

inquiries had been made, and it had been reported by the head of the branch that, although as strict an inspection as was desired had not been made, still the neglect was not sufficient to cause the officer's services to be dispensed with. It had been said that £600 had been lost by the department. That was not so. The Crown Law Department were now making a claim on the parties concerned with a view to recovering the amount owing.

Other items agreed to ; vote put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier : Papers on Applications for Loans in connection with the Stirling Estate.

BILL—POLICE FORCE (CONSOLIDATION).

Received from the Legislative Council, and on motion by the Premier read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.28 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 24th October, 1907.

Questions: Agricultural Railway Lands Resumption	PAC
Cattle from Tick Area	3
Overpayment of Subsidies to Municipalities	3
Railway Wood-line, Cue	3
Sewage Filter-beds	3
Sewerage Scheme Inquiry	3
Agricultural Information and the Press	3
Motion: Sewage Filter-bed Drawings	3
Bills: Mt. Magnet-Black Range Railway, 2s. moved	3
Sale of Government Property, 2s. concluded, Com. reported	3
Estimates resumed: Treasury Votes and Items, first to Audit passed	3
Discussion on Tender Board System	3
Discussion on Care of Aborigines	3

The SPEAKER took the Chair :
4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL RAILWAY LANDS RESUMPTION.

Mr. STONE asked the Premier: Will he consider the advisability of resuming all unimproved land within ten miles of new railway lines in agricultural districts for the purposes of close settlement, the value of the said land prior to the construction of such railways?

The PREMIER replied: Provision made in all new Railway Bills that have been introduced for the resumption of areas of not less than 1,000 acres, and certain blocks are being inspected at the present time. The clause referred to reads as follows:—

"At any time after the passing of this Act, and until the expiration of twelve months from the publication of notice in the *Government Gazette* declaring the railway open for traffic, the Governor may, with the object of encouraging the cultivation and settlement of the land, compulsorily purchase any land in parcels of not less than one thousand acres, each parcel being the property of one person or two or more persons jointly or in common, and situated within fifteen miles on either side of the line of railway, and when the land is certified by the Minister of Lands as suitable for closer agricultural settlement: Provided that no land shall be compulsorily purchased until the Land Purchase Board has favoured and reported thereon."

QUESTION—CATTLE FROM TICK AREA.

Mr. MALE asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that it is reported that a shipment of cattle which have come from the tick area was made at Derby, on or about the 17th instant, per "Moira"? 2, Has he given any permission for these cattle to be brought through clean country, and shipped from a clean port? 3, If he is not aware of this shipment having been made, will he cause inquiries to be made as to this shipment, and where these cattle have been brought from? 4, If it is found that these cattle have been driven from the tick area, what steps will he take to prevent the recurrence of such an offence? 5, Should it be found that these cattle have brought tick into the clean herds, what steps will be taken to have them eradicated and the clean cattle protected from the disease?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, Yes. 4, Prosecution will follow. 5, Infected herds will be quarantined and the owners required to take necessary steps to eradicate the pest.

QUESTION—OVERPAYMENT OF SUBSIDIES TO MUNICIPALITIES.

Mr. TROY, for Mr. H. Brown, and pursuant to notice, asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to move for the reappointment of a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the overpayment of subsidies to various municipalities in the State during the past six years?

The PREMIER replied: As the hon. member has given notice of his intention to move for the appointment of such a Committee, there is no need for the Government to take farther action in the matter.

QUESTION—RAILWAY WOOD-LINE, CUE.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, When is a start to be

made with the construction of the Cue Wood-line? 2, What is the reason for delay?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Sleepers and rails are now on the way. 2, Cutting of necessary sleepers and failure of contractor to make arrangements for receiving the material at Nallan.

QUESTION—SEWAGE FILTER-BEDS.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Were the plans and specifications for the filter-beds at Burswood Island, upon which tenders were called and the contract let, the same as originally designed and drawn up and submitted for approval to Mr. Davis, the consulting engineer? 2, Were the plans or specifications altered after the contract had been let, and, if so, in what manner? 3, What was the height of the walls of each filter-bed—(a.) As originally designed? (b.) As provided in the specifications upon which the contract was let? (c.) As completed by the contractor? 4, Were the walls completed by the contractor as provided in the specifications of contract? 5, If not, why not? 6, Who was the officer that made the tests of the site upon which these beds are placed? 7, What pressure or weight did he state in his report that this site was capable of carrying? 8, What is the weight of each filter-bed as constructed? 9, Has there been a subsidence of the walls? 10, Will it be necessary, before the beds are used, to place any farther weight upon the walls? If so, how much? 11, What was the total cost in connection with these beds? 12, When were they completed, and when will they be put in use?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The plans were the same. No plans were submitted to Mr. Davies; these were only drawn up immediately prior to the letting of the contract. 2, Yes, as explained in No. 3. 3, The height of the open wall was—(a.) Five feet. (b.) Five feet. (c.) Filter No. 5, 3ft. 7in.; Filter No. 6, 2ft. 9in.; Filter No. 7, 2ft. 11in.; Filter No. 8, 3ft. 7in. 4 and 5, No. The filters were cut down in height as set forth

in 3, as the indications of settlement rendered it inadvisable to complete to the full height. The decrease in height does not render the filters less efficient in relation to their cubic capacity. 6, The tests of the site were made by Mr. Nenjar, under the direction of Mr. Hickson, the officer at present in charge of outside works. 7, One ton to the square foot. 8, Filter No. 5, 4.0cwt. per square foot; Filter No. 6, 3.4cwt. per square foot; Filter No. 7, 4.3cwt. per square foot; Filter No. 8, 4.0cwt. per square foot. 9, Yes. 10, It is proposed to place a grid work of distributing pipes and fixed nozzles on the surface of the filters. These will not increase the load more than 3 per cent. 11, £7,000. 12, 17th April, 1907. They will be probably be put into use in from seven to nine months' time.

QUESTION—SEWERAGE SCHEME INQUIRY.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Premier: 1, In view of the large amount of expenditure contemplated in connection with the Perth Sewerage Scheme, the admitted partial failures in the work already done in this connection, and the statements in the public Press, charging the Departmental Officials with incompetence and waste of money due to their inexperience in Sewerage engineering, is it the intention of the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate and report? 2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: The main criticism directed against the scheme has been in connection with the filter-beds on Burswood Island. These four filter-beds were completed on the 7th April. Settlement has taken place, but at a continually diminishing rate. During last month it has amounted to 5-16th inches. The total average settlement since construction has been 7½ inches. This has not been caused by the edge of the beds sinking into the soil, but by the general depression of the surface in the vicinity of the beds. There is no reason to believe that the general usefulness of the beds is appreciably impaired. The selection of foundations is a purely abstract engineering question.

Since the commencement of the work the syphon to Burswood Island and the Mount Bay Stormwater Drain have also been criticised. The syphon, which has been laid some 5½ months, despite assertions that it would sink into the bed of the river, is in the same position as when put down. In connection with the Mount Bay Stormwater Drain, it was asserted that the finished alignment of this work was very crooked owing to the inaccuracy of the driving of the headings whereby they failed to meet. This was absolutely incorrect. The statement also that the drain had abrupt turns in it owing to the above cause is also entirely wrong. The Government, therefore, does not propose to appoint a Royal Commission.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION AND THE PRESS.

Mr. COLLIER asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Has any contract been made as to the publication of matter in any form, either by advertisement or otherwise, between the Minister or officers of the Agricultural Department and the editor or manager of the *Western Mail*? 2, If so, what is the character of the contract?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. The committee of the Franco-British Exhibition have arranged to purchase a number of copies of the *Western Mail* and *Western Argus* for distribution in London. Both papers contain photos. and letterpress in connection with the work of the Departments of Agriculture, Lands, and Mines.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Return of gold produced in the Black Range District. 2, Additional Papers *re* Applications for and advances on lands in the Stirling Estate.

MOTION—SEWAGE FILTER-BED DRAWINGS.

On motion by Mr. Scaddan, ordered—

That there be prepared and laid upon the table of the House Drawings

of the Filter-Beds at Burswood Island, to show—(1) Height of walls of each Filter-Bed, (2) Bottom of each bed as originally planned, and position of each at present.

BILL—MOUNT' MAGNET - BLACK RANGE RAILWAY.

Second Reading moved.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in moving the second reading said: The Government in their railway policy, while desirous of giving every facility to the many who are situated on the land in agricultural districts, have realised that it is absolutely essential those mining districts far back from railway communication should likewise have railway facilities afforded to them; and in the schedule to the Loan Bill passed in December of last year, provision was made for Railway Bills affecting mining districts, and provision was made in the loan appropriation for a certain amount of money for the construction of a railway from Mount Magnet to Black Range. In connection with this line, it is interesting to note that in 1894, when gold was first discovered in this locality, a party consisting of Shillington, Ralph, Smart, Wright, McIntyre, and Angelo registered a claim a little south of the townsite of Nunngarra. This was sold in the following year, and a small battery erected on the claim. [*Mr. Taylor: Who erected that battery?*] Owen Daly. This locality did not come into prominence until Payne discovered alluvial, when there was a rush to the spot. Messrs. Howie and Klemtz about this time discovered an alluvial patch, afterwards known as Howie's patch, which contributed to the attraction of population to that locality. In the early part of 1895, £300 was apportioned as the reward for the discovery of Black Range goldfield, and was divided amongst three different parties. The matter of railway communication to this district has been the subject of discussion in Parliament for some years. Sir John Forrest, prior to leaving this State, advocated the connection of the Murchison railway system with the Eastern railway system, and Sir Walter James speaking in the Queen's Hall in

1904, on the occasion of the delivery of his policy speech, gave this question precedence over all others in his public works programme. He said:—

"I would be willing to ask Parliament to sanction the extension of the railway from Magnet to Lawlers for the purpose of bringing the Victoria district in communication with the Eastern goldfields. That is a work which might well be undertaken."

Later on in the following year, prior to Parliament proroguing, the present member for Mount Magnet was successful in carrying a motion to the effect—

"That in the opinion of this House it would be in the best interests of the State and especially of the mining and agricultural industries if a railway were constructed from Mount Magnet via Black Range to Lawlers."

This matter was only brought on a short time prior to the prorogation, and unfortunately was not much discussed owing to want of time, but the motion was carried on the voices. Later on the Rason Administration expressed their determination to provide railway facilities for the latest mining field of the State, as soon as it could be shown there was reasonable justification for the railway. And speaking at Bunbury last year I also intimated that it was our intention to give this railway a place in our public works programme. Inadvertently however, when bringing forward the Loan Bill last session, the Treasurer omitted to mention the fact that the Government intended to include this line in their programme, with the result that a considerable amount of capital was made out of this, and I believe the present member for Geraldton can thank that fact for his presence in the House to-day. [*Mr. Troy: No fear.*] Notwithstanding that, we heard the member most affected by this railway state only last night that we as a Government were anxious to award spoils to the victors, but he surely would be justified in making an exception in regard to this particular proposal. When the Loan Bill was introduced into the House last year, the sum of £132,000 was set apart for the construction of this railway,

£71,000 being estimated as the cost of construction—earthworks, clearing, etc.—and £61,000 was included as the amount for rails and fastenings. As is invariably the case when new proposals are mooted, various suggested routes are brought into prominence, and this particular railway has proved no exception to the rule. The three proposals which have been made are, first, for a railway from Mount Magnet to Black Range, which will bring that locality within 312 miles of the port of Geraldton, costing approximately £134,000, and the total length of the line would be 96 miles. Cue to Black Range was a route suggested, making Black Range 378 miles from the seaport, the cost approximately being £167,000, and the total length of the line 116 miles; while the other proposal was to construct a line from Nannine to Black Range, which would mean that the traffic would have to go from the nearest port, Geraldton, 415 miles. This line would cost £155,000, and the new line would have to be constructed for a distance of 105 miles. When reviewing the respective merits of these proposals, the Government first of all gave consideration to the question as to which line would be the shortest direct route to the natural port of that particular district. We recognise that as far as possible it is the duty of Parliament to give that port which by virtue of its geographical position is entitled to it the trade due to it, and it is essential that every consideration should be given to that bearing of the question; also in regard to the general utility of the proposed railway, the cost of construction and the length of line to be built. I may state in regard to this proposal that Mount Magnet, where it is proposed the line should branch off from the Murchison goldfields, is situated 216 miles from Geraldton, and the length of the proposed line is 96 miles. It goes in a general easterly direction from Mount Magnet, and practically there are no engineering difficulties. The three suggested routes are nearly on a par as regards engineering difficulties, and it will be found that each would cost practically the same amount per mile, plus the extra freight on sleepers and rails

in the event of the line being built from Cue or Nannine. The line will go easterly through Paynesville, and the terminus is at Sandstone, the chief mining centre of the district. It is proposed to adopt the standard gauge of 3 feet 6 inches, with 45-lb. rails and sleepers 6ft. by 6in. and 8in. by 4in. The ruling gradient will be 1 in 60, and the sharpest curve will have a 15-chains radius. As already intimated, the estimated cost of the line will be practically £132,000, or roughly £1,370 per mile. The cost of carriage of sleepers and other material will be a considerable item, and accounts for the higher estimate for constructing this railway. Mr. John Muir, Inspector of Engineering Surveys, who has examined the various routes, reports that—

“Taking into consideration the main proposition, that is to connect the Black Range Goldfield with the present railway system and its natural port by the most economical means, and at the same time giving due consideration to the interests of the country as a whole, in my opinion, in justice to the Black Range district, the point of junction with the existing railway should be Mt. Magnet. Such junction would bring it 66 miles nearer its natural port than the Cue proposal, and 103 miles nearer than by the Nannine proposal. There is also the saving in cost in favour of the Magnet route of £33,000 in one case and £21,000 in the other. Apart from the saving in first cost, it would I think be a monstrous thing to handicap this promising district for all time with the extra rail haulage, rendered necessary by the adoption of either the Cue or Nannine proposals. Again, too, this line will undoubtedly be extended to junction with the Eastern Goldfields railway system in the near future, and a glance at the map will demonstrate at once that the most reasonable connection would be from Mt. Magnet to Leonora via Black Range and Lawlers.”

He farther states that—

“From an engineering point of view, the relative proposals are much the

same, and in any of them I consider a surface line with, say, a 1 in 60 grade should be practically obtained throughout."

Members who have visited the locality will bear out the report of Mr. Muir, inasmuch as the country throughout the whole of the Murchison district is very similar. I will glance briefly at the localities to be served by the railway if constructed. The population of the district is about 2,000 souls, mostly congregated at Sandstone. The other centres comprise Nungarra, Maninga Marley, Birrigrin, Montague Ranges, Hancock's, the public battery district, and the You-and-Me country. The last-mentioned is now some 80 miles distant from railway communication; but the construction of this line will bring it within 30 miles. I am indebted to the member for the district (Mr. Troy) for some little information showing the condition of this district. He tells me that quite recently a Mr. Toohey brought to Mt. Magnet 10 tons of stone which when treated yielded $3\frac{1}{2}$ ounces to the ton; and there is every reason to believe that from the construction of this railway increased mining development will result in many directions, and no doubt the population also will rapidly increase.

Mr. Holman: What is the distance from Montague?

Mr. Troy: It is 25 miles.

Mr. Heitmann: It is 47 miles.

The PREMIER: Two mineral leases representing five acres have been taken up in the vicinity of the proposed railway, and 195 gold-mining leases of 2,039 acres, while an additional 29 have been applied for, having an area of 311 acres. An additional mineral lease, representing two acres, has also been applied for. Nine homestead leases are held, representing 1,530 acres, and three more have been applied for with an area of 29 acres. In addition to the mineral leases a large extent of pastoral country is available for selection within 15 miles of the route, and amounts approximately to 600,000 acres, while some 1,245,920 acres are held under pastoral lease, making a total area of pastoral land within 15 miles of the railway of a little less than 2,000,000 acres.

I may mention that when I passed through the district there was excellent feed and it was not an exceptionally good season, and on looking up the records I find that the rainfall for the past nine years has averaged eight inches. In dealing with a proposal of such magnitude it is necessary to give members full information, and to quote not only from the reports of the railway engineers but also of the State Mining Engineer, who was sent to the district to investigate. Mr. Montgomery, first of all, in his report presented late last year on the mining developments north of Geraldton, states:—

"From the immediate point of view of the Black Range District the line via Nannine would be a very long roundabout route, all produce and machinery from the coast having to travel 211 miles round two long sides of a triangle of which the points are Mount Magnet, Nannine, and Black Range, instead of 86 miles along a much shorter third side, forming the direct route via Mount Magnet. Even if the Eastern and Northern railway systems were connected at Nannine via Black Range, a short connection from Black Range to Mount Magnet would be immensely useful for connecting the interior goldfields with the coast at Geraldton."

Mr. Holman: Read the first part of his report.

The PREMIER: You can read that when you speak. He farther states:—

"Under existing circumstances, and with the present outlook of the mining fields concerned, I would advocate the direct line from Mt. Magnet to Nungarra and Sandstone as the one first to be made, with eventual—"

Perhaps this will please the hon. member—

extension northward to Redcastle, Barrambie, Burrakurra, and Nannine. A short spur line to Birrigrin and Montague might become necessary in time, and there is some possibility of its having to be extended to Mount Townsend, there being a belt of likely mineral country in that direction."

When it is borne in mind that at the present time the East Murchison Gold Mining Company, at Lawlers, are able to make four pennyweights pay, some idea can be formed of the possibilities ahead of the Black Range District; and we must remember there have been some high yields in that district, as well as a number of low-grade shows which it will be possible to work satisfactorily when railway facilities are afforded, more especially in view of what I learnt on my recent visit to the district, at a function when a responsible mine-owner stated that the saving per ton would be from £2 to £2 10s. should the railway be constructed. Considerable attention is now being directed by various prospectors to Paynesville or East Mount Magnet; and I understand arrangements are being made at the present moment for the erection there of a private battery. The Sir George mine at Mount Magnet was recently purchased by the Great Boulder Proprietary for £10,000. A 20-head battery is to be erected on this property; and it is a sign of revival of interest in the district when such a powerful company is prepared to take up a property and promptly proceed with the erection of a mill. The State Mining Engineer has pointed out that Barrambie, Burnakurra, Redcastle, Paynesville, and Birrigrin would benefit by the construction of this line; and it must also be borne in mind that there is promising country between Black Range and Lake Way. By the construction of the line Barrambie will be brought 30 miles nearer to a railway and Lake Way 55 miles nearer. I would like to correct one statement I have made with reference to the length of the line. The estimated length of the line to Black Range was 96 miles, but the permanent survey has now been completed to Sandstone, and I find that as a result the total length from Mount Magnet to Sandstone is 93 miles 40 chains, or 2½ miles less than we estimated. The district of Bellechambers, some 20 miles south-west of Sandstone, is of considerable promise, and owing to recent developments applications have been made for a public battery to be erected there. Sandstone is of course the principal

mining centre. It may be interesting to know that the Oroya-Black Range Company, which is the principal mining company operating there, spent £90,000 on the mine in erecting machinery and carrying out different development work before the battery commenced to crush. In addition to that they spent £22,000 in road transport. A 20-head battery is now running, and I understand that a profit of £4,000 resulted from the first month's clean up. In the event of this company deciding to erect a slimes plant it will necessitate a farther increase in road transport expenditure. The wages paid on the mine to date are approximately £30,000, and the monthly pay is within a trifle of £3,000, while the machinery erected on the mine cost £35,000. The expenditure on firewood per month is £260, and the total cost of cartage paid to the 30th June last was £19,000. In addition to the properties I have already mentioned there is the Kohinoor, a lease of 150 acres, on which it is expected operations will be carried on on a large scale in the near future. This lease is situated between Nunngarra and Sandstone. While I was in the district I had an opportunity of visiting these workings as well as the workings at Hancock's, which property has recently been acquired by the Black Range G.M. Company, and has crushed 115 tons for a yield of 909 ozs. while the sands averaged over 2ozs. per ton, so that the average for the 115 tons was 10ozs. per ton. This is evidence of the richness of some of the shows in this locality. The formation and prospects of the property are promising, and development work is being done and shaft sinking, while machinery is in course of erection. The monthly pay sheet is £350, and a 10-head battery is to be erected with no loss of time. Then there is the Black Range G.M. Company, No-Liability. When I visited their mine they had a 10-head mill going, but they had arranged for 20-head of stampers to be installed. [Mr. Troy: The 20 head are working now.] To the 7th April last the mine had crushed 19,741 tons for 41,220ozs., or with the slimes and sands, 45,720ozs., giving an average per ton of

2ozs. 6dwts. The wages paid averaged £23,400 per annum, or about £2,000 per month. This property which was originally known as Hack's, was purchased by Mr. Hans Irvine for £10,000, and the first crushing yielded 15ozs. per ton. Summarised, the returns from these districts are as follows:—For 1906 the yield was 35,420ozs., valued at £150,455. The total yield from 1894 to the 31st August, 1907, has been 95,346ozs., valued at £405,004. The increase from end of 1905 to the end of 1906 was 18,727ozs. of a value of £79,547, while the yield from the 1st January of this year to the 31st August was 30,959ozs., an increase over the corresponding period of last year of 11,514 ounces. There is certain other information in regard to the other districts I need not now mention, especially as the Minister for Mines will speak later on, also the member for the district (Mr. Troy). On the 30th June there were 379 men working aboveground, 480 men working underground, and 113 diggers making 972 employed in the district in connection with the mining industry. Some idea of the extent of the mining carried on now in the Black Range district is afforded by the following figures with respect to the monthly pay sheets of the principal mines:—Oroya-Black Range £3,000; Sandstone Development, £1,000; Maninga Marley, £700; Black Range G.M., £1,900; Havilah, £1,200; Black Range (Kohinoor) Hancock's, £350. I do not propose to go into all details in regard to the mines and their development and yields, but I will leave the general facts which I have mentioned to speak for themselves, feeling sure that they establish the claim of this district for railway communication. Touching the question of the railway's paying or otherwise at the outset, Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer, says:—

"There are few mines that could be carried on at a profit outside a radius of at most 100 miles from the end of the railway. The whole working of the mines is profoundly affected by the proximity or otherwise of a railway, the actual cost of procuring goods being often far the least item in the question. The loss occasioned in every branch of

the work by delay in promptly obtaining men, machinery, timber, and supplies of all sorts when suddenly required is of far more importance than the mere cost of freights, or even the cost of supplies. Operations are carried on at a disadvantage with make-shift appliances pending arrival of repair parts and new orders, but while every practical man realises the effect of this on the cost of the work, it is impossible to express it as an average figure. That there is a very big annual loss to every outlying mine through difficulties and delays of transport is certain, and the reduction of this loss through establishment of railways is by no means the least of the indirect benefits to be credited to them in the national profit and loss account. . . . If the railway were made there would be a saving in freights on all supplies brought by rail of about £5 a ton to Black Range, and £10 a ton to Birri-grin. It does not take a very large mine to require 20 tons a month of various supplies when in fair working order, and when putting up its machinery and mill the tonnage is very much larger, so a saving of £1,200 a year for such mines at Black Range or £2,400 a year at Birri-grin would not be an unreasonable estimate. Mining supplies are, however, only a small part of the imports to a district, as domestic supplies are brought in in much larger quantities and there would be a great saving on them also."

There is no doubt the railway is the pioneer to open up the country for settlement. To my mind the question is not so much as to the traffic that is actually in sight as whether the country to be opened up gives such promise that there is reasonable probability that in the near future it will be able to support a railway, and dealing with the matter from this point of view, I feel satisfied that a railway from Mount Magnet to Black Range is one I can support. In regard to the cost of transport, at the present time I may mention that the cost of transporting stores from Mount Magnet to Sandstone amounts to £6 10s. per ton; to Maninga Marley, £7 per ton; and to

Birrigrin, £9 per ton. The passengers by coach average eighteen per week. Taking an average transport of 595 tons per month, and 7,140 passengers per annum right through to Black Range, the estimated gross revenue is £10,741 at local rates per annum. Taking 60 per cent. of this for working expenses, the net revenue will be £4,297 per annum, or 2.95 per cent. on the estimated cost. There is no doubt there is every possibility that this estimate will be considerably exceeded, because it is taken on the basis of the population there at present. In addition to the goods mentioned of which one is able to get track, there are many storekeepers at Mount Magnet shipping supplies direct to Sandstone and there is no means of ascertaining what that quantity is. There is also every possibility that there will be a considerable amount of back-loading owing to the fact that the firewood in the neighbourhood of Mount Magnet has been pretty well cut out—[*Mr. Troy*: Absolutely cut out]—and at the present time they are sending considerable distances down the railway for their firewood supplies. With the installation of the new battery for the St. George mine at Mt. Magnet, there is every possibility that the amount of back-loading along this railway will reach a fairly respectable amount. There is one other aspect of this question, and that is water supply. In this district water is obtainable at a shallow depth, and in the class of country which the railway will serve, there is practically a river all the year through. Members have had an opportunity of perusing Mr. Montgomery's report so I do not propose to give any farther details, except to say, when recently in the district, on being asked to telegraph what he thought of the prospects of the district, Mr. Montgomery replied:—

"Present inspection confirms report of last year re Magnet-Black Range railway. Good progress made; field considerably extended; developments at deep levels Sandstone mines generally satisfactory; Hancock's district much improved; several recent new finds Maninga Marley district; railway terminus best near Sandstone, but

would advocate line from East Mount Magnet approaching Bellechambers and Nunngarra, unless engineer's report very unfavourable. Passed 40 teams on road between Maninga Marley and Magnet; over 50 in trade; recommend 5-head battery Bellechambers district. Cost of carriage Magnet to Sandstone £6 per ton; average cost firewood 18s. per cord; next Oroya contract expected to be 19s. 6d. per cord. Railway will greatly reduce cost mining timber and firewood. Birrigrin district progressing favourably according to local information, but did not visit it."

That telegram is evidence that the State Mining Engineer has been in the position to confirm his already expressed favourable opinion of the district that will be served by this railway. He has laid particular stress on the fact that it is essential for the development of the mines that mining timber should be procured. Owing to the fact that practically the whole of the mining timbers have been cut out within considerable distance of Sandstone, it necessarily follows that, unless provision is made for securing this timber from the coast at a less cost than the present, it must have the effect of very much retarding the development of this district. There is another aspect of the case, and that is that a considerable agitation has been aroused with a view to securing the construction of the railway to Black Range from Leonora. But when it is recollected that the distance from Geraldton to Sandstone is practically about one-half the distance from Fremantle to Black Range *via* Leonora, members will realise when all the circumstances are taken into consideration that the construction of the line should proceed from Mount Magnet. Most members, I think, generally approve of the principle that every natural port is entitled to the trade due to it from its position, and in this case, if inquiry is made into the subject, it must be recognised that the trade of that district is due to the port of Geraldton.

Mr. Underwood: Why not start from Dowerin?

The PREMIER: It would cost a fortune to build a line from Dowerin. You mean that the line should go straight north? If the line were built from Dowerin, I would pity the people of Black Range who would have to pay the additional freight; but I scarcely think the member for Pilbarra suggests that as a good argument. If he does, possibly someone may suggest that his district might be reached from Nannine instead of building a railway from the coast to Marble Bar.

Mr. Bath: He suggests starting this line from Goomalling.

The PREMIER: Yes; and I say that perhaps the member for Cue, for instance, might suggest that Marble Bar would be better served by a railway from Nannine than from Port Hedland.

Mr. Johnson: For goodness sake, do not suggest anything of that sort. If you do, we will have all sorts of notices of motion.

The PREMIER: If the railway were constructed via Leonora as suggested by some people, the people at Black Range could still get their goods from Geraldton by railway and road cheaper than via Leonora by railway. The cost is now £6 per ton from Mt. Magnet to Black Range by road, and £4 per ton by rail to Mt. Magnet from Geraldton. That will give members an idea of the railway charges that would be entailed were the line constructed via Leonora. I have already given some idea of the amount of traffic that passes over the road, and there is every likelihood of its increasing, and that the people of the district have every faith in the locality is evidenced by the fact that something like £340,000 has been invested within a short distance of the Sandstone Hotel, and it will be recollected that quite recently when a land sale was held at Sandstone 108 lots were sold and realised a total sum of £15,882. That is an evidence that the people in that locality are satisfied that there is a good future ahead of it. The Commonwealth authorities also have recognised that fact, as on Saturday last I had the pleasure of completing a deal with the representative of the Commonwealth Government for a

post-office site for the sum of £450. The dividends paid by the Black Range Gold Mining Co. from the 20th January, 1905, to the 24th August, 1906 amounted to £23,625 and by the Black Range Mining Co. £25,250; or a total of £48,875. These two mines are now owned by the same company, and are known as the Hans Irvine. At the present time there are 82 stamps constantly working between Maninga Marley and Sandstone, while at Birrigrin, Montague Range, some 15-head are employed. It is satisfactory to learn that the average return from crushings in the Black Range district is now given officially at 1.48 ounces per ton. Mr. Montgomery has since returned from the goldfields, and has made an exhaustive farther report. I do not wish to weary members with it, and later on I will place it on the table. He says:—

"Speaking generally the district has developed very satisfactorily, and though it has not realised the extravagant expectations that were frequently entertained by many persons a year or so ago, neither has it given justification for the pessimistic opinions which one often hears expressed now."

There have been letters in various newspapers expressing doubts as to the permanency of these fields, but I maintain that if we are going to stand still every time a raven croaks, Western Australia will never move ahead. We must be prepared to take a certain amount of risk; and I feel satisfied that in authorising the construction of this railway the country will find it a sound investment. Mr. Montgomery farther states:—

"New discoveries are being continually made throughout the field, extending the area of known auriferous ground. This auriferous belt may now be said to stretch, somewhat discontinuously, from Mount Townsend on the north to Coorang (or the Youanne Well) on the south, a distance of over 100 miles. On this occasion I did not visit the Montague Range portion of the field, being most concerned with the development in the larger mines more immediately to be served by the proposed railway, but according to the information obtained at Black Range

from residents of Birriggin and Montague Range, there was little difference in the general position of affairs there from that described in my previous report. At Sandstone the Oroya-Black Range Co. have done a large amount of work on the Sandstone reef, and have put up a very fine 20-head battery, cyanide plant, rock-drilling outfit and winding plant, and have become regular producers of gold. The Black Range Co. have also greatly improved their plant both for mining and milling and are doing good work underground. Both of these mines have been rumoured to have become greatly impoverished in the lowest levels, but this is not the case at all, there being large bodies of payable ore in both instances opened up in these levels."

Mr. Troy: The pessimistic remarks were made by interested parties.

The PREMIER: I would like to make a point of this portion of Mr. Montgomery's report:—

"I could see nothing to justify any fear that the ore in these reefs would not live downwards as well as in any mines of the State; on the contrary, it is of a sort from which one expects great persistency, being dense, granular, bluish-coloured quartz, carrying a good deal of iron pyrites embedded and enclosed in its substance and associated with gold."

That is the report of the State Mining Engineer, and he also furnishes a table showing the gold won year by year and farther information with regard to the cost of transport to the field and the necessity for making provision for supplies of firewood and mining timber. I may say in this connection that provision has been made for a large area of country to be reserved for firewood in the vicinity—that is, reserved exclusively for the mines in that locality, so that we shall not have a repetition of the spectacle witnessed recently in the case of Nannine, where other districts secured firewood which really belonged to Nannine, owing to its being the closest centre to that forest. Nannine mine-owners had to send in many cases considerable distances

down the railway past Cue—[*Mr. Holman:* Past Magnet]—for firewood supplies. The point I want to make is that the mine-owners at Nannine have to pay more for firewood now than those at Cue. On this question Mr. Montgomery states:—

"In working the larger reefs a good deal of long and heavy timber is required, and this has now mostly to be brought from the Midland Railway line. While ordinary mulga mining timber is costing the Black Range G.M. Co. 5½d. to 6d. per lineal foot, long gum timber costs them 2s. 9d. per foot. The Oroya-Black Range mine in six weeks just previously to my visit used heavy timber to the value of £693, costing over 2s. a foot. The Black Range G.M. Co's. mining timber expenditure for the first six months of the present year is put down in their published accounts as £357 3s. 5d."

In conclusion, I should like to say I have endeavoured to obtain all information which I expected would be of value to members in considering this very important railway proposal; and I think it will be found, when the matter is given consideration, that the Government are perfectly justified in bringing forward the proposal for the construction of this line, which when completed will be the first section of the link which will unite the Murchison railway with the Eastern gold-fields railway system. During the recess I had the opportunity, with my colleague, the Colonial Secretary, of traversing the country between Leonora, Lawlers, Black Range, and Mount Magnet, and I am satisfied that there is every reasonable possibility that this line will prove a good investment for the country. I have endeavoured to place before members as far as possible the mining operations in the district, the traffic which may reasonably be expected, the cost of construction of the railway and other correlative information; and it is now for members to say whether they consider this proposed railway, if constructed, will be in the best interests of the State. I have very great pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill for the construction

of a railway from Mount Magnet to Black Range.

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

BILL—SALE OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th October.

Mr. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): In regard to this measure, if one admits the principle which has been adopted by the Treasurer for the utilisation of this money, the measure which he has introduced at once becomes necessary; and, as was pointed out by him, he is fulfilling the representations made by the Audit Department in providing machinery by which the money can be properly utilised. My objection to the measure as it has been introduced by the Treasurer is chiefly on the ground of the manner in which the money is used. The greater proportion of the proceeds from the sale of Government property naturally comes from the sale of property which has been purchased out of the General Loan Fund; and when we look up the Estimates, passed not only in 1905-6, but also last year, we find this money is being utilised for purposes which hitherto have been paid for out of Consolidated Revenue. In looking over the Public Accounts for last financial year, and comparing them with the Statistical Abstract which is issued monthly, one will notice a discrepancy between the returns of expenditure from General Loan Fund in the Public Accounts and that in the Statistical Abstract. I was at a loss to understand how this discrepancy could arise, and at first thought some mistake had been made in one of the publications; but in the Statistical Abstract the expenditure from General Loan Fund on roads and bridges and public buildings includes, in addition to the amount provided on last year's Estimates, the amount also expended from the sale of Government properties. So that whoever is responsible for preparing the returns regards this really in its essence as loan expenditure. The position is that this money has been borrowed, and it is money on which

we have to pay interest and sinking fund. In private undertakings, if one drew on his capital account to that extent—supposing a private individual carrying on any industry had sunk a proportion of what he had borrowed in securing a plant, and later on finding it useless, sold portion of it with the idea of securing a more up-to-date plant—he would not use the result of that sale for current expenditure, but he would rather invest it in obtaining plant necessary to carry on his business in an up-to-date manner. But the Government take an altogether different course; they sell Government property and utilise the money for the construction of roads, bridges and public buildings.

The Treasurer: Is that not Government property?

Mr. BATH: The difference is that these are not reproductive works. Where a railway is proposed it might be a work which would return interest and sinking fund; but this money is not invested in works of that character, and it means that the taxpayer is called on to make up the difference when the money is not invested in works of reproductive character. The position is that the policy inaugurated in 1905-6 of expending money in this direction, the first time it has been introduced since Responsible Government was granted, has been taken advantage of to a greater extent by the present Government than previously; to the extent representing loan expenditure on buildings of £122,000, and roads and bridges £18,000, a total expenditure on non-productive works of £140,000. This must involve trouble in the future, and will mean an increased call on the ordinary taxpayer in order to pay our annual interest and sinking fund bill. And no one knows better than the Treasurer himself that the policy cannot be pursued for long without involving serious difficulties in the administration of the finances of Western Australia. Probably the Treasurer acts on the principle that it is all very well for current needs, and as far as he and his colleagues are concerned they will not bear the brunt of the trouble which will come later on. Looking at the question not only from the

present condition of Western Australia, but also from future conditions, and the burden that it will impose in the future, I consider the policy a very unwise one. I entered a protest both in 1905-6 and 1906-7 against the utilisation of this money in this manner; and it savours of very unsound finance when we find the Treasurer reduced to the necessity of disposing of our property in order that he may make up the deficiency in the revenue by utilising general loan fund practically for the purpose of current expenditure. I strongly object to this manner of utilising it, and while one cannot cavil at the Bill because, as he says, it is made necessary by the representations of the Auditor General still the principle involved is a very unsound one, and one to which I am utterly opposed.

The TREASURER (in reply): The Leader of the Opposition has made his remarks rather in opposition to the Estimates and the expenditure of this money, than to the Bill before the House. Of course, I admit at once if we are to hold the opinion that no buildings and no roads, and nothing in the shape of public works that does not bring in a direct revenue to the State are to be constructed out of loan funds, then perhaps his arguments are sound. But I venture to say anyone knowing the history of Australia and New Zealand, and the development that has taken place in the different States of the Commonwealth in the past, will venture for a moment to dispute the right of Parliament to utilise loan funds, when necessity arises, to carry out necessary public works.

Mr. Bath: They have grown wiser since those days, after their disastrous experiences.

The TREASURER: That may be; if the system is abused it only follows that those who abuse it grow sadder and wiser men. We have not, up to the present stage, anywhere approached an abuse of the system of constructing public works out of loan funds.

Mr. Bath: We did without it until 1906.

The TREASURER: No, we did not. I had some figures to show what had been expended out of loan funds on works of

this description, but I have mislaid them, unfortunately. So far back as 1888 in the history of Western Australia, the sum of £60,000 odd was taken from loan to make good the deficiency in the revenue.

Mr. Bath: I mean since Responsible Government.

The TREASURER: On two occasions since Responsible Government, nay, on several occasions, very considerable expenditure (speaking from memory) amounting to about £360,000 or more has been utilised in this way. In Sir John Forrest's time, in the early years of Responsible Government, moneys were expended from loan on buildings and roads. If one had the figures of the Eastern States, members would see that many millions of money, I venture to say something near 30 millions, have been expended from loan funds on works of this description that the hon. member now takes exception to. In New Zealand the public works account is kept altogether apart from the fact as to whether the funds were raised by loan or come from revenue; and in addition to that, from time to time when they have a surplus they transfer some of the money from revenue, and construct works from that account. If my memory serves me aright, here again some 8 millions of loan money or nearer 10 millions have been expended on roads, bridges, and buildings in New Zealand from this account which is so largely composed of loan moneys. Of course it is very easy to say we should not utilise this money, but what does the hon. member suggest in place of it? So far back as four years ago the sum of £60,000 odd has been accumulating to this trust account, for the reasons I explained complicating the accounts, and they could not continue to keep them if they had to give credit to the loan items for these sales that take place from time to time. True, it is the proceeds of property which has all had to be purchased out of loan moneys, but what does the hon. member suggest in place of this? I suppose he suggests that we should take the proceeds of the sales of Government property and redeem certain portions of our loan indebtedness.

Mr. Bath: Or put it in another reproductive work.

be TREASURER: What is the position? We have sinking funds which are accumulating at a very rapid rate to mature all our loans, practically at the date of maturity. These sinking funds range from one per cent. to three per cent., and in addition to that the hon. member would take the proceeds of Government property sales and redeem our loan indebtedness in addition to saddling the current year's expenditure with the amount of the interest and sinking fund. That would be overrating the matter entirely.

Mr Bath: If you expended too much money on non-productive works, the sinking fund would be a burden.

The TREASURER: We are not expending too much. We are saving a large amount to the State in utilising the money in the way I suggest. Admitting we must have these buildings, for no one wants to see these school buildings which are to be provided out of this fund left unbuilt; admitting that we must spend the money, and admitting if we have not the necessary revenue to spend on these buildings, will the hon. member suggest that we should do away with these school buildings because at the present juncture we have a shrinkage in the revenue and cannot build them. I do not think he would, I do not think he would be a party to such a suggestion, therefore we should construct the buildings from loan funds, providing from the consolidated revenue the necessary interest and sinking fund. If we are doing that we are doing all that is expected of us at the present time. To go farther; if we redeem part of our loans with this £60,000 or £70,000, what would be the result? I should have to go to the market to raise farther loan money for the purpose of carrying out the necessary buildings; I should lose between three per cent. and four per cent. in the operation; I should have to take the £70,000 which I have lying at the Treasury and redeem certain Government debentures, or inscribed stock, with the one hand, and then go back to the same people again for money, losing three per cent. or four per cent. in the transaction.

Would that be good finance? I say it would not. The position is safeguarded to this extent, the whole thing is under the control of Parliament, and the effect of passing the Bill only enables the account to be kept in proper style in the Treasury, while it has been kept illegally up to the present time. We should authorise the account to be kept in this style, and it is for Parliament to say how the money will be expended when dealing with the Estimates. If members in their wisdom say we shall not expend the money, that it shall lie in the Treasury, then they have to vote against the Estimates which have been submitted. But if they view it in the same light as they viewed it last year when I submitted my Estimates, they will pass the Estimates as indicated and the money will be spent in the erection of school buildings, and in the construction of certain roads. I hope the House will see with me that in passing the measure they are doing no harm, for the matter is entirely in their own hands to deal with when the Estimates are under consideration.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1907-8.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day, *Mr. Daghish* in the Chair.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCHES: (Hon. F. Wilson, Treasurer).

Vote—Treasury, £12,103:

Inspection of Liquor in Licensed Houses—Item, Chief Inspector, £300:

Mr. HOLMAN: People complained that much of the liquor sold, especially in out-back places, was of bad quality. Would the inspectors be instructed to visit such places?

The TREASURER: The inspectors were doing excellent work. Since the

beginning of the financial year Chief Inspector Lee had visited the North-West, and it was intended that he should travel wherever necessary to see that the Act was complied with. Even on the goldfields only a few remote centres had not been visited; and they would be reached in due course.

Mr. Holman: Any convictions?

The TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. BATH: Visitors to Perth complained that the quality of the liquor here was far worse than on the goldfields.

Tender Board Salaries—Item, Inspector of Clothing, £175 :

Mr. JOHNSON: What were this officer's duties? Did he enforce the provision against sweating in Government contracts for the manufacture of police uniforms? Such a condition was imposed by Executive Council minute.

The TREASURER: The inspector's chief duty was to see that goods were according to sample and specification; but he had also a general supervision, and it would certainly be his duty to report anything in the nature of sweating contrary to the terms of the contract.

Mr. JOHNSON believed that when before the select committee on sweating the inspector said it was not his duty to enforce the conditions of the contract, but merely to see that the proper material was used. Would his duties be extended?

Mr. TAYLOR: In the past, at all events, the inspector had never been instructed to deal with sweating, but merely to see that material and workmanship were according to sample and specification. He (*Mr. Taylor*) when Colonial Secretary, added the duty of seeing to the fit of police uniforms. When the Tailors and Tailoresses' Union complained to him of sweating he had to use the detective force to investigate the conditions, and found Government contract work being finished in the homes of the workers. The inspector had no power, and could not give any information. His powers should be extended to deal with sweating, which, it is said, was worse now than when the select committee sat last year.

Generally, with Incidentals, £2,200 :

Mr. BATH: There was an increase of £441 in the incidental expenses. The Treasurer should set an example to other Ministers instead of increasing the cost of administration.

The TREASURER: The increase was brought about by the inclusion of items which were previously charged to other votes. The cost of printing the financial returns and the Estimates was included under this item for the first time, amounting to about £250, also £112 for an adding machine which had been authorised and would bring about a saving in office labour. There was also the expense of inaugurating the card system of keeping accounts, which meant an immediate increase of expenditure but an ultimate saving.

Inspection of Liquor in Licensed Houses, £300 :

Mr. STUART: The inspection in regard to spirits on the goldfields was somewhat crude. Stricter inspection should be insisted on. There were many complaints, for instance at the Kalgoorlie racecourse, against the quality of the spirits sold.

[Discussion on Tender Board System.]

Tender Board Incidentals, £1,000 :

Mr. HOLMAN: For years one firm in the plumbing trade in the metropolitan area had secured nearly all the plumbing work of the Public Works Department. No tenders had been called. Only within the past few months, when attention had been drawn to the matter, had the Minister promised some alteration. But how had it been possible for one firm to get work to the extent of thousands of pounds without tenders being called? Plumbing work worth £5 was not always required in a hurry, and tenders should be advertised to give every firm the opportunity of securing the work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Attention had been recently drawn by one of the plumbers in Perth to the fact that practically the whole of the jobbing work had been given to one firm; and having gone into the matter, he (the Minister) had then given instructions that a list of competent plumbers was to be

drawn up and that all urgent work was to be given to the firms on this list each month in turn, while for small jobs that were not of an urgent nature quotations were to be obtained from the different firms on the list, and for big works tenders were to be called. That was the system now in vogue. The state of affairs in the past was not suitable, and immediately attention had been drawn to it the matter had been rectified.

Mr. BATH called attention to the following paragraph in the report of the ex-Commissioner of Railways:—

"In the purchase of stores and materials, I regret very much that the system of Tender Board, etc., has not, in my opinion, been of benefit to the Department, and would not be tolerated by any business firm desirous of keeping out of the Bankruptcy Court. From time to time, to the various Governments under whom I have had the honour to serve, representations on this matter have been made. I understand that new arrangements are now under consideration, and I trust that some more satisfactory scheme will be evolved."

That was a severe indictment of the Tender Board.

The TREASURER: The Tender Board was doing excellent work, and had put the system of purchasing goods for the State on a sounder footing than it had been in the old days when millions of pounds worth of plant and goods of every description were purchased through the Agent General's office, often without the formality of tenders being called. The system was in the old days for certain firms to be on a list as approved manufacturers, and if anything was urgently needed a cablegram was sent home and these firms would be asked to put in prices. The inauguration of the Tender Board was a new era in this respect, and the board did excellent work. The Government would not now revert to the old system, and had given instructions that tenders should be called for all requirements. Tenders were called in London and Perth simultaneously, so that our own merchants, manufacturers, and agents had the chance of doing business.

Of course certain goods at times had to be specified, and the ex-Commissioner of Railways took advantage of that whenever he thought it necessary; yet tenders were called for these special lines through the Tender Board so that merchants and others could tender for them. Perhaps there might have been a little delay at times, but if the ex-Commissioner of Railways had looked far enough ahead for his requirements there would have been no cause for complaint in that respect. In fact the delay of the department in getting out specifications of their requirements was often more serious than the delay occasioned by the Tender Board.

Mr. MALE: What would be the position of the Tender Board when the new Stores Department was inaugurated? Would it not be portion of the duty of the Stores Department to look after indenting or purchasing stores?

The TREASURER: The report of the special board appointed to consider the question of the stores was contained in the annual report of the Public Service Commissioner. The recommendation was that the Tender Board should have control of the stores.

Mr. STUART: The Public Service Commissioner in his report had made the following remarks with regard to the Tender Board Regulations:—

"We find the Tender Board Regulations clash with the Audit Act and the Treasury Regulations thereunder."

At 6.15, the Chairman left the Chair.

At 7.30, Mr. Hudson took the Chair.

Mr. TROY: During the past 12 months the fact that certain contractors had not been carrying out the conditions with regard to the employment of Asiatics had been brought under his notice. One of the regulations provided that no person who employed Asiatic labour should be given a tender to supply Government departments, but as a matter of fact this regulation was being ignored. He recollected the case of a person who secured a tender for supplying forage for horses belonging to the Police and Mines Water Supply Departments. It was ascertained

that the forage was taken from the head of the line by teams driven by Afghans. The Tender Board asked for an explanation of this, and the contractor replied that the order for forage was supplied from his store by white labour, and his cart notes showed that the goods were carted from the nearest railway station by teams driven by white persons. It was an easy matter to get a cart note fixed up. He would be glad if the Treasurer would inform him what the exact regulation was and whether it provided that no person could have a Government contract who employed Asiatic labour in any shape or form; or did the regulation not go so far as to prohibit goods being carted from the head of a line to any certain district where they were wanted, by Asiatic labour.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The same thing that the previous speaker had referred to existed in the Pilbarra district, and the successful tenderer for forage largely employed Afghans to cart his stuff. Complaints had been received from the other tenderers with regard to this matter, for they had tendered on the understanding that all work should be done by white labour. The successful tenderer was practically carting all his stuff through the medium of Afghans.

The TREASURER: Although he was not in a position then to say whether the statements made by the members were absolutely correct, he believed that the storekeeper in question was having his goods carted by Afghans who controlled camel teams. He was not conversant with the exact wording of the conditions of the tender, but he should say that it probably stipulated that the successful tenderer should not employ Asiatics. By that he thought it was meant that the contractor should not have Asiatics in his employ or on his pay-sheets, but he would not construe it to mean that the contractor should not allow his goods to be conveyed from the head of the line to his store by camel teams. It would be a very difficult matter to follow up every article in a store and to know how it was carted to that store. The Tender Board were not responsible, as they called tenders under the ordinary conditions of

contract and the contract was concluded under those conditions. If there were a breach of these conditions it was a matter for the department obtaining the goods to look into.

Mr. TROY: The only tenders let by the department were for forage, and it would be easy to trace the way in which the forage reached the contractor. The man who got the tender for the forage to which he had referred, secured it on the understanding that he would have all the goods carted by white labour. Despite the fact that he was supplying the goods direct from the store by means of white labour the forage was carried over the greater portion of the distance it had to travel by Asiatic labour. What was the use of having a regulation if it was not enforced? The regulation said that the successful contractor must not utilise Asiatic labour at all. The Treasurer had just said he did not know what the conditions were, but surely he should be in a position to supply that information to the House. If Asiatics were to be allowed to cart the forage the regulation might just as well be struck out altogether.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The question was whether the forage was to be handled by Asiatics or not. Fodder could be purchased on the North-West coast for £6 or £7, but when it was needed at Marble Bar or Nullagine it cost an additional £10 or £12 per ton to cart it, therefore as the Afghans had the carting work they received more money for the article than anyone else, and surely therefore it could be said that the work was being done by Asiatic labour. The whole question required looking into in view of future tenders. There should be a drastic regulation inserted, providing that the fodder should not be handled at all by Asiatics.

Mr. SCADDAN: Some time ago the Stores Inquiry Board was appointed, and in their report recommended that a stores manager should be appointed to work out the scheme which they had formulated. Judging from the Estimates, however, no provision was made for the appointment of such an officer, and he would ask the Government whether they intended to comply with that and the

other recommendations of the board. Up to now no notification had been given as to the intentions of the Government with regard to the report.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The stores question could not be discussed under the present item.

Mr. SCADDAN was speaking now on the item "Incidental," and surely that enabled comment to be made concerning the Stores Inquiry Board.

Mr. TROY: The Tender Board had certain conditions inserted in their tenders, and it was hoped that by carrying out those conditions sweating would be abolished in connection with Government contracts. The select committee which had inquired into sweating in a previous session were unanimous that some other conditions were needed to provide against sweating. Did the Treasurer intend to allow the present conditions to continue, and were contracts to be taken as they had been in the past?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was out of order. The item related to office expenses.

Mr. TROY: There were dozens of people in the State employed in Government work earning only a sweating wage, and he intended to take every opportunity of making that knowledge prominent. If the Government advertised certain conditions they should see that those conditions were carried out.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN had already ruled the member out of order. He should not permit this discussion.

Mr. ANGIN: What method was adopted in placing before merchants the materials required for certain work? A little while ago tenders were called for the supply of spring steel. The price tendered was £25 per ton. This steel was of a superior quality to that required. Some time afterwards tenders were called for springs manufactured, and the tender for one class of springs was £15 per ton and for another class £19 per ton, showing that owing to the manner in which the tenders were drawn up the cost of the raw material was greatly in excess of the manufactured article. The Tender Board required a launch. They first inspected a launch in the State and after-

wards put in the advertisement the exact size and speed of the launch which they had inspected as that required by the department. The launch inspected measured 31 feet long, 6 feet 8 inches beam, 2 feet 6 inches draught, and the speed was 7 knots. The advertisement for the supply of a launch asked for a launch not less than 30 feet long, 6 feet 8 inches beam, 2 feet 6 inches draught, and 7 knots, exactly the size of the launch inspected.

Mr. Johnson: Was that Mr. Moss's launch?

Mr. STUART: Tenders were called by the Tender Board for the carriage of police supplies in out-back districts, and according to the tender form with which business people in the back country were supplied the material had to be handled by British labour. Why were not the conditions complied with, and the material handled by British labour? If the conditions were not carried out the contracts should be cancelled.

Mr. SCADDAN: Did the Treasurer intend to pass by the charges made by the member for East Fremantle, who had pointed out that a certain launch had been inspected, the dimensions taken and then tenders called for a launch of the exact size of the one inspected, thus preventing other persons from tendering? Perhaps the Minister for Works might be able to explain this matter.

The Minister for Works: Those were the minimum dimensions.

The TREASURER: The question of this steam launch was threshed out last year. The member for East Fremantle had made no charge whatever against the Government. The complaint was that a certain launch had been inspected and found suitable for the purposes of the department, but not satisfied with it and the price quoted, tenders were called for a steam launch of a similar size, not less than a certain length and a certain beam.

Mr. Bolton: There was no other launch in the State of that size.

The TREASURER: If tenders were called for a launch of not less than 30 feet in length, that gave everyone a chance of tendering for the supply of a launch above 30 feet in length. If there

was no other launch in the State of that size but this one, the Government were not responsible for that. Were the Government to blame for purchasing a launch that came up to departmental requirements? If, as alleged, the Tender Board paid £25 for spring steel, they paid too much. But such off-hand statements could not be accepted without proof. Whenever possible the Government would purchase goods manufactured in the State.

Mr. ANGWIN: It was said that a certain brand of imported steel was specified, thus giving local makers no chance of tendering. As to the launch, he had not alleged any irregularity; but the tenders called for a launch of definite dimensions except in regard to length, and similar to the launch already inspected. This was unfair, for when so many launches were available, all the owners should have a chance.

The Treasurer: Then other launches were available?

Mr. TROY: Did the Tender Board arrange for the insertion of all Government advertisements in the daily papers?

The TREASURER: The advertising clerk in the Treasury arranged the distribution and the prices of advertisements, but each department supplied its own subject matter.

Vote (for Subdivisions 1 to 8, Treasury £12,103) put and passed.

[*Discussion on Care of Aborigines.*]

Vote—Aborigines, £5,500:

Mr. TROY: Since the passing of last year's Estimates inspectors of aborigines were appointed. By whom were they appointed, and were they under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commissioner?

The TREASURER: Two travelling inspectors had been appointed temporarily by him (the Treasurer) on the recommendation of the Chief Protector, shortly after the new Act was passed. Subsequently the Commissioner pointed out that the matter should have been arranged through him, and the inspectors were then instructed to fill up the usual application forms. The inspectors had done excellent work. One of them, Mr. Isdell,

an ex-member of this House, of great experience in the North-West, had covered some 2,000 miles in his official journeys, and reported that the aborigines as a whole were fairly well treated. Mr. Fartière, the other inspector, who had visited the stations in the Victoria, Gascoyne, and Ashburton districts, also reported favourably. Mr. Isdell was now at Broome, having inspected the whole of the North-West. Venereal diseases amongst the aborigines gave great trouble to the Government; and Bernier and Barrow Islands had been temporarily reserved for lock hospitals. For this purpose £2,000 was provided, thus swelling the vote to £5,500, in addition to the £10,000 provided by statute. Bernier Island had already been inspected by Mr. Fartière, and the inspector was now on his way to Barrow Island. The islands, if found suitable, would be converted into hospitals, and the Medical Department would take over the administration, as it was not economical to have two sets of medical officers. The funds would be provided from this vote. Relief was administered to 996 crippled, aged, or destitute natives, and cost £7,946. Grants to institutions such as mission stations, for the care and education of aboriginal and half-caste children, amounted to £1,974, and the balance of the expenditure for the year, which totalled £13,964, represented clothing, medical attendance, the cost of defending native prisoners, transport, etcetera, including the distribution of blankets, which some people thought did not confer much benefit on the natives. The Government looked for good results from the labour of the inspectors.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Treasurer was trusting to the inspectors; but what about the Aborigines Department in Perth? Who was its head? How many officers were there, and how was the money spent?

Mr. HOLMAN: The Treasurer's statement was neither important nor enlightening. It seemed strange that the reports of the inspectors and of the department were not tabled. The information available as to the expenditure of money in relieving the aborigines was frequently insufficient. Allowances were made to

certain squatters. At one station near Bangemall a squatter was entrusted with the means of assisting forty natives; but there could hardly be so many in the district. In fact, in all the goldfields where allowances of this kind were made, not twenty per cent. of the natives there a few years ago could now be found; yet the same number of blankets, for instance, were provided. The inspectors might well investigate this matter. This department was one of the most unsatisfactory in the service. Not fifty per cent. of the money went in relieving the natives. The lock hospital ought to do good. Venereal diseases could best be prevented by not permitting Asiatics to have access to the natives. The diseases were not confined to the natives of the North-West. They existed also among natives on the goldfields. Was anything being done to prevent their spread there? Apparently the condition of the natives was worse than before, and measures should be taken to make the declining years of the natives better. The report of the Aborigines Department was not before members this year to enable them to see how the money had been expended by the department. It would seem there was some motive in withholding the report.

Mr. GULL: If members from the back country saw where the department was being despoiled by the squatters of the money doled out for the natives, why did they not report it? Any complaint would be looked into. If the Government would not take notice of complaints the pressure of public opinion would compel them to do so. He would ask the Treasurer if there had been any reports of the shocking misdoings of the squatters in robbing the country of the few pounds provided for the natives. Of course there were none, but there was always the tendency on the part of members opposite to throw stones at the squatters.

Mr. BATH: The hon. member's lecture would have been more reasonable had some instance been given where members of the Opposition had thrown stones at the squatters. The member for Murchison had been referring to what happened on the goldfields, which was dis-

tinct from what happened in the squatting districts. We would not have satisfactory administration in the Aborigines Department until there was some gentleman in control located in a central place where the necessities of the department were greatest. Recently a member of the House of Commons had asked a question in regard to the neck-chains, and the matter had been ventilated in a way not altogether creditable to Western Australia; and recently, the Melbourne Criminological Society had sent him (Mr. Bath) a communication making inquiries into the same subject. He had secured information from the Treasurer on the subject to send to the society, but the fact that there was a difference of opinion on the matter should make us watchful to remedy any abuses that might exist so that we could reply on matters where criticism was not actually justified. In the last report of the Commissioner of Police the Commissioner dealt with this subject and said:—

"On the subject of our responsibilities to natives I desire to say a word or two in defence of a practice which has been deemed cruel by those who have no first-hand knowledge of the matter. I refer to the system of chaining natives by the neck. I strongly support it. There are only three other ways of securing natives, any of which upon examination will appear less humane than the present method."

Dr. Roth who reported on the condition of the natives must be credited with first-hand knowledge of the natives.

The Premier: Very little. Dr. Roth did not go off the coast.

Mr. BATH: Dr. Roth had many years' experience and an intimate knowledge of the natives in Queensland. That gentleman in his report made reference to the question of neck chaining and said:—

"Authority for this is to be found in No. 647 of the Police Regulations, which states that 'the practice of chaining them by the neck must not be resorted to except in cases where the prisoners are of a desperate character, or have been arrested at a considerable distance in the bush; or when travelling by sea, they are near the land to which

they belong, and it is necessary to adopt special measures to secure them.

Even then the practice must not be adopted if it can be avoided.”

Also:—

“Your Commissioner recommends the abolition of neck-chains and their substitution by wrist-cuffs, one prisoner’s right hand being connected by chain to his neighbour’s left. All the officers in charge of the three North-Western gaols admit that by this method the transport of prisoners could be effected in safety.”

Farther on Dr. Roth said:—

“Though the Comptroller General of Prisons has no legal authority for using neck-chains at all, and there are no regulations as to weight and mode of fixation, he has nevertheless given instructions for their employment in the case of natives. His predecessor gave similar instructions.”

Yet we had it on the authority of the Commissioner of Police, who must act on the advice of the people of the North, that neck-chaining was the most humane system, and that only those who did not possess first-hand knowledge of aborigines were opposed to the system. Between the opinion expressed by Dr. Roth and that expressed by the Commissioner of Police there was a great discrepancy; but seeing that the weight of evidence, that of Dr. Roth and that of officials in the North, was against neck-chaining, it would seem we were rather unwise in inviting adverse criticism in Australia and the old country by continuing the system to which expert opinion was opposed. It was unfortunate we did not have the report of the Aborigines Department giving the opinion of the Protector of Aborigines, and showing whether the Government had gone into the matter to really decide which was the more advisable of the systems.

Mr. EWING: With regard to the appointment of a successor to the present Chief Protector of Aborigines it must not be forgotten that the gentleman who was now on leave had done great service to the country, was of advanced years, and would probably retire from the position before long. When his successor

came to be appointed the Government should see that he travelled right through the North-West and studied the habits of the natives for himself. The new man would have to be a good administrator.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Treasurer had stated that good work was being done by the inspectors; but he got that knowledge from the reports of the inspectors themselves, and they would not be likely to be anything but commendatory of their own efforts. The question of building hospitals was certainly a step in the right direction, and if they were erected and worked properly the whole of the vote for the aborigines would be justified. At present a large proportion of the vote was wasted in administration and the natives got very little of the money. They had heard of the great work that Mr. Isdell had done by travelling 2,000 miles, but after all it was not a big undertaking considering that he occupied a year over it. A man could walk 100 miles in a week, and the trip might well be done in 20 weeks. He had discussed with the present Chief Protector of Aborigines questions affecting the natives, and had come to the conclusion that that gentleman knew practically nothing about the aborigines. It was waste of public money to pay a salary to a man who was supposed to look after something he knew nothing about. One did not desire to detract from the other merits of the Chief Protector, but he certainly knew nothing about the habits of the aborigines. They should have an officer in that position who understood the subject.

Mr. H. BROWN: With regard to the neck-chain question he differed altogether from those who objected to it. He had had experience of the natives in South Africa and could tell members that in comparison with them the aborigines here were most leniently treated. In South Africa the natives were practically civilised, and yet in the former place they were chained by leg-chains which were riveted on them and were kept there sometimes for six or seven years. No outcry had occurred in South Africa with regard to the treatment of the natives. Dr. Roth was the greatest humbug the State had

ever imported, and one was pleased to see that the Government took so little notice of his reports that they carried out hardly any of his recommendations. The future Protector of Aborigines should go far more among the natives than the present one did, and then he would be able to speak from his own personal knowledge.

The TREASURER: The Chief Protector of Aborigines (Mr. Prinsep), who was now on leave, would retire from the service at the termination of his leave. He was one of the most humane men he (the Treasurer) had ever met. [Mr. Heitmann: Quite right, but he did not know his business.] Mr. Prinsep did his best and he had the interests of the natives at heart, and he did everything he possibly could to relieve those who were destitute, crippled, aged or blind, or suffering from disease. The Chief Protector had always done his level best, and although perhaps that best might not meet with the approval of all members, still there were very few men who could fill that position satisfactorily to every member of the House. It was a very difficult post to fill because of the necessity to employ outside aid in the distribution of relief. Ever since he had taken charge of the department he had tried to put a check on the distribution of rations and clothing, but up to the present he had been unable to get a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. He had to trust to the permanent residents in the districts and others who distributed the relief to the natives and who sent in the returns. Some check was provided by the travelling inspectors, for they went round the stations and saw for themselves approximately the number of natives being relieved. He was again going into the question with the Auditor General whom he had asked to advise as to the best system to adopt for checking distribution of relief. It meant an expenditure of £5,000 a year and care should be taken to see that this large sum was properly and usefully expended. He was sorry that the member for Pilbarra had endeavoured to belittle the efforts of Inspector Isdell, for he was a man whom every member esteemed. All knew that he would honestly carry out his duties. The journey he had taken of 2,000 miles

was no small undertaking. It was idle to say that a man could walk 100 miles a week in such country, and in the circumstances connected with Mr. Isdell's case, where he had to visit every centre, make inquiries to see that those in charge of the natives were carrying out their duties, inquire as to complaints, etcetera. As to the neck-chaining the Leader of the Opposition had asked what the Chief Protector thought of it. That officer was distinctly in favour of neck-chains as being more humane and causing less injury to the natives themselves than either the leg-chains or wrist-chains. By the neck-chains they were able to use their limbs while making the long marches from inland to the coast. Both the wrist-chains and the ankle-chains had to be put on so tightly that chafing was set up and subsequently this broke out in sores. The neck-chains, on the other hand, could be worn comparatively lightly and as they only weighed seven pounds for four prisoners a native had only to carry a weight of about one and three-quarter pounds, which practically depended from his shoulders. The Commissioner of Police was correct when he said that the neck-chain was preferable either to the ankle or wrist chain. [Mr. Bath: Was a statement to that effect sent to England?] Yes; one was sent through the Governor in response to a communication from Lord Elgin. He had also arranged with Mr. Prinsep, when in London, to interview the Imperial authorities and explain personally the whole of the system and the reason why we in Western Australia preferred that system to either wrist or ankle-chains. The position of Chief Protector would be vacant very shortly, and the Government were now inquiring as to the best person to fill the position. It was desired that a man should be obtained who could travel through the country more than the present Chief Protector had been able to do. A younger man was needed and the Public Service Commissioner was now making inquiries and would shortly make a recommendation in regard to filling the vacancy at the termination of Mr. Prinsep's leave of absence. There was an idea of amalgamating two existing offices, but that idea

had not yet matured. As soon as possible the appointment would be made, first temporarily, and if it worked well the person would be appointed permanently to the position. Every care would be taken by the Public Service Commissioner in making inquiries to see if he could get a good officer to replace Mr. Prinsep.

Mr. HOLMAN: Why had not the report of the Aborigines Department been placed before Parliament? The member for Swan had complained of Labour members throwing stones at the squatters, but after reading the evidence given before Dr. Roth, evidence taken from magistrates, police officers, and gaol officials, there was good ground for throwing stones at the squatters.

The Minister for Mines: When at Marble Bar Dr. Roth was offered a conveyance to take him to Corunna Downs, but he refused to go.

Mr. HOLMAN: No one could go on any run without seeing many half-caste children. As to the distribution of relief, on several occasions he had pointed out that the squatters always returned the same number of natives on their runs as receiving relief. Mr. A. W. Edgar on the De Grey always returned 25 females, aged, crippled and diseased, and 25 males, and he received assistance for these. At a place called Bangemall, a squatter year after year returned 20 crippled natives to whom relief was distributed. The totals never varied. Grave dissatisfaction existed in regard to some of the protectors on the goldfields areas. A little while ago there was a disturbance at Wiluna, the inspection was not good. If the Government expended this money they should see that it was spent on the natives and did not go to the pockets of those who were supposed to distribute relief.

Mr. UNDERWOOD did not desire to belittle the efforts of Mr. Isdell, but to travel 2,000 miles was no feat whatever. The Minister for Mines travelled several hundreds of miles when he was in the North. The inspector was on the road all the time and had a pack horse with him. He agreed pretty well with the report of Dr. Roth, but neck-chains in certain circumstances were necessary. He pro-

tested, however, against working the natives on the roads with neck-chains on. It was necessary to use the neck-chains to bring natives in from the bush, but the natives should not be kept continually on the roads chained by the neck day after day and year after year. It was brutal and degrading to work these men continually with the chains on. The natives when brought in should be kept in gaol, and if the gaol was not strong enough for them the Government ought to build one which was strong enough.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was a step in the right direction to appoint protectors to look after the interests of the blacks in the West and Nor'-West portions of the State. As to the work being done by Mr. Isdell, he (the Minister) had an opportunity of witnessing that officer's work and hearing from him what he was doing. It was rather early yet to look for good results from his work as his appointment was only a recent one; but from the enthusiasm manifested in connection with this work he was satisfied, knowing the humane qualities of the officer, that good was bound to result. In connection with the report of Dr. Roth, when in the North he was informed that Dr. Roth made no effort to find out the condition of the blacks on the squatter's runs. It would be wise if we could absolutely prohibit blacks from getting into seaport towns and mining camps. At Port Hedland, and other large centres, and in mining centres, the conditions were degrading. As to the treatment of the blacks by the squatters, Dr. Roth was asked specially to go to Corunna Downs station to see the condition of the natives there; he was offered horses and a drag, but he refused to go because he said he might see something which he would not care to see. The complaint he (the Minister) received from most of the squatters was that Dr. Roth made no effort to get any first-hand information as to how the blacks were treated at the stations. From his visits to the stations, as far as he could judge, the natives were treated in a very generous manner indeed. He did not believe in the system of indenturing natives; the blacks should be as free as other people; if they desired

to work for squatters they should be allowed to do so, but they should not be tied down to any period of time. If he (the Minister) had his way the indenture system would be done away with. At one place he saw the natives paraded three times a day to receive their rations, and from the condition of these blacks they had been kindly looked after for many a long day. He was pleased that there was to be some new blood in connection with the administration of this department. We should have someone who should be compelled to travel throughout the country and see how the protectors and their assistants were doing their work. The officer's centre should be in Perth, for there were blacks to be cared for throughout the Eastern Goldfields, at Eucla, on the Murchison, as well as in the Northern portion of the State. As to the neck-chains, he saw some 60 natives at work at Roebourne, and he came to the conclusion that the neck-chain was the most humane method of safeguarding the prisoners, for it must be remembered the natives were wild and untutored, and if an opportunity of escape presented itself the majority would take advantage of it. Only two warders were in charge, they had firearms and no doubt if a black got away the warder would fire at him. From watching these natives for half an hour he was satisfied that the neck-chain was the safest method that could be adopted for keeping the prisoners. He saw natives repairing a road, they had to wheel the material a short distance, and the men were of a good stamp, mostly six feet, solid fellows, and he did not think any harm resulted from their doing the work. He did not know what work could be found for the natives inside a gaol, and certainly it was better for their health to be working outside than to be confined within the precincts of a prison.

Mr. STUART wished merely to emphasise the fact that Mr. Prinsep's successor could not do his duty without travelling. When in Queensland Dr. Roth was highly efficient, and if he deteriorated here, must have deteriorated quickly. He was not the man to drive in a four-in-hand to a station, after advertising his visit, so that he might see

the niggers in their holiday garb. Any inspector or protector who went in that style would not see what would be apparent to the ordinary visitor. The administration by Mr. Prinsep was the greatest farce ever perpetrated. The inevitable disappearance of the aborigines from the face of their country should be accompanied by a minimum of cruelty. From various statements he (Mr. Stuart) had received, verified by affidavit, it appeared that certain Governments rations and blankets sent to stations for distribution amongst the blacks did not reach their proper destination. In the electorate of the Minister for Mines a recent incident showed how the blacks were protected: for they were starving, and some prospectors threatened to take action unless the blacks were relieved so that the looting of camps might cease. The expenditure of this large vote should be so supervised that the maximum amount might be spent in relieving the aborigines.

Mr. TROY: The Aborigines Act, passed by the Rason Government, provided for reserves on which, according to Dr. Hicks, then Colonial Secretary, the natives were to be placed under the care of a superintendent, and employed in cultivating tropical products. Why was not this done, as in the East, where in one instance an island was reserved for the natives, who grew produce for their own support? No reserve could carry enough game to keep the aborigines thereon. Sheep and ostrich farms might be started. Though he had years of experience with squatters and station people, he had only once seen a blackfellow badly treated by a squatter. On stations blacks were not called on to do very arduous work. The majority of protectors appointed were squatters or police officers. The appointment of any protector found ill-treating natives should be cancelled.

The Treasurer: Such appointments had been cancelled.

Mr. TROY: All native prisoners should be allowed to work, for the good of their health. The niggers should neither be treated like those of South Africa, nor like spoilt children, but punished justly for any wrongs they committed. Particu-

larly on the goldfields the safeguards promised in the Aborigines Protection Act had not been forthcoming. A competent Chief Protector could easily be found in the State, and he must reside in the North, near the majority of the aborigines and particularly the tribes most difficult to deal with.

Mr. ANGWIN: Though the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) was a member of the Government which appointed Dr. Roth, he accused the doctor of not properly carrying out his duties. Why then was he appointed? The Public Service Commissioner, on page 13 of his report, complained that if Ministers took advantage of the provision for appointing temporary employees, it would be impossible to reduce the number of civil servants. The Minister who introduced the Public Service Bill spoke of entrance examinations, both medical and educational.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order.

Mr. ANGWIN: But the Treasurer said he had appointed two inspectors to be paid out of this vote.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not in order in reading a speech delivered on the Public Service Bill. The speech could not bind the Treasurer.

Mr. ANGWIN: It showed the intention of the House as to the appointment of officers. Every qualified person in the State should have an opportunity of applying for any vacancy in the service. He had merely referred to the speech to enlighten the Minister. The Public Service Act was framed to take away many of the powers Ministers previously enjoyed with regard to appointments to the public service; and no officer could be appointed now unless he was qualified. We might as well save the Commissioner's salary if appointments were made without reference to him or if his recommendations were not to be carried out. How was it possible to control the service if we allowed Ministers to override the Act? They should comply with the Act which was framed for their guidance. With regard to this vote the Protector of Aborigines was certainly entitled to the long leave he was enjoying, but the Minister should see, when the new appointment was made, all those persons

qualified to fill the position had the opportunity of securing the appointment.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Audit, £7,544.

Mr. BATH: Last year, when this was being discussed, reference was made to the necessity for having the annual report of the Auditor General before members when we were discussing the Estimates, and it was suggested that the report should be presented as soon as possible after the House met. However, this year the report had not yet been presented, though the Treasurer had promised he would endeavour to have it laid on the table early in the session. Unless members had the opinion of the Auditor General on financial matters they could not deal with the Estimates properly. A matter for regret was the constant bickering between the Railway Department and the Auditor General's Department; as was evidenced by the strong comments made by the Commissioner of Railways in the last report of the Railway Department. The Commissioner of Railways practically said that the Auditor General's Department was a confounded nuisance. This was what Mr. George said:—

"The Audit Department of the State has, to this department, been a source of trouble instead of assistance, and some friction has consequently ensued. While this is to be regretted perhaps for the State, there remains the compensation that as no fear exists in the Railway Department, no favour is likely to be shown by the Audit Department. At the same time, nothing but trivial technical differences and queries have really arisen, and these the Railway Department would have been only too happy to alter to suit the requirements of the Auditor General, if that officer had made known what he required."

It would be in the interests of both the departments if this bickering ceased. The Treasurer should endeavour to get some more amicable arrangement between the two departments.

The TREASURER: It was unfortunate there should be bickering between these

two important departments; but now Mr. George had retired, a lot of the friction would probably cease. Notwithstanding the possession of many good qualities, Mr. George was somewhat short-tempered, and did not like to give way on any point. If one could explain the treatment the Auditor General said had been meted out to him, members might understand the position better. However, all the Auditor General wished was to carry out the duties of his responsible office, and he would probably get that opportunity now. The report of the Auditor General would be ready before the end of next month; but in no year had the report been made available for members while the Estimates were being considered, unless it happened that the Estimates were being discussed at the end of the year. It was only last year for the first time that the report for the immediately preceding year had been laid on the table during the course of the session. There was a lot of work to do after the accounts were closed. Even yet all the audits were not complete.

Mr. BOLTON: There was an increase of £20 for the Chief Inspector. Was this an increase brought about by the public service classification?

The Treasurer: Yes.

Mr. BOLTON: Why was it necessary to increase the staff of inspectors from six to ten.

The TREASURER: The number had not been increased, but owing to the re-organisation brought about by the Public Service Commissioner's classification, two inspectors previously under the temporary, clerical and other assistance item, had been transferred to the permanent staff; and two clerks had been successful in their appeals, and were appointed junior inspectors.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported at this stage of the Treasury Estimates, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.30 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 29th October, 1907.

	PAGE
Question: Land Purchase at Spencer's Brook	373
Bills: Navigation Act Amendment, &c.	373
Public Health, Report of sel. com. presented	376
Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages	
Amendment, Com. reported	376
Sale of Government Property, &c.	376
Motion: Standing Orders Amendment as to	
Lapsed Bills	373
Adjournment of House, Royal Show	376

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Filter beds on Burswood Island—Correspondence between the Government and Mr. J. Davis re the installation.

QUESTION—LAND PURCHASE AT SPENCER'S BROOK.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD (for Mr. Throssell) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Have the Government purchased, or are they about to purchase, land at Spencer's Brook? 2, If so, what is the area and the price of such land, from whom purchased, and for what purpose required?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Area: 12 acres 2 roods 1 perch. Price £125. Purchased from Herbert William Hancock. Purpose: Enlargement of station yard.

BILL—NAVIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary, and read a first time.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS AMENDMENT, LAPSED BILLS.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan-Suburban): In moving this motion, I should like to explain that I am actuated by only one desire, which I think should actuate all hon. members, that of rendering as perfect and as efficient as possible the machinery by which Parliament has to produce its legislation. For many years past, when at the end of a session those Bills which are known as the