

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 30th November, 1926.

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

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT AND A.W.U.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the following paragraph which appeared in Wednesday's "Daily News":—"Mr. E. Devine, the officer in charge of the construction of the railway to connect the gap between Norseman and Salmon Gums, on the Esperance line, has engaged 40 men to proceed to Norseman by train early to-morrow. Addressing an assemblage of 60 applicants outside the Post Office, Mr. Devine made it clearly understood that it was an A.W.U. job, and any man not joined up with that union would be required to take out his ticket when he commenced work. Mr. Devine invited members of the union to step forward, and a ready response was forthcoming. Several names were handed in. A move was then made to an office in the Government buildings, and the names of the various applicants were taken. Mr. J. J. Lawler, secretary of the Eastern Goldfields District Council of the A.L.P., informed a Press representative that a full complement of men would have been willing to go if work had been available for them"? 2, Does the Minister approve the conditions of employment set out in the paragraph?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No, but my attention has since been drawn to an unqualified denial of the report by Mr. Devine appearing in the issue of the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of the morning upon which the hon. member gave notice of his question. In reply to the Engineer in Chief's inquiry Mr. Devine states he did not address men or speak to them on condi-

tions of employment. It is apparent that, so far as it relates to officers of the Public Works Department, the report is pure invention. 2, Answered by No. 1.

PRIVILEGE—"HANSARD" COPIES REMOVED.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Mr. Corboy, the time for bringing up the committee's report was extended by one week.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Dairy Cattle Compensation.

Transmitted to the Council.

2, Navigation Act Amendment.

Passed.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1926-27.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 25th November; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Vote—Departmental, £140,034:

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Nor-
tham) [4.38]: One approaches the discus-
sion of Loan Estimates always with a good
deal of satisfaction, not because one neces-
sarily agrees with all that appears on them,
but because this is a time of the session
when we can discuss the real work to be done
in the country. The ordinary Estimates of
Revenue and Expenditure consist largely of
salary items, which are fixed quite apart
from the House; but in the Loan Estimates
we have something which we must consider,
and with regard to which it is just as neces-
sary to be careful as with regard to revenue
expenditure. There are some people who
think the State lives by the expenditure of
loan money, but that is not the case at all.
So far as we create assets with the money
that we borrow, we are living by work. If
we expend on a work more than is reason-
able or right, then to the extent to which
the expenditure is excessive, but to that ex-
tent only, do we live on borrowed money.
We must be careful in our borrowing and
in our spending. On that point we are all
agreed. In framing Loan Estimates our aim
should be the creation of wealth—wealth
creating work, and wealth creating enter-

prise. Such development is needed in this new country. Without money we cannot have work. For the most part we have to delve into the soil to get the wealth that provides work, that provides opportunities of taxation and, indeed, really everything we have. We possess a territory, and territory of all things in the world seems to be the most valuable possession to-day. Our territory is growing more important day by day as the world's population grows, and it is growing rapidly. We should keep before us always the fact that the change in this regard completely alters the outlook for this State of ours. Our public debt is very considerable—about 70 millions sterling, less some 10 millions of sinking fund, leaving a net indebtedness of about 60 millions. We have wonderful assets, for the most part interest-earning assets, assets created for the development of our State. I doubt if any State has been more careful in the aggregate than this State in the expenditure of loan moneys. We hear much to the contrary from time to time, but taking our loan expenditure of 70 millions and looking over all that has happened owing to that expenditure we see that, as a result, we now have not only works but people. Production is going on adjacent to the works created by the loan expenditure. That, of course, is the right thing. We have, it is said, in a loan indebtedness of 60 millions, enough for 370,000 people to carry. We should have an enormous debt if the money were not invested in interest-earning ventures. If 370,000 people can carry a debt of 60 millions sterling, on the same basis, and judging by the past, the expenditure of £4,800,000 proposed by these Loan Estimates should provide opportunities for the settlement of another 30,000 people here, though not of course straight away. As the loan expenditure bears fruit, so should we add to our population to that extent; and I believe that we will do so. Naturally, it takes some time after a railway has been constructed for the land served by it to be brought into full production, for towns to spring up, and for trade to grow; but those things have come in the past, and surely will come in the future. There are 30,000 people needed to keep the per capita debt at its present level, by reason of this proposed expenditure of £4,800,000. I wish to make it clear that I do not expect 30,000 people to be added to our numbers straight away, but if the money is wisely

expended that additional population must in time result from the expenditure. Our energies in the provision of developmental works have been largely devoted to creating transport facilities, harbour facilities, railways, and marketing facilities, and to the providing of money for developmental loans to individuals. If it were not for these loans we should not be justified in building railways. As everyone knows, long-term loans are not easily obtained from ordinary financial institutions, and certainly not by the men we are able to secure to settle on our lands. Therefore it becomes a matter for the Government to provide funds for our banking institution to do this work. When the work is done, we shall be able to absorb far more people. For instance, take that railway of 90 miles from Dowerin to Merredin, consider the farmers settled along the route and the eight small townships, and take all the people in Perth engaged in supplying the wants of those people up there; I wonder how many of our population would be represented by that 90 miles of line. And so, too, with other railways that have been built; wealth has been created, work provided and life flows in the shape of trade throughout our land. So when we face this question we must face it having in mind just what has happened as the result of work of that kind. We have the land. In the South-West there are 100,000,000 acres, of which we have sold 30,000,000 acres. So we have 70,000,000 acres left. Not all of it is good land; but neither is all the land in any part of the world. It is estimated that not more than 40 per cent. of the world's surface can be cultivated. The land can be used only when it can be profitably used. If only wool prices are maintained, a great deal of land not now cultivated will be used; and so long as wheat prices keep up, opportunities in this State will be unlimited. I believe that after a few years these prices will be even firmer than they are at present. At any rate, we have a long way to go to meet the food requirements of our own people. We shall discuss later the development of the South-West. I do not propose to do more here than point out that we are importing about £2,000,000 worth of food-stuffs, the production of which would keep a great many of our people busy. Why should we import food? Our aim should be to produce enough for ourselves, and for exporting in ever-increasing quantity when

we once embark on the export trade in dairy produce. That, I think, should be our aim. Then, too, we should manufacture to meet our growing demand. I am glad to see that Messrs. McKay, the Sunshine people, are establishing themselves here. A very big industry should follow. Take the increased area under cultivation in this State as compared with that in the other States. In view of our increased area, the opportunities in this State for machinery manufacturing firms should be very rosy. The demand for agricultural machinery is certainly great in this State, and I hope McKay's will establish their firm here and make for us most of the agricultural implements they now send from the Eastern States. Then, of course, there are other manufacturing firms already established here, and others that will have to come here if they wish to retain our trade. I do not know why we have bought so much heavy machinery that costs a great deal in freight when sent from the Eastern States, since it could well be manufactured here. The demand here is quite sufficient to keep manufacturers going. It has always been said that production on a large scale is much cheaper than manufacturing in small factories. But if that was so some years ago, it is not so now. These firms can manufacture agricultural implements here to a considerable extent, and I hope they will do so. In respect of this developmental work, this provision of transport facilities, this making possible the establishment of secondary industries by developing our back country, all this work should be kept well before the people, and it should be pointed out to them that there will be a market for their food products, certainly wheat and wool and dairy produce. This should be made clear to them and kept constantly before them. Our aim should be well understood by the people. If it were, we should not hear so much criticism of borrowing for genuine developmental work. When it comes to adding to our population, it is difficult to graft on a considerable number of newcomers to a small population. That of course is easily understood. A large population, naturally, has very many more industries and so much more to do that it can absorb easily a greater number than can a smaller population. The only difference, of course, is that we have an enormous area of Crown land that can still be utilised and ought to be settled,

and when settled, will make this country. The proposals contained in the Loan Estimates are certainly very large, probably the largest that have been presented to the House, namely, £4,832,347. I am disappointed to find that nothing has been provided for workers' homes. The board are without funds. They cannot approve of the applications made to them. I know that, because I have been written to by one or two people in my electorate who have been told by the board that they would have to wait some months before their applications could be approved. I am sorry it has not been found possible to provide from this large amount of money a moderate amount for workers' homes. New railways are to absorb only £354,400, if we exclude certain small items totalling £39,000. Included in the main items are the Albany-Denmark extension, which is really an extension from Denmark to Nornalup, for the line already exists between Albany and Denmark. Then there is the Dwarda-Eastward railway to be completed, and the Norseman-Salmon Gums line. For rails and fastenings £65,000 is provided, for survey of new lines £13,000, and for water supply £30,000, making, with the cost of the three railways, the total of £354,400. Only two of the railway items referred to are really new. Amongst the smaller items there is £5,000 each for the Brookton-Dale railway, the Boyup-Cranbrook, the Ejanding Northwards, the Kalkalling-Bullfinch, and the Lake Grace-Kalgardin. Then there are £4,000 for the Lake Grace-Newdegate line, £5,000 for the Manjimup-Mt. Barker, and £5,000 for the Yarrimup Eastwards railway. I notice there is on the Estimates £100,000 for the development of mining. I understand that there is a water rebate of £45,000 included in that amount. The Premier will agree that since we shall have paid off the loan in January next we shall not be justified after that date in charging that rebate of £45,000 to loan. I know it originated in my time. When the greater part of the interest on the capital cost of the work is rebated because the repayment of the loan has been provided for, I think the scheme itself should bear this reduction. Since we are discussing the Kalgoolie water supply, I may be permitted to say that in January we shall pay off a loan of £2,500,000 from sinking fund. I hope Australia from one end to the other will be made to realise that the West-

ern Australian sinking fund is a real thing, invested in the hands of trustees in London. They will find a solid ten millions of money in the Western Australian sinking fund in the hands of trustees in London, kept away from the control of the State Treasurer. In good times and bad we have kept up our payments to the sinking fund, with the result that in January we shall from that sinking fund repay a loan of £2,500,000. The Premier said the other day that no Australian Government had ever repaid from savings a loan of any considerable magnitude when it became due.

The Premier: We have another loan falling due in nine years, and there is already sufficient to meet it. We shall require an amendment of the Act to enable us to forego further payments to that particular sinking fund.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have not only added to our sinking fund the interest on debentures that we have paid, but we have bought debentures at less than their face value. So probably we are paying interest on £100 debentures bought at £80. By this means the sinking fund has been built up. Well over a million pounds, I think, was made in the purchase of debentures three years ago, as represented by the difference between the price paid and the face value, and the security. When we remember that we are paying into the sinking fund interest on that million pounds, it will be seen that we have kept faith. There is nothing we have not done to maintain that sinking fund as it was intended to be maintained. We know now that when arranging amounts to be paid as sinking fund it is impossible to say just what we are going to get for our money when we invest it. So this 3 per cent. sinking fund in respect of the goldfields water supply proved to be far more than was necessary; for when that money was borrowed, the investments were very much higher and we were able to buy at less than face value. So our sinking fund has proved to be very useful. We can congratulate ourselves that the money to meet the loan of £2,500,000 is already in the hands of trustees. I hope the Premier will see that when this payment is made in January, the fact is made known in the Eastern States. I have had some little experience of financial conferences in the East, and though they may be totally different now, a few

years ago we were regarded as very small potatoes indeed. An amount of £250,000 is set aside as working capital for the Agricultural Bank. The Minister told us the other day that a sum of £1,200,000 had been repaid to the bank last year. Portion of those repayments is due to the fact that other banks have taken over clients' accounts and paid off the indebtedness due to the Agricultural Bank. That is a happy state of affairs for the Government.

The Minister for Lands: I think that £1,200,000 was repaid to the Industries Assistance Board.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister said it was repaid to the bank.

The Minister for Lands: I meant the Industries Assistance Board.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister made a mistake, I hope he will correct it. A good deal of money has been repaid to the Agricultural Bank, and I doubt whether the bank will need working capital in future, because the repayments of capital are re-invested. The Loan Estimates contain a considerable sum for agricultural development, the amount being £2,109,000, including £86,000 for the purchase of wire netting. I hope that the latter amount will be repaid to us by the Commonwealth. The sum of £2,109,000 is a considerable one, especially when we remember that Agricultural Bank capital is being repaid in increasingly large amounts. Of the total £1,200,000 is provided for group settlement. With that I shall deal a little later. The Premier explained that new roads will absorb £181,000 this year. That amount in itself is not sufficient to cover the full Federal grant but, as the Premier explained, the unexpended balance will be available next year. As the State, under the Federal aid roads grant has to provide 15s. to every 20s. provided by the Commonwealth, the £181,000 should be sufficient. I hope the Minister will see that the roads to be constructed are made strong enough to carry the traffic. I do not quite know how he will get sufficient money to do that, but it is a fact that we have spend hundreds of thousands of pounds in the last few years, and that our roads have never been so bad as they were last winter. That is due to the fact that there is insufficient strength in the roads to carry the heavy traffic. Unless we build roads that are able to carry the heavy traffic, they must be

broken up and destroyed, and the money will be lost. I hope the Main Roads Board will be able to devise means, not only to build durable roads, but to protect the roads when they are constructed. Naturally roads are meant to be used, but when they are subjected to the heavy sleeper carting in the South-West, they are bound to cut up. I suppose that for the most part sleeper carting over long distances will soon be a thing of the past. If we spend £181,000 this year, we must see that we have something left at the end of a few years. Only by building substantial roads can we make sure of having something to show for the expenditure. The whole of the State's contribution to road making is to be provided out of loan funds. I think the Federal Government stipulated that some money should be provided out of revenue. Of course, roads are constructed for the future and there is no reason why the money should not come out of loan funds. I believe the loan is to carry a sinking fund of 3 per cent., so it will be sufficiently protected. If the roads are sufficiently well made, they should last long enough to enable us to pay off the debt. The Main Roads Board was appointed towards the end of the financial year. I should like to point out to the Minister that, according to these Estimates, the expenditure on the Main Roads Board last year was £8,155. In that year, however, there was no board and no work was done. There must be something wrong. The figures may have been included for the purposes of comparison, but it is not right to charge up the salaries of the members of the board for last year because the board were not then in existence. The Minister will see that the expenditure by way of salaries for the chairman and the second and third members of the board are shown, and I can only conclude that expenditure to that extent must have been saved last year. The public will realise the many advantages that we have enjoyed this year as a result of the Federal road grant. After all, £384,000 is a considerable sum for road expenditure, and that of course is given to us on condition that we add 75 per cent. to the amount and spend the total on certain roads. That expenditure is a decided advantage to the State, and will provide a great deal of work. Then we have enjoyed very cheap migration money, and we shall get some more. That money is for group settlement.

The Minister for Lands: It all depends how they work it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Whom do you mean by "they"?

The Minister for Lands: The people that provide the money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have had a good deal of it.

The Minister for Lands: You said we would get some more.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so.

The Minister for Lands: It all depends how they work it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We must see that we keep our end up, and get the money for which arrangements were made under the migration agreement. The money is for group settlement and for certain development work, such as railways and water supplies. Many water supplies in the agricultural areas will come under this heading and so will railways, apart from the lines to be constructed in the group areas. We are paying 1 per cent. interest on £2,200,000, which is £22,000 a year. If we were paying $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. interest for that money, the interest bill each year would be £115,500. Thus we are saving £93,500 on the money we are getting at 1 per cent. instead of $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. That is a decided advantage, because it saves the revenue to the extent of £93,500, which is a substantial amount. There will be 1 per cent. to pay on this year's expenditure under the agreement. On an expenditure of £10,000,000 under the agreement our payment for five years at 1 per cent. would be £100,000 per annum. For a further five years the State is to pay one-third of the interest rate, which will mean £175,000 per annum. The British and Federal Governments between them will pay in the first five years £425,000 per annum, and in the second five years £350,000 per annum. Thus the State's interest on the £10,000,000 during the ten years will be £1,375,000, and the total to be paid by the British and Federal Governments will be £3,875,000. The latter amount represents the saving to the State. I hope we shall get this money and use it. A sum of £3,875,000 represents a big saving in interest on an expenditure of £10,000,000. Up to the present, except for soldier settlement, we have had to find the whole of the interest on the money for all our development work, and even then it has paid us handsomely. The State could not have kept afloat but for the expenditure of loan moneys, particularly on development works and on

agricultural development. It is from agricultural development that we draw the money that keeps us going. I hope the public will realise that the new migration agreement represents a saving to the State of £3,875,000 on the expenditure of £10,000,000, and if they do so they will appreciate the fact that if a loss is incurred on group settlement, the whole of it can be covered by that amount. I hope they will realise also that in any case we would have to build those railways and, but for the assistance of the British and Federal Governments, would have to pay the whole of the interest ourselves. We as a State cannot stand still; we must go ahead. The water supplies that are to be constructed with money at one per cent. would have to be constructed in any case. This is the first time in our history when we have been helped in the work of developing this country, and assistance comes now only because there are many people in the Old Land who are anxious that some of the surplus population should be transferred to the dominions and particularly to Australia. Those people are keen also to create trade, which follows the settlement of British people in Australia.

Mr. Teesdale: We are anxious to get their surplus, too, are we not?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. We cannot do without them, and England cannot manage with all of them. England has always had population to spare. It is because of that position that we are getting this money. The agreement that I was able to make with the British Government, I thought was very favourable. The present agreement is at least twice as favourable and probably rather more in the matter of rebate of interest.

Hon. G. Taylor: Yours was a very successful agreement at the time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, but the present agreement is much better, and possibly we shall get a still better one later on. At any rate we set the ball rolling and suggested the idea that led to the favourable agreement under which we are now working.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is very easy to improve upon existing machinery.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We can thank the Federal Government for doing more themselves and for getting the British Government to do more for us. I do not care where the money comes from so long as we get it and so long as development follows its expenditure. During the last two years

of my term of office, we expended £7,325,000 of loan money, and of that amount £4,572,000 was devoted to agricultural development—equal to about 62 per cent. Loan expenditure apart from land development in the same period amounted to £2,753,000. The total loan expenditure during the last two years has been £8,177,000, of which £4,256,000 has been devoted to land development, or only £316,000 less than during the last two years of my Government. The loan expenditure of the present Government, apart from land development, has been £3,921,000, or £1,168,000 more than during my last two years of office. I do not know where that money has gone, but it has been expended. I do not know why it has not produced more employment; we certainly have experienced a considerable amount of unemployment.

The Minister for Lands: Unemployment be blowed! Only last week we wanted a number of men and could not get them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose the farmers have now taken all the unemployed we had. The Minister is so touchy. We have had unemployment.

The Minister for Lands: It makes one touchy to read a paragraph in the paper saying there is unemployment, and to know we cannot get the men we want.

The Premier: They announced in their resolutions that it was not work they wanted, but Government employment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That may be so. We have had unemployed in the country as well as in Perth. Good men have been out of work.

The Minister for Lands: We always have that position at certain times of the year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have had it all the time.

The Premier: The two years you quoted as those in which your percentage of loan funds on land development was spent, included the periods when the expenditure was made on the purchase of land for returned soldiers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course.

The Premier: That is not really expanding agricultural development. You buy out one man and put in another. It does not necessarily follow that you are increasing agricultural development.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There was not so much of that expenditure between 1922 and 1924. It was borrowed money that

was invested in land settlement and development.

The Premier: It does not indicate increased agricultural development to spend a lot of money in buying out one man and putting in another.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Oh yes!

The Premier: No!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is an amount set down for soldier settlement this year. The expenditure on the purchase of land for soldier settlement took place largely between 1919 and 1921, and did not occur so much between 1922 and 1924. The expenditure on group settlement to June, 1924, was £1,227,030, and for the last two years it was £2,167,150, so that £900,000 less was spent by us up to June, 1924. But for soldier settlement we should probably not have had anything like the wheat crop we have to-day.

The Premier: A great number of returned soldiers merely took the place of others, who would have grown wheat just the same.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They would not. The returned soldiers cleared enormous additional areas of their holdings.

The Premier: It is fair to assume that the other settlers would have done likewise if they had continued in possession.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No provision was made for the returned soldiers, and they had to be settled on the land. In 1919 thousands of soldiers were coming back, and thousands of people were out of work. I am sorry to say that the men who went out of their holdings did so for less than they should have received, although the bargains were good ones for the soldiers.

The Minister for Lands: In some instances.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In most cases. The estimate for group settlement this year is £1,200,000. I was at Pemberton the other day with people from New Zealand, who understand that class of country. One man said to me he would advise people to settle there rather than in New Zealand. We have the land and the climate. We have sufficient evidence of pastures to justify us in saying that we can grow pastures equal to anything in Australia. We have the crops too, and the evidence of what the land will do. All that is needed is that a great deal more should be done. We know what dairying means to the country. This can only be done in a fairly large way. We have for years imported butter and bacon

costing hundreds of thousands of pounds. We ought to get to work as speedily as possible and develop this part of our territory. In Victoria 760,000 cows are being milked. The dairy production of that State was worth in 1923-24 £10,376,000, nearly as much as the value of the wheat crop, which was £11,000,000. In Victoria within the period 368,000 pigs were slaughtered, their value being £1,588,000. The dairy production, including pigs, in Victoria was worth nearly £12,000,000. In addition, 494,000 head of cattle were slaughtered and sold. Most of the cattle were grown by small holders. We thus see the value to Victoria of the class of country we are developing in the South-West. Victoria has a little over a million and a half head of cattle, and can slaughter 33 per cent. because the cattle are bred on small holdings and are produced every year. That is a lesson we ought not to forget. A vast opportunity is offered to the people of Western Australia. If we take the expenditure of loan money over the last three years, we find it amounts, for the two years just ended and the estimate for this year, to £13,009,000. The whole of the estimated amount for 1926-27 is not likely to be expended. If it were, we would find the expenditure was £3,230,000 more than it was during the last three years of my Government. In 1911 the invested money earned interest on account of the public debt. It nearly did so in 1925, but fell considerably short in 1926. As far as possible we ought to see that the invested money does earn interest on the total public debt. We fell short of doing this in 1926 due to the loss on the railways. It is hard to know why we lose money on the railways.

The Minister for Railways: Why did we have a bad harvest?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We did not. For the last two years the railways carried 284,000 tons of wheat more than we had to carry in 1923 and 1924.

The Minister for Railways: In one year we had 4,000,000 bushels less than in the previous year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The railway profit in 1924 was £142,000, in 1925 it was £190,000, and in 1926 the loss was £31,982. The gross earnings in 1926 were only £22,000 less than they were in 1925.

The Minister for Railways: We did not put the rates up as you did when the wages

were increased, or we would have made a profit.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister did not increase the wages as we did.

The Minister for Railways: We increased the wages, but not the rates.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister did not put down the rates. We increased freights to meet the increase in wages. We increased the wages by £58 and the Minister increased them only by £15. We had not anything like the traffic that is now running over the railways, which are carrying 284,000 tons of wheat more than we carried.

The Minister for Railways: You know we make very little profit out of wheat.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the railways have the wheat, they make the profit. The Minister now says he made a loss because he did not get the wheat. He cannot have it both ways. If he makes a loss on wheat, why does he want to carry it? That is no excuse for the loss. Wheat brings railway traffic. There is not only the freight on the wheat, but the freight on all the stuff which goes into the districts that grow the wheat. A great deal of traffic passes through Northam. All the down traffic is very heavy. There has never been so much traffic going into the country as is going now. That is because farmers are growing and selling wheat.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the Minister says that is the reason for the reduction in railway earnings.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He says that wheat does not pay. The Minister should tell us why he went back £22,000 last year in gross earnings. There is no excuse for the loss.

The Minister for Railways: We reduced railway freights by £45,000. The railways do not get anything of that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That was not to be expected. The Minister should get that money out of the Treasurer. I feel inclined to move that we order the Treasurer to pay that money over in sovereigns to the Commissioner of Railways.

The Premier: That would make a difference to the railway finances but not to the Treasury.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It should be handed over. I sympathise with the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: You blamed me just now.

Hon. G. Taylor: Rightly so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He should have the money. He ought to be able to justify this wonderful loss on the year's operations. There is no excuse for a loss of £31,000. I sympathise with him because the Treasurer has stuck to the tax.

The Minister for Railways: Wages have been increased, but there has been no increase in freights.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister will move that the Treasurer hand the money over to him, I will support him. The railways are our great earning department. They are well run. Everybody connected with the management and operation of the railways is doing his best all the time.

Hon. G. Taylor: It must be the Minister who is wrong.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I believe the latest recruit is just as much concerned in the success of the railways as is every other officer up to the Commissioner. They are doing their best to make them pay in a way that must please everyone. I doubt if there is any service where the people concerned are working so loyally in it.

The Minister for Railways: There is a wonderful spirit of co-operation in the railway service now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. All our financial troubles over a number of years were due to the fact that trade was not here. The railways could not earn, for there was nothing for them to do. Almost the whole of the deficit was due to the loss on the invested money as a result of the war, and the tremendous loan expenditure which was not followed by the settlement of people and the development of the land. This resulted in loss on the railways and on every public utility. If we do not pick up some of the loss this year, it will be a serious matter for the Treasurer, notwithstanding any advantages that may be experienced by the Treasury on account of cheap money or in any other direction. It is our duty to see that the public utilities are carefully managed and properly run. We must see that nothing is done to jeopardise the work.

The Minister for Railways: And I suppose you want it done in what you regard

as the proper way, by raising freights and fares.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When the Minister does as we did, and pays the men over £58 a year extra in wages, he will do as we did; he will increase fares and freights.

The Minister for Railways: We won't do that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister should not have done what he did. I was sorry when I learnt that he had gone to the men about it. No Minister has any right to go to a State employee and say, "I am paying you more, and you should vote for me." The men received what was their right, and what they were entitled to be paid. Increased cost of living makes everything dearer in connection with the railways, or anything else. If costs go up, it is necessary to take action to meet the difficulty. It cannot be expected that employees on wages can live on the same scale as formerly when the cost of living was not so high; it cannot be done. I do not wish to be unpleasant with the Minister, but I would advise him to remember that, in the instance he referred to, the wages went up because of the decision of the proper tribunal, and that is the correct way for such increases to be obtained. The tribunal that gave the increased wages came to that determination upon inquiry, because it was just. Therefore no Minister should go to Government employees and say, "Look what we have done for you; you should vote for us." We are all only too pleased to know that our employees are well paid, and no country can be great where employees are not well paid.

The Minister for Railways: If the Government had not passed legislation dealing with the basic wage, the men would not have got it, so that the Government were really responsible.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister said that the Government had appointed the court, and he had no right to say so.

The Minister for Railways: I did not; I said Parliament did.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister did, and he had no right to say so. If the House passed the necessary legislation, that would be quite all right.

The Minister for Railways: That is what I said. Parliament did so, on the initiation of the Government.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And there is no reason why Parliament should not deal with that subject. Certainly the provision regarding the basic wage should simplify arbitration. We had discussed that question often, and attempts were made to deal with the basic wage before. It was difficult for the court to deal with and, in fact, it could not be done. While the provision of the basic wage legislation should simplify the work of the Arbitration Court, it does not seem to have had that effect. There should be less trouble and less delay in consequence of it.

The Minister for Railways: We have had no strikes or industrial troubles as the result of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Every day we see a long list of industrial troubles.

The Minister for Railways: That relates to matters under the jurisdiction of the Federal Arbitration Court.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Government intend to go on with public works and will build more railways. These troubles will add to the cost of those undertakings. Ministers will desire to get the produce of the State away from the districts where it is growing. I do not wish to argue with the Minister for Railways, but to give him a little sound advice. I hope he will not err again, as he has done once or twice lately. I hope he will not again say that because there was a little less wheat to be raised, the loss of £200,000 in connection with the railways was justified; it was not. We are also responsible for tramways, water supplies and the supply of electricity. We have to meet the requirements of the people under those headings, and we have to live up to our responsibilities. I wish with all my heart that the people of the metropolis would take over those activities and the responsibilities attaching to them. As it is we have to do the work for them, and include the total cost of the undertakings in our indebtedness. The inclusion of the capital cost of those undertakings makes our public indebtedness far more than it would be if those works were dealt with as in Victoria, where the capital involved is not a charge against the public debt of the State. I am glad that the Minister in charge of water supplies is present. I well remember the trouble experienced by and the criticism and abuse levelled at the head of the ex-Minister for

Works, when he was in charge of the metropolitan water supply undertaking. He was criticised because of the quantity and quality of water supplied. I had hoped that the expenditure of large sums of money would have improved the position. Some time ago the Minister, I think, announced that the position had been improved by the use of water from the hills, yet to-day the criticism is as strong as ever.

Hon. G. Taylor: There are more complaints now, although I do not know why there should be.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know there are complaints against the Government of the day, whereas in the past they were against the Government with which I was associated. I trust the Government will be able to provide the people with a better supply of water from the hills very soon. These works I have mentioned cost a good deal of money, and will cost a great deal more. The local authorities should be able to handle the undertakings as well as we can. I notice that £6,000 has been provided for migration. The cost of that activity is largely borne by the Federal Government in these days. I trust that, with the expenditure of such large sums of loan moneys, we shall not fail to bring in a considerable number of people for land settlement and development generally. It is no use bringing them in for the towns because already we have too many people there. We cannot have migration when there is a considerable degree of unemployment, but if the migrants are placed in the country areas they will make more work for the people in the towns. I do not know what the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) will say when he notices that £11,900 only is provided on the Estimates for the North-West, if we except the amount provided for cattle stations.

Mr. Teesdale: We are used to that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Under the heading of Roads and Bridges, there is an item relating to the purchase of the Avon Valley cattle station, for which £6,500 is provided. I presume that item is included under the wrong heading. I take it the reference is to the purchase of a new cattle station for the natives. We have heard of the purchase only recently. For State trading concerns £259,500 is provided on the Loan Estimates, that amount including £170,000 for State ships, largely used for

the service to the North. I am sorry nothing is included in the Estimates for workers' homes, and also that the Premier has not been able to provide more money for hospitals. Well equipped hospitals in the larger centres are just as important to the people of the districts served as is the Perth hospital to the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Lands: No one knows better than you do that we could easily provide for £9,000,000 or £10,000,000 in the Loan Estimates!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: With the permission of the Minister for Lands, while apologising to him for doing so, I express my regret that so little has been provided for the hospitals. The Minister for Lands is getting unruly.

The Minister for Lands: Not at all; I am just pointing out the position to you.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Cannot the Minister understand that it is merely right and just for me to say that I regret that, out of the large sum of £4,832,347, only £23,000 is provided for hospitals. We have large centres throughout the State, such as Albany, Geraldton, Bunbury, Northam and Merredin.

The Premier: There is no centre going short regarding hospital accommodation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, there is.

The Premier: No. We have spent a large sum of money on hospitals, and I am finding £5,000 for the hospital at Northam.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Is that to come out of this vote?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Does the Premier want the people to find that money? These hospitals should be supplied by the Government. There was a time when the position was different, but Mr. Colebatch instituted a system under which the pound for pound subsidy was provided for country hospitals. I am not sure that it is a good system because the Government are inclined to push it too far. The Geraldton hospital serves centres as far away as Mullewa and Pindar.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: What is wrong with the Geraldton hospital?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It must be provided for.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: So it has been.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know whether there is sufficient hospital accommodation there.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Yes, there is.

The Minister for Railways: We spent £2,000 there last year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: On a pound for pound basis?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: No. Over £8,000 was spent on the hospital at Northam and the people there did not pay a bob of that amount.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know that they should.

Mr. Lindsay: Why should the people in other districts have to find money on the pound for pound basis?

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Northam will have to find money on that basis if any more is wanted.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It should not be expected that the people from the country districts should come to Perth every time they want to see a doctor. In the more closely settled districts there should be hospitals such as those at Northam and Geraldton to which the people go for operations. They will be able to go to such hospitals at Merredin, Katanning and other centres in future years. The Government should provide such hospitals.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: We have provided wholly and solely the buildings for hospitals. You cannot name one to which people from outside districts do not go.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They go where there are two doctors and where the equipment is better, so that operations can be performed. Those hospitals should be provided for the people. I notice that £98,000 is included in the Loan Estimates for public buildings. The Minister has erected a new building next to the old Public Works Department. I do not know why that was not mentioned in the House. Everyone knows that for years the question of removing the old buildings has been under discussion. I am old-fashioned and hope that the old buildings will not go. However, a great many people consider that the Barracks will have to go. When the Minister decided to erect the new wing, he should have informed the House. I do not know when it will be finished; it has been under construction for a long time. There is a good deal in the Loan Estimates

that will provide useful work. It will be possible to carry out much work with the aid of cheap money. Up to the end of last year the Treasury, in this respect, saved no less a sum than £93,000. We can afford to do work when we can get money at a low rate of interest, but we must see to it that we carry out revenue producing undertakings. We increase the population of the State by using the cheap money and we increase production. This year it will take only a portion of our wheat to pay our interest bill. It is not so long since it took the whole of our wheat production to pay our interest bill, and the change that has come over the scene, therefore, is of considerable importance. We meet our obligations with the aid of our produce and we must see that the money we spend brings about increased production which will make it possible for us to export our surplus and so meet our interest and sinking fund obligations. I am sorry that so little has been provided for railway construction, and I repeat that I am sorry provision has not been made for the erection of additional workers' homes. It would be possible to criticise a good deal more seriously than we actually do, but we have to remember that the policy being followed is the policy that has been in operation in this State for some years. It is a policy that has been approved, not only here, but at the other end of the world, a policy that led to the country being better known than was the case before. At the present time no State in the Commonwealth has a better reputation than has Western Australia. We meet our obligations promptly and we do more than that, we provide interest and sinking fund for the repayment of our loans. It should be acknowledged that we have spent our money wisely and that those from whom we seek loan money can with confidence continue to advance us money, knowing that we shall send them something they want, something that has resulted from the expenditure of their money. I hope the Committee will discuss the Estimates very carefully and freely, particularly the members for Perth, who, I am sure, will have something to say to the Minister for Works about the water supply. The Minister is deserving of some criticism in respect for not having provided a water supply that he promised so whole-heartedly and without reservation just before the last general elections.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.49]: When we are asked to pass Loan Estimates amounting to £4,832,347, it make us wonder. We sincerely hope that the expenditure of this amount will give an adequate return to the State. It is serious to contemplate that the debt per head of the population has increased from £148 to £158, and we are tempted to ask whether we have been getting value for the expenditure. I regret that I have not had very much time to study the Auditor General's report, but I intend to ask the Premier, when he is replying, to give us some information particularly in regard to several items that appear in the Auditor General's report. We find that last year the Treasury regulations were again departed from. The Auditor General draws attention to that and states that instances have been noted where collections during the first ten days of July have been included. That is probably very good for the Treasurer. It is a custom that has been brought in lately.

The Premier: Nothing of the kind: it has been done ever since I have been in Parliament.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was done as far back as 26 years ago when I first came into Parliament.

MR. THOMSON: It is strange, if it has been the practice for so long, that the Auditor General should bring it under notice just now.

The Premier: There are some things in the Auditor General's report that never vary. He repeats them year after year.

MR. THOMSON: It is difficult to deal with several of the matters that I would wish to refer to. Unfortunately a practice has arisen in connection with the general administration of the State whereby a great deal of money is charged to loan expenditure. I have referred to this before on the Loan Estimates. The Auditor General says in his report—

In the year 1924-25 the Governor approved of the "Advance to Treasurer" being drawn upon for the construction, at an estimated cost of £18,000, of three gantry cranes for the Fremantle Harbour Trust, the arrangement being that the trust was to recoup the expenditure over a period of four years. An amount of £4,500 received from the Trust for the year 1925-26 was not applied in reduction of the expenditure, but taken to the Revenue Fund. The Treasurer minuted the file as follows:—"In view of the £14,000 Fremantle harbour revenue outstanding, I cannot agree to allow the £4,500 contribution to suspense for the

year 1925-26. As the £14,000 will be collected in the 1926-27 year, I agree to two debits to the year 1926-27 of £5,000 each, namely, £9,000."

We are taking into revenue money that should have gone to recoup the contract between the Harbour Trust and the Treasurer. It seems to me that interest is being paid from loan fund into revenue.

The Premier: There is no foundation for such a statement as that.

MR. THOMSON: Following on, the Auditor General writes:

In respect to certain works and services, as detailed below, the expenditure on which is met from loan fund, interest on the net expenditure has been charged to the loan fund and credited to the revenue fund, purporting to recoup the latter for interest paid. In the first three cases the works have not become revenue-producing. The provision in the various loan Acts relating to interests states that it shall be charged upon and payable out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and assets of the Government of Western Australia.

If the Treasurer will point out that that is wrong I shall be pleased, but so far as I can gather we are charging up to loan expenditure, interest that is due on certain works. That is the statement set out in the Auditor General's report. There is another matter to which I would like the Treasurer to refer when replying. On page 9 of the Auditor General's report in connection with the London loan of £500,000, this is set out:

On the 18th July, 1925, the Commonwealth, on behalf of the Commonwealth, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia, issued a loan (£5,000,000) in London, repayable in 1945-1975.

The charges came to £17,384, made up as follows: Discount at $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., £2,500; interest bonus charged to loan proceeds, £5,000; then we have two lots of commission. It seems strange that we should have to pay double underwriters' commission. First we have underwriters' commission £5,000 and next underwriters' brokerage, £1,250. Then we find that the commission paid to the Commonwealth Bank amounted to £1,250 and commission to brokers and other bankers, £1,165. It does seem strange that we should have to pay double brokerage. No doubt the Premier has an adequate explanation to offer. Later on we find a reference in the Auditor General's report to conditions relating to a sinking fund not having been complied with. He says—

The condition relating to a sinking fund has not been complied with by the State, neither has any alteration been made in the interest charges of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on

the initial advance of £250,000, but interest at 1 per cent. has been calculated as from the 1st December, 1923, on the loan of £750,000, and at the same rate from the date of receipt of the money in regard to the £1,500,000 received during the financial year. The excess interest at the rate of two-thirds per cent. charged in the years 1923-24 and 1924-25 was then set off against the calculation on the 1 per cent. basis.

The point I wish to emphasise is that under Clause 6 of the migration agreement we find this—

The State has agreed to pay the Commonwealth a sinking fund at the rate of 10s. per cent. annually on "each £100 or portion of £100 of the moneys issued to the State" No charge has yet been made against the revenue fund on account of any portion of the £2,250,000 already received from the Commonwealth in regard to migration. If the clause is to be applied retrospectively, the accrued liability of the State will be considerable. The only information available upon the matter is a statement by the Under Treasurer on the file to the effect that the Commonwealth Government are to be asked to forego the sinking fund charge.

I have stated frequently in the House, and I am going to repeat it, that in my opinion, we should have in existence a public works committee, so that we might be in a position to deal with the finances of the State particularly as regards the expenditure of loan money. We know that it is the policy of the Government to construct the whole of the works departmentally. We have absolutely no check upon the amount of money that is spent. That is not in the interests of the State. Tenders should be called for the construction of public works. To-day the Leader of the Opposition asked a question regarding the selection of men required for the construction of the Norseman Salmon Gums railway, and the Minister's reply was in effect that what was published was absolutely incorrect. I would like to know whether any migrant coming here will be able to get employment on new railway works or on the construction of roads without being possessed of a union ticket. If not, it is not in the interests of the State that that kind of thing should prevail. It looks as if there was a certain amount of truth in the published report by reason of the fact that no man seems to be able to get a job on Government works unless he has a ticket.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That is not correct.

Mr. THOMSON: I cannot agree with the Minister.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not dealing with the A.W.U. ticket, but with the expenditure of loan funds.

Mr. THOMSON: And, Sir, with the methods adopted by the Government in the expenditure of those public funds. I maintain that the present system affords no adequate check. The Government would say "But we have the estimates put up by the engineers." Those estimates, however, are based on the conditions which exist.

Mr. Sampson: And they are not necessarily right.

Mr. THOMSON: No. In the administration of our own Railway Department we find that the inauguration of the 44-hour week has meant an increase of approximately £100,000 in the annual expenditure. A statement to that effect appears in the Commissioner's report.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the Commission would be likely to know.

Mr. THOMSON: I presume he would. He makes that statement in reporting on the operations of his department. In New South Wales it is estimated that the 44-hour week means an additional expenditure of £800,000 per annum in the Railway Department. The 44-hour week, of course, is the policy of the Government. I am criticising the administration of our Public Works Department on the ground that it has been for many years a recognised custom that three-quarters of a mile to a mile per day of railway is a fair and reasonable rate of construction.

Hon. G. Taylor: Of platelaying.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: With how many men?

Mr. THOMSON: We know that the engineers in charge of the line that is being built under the departmental construction system are firmly convinced that they ought to be getting three-quarters of a mile of line laid per day. I am not discussing the conditions, but only a statement which has appeared in the Press. The matter was also dealt with in the Arbitration Court. We know that the union secretary has said that the proper rate is half a mile per day. And half a mile it is. I want to know who is actually controlling the affairs of this State, who is actually in charge of the expenditure of public funds, including the large amount we are being asked to vote to-day.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is easily seen in that instance.

The Premier: The matter was decided in the proper, constitutional way under the

laws of the land. The court has determined the matter.

Hon. G. Taylor: The platelaying is all pretty well done now.

The Premier: No. There are hundreds of miles of railway to be built yet.

Mr. THOMSON: That is all very well, but I am referring to the principle of doing everything by departmental construction, or under the administration of the Public Works Department, instead of the Government giving the engineers a free hand as to general administration, and as to who shall be employed and who shall not be employed. The engineers are hamstrung in their administration right from the beginning, by the Government saying to them, "You shall not employ any men except those we approve of," those they approve of being, of course, members of their political organisation and giving them political support. That is the regrettable position which obtains to-day as regards the expenditure of loan money.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Do you expect 20 men to do the same work as 40?

Mr. THOMSON: I am not discussing that.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: That is the reason for what you are complaining about.

Mr. THOMSON: I have not been discussing either 20 men or 40 men. I have sufficient confidence in the engineers who are in charge of the Norseman line to believe that if they did not consider three-quarters of a mile of line should be laid per day, they would not have put up that request. If those engineers had had a free hand, the construction of the railway would not have been delayed as it has been. The number of men employed goes by the board.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: The Press stated that the trouble occurred because the number of men required were not being employed.

Hon. G. Taylor: The court decided the matter.

Mr. THOMSON: We all recognise that in order to open up and develop this country money must be borrowed and railways must be constructed, but I feel bound to voice my protest against the present method of constructing public works. The country may be getting excellent value in the services rendered by the departmental officers, but at present there is no check. For that reason I maintain that tenders should be

called for railways and other public works. If the departmental authorities, upon the return of tenders, are in a position to say, "We can do the work at a cheaper rate," very well, I shall be satisfied, because then we shall have a check. At present, however, we have absolutely no check whatever on the cost of construction of our railways. As regards the borrowing of money, the Government are very fortunately situated. Under the migration agreement it is proposed to construct railways so that country may be made available for new settlers, and the money required for those railways can be borrowed by the Government at 1 per cent. per annum. Over a period of ten years the rate of interest runs out at 1½ per cent. From that aspect, I repeat, the Government are most fortunately situated. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I gathered from a statement made by the Minister for Works when dealing with the agreement for road construction, that a certain proportion of the funds needed had to be found from revenue. So far as one can judge from these Loan Estimates, the whole of the office expenses connected with road construction will be charged to Loan. That may be sound policy; I am not taking exception to it. But, once again, the Government are most fortunate in getting a sum of £384,000 from the Commonwealth, whereas I think, speaking from memory, that on a per capita basis Western Australia would be entitled to receive only £90,000. Therefore the Federal Government, who sometimes are regarded as indifferent to the interests of Western Australia, have at any rate one good point. They are providing, and have provided, money for a road construction scheme in Western Australia. That scheme is part of the Federal Government's scheme for the opening up and development of the Commonwealth. Thus our State Government are in the happy position of being able to say to the various road boards, "Put up your scheme of road construction for a period of five years."

The Premier: I am in the unhappy position of having to find three or four or five times as much money for roads this year as has ever been found in any previous year.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so.

The Premier: Do you call that a happy position?

Mr. THOMSON: But the Commonwealth Government are providing funds for—

The Premier: That does not assist me. I have to find my share, and it is four or five times greater than the money found for road construction in any previous year.

Mr. THOMSON: In some cases the Premier has not to find the whole of the 15s., because 7s. 6d. will have to be contributed by road boards towards the construction of main roads.

The Premier: It all means that I have to find more money.

Mr. THOMSON: I recognise that the scheme takes financing. Nevertheless, after all said and done, the State's share is only a small part of the expenditure involved.

The Premier: Is it? Our share is £196,000.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: How much was spent by any previous Government on road construction in a year?

Mr. THOMSON: That is just the point. No previous Government had the opportunity to spend so much money.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Yes; a previous Government had.

Mr. THOMSON: That is not so.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The last Government had the opportunity of spending £98,000 and spent about £12,000.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not dealing with that phase.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The previous Government would not raise the pound for pound.

Mr. Sampson: The plans had to be prepared and the work had to be initiated.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: You would not find the money.

Mr. THOMSON: I am dealing with the position as it faces us to-day. We know an abnormal amount of road development is taking place, and that must prove beneficial to the State. Admittedly the Treasurer has to find some £190,000. Nevertheless the State is in the happy position of getting £384,000, which previously it did not get, to put into roads. Therefore Western Australia is benefiting from the amount of money provided by the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: And provided by Western Australia.

Mr. THOMSON: I acknowledge that we are finding our quota, but nevertheless we are getting from the Commonwealth Government something which we did not receive previously.

The Minister for Railways: That fact does not make it any easier for us to find the money.

Mr. THOMSON: But it does mean making it much easier to find work for the people coming from overseas.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I thought your policy was that people from overseas should go on the land.

Mr. THOMSON: No! under the present agreement.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: This is the first time you have admitted that.

Mr. THOMSON: All those who come under the migration agreement are not to go on the land. A definite proportion is stated. I think it is one migrant for every £75.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: One farmer?

Mr. THOMSON: No; not one farmer for £75.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: But one man must be settled on the land?

Mr. THOMSON: One man according to that proportion. However, we are not discussing the migration agreement, but road construction.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: But you will not be fair even when discussing the road construction policy.

Mr. THOMSON: The Honorary Minister is quite wrong in saying that. I have made the plain statement of fact that we are to receive £384,000 annually for ten years. Thus for the first time in the history of Western Australia we have a very considerable amount of money available for road construction, enabling us to adopt what may be termed a continuity of road policy. I repeat that I do not view with entire equanimity the position facing us to-day, inasmuch as there is absolutely no control and no check over the expenditure of these huge sums of money. I know that the present Government are carrying on a system which has existed for years, and I also know that this Chamber once passed legislation for the establishment of a public works committee. I have it on the authority of men who know that to the Commonwealth the establishment of a public works committee has meant the saving of many hundreds of thousands of pounds. My contention is that Western Australia should have a similar committee, which would enable us to scrutinise public expenditure.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I think the Upper House threw out the Bill to establish a public works committee.

Mr. THOMSON: I know it and I regret it. That, however, does not get away from the fact that such a committee would be in the interests of the State, more especially as regards the expenditure of loan funds. Next year we shall be increasing our indebtedness by a further £10 per head. Provided we get full value for the money expended, we are justified in taking that additional responsibility upon ourselves; but I do want to sound a note of warning. Honestly, I do not believe that the present system of doing all public works departmentally is in the interests of the State or means economical work. I know it is useless to ask the present Government to change that policy, but I would be wanting in my duty, as representative of a proportion of the electors, if I allowed this matter to go by without raising my voice in protest. Millions of pounds are to be expended in road construction. We know that tenders are to be called as far as may be possible. That was agreed upon in the negotiations with the Federal Government. I am strongly of opinion that in the matter of road construction we should provide a check by calling tenders. I feel quite sure that if the amount of a departmental estimate is exceeded by the tenders submitted, the department will carry out the work. I would give the engineers an absolutely free hand. I regret to have to say that, in my opinion, they have not a free hand at present, have not "the order of the sack" as fully as they should have it. The engineers should be at complete liberty to employ whom they like and to dismiss whom they like. Under that condition of things the State would get much better value for its money than is being got under present conditions.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.30]: The Committee are considering Loan Estimates amounting to nearly five million pounds, or something like £13 per head of the population. All parties are agreed that money is essential in order that the country should be developed. But it is a *sine qua non* that population should be materially increased. One matter I should like to discuss is the provision of a refrigerating shed on the wharf at Fremantle. This has been a subject of discussion in Parliament for several years past. The need for a store at a convenient place for the pre-cooling of fruit

before export has long been recognised as essential. I regret that I am unable to find on the Estimates any provision for that store.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think it is on the Revenue Estimates.

Mr. SAMPSON: I daresay the Treasurer will be able to explain. The Loan Estimates, I understand, offer opportunity for a wide discussion. During this session on many occasions members have been advised to leave certain matters till we came to the Loan Estimates.

The Premier: You cannot discuss any matter not provided for in the Loan Estimates.

Mr. SAMPSON: Then I wonder whether my remarks are in order. I am unable to find anything in the Estimates for the pre-cooling store.

The Premier: There is nothing, so you cannot discuss that subject.

Mr. SAMPSON: I had hoped provision had been made for a pre-cooling store. It is essential. The State is becoming of some importance as a fruit exporting State, and we need to see that every possible opportunity is given to export our fruit in sound condition. Many countries are becoming more and more qualified to compete with us. America offers serious competition in the export of primary products; and the same may be said of South Africa. There the London and Continental markets appear to be of primary consideration. If fruit is not of first quality it is not permitted to be sent overseas; but I believe that in South Africa they have every facility for the proper transmission of their fruit. No fruit can be sent away in good condition unless, prior to its being placed on board ship, its temperature has been reduced. I regret that a tram extension has been made recently to Cambridge-street. I know it is still open to debate whether or not the day of the tram has gone. Personally I think this particular tram extension will very easily fall a victim to char-a-banc opposition. The route adopted is a roundabout one. It certainly does not traverse the shortest distance. It passes from Cambridge-street through one or two smaller streets and, instead of travelling south, it goes north as far as Newcastle-street, where it joins with the Leederville tram at the Oxford-street junction. It is a great pity that tramway has to face such a heavy handicap. I am sorry no provision is made for workers' homes. There

was brought under my notice some months ago the instance of a family living in a hessian house. The only protection they had from the weather was a few sheets of galvanised iron and some hessian. It was a family consisting of a man, his wife and three children, and they were anxious to obtain a worker's home. Unfortunately their application was so far down on the list that it was impossible for them to wait. In another instance success was ultimately secured. That was the instance of a family numbering 10 when the application was put in, but 11 when approval was finally given. It took eight months to secure that approval. I think loan money could properly be provided in larger quantities and so give opportunity to those who are anxious to purchase homes of their own on extended terms under the Workers' Homes Act. I notice a sum is being provided for experimental farms. I should like to know whether these experimental farms will include one or more fruit farms. Those well able to judge claim that Western Australia compares favourably with California in point of fruit production. That being so, the establishment of fruit farms for experimental purposes is well justified. An immense amount of money leaves this State every year for bananas, pines, and other tropical fruits. I believe that if serious consideration were given to this subject and experiments were made in various parts of the State it would be found possible by growing a proportion of our requirements here to greatly reduce the money we are sending away for tropical and sub-tropical fruit. Let me touch upon the charges being levied for water from an extension from Mundaring to Glen Forrest and Darlington. Prior to approval being given to this extension the Greenmount Road Board joined with other guarantors in making an offer of £50 per annum to cover any loss that might arise in respect of this work. Later the members of that board, realising how important it was for the maintenance of the York Road that that road should be watered during the summer months, waited as a deputation on the Minister and urged a reduction in the charge per thousand gallons, which is no less than 5s. 6d. So astonished was I at the reply given that I felt a mistake had been made. Not only is 5s. 6d. the charge for this public purpose of watering the York Road,

but it is levied on those who have the water service at both Glen Forrest and Darlington. When a conference between the departmental officers and representatives of Glen Forrest and Darlington met at Chidlow some three years ago, it was definitely decided that the charge per thousand gallons should be 2s. 6d. Even that is in excess of the amount charged in Guildford and in Perth. Nevertheless the conference felt it was a reasonable charge, since the quantity to be consumed would be comparatively small. When, later on, the accounts showed that the actual charge was 5s. 6d. per thousand gallons, dissatisfaction was general.

Hon. W. J. George: But they agreed to pay it.

Mr. SAMPSON: No such agreement was ever made. The agreement was that the charge should be 2s. 6d. I cannot conceive any justification for the charge of 5s. 6d. per thousand gallons.

Hon. W. J. George: It is all a question of the cost of putting down the main.

Mr. SAMPSON: When an arrangement is made it should be observed.

The Minister for Lands: Did you ever hear of consumers of water maintaining their agreements?

Mr. SAMPSON: The people of Darlington and of Glen Forrest are maintaining the agreement they entered into. They are very ready to maintain that agreement, but the department says the charge is not 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons but 5s. 6d. It is incredible that so high a charge should be levied on people so near to the source of supply.

Hon. W. J. George: They agreed to pay 5s. 6d.

Mr. SAMPSON: They never did.

Hon. J. George: I know they did.

Mr. SAMPSON: They did nothing of the sort. The file will show that 2s. 6d. was the charge agreed upon at the conference at Chidlows. Surely 2s. 6d. is quite sufficient.

Hon. W. J. George: You cannot make me believe that the department charge 5s. 6d. if they agreed to charge only 2s. 6d.

Mr. SAMPSON: I assure the hon. member it is so. I shall be perfectly satisfied if the Treasurer will be good enough to look into this. I regret that the Honorary Minister, who has the administration of this particular department, is not present, and so I appeal to the Treasurer. I hope he will look into the matter and if, on finding that my statement is correct, he reverts to the charge agreed to at the Chidlows conference, I shall be perfectly satisfied. The matter of

the charge to the road board is one which should receive special consideration. All said and done, the maintenance of the York-road is of importance to many local authorities in addition to the Greenmount Road Board. Why should not the water be available to the Greenmount Road Board at a reasonable rate? When one mentions a charge of 5s. 6d. per thousand gallons, one is struck by the unreasonableness of it.

The Minister for Lands: Did not you discuss that matter on the general Estimates of the Water Supply Department?

Mr. SAMPSON: I have discussed it on several occasions, and I shall continue to mention it until the agreement entered into is observed.

Hon. W. J. George: Why do not you see the file and then you would know.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have seen the file and it is stated that 2s. 6d. would be the charge.

Hon. W. J. George: Was it agreed to by the Minister?

Mr. SAMPSON: I cannot say, but it was agreed to by the people at the conference. As a result of the discussion at the conference, the people at Glen Forrest and Darlington entered into the guarantee.

Hon. W. J. George: If that can be proved, you have a case, but I have my doubts.

Mr. SAMPSON: This matter has been urged time after time, but the people have received no redress. The people of the hills district are law abiding, anxious to pay their way and do what is right, but they urge that the Government should do what is right and not seek to impose a charge of more than 100 per cent. in excess of that agreed upon. When the general Estimates were under consideration, a good deal of discussion ensued on the metropolitan water supply. Those members who have considered the matter have been astonished at the immense area of country that is gradually being reserved for watershed purposes. The Minister for Works, when introducing his Estimates, said he expected that ultimately the water from the Murray River would be required for metropolitan purposes.

Hon. W. J. George: And lower down, too.

Mr. SAMPSON: Possibly so. What does that mean?

The Minister for Lands: It means that development is taking place.

Mr. SAMPSON: I wish to show that it is the reverse of development. What is the position in the big centres of the world?

Take London, Berlin, Paris, and even some of the Australian capital cities. Already certain parts of this State are being denuded of settlers, who are compelled to leave their holdings because the land is required for catchment or watershed purposes. A man may have lived on a farm or orchard for many years, possibly having been born and bred in the locality, and he is required, perhaps at an advanced age, to seek new country and make a new home.

Hon. W. J. George: Well, he is compensated.

Mr. SAMPSON: No monetary compensation could recompense a man who is forced off his holding in that way.

The Minister for Lands: But the Government must provide a water supply for the public.

Mr. SAMPSON: The general impression is that it is essential such men should be forced off their holdings in order that the land might be used for watershed purposes. Let us consider the question from a broader viewpoint. What is best for the State? Is it a good thing that such a tremendous area as is gradually being resumed should be utilised for that purpose, and that settlers should be deprived of the opportunity they previously had to earn a living and increase the production of the State?

Hon. G. Taylor: You cannot have dense settlement on a watershed.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have sought information as to what is done in the Old Country.

The Minister for Lands: Look at the rainfall in the Old Country.

Mr. SAMPSON: And we, too, get good rains at certain times. It is possible by various methods to bring the water to a state that it should not cause any injury to the health of consumers. I am pleased at the utilisation of pipe-head dams, which means that immediate use can be made of the flow of water available. That appears to me to be in the highest degree wise, and the effect must be a big saving of interest charges. I claim in regard to catchment that there is no need for extensive areas. I realise that that is a bold statement to make, but I have in support of my statement my knowledge of what has taken place and is taking place in other countries. At Churchman's Brook the catchment area is roughly three miles long by 1½ miles wide. The Wongong area has a length of 10 miles by perhaps three miles. The area of the Caning catchment reserve is perhaps 30 miles

by seven miles. I repeat that those figures are approximate. In view of the statement made the other evening, there is a possibility that the Serpentine area may be utilised for catchment purposes. In that instance a length of 20 miles by a breadth of eight miles would be required to make possible the catchment of the Murray. I can give only approximate figures, but the ultimate area of land to be reserved will probably be not less than 500 square miles. Even to-day I believe about 400 square miles of country is so reserved. That is a tremendous area; from Mundaring half way to Beverley there is a great watershed reserve. Picture that enormous area, some of the most fertile land in the State, held for watershed purposes! Surely, in the ultimate result, we shall find half the southern portion of the State reserved for catchment purposes.

Hon. W. J. George: Nonsense!

Mr. SAMPSON: Everything is tending that way.

Hon W. J. George: Not at all.

Mr. SAMPSON: Here we are forcing producers off the land. Not every authority is convinced that it is essential to do so, and if it is not essential, is it not desirable that an alteration should be made at the earliest possible moment? When we realise how many of the best portions of the country are being forced out of use, the question is surely worthy of consideration.

Hon. G. Taylor: Its value as a catchment area is greater than the value of anything it could produce.

Mr. Marshall: There is a lot of land being voluntarily held up while the owners are waiting for a price.

Mr. SAMPSON: Much of the land to which I refer is being resumed under the Public Works Act, and ultimately it must become non-productive.

The Minister for Lands: You could not have two or three pigsties in the centre of a catchment area.

Mr. SAMPSON: It would be possible to control that sort of thing. The Minister for Lands, perhaps more than any other member of this House, has travelled in the Old Country. He knows that the consumption of water there is very high, though not so high per head as in a warmer climate such as that of the Commonwealth. The quantity of water used in a city like London is tremendous. If it were necessary there to reserve as a watershed area all the land from which the water comes, the whole of England might

be held for that purpose. Obviously that is not necessary, and since other countries can provide a sufficient quantity of water to meet their demands without holding up half the country side, why should we not alter our present policy? I ask the Government to give this matter serious consideration. I cannot believe that it is essential in the interests of the health of the people that so much land should be held for watershed purposes. Notwithstanding what has been done, the present position is unsatisfactory. No doubt the Minister is doing everything that can be done, but we know that when bore water was available, the position was better than it is to-day. To revert to the use of bore water, however, would not solve the problem. I ask the Government to consider whether it is necessary to hold such extensive areas in reserve.

Mr. Marshall: Do not you really think we should first force into use the land that is held out of production?

Mr. SAMPSON: That is another question. I have always advocated—

Mr. Marshall: You have not done so sincerely.

Hon. G. Taylor: The member for Murchison must not question an hon. member's sincerity.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member may do so if he wishes; I have no objection. The watershed areas to-day are traversed by roads and fauna dies within them, while there are also other possibilities of pollution, but still no one suffers. One could drink from a running stream at a very short distance from the source of pollution and I believe no ill would result. The possibility of pollution is very remote indeed. There is no need to depend upon this natural law. The water could be chlorinated. If that were done there would be no possibility of any injurious organic matter getting into the water.

Mr. Lindsay: I agree with that.

Mr. SAMPSON: Though I am expressing the views of a layman. I am supported by my knowledge of other parts of the world, and I think I am justified in drawing attention to the matter. I hope the Treasurer will see that special attention is given to ascertaining whether it is essential that these areas should be held in reserve. I am convinced that an inquiry would result in a determination that they should not be resumed. Consequently, this State would be the richer, because in place of a tremend-

ously large and steadily increasing area being held in idleness and non-productivity it would be held and utilised.

Mr. Marshall: You will see a lot of that sort of land along the Avon River that is held and not used.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am referring to the valleys in the hill country. The other evening the Minister for Works said that in the opinion of many the day was perhaps not far distant when the waters of the Murray would be required in order to give Perth a sufficient water supply.

HON. W. J. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [S.3]: The member for Swan does not seem to have very much faith in the possibility of the officers responsible for our water supply having given consideration to every aspect of the question before getting out their plans. He draws a comparison between Great Britain and other countries and this State. I would point out that the rainfall in those countries is vastly different from what it is in Western Australia.

Mr. Marshall: Where you get 20 inches to our one.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: The rainfall in this State, with the exception of this year, is generally confined to a few months of the winter. Unless there is an area sufficiently large to collect the big amount of water required to carry on the particular district during the dry parts of the year there is bound to be trouble. I am acquainted with the water supplies of such cities as Glasgow, Manchester and Birmingham. In those cities the water is drawn from the adjacent mountains and from long distances. There are constant showers coming down throughout the year, and in the winter there are large falls of snow, which thaw and create another flow of water into the sources of supply. It is a pity the hon. member, or his friends, who gave him the information, did not give greater consideration to a matter which is too serious to be dealt with except in a serious manner.

Mr. Marshall: In India it rains almost every hour of the day.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: The member for Swan may rest assured that the engineers responsible for dealing with our water supply have given the best of their ability and the fulness of their experience to doing that which they felt was right to do, and they should not be cavilled at. I do not intend to deal with the question of

the distillation of water. It is so silly for people constantly to be dealing with the same question. The whole of the ground was covered by the original Perth waterworks people some 30 odd years ago, when there were no complaints. It was dealt with by the metropolitan water supply service, up to the time when Mr. Faulkner left it, and there were no complaints. It is only during the last few years that these complaints have come forward. It is not altogether a question of rust. The water is stained because it has held in solution a certain amount of wash from the clay soils of the catchment areas. These deposits are coated upon the pipes. Whenever the water pipes are opened up or there is a constant flushing of the pipes, some of this coating is bound to be dislodged, and some people are bound to get it. I notice that a certain sum is set down for group settlements. The Estimates show—

Contribution to Commonwealth main roads chargeable to group settlement. Construction of roads and drains Busselton, Denmark, Manjimup and Northcliffe areas and other works as may be authorised.

I would draw attention to the fact that when further group settlements are required there is no need to go to the extreme south of the State. There is any amount of land equally as good as the Peel Estate, if not better than it, between the Peel Estate and Parkville near Bunbury. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of land there suitable for a big settlement scheme on similar lines to those which are already under way. Around Bunbury and Harvey and those other centres the people are already beginning to get together data to put before the Government with a view to asking them to give more consideration to that part of the South-West than has yet been meted out to it by any Government. There are large areas of land around Parkville that have been shown to the Minister for Lands. Many fine areas of land exist on the coastal side of Pinjarra which could be used for the purpose I have indicated. There is a railway which was constructed from Waroona to Lake Clifton. That could be brought into use and put to great service for the development of the area in question. The Government have certainly stolen all the sleepers, rails, fishplates and bolts, etc., but the time is not far distant when some Government—probably not the present one—will relay

that line and put it to the use that it should be put. I notice that the Minister in his Estimates is very modest as to the amount of money that will be spent on railways during the rest of the financial year. For the Manjimup-Mt. Barker railway a sum of £5,000 is set down. No doubt this has to do with the necessary survey. For the Ejangding Northwards railway another sum of £5,000 has been allocated. For the railway north of Salmon Gums £115,000 is set down. I hope this unfortunate line may be constructed with common sense governing the actions of the workmen who are engaged upon it. We should have no more of the silly business as to whether there shall be constructed half a mile or three-quarters of a mile in one day. Surely it is to the interests of the State that the line should be constructed as quickly as possible. If three-quarters of a mile of line can be laid in one day it will shorten the period and hasten the time when the line will be of use to the people for whom it is being built. I hope that better counsels will prevail with the men who are building the line, and that there will be no further argument as to the rate at which the work shall proceed. It is proposed to recondition certain water pipes. This shows the exercise of great care and that overlooking is going on with regard to the requirements of so important a scheme as our water supplies. Very naturally the people of Perth require the water to be as good as possible. They have to remember that a water supply is a serious undertaking for any Government. Unless we are all prepared to co-operate, the undertaking cannot be carried through. I do not know how Perth would get on without its water supply. The people could not depend upon wells. If they did there would be an outbreak of the Colonial fever which almost devastated Perth in its early history. The water supply of Perth and the facilities given to the people have been a great boon to them. So far as price is concerned, we cannot have an article without paying for it. During the time I occupied the position of Minister for Water Supply a number of people on the hills wanted water. Every scheme was gone into, not with the idea of taking money out of their pockets, but with the idea of supplying them at a reasonable price so long as the department did not lose money on the deal. It is an astonishing thing, but only human nature, that when people get a thing they have tried for, as

soon as they get it and it cannot be taken away, they endeavour to secure still better conditions. They find some susceptible or sympathetic member of Parliament to take up their case and endeavour to secure an improvement over the conditions that were granted at the time.

Mr. Sampson: In other words, a reduction in charge from 5s. 6d. to 2s. 6d.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: If in this particular case, when the supply was given, it was agreed to do the work at 2s. 6d., it should be carried out for that, even if the State lost money. I question, however, whether that was the case. I fancy it is more likely that 5s. 6d. was put down, and that the people desired to get the water for 2s. 6d. When these things happen there is always someone on the deputation who is possessed of a facile memory and can always recollect that someone has said something which does not appear on the notes.

The Premier: Those are the facts of the case.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: It is only human nature, of which I know something. I have a great contempt for people who go to the Minister and get something out of him, and then afterwards endeavour to secure something better. My heart is swelling with sympathetic pity for the gentleman who has been their unsuspecting mouthpiece.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.15]: If in discussing these Estimates one does so from the point of view of the people one represents, and the term parochial may be applied to a member's speech, then I am afraid my remarks will come within that category. Out of a total of £4,832,347 there is a sum of £30,000 set down for the Yarramonv railway. There is the large sum of £5,000 that is to be spent before the end of June, 1927. This railway has been the subject of many deputations to various Premiers. This evening I hunted up the names of the various Premiers who have had something to do with the line. I find that they include the late Mr. Frank Wilson, Sir Henry Jeffry, Sir James Mitchell, Mr. Scaddan, Mr. Colebatch, and the present Premier. It took 15 years to secure the authorisation for the construction of the line. Now, after a further three years we have arrived at the stage where £5,000 is to be

spent. Since I have been member for Avon I have introduced three or four deputations to various Ministers. Always we had hoped to hear something encouraging, certainly something more encouraging than we can learn from the Loan Estimates this year. No fewer than seven railways are mentioned in the Loan Estimates as being marked for commencement, £5,000 being provided for each. Those railways are the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway, the Brookton-Dale River line, the Bridgetown-Jardanup line, the Kalkalling-Bullfinch line, the Lake Grace-Kalgarrin line, the Manjimup-Mount Barker line, and the Yarramony Eastward line. I know that the survey of the Yarramony Eastward line has been completed, but not much of a commencement can be made with the expenditure of £5,000 only. This particular line has been a political railway ever since it was first dealt with. I was hoping that it would continue to be a political railway now, and that it would be started just before the election, which would make the election an interesting one.

Mr. Marshall: You may be sorry before the election is over.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is all right; I do not mind that.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is a case of tread on the tail of my coat!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I should have thought it wiser to have provided a much larger sum of money on the Loan Estimates and thus made a decent start with the railway. I am keenly disappointed because the country through which the line will proceed is one of the finest wheat belts in the State. Last year it contributed about one-fifth of the wheat that was exported overseas. The total wheat sent from the four areas through the centre of which the line will go, was 4,023,888 bushels, and we expect that the output will be largely augmented this year. I told the settlers that they would probably have to wait for 20 years before the line was constructed, which would give them two more years to go, but I hope that my forecast will be proved inaccurate. When sneaking regarding the Kalkalling railway the other night, some remarks of mine were flatly contradicted.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is nothing new in this House.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: My facts are generally correct and they were so on that occasion. I said that some of the blocks held in

the country through which the line would pass—I may have said Bullfinch, although I did not mean to do so—north and north-east of Westonia, comprised over 4,000 acres and pointed to the fact that the country through which the railway was to go might be lighter than the land in the Goomarin area, for which we were asking railway facilities. I find that there are nine blocks of over 4,000 acres each, making a total of 40,643 acres. There are nine blocks of over 3,000 acres each, giving a total of 31,121 acres. There are 14 blocks each over 2,000 acres, giving a total of 33,687 acres. These blocks, ranging from 2,000 acres to 4,000 acres each, give a total area of 105,452 acres all in large areas. There are 10 blocks of over 1,000 acres each, making a total of 16,877 acres, and nine blocks each of 1,000 acres or less than that area, making a total of 8,341 acres. This gives a total for the blocks of 1,000 acres or under of 25,218 acres. Geelakin Sheet No. 1, which I have prepared, shows six blocks of over 4,000 acres each. Three blocks each over 3,000 acres; 12 blocks each over 2,000 acres; 14 blocks each over 1,000 acres; and 15 blocks of 1,000 acres or under. These 51 blocks give an average of 2,033 acres, whereas the 51 blocks on Geelakin Sheet No. 2 give an average of 2,562 acres per block. That area extends to 19¼ miles from the fence to its eastern boundary of the areas mentioned on Geelakin Sheet No. 2. That would make it 31¼ miles from Kalkalling and bring it within 17 miles of Bullfinch. So, when I urged that the line should be taken south to suit the people of the Goomarin area, I was suggesting taking the line through better class land. I hope the Minister will look into this question and I will be pleased to show him the particulars I have drawn up in the two sheets I referred to.

Mr. Kennedy: Why are there such huge blocks?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Because there is not sufficient first-class land available. There must be 640 acres of first-class land in a block before advances can be secured from the Agricultural Bank. It was necessary to have these large blocks in order to get that proportion of first-class country. It may be found in the future that the lighter country is the better in view of the lighter rainfall.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I suppose that is the reason why the railway has been hung up for 18 years.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That country was not proved until the Goomarin people pioneered it and proved its capabilities. The Yarramony Eastward railway is becoming a hardy annual. I regret sincerely that out of £4,832,-347 provided on the Loan Estimates, there is £5,000 only to be spent on the Yarramony Eastward railway before the end of June, 1927.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.24]: There are one or two small matters to which I desire to refer. One concerns the State Sawmills. Will the Minister for Works tell me whether the business premises that are being erected at Pemberton are to be provided for out of loan funds? Will he inform me whether the Government think it is fair to sell land in the townsite adjoining and yet proceed with the building of shops that will be used in opposition to the people who have bought blocks in the town site for business purposes?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They are still doing it, too.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: To my mind it is an absolute breach of faith on the part of the Government to sell blocks in the townsite and yet build business premises half a mile away, thus embarking upon unfair competition.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And they are doing it deliberately!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Are those buildings to be paid for out of loan funds or from general revenue or is the money to come from the profits of the State Sawmills? Dealing with the vote for the development of agriculture, I notice that no provision has been made for the establishment of a school of agriculture in the South-West. Why is Narrogin the only favoured district? In view of the large sums of money being spent in the South-West, the Government would be wise to make provision along the lines I indicate. If they desire to make the prospects bright for the boys in the South-West they should provide a school for agriculture in the South-West so that the lads will learn the best methods to adopt under the conditions that exist in that part of the State. I am bitterly disappointed that the Treasurer has not been able to find a sum of money to establish a school of agriculture in the South-West. We have experimental farms throughout the wheat areas and the Mount Barker and Bridgetown orchardists have been urging the Government to establish an

experimental orchard where investigations can be carried out to determine the best fruits to grow for export, the best way to combat diseases and so forth. We want to know whether the Treasurer will, even at this late moment, consider the advisability of doing something along the lines of establishing a school for agriculture in the South-West. Regarding railway matters, I have been favoured by the Government. The people in my district greatly appreciate what has been done in that direction, but there are people there who consider that the Treasurer is the hardest hearted man that ever occupied that position. They consider he has an obligation to fulfil and yet has made no provision for doing so. They say he has favoured the Albany and Denmark people by making provision on the Loan Estimates to start the construction of a railway from Denmark. On the other hand, he has left the people at the Pemberton and Northcliffe end untouched. If a start can be made with the line from one end, surely the people at Northcliffe and also those 15 or 20 miles further away, are entitled to some consideration at their end. What is good for the people at one end of a proposed line, should be good for the people at the other end of the line.

The Premier: They have good roads.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Premier knows it is impossible to cart produce over those roads during the winter months.

The Premier: I do not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A road was constructed out from Pemberton at a cost of £40,000 and the Premier knows it will not stand the strain of continuous traffic, particularly in the winter months. There is only one way of getting the produce to market and that is by means of a railway which should be constructed. If the Mitchell Government had been returned to power, the railway would have been constructed by now and the people would have been carting their produce for 2½ years.

The Premier: You are joking!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Unfortunately a change took place. I know it was the dream of the Leader of the Opposition, had he been returned to office three years ago, to construct that railway.

Mr. Chesson: He is still dreaming.

The Premier: Can you not see that I am going to start it? There is an item on the Estimates.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is no provision on the Loan Estimates.

The Premier: As a matter of fact it is in your interests that we should not start it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Even if it meant my political oblivion, it would not matter, because the interests of the country are much greater than my personal interests and the line is necessary to make a success of that part of the State. With regard to hospital accommodation I want to know why places like Beverley, Katanning, Geraldton, and Northam should be selected for special treatment. That kind of thing applies throughout Western Australia in old-established towns. The districts that are growing are not receiving the same consideration. In those places the people have to subscribe a portion or half the amount that is required to provide hospital accommodation.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is wandering from the Loan Estimates.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have said all I want to say about hospitals except to add that I would like to know why some provision has not been made for increasing the size of the hospital at Northcliffe. The Premier knows that Northcliffe is a growing centre and we require provision made for the accommodation of settlers' wives.

The Premier: Yes, I know. A hospital was needed the day I was there.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is no provision on these Estimates.

The Premier: Yes, there is.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: With regard to harbour facilities, I draw the attention of the Government and their supporters to the miserable amount that has been provided for improvements to the harbour at Bunbury. I am interested in Bunbury harbour because it is the natural outlet for our dairy products and our fruit.

The Premier: There is money provided for Bunbury harbour.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. A paltry £15,000 which is merely a drop in the ocean. At the same time we find that for Geraldton and Fremantle five or six times that amount has been set aside.

The Premier: There has been more money spent at Bunbury than at Geraldton.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: More money has been wasted at Bunbury. It has not been spent in the right direction by this or any previous Government. We want adequate provision made at Bunbury. I am astonished at the member for Bunbury (Mr.

Withers) allowing the Vote to go through without having something to say about it.

The Premier: We are going to snag the river right up to Bridgetown.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That will be a good idea. We in the South-West do not want to haul our produce right past Bunbury to Fremantle. We also want cool stores at Bunbury. This year it will not be possible for fruitgrowers in the South-West to ship a single case of fruit from Bunbury.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Possibly the Premier has been following the advice given in Buchanan's report.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: What I read of that report was not very generous so far as the whole State was concerned. It dealt with the political side of Western Australia but did not refer very much to the conditions of the different harbours and their geographical positions. However, I am not discussing that report. I am expressing disappointment at the small consideration that Bunbury has received at the hands of the present Government. There should be in hand at the present time the nucleus of a very big scheme at the Bunbury harbour. It is not good policy for people outback to have to carry their produce right past a harbour which is at their very door.

The Minister for Works: The Engineer-in-Chief is going into the matter now. He has not his report ready yet. I have told this to the House half a dozen times.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Treasurer then is again at fault for not anticipating the report of the Engineer-in-Chief. He must know that approval as recommended by this officer will cost at least £100,000. The Premier could have anticipated something like that and provided a larger sum on the Estimates. I heard both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition agreeing with each other that neither had spent all that had been provided on the Loan Estimates.

The Minister for Works: You can bet your life that no money will be spent at Bunbury until the Engineer's scheme has been set out.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not blame the Minister for not spending any more money at Bunbury until that report has been made available. Of course the Government must make out some case so that it shall not be apparent that Geraldton and Fremantle have had such a big advantage over other ports. The Minister for Works must be aware that Bunbury is becoming a very im-

portant centre. This year there will be shipped from that port no less than one million bushels of wheat. Although the Premier has told us that he is going to make necessary provision in the yards, I cannot help remarking that nothing has been done in the way of improving the railway yards at Bunbury for the past 20 years. There is no shed accommodation or cool stores or anything of the kind. I am very disappointed with these Estimates, more especially in regard to the continuation of the railway from Pemberton to Northcliffe which has been promised during the past four or five years.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.37]: When speaking on the general Estimates I referred to the Rottnest jetty and the Minister replied that provision would be made on the Loan Estimates. I notice that on these Estimates there is a sum of money allocated, but it is so well wrapped up that it is very hard to say how it is intended to spend it. There is an amount of £36,000 provided, but the note beside it tells us that it is for "Swan River improvements from the Narrows to Maylands, the Rottnest jetty, the charges of plant and minor works as authorised." I shall be pleased if the Minister will tell us what it is proposed to do at Rottnest during the current financial year. The question of the condition of the Rottnest jetty has been agitating the minds of a number of people for a long time. In July last I received the following letter from the Public Works Department:—

With reference to your letter of the 15th ult., to the Hon. Minister, in regard to the jetty at Rottnest, I have to inform you that an amount of £500 was spent on repairs to the existing jetty at Rottnest. It is understood that Captain Nicholas's objection is not to the structure of the jetty but to the position, which is close in shore where the swells break only a short distance from the rocks. There is a proposal under consideration to resurvey the channel, which was partly dredged during 1924, as soon as fine weather sets in. The whole question of a new jetty will then be reviewed. Even if money was available at the present moment jetty construction could not economically be undertaken at this time of the year.

Unless something is done the £5,000 that has already been spent there will be so much money thrown into the sea. Something will have to be done very shortly otherwise it will be too late by reason of the fact that the weather will again become so bad that no work will be possible at the jetty. I

draw the attention of the committee to the fact that a large number of visitors will be proceeding to Rottnest in the near future, and to those people the jetty at the island will be as great a source of annoyance and danger as it has been to others in past years. I trust the Minister will be able to give us some definite information as to what it is proposed to do in the early future at the island. A sum of £50 for repairs was provided on the general Estimates. To-night it will be interesting to be told what is going to occur during the present financial year. With regard to the Fremantle railway and road bridge, I regret that a larger amount has not been provided on these Estimates. The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) complained that something like £30,000 was voted last year for the Yarramony railway and that only £5,000 was to be spent this year. But in connection with the Fremantle railway and road bridge the Estimates show there is an unexpended balance of £93,956 and that the estimated expenditure for this year is £5,000, leaving a carry-over of £88,956. It occurs to me that things should be moving a little faster with an important work of this description. I do not know whether the Minister can tell us how far the investigations have gone, for instance, whether a site has been chosen. Unless something is done before this session finishes, practically nothing more will be possible until next year when the Loan Estimates come up again for consideration. Something might have been done in the way of providing sufficient money to place an order for material in the Old Country where we know it has to be purchased, but it certainly looks as if nothing is going to be done until the House meets again. The progress made for the year ended the 30th June, 1926, consisted of the purchase of a site, whilst the progress anticipated for the year ended 30th June next will amount to the completion of investigations and preliminary work.

Hon. G. Taylor: And land resumption.

MR. SLEEMAN: It occurs to me that nothing is going to be done during the next 12 months further than the completion of investigatory and preliminary work. If that is the case, I am sorry more is not being done. I note also that the Government propose to construct the second line on the existing bridge. That certainly points to the fact that the old bridge is to be improved to an extent as to make it serve for

some time to come. Then there is a possibility, that having spent so much on the old bridge, the Government may side step the new bridge for some years. I certainly would like to know what the Government propose to do.

MR. KENNEDY (Greenough) [8.43]: Though the Loan Estimates provide for the expenditure of nearly five millions sterling, it will be realised that this is a modest amount considering the huge area of the State, comprising as it does nearly a million square miles. When we take into consideration the expansion of all our industries and the undertakings that are being carried out by the Government, the sum represented in the Estimates is not very big. I congratulate the Government for what they have done in the Greenough electorate in the way of providing water supplies and assisting the agricultural industry generally. Water supplies have been provided throughout the district excepting at the new areas of Balla and Dartmoor. Boring operations were carried out there in the hope of locating water, and the five or six bores that were in operation unfortunately were not successful. The same position obtained in Goomarin, which is adjacent to the Goldfields Water Supply, and was provided from that source. I hope the Government will not overlook the matter as regards my district. New bores are being put down in the Balla and Dartmoor areas, and are expected to furnish an adequate water supply. Adjacent to those agricultural areas is the mining town of Galena. Last year between 200 and 300 miners there, with their wives and families, found themselves unprovided with water. Their supply then was the Murchison River when in flood. However, the Government have furnished them with a tank, which I am glad to say is now full, and the Galena people are extremely grateful. A large amount is provided on the Loan Estimates for agricultural development. That is highly necessary, considering the numerous applicants there are for land. I am pleased to see that the Minister is establishing an experimental farm east of Perenjori. The district contains a large area of agricultural land, but sufficient data has not yet been secured regarding rainfall. An amount is provided for the building of a railway from Ejanding northwards, which will extend about 25 miles east of the present railway to Pithara. I

hope the time is not far distant when the line will be extended to Pindar and Mullewa on the Cue railway. The Minister for Lands has stated that there is an immense area of land available in the Esperance district, but I would point out that if the Ejanding Northwards line is continued to either Pindar or Mullewa, hundreds of settlers will be provided for. Last year Morowa, which is 60 miles from Mullewa, produced 100,000 bags of wheat, and this year it is expected to produce 150,000 bags. There is also a large area of land available out from Pindharuka, Gutha, Canna, and other sidings along the Mullewa-Cue railway. If that area were opened up, it would provide freight for the railways and shipping for Geraldton, where a large amount is being spent on harbour improvement. I hope the Minister for Lands will have the area east of Perenjori classified at an early date. Last year the Government purchased the Mendel Estate, near Mullewa, comprising approximately 33,000 acres. This has been subdivided into 17 blocks, for which there were about 150 applicants. Every day I am receiving letters asking when the Government intend to purchase the Wongoondy and Kockatea Estates, which are adjacent to the Mendel Estate. Wongoondy and Kockatea are now lying practically idle, and they would cut up into first-class farms. I hope no hitch will occur in the carrying out of the main roads policy. During the last few years the Greenough electorate has benefited considerably from the Government's road policy, and large areas of land situated far from a railway, and containing considerable stretches that would not justify a railway—as is also the case in other parts of the State—have been rendered accessible by the building of good roads. One section of the district from Yuna to Bindoon, which is not of sufficient quality to justify railway construction, is now being opened up by roads, and numerous settlers are established from Yuna to Dartmoor and from Bindoon to Balla. The good roads which have been provided enable the settlers to convey their produce to the railways. I note that £100,000 is provided for mining development. I would like to see the amount increased. The Northampton mining field, one of the oldest in the State from a base metal point of view—lead and copper—has produced over £1,500,000 worth of minerals. Many of the mines on the field were closed

down in the early days, not because of low-grade ore, but because the price of lead had fallen to between £7 and £5 per ton. Lead is now from £29 to £30 per ton, and even higher; and it would be an excellent thing for that part of the State if the mines were re-opened. The area of the field is extensive, running from White Peak to the Murchison River, and measuring 60 miles in length by 50 miles in breadth. In that area are many abandoned mines which, with a little assistance, could be worked profitably. Last year a farmer in the district while ploughing his field turned up a lump of metal, and to-day that place is a mine. It has been equipped by the Tarcoola Blocks Co. Ltd., who are now establishing a large plant and in a few months will be employing from 70 to 100 men. So far as lead and copper are concerned, the district has never been adequately prospected. I am glad to say that the Government have undertaken boring operations for coal at Eradu, 30 miles from Geraldton. For many years coal has been known to exist in that part of the State. It has been discovered at Irwin on the Midland railway, and also on the Greenough River in the vicinity of Eradu; but very little exploration work has been done until recently, when the Government put down a bore. I am pleased to be able to say that a few days ago coal was located. The boring is still in progress, and I hope the coal will prove to be of commercial value. Although the Collie fields are a great asset to the State, a discovery of commercial coal in the Geraldton district would prove of immense advantage to the Commissioner of Railways, who would be relieved of the necessity of railing coal 600 or 700 miles to supply locomotives in the northern part of the system. Regrading, I notice, is to absorb a large amount of money, especially the regrading between Midland Junction and Northam. Some regrading work is also going on in the South-West. But other parts of the system, especially in the neighbourhood of Mullewa and Geraldton, also require regrading. The traffic between Mullewa and Geraldton is growing enormously. The wool traffic is heavy and the wheat traffic is increasing every year. In a little time manganese will be transported from Meekatharra to Geraldton at the rate of 50,000 to 100,000 tons annually. Over the ruling grade on that line the heaviest engine can at present take only between 180 and 200 tons. For the economical

working of the line, and in order that assistance may be given to the industries of the north, it is necessary that large locomotives there should be able to haul between 300 and 400 tons. Regrading at the 47-Mile, between Mullewa and Geraldton, would be a distinct advantage to the system. At Eradu there is a bank with a one in 50 grade which should be reduced considerably. I hope the Government will have those works carried out as speedily as possible. On the items I shall have something to say regarding accommodation for the railway staff at Mullewa. At present that accommodation is utterly inadequate. Married men transferred to Mullewa are unable to take their wives and families with them, owing to want of accommodation. The Mullewa depot is rapidly growing by reason of the increase of agricultural and mining products. Numerous railway men are there now without homes, being compelled to leave their wives and children in other parts of the State. The Railway Department cannot get enough single men to go there. I hope, therefore, that the Minister for Railways will see that adequate housing accommodation is provided at Mullewa as in other parts of the State. At Merredin, where I recently spent a week-end, I noticed that the railway men had substantial homes. Accommodation on the same lines should be provided at Mullewa, either in jarrah or in cement bricks. Another anomaly exists at Mullewa. The railway yards there are located similarly to those at Merredin. At Merredin, however, there is an overhead bridge for pedestrian traffic from one part of the town to the other. Mullewa, though as large a town as Merredin, has no railway bridge. The public have to get from the station to the town over railway lines covered with trucks and over engine pits. The people of Mullewa are anxiously waiting for the erection of a bridge. One similar to that at Merredin would not be costly, and I hope the Minister will give the matter serious consideration. I do not see anything on the Loan Estimates to provide additional water supplies for the Mullewa-Gee railway. All the trains on that line have to haul water tanks, and in some parts of the system they require two and even three tanks to carry them through to the next watering station. There will be enormous traffic on this part of the system soon, and an adequate water supply is essential. The water catchments available would fill the dams every year. I hope, therefore,

that the Minister for Railways will give consideration to the establishment of additional watering stations on the northern section of the railway system.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [8.53]: During the last three years the Government have introduced Loan Estimates for a total of nearly 12 millions. It is curious to look back a few years and see how the present attitude of all sections in this State in regard to loan expenditure differs from that which existed some time ago. A few years back the present Premier, when speaking on the Loan Estimates, is reported in "Hansard" as follows:—

Mr. Collier strongly protested against the vicious proposition to spend £70,000 out of loan money. This was nothing short of placing posterity in pawn . . . In the face of this prosperity we found this miserable pettifogging system of erecting bridges and public buildings out of loan money.

The Premier: In what year was that?

MR. NORTH: Nineteen hundred and five

The Premier: That was in my unsophisticated days.

MR. NORTH: I was coming to the point that it does not do for a new member to offer many comments on Loan Estimates. The State alters very materially in a short time, and our business is to look ahead and make provision for the future.

The Premier: The thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

MR. NORTH: I want to make the point that since it is easy for a man like the Premier to find occasion to alter his views, it is inadvisable for a new member, as I am, to say much when he has not even had the opportunity to be on the Government side and learn something about the handling of the affairs of State.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: You are now looking 21 years ahead.

MR. NORTH: Therefore I propose to confine myself to a few remarks made by Dr. Earle Page and reported in this morning's newspaper, and to a reference to the State enterprises. We find in the Loan Estimates provision for certain new railways. Dr. Earle Page, as reported in this morning's newspaper, stated definitely that the Federal Government were still willing to assist the States in the conversion of their railway gauges. In view of that, and in view also of the motion recently passed in this House,

I urge the Government to explore the question of how far the Federal Government are prepared to assist in converting our railways, without our having to wait for the recalcitrant States, Victoria and South Australia, especially in view of the fact that we have so many thousands of miles of railway yet to build. The other point I wish to make is as to whether it would not be advisable for the State to try to eliminate some of our State enterprises and other works with the idea of improving the more important ones that will be retained. Here I would point to the illustration of the cat and its kittens. It is said that if you remove all the kittens but one, the one that remains does much better with the cat than it would otherwise have done. So, too, with the State enterprises. If we could eliminate those that give us trouble, and confine ourselves to a few, such as railways, electricity supply, hospitals and State steamers, it might be possible out of loan funds to handle those enterprises in such a way as to get the results that those controlling them desire. The Commissioner of Railways has said he could spend millions of pounds on the railways and make it return 7 per cent., if not more, in increased efficiency of service. At present he cannot get the money, because the State has so many enterprises to look after.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Railways and Tramways, etc., £1,052,223:

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [9.5]: There is a sum of £5,000 to be spent on the Brookton-Dale River railway. The building of this railway has been authorised for a few years now, and the settlers in the district have been agitating for it for the past 20 years. It is the general desire that the railway should be extended to Armadale. I see the sum of £5,000 is to be spent during the year. That will not go far. I understood from the Treasurer's remarks that it was possible a better grade could be obtained with a view to extending the railway to Armadale. That is pleasing news, but it leaves me wondering whether the Premier was sincere in that, for it is not long since he said his Government would never consent to build any railway for the sake of shortening the route. I remember also that the Minister for Works, a few months ago, when opening the Dwarda railway, said that prob-

ably within a short time he would be opening the railway from Dwarda to Armadale. It was only a little while afterwards that the Premier said his Government would never consent to the building of a railway for the purpose of shortening the route. I will pin my faith to what the Premier said as being probably the more correct of the two statements.

The Premier: Don't be pessimistic.

Mr. BROWN: This railway of 26½ miles ought to be built as quickly as possible, because the settlers have put up with considerable hardship and the land is not being brought under cultivation, it being too far from a railway. Stock has to be driven from 30 to 40 miles into Brookton and it is, of course, impossible to make farming pay at a distance of 40 miles from a railway. Although there is only this item of £5,000 on the Estimates, I should like to know when the Government intend to start this railway. We are told the Government intend to build all our railways with Imperial cheap money. I do not know whether this cheap money comes to the Government in instalments. Probably only a certain amount is granted each year, and it may be that application has to be made by the Government for what money they require for railways. I regret we have here nothing definite as to when the Government are likely to apply for the money for this railway. Also there is on the Estimates a sum of £5,000 for survey and preliminary work on the Lake Grace-Kalgarin railway. When we have before us the advisory board's report on that line and the Bill for its construction, I shall have a little to say about it. I do not know whether it is the policy of the Government to send our produce 300 miles round when it could be brought to port within 200 miles.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It depends upon which port you want.

Mr. BROWN: The best port for us is Fremantle. Personally, I have nothing to say against Bunbury, but I have been told it is not much of a port. It is a good policy to get away from centralisation and avoid building up huge cities such as Sydney. When we have in Western Australia harbours like Fremantle, Bunbury and Albany, it is only right that the produce should be taken to those ports. However, I should like to know what money would have to be spent on Bunbury to bring that port up to date.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is wrong with Esperance?

Mr. BROWN: I have been told that Esperance has a splendid harbour and that there will be a new wheat province in that district. However, I shall have a little more to say when the Lake Grace-Kalgarin Railway Bill comes before the House. I also note there is on the Estimates an amount of £200,000 for additions and improvements to opened railways. I should like to draw attention to a hardy annual in the Pingelly railway station, which is a disgrace to the State. I do not know whether the Government intend to do anything to that station out of the sum provided, but I do hope that something will be done. Not a great deal of money would be required to put the station into a proper condition for the benefit of the travelling public and of the staff. Of course I know we require to have a great many stations and additions and platforms constructed throughout the State. The settlement of Yealering Lake is fast growing into a town, and it is nearly time a station-master was appointed to that place. If possible a short platform should be erected at every important siding on our railways. I am pleased to see that between two and three million pounds are to be devoted to the development of agriculture. At the same time I am told that more than half of it is to be expended in the South-West. Possibly in the course of time the South-West will be the garden of Western Australia, but I should like to point out that at present the Government have to depend upon the wheat-growing districts for the welfare and prosperity and revenue of the State.

Mr. Withers: I am glad you say "at present."

Mr. BROWN: When the population of the State reaches a million, the South-West will come into its own; but in the meantime other districts, where development is now taking place, are to a certain extent neglected for the South-West. My principal object in rising was to speak on behalf of the Brookton-Dale railway, and I hope when the Government get this cheap money that railway will not be forgotten.

Item, Additions and Improvements to Opened Railways, £200,000:

Mr. WITHERS: I do not see here any reference to the locomotive shops at Bunbury. Will the Minister tell us whether they are provided for?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: When the Premier introduced the Estimates

he indicated how certain of that money would be spent. Something like £8,000 or £10,000 is to be expended on that work.

Item, Lake Grace-Kalgarin railway, £5,000:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Can the Premier tell us anything about this item? If this is the route that has been decided upon, I congratulate the Government on the fact that it will serve the people east of Jilakin, East Walyurin, as well as Kalgarin. The line should have started at Dudinin or Kulin or at some point on the Yilliminning-Kondinin line, but I am glad that the route suggested will serve the extensive settlement south of Kalgarin. All through Jilakin and East Walyurin there are as many settlers as there are at Kalgarin. Consequently many good men will be served by this railway, but a better route would have been from Dudinin or Kulin.

Mr. Corboy: There is not so much difference that you would oppose this route.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No; I will support it in the interests of the settlers who will be served by this proposal.

Mr. CORBOY: I congratulate the Premier on having provided on the Loan Estimates the necessary money for the initial work of constructing the Lake Grace-Kalgarin railway. The route proposed will serve the settlers at least as efficiently as any other route could possibly do. To-day I received a letter from Kalgarin informing me that at a meeting of the local railway league held on Sunday last a motion was carried unanimously expressing satisfaction that the recommendation had been adopted and that the settlers were about to be provided with railway facilities.

Mr. Brown: What about Kondinin?

Mr. CORBOY: I am not concerned about Kondinin or the loss of trade to the storekeepers there. I am concerned about the provision of railway facilities to settlers who are at present some 30 miles from railway facilities.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That is the point.

Mr. CORBOY: It does not matter whether the railway goes into Kondinin, Kulin, Dudinin or Lake Grace, but it does matter that settlers situated a long way out should be provided with railway facilities. Kalgarin this year will be sending away 100,000 bags of wheat, and that does not take into account the settlers at Jilakin, North Newde-

gate or Walyurin. The average distance from railway communication of the settlers at Kalgarin is 35 miles.

The Minister for Lands: Is it not 18 miles?

Mr. CORBOY: The Minister is speaking of those settlers whom one might regard as suburban residents of Kondinin. Settlement continues 42 miles east of Kondinin, so when I say that the average distance of settlers at Kalgarin is 35 miles, I am very near the mark. The Government should be congratulated on having provided on the Loan Estimates this year the necessary money for the initial expense of building the line before the Bill has been introduced. We thus have an assurance that the Government will push on with the work at the earliest possible moment, and we may safely assume that the facilities will be provided for those settlers to shift their harvest next year.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I would not have taken part in the discussion but for the remarks of the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) regarding the provision of money for the survey of the line, the particulars of which have never been discussed by the House. I do not know the policy of the Government regarding the area to be served, but we must recognise that we are tackling a new area. It is one that is not generally understood by the House; it is not much understood by the departmental officers.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The area in question is settled.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We want to know where we stand. We must not be carried away by a desire to serve the Kalgarin area. No doubt it is a valuable and well-settled district, but when we start to build this railway, it will not be merely a railway from Lake Grace to Kalgarin. It must be carried somewhere and presumably a long distance. I should like to know what is proposed. Perhaps the Government propose to carry the line from Lake Grace merely to serve the Kalgarin area, where the settlers deserve early attention, but we want to know what the ultimate intention of the Government may be.

Mr. Teesdale: We will have to deal with that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The danger is that we may be embarking upon something that will cause some regret afterwards. I am speaking from experience; this sort of thing has been done before. After surveys have been made and railways built, we have found that mistakes have been made, be-

cause Parliament had not given the question mature consideration. I believe the line should go from Lake Grace and junction somewhere with the eastern goldfields line. Is there any definite policy, and how far will the £5,000 carry us in the way of pledging Parliament to something about which we know very little?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is not wise to vote £5,000 for a railway about which we know nothing. Had the Bill for the construction of the line been passed, we would have known what area was to be served. We are asked to vote £5,000 for preliminary work that will pledge Parliament to carry out the construction of the railway from Lake Grace to Kalgarin. I am not opposing the building of the line, but we may be placing ourselves in a difficult position.

Mr. Corboy: It is better than holding up the work for another 12 months.

The PREMIER: The member for Mount Margaret is quite right. The Committee, in passing this item, will not be committing themselves to anything. It would not be possible for the Government to construct the line or commence even the preliminary work of construction without bringing down a Bill and securing authority. It is intended to bring down in a day or two a Bill to authorise the construction of the line, and the whole matter can then be discussed by the House. If the House does not approve of the route, no money will be expended.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is all right so long as you bring down the Bill.

The PREMIER: The Railway Advisory Board have recommended a line from Lake Grace to Kalgarin, and there is no doubt it will not terminate there for all time. It will have to be continued somewhere, but I do not think there is anyone in the Lands Department or on the Advisory Board with a policy as to where the line should go. I think all are agreed that a railway to the Kalgarin district is justified. What direction the line may take in future I cannot say. We shall have the report of the Advisory Board in a day or two and when the Bill comes down the route can be discussed. With the exception of the people at Kondinin -

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Who have a railway.

The PREMIER: Yes, and who really are not concerned, I think all are agreed that the route recommended by the Advisory Board is the correct one.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Kondinin was mentioned in the Governor's Speech.

The PREMIER: But it was intended that Kalgarin should be served.

Mr. Corboy: Yes, the country east of Kondinin.

The PREMIER: When members see the report of the Advisory Board, I think they will have no doubt that the route recommended is the correct one.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier's remarks have cleared up the difficulty that I foresaw, but the member for Yilgarn said that if the item were not passed, the line would be held up for 12 months. I thought we were being asked to pass something for which a Bill would be brought down next year. The Premier tells us that the Bill will be brought down in a few days and that puts a totally different complexion on the matter. No doubt when we see the report of the Advisory Board we shall be satisfied.

Item, Railway Surveys, New lines, £13,000:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I thought the Minister for Works agreed the other night that it was advisable to set aside sufficient money for the survey of lines to avoid the re-grading that has been necessary on many of our lines in the past. We have always spent too little on the initial survey of our lines and have not obtained the best possible grades. I merely wish to direct attention to the matter. It is not wise to starve the survey. Only £13,000 is provided and that amount will not go far these days.

Mr. Corboy: The amount is eight times greater than the expenditure last year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But nothing was done last year. The first survey is all important.

The Minister for Railways: An expenditure of £1,000 on that may save £20,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and years of haulage over a bad grade. We have never given the engineers sufficient money to enable them to locate the best route.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have in the field every available skilled railway surveyor. Possibly we shall be able to get another gang out very soon. It is with that in mind that the vote has been arranged. Any railway may require to be relaid later on, as trade improves and the load increases. We are relocating the Brookton-Armadale route. The Engineer-in-Chief is convinced that he can get a grade of one in 80 instead of one in 60. This will be an important line, and

may carry as much wheat as any other line. It is, therefore, essential that the grade should be a good one. Great pains are being taken in this matter by the Engineer-in-Chief and his staff, and there will be no unnecessary delay in carrying out the preliminary work. The amount provided under this head will all be spent.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad to know that care will be exercised in the choice of routes. I do not blame the department, because in the past we have given too little money for this purpose. Between Perth and Northam there has been an enormous expenditure in deviations, especially between Chidlows and Woeroloo.

Item—Trams, Perth Electric and Extensions, £80,000:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I wish to draw attention to the deplorable state of the Newcastle street and Oxford street trams. One line has been laid for 27 years and the rails are now worn out. I understand that quite recently a tram ran off the line on to the footpath. I believe as much money has been spent in trying to keep the line in order during the past six years as would pay half the cost of relaying with new material. I fear some serious accident will occur on the Oxford street section if the matter is not attended to. The running time between William-street terminus and Mt. Hawthorn has been increased by seven or eight minutes, and over a bad line such as this is the danger of accidents is increased. The section between Loftus-street and Oxford street is a new one, but as soon as a tram leaves that the passengers feel that it will run off the line.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We have ordered eight miles of rails for the trams, but they have been held up in England. We are informed they will be ready two months after the coal strike ends. A relaying programme has been arranged, and when the rails arrive it is almost certain that the portion of the system referred to by the member for Mt. Margaret will be attended to. Every year we are spending £21,000 on relaying, and that expenditure will go on for the next three or four years.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Harbours and Rivers, £233,285:

Item—Bunbury Harbour Works, £15,000:

Mr. WITHERS: Is this money for maintenance? The amount set down is necessary

for the continuance of the present system. In the event of the Engineer-in-Chief reporting favourably on harbour improvements, could the unexpended balance of £70,569 be spent on the works? If not, will a greater sum than £15,000 be available on next year's estimates?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position regarding the Bunbury harbour is that the money is required for further dredging, deepening and completing investigations being conducted regarding the provision of a new harbour. The Engineer-in-Chief has an officer at Bunbury who is collecting a lot of information. Mr. Stileman declines to commit himself to any scheme for Bunbury until he has the information he desires.

Hon. G. Taylor: Quite right, too.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The officer is taking soundings, watching the movements of the tides, the effect upon the existing dredging and so forth. The Engineer-in-Chief tells me that he hopes before long to be able to make a definite recommendation to the Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you have had all this information for years.

The Premier: But some mistakes have been made there.

Mr. Withers: The Bunbury harbour alters every year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: While there is a fund of information already available, everyone from C. Y. O'Connor onwards, including Sir George Buchanan, admits that the Bunbury harbour presents a difficult problem. When the Engineer-in-Chief presents his definite scheme it will be necessary for Parliament to approve of it and vote the necessary funds. It will be for the Government to decide what action will be taken and that will be discussed later.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There must always be annual expenditure in connection with harbours that have to be dredged, because they are always silting up. Even at Fremantle money has to be spent annually on dredging. Engineers have gone into the Bunbury harbour problem for years past. With the new Engineer-in-Chief there came practically a new staff, all the old officers of the department having vacated their positions.

The Minister for Works: That is so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the records compiled by those old officers still remain.

The Minister for Works: The ideas of the predecessors of the present officers are all on paper.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And I do not know that the new officers will get more information regarding tides and so forth than the older officers. Of course, they cannot get anything new!

The Minister for Works: They are doing so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The trouble at Bunbury is that the water becomes still inside the jetty and the sand settles. That is why so much dredging has had to be undertaken and acres of land have been reclaimed since operations first commenced. I am glad to know that the Engineer-in-Chief is giving consideration to the Bunbury problem, but I do not like to think that the older men who have looked into the question for years are to be ignored altogether.

The Minister for Works: They are not being ignored.

Item, Improvements to Harbours and Rivers, £36,000:

Mr. SLEEMAN: In the details regarding the work mention is made of the Rottnest jetty. Will the Minister furnish some information regarding that proposal?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am afraid Rottnest will have to wait another year for the jetty. It is not proposed to construct it from the vote this year. The dredging done at Rottnest was in connection with the new site for a jetty. The present site is not considered suitable and it was proposed to erect a new jetty on another site. The channel has been carefully examined, and soundings taken to determine the silting that takes place. Further investigation is necessary and, therefore, no money is provided for a new jetty.

Mr. ANGELO: For several years I have mentioned the necessity for dredging at the Carnarvon jetty. That question has been placed before the Government several times and there have been promises that investigations would be made. I hope the Minister will look into the matter this year. The trouble seems to be that when ships move in the swell they create a trough for themselves and throw up the ocean bed into a sort of furrow off the jetty. It is on the bank thus thrown up that boats have grounded. If the new State ship "Koolinda" draws more water than the boats at present

on the coast, she will encounter difficulty at that port. During the last two or three years boats that grounded off the jetty have had to wait until the tide was high enough to enable them to come alongside. Another matter relates to the provision of lights at the entrance to Shark Bay. The Honorary Minister, Mr. Hickey, when travelling north, had the position explained to him by the captain of a State steamer. That officer pointed out how easily the channel could be lighted by the erection of three reinforced concrete piles, fitted with automatic lights at a cost of about £1,500 each. Under existing conditions, boats have to remain at anchor for upwards of 12 hours waiting for daylight to enable them to navigate the narrow channel at the entrance to the Bay.

Mr. Teesdale: Look at the cost the "Koom-bana" was involved in there.

Mr. ANGELO: And the "Bambra" too. The loss entailed by such stoppages would more than compensate for the cost of the three lights.

The Minister for Lands: All lighting dues go to the Commonwealth.

Mr. ANGELO: I think the Minister is wrong. We were told that dues in respect of lights at the entrance to a channel do not go to the Commonwealth. The Honorary Minister, Mr. Hickey, promised that the matter should be looked into.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Water Supply and Sewerage, £589,080:

Item, Sewerage for Perth and Fremantle, £115,975:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Will any effort be made to sewer portions of the metropolitan area to the north of the existing sewered area?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am afraid we shall not be able to find money this year for that work. We are committed to a large expenditure in Subiaco. The outfall there has necessitated the expenditure of a large sum. To spend £115,000 on sewerage in one year is a pretty big item.

Hon. G. Taylor: But you are spending a large proportion of it in Subiaco.

The Premier: Until that is completed we cannot get any return.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is all dead money until we get to that stage.

Item, Metropolitan Water Supply, £269,425:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: How far will the Vote take us? Will it mean a supply from Churchman's Brook next summer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Engineer-in-Chief is hopeful that he will be able to impound next winter's rains in the Churchman's Brook reservoir, in which event the supply will be available from there during the following summer. The original idea was that as soon as the work at Churchman's Brook was completed, we should shift over to Wongong Brook and construct the reservoir there before proceeding to the Canning site. The Engineer-in-Chief has not yet decided whether he will adhere to the original plan or proceed with the Canning site first.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The one pipe will connect the two supplies?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, the pipes are there now, and we have pipe head dams bringing in the water. But the storage is not there, and as the end of summer approaches there will be very little water left. When the work is completed Wongong will hold twice as much as Mundaring, while the Canning reservoir will impound twice as much as Wongong.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At present we are getting only the natural flow?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. The work at Churchman's had to go slow during the winter because of the expense, but now the fine weather has set in, efforts up there have been redoubled and the work is being pushed on. So it is hoped that reservoir will be ready to impound next winter's rain, although that is not to be taken as certain.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the water from Churchman's will be available next summer. Of course every city in Australia has had its troubles in respect of water, and I suppose we must have ours.

Item, Goldfields Water Supply, £62,000:

Mr. SAMPSON: I should like to know from the Minister whether the extension from Mount Helena to Parkerville is included in this.

The Minister for Works: This is in the department of the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Cunningham) who, unfortunately, is not here just now.

Item, Water Supply in agricultural and North-West districts, including drainage and

irrigation and loans and grants to local authorities, £110,800:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I should like to know how much of this will come under the migration agreement at interest of one per cent. That money will be available, will it not?

The Premier: We hope so, but we are not yet sure.

The Minister for Lands: We have a temporary approval.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I knew the Minister had some kind of approval. Apparently it is an approval that has to be confirmed.

The Minister for Lands: I have definite approval for £148,000 for water supply, and £500,000 in all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is water supply for agricultural districts? Well that will enable us to hold up water at a moderate cost. I just wanted to know whether we are to pay one per cent. for this work this year.

The Minister for Lands: There is no drainage from one per cent. money in that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope this temporary approval the Minister has will prove to be permanent, and that we shall be able to give the farmers the advantage of it.

The Premier: The commissioners seem to be going very thoroughly into things.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Apparently they are. If they get a good look at that country they will be satisfied for all time.

The Minister for Lands: If they attempt to exercise control there will be no cheap money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They are taking considerable pains to acquire a knowledge of the country, and I am glad of it. The Minister should be with them.

The Premier: I am afraid there would have been a disruption before they went very far. I am keeping him as far from them as I can.

The Minister for Lands: I sent two under secretaries with them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister ought to have gone with the commissioners. However, he is very obstinate and will not do his duty, even when we point it out to him.

The Premier: He is to have a conference with them on Friday.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Well, I pity them.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Development of Goldfield and Mineral Resources, £105,175:

Item, Development of Mining, etc., £100,000:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I suppose the £45,000 rebate on water will come out of this £100,000.

The Minister for Mines: It had to.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Is that the only call on the £100,000, the only money earmarked?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The money will be expended in the usual way in the form of assistance to persons engaged in mining development to whom loans are approved, loan of boring plants, assistance for prospecting and boring, rebates to prospectors on low grade ore, subsidies to batteries, and subsidies for carting long distances.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You spent £35,000 in that way last year. What happened?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This year we have segregated the item for prospecting and boring for minerals.

Hon. G. Taylor: I noticed that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The object is to enable us to take advantage of the Federal prospecting grant. Last year we did not get a penny of that grant. Although £5,000 was allocated to the State out of the total of £30,000, no portion of it could be claimed until the total amount of our vote had been spent. We can never spend our total vote because we are paying out during the year and must have a few pounds in hand at the end of the year to meet commitments.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You should reduce the vote.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have segregated the amount for prospecting, and when that is expended, we shall call upon the Federal authorities to allocate their vote.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You spent £35,000 last year.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: More than that. We spent £50,000 on the Horseshoe mine alone.

Hon. G. Taylor: Not out of this vote.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, out of Government funds. We spent money also

on the silver-lead mines and we had £5,000 in the Protheroe mine, which closed down.

Hon. G. Taylor: There was no return for that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The £50,000 to the Horseshoe mine was not money spent but money guaranteed.

The Minister for Mines: It is as good as spent. We shall have to pay it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It might not be necessary to pay one penny of it. If the company pay the amount, the Government will not have to pay.

The Minister for Mines: The company will not pay it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is security over the plant and the mine.

The Premier: The bank has advanced the money to the company with our guarantee.

Mr. Teesdale: There is great security in mining machinery!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Horseshoe mine will be revived.

Mr. Teesdale: Try to sell some mining machinery and see how you get on.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Recently I travelled with a mining expert, who discussed values in the Boulder and Horseshoe mines and came to the conclusion that the prospects were very bright if those mines went down another 1,000 feet. I hope the Horseshoe will start again and that a revival of mining will follow. The Premier does not expect to have to find the money.

Hon. G. Taylor: He does not look too pleased about the prospects.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Government had to find the money, it would mean that the mine would not work again.

Mr. Teesdale: The Premier would sell his chance pretty cheaply.

The Premier: I feel confident that the mine will work again.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think so, too. I hope the company will find money to do some development work. I do not see why more gold should not be obtained from the Golden Mile.

Mr. Teesdale: There are plenty of mines outside the Golden Mile.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No chance should be missed, as all the facilities are available for working the Horseshoe mine. After the goldfields water supply loan of £2,500,000 is repaid in January next, the £45,000 should not be charged to loan. The scheme should carry the reduced

amount. The interest is about £75,000 a year and the rebate to the mines is £45,000. Since 1922 the rebate has been made and charged to this vote, but this should be the last occasion when it should be so charged.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If the bank calls up the guarantee for the £50,000, will it be paid out of this vote?

The Minister for Mines: No, it will not affect this vote.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: My chief is very hopeful that the Government will not be called upon to find the money. Even if the Government have to meet this demand, I hope the mine will work again. The Government are pledged to that loan, but I am glad to know it will not come out of this vote.

The Minister for Mines: Without that guarantee the mine would not have been working so long.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That is so. It kept the mine working at least 12 months longer than would otherwise have been the case. Certain development work was not done during the previous year, but the money that should have been spent on it was paid out in dividends.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The money will not come out of this vote. I believe the Golden Horseshoe will yet resume operations. There are wonderful possibilities about it, and big reserves of ore. We require more money this year than last, because we have three boring plants at work, and may have a fourth later on. These will absorb a considerable sum each month. I anticipate that the vote will be exhausted by the end of the year. We may get good results at any time.

Vote put and passed.

Vote — Development of Agriculture, £2,123,750:

Item, Agricultural Immigration, £6,000:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This item seems to refer to passages. Will the Minister kindly explain?

The Minister for Lands: It refers to railway fares and items of that description.

Item, Agricultural Group Settlement, £1,370,000:

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: What specific works will be included in this expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It refers to drainage in the Busselton, Northcliffe and

Denmark areas. One of the works included is that of the drainage of the Owingup Swamp.

Item—Purchase of wire netting for settlers, £100,000:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What is this item for?

The Minister for Lands: It is for wire netting that we bought this year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Is it part of the arrangement that the Federal grant will cover?

The Minister for Lands: Yes, when the agreement is entered into.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Is this a temporary arrangement?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not a temporary arrangement. When the Commonwealth agreement is made, we hope to transfer this amount to the Federal Government. In the meantime it is a State arrangement whether the Commonwealth come in or not. We are charging extra interest to make up for the State's payments. If the agreement is made, a reduction will be given to the farmers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Has the Minister finalised the agreement to cover the amount?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. This cannot be done until the Federal Parliament meets.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the State has signed the agreement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then it is fairly certain we shall get the money.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Roads and bridges, public buildings, etc., £329,300:

Item, New roads and bridges in country and goldfields districts, including feeders to railways, etc., £181,300:

Mr. LATHAM: Is it proposed to provide money for clearing feeder roads in new areas where land has been thrown open for selection?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have tried to bring as much of this work as possible under the Commonwealth scheme, devised mainly for the construction of roads to open up country for new settlers. We asked the road boards to name the roads they wanted, in their order of preference, but after doing that many of the boards said

there were other roads more urgent than those they had instanced. They are not going to doublebank me in that way.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There must be roads for new settlers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: During the last two years records have been broken in this direction.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In your imagination.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In solid mileages. It is no use boards giving me their order of preference, and then afterwards bringing forward what they consider to be more urgent works. In view of all the money the State has to find under the scheme, it is impossible for the Government to continue giving additional grants to local authorities. Besides, the local authorities are getting great relief under the scheme. I have been impressing those facts on them. Special grants will henceforth be few and far between. Roads are being built into all new railway sidings.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That has always been done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. We provide for such roads in the scheme.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister for Works always says, "We have done far more than you ever did." Years ago roads were cut wherever land had been sold. Land was surveyed and sold all the way from Perth to the Murchison River, and roads were cut everywhere. I am speaking of 1909. However, the roads were then cut cheaply under efficient administration. Why should the Minister want preference as regards new roads to be cleared in new areas now? The total mileage cannot be great. There is no use in sending people out into the country unless they are provided with roads.

The Minister for Lands: The Minister for Works was dealing with roads for which preference was desired.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope that wherever land is surveyed and sold, the Government will cut those promptly. Otherwise settlers cannot remain on the land.

Item, Roads and Bridges, Public Buildings, etc., New Roads and Bridges in country and goldfields districts, £181,300:

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH: Has any provision been made for the Gordon River bridge?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not unless that work is provided for in the Commonwealth grant.

Item, Fremantle Road and Railway Bridge, £5,000:

Mr. SLEEMAN: Is this amount of £5,000 to be spent on the bridge during the next twelve months? Is there any possibility of making a commencement with the building of a new bridge this year? I ask because there will not be any more Loan Estimates until this time next year. Last August, when I introduced a deputation to the Premier, he was pretty definite regarding the matter; but this item of £5,000 does not look very definite.

The Premier: I cannot say. It is a matter for the Engineer-in-Chief. The Government cannot decide until they have the necessary reports.

Mr. SLEEMAN: For a railway, provision is made on these Loan Estimates to the extent of £5,000 in anticipation of what the report of the Railway Advisory Board is likely to be.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Government have the board's report on that line. They have not the report of the Engineer-in-Chief on this bridge.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I was told that the report of the Engineer-in-Chief was ready, but that he did not want to let his report go because certain people were likely to jump in and take up land.

The Minister for Works: No such thing.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The other night the Minister for Works said that the Engineer-in-Chief was afraid even to put his plans on paper lest land agents seeking information might obtain it. Whether the report of the Engineer-in-Chief was ready or not, the Minister did not say.

The Minister for Works: You said I did say it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I took it that the report of the Engineer-in-Chief was ready but was being kept back lest some people should get hold of certain information.

Mr. Davy: And put up fake sales to swindle the Government.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That was what was meant.

The Minister for Works: That is what I said.

Mr. SLEEMAN: A great deal of valuable time may be lost before a commencement is made with the bridge. The Premier

told the deputation pretty definitely that as soon as the Engineer-in-Chief had delivered his report, the work would proceed.

The Premier: I said there would be an item for it on this year's Loan Estimates, and the item is here.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is a pretty miserable item.

The Premier: Quite possibly the amount will not be spent.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It would be as well not to spend the amount as to hold it out by way of inducement. I wish to know whether something definite is being done regarding the bridge.

The Premier: How can we do anything definite before we have a definite recommendation?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The report of the Engineer-in-Chief will be available in a week or two; if it is not available now.

The Premier: Who said it would be available in a week?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Perhaps in two weeks or three weeks?

The Premier: Perhaps in three months.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Then, cannot something be done at the end of the three months?

The Premier: Something will be done.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It looks as if nothing will be done except investigation and preliminary work, things which amount to practically nothing.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will be all right before March.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not know that it will be all right before another 12 months. What is going to be done beyond the expenditure of £5,000?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no idea when the Engineer-in-Chief's report will be ready. I gave no indication to the House that he had formed any ideas on the subject. I said he was afraid to put his ideas on paper for fear the information would leak out. I did not say his schemes were ready because I did not know. When the Engineer-in-Chief's report is presented it will be a good while before the work can be undertaken. This applies particularly when it concerns a work such as the proposed bridge, which will cost nearly one million pounds. It will involve a great deal of preparation and the bulk of the material will probably have to come from England. Specifications will have to be prepared and a whole host of details attended to. It will mean months and

months of work quite apart from the question of surveys, land acquisition and so on. It is not only the building of a bridge that is involved in this proposition. In some quarters, particularly at Narrogin, my recent remarks were misconstrued. When the bridge is built, quite a number of very important points will have to be taken into consideration. There is the extension of the existing harbour, which has to take paramount place in regard to this question. To spend a million pounds in the construction of a bridge only to find that the extension of the harbour will necessitate its removal, would be a calamity. A large sum will have to be provided for harbour extensions and we must be very sure that the best is obtained from the expenditure we will incur. The whole of the railway system that leads into the port has to be considered. Attention has to be given to all the trunk lines that bring produce down to the coast and all this is the job for the officers of the Engineer-in-Chief. I have seen masses of figures dealing with the traffic over the different lines, the quantity of wheat hauled, the tonnage at various stages, and what it will mean if the haulage is done over one line. I have seen details regarding the use that can be made of both sides of the harbour, and the possibility of transferring goods from one side to the other. People who think we can say we will build a bridge one day and get on with the job next week, have no idea what investigations have to be carried out, and such people should get it out of their minds that it is possible to arrive at a decision on such a big question within a week or a month. We do not want any repetition of the Fremantle dock episode. Before we incur any big expenditure, detailed information has to be collected and carefully examined. We will not ask the country to be involved in this huge expenditure before Parliament is given the opportunity to approve of the position. I do not know that it will mean the introduction of a special Bill.

Hon. G. Taylor: You will have to get authorisation to spend the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but I do not think a special Bill is necessary to enable us to construct the bridge. The land will be acquired under the Public Works Act and the money for the actual work will be voted by Parliament. In determining matters relating to the bridge,

the interests of the railways, road and tramway communications have to be considered too. Those who know the discussion that took place in New South Wales regarding the construction of the North Shore bridge, which is a much bigger proposition, will appreciate what such a problem means.

Hon. G. Taylor: They were fighting about it when I was a boy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have to be sure of our position before we approve of any proposal, and I will not be hustled into any decision.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is the way! We will see that you are hustled.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When a decision is arrived at it will be on sound grounds. I am as anxious as the next man to see the bridge built and to get on with the work, but that will not be the deciding factor.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We are all expert bridge builders!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No matter what agitation may be apparent outside, it will not induce me to interfere with the engineers, who will do their task thoroughly without any pressure from me.

Mr. Teesdale: You are looking on the wrong side of the House. No one spoke about it from the Opposition side.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can only reiterate my statement that I never stated that the Engineer-in-Chief's plans were ready and that we were likely to have them within the next week or two. I am sure I did not convey that impression to the House.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I should like to know that the Government will not undertake such a work without consulting Parliament. By voting £5,000 we are making provision for the preliminary work that has to be done. The erection of this bridge is a most important matter for the whole State. Future harbour requirements must be considered and I do not know that it is enough to take the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief only. Certainly Parliament should be consulted before a start is made with the construction of the bridge. The Government should not take the responsibility of deciding where the bridge should be established without consulting Parliament. To authorise its construction at a wrong site would be disastrous. In the past this work was held up because it was not possible to find the money necessary.

Mr. Sleeman: That is a good old excuse! No money!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Time and again it has been stated why the money was not available for work that was required. In the past we have endeavoured to embark upon undertakings that would create developmental work for the people and thus provide means by which the works could be paid for. This bridge will be a very costly work and I hope the Minister will see to it that the House is consulted before the work is undertaken. By voting £5,000 to-night, we are not committing ourselves to the site of the bridge, nor to the great expenditure in respect of the bridge, but merely to the preparatory work that must be done before we are consulted. Even the Minister cannot hold that the House has agreed to let the Government decide this very important question of the site of the bridge.

The Minister for Lands: It would not take me long to decide it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There you are! I do not know how the Premier gets on with the handling of that Minister!

The Minister for Lands: We get on very well together.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course the whole of the heavy traffic goes to North Fremantle, as does also the timber traffic.

The Minister for Works: No, most of that goes to the south side.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: However, that is not important. What is important is that the House should be consulted before the real work is undertaken. I am satisfied to vote this sum, but I should be dissatisfied if I thought the House was not to be consulted before the actual work was begun.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The engineers cannot bring down a report in a day or two. This question has been on the cards for a considerable time and has been investigated by various engineers. It is now five or six months since the Engineer-in-Chief began conferring with the other engineers about it. We can reasonably expect it will not be long before his report is ready. In the meantime something should be done, so that when the report is ready orders could be placed for some of the material, whether in the Eastern States or in the Old Country. To hear some members talk one would think this bridge was a new question. It has been a burning question for a number of years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The material, of course, will be ordered as soon as possible.

Mr. SLEEMAN: What can be done by way of ordering material with £5,000?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I hope the Government will not embark on any expenditure beyond the amount voted to-night. The bridge will cost anything up to £500,000.

Mr. Sleeman: According to the estimates, it will cost £650,000.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Does the hon. member think that by voting £5,000 for preliminary work we are going to allow the Government to embark upon the main expenditure?

Mr. Sleeman: You ought to give me credit for having more brains than that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The hon. member has suggested that they should go on ordering material.

Mr. Sleeman: I said provision could be made for it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The great bulk of the main expenditure will be for material. If the hon. member expects the Government to embark upon that expenditure by immediately placing orders for material, what chance will Parliament have to discuss the expenditure when the question comes before the House? I hope the Government will not spend a penny more than the amount authorised to-night.

Mr. SLEEMAN: What I said was I hoped something would be done to provide for a certain thing, by way of purchasing material in the Eastern States or in the Old Country. What I complained of was that £5,000 was insufficient.

Item, Reconstruction of Canning-road:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Is that the road being built between here and Armadale?

The Premier: No, it is the road on the south side of the river to Fremantle.

Vote put and passed.

Vote — Other State Undertakings, £259,500:

Item, State Sawmills, £50,000:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We have been told that the Government have formed a townsite at Pemberton and sold lots at high figures, and that they are now building shops on the old townsite, which is half a mile from the new townsite. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) desired to

know whether any of the £50,000 was intended for the erection of shops or other buildings.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The only buildings that have been erected since the townsite lots were sold are those necessary to complete undertakings given before the lots were sold or to meet the requirements of the sawmills store. The store was much overcrowded and a new building was required.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: What about the bank?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: An arrangement was made with a butcher and a bank. The hall, which has stood in the centre of the settlement for years, has been enlarged under an arrangement with the Timber Workers' Union.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The hall is used for recreation purposes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, all the people use it. The big settlement will always be at the mill.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Lands Improvement Loan Fund, £44,225—agreed to.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

BILL—SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.