

amount of wages that were paid in the 12 months in the calling, and that was what this Bill sought to do. One would like to see the Bill extended farther to include people in casual employment in other lines. Assessors in the Admiralty Court were not part of the court; they were there merely to give the Judge an opportunity of getting advice on technical matters brought forward.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

BILL—NAVIGATION AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

BILL—PUBLIC HEALTH (Consolidation).

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Assuming that members would prefer not to go on with this Bill to-night, he would like to say the select committee had brought up their report and recommended certain amendments, that by a resolution of the House these amendments had been embodied in the Bill, and it had been reprinted and distributed together with the report of the select committee. He hoped members would look into these, and be prepared to go on with the Committee stage at the next sitting.

Order postponed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8.32 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 5th November, 1907.

Question: State Battery, Nunngarra	509
Bills: Police Act Amendment (Mr. Male), 1a.	509
Narrogin-Wickepin Railway, 2a. moved	509
Estimates resumed: Treasury continued—Compassionate Allowances, Discussion on the Illingworth grant	514

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

Prayers.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERY, NUNNGARRA.

Mr. TROY (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: Does the department intend to give any reply regarding the application made by the people of Nunngarra for a battery for that district? The battery was asked for some months ago, and a report was promised.

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: I do not know why the hon. member could not let us know that he was desirous of asking this question. It is usual, as a matter of courtesy, to inform a Minister beforehand. I will answer the hon. member to-morrow.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Male, and read a first time.

BILL—NARROGIN-WICKEPIN RAILWAY.

Second Reading moved.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in moving the second reading said: Members are aware that during last session there was a discussion as to the route of the proposed line, and more especially did the discussion relate to two petitions which were presented by the advocates of the rival routes, from Cuballing to Wickepin and from Narrogin to Wickepin, the discussion resulting from a motion by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) to the effect that a board should be appointed to consider the respective claims of those routes. It

was generally admitted on all sides of the House that there was every justification for extending railway facilities to this district; but opinions differed as to whether the line should be constructed from Narrogin or from Cuballing.

Mr. Johnson : No ; that was not considered at all.

The PREMIER : I think that the majority of those present, or at least the majority of those who spoke, were of opinion that the line should be constructed from Narrogin. The merits and the demerits of the proposal were freely discussed on that occasion ; and I pointed out that as a matter of fact a board had already investigated this proposal, and that as a result of a recommendation by the professional advisers of the Government Cabinet had approved of the construction of the railway from Narrogin. The arguments used by the Minister for Works, by me, and by others on that occasion, are no doubt fresh in the minds of most members, and it is not necessary to recapitulate what was then said, or the reasons why the Cabinet came to their decision. Suffice it to say we recognised that the objective to be served was practically the same, whether the line was constructed from Narrogin or from Wickepin ; while Narrogin has this advantage : should it at any future date be thought advisable to extend the Collie-Narrogin line, which was recently completed, to the goldfields line, to junction at Doodlakine, Narrogin will be in a more direct line than Cuballing, and at the same time the ruling grade of 1 in 80, which governs the Collie-Narrogin line, can be obtained on the line that is now proposed, though as a matter of fact we are at present adhering to the natural contour of the ground, with the result that the line adopted has a ruling grade of 1 in 40, which at a future date may at a small cost be converted into 1 in 80. As a point of departure, Narrogin, in addition to giving the advantage of a line constructed from the existing junction, has the advantage of an already existing water supply, while there is not any at the other suggested junction.

Mr. Johnson : You understand that there is no other suggested junction.

The PREMIER : The only other suggestion I have heard was that of Cuballing.

Mr. Johnson : That was never suggested during the debate.

The PREMIER : If not suggested during the debate, it was certainly suggested in one of the petitions, because one petition was in favour of Cuballing as a junction.

Mr. Johnson : No.

The PREMIER : And the other was in favour of Narrogin.

Mr. Johnson : No. One was not in favour of Cuballing.

The PREMIER : Well then, one progress league was very strongly in favour of that route ; in fact, the league has, I notice, passed a vote of no-confidence in the Government because the Government are not prepared to bow in that respect to its wishes.

Mr. Johnson : No. The Premier is quite mistaken.

[*Mr. Taylor* interjected.]

The PREMIER : The hon. member will have an opportunity of speaking later. I have personally inspected the country that will be served by this railway, and have no hesitation in saying it is one of the finest agricultural areas in the State ; and moreover, it is peopled by some of the most enterprising and energetic settlers we have in Western Australia. In the Loan Bill of last year provision was made for the construction of this railway, a sum of £16,000 being set apart for that purpose, in addition to a certain amount in the vote for rails and fastenings ; and it is generally recognised by those who are competent to judge that this railway is one of the most promising works that can be brought forward. Narrogin, the starting-point of the railway, is situated 174 miles by rail from Fremantle and about 131 miles from Bunbury ; and it is anticipated as a result of the construction of the Collie-Narrogin line that a good portion of the trade of that district will go to its natural and nearest port. Leaving Narrogin the line will go in a north-easterly direction for a distance of 29½ miles. The weight of the rails is 45lbs. ; as I have already stated, the ruling grade is 1 in 40 ; and the sharpest curve is of 10 chains radius. It is estimated

that the cost of the line, exclusive of rails and fastenings, will be practically about £533 per mile. To it may be added rails and fastenings at a price of about £700, per mile, making a total of £1,200 per mile. This is a little in excess of the amount first allowed for rails and fastenings, owing to the fact that there has been a jump in the price of rails since the estimate was first made out. Owing to the fact that there is every likelihood that the sleepers will be procured from Collie, which is within easy distance of the commencement of the line, it is probable that this line will be built within the estimate. Recognising that this district, if opened up, would be a fair field for settlement, I have issued instructions—and surveyors are at present engaged in the work—for the survey of 200,000 acres recently classified. It will bring the whole of this land, all of which is on the coast side of the rabbit-proof fence, at least 25 miles closer to railway communication than at present. As an argument in favour of the route I may say the majority of this good land is on the south side of the present route of the Narrogin-Wickepin railway, and consists mainly of salmon gum, white gum, and morrell. The hon. member for Guildford has been looking at me with a certain degree of uncertainty in his countenance, but I have had plans prepared which will show the area referred to, and by that it will be seen that at the terminus of the line at Wickepin, practically the whole of the area I have been referring to is south of the latitude of that place. At the present time two surveyors are engaged in subdividing the area. The community known as the New Jerusalem settlement, which will be served by this line, is very near the terminus, and the settlers there are obtaining yields averaging from 16 to 25 bushels per acre, and are proving on a small scale what can be done in the way of dairying. Of the 200,000 acres to which I have referred, which will be opened up by the construction of the line on the surveyed route, over 140,000 acres lie south of the latitude of the proposed terminus. The land on the south side is of better quality than that on the north side, the

surveyor's classification and report showing that such large areas of good land are not available for selection. Mr. Surveyor Breen, reporting on the land in the neighbourhood, states:—

"The area we are now subdividing and which excludes all land not considered good enough for immediate settlement is 120,000 acres. To this 120,000 acres of good land, all of which is temporarily reserved from sale at present, may be added 20,000 acres already thrown open for selection, making a total of 140,000 acres of Crown lands, south of the latitude of the proposed terminus at Wickepin. The high quality of this land has been known to the land guides and to settlers for years past, but owing to its present distance from railway communication, many desirable settlers from the Eastern States, with money and a good knowledge of farming, while speaking in the highest terms of its quality, have been deterred from selecting."

The Government land agent at Narrogin, reporting on the land, says:—

"The whole of this area of 140,000 acres and the farther area of 60,000 acres east and north-east of the proposed terminus, which comprises the 200,000 acres being subdivided specially to dovetail with this important railway proposal, will be speedily settled by men of the right stamp, who are arriving daily in search of land, and probably with the completion of the railway 100,000 acres of poorer land, and good land situated outside the rabbit-proof fence, would be settled by the free selector in addition to the areas specially surveyed into farms. It can be realised what an impetus the settlement of, say, on a conservative estimate, 300 new families in the East Wickepin district would give to the many Western Australian industries dependent on the agriculturist; but if this railway is not built, practically the whole of this 200,000 acres of subdivided land will remain unselected, at least as far as wheat growing is concerned."

That is the report from the Government land agent at Narrogin, who is specially qualified to report on the country along

the Great Southern railway, having been connected with the Lands Department and the various land agencies in that district for from six to eight years.

Mr. Stone: What is his name?

The PREMIER: Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Foulkes: He is a son of the Surveyor General?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Foulkes: About 25 years of age?

The PREMIER: I do not know how old he is, but he is a really good man. If all the officers were as competent as he is I would not have much to complain of.

Mr. Johnson: He goes pretty far in his reports.

The PREMIER: He is in a better position to judge than any member of this House as to the country available. He has the advantage of the reports from the various land guides, as well as the report of the surveyors now engaged in subdividing the land referred to. It is no use our subdividing large areas if we are not in a position to give railway facilities, and we are taking this precaution, that while limiting the area we are not reducing it to such an extent that a man will not be able to live. The smallest block will be about 500 acres. We realise that it is absolutely necessary for a man to have from 500 acres to 1,000 acres in that country if he is to make a living. As to the areas which will be thrown open after survey, among conditions pertaining to certain areas is one that those applying for land shall at time of application not hold more than 100 acres of land. We recognise that if we are to make the best use of this country we must give it to those who are not large holders of land. Reference has already been made to the fact that settlers have refused to go on the 200,000 acres of good Crown lands available to the east of Wickepin and the east of Narrogin owing only to the distance from railway communication. As a matter of fact that land, which at the present time is valued by the department at 7s. per acre, given railway communication, will be able to have placed upon it as a reasonable price the sum of 12s. per acre. Assuming that the 200,000 acres

are taken up, the enhanced price of the land will be something like £50,000, which will go into the coffers of the State; payment spread over a period of 20 years, as provided for under the conditional purchase regulations. Just a word or two in regard to the provision made for railway stations and town sites in connection with this railway. One of the best features of the proposal is that the Government have been able, by taking due precautions, to make certain reserves along the route, and so be able to have the stations on their own land. Most of the sidings and stations will be on reserves of from 500 to 2,000 acres, so that should occasion arise we will in the future be able to subdivide the land into town lots. It must be realised that many of these places will ultimately become large towns, and it is essential that every provision should be made for that. The first station is at Crooked Pools, 15 miles from Narrogin, and for it we have reserved 2,000 acres at the intersection of two of the main roads of the district. The station will be used by the whole of the settlers in the Lake district and most of those in the Yilliminning Valley. As settlement is very close and the soil rich an important town site may be expected to arise at this centre. I realise the necessity that exists for making reserves in view of the experience I have had of some town sites on the Great Southern Railway. It was anticipated at the time we made reserves at Katanning and Wagin and other town sites that we were looking very far ahead, but it has now been proved that justifiable precautions were taken by making those reserves, and the value of this experience is useful in the present instance. The next proposed railway siding near Fairheads will be on a Government reserve of about 1,500 acres. The railway station at Yarling Well, 25 miles from Narrogin and on one of the highways of the district, will serve the large centre of New Jerusalem, and a large number of other farmers. It will be a very important centre. The terminal point of the railway has been altered from the original design in order that the Wickepin town site may be laid out on one of two Gov-

ernment reserves we have made in that locality. Reference to the district plans proves conclusively that no route other than the permanently surveyed one of the Narrogin-Wickepin railway can offer the advantage of a good reserve for each siding and town site, which will be subsequently sold for the benefit of the State instead of being sold by owners of private property. No other route could so well fit in with the old established main roads which lead into more important railway stations. Such advantages have not, so far as I know, been attained in other spur railways. During the last two or three weeks a party of selectors have acquired land to the east of this proposed railway. They comprise settlers from the Eastern States, men with a certain amount of capital and of great experience, who will make really desirable settlers. I am particularly anxious that they should not be disappointed in regard to this railway. Another argument has been used, that this line will eventually prove a portion of the line which will go through from Narrogin to join with the Eastern Railway. This will, it is considered, be constructed eventually, and as members know, when the line was first contemplated it was expected that it would carry coal to the goldfields. In addition, it will enable the towns on the Great Southern Railway to get into touch with the Eastern Goldfields market, and consequently it will have a very beneficial effect on the goldfields buyer, who will be able to purchase his goods at a much less rate than if the produce had to go to the goldfields *via* Spencer's Brook. It is estimated that the extension of this line northerly to Doodlakine, a distance of about 80 miles, would, within a 15-mile radius and beyond the 15-mile radius from existing lines, tap 123,000 acres of land already subdivided and priced about 12s. per acre, and not yet selected; also classified areas, each containing 2,000 acres or upwards, amounting in the aggregate to 130,000 acres, with farther areas in small patches amounting to about 100,000 acres; or a total of 230,000 acres unsubdivided, suitable for cultivation and worth 10s. per acre. That line would

serve the land which has been recently subdivided in the Kwollyinn area, as well as areas laid out east of the present terminus of the Greenhills-Quairading line. Both these routes were reported on by officers of the department, and the last officer who reported, prior to the board, was Mr. Stoddart, who made an examination of the route. His report I read on the last occasion when this matter came into debate and I do not propose to weary members by reading it again to-day. [Mr. Johnson: Will you make it available to the Press?] The whole of Mr. Stoddart's report is contained in last session's *Hansard*. To make assurance doubly sure, before the introduction of this measure was finally decided on a report was obtained from a board, consisting of the Surveyor General, the Manager of the Agricultural Bank, and an officer of the Engineering Department. Their joint report on this railway is to the following effect:—

"After careful consideration of the engineer's report on the proposed routes of a railway extending eastward from either Narrogin or Cuballing, and our personal knowledge of the districts that will be traversed by the suggested railway, we are unanimously of opinion that Narrogin is the better point for departure, and that the proposed railway should follow the route as surveyed and shown in red on the attached plan. The alternative route leaving Cuballing would practically serve the same amount of land from an agricultural point of view as the Narrogin one. We however advocate the Narrogin route for the following reasons: Firstly, that it would be a continuation of the Colliie-Narrogin Railway, and is graded similarly with the object of future connection with the Eastern Railway, with a view to future probable traffic in coal for the goldfields. Secondly, if the Cuballing route were adopted, considerable lengths of 1 in 60 grades against the load between Narrogin and Cuballing would have to be negotiated, which would considerably militate against profitable and economical work from the railways point of view, especially if the coal traffic to

the goldfields is developed. Another argument in favour of the surveyed route is that it would be shorter to the extent of about six miles from Collie towards the goldfields."

As I have already stated, I have the advantage of a fairly good knowledge of the country to be served by this railway; I had a knowledge of it when there was only one selector to the east of the Great Southern Railway; and consequently I am in a position to assure the House that this line, if constructed, will materially benefit the district served. Last year I had an opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with that district, and I was more than pleased to note the development which has taken place during the last year or two; and settlement is still going on apace in the district to be served by this railway. In concluding his report on this railway proposition and on land settlement generally in his district, the Narrogin Land Agent says:—

"Speaking with six years' experience of the several districts along the Great Southern Railway from Katanning to Pinjelly, with each of which I have been intimately associated, that no railway proposal can be put forward in these districts offering greater advantages to the State, in regard to providing land of the quality required in areas limited practically only by the distance to which the Government will extend the line, and capable of providing homes for many hundred settlers, than does the Narrogin-Wickepin proposal, on the surveyed route."

I do not know that I need add anything farther to the reports I have read. I have had a plan prepared showing the route of the railway, also showing the land which would be served and which at the present time is being subdivided prior to selection. There is no doubt as to the justification for this line, although there may be some difference of opinion as to where the line should be commenced from. With the bright prospects ahead of us from an agricultural point of view, we should not hesitate to push on land settlement by every legitimate means. The interests of the State have been well safeguarded in locating this line; pro-

vision has been made of necessary reserves for townsites, sidings, etcetera, and the State will reap the enhanced value to be derived from the sale of a large area of land which is now being subdivided. I maintain that in no better way can we assist the development of this important part of our State than by giving parliamentary approval to the construction of a railway from Narrogin to Wickepin. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Johnson, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1907-8.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 24th October.

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

Vote—*Compassionate Allowances*, £1,808 :

Item—Compassionate allowance to Mrs. Adair, £50 :

Mr. BATH asked for an explanation of the item.

The TREASURER : This amount was paid to Mrs. Adair, wife of a former clerk in the Lands Department, and represented the value of the accumulated leave due to that officer at the time of his retirement.

Item—Allowance to Mrs. Bell, £25 :

Mr. BATH : What were the services recognised in this item ?

The TREASURER : A similar explanation applied. This amount represented the value of the accumulated leave due to the officer who was obliged to leave the service owing to a mental derangement.

Illingworth Grant, a Discussion.

Item—Allowance to F. Illingworth, £1,000 :

Mr. H. BROWN moved—

That the item be struck out.

The TREASURER reminded the Committee that the item was inserted in the

Estimates at the express wish of some 40 members of this House, a meeting of members having given their approval because Mr. Illingworth was in a dangerous state of ill-health, was financially broken and it was absolutely necessary that he be put in a position to leave the State if his life was to be prolonged. True, since that time certain developments had occurred, and the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown) had moved in a certain direction ; but probably the best way of dealing with the item now would be to pass it on the understanding that no farther payments than the £400 already expended would be made, until the report of the Royal Commission on the subject had been received.

Mr. Johnson : Better postpone the item.

The TREASURER : The commissioner's report might not be available for several weeks, perhaps five or six, and it would be awkward to have the Estimates hung up so long.

Mr. Johnson : It would only hang up this item.

The TREASURER : No; it would hang up the whole of these Estimates.

Mr. Walker : Delete the item, and re-introduce it later.

Mr. Foulkes : Reduce the item.

Mr. Gordon : You could not reduce an item on the Estimates.

The TREASURER : On the understanding when the meeting of members was held, that certain moneys should be paid to Mr. Illingworth, £400 had since been so paid, sufficient to enable Mr. Illingworth to leave the State; and it became necessary that there should be an item in the Estimates to cover that expenditure. [*Member :* Reduce the item to £400.] He was entirely in the hands of the Committee, and wished to act in accordance with the desire of members. Whatever might be the result of the inquiry which was pending, if the majority of hon. members considered that the item should be reduced now to the amount already expended, he would not object to reduce the item accordingly. But if that were done, it might appear to be prejudging the case which was to be inquired into. He would suggest that

the item be agreed to now, on the understanding that no farther sums were to be paid until the report of the royal commissioner was made available.

Mr. BATH : As one who took part in the meeting of members referred to, he felt obliged to vote for passing the item, to which the majority of members were committed through part of the money having been paid on the understanding arrived at. The best course would be, as suggested by several members, to pass the item for the amount already paid, and leave the farther consideration of the matter until receipt of the report of the royal commissioner ; or, in the alternative, to pass the item as printed.

Mr. WALKER : It was regrettable that circumstances should make it necessary for anyone to speak on this item; but as the necessity had arisen, it was well to be frank. If the pledge given was good for the £400 already paid it was equally as strong for the £1,000, but the whole issue was really dependent on the result of an inquiry, any promise, pledge or contract given having been obtained in the absence of information which had since been given to the public. [*Mr. Taylor :* The Government were not in possession of that information.] The Government and Opposition were precisely in the same fix. If the Government undertook to pay £1,000 to a person in the belief that they were honouring and at the same time assisting a valued and honest servant, and afterwards it was discovered that there had not been that honesty and uprightness of conduct which would make such a gift valid, then the Government should in honour bound retrace their steps.

Mr. Gordon : The hon. member would probably put in his lot.

Mr. WALKER : One could not see what the hon. member was alluding to. Pending the result of the inquiry no member should be asked to vote one farthing.

Mr. Angwin : What if the money had been already paid?

Mr. WALKER : Then it had been paid in error.

Mr. Butcher: What was paid could not be got back.

Mr. WALKER: The vote should be hung up until the result of the inquiry was known. The item should be deleted on the understanding that if the inquiry turned out so that members who had pledged themselves to the vote could fulfil the contract completely, they could do so; but if the verdict was adverse and it was found that the public money was to be paid away in circumstances that would not warrant it, then honourably those who had given their pledge could withdraw from it. One could not for a moment believe that the Premier or those who spoke at the meeting of members had wilfully and knowingly misled a single member. They had acted in the best of good faith and honour to assist a gentleman absolutely believed to be worthy and who, without absolute proof to the contrary, must still be so regarded until the inquiry was completed. However, as we were not justified in dealing with the item until then, the straightforward and honourable course was to delete it for the present, and it could be brought up on supplementary Estimates or, if necessary, left out altogether under the circumstances of the case; but to deal with it now in darkness, when suspicion was directed towards it, and while the public were watching whether we were safeguarding their interests in this matter or not, was foolish. In the circumstances, he would vote for the deletion of this item in order that no opinion might be expressed for or against the intending recipient of the gift until the inquiry had been fully completed and reported on.

Mr. FOULKES: There was no contract on the part of members that the sum of £1,000 should be paid to Mr. Illingworth. No Ministry had power to enter into a contract that a certain sum should be paid as compassionate allowance to any individual. All that could be done was to say that a certain sum would be placed on the Estimates, leaving it to Parliament to decide whether that money should be paid or not. It constantly happened that sums were placed on the Estimates and reduced or struck out.

Mr. Holman: And then paid by the Government.

Mr. FOULKES: Not necessarily; they might be paid before, but not after the deletion of the Estimates item.

Mr. Holman: They had been paid after.

Mr. Johnson: We had experience of one item.

Mr. FOULKES: It was exceptional for a Government after receiving the decision of the House with regard to a particular matter, to run counter to it. The Treasurer should agree to delete this item, and when we had the report of the Commission the Treasurer could decide whether he would reinstate the sum in supplementary Estimates. It was no new thing, to bring down supplementary Estimates. [*Mr. Taylor:* It would be with a deficit.] During the last four years supplementary Estimates had been brought down and passed. It was recognised the Government acted in good faith by paying £400 to Mr. Illingworth. That was done with the sanction of 40 members of the House, so that it would not be right to strike out that sum of £400; but there was a distinction between paying that and the balance of £600. No doubt the House would have to pass £400 which the Government paid in good faith, but we should not pay the balance for the present.

Mr. T. L. BROWN realised the peculiar position in which he was placed. [*Mr. Gordon:* The hon. member was at the meeting, of course.] It was his endeavour at that meeting to persuade the member for Perth to withdraw opposition on that occasion, but circumstances had since arisen which made him feel justified in opposing the item. By his endorsement of the position as placed before the meeting of members by the Premier, he must endorse the action of the Government in paying the £400, but he felt that he was justified in voting that the balance should not be paid, while giving assurance that if the result of the inquiry showed, as he hoped with the strongest friend of Mr. Illingworth's in the House, that Mr. Illingworth would be exonerated, he would support the Treasurer in reinstating the item on supplementary Estimates. But for the present

the item should be deleted, and the money already paid brought down on supplementary Estimates, the balance being made dependent on the result of the inquiry pending. The Treasurer would receive the support of the majority of those 41 members present at the meeting so far as the money already paid was concerned. He (Mr. Brown) sincerely hoped that the result of the inquiry would enable him to vote for the whole item, but at present he could not do so.

Mr. GULL: Regarding this item, as far as the amount of £400 was concerned, at the meeting he knew that the £400 was to be paid to Mr. Illingworth. At the meeting the Premier suggested that a sum of £750 should be paid to Mr. Illingworth; the matter was discussed, and it was practically carried unanimously that the amount should be increased to £1,000, realising that £400 was not sufficient to clear his then present liabilities and send him away for a trip.

Mr. T. L. Brown: Was £400 mentioned at the meeting?

Mr. GULL: No.

Mr. T. L. Brown: Then why mention it now?

Mr. GULL: The Premier suggested the sum of £750, and an amendment was carried unanimously that the amount should be £1,000, and we were just as much bound to pay the £1,000 as the £400. He did not mind wagering that a good deal more than £400 had been paid. He would vote for the amount on the Estimates.

Mr. G. TAYLOR: On this item, having listened to the suggestions thrown out by members, he could not think that the proper course to pursue was to delete the item.

Mr. Walker: Judgment was suspended by doing so.

Mr. TAYLOR: No. The Treasurer had pointed out that if the item was passed as it stood and the report of the investigations came out in a manner that would not justify farther payment the Government would not pay any farther money. That was a legitimate stand to take. If the Committee struck out a portion of the amount it was tantamount to saying there was a sufficiently strong

doubt, and that we should remove the possibility of this money being paid over.

Mr. Walker: It was usual to suspend judgment while an inquiry was being held.

Mr. TAYLOR: The suspension of the judgment was in the words of the Treasurer, when he said, "I will pay no more." The Treasurer had conveyed to members that if they passed the item and the investigation did not clear Mr. Illingworth then no farther money would be paid.

Mr. Angwin: The Treasurer said he would pay no more until the verdict was given.

Mr. TAYLOR: That was the wisest position for the Committee to take up. When the meeting was held he had no knowledge of what now transpired on the files, and he believed the Premier had no knowledge, for the Premier would not mislead the meeting. He (Mr. Taylor) had pledged himself to support the decision of the meeting and he intended to do so. If subsequent events justified the Government no doubt they would take up the attitude and say that they would relieve members of their support in connection with this matter. He would have moved that the item be postponed until the inquiry had been completed, but he found we could not postpone the item without postponing the whole of the Treasurer's Estimates. Therefore the wisest course was to trust the Government and vote for the item as it stood. It would not cast a reflection on anyone if the inquiry did not result as it should.

Mr. DRAPER opposed the item for the reason that he could see no possible advantage in awaiting the result of the commission which had been approved by the House. Mr. Illingworth was unfortunately in such a state of health that it would be impossible for him to attend that inquiry, and in addition to that the inquiry must take place while Mr. Illingworth was out of the State. An inquiry of that nature was to his mind contrary to all sense of British justice. It could do no good unless it exonerated Mr. Illingworth from the charges. No matter what the result of the inquiry it would not satisfy him that any charge had been proved against Mr. Illingworth. To await the

result of the commission would be useless. He could see no reason whatever why Mr. Illingworth's private affairs should entitle him to an allowance of £1,000. There was no principle on which the allowance should be given, therefore he intended to vote against the item.

Mr. JOHNSON could not follow the argument advanced by the member for Mount Margaret, and he did not intend to support the amendment of the member for Perth, because he (Mr. Johnson) took an active part in the meeting, and he felt he was responsible in endorsing anything done by the Government as the outcome of the meeting, which decided that the sum of £1,000 should be placed on the Estimates. Any advance made out of the £1,000 had been made by the Government, still he was prepared to say that had he been in the Premier's place he would not have hesitated in making the advance, therefore he felt equally responsible with the Ministry as far as the payment of £400 was concerned. It had been paid, unfortunately, and we were not in possession of the particulars. We took what knowledge we had of the gentleman under discussion from our association with him in the House. We did not get behind the scenes as some people had now and rake up information which we were not possessed of when the resolution was passed. The Government had paid the £400 and all those who attended the meeting were equally responsible for the payment of the sum. It was paid and we could not get it back. To say we should go farther and wait the result of the inquiry before the remainder was paid was wrong. Pass the £400, await the result of any inquiries that might be held, and let that result decide what should be done with respect to the £600. If the inquiries convinced him that the House did wrong in passing the amount, and the Government did wrong in paying the £400, he would feel himself called on to pay to the State his proportion of the £400. If we were not justified in paying £1,000, neither were we justified in paying £400.

The PREMIER : Having been responsible for calling a meeting of members of

Parliament to consider Mr. Illingworth's retirement, and whether a sum should be placed on the Estimates in recognition of the many services Mr. Illingworth had rendered in a public capacity to the citizens of the State, he took that step after being approached by several members from both sides of the House, and prior to taking any action. He clearly told members at the meeting that he was not prepared to do anything without practical unanimity. With one exception, those members were ready at the meeting to go even farther than he with regard to the amount to be given Mr. Illingworth. The member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) had correctly stated the case, and the action which ought to be taken. This was not the time to discuss the question whether Mr. Illingworth did or did not deserve the money ; but he (the Premier) had seen nothing to alter his opinion. He did not propose to prejudge the man, or to suspend judgment. He would consider that a man was innocent until proved guilty, and he hoped he would always be loyal to his friends in matters of that kind. The member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) said if it appeared on inquiry that Mr. Illingworth was not entitled to the slight recognition granted him for his services, he (Mr. Johnson) would feel himself called upon to make good his share of the amount paid. But anything done on that occasion was done in good faith by hon. members. Many of them at that meeting were more intimately acquainted with Mr. Illingworth than he (the Premier), who, till he entered the House, had never known Mr. Illingworth. Many of them at that meeting had known him intimately for years ; and many of them had perhaps done him a good turn, or might have been done a good turn by him. The hon. member (Mr. Johnson) should not think that if Mr. Illingworth's actions were subsequently found to be not all that could be desired, the hon. member should be called on to contribute from his own pocket towards a refund of the money already paid.

Mr. Johnson : If we were justified in passing £400, we were justified in passing £1,000.

The PREMIER : No. We were to assume that Mr. Illingworth was innocent until proved guilty after an investigation. As to the suggestion by the member for West Perth (Mr. Draper) that Mr. Illingworth was not entitled to any remuneration, that sentiment hardly found support on either side of the House. Members recognised occasions when men who had done good work for the State were entitled to some recognition. In other public capacities the services of members were often recognised. Some had even their election expenses paid; and why should not the good services of Mr. Illingworth be rewarded? As to the trivial matters disclosed on the file, dating back some fourteen years, if fourteen years did not purge an offence, what time would be required for that purpose? What were these but trivial details, unworthy of any notice? He (the Premier) was responsible for calling the meeting of members, and he suggested that £750 should be placed on the Estimates. In response to an inquiry as the advisableness of paying an annuity, he pointed out that Mr. Illingworth needed at least £300 as early as possible, to settle some pressing liabilities. In all £400 was paid to Mr. Illingworth, and a full receipt obtained from him. The Treasurer had already intimated that provided the £1,000 was passed he would undertake that no sum beyond the £400 would be paid until the result of the inquiry was made known. Ministers realised this was a question not for the Government but entirely for the House, as the amount was placed on the Estimates at the suggestion of the forty hon. members at the meeting.

Mr. GORDON : Thirty-nine members were present at the meeting, and three others promised to abide by the decision. When he recently interjected that no item on the Estimates could be reduced, he naturally meant that forty-two members of the House could not honourably reduce an item for which they had practically made themselves responsible.

Mr. UNDERWOOD supported the item, for the reasons given by the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor). No doubt the money was voted in good faith, and we were fully justified in vot-

ing it on the information then available. A charge subsequently made had somewhat altered the aspect of the case. That charge had not been investigated. The Government had paid in good faith £400, which sum must therefore be passed; and as we had trusted the Government so far, we should trust them to the finish, allowing them to hold the balance of the £600 until the result of the investigation was known. The vote should be passed without discussion, as a serious charge was pending against Mr. Illingworth, and he should not be prejudged. If the charge was true he did not deserve any grant, and members had made a mistake. As to the member for Guildford's suggestion that if the charge was proved he (Mr. Johnson) would feel bound to hand his share of the grant to the Treasurer, the hon. member was surely talking to the gallery. He (Mr. Underwood) had voted in good faith for the grant, and would not feel at all called upon to pay his share. He would support the item as it stood, and would trust the Government to use their discretion in paying the balance.

Mr. STONE : It did not appear what Mr. Illingworth had done to warrant his receiving £1,000 of the State's money. Before the meeting the Government Whip had spoken to him (Mr. Stone), and he replied that he would fall in with the majority to the extent of giving a free railway pass to Mr. Illingworth, but would not agree to giving any of the people's cash. Other members had served their country and had received no consideration whatever. Mr. Illingworth, while in the House, had drawn his salary, had held office, and had enjoyed a very fair time. Unless the Government intended to make these grants general for every member who resigned, the justice of this grant did not appear. Some members might vote for the item with the idea that the Government would do something for them in their turn. He would oppose the item on division. As a politician Mr. Illingworth had probably done his best. He was always anxious to get into Parliament. But a politician, a local preacher, and a land-boomer were not a good mixture.

Mr. H. BROWN: Having a very important business engagement to-night, he might not be present on division. In this House he had made no charges at all. The Government had practically forced him into making the charges.

The Treasurer: No.

Mr. H. BROWN: The resolution passed by the House at his instance was simply that a Royal Commission, instead of the select committee proposed, should be appointed to inquire and report on a loan granted by the Treasurer to Mr. John Elliott, also the amounts paid to and on behalf of Mr. Illingworth by the Government, in anticipation of the proposed vote of £1,000. There was no charge whatever in that resolution. He (Mr. Brown) had asked that certain papers should be laid on the table of the House, having heard that certain things had happened. If he liked, he could have called for more papers. He would not have his hands forced by the Government. Only the other evening the Treasurer said that if he (Mr. Brown) knew of these things, why had he not stated them at the meeting. But the Treasurer, knowing why a certain sum of money was being paid to Mr. Illingworth, should have given the information to the members present, and there would probably have been a very different vote.

The Treasurer: What did the hon. member mean?

Mr. H. BROWN: If the Treasurer had told the members present where that money was going to—

The Treasurer: Its destination was then unknown to him.

Mr. H. BROWN stood corrected. When he asked for certain papers to be laid on the table the Attorney General's Department replied asking whether he was prepared to make charges of forgery and tampering with stamps. Was it not the Government who had forced him to make charges against Mr. Illingworth? The resolution requesting a Royal Commission contained no charges. There was a certain transaction. It would burk all possible inquiries if, directly a member asked in the House for certain information with reference to a certain transaction, he must immediately be put on his

trial by being forced to go before a Royal Commission to prove charges in respect of that transaction, though it might possibly turn out satisfactorily to all parties concerned. That was the exact position. He had asked for certain information, and was prevented from getting it by being practically forced to stand his trial. He was quite certain of his ground. During the last few weeks pressure of business had prevented him from forwarding to the Government the necessary particulars of the scope of the inquiry; but he trusted to be able to supply them to-morrow.

Mr. A. J. WILSON: Every person who attended the meeting of members should vote for the item as it appeared on the Estimates. In regard to the charges made against Mr. Illingworth of tampering with stamps and trying to defraud the Government of revenue, he would point out that the whole amount involved could not be more than 5s. or 10s. at the utmost. Was it reasonable to suppose that a gentleman like Mr. Illingworth, who did so much to retrieve his Victorian history by paying anything between £15,000 and £20,000 back to his creditors, was going to attempt to defraud the Government of Western Australia of the paltry sum of 10s.? [*Mr. T. L. Brown:* What proof was there that he had paid up?] There was abundance of proof. As to the transfers there were possibilities that they had no right to be cancelled, for if they were in the Titles Office, how was it possible for them to be interfered with? It might easily have happened that in the rush of business a mistake was made, and that Mr. Illingworth was in no way responsible for what appeared to be in the minds of some members a very glaring instance of defrauding the Government of a paltry 5s. Members had a perfect right to vote in all good faith, and to be bound by the arrangement made by the meeting of members of both sides of the House, at which it was agreed not only to give the amount promised by the Government but to increase it by £250. He had much pleasure in supporting the item as it stood.

Mr. FOULKES: The Premier when addressing the House had said the pre-

sent was not the time to discuss the pros and cons of the grant. He could hardly believe his ears when he heard that statement, for if the present were not the time when would the right time be? The Treasurer had suggested that the matter should be left to him and that after the result of the inquiry of the Commission was made known he should decide whether the balance of the money should be paid or not. He could not agree to that proposal for one instant, as it was the members of the House who should decide whether the balance should be paid or not. The debate had changed ground during the last few minutes. First it was proposed that the question of the payment of the grant should be deferred until the report of the Commission was received; but now members, and among them the Premier, said "Pay this money; it is possible Mr. Illingworth will have his character cleared, but all the same agree to pay it." And the member for Mount Margaret for the first time in his life said "Trust the Ministry." He had been suggesting this course of trusting the Ministry to the hon. member for some years, but he had never adopted it until now. Members should take the responsibility on themselves of settling the question and not put it on the shoulders of the Ministry, for it was not fair for them to do so. Those members who wanted to leave it to the Ministry to decide were political cowards. The consideration of the grant should be deferred until the report of the Commissioner was received. If he did not take the present opportunity of mentioning his objections, no other chance would be afforded him. If once the money were paid by the Ministry they would be in the position to say that this course had been followed at the request of members. Apart from the question of the charges against Mr. Illingworth, or the statement made about his character, he strongly objected on principle to the grant being made. In the debates which had taken place on the question, he had refrained from saying a single word against Mr. Illingworth's character, because it was not necessary on a matter of principle to bring in out-

side questions. He opposed any grant of this kind as a matter of principle. A great deal had been made of the fact that Mr. Illingworth had suffered reverses of fortune. That was no exceptional thing for a member of Parliament, and during the last 15 years a great number of members had suffered financially, but not one of them had come forward to the Government asking for a grant from the Treasury. Why, therefore, should an exception be made in the present case? There were members in the House now who were suffering reverses of fortune, and if the present case were to be adopted as a precedent everyone of those members should put in his claim for assistance from the Treasury. During the present Parliament members had suffered great reverses of fortune financially, so much so indeed that other members had done their best to assist them. It was unnecessary to mention names, but if a grant of this kind were made to Mr. Illingworth because he had suffered, why should other members who had been in the House for years and had rendered equally as great services as Mr. Illingworth receive no grants? If a precedent were established, in the future Parliaments would quote this case and state that on all occasions when members of Parliament suffered reverses of fortune, it was the duty of the State to put them in a solvent position. It had been said that Mr. Illingworth had served as a member of Parliament without any compensation and without payment. That was put forward as a reason for making the grant. Members seemed to forget that payment of members only came into force in 1898, and that scores of men had acted as members of Parliament without receiving pay. For instance, the member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse) had served for years without getting one penny for it. Were all members to receive grants when they suffered reverses of fortune? A number of members of Parliament who served without pay were to-day in indigent circumstances having suffered reverses of fortune, but not one of them had had the audacity to apply to Parliament for financial assistance. He would also remind members of the fact that although

Mr. Illingworth had served as a member for 13 or 14 years, still during that time he acted for two and a half years as a Minister of the Crown. [*The Premier*: For one year only.] He received the usual slender emolument of that office, while in addition, for one and half years, he acted as an officer of the House and during that time received additional emolument for his services. The great majority of members never obtained the position of a Minister of the Crown or any other salaried office. Mr. Illingworth could therefore be considered to have been exceptionally fortunate in receiving a greater amount of payment from the State than the majority of members. [*Mr. Taylor*: He did a great deal more work too.] The Legislative Assembly consisted of 50 members, and at the present time only seven members out of that number received an additional amount from their fellows for the services they rendered to the State.

At 6.15, *the Chairman* left the Chair.
At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. FOULKES: As to whether Mr. Illingworth was in necessitous circumstances financially, or was a wealthy man, appeared to be outside the present question, because if the grant was merited at all it should be given whether the recipient was rich or poor.

The Premier: If he was rich he would not want it.

Mr. FOULKES: But that aspect of the question should not be taken into consideration in granting a compassionate allowance for services rendered to the State. In the British Parliament many cases could be cited in which men, both eminent and wealthy, received large sums for important services rendered to the country. On that principle Mr. Illingworth's poverty should not come into consideration when making a compassionate grant for services rendered to this State. Members would see several cases in this year's Estimates, and some also in last year's Estimates, showing that comparatively small sums were granted to the widow or other relative, or to an officer retired from the service, in consideration

of services rendered to the State; and by comparison with these cases it could not be reasonable to grant so large a sum as £1,000 to Mr. Illingworth in view of the services he had rendered to the State. There was in these cases of course no legal claim against the State for compassionate allowances on account of services rendered; but if allowances were to be made for services rendered, any amount granted to Mr. Illingworth should bear some comparison with the amounts granted to other persons who had rendered services to the State. Hon. members must be aware that this State was not now in a position to make compassionate allowances of large amounts for services rendered to the State; and the Treasurer seemed to have had that fact in view when making up the items for compassionate allowances in other cases, yet in the case of Mr. Illingworth it was sought to grant a large sum which would be equal to £40 per annum in perpetuity. Comparing this case with that of the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, to whose widow and family an allowance of about £250 a year was granted, members would be aware that Mr. O'Connor rendered great and important services to this State, and that when he died he had nearly reached a position in which he would have been entitled to a retiring pension of £500 a year. In view of all the circumstances, he (Mr. Foulkes) must strongly object, on principle, to this proposed grant of £1,000 to Mr. Illingworth.

Mr. TAYLOR: There were circumstances surrounding this case which should prevent any reasonable member from making reflections of a damaging kind against an absent man whose case was well understood by members generally; and it was not desirable either that any member should make observations which might prejudice the inquiry about to take place in connection with charges made against Mr. Illingworth. The member for Claremont had said that those members who supported the proposed grant were cowards, because in supporting it they tried to throw the responsibility on the Government. But surely to protect the character of a man who was absent and believed to be on the verge of the grave was the very opposite of cowardice; and he (Mr.

Taylor) must say that to assassinate a corpse was more cowardly than the action of one who stood up to defend it. The member for Claremont was speaking of one who had been injured and could not retaliate ; was attacking one not here to defend himself, and physically incapable of doing so if he were here. On the other hand, he (Mr. Taylor) had given his word at a joint meeting of both parties in the House and would support the item as it stood on the Estimates. Unless the inquiry turned out as it was expected to turn out, no farther sum need be paid. No one could relieve the joint meeting but the Government. The Government might be justified in their present stand ; but members generally, with no farther facts before them than were before that joint meeting, except that an investigation was going to take place which the gentleman attacked could not attend, were not justified in debating the matter. It was wrong to say that men who had occupied public positions had not received compassionate allowances. Lord Chatham in his declining years, after a long and honourable political career, when financially low and when his creditors were going to seize his silver was rescued by the House of Commons. In New South Wales, Sir John Robinson and Sir Henry Parkes were similarly treated by the State ; and Queensland and Victoria had acted similarly. Parliament was perfectly justified in making a grant to one who had rendered valuable services to the country. There was too much ingratitude in this world ; we were always too eager to attribute evil motives to noble minds ; and it was about time we were more generous. The member for Claremont in attacking one for trusting the Government was on bad ground. One trusted the Government in this particular because the Government had taken members into their confidence and a contract had been entered into which he (Mr. Taylor) would not break. He was not going back on his word given to the Government at that meeting. If we reduced this vote in any one particular we would at once give out to the country that we had some doubt as to the attitude of the unfortunate man lying

ill in Victoria. Call it suspending action or by any other name, it would mean in the eyes of the country that there was a doubt among members of Parliament as to the circumstances surrounding Mr. Illingworth. We should avoid doing that ; we should allow the item to stand and should accept the Treasurer's assurance as to what would follow. [*Mr. Heitmann*: There must have been some doubt in the mind of the Treasurer.] The Treasurer had put forward a proposition which was fair, and it was the proper course to pursue. It was to be hoped no vote would be taken on the matter ; but if so, there should be unity among the 40 members who had attended the joint meeting ; they should not go back on their word in the light of subsequent events ; because if after the investigation was held something was proved, the Government, he (Mr. Taylor) felt confident, would relieve those members of the pledge to support the item. The member for Claremont could be reminded that the country granted £500 a year to Sir John Forrest for services rendered.

Mr. T. L. Brown: Did the hon. member think Sir John Forrest had not earned it?

Mr. G. TAYLOR: No one questioned that.

Mr. Foulkes: It was given as a pension.

Mr. Stone: Prior to Responsible Government.

Mr. G. TAYLOR: That old bogey about "prior to Responsible Government" had received a severe knock from the High Court.

Mr. Stone: The pension was saddled on us by the Imperial Government.

Mr. G. TAYLOR: The hon. member was bearing the burden very passively, having had ample opportunity to move to rid us of it.

Mr. Stone: It was not that it was a burden, but it was something we had no control over, like the natives' vote.

Mr. TAYLOR: The member for Claremont was accusing members who took up a proper stand, one which was excusable even if wrong, being humane. If a man was down and could not defend himself he (Mr. Taylor) was not an assassin.

It behoved the House to take a generous view of the question and to pass the item as it stood and trust and hope that the late member for West Perth would come out of this inquiry as one hoped the gentleman would.

Mr. WALKER, having already regretted the necessity for speaking on this subject at all, was still more pained that those who had discussed it had dragged in the personal element and were really pre-trying a case which was to be subjected to a Royal Commission. His endeavour had been to prevent any discussion of that kind or anything which would prejudice the ultimate judgment one way or the other. While he yielded to no person in his respect for age or infirmity, while he scorned to wear the title of assassin, or to break a contract, agreement or understanding, and while he believed he was as much a man of his word as those who boasted more about it, yet he maintained it was the duty of the House to be just before being generous. That was the position we were confronted with to-night. Our absolute duty was to be just. We were not dealing with our own money. We were here as trustees for the people, and whilst we were trustees for the people we should not allow our own feelings, or friendship, or heroism, or desire to be generous to the aged and afflicted to blind us to our duty as trustees.

Mr. Gordon: Why did not the member express that at the meeting?

Mr. WALKER: It was done. The position was expressed at the meeting and he was still anxious that the decision should be fulfilled. But were we put in possession of all the facts that had come to light—if they were facts—were we at the moment aware that there were charges hanging over the head of the ex-member for West Perth? Were we told that the money that was to be voted had to be voted to pay creditors who might possibly have prosecuted the late member for West Perth criminally if the money were not paid?

The Treasurer: We knew nothing about it then. Who knew now?

Mr. WALKER: None knew. He was not accusing anyone, far from it. If the

Government did wrong at the meeting, he believed that he (Mr. Walker) did wrong with them. Because an error was committed in ignorance, because the first step of a mistake was taken at the meeting, was that to compel members with their eyes open to continue in the mistake? We must, having been cautioned and warned, now hesitate to complete the contract until the inquiry was finished. A charge had been made and until that was settled one way or the other, it was his duty not to move a farther step. Let one imagine this money, and only presuming now for argument, as he would be sorry to believe it was so, already spent, £400 was to save Mr. Illingworth from criminal prosecution. If it were paid for that purpose it was compounding a felony, and there was not a member present who was sent here to use the people's money to compound a felony. Was he to suppose it was not so until those accusing had a chance to produce evidence? He was arguing that we should not decide one way or the other. But he was as ready to take that position as to take the position that there was no scintilla of evidence.

Mr. Gordon: A low idea.

Mr. WALKER: The member for Canning preached about lowness. Where was the depth of fifth the member had not wallowed in. It was a just idea he was taking. He was not saying the ex-member for West Perth might not come out of this with absolutely clean hands and if so Parliament was entitled to vote him the full £1,000. He would be entitled to it if he came out clean and there was no truth in the charges. What would be the result of voting him £400 to-night? It would be practically telling the world that we believed him to be £600 worth guilty. Members had no right to believe him innocent or guilty until the charges had been decided, but if members voted him the £400, and not the £600, we practically did to that extent prejudice his case. Moreover we had no right on the other hand to vote the whole £1,000 to-night, as that again was an act of prejudicing his case. It was practically declaring that notwithstanding any charges the House declared him entitled

that amount, and members were not in position to do that. We were here as trustees for the people, and it was our duty to hold aloof. He suggested that the Government should withdraw the item for the present, pending the ultimate decision. If the inquiry was in the full exoneration of Mr. Illingworth, then fulfil the obligation and give him the amount. If the inquiry was to the opposite was our duty not to vote a penny. If money was spent illegally and wrongfully, and if it should leak out in the course of this inquiry that the Committee had no right whatever to back up this criminal wrongdoing, it would make us all alike, criminal in any event of that kind. To speak in this strain was perhaps to bring up the whole debate of the personal responsibilities and character of the hon. gentleman; but one presumed him to be innocent, and on his behalf and on behalf of the Government itself and those who promised, he asked that the item be removed from the Estimates until a decision had been arrived at. If the charges were not proved then the Government could bring down a vote on the supplementary Estimates. He was only advising care, caution and justice; and there was no dishonour and no wrong in it. If in the inquiry it was found that Mr. Illingworth was not the man believed him to be, and if it turned out that all had been deceived, and still he voted this money, we should deserve whatever penalty the people decided to impose on us.

Mr. EWING: It was with regret that this matter had come up for discussion. The most honourable way of dealing with the question was to keep faith with the promise given at a certain meeting. He took part in that meeting and regretted the fact of the meeting being held having been mentioned in the House. He had not wavered at all in his opinion that Mr. Illingworth was worthy of some consideration at the hands of the people of the State. Therefore he was prepared to carry out fully and entirely his word given at the meeting. Members had noted that charges had been made against Mr. Illingworth; the only member who had moved in any direction in regard to

Mr. Illingworth was the member for Perth and he had to-night stated distinctly that no charge had been made. Certain inquiries were to be carried out and Mr. Illingworth was not in a position to refute those charges at the inquiry to be held. No verdict could be arrived at unless the man accused were there to defend himself. Members who attended the meeting were in duty bound to pass the vote and in no way instruct the Treasurer how to deal with the money. Some members were satisfied to vote the £400, but there was no more justice and right in paying the £400 than the £1,000. He was inclined to believe with the member for Guildford that if the Committee were not willing to pay the £1,000, the fact that £400 had been paid made them all personally liable to reimburse the State to that amount. If a mistake had been made, let members stand by it. He intended to give his vote for the amount of the item.

The TREASURER: Having wished if possible at the commencement of discussion on the item to avoid as far as possible entering into the details of the matter under consideration, he did so for several reasons, more especially because there had been some charges undoubtedly made against the late member for West Perth, who at the meeting of members decided should be provided for in this way. He (the Treasurer) felt it was due to the Government that the House and the public generally should realise that this item appeared on the Estimates in accordance with the request of a meeting of a large majority of the members of the Assembly, from both sides of the House. And he felt it was also due to himself and the Government to-night that he should clearly leave the item in the hands of the Committee. He thought he should briefly explain what had been done in accordance with the wishes expressed at the meeting. That action and a subsequent action had already been explained rather fully in debate on the motion of the member for Perth for the appointment of a select committee; but he, as representing the Government in the discussion on the Treasurer's Estimates, thought he should also intimate to the Committee what he considered was the correct course to pur-

sue in the circumstances. It was a matter for the House to decide as to what was the correct course to pursue. It was the duty of him as Minister in charge of the Estimates to suggest to the House the course he thought ought to be pursued. He had simply made that suggestion, and he felt notwithstanding the adverse opinions expressed by several members, that it was the proper and reasonable course that we ought to pursue in the circumstances. We had decided absolutely without knowledge of any charges being in the mind of the member for Perth that a compassionate allowance should be placed on the Estimates for Mr. Illingworth in consideration of his services to the State, and farther in consideration of the unfortunate circumstances he found himself placed in at the present juncture. Subsequently a charge was made by the member for Perth, who had the audacity to say to-night he had made no charges, and that the Government were trying to drag him into making charges, practically placing him on his trial. He (the Treasurer) denied that emphatically. The hon. member had made charges. [*Mr. T. L. Brown*: What were they?] Read the hon. member's speech when he moved for a select committee to inquire into certain alleged acts of the ex-member for West Perth as Colonial Treasurer. In that speech explicit and direct charges were made. The member for Perth now wished to confine his charge to the exact wording of his motion—That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on a loan granted by the Treasurer to Mr. John Elliott, also the amounts paid to and on behalf of Mr. Illingworth by the Government in anticipation of the proposed vote of £1,000. But how did the hon. member open his speech on that occasion? He said: "Before proceeding with the motion I should like to ask the Treasurer whether he will be prepared to lay on the table all the papers referring to Mr. Illingworth in the possession of the Titles Office or the Supreme Court." Would anyone say that was not a charge? First, he brought a charge as to certain land transactions under the name of John Elliott. Secondly, before proceeding with the charge he asked that certain papers

not specified be laid on the table in reference to other matters, which presumably he thought deserved inquiry. Later in his speech, the hon. member said: "I think if I can prove that this gentleman, Mr. Illingworth, is not worthy of the vote about to be paid to him, I am entitled to this select committee." Did not this convey the impression that there was a charge of unworthiness against Mr. Illingworth? He (the Treasurer) then immediately said that if the hon. member would specify the papers, they would be tabled, but that it was impossible to promise to lay on the table all papers relating to the transactions in which Mr. Illingworth was concerned. It was impossible to decide which papers were requisite. The hon. member then said he (the Treasurer) dare not put the papers on the table. [*Mr. Horan*: The member for Perth was not here now.] One could not help that. The member could read the report of what was now being said. The Government were perfectly fair and above-board in this unfortunate matter and acted in all good faith on the occasion of the meeting of members, when the Premier said distinctly it was well known that there were certain urgent engagements, amounting to some £330, which it was necessary Mr. Illingworth should have money to liquidate before he could leave the State; and that according to medical testimony it was absolutely necessary that he should leave Western Australia if his life was to be prolonged. Some forty-one members then present were agreeable to the sum of £1,000 being placed on the Estimates; and he (the Treasurer) on behalf of the Government advanced £400 to liquidate those pressing engagements, and to allow Mr. Illingworth to be taken to Victoria, thus giving him a chance of life. Then the member for Perth brought the charges just referred to. The Government were not bringing charges against the member for Perth, but he unfortunately, perhaps not directly but indirectly, brought some charge against the Government; for in his speech he implied that they had wrongfully advanced the £400, and were inclined to keep back anything they might discover or happen to know regarding the transactions:

in which Mr. Illingworth was interested. He (the Treasurer) then gave vent to his indignation, and stated that he was willing, if possible, to put the whole of the Lands Titles records on the table, if that were possible, provided the hon. member would move for them; that all papers in charge of the Government were open to him or to any other member of the House. And so that the hon. member might have every opportunity, which he evidently desired, of not confining himself to the exact wording of the motion, but of dragging into the inquiry any papers in the Lands Titles office or in the Crown Law Department, he was written to on the 17th October, the day after that debate, by the Under Secretary for Law: "Royal Commission on matters concerning Mr. F. Illingworth. I have the honour to inform you that the Hon. the Attorney General is communicating with His Honour the Chief Justice, with a view to the nomination of a Judge of the Supreme Court as a Royal Commissioner. The Hon. the Attorney General instructs me to ask you to formulate the matters you desire inquiry to be made into, in order that they may be duly set out in the commission which will be appointed in conformity with the motion passed by the Legislative Assembly." Could there be anything more open, anything which would give the hon. member a wider scope? He (the Treasurer) had asked the hon. member to move for any papers he might require; but instead of that the hon. member wrote on the same day, the 17th October, one letter presumably crossing the other:—"I should be obliged if you would kindly allow me to examine the files of the Lands Titles Office with reference to the forgery of initials on the transfer submitted for registration by Mr. Illingworth, also the file with reference to tampering with stamps on transfers submitted for registration by that gentleman. I regret that I am unable to supply you with the dates of the matters referred to above, but no doubt the office will be able to supply the information." There again was something that was not a charge! The hon. member wanted papers in connection with a forgery, papers relating to tam-

pering with stamps. To that letter the Under Secretary for Law replied on the 19th October: "I am instructed by the Hon. the Attorney General to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th inst., addressed to the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, which has been passed to him as the Minister in charge of the Lands Titles Office. I am instructed to ask you to be good enough to inform him whether you specifically charge Mr. Illingworth with (a) forgery of initials on the transfer submitted for registration, and (b), tampering with stamps on transfers also submitted for registration. In the meantime instructions have been given for a search to be made for any papers relating to the matters referred to, with a view to placing them on the table of the House." That search was made, and the only papers that could be found were the two files already placed on the table. The Under Secretary then received the following letter from the hon. member, dated the 22nd October: "In reply to your letter of the 19th inst., I am afraid you are under a misapprehension. On Wednesday evening last the Treasurer promised to place on the table of the House any papers I might ask for that were in possession of the Crown Law Department or Titles Office concerning Mr. Illingworth." Of course the papers were placed on the table. The hon. member did not pursue the question, in his correspondence at any rate, as to charges of forgery or tampering with stamps. He mentioned those in his first letter, but dropped them subsequently. The papers were there to explain for themselves what occurred some fourteen years ago, in 1893. Then on the 22nd October the member for Perth again wrote: "In reply to your letter of the 17th inst., I will forward the particulars asked for, at the earliest opportunity." These were the particulars of the charge. That was the whole correspondence, which was simply read so that members might understand that the Government had acted perfectly above-board throughout the whole of this unfortunate and most regrettable occurrence; that the Government were not asking the member for Perth to stand his trial or to answer

any charge, but were asking him to prove the charges he had made against the ex-member for West Perth (Mr. Illingworth), and apparently against members of the Government in connection with money paid to Mr. Illingworth in advance, at the behest of the majority of the members of the House.

Mr. Angwin: There was a charge suggested in regard to money paid.

The TREASURER: Suggested by whom?

Mr. Angwin: By one or two members.

The TREASURER: Surely no charges were made to-night. The member for Kanowna had intimated when speaking that if this money had been paid away illegally by way of compounding a felony the House should not pass one penny.

Mr. Angwin: But what had the member for Perth said?

The TREASURER: It did not appear that the member for Perth had to-night made any charge against the Government. If he had, it had not reached his (the Treasurer's) ears. The position of the Government should be perfectly clear. Although there had been no charges made to-night by the member for Perth, on a previous occasion he made a certain charge against members of the Government. He was not content with the charge against the ex-member for West Perth, but he also said that the greater portion of the £1,000 was paid, not to Mr. Illingworth, but to persons who had advanced money to him. As members were aware, the greater portion of the £1,000 had not yet been paid; but a small amount, namely £400, had been handed to Mr. Illingworth and the Treasury held his receipt for the money. A certain portion of this money had been paid to different institutions on Mr. Illingworth's order, but whether it was in the nature of saving him from charges of criminal intent or procedure, one did not know. There were certain liabilities Mr. Illingworth was obliged to satisfy, as had been explained to the meeting of members, before he left Western Australia. It was at Mr. Illingworth's urgent request that these debts were liquidated and the balance, £70, handed to Mrs. Illingworth so that she could take her

husband to Victoria. This was well understood by members. In taking the course they had adopted the Government were carrying out the wishes of members. If he had interpreted the wishes of the meeting wrongly then he must bear the blame, but he doubted very much whether he had done so. The wishes of the meeting were that Mr. Illingworth should have a chance for his life. He would have only a few weeks, according to medical testimony, to live if he remained in Western Australia, and the wish of the meeting was that he should have a chance and that whatever was necessary should, on the authority of that meeting, be advanced by the Treasurer in anticipation of the vote. That wish he had endeavoured to carry out and he hoped he had done so successfully. The member for Claremont had gone out of his way when he made a comparison between, for instance, the member for Katanning and Mr. Illingworth in connection with a vote of this description. This vote was a compassionate allowance. It was not a pension nor a reward in the ordinary acceptance of the term, but a compassionate allowance in view of the long services Mr. Illingworth gave to the State, an allowance no one would have thought of had not the ex-member been in absolute and dire need of assistance. It was an allowance on the same footing as those which were voted to the widows of men who had died in the service of the State and were left without any means of subsistence. [*Mr. Foulkes:* It was not on the same scale.] It was invidious to make comparisons between a man who had been a clerk in a department and another who had filled the responsible position of one of His Majesty's Ministers, and who for 13 or 14 years had been a representative of a section of the people in this House; but at the same time it must be admitted that every case would have to be considered on its merits. It was not necessary, nor was it possible, to arrive at a similar decision in each case. Naturally all the local circumstances had to be taken into consideration, and it was a regrettable thing that the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) should as an argument

compare the case of one who was in full possession of all his faculties and strength, who was an ornament to the Chamber and a good citizen of Western Australia, who was well-to-do and required no assistance or recognition at the hands of the State, with that of a man deserving of the compassionate allowance which we proposed to give to a man in dire need and depending on the assistance of Parliament for his very existence. One hoped this was not overstepping the bounds of propriety in dealing with this question, but the only matter which we should consider in all calmness was how the item should be dealt with. Some members had suggested that it should be struck out of the Estimates, but he hazarded the opinion that if that were done members would be prejudging a case to be inquired into by one of His Majesty's Judges. [*Mr. Walker*: It was to avoid it that the suggestion to strike out the item was made.] If the item were struck out it would be tantamount to saying that at any rate a *prima facie* case had been made out, sufficient at all events to warrant us to do nothing until the case had been heard. Something had already been done which Parliament could not get away from. We must acknowledge the position taken up, for we had given £400. He was glad to hear members say they would endorse the payment of that sum, but if the item of £1,000 were reduced to £400 the same inference would be created. There would be the same feeling that members were prejudging to some extent the case to be heard by one of the Judges. He desired to avoid that position and therefore suggested with all due deference that the proper course was to let the item go. [*Mr. Walker*: That was prejudicing the other way.] Because an item happened to be on the Estimates that was no justification for the Government to spend it if it was found subsequently that there were good reasons why the money should not be paid away. The Government would be just as culpable if they spent the sum voted after having found that good reasons existed for not expending it, as they would if they spent the money without the sanction of Parliament. He

hoped the Committee would agree to the item on the understanding that nothing farther would be paid until the report from the Royal Commissioner was available and on the table of the House. He hoped members would follow him in this and would allow the item to pass on that understanding. It was not a Government matter, it was certainly not a party matter, but it was a matter that we must decide according to our judgment and consciences. He hoped the House would see with him in this respect.

Mr. T. L. BROWN: By adopting a sort of dignified and injured pose, and by the introduction of sentiment, the Treasurer had endeavoured to affect the feelings of the Committee. The matter was not one in which sentiment should be allowed to enter. He was not taking a stand against the vote from any party point of view, and he felt sure that no member of the Opposition looked at it from that aspect at all. The argument that the striking out of the item would prejudice the finding of the Commissioner was not sound. On the contrary, if the vote were allowed to go, it would imply that the Committee thought Mr. Illingworth was innocent and that, therefore, the money should be paid to him. If the item were struck out it would no more imply that Mr. Illingworth was guilty than the retention of the vote would imply that he was not guilty. No injury could be done to Mr. Illingworth by holding the matter over. The attitude adopted by the Treasurer when he said members were attempting to go back on their word. [*The Treasurer*: He had said no such thing.] Well, he would accept the contradiction. On the facts placed before the meeting of members he had felt justified in acting as he had done, but since then other matters had come to his knowledge, or rather had been inferred, and on that account he had decided that it was not his duty at present to acquiesce in the vote. The Ministers must have known of the contents of the papers laid on the table of the House. [*The Treasurer*: We never sighted them.] He would accept the denial of the Treasurer, but he was sure that there was knowledge in the posses-

sion of Ministers which was not in the possession of every member. Had such knowledge been in the minds of other members as was in the minds of Ministers—

The Treasurer : What was in the minds of Ministers ?

Mr. T. L. BROWN : Had the Treasurer the right to interrupt ?

The CHAIRMAN understood the Treasurer to take exception to the hon. member's remark, and to demand farther information in justification of it. If the hon. member was not prepared to justify his statement, which the Treasurer evidently denied, the hon. member should accept the denial.

Mr. T. L. Brown : The Treasurer had not risen to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member must either give the information or else withdraw the charge against Ministers that they had certain knowledge which they kept back from other members.

Mr. T. L. Brown had made no charge whatever.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member must at once withdraw the statement.

Mr. T. L. BROWN would, under pressure, withdraw what he had never laid down. Though, the member for Perth had before the tea adjournment explained that he must leave the House for some time owing to an important engagement, yet the Treasurer, in the hon. member's absence, attacked him. It was well the hon. member was now in his place. The Treasurer's offer to lay the papers on the table was made in a sarcastic spirit. He had said, "We will bring the whole of the papers in the Titles Office, but you will have to enlarge the Chamber to receive them." To-night the Treasurer spoke with an air of injured dignity. He (Mr. T. L. Brown) was not charging Ministers with keeping back anything.

The Treasurer : The hon. member had done so.

Mr. T. L. BROWN : If Ministers liked to take what he said as a charge, they could. He (Mr. T. L. Brown) and other members had been led to believe that Mr. Illingworth was in a certain position, and that unless they relieved

him something dreadful would happen. To some extent they had been guided by sentiment, and they not only agreed to what the Treasurer asked for, but increased the amount. He (Mr. T. L. Brown) had even pleaded strongly with the member for Perth to withdraw his opposition, but that gentleman would not do so, and should be honoured for his refusal. He evidently knew more than other members. To-night, knowing what one knew, he (Mr. T. L. Brown) refused to acquiesce in the grant. The Treasurer said, "Pass the item and trust the Government." Why not delete the item and trust to the House ?

Mr. Taylor : That would prejudice the case.

Mr. T. L. BROWN : Should we not prejudice the other side by passing the item ? Let us stand neuter, and when the case was decided by the Royal Commission, surely the House would endorse whatever action the Treasurer might take. When once Mr. Illingworth's character was cleared, as all hoped it would be, he (Mr. T. L. Brown) would be sincerely delighted to vote for the item.

Mr. ANGWIN : The member for Perth said that if the meeting of members had been told what Ministers knew, the grant would never have been agreed to. To-night the Treasurer denied having had any such knowledge, and the hon. member accepted the denial. Nevertheless, two other members said to-night something had been kept back. This he (Mr. Angwin) did not believe, and would, therefore, trust Ministers either to pay or to retain the balance of the vote after the decision of the Royal Commission was known. At the meeting he had opposed fixing the amount, preferring to leave it to the Government. Unfortunately before the suggested compassionate allowance was decided upon, the matter had never been discussed in the Press. It had since been discussed frequently, and no doubt Press comments had a certain influence on some members who had spoken to-night.

Mr. HORAN had been absent on the goldfields during the meeting of members, but had he then agreed with the majority

he would agree with them now. He was opposed to the item. First, he considered Mr. Illingworth had never rendered to the State services sufficiently distinguished to entitle him to such consideration. His name could hardly be mentioned in the same category as Sir Henry Parkes and the other statesmen referred to by the member for Mount Margaret. He (Mr. Horan) objected to the attitude of the Government in holding the meeting and getting both sides to agree to this grant before it was mentioned in the House.

Mr. TROY had been absent from the meeting of members; but had he been present and agreed to the grant, he would have stuck to his promise. It was generally understood that £400 of the money had been paid. If so, it was little use in not passing the full amount. But as an inquiry was to be held, and as the member for Perth said other matters were to be investigated, it was but fair to hold the balance until the decision was known. Some members said we should trust the Government, but why put all the responsibility on Ministers? Members must do their duty to their constituents. While raising no opposition to the £400 paid away, it was right that we should pay no farther money to Mr. Illingworth until the result of the inquiry was made known.

Mr. HARDWICK supported the striking out of the grant, and leaving the matter in abeyance for the Government to decide later on what they should do. If there was justification for paying £400 there was justification for supporting the paying of the full amount. He had not been present at the joint meeting and it seemed to him it would be a dangerous precedent to grant this money. We had no right to be generous with the moneys of the people. If the item be passed and it was afterwards found there was no justification for paying the money, it would be a dark stain on the character of this Parliament.

Mr. Gordon: At the first meeting held in connection with this matter, the hon. member raised no opposition.

Mr. HARDWICK: It was an excellent thing to have a convenient Whip. Having been late in attending that meeting he had asked the Premier was it not a new departure, and the Premier had said, "No; grants of money had been given away in New Zealand and the old country." There was no vote taken at the meeting to show the unanimity, and on leaving the room he (Mr. Hardwick) had reminded the Government Whip that he was not unanimous on the point.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was to be deeply regretted that it should be possible to bring any matter forward that would lead to such a discussion. So far as Mr. Illingworth's public life was concerned, one always found Mr. Illingworth to be honourable and upright, and a man in whom one had absolute confidence. He (Mr. Holman) would trust Mr. Illingworth with anything, and believed in speaking of a man as he found him. Mr. Illingworth's services to this country for many years were of much more value to the country than £1,000. If any public man fell into a position in which he required assistance and his (Mr. Holman's) voice could do anything, he would be the first to come forward and try to assist by giving some repayment for the services rendered to the State by that public man. Any public man whose health broke down under the strain of public duties, or who had sacrificed his life for the sake of public affairs, was entitled to every possible consideration. Of course the question was whether Mr. Illingworth's transactions had been of an honourable character, but that was a phase of the question he would not touch on, and so far he had not seen or heard of anything on which he could blame Mr. Illingworth. If it was a fact that any individual who was present at the meeting of members had the knowledge that the money was to be given to save Mr. Illingworth from the consequences of some action Mr. Illingworth may have taken, that person was to blame for the grant being passed; but assuredly no one present at that meeting possessed that knowledge. It would be preferable to have the item held over until the matter was cleared up. He would support the

vote anywhere so long as Mr. Illingworth's career had been honourable. If it was not honourable it would not be right to vote money to a man who had not acted rightly. We heard of a faulty stamp. We knew that at the time Mr. Illingworth's duties took him away from his office a good deal, and we did not know that the stamp had not been put on the document by a clerk employed in the office. Transactions had taken place in more than one office where those employed had taken off stamps and replaced them by others. There was an example of that in the Post Office some time ago. He (Mr. Holman) would not condemn any man on an action connected with a paltry stamp, which occurred 14 years ago. If that was the only charge against Mr. Illingworth he hoped that no charge of a more serious nature would ever be levied against him (Mr. Holman). He attached very small importance to it. He was prepared to take his share of the responsibility of passing this £1,000. The Government in their action had been really trying to assist a man who had fallen on hard times, and in granting Mr. Illingworth a compassionate allowance were only doing what should be done to any public man who had fallen by the way. If it was impossible to defer the item he (Mr. Holman) would support it as it stood, with the pledge from the Treasurer that no money would be paid away if a dishonourable action was proved against Mr. Illingworth. He (Mr. Holman) would be prepared to pay his share towards clearing off any debt to the State if there had been dishonourable action on the part of Mr. Illingworth, but if a mistake had been made we really should not be called upon to make good the mistake. It was not the first financial mistake made. Notwithstanding a resolution of this House, £2,000 had been given to Faiz Mahomet. That transaction was much worse than the Illingworth transaction, but nothing had been said about it.

Mr. H. BROWN regretted the Treasurer had made an attack upon him during his (Mr. Brown's) absence, but he was not going to be so foolish as to be drawn into any other charges against

Mr. Illingworth than he had made the other evening when he said that Mr. Illingworth, when Treasurer, was the registered owner of certain land on which he (Mr. Illingworth), as a member of Cabinet, had approved of a loan; and of an inquiry that might be made into that charge he (Mr. Brown) was not afraid. He had heard of other dealings that had occurred with the Titles Office, and there was evidence in the letter he wrote to the Treasurer that he had not asked for these files to be brought to the House. If the Treasurer read the letter it would be seen that he had asked to be allowed to peruse the files.

The TREASURER: When the hon. member moved for a select committee the hon. member used the words, "Before proceeding with the motion I would like to ask the Treasurer whether he would be prepared to lay on the table all the papers referring to Mr. Illingworth in the possession of the Titles Office or Supreme Court."

Mr. H. BROWN: The Treasurer could not draw him off the track. When he heard of the purport of these papers, in order to save Mr. Illingworth he had written the following letter to the Treasurer:—

"I shall be obliged if you would kindly allow me to examine the files of the Land Titles Office, with reference to the forgery of initials on transfers submitted for registration by Mr. Illingworth; also the files with reference to the tampering with stamps on transfers submitted for registration by that gentleman."

The Premier in his speech had referred to the dragging up of affairs that happened 13 or 14 years ago. To show that he (Mr. Brown) was ignorant of the date when the transaction with the Land Titles Office occurred, he would read the following addendum to the letter:—

"I regret I am unable to supply you with dates of the matters referred to above, but no doubt the office will supply you with that information."

To this the following reply was received

not from the Treasurer but from the officer of the Crown Law Department:—

"I am instructed by the hon. the Attorney General to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant, addressed to the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, which has been passed to him as the Minister in charge of the Land Titles Office. I am instructed to ask you to be good enough to inform us whether you specifically charge Mr. Illingworth with—(a) Forgery of initials on a transfer submitted for registration, and (b) Tampering with stamps on transfers also submitted for registration. In the meantime instructions have been given for a search to be made for any papers relating to the matters referred to, with a view to placing them on the table of the House."

The Government were entirely responsible for these papers being laid on the table. He did not fear them now they were here nor the result of the inquiry. The next letter he wrote was as follows:—

"In reply to your letter of the 19th instant, I am afraid you are under a misapprehension. On Wednesday evening last the Colonial Treasurer promised to lay on the table of the House any papers I might ask for that were in possession of the Crown Law Department or the Lands Titles Office concerning Mr. Illingworth."

The Treasurer: The papers had been laid on the table; so what more did the hon. member want?

Mr. H. BROWN: Then there was the following letter which he received:—

"I have to inform you that the hon. the Attorney General is communicating with his honour the Chief Justice, with a view to the nomination of a Judge of the Supreme Court as a Royal Commissioner. The hon. the Attorney General instructs me to ask you to formulate the matters you desire inquiry to be made into, in order that they may be duly set out in the Commission which will be appointed in conformity with the motion passed by the Legislative Assembly."

We had now come to a time for plain-

speaking. The Treasurer had said he had no conception of what the money was required for. Would he, or the members of the Ministry, deny that they had a meeting to consider the financial position of Mr. Illingworth?

The Treasurer: There was no meeting.

Mr. H. BROWN: Would the Treasurer say there was no meeting of the members of the Ministry with the Chairman of Committees, to discuss the financial position of Mr. Illingworth?

The Treasurer: There was no meeting of Cabinet.

Mr. H. BROWN: Would the Treasurer deny that the members of the Ministry and the Chairman of Committees had a meeting.

The TREASURER (in explanation): The hon. member was now trying to cast farther insinuations upon the Ministry in connection with the matter. No Cabinet meeting was held at all. There was no meeting of members of the Ministry, but he believed the Chairman of Committees and the Premier had conversations. The Premier also had conversations with individual members of Cabinet. Naturally a matter of that sort would be talked about by members of the Ministry, but there was no formal meeting of Cabinet to consider the question. What did the hon. member mean when he said that there were conversations?

Mr. H. BROWN had never suggested there was a meeting of Cabinet, for if there was one the Chairman of Committees could not have been present.

The TREASURER: The hon. member was rather showing his ignorance. On many occasions members from outside had been asked to attend Cabinet meetings. The hon. member had not yet occupied a position in the Cabinet, and could be excused for his error on the present occasion.

Mr. H. BROWN had not yet received a denial of the statement that Ministers met Mr. Daglish, the Chairman of Committees, to discuss the financial position of Mr. Illingworth. Had the members of the Ministry told the meeting of members what that money was required for, they would have demurred before granting the vote. The Treasurer had denied

that he knew anything about what the money was for, until the question came before members. Yet when speaking to the House on the question he said:—

"I want to discuss the matter without interruption from the hon. member. In regard to the meeting and the action that the hon. member took on that occasion, the Premier clearly laid the position open to members. He stated—I remember his words distinctly—that there were £300 odd of urgent debts of Mr. Illingworth's that should be paid before he would be permitted to leave the State, and the doctor's evidence went to show that the pressure was so great that there was the possibility, if he did not leave within two or three weeks, and unless he was relieved of his financial trouble and permitted to go away to Victoria, as it was Mrs. Illingworth's intention—(At this stage Mr. Foulkes interjected.)—Of course there was. I am telling the member that there were certain urgent liabilities. We discussed whether an annuity would be better, or whether he should be granted leave of absence."

Farther on he said:—

"Let me explain how the money was advanced, so that the House will know the whole matter. The £400 was advanced by the Under Treasurer on my authority. The money was drawn, and in order that there should be no mistake and no possibility of Mr. Illingworth being prevented from leaving the State, I asked—[Mr. H. Brown: Was it paid to his creditors?] Certainly; but what have I to do with his creditors. I asked the Under Treasurer to act the part of a friend to Mr. Illingworth, and see that the urgent liabilities which the Premier referred to at the meeting were cleared, so that he would be allowed to leave the State, and that the balance should be handed to Mrs. Illingworth. That was carried out. On the written orders of Mr. Illingworth the sum of £330 out of the £400 was paid to discharge urgent liabilities, and £70 was handed to Mrs. Illingworth in order to take her husband to Victoria and thereby possibly save his life."

The Minister had stated that the money was given entirely to Mr. Illingworth, and they did not care what he did with it. It would be found on inquiry that the Government themselves had been assisting by registering certain transactions through the Crown Law authorities. He was not afraid of the result of the inquiry. He had stated at the meeting of members that he would oppose the vote both inside the House and outside of it; and although possibly he might stand alone, he was prepared to stand or fall by it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for Perth had been very guarded in his attitude for the past few months in regard to the question. When it was discussed at the meeting of members, the member had knowledge of certain charges. While Mr. Illingworth was in the country and there was the slightest possibility of his being able to refute any charges the member had against him, the member for Perth was silent. In speaking to the question to-night, the member for Perth stated most emphatically that he had made no charge against Mr. Illingworth. [Mr. H. Brown had stated there were charges.] The hon. member stated that he made no charge whatever against Mr. Illingworth. One had only to read his speech at the time he asked for a select committee to realise that he made charges, for every word he said on that occasion was a reflection on the honour and the integrity of Mr. Illingworth; and the hon. member went farther on a later occasion, when he told the House that in regard to the moneys which had been paid to Mr. Illingworth, certain moneys were to be repaid to certain members of the Ministry.

Mr. H. BROWN (in explanation): The remarks made by the Minister showed the low-down way in which they treated him. He had withdrawn that statement about the Ministry absolutely, and none knew that better than the Minister for Mines. The Premier had the decency to let the matter drop after his withdrawal. He had the assurance of the Attorney General, who he took it was a gentleman, that he was wrong, and so he had withdrawn it.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Perth must not make a speech. He must resume his seat. The Minister must not refer to any remark which the member for Perth had withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When speaking as he had done, he had no idea that the member for Perth had withdrawn the statement. He heard him make it originally in the House, but was not aware that it was since withdrawn. He referred to it only because the member tried to make another charge again to-night, when he said he wished to know whether certain meetings had not been held with a view of considering Mr. Illingworth's position. It must be apparent to anyone that before the Premier would bring a matter before members of the House, as he had on this question, he would discuss it not only with the Ministers, but with the Leader of the Opposition and with many members. More than half of the members had been spoken to, and the whole question was put fairly before them. He had known Mr. Illingworth for 30 years, and was aware of the trouble he got into financially in Victoria. Mr. Illingworth would have been a wealthy man had it not been for the land boom. When he came over here he did remarkably well for some time, but had embarrassed himself very considerably by paying away exceedingly large sums to make repayments of some of the debts he had incurred in Victoria. The amount repaid was over £8,000. He had been associated with Mr. Illingworth for a long time, and had every belief in his integrity. Unfortunately Mr. Illingworth was not present to speak for himself, and it was impossible for another member to answer the charges. However, when these charges were investigated he believed that, even in Mr. Illingworth's absence, it would be found there was no justification for them. If Parliament reduced the vote, that would be tantamount to saying that members believed the charges that were made and had therefore altered the decision they arrived at in recommending that a certain sum should be placed on the Estimates for him. If it were seen that 40 members of the House who had agreed that, owing to

the work Mr. Illingworth had done for the country, and the long period during which he acted as a member of Parliament without payment, and the work he had done for the State as a whole, he should receive the sum of £1,000, and then subsequently decided to reduce the vote, that would certainly be tantamount to an expression of opinion on their part that he was guilty of the charges made against him. [Mr. Walker: It would be tantamount to saying we had suspended judgment.] On account of the position most members occupied in connection with the vote, it was impossible for them to suspend judgment now. The sum of £400 had been paid with a view to removing a certain proportion of the debts and enabling him to leave the State. The Treasurer had given a promise that until the inquiry was completed, and unless the result of the inquiry was satisfactory, no farther moneys would be paid. With that assurance before members, the Committee were justified in passing the item. If we refused to pass it, or limited the amount, we would be stultifying the action taken on a previous occasion, or would be prejudging the case.

Mr. STONE moved—

That the question be now put.

Motion not pressed.

Amendment (to strike out the item) put; division taken with following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	25

Majority against .. 15

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. H. Brown	Mr. Angwin
Mr. T. L. Brown	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Bath
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Brabber
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Davies
Mr. Horan	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Stone	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Walker	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Troy (Teller).	Mr. Gull
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Holman
	Mr. Hudson
	Mr. Johnson
	Mr. McLarty
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. S. F. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Taylor
	Mr. Underwood
	Mr. Vervard
	Mr. Ware
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Layman (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. FOULKES moved—

That the item be reduced by £600.

Mr. JOHNSON: The position we were in was that £400 had been paid, and consequently we must pass that amount. If we passed £1,000, we ought to pay £1,000; if we were not going to pay £1,000, we ought not to pass it. The Minister admitted that he was not going to pay the balance of £600; therefore the Government believed there was some justification for delay. If there was no justification, why delay the payment? The Government should leave it to the Committee to decide whether the money should be paid or not. This was not business. One would not do such a thing in private life, and members were not justified in doing it in this House. When the time came for payment the Government could come down and ask for the £600. He (Mr. Johnson) was just as much responsible for the payment of the £400 as the Government, and any farther payment he was prepared to pass when the Government were willing to pay it, not before.

The TREASURER: This matter was in the hands of the Committee; but he wished to explain to the member for Guildford that it was not suggested the Government should use their discretion absolutely when the finding was given by the Commissioner. He had stated that it was the intention of the Government that no farther moneys should be paid until the finding was on the table of the House.

Mr. Angwin: What position would the Government be in if every item had to remain until it was time to pay the money?

The TREASURER: Preparations must be made; money must be voted in advance. He agreed with the member for Guildford that there was cause for delaying payment. A certain member had made charges, and the Government intended to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into these charges. That was sufficient, the fact that a commission of inquiry had to be held; and until the Government were in possession of the finding of the inquiry, he said distinctly the Government would not be jus-

tified in spending any more money under this heading. If when the finding was received it was discovered that everything was right, that Mr. Illingworth's character was cleared and the report was on the table of the House, members could then take action; or they could confer with the Government, and the Government would proceed to pay the balance of the vote. If there was divided opinion on the matter, if members thought the finding justified the vote being reduced, they could then confer with the Government and take action to prevent the Government paying the balance.

Mr. Hudson: Which might be put on the bottom of the list.

The TREASURER: The Government did not take up that attitude in regard to votes of this description. This was an item that concerned all members of the House. It was not a Government item; it concerned the honour of the House. He did not propose to move in the matter farther until the House was in possession of the finding and knew exactly how the charge stood.

Mr. Hudson: Could not Supplementary Estimates be brought down?

The TREASURER: It was unheard of to bring down Supplementary Estimates for the balance of a compassionate allowance. If the Government found there was justification for not going on with the expenditure they would stop the expenditure, no matter whether the House passed it or not. That was often the case with votes. The Committee having had that assurance, he hoped the item would be allowed to go without farther discussion.

Mr. FOULKES: The Treasurer was quite right when he said this was not a matter for the Government to decide. It was a question for the Committee and the honour of the House; yet the Treasurer asked members to leave the matter practically in the hands of the Government. He asked members to say if the Government were not satisfied with the result of the inquiry they should not pay the money. The Treasurer stated that it had been the practice for many years for the Government not to pay money if it was not justified, although votes had been

passed. In this case he asked the Committee to pass a sum of £600 and to leave it to the Government to decide whether the money should be paid or not, at the same time saying that it was not a matter for the Government, and that members were to confer with the Government. He would like to know what that meant. Did it mean that there would be a full Cabinet meeting at which members would be asked to attend and give reasons? Or were members to attend before the Treasurer and use arguments for or against this grant? Was the Treasurer to be a kind of court of appeal? It would be a curious conference. We were asked to confer with the Treasurer. Suppose the Treasurer did not agree with the views expressed and said he decided to pay the amount, that would be the end of the conference.

The Treasurer: The hon. member could table a motion.

Mr. FOULKES: A motion would be tabled and the whole matter would be gone into at length again; whereas, if the item were struck out now—not with a view to prejudicing the case one way or the other—the amount could be brought up on the Supplementary Estimates. It was a common practice for Treasurers to bring down Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. Holman: How long was it since Supplementary Estimates had been brought down.

Mr. FOULKES: No Supplementary Estimates had been brought down for the last three years; still it is a well-known constitutional practice, nothing out of the way. It was not fair to the member for Perth, or to members of the House, to ask them at this stage to agree to pass the full amount of the item.

Amendment (to reduce by £600) put, and a division taken.

Mr. H. Brown announced that the member for West Perth (*Mr. Draper*) had paired with the Premier.

The division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	22
				—

Majority against .. 9

AYES.
Mr. Bath
Mr. H. Brown
Mr. T. L. Brown
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Heitzmann
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Male
Mr. Stone
Mr. Stuart
Mr. Walker
Mr. Troy (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Angwin
Mr. Barnett
Mr. Brebber
Mr. Davies
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Gull
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Holman
Mr. Layman
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Monger
Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Price
Mr. Smith
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Veryard
Mr. Ware
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Item—*Tobin, M.*, father of the late *Michael Tobin* (member of Canning exploring expedition, killed by natives), £100:

Mr. HOLMAN: The amount seemed small. If it were true that *Mr. Tobin* senior was entirely dependent on his son, the allowance was paltry.

The TREASURER: Cabinet has decided that £100, in addition to some considerable arrears of pay due to the late member of the expedition, would suffice for the aged father, who was not entirely dependent on the deceased, as there were other brothers as well as sisters.

Mr. HOLMAN: In that case the amount appeared sufficient; but if assistance were subsequently needed, it should be granted by the Government of the day.

Other items of Compassionate Allowances agreed to, and the vote passed.

Vote—General Stores, £1,993:

Item—Transferring stores to Perth, £165:

Mr. ANGWIN: What stores were to be transferred?

The TREASURER: The board specially appointed to consider the question of stores recommended transfer of the whole of the general stores from Fremantle to Perth. The findings of the board appeared on pages 56-60 of the annual report of the Public Service Commissioner. They recommended that a tender and supply board be created, and a central store established in Perth to work under the direction of the said

board, a stores manager being appointed to take charge of the central store, his duties to include attendance at all meetings of the tender and supply board. The board of inquiry estimated that this would effect a saving in salaries alone of £2,500 per annum, without considering the large indirect saving which must result from the stores system being centralised. Applications for the position of stores manager were now in the hands of the Commissioner.

Mr. ANGWIN moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

The rottenness of the Treasurer's argument was apparent. The true object of the transfer was to provide a convenient office for certain officers who lived in Perth. The board of inquiry complained that some wire netting and iron posts had rusted at the Fremantle store. In any part of the State such material would corrode if buried in sand. The stores at Fremantle cost £5,000 or £6,000 to erect. Several large private firms had stores near the water's edge, and if such stores suited private firms they ought to suit the Government. From a minute by the Hon. F. H. Piesse when Minister for Works it appeared that a former Government had distinctly promised that the stores should not be removed from North Fremantle, and the report of the board disclosed no justification for the removal. Every department had now a store of its own, and the State would save by centralising all the officers; but whether they were centralised at Perth or at North Fremantle would make no difference. Some years ago Mr. Gardiner, when Treasurer, thought it advisable to close the Government stores, and distribution was made of the stores to the various departments, but now we found that the system had been a loss to the State and that the Government were reverting to the old position, except in regard to the Railway Department, though no doubt it would follow later. The Government called together a few officers, most of them situated in Perth, to see whether it was possible to bring the stores together at one central point, and naturally those

officers recommended Perth. We were not told what it was going to cost to build the new stores, though we had at North Fremantle sufficient accommodation already, and a place which was in every way suitable for transshipment to the North-West ports and for the despatch of goods by rail. There was no place better suited than North Fremantle. [*The Treasurer: The board did not say so.*] The damage at North Fremantle was caused through incompetent officers allowing the goods to be buried in sand instead of having them put under cover.

[*Mr. Hudson took the Chair.*]

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

Ayes	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	17

Majority against .. 8

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. T. L. Brown	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Collier	Mr. Draper
Mr. Davies	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Holman	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Gull
Mr. Smith	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Ware	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Heitmann (<i>Teller</i>).	Mr. Layman
	Mr. Male
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. S. F. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Stuart
	Mr. Veryard
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (<i>Teller</i>).

Amendment thus negatived; vote put and passed.

Vote—*Government Savings Bank*, £15,015:

Mr. BATH: It was pleasing to see that the Bill we passed last year, providing better facilities for depositors, had increased the business of the bank and apparently the slight amount of profit earned. What was the amount of interest the Government received from the Western Australian Bank for the money deposited with that bank, amounting to £467,384? Did the Government receive a commensurate rate of interest for that money. If they did not it might be possible to find a more profitable means of investing the funds than to leave them lying idle at the Western Australian Bank. The Government had to provide a fairly large amount in case of an ur-

gent call, but where they were paying their depositors three per cent. care must be taken to see that no money was put out at a less rate of interest than that, or otherwise they would not be able to pay interest on depositors' current accounts. The time had arrived when the Government Savings Bank and the Agricultural Bank should be amalgamated. Among the securities held in the Treasury chest on behalf of the Government Savings Bank were mortgage bonds amounting to £433,000 under the Agricultural Bank Act, and £88,870 on debentures under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. The bulk of the money re-invested by the State was in the nature of an investment under the Agricultural Bank Act, and it seemed to entail an unnecessary cost to maintain the institutions separately, whereas the management of the two institutions could really be conducted together. As to the unclaimed deposits, he noticed that there was no mention made of that in the Savings Bank report this year. Last year he had called the attention of the Treasurer to a case of hardship which that provision under the Savings Bank Act had inflicted on a resident of the State, in that he had placed a sum of money in the bank for emergency which might arise in the future, but not having operated on the account for some years the money was transferred to the unclaimed deposits, and for a long time he could not get satisfaction from the Government, who had practically commandeered the amount. It was only when the matter was brought up that restitution was made. It might happen in the future that a similar case would occur and people would be in danger of losing their money. He had opposed the clause when the Savings Bank Bill was before the House. The report showed that a profit of £3,927 was made last year, and that it exceeded the profits for the years 1905 and 1906. The money made by the bank was turned over to the consolidated revenue. In his opinion the profits earned on the operations of the Savings Bank should be placed to a reserve fund, which, in the near future, might go towards extending the operations of the bank in other directions.

For instance an application might be received from a district for, say, the erection of a State flour mill, or to provide facilities in other directions, and if a reserve fund, such as he proposed, were made, the money from it could be used to great advantage. The Savings Bank was in the nature of a trading concern, and it was wrong that the profits realised therefrom should be put into consolidated revenue.

Mr. DRAPER : In the Savings Bank report reference was made to debentures totalling £445,485 of the Metropolitan Waterworks Board. Did that sum represent the face value of the debentures?

The TREASURER : The amount of the debentures issued by the Waterworks Board was based on the face value. Evidently the hon. member desired to know if the goodwill in the original purchase was included in the valuation. The valuation covered everything, including goodwill. That amount was gradually being liquidated, however, by the small amount of profit the board was enabled to earn above its working expenses and the interest on the whole of the moneys borrowed. As to the question by the Leader of the Opposition, the sum owned by the Savings Bank and placed to their credit in the Western Australian Bank was under a special arrangement. For the first £100,000 deposited with that institution on current account, the Government received 3 per cent. per annum; and on the next £100,000, 1½ per cent.; and on the balance one per cent. He quite understood the member's object in referring to the matter for he (the Treasurer) also realised, as he had done ever since he had occupied the position of Treasurer, that one always had to be on the lookout to see that a direct return was received for the investment of Savings Bank moneys. More especially was it necessary when there was such a large increase in the deposits as at present. It followed naturally that if the Government could not earn on the money they received from depositors, interest sufficient to enable them to pay the working expenses, they could not expect to pay the three per

cent. interest on the current accounts of depositors. The result had proved that every caution had been exercised, for not only was there a good cash reserve in hand in order to meet demands made upon the bank, but the institution had been able to earn, after paying depositors the large amount of interest for the year, £61,859, a small profit of nearly £4,000 which had gone to the general revenue of the State. That ought to be considered a very satisfactory position indeed, more especially when we took into consideration the great benefit the institution was to the whole of the people of Western Australia, and when we knew that every fourth person, almost, was a depositor in the institution. We had 122 agencies in connection with the postal system, and five branch offices, namely, at Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Boulder, Fremantle and Coolgardie, and the ramifications of the bank practically extended from end to end of our State. Members did not wish him to detain them to-night in going into the details of the working of the bank. The figures were highly satisfactory; the percentage of depositors to the population compared very favourably to any of the other States, and the new Act was working admirably. The innovation of a school children's pence deposit was working in the schools and proving very useful. The distribution of small safes had resulted in £600 or £700 being collected which otherwise would have been spent in lolly shops and elsewhere. We were encouraging thrift in the young people which would bear fruit in the future. With regard to the transfer of the profits to the Consolidated Revenue, the Consolidated Revenue was responsible for the operations of the bank; if there was a loss the revenue was responsible to see the loss was paid in full, and until we had a State bank perhaps, we could not do wrong in transferring the small profit to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue; on the other hand if there happened to be a loss we would have to debit it up against the Consolidated Revenue. On the whole we might congratulate ourselves on the Savings Bank being a live and very useful institution.

Mr. HOLMAN : The operations of the Savings Bank might be extended a good deal on the saw-mills. At the present time practically no provision was made for savings banks in these localities. Every possible inducement should be given to the workers and the poorer classes of people throughout the State to save money.

The Treasurer : There were savings banks at some of the timber stations.

Mr. HOLMAN : The persons appointed on the different timber mills were practically the employees of the company.

The Treasurer : The postmasters.

Mr. HOLMAN : They were officials of the Combine.

The Treasurer : Was there objection?

Mr. HOLMAN : A good deal of objection. As soon as a man saved a few shillings that fact was stored up against him, and was detrimental to him. In a great many instances if the employers knew a man was saving a few shillings he was curtailed as much as possible. Extortionate charges were made for stores which would not be so if the men had not the money. An endeavour was made to get every penny of the workmen's wages. The Treasurer knew better than he did that when a case came before the Arbitration Court the Savings Bank accounts were used to reduce wages.

The Treasurer : To show the men were saving money.

Mr. HOLMAN : The Treasurer had used the argument on many occasions. The fact that men had saved a few paltry shillings and perhaps had starved themselves to do so was used as an argument to reduce wages.

The Treasurer had shown that the arguments used by the member, that the men could not save, were wrong.

Mr. HOLMAN : The men tried to save and more encouragement should be given in this direction. If a man could save a few shillings he did not wish his employer to know that was so; there should be some means of a man saving money without it becoming public property. If a workman happened to have £15 or £20, which he should have in case of accident, every encouragement should

be given to him. The time had arrived when a different system should be adopted on the timber mills. The present energetic manager of the bank would adopt a scheme if it could be introduced. In every outback place some encouragement should be given to the people to save money. There was a matter that was assuming alarming dimensions, and that was the question of defalcations. A sum of £300 or £400 was taken from the bank a little time ago by some means, and we should have some explanation of that. He had failed to gather from the Press any satisfactory explanation; it showed there was a screw loose somewhere. One of the worst features about the bank was that if a depositor's money was taken through no fault of his own, that depositor was liable to suffer the loss.

The Treasurer : He did not lose it.

Mr. HOLMAN : There was a serious chance of one man losing his money.

The Treasurer : No chance at all.

Mr. HOLMAN : In that case the man came down post haste to Perth on finding his money had been taken from the bank.

The Treasurer : He came because he found his account closed.

Mr. HOLMAN : There was a provision whereby if money was stolen there was no redress; in his opinion that should be altered. We should be able to work our Savings Bank in the same way as other banks, and give the same protection.

The Treasurer : So they did.

Mr. HOLMAN : To some extent. The cheque system could be extended. The present system was cumbersome and practically useless. There was no quick business transaction.

The Treasurer : The quickest in the Commonwealth.

Mr. HOLMAN did not find it so, and he had had one or two transactions with Savings Bank cheques. We should extend the operations of the Savings Bank, and give greater opportunities to people to deposit their money. The permission to various organisations to deposit money had assisted those bodies and extended the bank's operations. The banking

facilities should be extended so that the bulk of the country's banking would be done with the Government bank and not with the private institutions in which the Treasurer had graduated and which he therefore favoured.

Mr. BATH : What provision was made for auditing the accounts? A considerable period must elapse between the audits throughout the State.

The TREASURER : The audit was continuous. Few weeks passed in which there were not auditors in the head office checking the accounts. The accounts of the five branches were frequently audited. Apart from the branches there were agencies, principally for the receipt of deposits. As to timber stations it was hardly likely that information could, as alleged, leak out regarding amounts at a depositor's credit; for the deposits were simply passed through to the head office, no ledgers being kept at the agencies. Considering the immense scope of the institution, and the large number of the accounts, nearly 70,000, which could be operated on, and the fact that the deposits totalled some 2½ millions, it was gratifying that there was only one defalcation during the last 12 months. The offender or offenders in the case of the £360 stolen had not been traced. The present system, which existed in Victoria and elsewhere, was perfectly sound, being practically designed to prevent the recurrence of the fraud in question. But the old system provided that if a pass book were lost or destroyed, the new book issued took the same number as the old, and referred to the same ledger account. Unfortunately, some of the old books were still in existence. A new book having been issued to this depositor, the old book turned up after four years, and the person fraudulently producing it was permitted to draw the depositor's balance. The signature of the depositor, of course, appeared in the old book; but even under the old system the fraud should have been prevented, because when a new book was issued the ledger account was marked accordingly. But in transferring this account from one ledger to another, the note that a new book had been issued was, strangely enough, omit-

ted in the new account ; and stranger still, although the depositor had sent in his new book, and the interest had been written up, and the ledger in use was marked by the auditors who were responsible for seeing the interest entered in the pass book, yet, when the old pass book came in, some bank official in collusion with the thief, or guilty of gross neglect of duty, entered the interest in the old pass book and allowed principal and interest to be drawn. It seemed that someone either employed in the bank, or who had been employed in the bank and had an intimate knowledge of the account, was a party to the fraud. It was still hoped that the delinquent or delinquents would be unearthed and their crime brought home to them. Meanwhile the Government were satisfied that the depositor was not in collusion with the criminal ; and as soon as that was made clear Cabinet ordered the repayment of the money. Nevertheless, the section referred to by the hon. member (Mr. Holman) was necessary, otherwise it would be easy for a depositor to lose his book purposely, and try to perform the same trick in collusion with someone in the bank, though under the present system such a fraud would be almost impossible provided the employees were honest. The institution was doing splendid work, and he hoped members would realise that it was of great benefit to the whole State.

Item — Manager Kalgoorlie Branch, £142 :

Mr. JOHNSON : Some means should be devised of getting information as to the manner in which the officers in country and goldfields districts were living. It was generally known that the officer at Kalgoorlie who had got away with some of the Government's money was living beyond his means. When Minister, he (Mr. Johnson) had conveyed his fears with reference to this and other officers to the Auditor General and as the result of a special audit that was made, one or two of the officers had been passed out of the department. This officer had succeeded in passing the audit, but it was known that he was living under circum-

stances in which he could not possibly carry on at the salary. Had this officer had some kindly advice from those in authority we would have had better results.

The Treasurer agreed.

Vote put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.45 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 6th November, 1907.

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

Prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary : Plans showing proposed Route of Wonuerup-Nannup Railway.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the *Hon. G. Randell*, leave of absence for three sitting days was granted to the *Hon. C. A. Piesse*, on the ground of urgent private business.