubt he was then attending to the fisheries branch of his work. Another matter he desired to refer to was with regard to the appointment of inspectors. Incidentally he would say it was his experience and the experience of others in the Pilbara district that the natives were far worse off now, that the native question was more

difficult than it had ever been before the inspectors were appointed. In his district the inspector was Mr. Isdell, but he had not been in the Pilbara district for the past two years. Every communication one wanted to make with regard to the natives had to be made through Mr. Isdell, who was invariably around Derby or Wyndham or in some other part of the back country and it was almost impossible to get a letter delivered to him. On the other hand if there was any complaint and those making it wrote to the Chief Protector in Perth the letter was forwarded to Wyndham or wherever Mr. Isdell might be, in order to get a report, then it went back to Perth and then was sent to Nullagine. If an answer could be obtained in less than two years, well, whoever might say so, knew more about the district than he (Mr. Underwood) did.

Mr. Gordon: That is not saying much.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member did not know much about it.

The Premier: Are there no other inspectors?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, the police and some of the squatters. These were not inspectors however, they were protectors. They had to keep good horses to get anywhere near the natives. Once the natives got an indication of the presence of a policeman, even if he were 10 miles distant away they would start to scurry through the bush so as to get away from the police; and yet the police were the protectors. The squatters were men for whom he had the greatest respect. There were instances however where squatters did not deserve much respect, yet they were all made protectors. In any case the squatters were the men who were employing the natives. Neither the police nor the squatters were suitable to be protectors of aborigines, because the police had to run the natives down and prosecute them, and they had to instill a great amount of fear into them to manage them. On the other hand the squatter generally speaking was the man who employed the natives and thus was not suitable to be the protector. Again a policeman should never be appointed to distribute rations to the natives where

it was possible to get anybody else to do the work. It should be the duty of the policeman to see that the man who had the contract to supply the rations gave the natives a fair deal and also gave the department which provided the money a fair deal. Under the present system the policeman had everything in his own hands and was charging the department 9s. a week

Mr. Monger : It is rather rough on the police.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : The question had been dealt with by him at Nullagine, and he could inform the hon. member that a vote or two did not matter to him. Another question which was rather serious was the fact that a considerable sum of money had been expended in providing lock hospitals, and he was convinced that under the present management the money voted was being totally wasted for the reason that the natives who were afflicted with the disease which we should endeavour to stamp out were not collected and taken to the hospital. The subject was not a pleasant one to discuss in public but it had to be done. The existing system was that a policeman was appointed to catch a woman who might be suffering from venereal disease and when one came to think of it it was not a duty that any man would like to undertake. It was summed up in a recent issue of the *Hedland Advocate* as follows :—

“ Can it be expected that a constable (especially if he has a wife and family) will perform a lock hospital examination on any sickly-looking gin he meets ? He generally reports “ saw no diseased natives.” There are many men in the Pilbara districts who would rather resign their positions than properly attend to such work. The system is a disgraceful one and no permanent good can result until it is altered, segregation camps off Carnarvon notwithstanding.”

That was an absolute fact. This disease existed to a very great extent throughout the Pilbara district, and money was voted with the idea that the disease might be stamped out. Now one saw by this paragraph that it was left to the policeman to

catch a sickly-looking gin and the policeman did not do it. The idea was to place these patients on several islands.

The Treasurer : We have a lot of patients there too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : There were a lot who ought to be patients. Until the system was altered it would be absolutely ineffective

The Premier : What do you suggest ?

Mr. UNDERWOOD : A special man should be appointed to go through these districts. We should not ask a policeman to do this work. How could one expect a married man to look after these gins ? He would not do it, and he did not do it. The result was that these sick natives were still in the district and we were spending some thousands a year in attempting to cure them. In the present way of collecting the natives the money was entirely wasted. He protested against the whole management of this department and he would strongly urge the Government to appoint to the position of Chief Protector of Aborigines an active man or else strike out the vote altogether.

The Premier : We cannot do that ; the vote is constitutional.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : Then as we had to spend the money we might as well endeavour to spend it for the benefit of the natives and in a better way than we were doing now. It would be worth while appointing a man who thoroughly understood the position and who had the energy and ability to carry out the work properly.

The TREASURER : It was an easy matter for members to criticise a department of this description and find fault with the administration, but it was much more difficult to point out the direction in which the remedy lay. He had charge of the Aborigines Department for nearly two years and he found an immense difficulty, especially in connection with the distribution of rations. He wanted to have a check placed on these to show that the accounts which were sent in were for rations which had been generally distributed. Steps had been taken to put the department on a sound footing, and the Colonial Secretary had issued instructions with regard to the distribution of rations

that those supplying them should have their accounts checked and certified to by the police in the district and others who were in a position to certify to the correctness of the services rendered. The Government could not do more. The hon. member had referred to the fact that in some cases the police were supplying rations themselves. There were but few instances of this ; indeed there were now not more than three or four centres in which the police were issuing rations themselves; and this only in districts where there was no other responsible officer to do it. The member for Pilbara had said that Mr. Isdell, the inspector, had not been in the Nullagine district for the last two years. It seemed that Mr. Isdell was certainly in that district when the Minister for Mines had paid a visit to the place 18 months ago.

Mr. Underwood : He has not been there since.

THE TREASURER : Mr. Isdell had many other centres to visit and a large district to travel over. Some members would argue that because the hospital at Bernier Island was not sufficiently large for possible future requirements it should be done away with altogether. However, he (the Treasurer) hoped that the Committee would endorse the action of the Government in attempting to cope with the prevalent malady. Although perfection was not to be looked for, still the Government were doing their best to save the natives of the North-West from extermination. With that object in view the two islands, Dorre and Bernier, had been acquired, and already on the island set apart for women there were some 58 patients in charge of a doctor and a staff of nurses. That was only a beginning, and Dorre island was fast being got ready for males. In this matter of collecting the natives there were very great difficulties to be encountered, and the suggestion of the hon. member that one officer might do the work was wholly impracticable. It was quite necessary to call in the aid of the police in the various centres; and whatever might be said of exceptional cases, he ventured to think that in the vast majority of instances the police were

doing their duties well in this regard. The hospitals had been resolved upon in consequence of the recommendations of a special committee of experts who had considered the whole question and discussed it in all its bearings. As to the Chief Protector, he had just recently returned from a visit to this island, where he had seen the system started. He (the Treasurer) hoped the Committee would realise that everything was being done, considering the almost overwhelming obstacles in the way.

Mr. BUTCHER : It was regrettable to hear criticism levelled against the Government on this subject of the aborigines by those very North-Western representatives who ought to have nothing but praise for the manner in which the Government was endeavouring to discharge their duty towards these unfortunate natives. He, like many others, had used his utmost endeavours to induce the Government to do something for the sick natives in the North-West, and he could honestly say that he quite approved of the action the Government had taken in this regard. For this the Government ought to be commended and warmly supported by the members from the North-West, instead of being subjected to such criticism as had been heard this afternoon. This new hospital had been in existence only some six months, and it was utterly impossible to expect that an undertaking of this sort would work satisfactorily in so short a space of time. As to the distribution of rations to the natives, the hon. member apparently did not realise the enormous area of Western Australia and the difficulties in the way of the distribution. As had been said, it was utterly impossible to do this without depending upon the police, upon the squatters and upon the storckeeper of the various districts. More than this could not be done. As for the appointment of protectors, the hon. member had offered objection to the utilisation of the services of squatters for the purpose. Would the hon. member advocate that miners should be appointed as inspectors; miners who were here to-day and away to-morrow? If there was one man kindly disposed towards the natives it was the squatter.

That was his (Mr. Butcher's) experience, which ranged over a pretty considerable part of the history of the North-West. There were exceptions he would admit ; still, the rule held good. As for as the qualifications of the Chief Protector of Aborigines, he (Mr. Butcher) knew of no man in Western Australia with a wider knowledge of the natives. Some 30 years ago the present Chief Protector of Aborigines was in the Northern parts of the country, and had then to his credit a fairly long experience of the natives. No better man could be secured for the position if Western Australia were hunted from one end to the other.

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD : It was surprising the Treasurer did not attempt to reply to the report of the Auditor General, who said, "Cash had been supplied by the Treasury without an appropriation by Parliament, and that a special vote of £2,000 was provided by Parliament for the maintenance of hospitals at Bernier and Barrow islands, the expenditure on which for the year was shown by the Treasury returns as £758 18s. 11d. ; unpaid accounts belonging to the year amounted to £310 0s. 8d. ; no stock sheets were submitted. As previously reported money was found to be deposited in the Savings Bank for the Chief Protector but no accounts therefor had been kept in the books. The certification of accounts for rations was the same as previously reported, and the position was therefore still unsatisfactory. The Auditor General had made suggestions which were sent to the various protectors, and it was understood the matter was being considered, but the accounts generally required organising and placing on a proper basis." It was necessary that the Committee should have some reply to this. Nullagine was the last place where there should be any excuse for appointing the police to do the distribution. There were two storekeepers there, besides other people competent to do it. The police could certainly see that the distribution was correct. It was impossible for one

protector to cover a certain area, we should appoint two men.

The Treasurer : One man died, his position will be filled.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : An inspector could not do his work unless he got round once a year. If the inspector could not do that, it would be better to have no protectors rather than in this half-and-half style wilfully waste money intended for the aborigines. We should have some better method of collecting the patients for the hospitals. The present system was a failure, and there was no chance of stamping out the disease. Notwithstanding what the member for Gascoyne said, the Chief Protector had demonstrated the fact that he did not do justice to the office ; the department was not looked after as it should be. No doubt some of the squatters were kind to the natives, and among those who had a good reputation was the owner of Bullathanna, while a protector one could appreciate was Magistrate Foss at Carnarvon, but there were many squatters who did not treat the natives as they should be treated and there were men on the Gascoyne who were certainly not fitted to be protectors, because they employed natives. Those who employed natives, were they ever so kind, were not the proper people to see that the natives got fair treatment from their employers.

The Premier : Does not the scattered nature of the country make it awkward ?

Mr. UNDERWOOD : Saying it was awkward and doing nothing more, was not a satisfactory way out of the difficulty. Unless some serious attempt was made to reform the department, the best thing was to stop spending any money on the natives.

The TREASURER : It was previously explained that the Colonial Secretary had issued instructions for a new system in regard to rations. The police were to be utilised as certifying officers, and people who issued rations were not to be paid until their accounts were certified to by the police. This to a certain extent overcame the difficulty complained of in the Auditor General's report. With regard to the over-authorisation of £2,530, the hon. member would see a footnote on the

Estimates pointing out that the estimate for this year included £2,530 expended last year, but which through an oversight, was allowed to stand to the debit of a suspense account at the close of the year. That was why it was included in this year's Estimates. The amount was transferred to a trust account, because the books were all closed and the balance sheet issued before the oversight was discovered.

Mr. WALKER : The Auditor General complained that the position was the same as in the previous year, that the statements showing the financial position of the department had not been presented for audit, and that the books were not constructed to give the information. That was a strong indictment. Presumably it existed now as under the old protectorship.

The Treasurer : It has now been altered.

Mr. WALKER : Last June it was in existence. It would seem to imply that the new Protector of Aborigines had not the time to properly attend to office work or supervise the officers of the department. We had not heard why this gentleman was appointed. The fact that he was a squatter and had lived in the North-West 30 years ago was evidence of disqualification, rather than qualification, because in those days the apathy of the white man in regard to the relationship with the blacks was such as would scarcely be the case to-day, and the old notions that the aborigines were an inferior people to be indented and put into slavery were not notions to qualify a man to be a protector of aborigines. Last Parliament we brought in a new Bill correcting a large number of old abuses, and it was intended that the protector should be the administrator of the new methods to be adopted and should therefore have the most up-to-date opinions in an humanitarian sense as to the treatment of the black population of the State. It was then said that one man, and a capable man should receive the appointment, and that he should devote all his time to the work. If that officer had also to attend to the Fisheries Department, he would have more to do than he could manage,

and the dual appointment was the height of absurdity. Apparently the Public Service Commissioner only recommended the appointment of Mr. Gale on the score of economy, in that when travelling to the North-West on Fisheries' business, he could also attend to the requirements of the natives. Did the Government intend to neglect the work of the Aborigines Department ? The more unfortunate the blacks were, the more degraded they had become because of their contact with the whites, the more sickness they suffered from, the more afflicted they were, the more our pity should go out to them. What influence had been brought to bear in order that Mr. Gale might receive the appointment ? Who recommended the officer ? Was the appointment made solely on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, and did Mr. Gale apply for the billet ? Did the Minister suggest who should be appointed ?

The TREASURER : With regard to the accounts, the difficulty was as to the system adopted in the department. The accounts had now been transferred to the central accountancy of the Colonial Secretary's Department under Mr. Campbell, who reported that so far as they went, they were in order, and that he was now framing them as the Auditor General desired. Also he had reported that the accounts would be submitted for audit in due course. In regard to the stocks, they were not extensive and consisted almost entirely of blankets for distribution among the natives. These stocks could easily be checked at any time. With regard to the appointment of Mr. Gale, it was an easy thing for a member to say he was not satisfied that this gentleman was capable of filling the position, but the appointment was made after Mr. Gale had undergone a twelve months' trial. The ex-protector was granted twelve months long service leave, and retired at the end of that time. During the period, Mr. Gale, on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, was appointed acting Chief Protector. He (the Treasurer) agreed to the selection as he thought it was a good one owing to the desire to

effect economy, and as it was recognised that Mr. Gale could carry out the dual position of Chief Inspector of Fisheries and Chief Protector of Aborigines. The Public Service Commissioner was satisfied with the way in which the department was administered during the twelve months of probation. He was satisfied from Mr. Gale's record that that officer had the requisite experience of the aborigines, and that no man in the service had a longer or more intimate acquaintance with the question. Mr. Jull was satisfied that it would not interfere with the administration of the Fisheries Department that the Chief Inspector should receive the dual appointment. Mr. Gale had received extra assistance in connection with the Fisheries Department, and retained in the Aborigines Office the old chief clerk. The Commissioner was satisfied that Mr. Gale could administer both the departments economically in the interests of the State. We had members crying out for economy in administration, but so soon as the Public Service Commissioner or a Minister moved in the direction of economy—and this was the essence of economy—we had a wholesale condemnation without any intimate acquaintance with the workings of the department and without any knowledge of those in charge of it. This was carrying the debate too far. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) had condemned Mr. Gale unheard. The officer had filled the position creditably for twelve months. He was not perfect, no one was, but he was doing his very best, with the knowledge he possessed, to administer the department properly, and members rather than condemn him, should encourage him further, and allow him to prove himself. He had the experience if he possessed the administrative capacity. It was all very well to criticise these appointments but what was the Public Service Commissioner for? He was there for the very purpose of inquiring into the qualifications of applicants for positions in the service; therefore, if he were satisfied it was a proper arrangement to make, surely the appointment was justified. If the hon. member had any direct

charge of incapability to bring against Mr. Gale, let it be produced, but wholesale condemnation without one iota of responsibility or direct charge should not be indulged in. The officer was making the very alterations found to be necessary in regard to rations, provisions in the lock hospitals, and in addition, he had made provision by the transference of accounts for a system which would meet with the approval of the Auditor General.

Mr. WALKER: No charges had been made by him, and all he had done was to ask for information.

The Treasurer: You have got it.

Mr. WALKER had received nothing but a lecture. The department was important enough to have a Chief Protector who should do nothing else. In the past Mr. Gale was supposed to devote the whole of his time to the Fisheries Department; how, therefore, could he now find time to administer the very important Aborigines Department? To which of these two departments did Mr. Gale now give his spare time? The surest way to be extravagant was to give a man more than he could manage and let things go to rack and ruin. When we remembered there was £10,000 voted out of which the blacks had to receive consideration for all time, we found the Treasurer stating that a man with another billet had been appointed to the position so as to save the boat fare along the coast.

The Premier: I said it saved the additional expenditure.

Mr. WALKER: Was it not shocking to learn that this man had been given this position simply to save the boat fare to the North-West? It meant that the blacks were not worthy of a boat fare. A man could go up there on other business, and in the spare time over and above that, he could attend to the blacks. This was economy which should be termed injustice and inhumanity. Here was a matter which was important enough for a special Act to be passed for the protection of the blacks, and now as soon as the Act was out of sight a man was appointed who could use his spare time to attend to it.

This department required a man who could devote the whole of his time to it, and there were scores of capable men who for the salary which might be offered would be prepared to give up the whole of their time to the work.

The PREMIER: In reply to the hon. member he had informed him that there were two sub-departments and it was thought advisable to amalgamate them. This was done because it was considered that the Chief Inspector of Fisheries was not overworked. After consideration it was decided to amalgamate the positions of Chief Inspector of Fisheries and Chief Protector of Aborigines and as a result something like £800 was saved. With regard to what the Government were doing in this connection, he thought that those interested in the cause of the aborigines would have commended the Government for having taken a definite step towards securing isolation for diseased natives by establishing hospitals at the two islands on the North-West coast, and appointing a medical officer to devote his time to those particular cases. It naturally followed that by securing the isolation of those particular persons that it must of necessity prevent the spread of the disease, and in that respect the Government had made an advance this year above anything that had been done up to the present time. During the last year £9,000 was spent in addition to the amount devoted to subsidising missions and giving other assistance of a similar nature, while something like 1,100 infirm and indigent natives were treated. Members might consider it necessary that the officer holding the position of Chief Protector of Aborigines should not have any other duties imposed on him, and he desired to inform the Committee that two additional inspectors had been appointed during the year and they to a certain extent would relieve the Chief Protector of some of his duties. Only a few weeks ago the Chief Protector returned from the North, where he took charge of the transport of the natives from the mainland to these particular islands where the hospitals had been established.

Mr. NANSON: Considering the importance of the Aborigines Department

it was most unfortunate that members did not have before them the report of the department for last year. The latest report that was available was for the year ended 30th June, 1907. With regard to the fitness of the gentleman occupying the position of protector, as far as one could judge from what had been said he did not think there was any evidence, in the absence of further information, that would lead the Committee to suppose that a mistake had been made in appointing him. It was possible, as the member for Kanowna had pointed out, that the duties imposed on the protector, added to those of Chief Inspector of Fisheries, were more than one official could adequately discharge. That contention seemed, to some extent, to be borne out when we remembered it had not apparently been found possible to present the Committee with the report of the department for the last financial year. As a general rule it was undesirable that the Committee should pass the Estimates unless they were given a report of the various sub-departments, and he felt very much disposed to move for a reduction of the item on the Estimates in order to mark his sense of the duty of the Government in this particular, if he thought that by doing so any good purpose would be served, but he did not see that the amount placed on the Estimates, as far as we could gather, was too large for the purposes required, and one did not wish to seem in any way to want to check the benevolent impulses of the Government in dealing with this fast-dying race and soothing, so to speak, the last hours of their existence. He was less disposed to move for a reduction of this vote because although it might seem not only to censure the Government for not supplying the Committee with the report, it might seem to go further and censure the general administration of the department. If there was any one particular in which the Government were deserving of praise it was undoubtedly for what they had done with regard to the establishment of hospitals for these natives. And although he regretted the Committee in voting this sum were left in ignorance of many matters on which information should have

been supplied, he did not feel disposed, and he took it that was the general trend of the Committee, to interfere with the vote. Looking at the last report available there was a large number of subjects dealt with in which reforms were suggested, and before we left this vote he would like the Treasurer to give members some information in regard to a few points which he would specify. There were some remarks in the report for the year 1907 dealing with the issue of gun licenses to natives. It had been forcibly brought home to one in reading the papers in connection with the murder of natives at the Ida H. mine, at Laverton, that there were bands of natives perambulating that part of the country in possession of firearms, and it would appear that among the various native tribes there was a state of war continuing. Some natives were camped at the Ida H. mine in consequence of this tribal feud, and it appeared some time previously other natives were killed in a similar fashion. We were not told what was being done by the police authorities in order to check this state of things, or whether it was part of the policy of the Government to endeavour to check it, or whether they thought that the aborigines could be better left to settle these matters for themselves. In the report of Police Constable Donaldson, stationed at the North Coolgardie field, after dealing with some of the tribal murders, he spoke in a rather casual sort of way, that the tribe were returning through Darlôt, and were now on the way to Peak Hill, where another tribal fight was to take place. It did not seem to strike the constable as an unusual state of things. He related it as though we might expect to hear of another encounter between Johnson and Burns. He did not tell us that any steps should be taken to prevent this fight, but apparently looked upon it as quite in the ordinary course of things that this fight should take place, and if it came off there was no doubt it would be followed by other fights, until we arrived at the position reached by the Kilkenny cats, when there would be no natives left in that part of the country. It was on points like these that the report of the Chief Protector of

Aborigines would have been useful as showing the policy of the department in regard to these matters. Again, an application had been made to the Government by the Roman Catholic bishop for a large area of land for the establishment of a new mission at Napier, near Broome Bay. Possibly that application had been acceded to, but he would like some information on the point. There was another point: It seemed from the report of the late Chief Protector that there was a number of these natives willing to work, but unable to obtain work. For his part he had to confess that it came somewhat as a shock to learn that any aborigine was anxious to work. However it would be interesting if the Minister could give some information on this point also, and on the further point of the employment of natives by Asiatics. In this latter respect there was in existence a regulation prohibiting the employment of natives by Afghans, and the late Chief Protector of Aborigines had urged that this regulation should be further extended to cover employment by all or any Asiatics. It would be well if the Treasurer could give information as to what had been done.

THE TREASURER: The employment of aborigines by Asiatics had been stopped altogether. With regard to the application for land at Napier, Broome Bay, for the purpose of a mission station, an area of 10,000 acres had been granted to the Abbott of New Norcia for the purposes of a mission station, and to be held only so long as it was utilised for that specific purpose. With regard to gun licenses, he understood that none were issued to aborigines. If they were carrying firearms it was contrary to law and the police ought to relieve them of those firearms. He understood that the party the hon. member referred to had quite a number of guns in their possession, and these it seemed had been obtained from various private sources. Certainly the police should lose no opportunity of depriving a native of a firearm.

MR. OSBORN: The member for Gascoyne had expressed regret that the representatives of the North-West should attempt to censure the Government on this question. However it seemed that after

all it was only the member for Pilbara who had criticised the Government in respect to the Aborigines Department. For his (Mr. Osborn's) part he appreciated very much what had been done by the Government in this regard. It had been said that certain people were making considerable sums of money by the distribution of stores to the aborigines; and the member for Pilbara had condemned the policy of allowing the police to issue stores, and had recommended that the storekeepers themselves should be authorised to distribute the rations among the aborigines. But if, as the member for Pilbara had claimed, the police in distributing these stores were prone to tamper with the accounts, how much more likely would be these people who had the selling of the rations to fall under the temptation of making a little unlawful profit out of the transactions? The hon. member had declared that the police were in the habit of riding round the country for a distance of 40 miles or more and driving in the natives for rations. It might be so, but he (Mr. Osborn) knew nothing of it, and it seemed to him to have about as much foundation as had the other statements made by the member for Pilbara. As a result of some 17 years' experience in the North-West he (Mr. Osborn) could say that in the vast majority of cases the natives received nothing but good treatment at the hands of the squatters. Squatters appointed to distribute stores were allowed 6d. per day for each aboriginal supplied. He could assure the Committee that for that 6d. per day the squatters supplied per week 10 lbs. of flour, two pounds of sugar, half a pound of tea, three sticks of tobacco, and clothing whenever necessary. Again, he knew of one station which was supplied for three natives and was getting out of it sixteen. As for the hospital on the main island, there had been considerable difficulty in attaining the object for which the institution was established. As a member of the Committee he (Mr. Osborn) thought that the North-West were well served, and the completion of all the hospitals in the North-West that the Government had intended to there without further delay. He thought we would find that the difficulties would

be overcome. In regard to the question of the giving of permits, owing to the difficulty of getting these permits natives were now roaming about the country, and, being out of rations, were forced to commit thefts which would not occur if people, as formerly, could, when the blacks came along, give them employment. It would be found that permits were withheld from squatters in the Gascoyne district, so they were not favoured. Credit should be given to the department in that direction. The Chief Protector of Aborigines should not be looked upon as an ordinary inspector. We must have someone to do the administrative work, leaving the inspection work to be done by the Chief Protector's subordinates.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Charities*, £30,875:

Item, State Children, £545:

Mr. TROY: Who comprised the ladies' hoarding-out committee?

The PREMIER: There were ladies selected from each district in the metropolitan area. Mrs. Dr. Hicks of Guildford was one, Mrs. Brennan another, and the widow of the late Rev. T. Bird another. There were two others whose names he did not know.

Mr. COLLIER: The information was not satisfactory. The Treasurer should be able to give the names. Who comprised the committee on the goldfields? There were three persons appointed, but one left the district. Who was appointed in her place?

The TREASURER: Mrs. Walsh was appointed to the vacancy. Another lady engaged in this work was Mrs. Johnston of Boulder. These ladies were doing excellent work inspecting the homes in which the children were boarded out, and they sent in periodical reports to the department.

Mr. Hudson: Their reports should appear in the department's report.

Mr. COLLIER: It was satisfactory to know the vacancy was filled, though he could not express approval of the appointment of Mrs. Walsh. He would like to know the manner in which the appointments were made. The ladies

were drawn almost exclusively from the Women's National League in Perth and Fremantle; in fact, the appointment was a party question. Were these society ladies the only ones who devoted time to the care of neglected children? Were those three on the goldfields most prominent in looking after cases of this kind? Not one of them was ever known to be identified with the work, while others actively engaged in the work for years were not appointed. He had protested to Mr. Longmore, the Superintendent of Public Charities, with regard to these appointments at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and was assured by that gentleman that it was an oversight. Mr. Longmore was given the names of one or two ladies who had attended deputations to the Colonial Secretary in regard to this matter, but those names had been entirely overlooked. The committee was constituted of Mrs. Finister, wife of an ex-mayor of Kalgoorlie, Mrs. Johnston, the wife of an ex-mayor of Boulder, and Mrs. Cummins, the wife of another ex-mayor of Kalgoorlie. Miners' wives were better qualified than mayors' wives. Could the Treasurer tell how many inspections the committee made? One was informed that Mrs. Cummins had not paid one visit of inspection, but when a vacancy occurred another society lady was placed upon the committee. In fact, the ladies were drawn from that class of society Ministers moved amongst, and women who had done good work in this direction were overlooked—women who had had to rear children of their own without being able to afford to pay for nurses such as the ladies appointed could do. Who was Mrs. Walsh? If the Treasurer could not supply the information the vote would not go through.

The PREMIER: It was Mrs. Brennan who first of all organised the Fresh Air League. At any rate, she was the one who sent down the first contingent from the goldfields. This was evidence she had the matter at heart, and if she kept up her interest in this work we were fortunate in having her services. It was only a question of getting ladies who were interested in the matter, irrespective of the section of society to which they belonged.

Mr. Collier: I gave names to the de-

partment, and they were overlooked. They are party appointments absolutely.

The PREMIER: The names must have been inadvertently overlooked. There was a general desire to see that all classes of the community were considered in this work. It was a matter the Colonial Secretary took great interest in, and no one was more anxious than the Minister to see that the Act was carried out on the lines Parliament desired.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Fisheries*, £1,550:

Mr. ANGWIN: Those in charge of the Fisheries Department had been successful in making it almost an impossibility for people to get fish. The price at present obtaining was altogether outside the means of men working for wages. Owing to the regulations it was almost impossible for fishermen to earn a livelihood or to place fish on the market at a reasonable price. The department had been neglected, because the officer in charge was not qualified to carry out his duties. Now, in regard to the sponge industry, Captain Armstrong an old British officer, had, during the past four or five years, devoted much of his time in trawling and trying to show the people of Western Australia the amount of wealth existing along the coast in connection with the sponge industry. One would have thought that every encouragement would have been given a man of such experience and capability; but, instead of that, everything possible had been done to retard this old gentleman from carrying out his work. He had met with rebuffs every time he had approached the Government or the department in regard to the matter. Not only that, but the head of the department had gone out of his way to condemn the work done in regard to the industry. While Captain Armstrong had been blocked in every possible way, a Mr. Phillips, who came to the State recently from England, probably on account of the report from Captain Armstrong with regard to the industry, was assisted in every way possible in the direction of opening up an industry here. In addition, Mr. Phillips had been supplied with a number of sponges to

assist him in the work. Why should the man who had given his time and money to make this industry known, be rendered no assistance whatever? Captain Armstrong had very good reason to think the department had acted vindictively towards him. That gentleman sent an exhibit to the Franco-British exhibition. The Government had approached him with a view to purchasing sponges for exhibition there after a thoroughly expert examination had been made. Within a week or two, however, the Fisheries Department wrote a letter to London to Mr. R. C. Clifton, chairman of the exhibition, for the express purpose of condemning the exhibits sent there. The letter dated the 4th of September, 1908, said—"I beg to forward for your information reports received from London relating to the sponges purchased by your board from Captain Armstrong. These reports express the opinion I gave to your secretary and others that the samples submitted by Captain Armstrong were worthless, this opinion being backed up by reports received from London prior to your purchase relating to the same variety of sponges. You will notice in the letter from the Imperial Institute that mention is made of letters of the 18th of April and the 14th of September. Copies of these letters are marked "A" and "B." Captain Armstrong's claim was that the sponges referred to were no his at all, but had been obtained by Mr. Gale from some other place and sent to England by him; he also claimed that the reason for this statement was that his work should be condemned. If these statements were true, an inquiry by the Minister should be made, and the wrong done to Captain Armstrong should be rectified, while the department should be prevented from showing any further vindictiveness. Subsequently, a communication was received from London regarding the sponges, and Mr. Gale had an interview with the Press, and again, pointed out that the sponges were worthless. He said he regretted that Captain Armstrong was doing more to injure the industry than any other person. With a certain amount of optimism

Mr. Gale then went on to say, although the sponges exhibited were worthless, it did not follow there was no possibility of a paying industry being established. One would judge from these facts that there was a certain amount of truth in the statements made by the Chief Inspector, but when we found a little while afterwards that Captain Armstrong received from the officer in charge of the W.A. exhibits at the Exhibition, a notification that he had been awarded a diploma and a bronze medal, that showed that one or other of the parties must be wrong. Either Mr. Gale went out of his way to condemn the exhibit, and tried to get the judges to condemn it, or else those who examined it, and awarded the diploma could not have understood anything about sponges. Certainly, no bronze medal was to be delivered, although the award was made, for the intimation was sent to the successful exhibitor here that he must pay two guineas before receiving the medal.

Mr. Scaddan: How many entries of sponges were there?

Mr. Holman: Only one.

Mr. ANGWIN: If all the exhibits sent to London which obtained diplomas and medals were worthless, very little account must be taken of the so-called honour. He hoped that the Premier would see that justice was done to this old gentleman in connection with the sponges. The Premier had already given Captain Armstrong some encouragement in the letter he wrote to him, and which Captain Armstrong had printed. He (Mr. Angwin) was pleased to see that the Premier recognised a man who was spending his money to develop an industry within the State. His only regret was that the Premier was not in charge of the Fisheries Department. Everything showed clearly that Captain Armstrong was handicapped in the work he had in hand. He should certainly receive that courtesy and consideration to which every man who was willing to embark in a new enterprise was entitled. It was rumoured that Captain Armstrong was to have a monopoly of the shores of Western Australia. Some time ago a gentleman named Jacobs obtained

an exclusive right to deal with the wealth existing on the Western Australian coast. The application made by Captain Armstrong did not cover one-tenth of the area mentioned by Mr. Jacobs, so that members would see that the statements which had been made, that he wanted the exclusive right to operate on the whole of the shores, was not correct. We heard also that a share-broker in Perth had these sponges condemned by a firm in London. This firm, however, was doing all the business with other parts of Australia, a business worth from £80,000 to £100,000 per annum and members would realise that they were going to do everything possible to prevent the sponge industry from extending to Western Australia. He hoped the Minister would help Captain Armstrong to try and develop an industry which would do an immense amount of good to Western Australia in the near future.

[Mr. Foulkes took the Chair.]

MR. BOLTON: Now that Mr. Gale had been given another department to control, we should have a better time in the future with regard to the Fisheries Department. If the Government were sincere in their boasted expressions of regard for the poorer classes, they would now enable the poorer people to get fish at reasonable rates, and this they would be able to do by bringing about an alteration of the existing ridiculous regulations. Mr. Gale had been approached to alter these regulations, but he was too tired to go into the matter and make the necessary inquiries to find out whether they could be altered with advantage to the poorer class. The question had arisen about the size of the mesh, and that had been come into. A select committee had also sat on the fishing industry, and even the recommendations which had been made by that committee did not have any effect on the Chief Inspector who had not thought fit to alter the regulations. The report of this select committee stated, among other things—that the regulation mesh was too large for the fish, and there was no hesitation in recommending a reduction of the mesh, and also the opening of the Swan

River between the Narrows and Preston Point, and the Canning River from its junction with the Swan to Mount Henry. While the evidence was being given before that committee, Mr. Gale was in constant attendance and he should have had sufficient energy subsequently to go into the matter of altering the regulations. Perhaps now it would be better to approach the Minister on the subject, as the Chief Inspector would be too busy with the Aborigines Department to devote any time to this all important subject, and with that as an excuse, he (Mr. Bolton) would approach the Colonial Secretary, and ask him to make certain alterations. Members who knew anything about fishing, would know that at certain periods of the year the fish migrated from the rivers to the open waters. At the present time of the year the fish were migrating from the Swan in large numbers to the open waters, and sometimes a mile length of beautiful mullet were going out every night, and in fact this fish had been going out for the past three weeks. His information was obtained from those who had gained their living all their lives at this particular trade. It was necessary that some closed waters should be thrown open. The river was plentifully supplied with fish, and it was strange when one wanted to buy mullet or tailor, it was necessary to pay 2d. each. He was told that if portions of the closed waters were thrown open, these fish could be hawked to the houses for from 4d. to 6d. per dozen. The fact that the price of fish was so high went to prove that there should be some alterations to the regulations. He hoped that the Minister controlling the department, who was listening, but who was not able to reply, would take notice of what had been said. Evidence taken by the select committee showed that the number of schnapper in our waters was being fast reduced and that had been borne out by facts. Today schnapper were scarcer than ever, and it would shortly be impossible to get any at all. The way to safeguard this would be to close a number of schnapper fishing grounds, and Safety Bay particularly should be closed for a period of five years. If the Government were pre-

pared to do that a plentiful supply of fish would be assured at that place; if the Government thought that five years was too long a period, it would be an easy matter to issue regulations to provide that fishing could take place there for three hours out of the twelve or twenty-four. In that way the fish would not be much disturbed and would not leave the district. He was hopeful now that Mr. Gale had to devote a good deal of his time to the Aborigines Department, that the Fisheries Department would fare better. It was not in any vindictive sense that he made this remark. Mr. Gale had issued most absurd regulations, without reference to men who had gained their livelihood in this industry. He believed that the Minister would make some alterations; at any rate he hoped he would go into the question thoroughly. He (Mr. Bolton) might have felt justified in moving to reduce the vote—because he felt the department had been neglected—but for the fact that the gentleman in charge would now have less to do with the department than in the past.

MR. GORDON: Having taken a little interest in the fishing industry of Western Australia, he would say with reference to the opening of waters in the Swan river to the Causeway, that while this course would be beneficial to some of the fishermen now engaged on the river, he did not think it would have the effect of making fish any cheaper, because in spite of the vigilance of the inspectors, he was sure that operations were being carried out where these waters were closed. He was afraid that fish at 4d. a dozen would be so small as not to be worth having. He did not think the mesh to be used in the Swan river should be made much smaller than at present. No doubt there was a scarcity of fish along the coast, but the closing of certain localities was not likely to make them more plentiful. Some time ago he had taken an interest in getting certain waters around Rockingham closed; as a matter of fact the fish there to-day were not as numerous as they had been when the waters were first closed. In respect to the opening of the Swan river the matter had Mr. Gale's approval, and it was understood that the Minister him-

self offered no objection to it. Consequently that water would probably be thrown open, but he was confident that the fish would not be any the cheaper for it.

MR. WALKER: One note that struck him, and struck most other people, was that for some reason or another fish were too expensive for the ordinary citizen. There must be some cause for it.

MR. GORDON: There are no fish.

MR. WALKER: There were no fish because the management of the department had been bad and under it fish had been destroyed before reaching maturity. He did not know of any other part of the world were less practical attention had been paid to the development of the fishing industry than had been the case in this State. Everywhere else large sums of money had been spent in the development of this industry. Although perhaps in our rivers, bays, and estuaries fish were getting scarce, he was convinced that we had very good trawling grounds along our shores, from which by a little enterprise quantities of fish might be drawn, sufficient to supply every household at a comparatively reasonable price. He was prepared to condemn the Fisheries Department and more particularly Mr. Gale, who had been a stumbling-block in the way of reform. Equally so had Mr. Gale been an offender in regard to another industry, namely, that of sponges. He was pleased to see that the Premier was giving his moral, if not his practical, support to the development of the sponge industry. It had been clearly shown that we had sponges of good commercial value which offered a means of employment to a large number of people; yet Mr. Gale had tabooed any development of the industry. In this respect he had pigeon-holed matters which had received the imprimatur of the Premier himself; he had delayed actual operations to suit his own convenience, and he had tabooed and even slandered the suggested possibilities of the industry to the very utmost. He had stood between Ministers and experiment, and had shown himself to be a stumbling-block in the way of this country's industries. He (Mr. Walker) believed that in the Pre-

mier's Department there had been an earnest desire that this industry should be tested and given a fair chance. He believed that even the Colonial Secretary himself had been in favour of giving some encouragement to this industry. But Mr. Gale had stood above them all and bidden them retire to their kennels whilst he exercised authoritative command. He (Mr. Walker) submitted that if Mr. Gale was going to attend to the aborigines he could not attend to the Fisheries Department. If the reports which he (Mr. Walker) had seen in regard to Captain Armstrong's work among the sponges were reliable the Government ought to be prepared to make some great sacrifice in order to give this industry a chance. Captain Armstrong had been awarded a bronze medal at the Franco-British Exhibition; yet in spite of it all we had had nothing but condemnation from Mr. Gale. Talk about crying stinking fish! what would other countries say when they saw that the head of the Fisheries Department was the source of it all? If other countries had such an asset they would exploit it to the utmost. He was informed that sponges sent home from the Fisheries Department were not treated properly and that they were treated in a manner calculated to spoil them. That was current report down town. At all events, this head of the Fisheries Department had done his utmost to block any possibility of exploiting what were known as local sponges. Even if those sponges were not equal to those of the Mediterranean they at least constituted a valuable article of commerce and should be utilised as such. Yet because of the hindrances offered by Mr. Gale this could not be done.

Mr. Gordon: What are the hindrances?

Mr. WALKER: The hindrances Mr. Gale had thrust in the way. The Premier was well able to tell the hon. member what they were. He (Mr. Walker) was prepared to read a little evidence on the subject, but he thought it was only too well known. He hoped the Government would do something to exploit this industry lying at our doors, and that the praiseworthy efforts of Captain Armstrong would be recognised. Certainly

something more should be done not only in regard to sponges but in regard to the fishing industry.

The PREMIER: The remarks of hon. members in connection with the sponge and the fishing industries had been of considerable interest to him. Although, as the member for North Fremantle had said, he was not an expert as far as the Fisheries Department was concerned, yet he was satisfied that the views placed before the Committee by hon. members who had some knowledge of the subject would not be overlooked when the matter was brought under the notice of the Minister controlling the department. Undoubtedly at the present time we were paying a very high price for fish, and this seemed to obtain all over the State. His own experience of the fishing industry was limited to the buying of a boat in order to start a man fishing, which boat had been promptly wrecked. In regard to the sponge industry, he thought that Captain Armstrong was an estimable old man but, like many other getting on in years, often imagined that he had a grievance which, however, when investigated assumed very narrow dimensions. As far as that gentleman was concerned, he had received sympathetic treatment from the Government. When the exhibits for the Franco-British Exhibition were being collected, Captain Armstrong had brought under his (the Premier's) notice several specimens of sponges, which, to his unpractised eye at all events, appeared to be very admirable in quality. In consequence he had induced the committee in charge of the collecting operations to purchase these sponges for the sum of £20. These were sent home and Captain Armstrong was awarded a bronze medal; but Captain Armstrong in letters to the Press stated that these sponges had been carelessly packed and that they were used as packing for furniture and other exhibits, and consequently depreciated in value. Mr. Wicken, who had charge of the exhibits at Home, reporting on this said that these statements were most glaring, because the sponges were packed in Captain Armstrong's presence and none of them were used for packing other things, and that the ship's manifest showed that

the case containing the sponges contained nothing but sponges. He also said that the sponges arrived in as good order as when they were in Perth, but that they were not appreciated to the extent we hoped. Specimens were sent to Mr. Gilbert in Melbourne to bring them under the notice of the printers, as it was said they were useful in connection with printing work; but people competent to express an opinion having examined them, it was found that they were not as good as we expected. However, we should not be discouraged in endeavouring to exploit the industry. Captain Armstrong had made several applications for leases and the sole right to control certain areas of foreshore. His last application was in connection with a small portion of the Swan river foreshore at Preston Point and he was asked to state what particular produce of the sea he wished to collect. Captain Armstrong replied that he was unable to state this pending thorough investigation, and he applied for use of the Government launch and diving gear so that investigations might be made for three or four days. It was now arranged to hire a launch at £15 so as to make the investigations that Captain Armstrong considered necessary. Mr. Gale was not vindictive in any way in regard to Captain Armstrong, and the Government had been very sympathetic towards him, probably more particularly because he was an old Crimean veteran, and one who had done his share of pioneering work in the colonies. The Government would endeavour to assist him as far as they possibly could in the direction he indicated, as it might be of value in opening up some of the hidden wealth of the State.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Friendly Societies and Industrial Arbitration, £3,429:

Mr. BATH: Had the Government made provision for an examiner to examine apprentices under the arbitration award in the tailoring trade?

The PREMIER: Provision was made for these examinations to take place; the apprentices were now being registered.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Gaols, £32,163:

Mr. NANSON: The average number of prisoners in the gaols of the State was 671 and half of them were in the Fremantle gaol. The prisoners at all the gaols in the State cost on an average £41 per prisoner, while the cost, excepting Fremantle, was £28 per prisoner, but the cost at Fremantle alone was £67 and at Hamel £58. Comparing the cost of our gaols with the cost of those in the other States, we found that it cost us three times as much per head of population as it cost in Eastern States. No doubt the cost of food in this State was somewhat heavier but the figures for the other States per head of population were:—New South Wales, 1s. 2d.; Victoria and Queensland, 10d.; South Australia, 11d.; and, Tasmania, 8d.; whereas the cost in this State was 2s. 6d. It was 2s. 2d. in 1902, but it had now increased to 2s. 6d. It would seem there was some need for explanation and possibly, for inquiry, because facts like these gave one an uneasy feeling that economies that might be made were not being made. The Premier might explain the high cost at Fremantle as compared with the rest of the State, and the high cost for the State as compared with the cost in the other States.

Mr. GILL: Warders in the Fremantle prison going on duty at 12 o'clock midnight had to go to the prison at 7.30 p.m., and those who finished duty at midnight had to remain in the prison until 6.10 a.m.; but they received nothing for the hours they spent in the prison in the one case after reaching the prison and before going on duty, or, in the other case, after finishing duty and before leaving the prison. These hours were not counted as duty and they were not paid for. Of course, the reply recently given to a question he put, that the hours of work averaged eight hours a day, was correct; but these men really went on or off duty hours before or after their actual working hours counted. If a warder arrived at the prison after 7.30 p.m. he was fined, so that, practically, he was on duty, although he was not actually supposed to be on duty until midnight. The men had a just grievance in this respect. Another grievance was that men who came off in the

morning had to relieve the day staff for an hour at noon, and then had to go on duty again in the evening. Thus, a warder spent the greater portion of his day within the prison walls, and it was not fair to say that he only worked eight hours a day. The superintendent was an excellent man, but was old-fashioned in his ideas, believing that the system of 20 years ago was good enough for to-day. If the matter were gone into the grievance could be remedied.

[Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.]

Mr. JACOBY : It was surprising that the cost per capita of administering the gaols had increased considerably in recent years. One would naturally assume that as the cost of food supplies had decreased there would have been a tendency to bring down the cost rather than the reverse. Why was there an increase of 4d. per head ? Look at the administration of the Hospital for the Insane, and it would be found there that the cost was considerably less per head than in the gaols. According to the report of the Comptroller General of Prisons, the cost at the Fremantle prison for 1906 per capita was £54 3s. 3d., and in 1907, £57 1s. 5d. ; at Hamel the cost for 1906 was £44 14s. 5d., and in 1907, £58 2s. 10d. ; while at Rottnest the cost for 1906 was £31 5s. 4d., and in 1907, £40 8s. 10d. ; at the Hospital for the Insane the cost was £31 13s. There should be an inquiry as to why the cost of administering the gaols had increased, and why it was so much higher than the cost of administering the Hospital for the Insane.

Mr. Scaddon : At the latter place they produce a large amount of their own food.

Mr. JACOBY : So they did in connection with the gaols. At Rottnest Island, for instance, the prisoners fattened their own sheep, and bread was always made at the institutions. Mention was made in the report of the large amount of work done by the inmates of the gaols for other departments, but it did not appear that the gaols were credited with these amounts. That should be done. The value of the work done at the various gaols was estimated by the Comptroller

General at £5,280 14s. 7d., while it was mentioned that the value of the services rendered to the Harbour and Light Department alone amounted to just over £2,140. If such valuable work were done for the Harbour and Light Department, the Gaols Department should be credited with that amount. If the former department had to employ other people to do the work it would be a cash expenditure. Now that it was done by the prisoners it was a book-keeping amount, but it should be credited to the Gaols Department. The same remark applied to the printing that was done at the gaol for various departments. Something should be done to see if we could not make an effort to turn men out of gaol better than when they entered it. In a good many cases men were sent to prison for comparatively small offences, and because they had had the misfortune to be found out. An effort should be made that in these cases the prisoners should be prevented from becoming contaminated by their surroundings. The great proportion of the prisoners were not of the criminal class except by accident. Certainly there were criminals of a temperament from which good citizens could never be made, but there were many who, if care were taken to keep them away from those vicious from temperament, would be turned out of the gaols with a strong determination to do better in the future.

Mr. HOPKINS : Did the Government intend to do anything in regard to extending the principle introduced by the late Dr. Jameson, under whose instruction good conduct prisoners were given an opportunity of working at Hamel. Admittedly numbers of desirable citizens had found themselves within the walls of a prison for some temporary lapse, or for offences not of a particularly serious nature. He had always felt that once a man went to prison, even if only for a few months, such an influence was brought to bear upon him that he was led ultimately either into the lunatic asylum or into the gaols for ever. That principle was apt to grow, for this reason that we found the men at the head of the department in nearly every instance had the desire to

build up a circumlocution department around them and make it as big and important as possible. Only a very small percentage of men who went to prison were of such a character that they could not be redeemed from their evil ways if proper steps were taken, but, according to the system in vogue, not only here but also in the other States of Australia, the result was to manufacture criminals. One could not go round the agricultural and mining portions of the State without being struck by the need for water conservation. There was no State where the climatic conditions required the conservation of water more than this, and there was no other State that allowed more pure water to run into the ocean than was done here year after year, and at infinite cost the whole population was called upon to maintain the prison and numbers of men who might be redeemed if given the opportunity of working in the open air and carrying on an active and healthful occupation. It might be said that that would interfere with the labour market, but he could not agree with that. Take the Avon river. These men could be employed in building weirs there which would mean the conservation of millions of gallons of water. In fact, every stream which ran in the South-Western division could be dealt with in the same way. Perhaps after a few years, with a proper system of water conservation, we might then have summer showers as was experienced in some of the other parts of Australia. The people engaged in agricultural and pastoral pursuits knew the value of summer rains, and more particularly in a State like this, one could conceive the advantages that would accrue from a proper system of water conservation. As a humane people, he would like to see the Colonial Secretary bear this aspect of the question in mind, and despite the opinion of his officials give some reasonable chance to those men in the Fremantle prison to do some open air work instead of keeping them in prison for the purpose of employing a huge staff of warders who only batted on unfortunate circumstances.

Mr. BATH : The subject introduced by the member for Beverley reminded him that the administration were doing entirely the opposite. As a matter of fact the conditions existing at present were enough discouragement to reform or good because as a matter of fact we had a number of men within the walls of the prison engaged in the work of printing and bookbinding for a number of the State departments, while at the present time there were, he supposed, 30 or 40 hands who had lost their employment through the stoppage of the *Morning Herald*.

The Treasurer : There are only two in the prison engaged in printing work.

Mr. BATH : There were more engaged in the work of bookbinding or in the various processes of bookbinding. He was informed on good authority that there were more men employed in the bookbinding work there than were engaged outside. He was dealing also with the printing and here we had these men carrying on the work and doing it a little more cheaply, while outside there were not only those men who had been discharged from the *Herald* with families depending on them, but others who were looking for work or were leaving the State. Even before the *Herald* stopped publication there were many men employed in both the bookbinding and printing trade. As a matter of fact the prospect that these men were faced with at present was that the only chance of getting work in Western Australia was by going into prison. They certainly could not get work outside. The suggestion put forward by the member for Beverley was essentially sensible because anyone could see that the employment of these men, especially in planting forests or thinning out young plantations of jarrah would not deprive any man of work. We had talked and talked in this State of reafforestation, of conserving our jarrah forests, and giving a chance to the young stuff and thinning it out : but we had done nothing but talk. We had reports on forests and reports from forestry commissions, which had cost the country hundreds of pounds, and the recommendations were contained in the volumes now

on the shelves behind members, and nothing had been done except to grow a little pine plantation. This scheme at Hamel was essentially a good one. The prisoners there were not under the observation of their fellow citizens, and he knew, because he was one of the visitors appointed under the Prisons Act, that there were a number of those men who after having finished their sentences secured jobs on clearing work and ringbarking throughout the South-Western district. These men were in no sense competing with those who were fortunate enough to be outside the prison walls. The suggestion of the hon. member could well be extended. In New Zealand where they carried this out on a greater scale they did not employ a large staff of warders. It meant that if prisoners escaped and were captured they lost their chance of remaining on the plantations where they received certain concessions in the way of better treatment and better food. The result was that the men were not anxious to escape. Under those circumstances he sincerely hoped that in the allocation of work to the prison which was going on at present to a great extent, consideration would be given to the deplorable condition of the printing trade outside and to those who were victims of circumstances.

The TREASURER : Replying to the last objection first he could not understand the hon. members' information with regard to the printing establishment at the Fremantle gaol. The hon. member had been informed that there were more men engaged in the printing and bookbinding there than were engaged outside. At the present time there were only 18 or 20 prisoners engaged in both printing and bookbinding. The object of the Government had been to minimise this class of work as much as possible. On several occasions when he had received deputations he had given an undertaking to restrict this work as much as possible and he had been assured that this had been done. He was told that only those who were not strong enough to take on a heavier class of work such as blacksmithing or carpentering were put into these departments, and when one considered the total

value of the work turned out last year was only about £800, members would recognise that it was not a big item, and that no injury had been done to outside workers. With regard to the suggestion made by the member for Beverley he would point out that the Hamel depot had only recently been closed and that the Government were certainly in favour of endeavouring to find employment for prisoners outside. Of course, there must be a proper class of employment, and from what the hon. member had said it was obvious that if prisoners were given outside work, there must be a greater staff of warders to look after them, and that more particularly applied to prisoners working in jarrah forests. Surely in such places a double staff of warders would be required. That meant of course increased expenditure. Then came the question as to whether objections would not be raised on the score of these men entering into competition with outside labour. So too, when prisoners were put on to construct dams, or roads or bridges.

Mr. Hopkins : There was never any complaint. The system was rather approved of.

The TREASURER : For one, he himself quite approved of it. But he was pointing out that if complaints were raised against 18 men being employed in book-binding and printing, they would almost certainly be raised against men being put on to do navvying work. The member for Greenough had complained of the cost of the department and had drawn comparisons between the cost of the large gaols and of the small gaols.

Mr. Walker : And that the cost was 8d. in Tasmania and 2s. 6d. here.

Mr. Bath : The difference in cost of provisions will account for that.

The TREASURER : To a large extent it would. He would give the figures showing the costs of these gaols right through Western Australia. These would demonstrate that the cost was very much less than in previous years, and very much smaller than the cost of similar institutions in the Eastern States. Thus in 1889 the cost per head per year of the prisoners in Western Australia had been

£42 2s. 0½d., while in 1907, it was £40 18s. 1½d., showing a very considerable reduction. To take the cost per head of the prisoners in Western Australia as compared with those in the Eastern States it would be found that in Victoria they cost per head per annum £55 5s. 10d., in South Australia £53 18s. 5d., in Queensland £49 16s. 4d., and in New South Wales, £51 6s. 2d. So that the lowest cost in the Eastern States was £8 18s. 2d., per head more than Western Australia, while the highest was over £14 in excess of the cost here. This too, notwithstanding the fact that the cost of food-stuffs in Western Australia was certainly greater than in the Eastern States. He had before him a schedule showing that the increase in the cost of food-stuffs this year as compared with that of last year was enormous, ranging from 10 per cent. to 40 per cent. Bread had increased 26 per cent. and meat 17 per cent. One could therefore see at once where the extra cost for this year came in. With regard to the cost of the Fremantle gaol in respect to trades no credit was taken for the work being carried out. The cost given was the total cost of the establishment. It was not credited with the value of the work turned out, because the Audit Act prohibited that. Such credit had to go to revenue account. Then there was the question of the hours worked. The hours of warders had been reduced ; and with regard to the guard-room duty he wished to point out that instead of eight warders there were now only two kept on that special duty. It was necessary for the general protection that there should be extra hands in case of need. It was a system adopted right through the whole of the Commonwealth. These men were not on every night, but only one week in three. To do away with this system would mean a very large increase of expenditure. It was not considered a great hardship to ask two warders to sleep on the premises for one week in three. Still the Minister would look into the matter. He was quite sure that the Government would also consider as to what means could be taken to employ prisoners outside in the manner suggested by hon. members.

Mr. JACOBY : It was understood to be the intention of the Government to remove the prisoners from Rottneest on the completion of their work there. Apparently the department had some proposition as to what other outdoor labour would be given these prisoners. He would like to hear the intentions of the department in that respect. Several suggestions had been made to-night and he was sure that if the department were determined to close the prison at Rottneest they must have some plans in view in respect to the employment of the prisoners.

The TREASURER : The work at Rottneest would probably last for another couple of years. The only other work which the Minister had under consideration at present was the question of planting pines.

Item, Superintendent, £390 :

Mr. ANGWIN : By the footnote it was seen that this officer had quarters, water and sanitation. What was the meaning of sanitation.

The TREASURER : It meant that the superintendent was provided with sanitary service free.

Item, Religious instructors, £300 :

Mr. BATH : Surely a saving might be made in this direction. Were there not some gentlemen connected with the various churches who had sufficient interest in the welfare of prisoners and sufficient Christian spirit to undertake the spiritual charge of the prisoners without it being necessary to provide an item on the Estimates to the extent of £300 ?

The TREASURER : Service of prayers was held every morning. These ministers of religion had to give their attendance every day and to provide religious instruction for the prisoners. He thought it was a reasonable proposition that they should receive some consideration.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : We heard a great deal of Christian charity ; it would be refreshing to receive some of it here : the Government supplied it.

Mr. Hopkins : Would the prisoners be annoyed if it were taken away ?

Mr. UNDERWOOD : The prisoners were sentenced to be kept in gaol, but were not sentenced to have these in-

fictions. To what denomination did these gentlemen belong?

The TREASURER: A priest of the Roman Catholic Church received £125 per annum, and a clergyman of the Church of England received £175 per annum, getting a larger salary because of the larger number of prisoners he attended to. If we did not have these gentlemen to attend services and look after the spiritual welfare of the prisoners there would be no one to do it. Prisoners could not be marched out of the gaol to a church, so we had to provide for instructors to go to the prison.

Mr. BATH: This was a matter that should not be treated with levity, but it was a reflection on every clergyman in the metropolitan area when the Treasurer said that unless we provided these sums the prisoners would receive no spiritual attention.

The Treasurer: No, we could not have regular attendance every morning.

Mr. BATH: We had throughout the metropolitan area a large number of gentlemen who acted as censors of public morals, and who throughout their ministries were protected against every possibility of want, and consequently were able to exercise the very desirable virtue of Christian charity, and it was a reflection to say that among them we could not find some sufficiently interested in the prisoners to provide for the instruction in the gaol.

Mr. Nanson: You could probably find them, but it would be scarcely a fair deal to expect them to work for nothing.

Mr. BATH: Surely the hon. member was aware of the protestations they made.

Mr. Nanson: The labourer is worthy of his hire.

Mr. BATH: Was Christ the character of hire? If this was a question of hire then the expense could be saved, because the prisoners were better without it.

Item. Warders, £8,335:

Mr. ANGWIN: It was explained in a footnote that these warders were to have sanitary services free. This was a recognised practice for years, but now the Government had issued instructions that the warders were to pay their own sanitary

fees, amounting to about 1s. a week on a warder's salary.

The TREASURER: The reply in regard to the superintendent applied here, but this work was now transferred to the Medical Department and a regulation had been made that all officers must pay for these services. However, during this year a certain number had received their services free, just as the superintendent had. In future the services would be charged for.

Mr. ANGWIN: The warders were now paying the fees. Why were they doing so when the higher officials were getting their services free?

The TREASURER: It was understood that they would be all on the same footing from the 1st July next.

Mr. BOLTON: Were they all on the same footing now? It appeared to him that the warders were being treated most unfairly, and that the Committee were being misled by the Estimates. There might have been a mistake made in the information provided by the superintendent, but if the Minister knew all about it, it was wrong that the treatment meted out to the warders should be different from that granted to the superintendent.

The TREASURER: All would be placed on the same footing dating as from the 1st July next. If at present the warders were paying and the superintendent was not, then he must be placed on the same footing in that respect as they were. If the superintendent were getting services free so should the warders.

Item. Medical Officer, Rottneſt Gaol, £110:

Mr. HEITMANN: Who was the medical officer undertaking the work at the Rottneſt gaol, and what were his duties?

The TREASURER: Dr. Hope was the medical officer there, and his duty was to attend the prison at Rottneſt once a week or once a fortnight. He also went over to the gaol whenever he was called upon.

Mr. Underwood: I suppose it depends on the weather.

The TREASURER: Nothing of the sort. Dr. Hope was not afraid of any weather, but went over there whenever

he was called upon. He was one of the most energetic officers in the service.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Harbour and Light.* £24,672 :

Mr. ANGLIN : Complaint must be made against the Government for not having carried out the promise made by a former Government that a representative of the workers, or the lumpers, at Fremantle should be put on the Harbour Trust. A new appointment was made recently, and he would like to know what special qualifications the gentleman appointed possessed. Possibly he had no better qualifications for the practical working of the harbour than the other members of the Trust, and if that were so he possessed none at all. The Chambers of Commerce at Perth and Fremantle had representatives on the Trust, also the Chamber of Mines and the shipping interests, and it was only fair that the workers should be represented also. Seeing that the Government, or the officials were afraid of one worker being on a Trust of five members, evidently they had a very small opinion of the other four. Why did not the Government extend to the workers the same privilege the Premier said would be extended in connection with the Bunbury Harbour Board, by the appointment of a worker as a member ? The reason was that the Government did not intend that the Trust should give fair play to the workers. A few weeks ago one of the workmen met with an accident which debarred him from his employment for about four weeks. If he had been working for a private firm due consideration would have been given to him, but this was not so in the case of the Trust. He was not entitled to compensation for two weeks, but for the other two weeks during which he was laid up he was granted the magnificent sum of 6s. 3d. as compensation. With regard to the appointment of a worker on the Trust, he had written to the Minister at the time of the recent appointment, and the reasons given by the Minister in reply were little short of an insult to the large number of workers employed on the harbour. The Minister in his reply point-

ed out the large sum earned by the department and said, if a worker were appointed on the board, this amount of money would soon be squandered, or they would take advantage of the position they were placed in to work contrary to the best interests of the harbour. Why could a representative of the workers do this more than a representative of the shipping combine or a representative of the merchants ? It showed clearly that the Minister was afraid to appoint a workers' representative, because he might have more brains or more persuasive powers and would override the other commissioners. Perhaps the Minister might tell the Committee what special qualifications were held by the newly appointed commissioner and what his duties were in connection with shipping companies previously. If the workers had direct representation on the Trust, the representative would assist the Trust to a very great extent in carrying out the work of the harbour. The representative of the workers would have practical knowledge, which none of the commissioners possessed ; and the State would thus gain considerably.

The PREMIER : To his recollection no promise had been made that the workers representative would be appointed. He made that promise about another harbour but with regard to Fremantle he understood that the board was practically the same as it had been constituted during the last three years, with the exception of one gentleman who was appointed recently, Mr. Barker. In the opinion of those responsible Mr. Barker had every qualification requisite for making a useful member.

Mr. Bolton : Who were those responsible ?

The PREMIER : Those who were consulted, the members of the board and others competent to give information as to this gentleman's qualifications. Personally, he had no knowledge of the acquisition to the board, but he took the place of Mr. Viles who resigned. The other members had done good work and the Government saw no reason for the alteration of the personnel of the board.

Item, Extra Labour, Penguin, £350 :

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Would the Minister explain what this extra labour was ?

The TREASURER: The extra labour was required in connection with the inspection along the coast.

Item, Reserve light-keepers. temporary labour, etc., £350 :

Mr. HUDSON: A grievance had been brought under his notice regarding the treatment of the light-keeper at Esperance. The man was employed there at a remuneration of about £20, and for the sake of another £10 he was placed in the position that he was not able to leave there, and thus he was practically thrown upon the charity of the State. The matter had been brought under notice, but he took the present opportunity of bringing it forcibly under the notice of the department.

The Treasurer: Would the hon. member see the Minister ?

Mr. HUDSON: I have already seen him.

The Treasurer: The Colonial Secretary says that he has not been seen about it.

Item, Incidental, £2,580 :

Mr. HUDSON: There was necessity for providing boats on the South-East coast of the State. There were jetties at every place, and there was very little in the nature of life-saving apparatus. At Esperance it was necessary that there should be a boat provided which could be placed in charge of the police so that in case of accident—and several had occurred during the operations of a company that was seeking for phosphates on the islands—it might be of some assistance. Several accidents had happened at Hope-toun and a man was killed there. The difficulty of landing cargo there was well known to the department, and there was no boat for use in bad weather.

The Treasurer: I have made a note of it.

Vote put and passed.

Vote Lunacy, £27,012 :

Mr. ANGWIN: Had nothing been done in regard to giving the attendants at the Claremont Asylum the right of appeal in respect to any dispute that might arise between them and their superior officers.

For some years past he had been bringing this before the Minister. The objections alleged were that it was never done in any of the other States. Yet in every other department of the service, the servants had the right of appeal, while here one man controlled the whole show, and his decision whether right or wrong was final. The Minister refused to look at the matter in a reasonable light. These servants had been treated very unfairly in the past. During the recent absence of the superintendent the officer acting in his behalf had fined some of the girls so much that even the superintendent on his return saw fit to reduce the fine. It went to show the necessity for some court of appeal.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 3rd February, 1909.

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Motion: Land Settlement and Water Supply	1877

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: By-laws Goldfields Water Supply Administra-tion.