

hear others, but I think a select committee of three members could hear all that everyone had to say in the course of a day. I hope members will accede to the wishes of this important body, because it represents the whole of the ratepayers of Greater Perth.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.46]: I shall certainly support Mr. Lovekin in his request for the reference of this Bill to a select committee. He has dealt with the clause which affects the province he represents. Without tying myself in any way to that particular point, I think the people he is speaking for are entitled to the fullest hearing of their case. It is only fair play that they should be heard and the easiest and most effective way is before a select committee. It is rather difficult to obey, Mr. President, if not your ruling, the indication of your wishes in connection with this Bill, because the question of general principles hardly comes in. There are three provisions to which I wish to refer and it is very hard to group a criticism of them as any kind of principle. Paragraph (b) of Clause 4 proposes to insert in Section 41 of the Act the words "and prescribe the manner in which such tablets and the characters thereon shall be painted and the distinguishing colours thereof for the several classes of licenses." This is followed by a provision as follows: "Require the driver of any vehicle licensed for the carriage of passengers or goods to exhibit a prescribed sign whilst waiting for hire to indicate that such vehicle is plying for hire." I am going to make an appeal for a select committee in order that these people may be heard. I am voicing the opinion of a small minority, but they are entitled to a full hearing of their case. I am referring to motor people who ply for hire in the sense that their cars can be taken out for hire, but they do not ply for hire in the sense of standing on the ranks and picking up odd passengers. I hold in my hand the Manchester Corporation General Powers Bill, a memorandum on behalf of the motor legislation committee of the House of Commons which was drawn up with special reference to this particular point, and is well worth the attention of a select committee. Paragraph (c) of Clause 4 demands some consideration. It refers to the question of requiring and authorising each local authority to require a license to be obtained at a prescribed fee for the use of any jinker, whim, or other vehicle or trailer engaged in heavy traffic in its district. Members who are acquainted with country districts, the duties of road boards, the Road Districts Act, the work under present conditions and the proposed alteration know that this provision has aroused the greatest interest in country districts. As an instance of this, a public meeting of ratepayers of the Darling Range district called upon the whole of the board to resign, a thing which had never previously happened in the 25 years of the

board's existence. The question at issue was that of the heavy traffic. It is a matter which demands the closest attention of members before they pass this measure. If Mr. Lovekin's suggestion is not adopted, one of two things will happen; either we shall pass legislation without the full consideration which these particular points deserve, or we shall be unduly delayed in Committee in dealing with these points. To save time I trust that the Leader of the House will consent to the appointment of a select committee.

On motion by Hon. F. E. S. Willmott, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 3rd January, 1923.

	Page
Assent to Bills	2646
Loan Estimates, 1921-22	2646
Bill: Architects, retd.	2673

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Auctioneers.
2. North Fremantle Rates Validation.
3. Supply Bill (No. 4) £1,030,000.
4. General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.
5. Sale of Liquor Regulation Act Continuance.
6. Constitution Act Amendment.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1921-22.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from 15th December; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Colonial Treasurer in charge of the votes.

Vote—Departmental, £66,124:

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.35]: Doubtless hon. members, during their leisure hours of the holiday season, availed themselves of the opportunity to closely study the

details of the Loan Estimates. Doubtless also, they will find themselves approving or disapproving of the Estimates according to the amount set out for works they consider essential to the development of the districts they represent.

Mr. Johnston: No, for the whole of the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Works are bound to be national, so long as they are in the constituency one represents. I am afraid, however, that if goldfields members viewed the Estimates from that standpoint, they would find it difficult to become enthusiastic. Although some parts of the State may not participate to a great extent in the loan expenditure during the coming year, certainly no hon. member will have cause to complain of the total amount set out for their approval being in any way inadequate. Members will observe that the Premier estimates that he will spend, in round figures, £3,548,000 from loan funds. That is a very large amount, especially when we have regard for the fact that our total indebtedness amounts, again in round figures, to some £49,000,000. It has been pointed out by the Premier that we are entitled to deduct a sum of £7,640,000 which has been contributed to the sinking fund; but even so, the figures still stand out as being very large. I know that the Premier will point out before the discussion closes that it is intended to spend the greater portion of this money on land settlement, principally relating to soldier settlement. It is interesting to note how loan expenditure has been increasing during recent years. During the years of prosperity, in the good old days when Labour governed the country, large sums of loan moneys were spent each year. We reached our high water mark in 1913, when we spent £3,400,000. I would remind hon. members who may desire to quote that fact against me, however, that included in that amount was a sum of £500,000 for the purchase of the Perth trams which, it will be agreed, was exceptional and extraordinary expenditure. That expenditure, it should be mentioned, was authorised by Parliament. In that year, also, £160,000 was expended in connection with workers' homes.

Mr. Lutey: And that has been a paying work too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Undoubtedly. That expenditure also included additional funds for the Agricultural Bank. I recall the fact that one of the charges made against the Government of the day was that we were expending enormous sums of loan money. We, however, were never permitted to take the loan expenditure and the expenditure from revenue separately. The expenditure from revenue and loan was bulked together and the total held up as something appalling. We were told that the time had arrived when the State should steady up on loan expenditure. I recall the fact that the present Minister for Education, when speaking at Northam, said that Western Australia had reached the stage when it could not afford to

spend more than a million pounds annually from loan funds. I do not pick on the Minister for Education specially for any reason whatever, but I know—and hon. members who were in the House at the time will also remember—that the Minister for Education was one of the most reckless of our then critics.

Mr. Underwood: And he spends most to-day.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The man who preached economy in season and out of season and said that the State could not spend more than a million pounds per year from loan funds, is to-day the senior Minister in a Government who bring down Estimates for the expenditure of over 3½ million pounds. When the first National Government came into power in 1916-17, it was then said that a halt would have to be made in the expenditure from loan funds, and only £855,184 was voted that year. In 1917-18—I think that was Mr. Gardiner's year—the amount was £1,054,178; in 1918-19 the expenditure was £1,049,735. In the two or three years I have referred to, the average expenditure was about one million pounds. It was slightly under that amount for the first year and slightly over for the next two years. Then came the present Treasurer and in 1919-20 the loan expenditure rose from £1,000,000 odd to £2,663,320.

The Premier: That was for soldier settlement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know. I will not attempt to be unfair, because, in any case the Treasurer would readily explain the increased expenditure. In the year that the expenditure averaged about a million pounds there was very little, if any, soldier settlement going on.

The Premier: Or land settlement either.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so. It was in the first year that the present Premier took office that a step forward was made regarding soldier settlement in particular and land settlement in general.

Mr. Underwood: The Federal Government provide the money.

The Premier: The amounts have to be included in the Loan Estimates.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so, and some of the money included in the present Loan Estimates will be refunded by the Commonwealth Government. For the year 1920-21 the loan expenditure was £2,586,404, or about the same as the previous year. Now on top of that, the Premier expects to exceed last year's expenditure by about a million pounds. I repeat the statements I heard frequently in this House a few years ago. It was then said that Western Australia or any other State might safely expend loan funds so long as the money was soundly invested in industries or the development of the country. But we cannot overlook one fact; the moment we do we shall proceed along unsound lines. The fact remains that money may be wisely expended in the development of the essential industries of the country, but if we incur

expenditure out of proportion to the increase in our population, we shall strike trouble. I have no doubt we could spend £5,000,000 in the coming year on works which are required, but are we justified in spending ahead of our population? The expenditure of loan funds must surely bear some relationship to the proportion of increase in our population; otherwise the State will strike trouble. I do not think our population is increasing very rapidly. A very considerable amount of this three and a half million pounds which the Treasurer proposes to spend this year is to be spent on agricultural and soldier settlement. During the last three years £4,108,000 has been expended on soldier settlement, and we have settled 4,106 soldiers—in round figures £1,000 per man. This is a very large sum of money. I am not complaining of this expenditure; I am speaking purely from the State's point of view. That money would have been well expended if the 4,106 men had been additional or new settlers. If we had succeeded by the expenditure of £4,000,000, in adding 4,106 to the total number of settlers, it would have been a good expenditure for the State, but I think I am about the mark when I say that nearly two-thirds of the 4,106 soldiers have merely replaced other settlers on the land. If this is so, these two-thirds would not give to the State any increased production. There would be nothing extra for the railways to carry. While the individuals would have the advantage, the State as a State would not benefit. If we buy out 3,000 men who are already farming—we must assume they are doing their best with their land—and replace them with 3,000 other settlers, the State as a whole does not reap any material benefit.

Mr. Davies: In some instances three men were settled in place of one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am allowing for that. In some instances four, five and even a dozen settlers have replaced the one who was bought out. But even allowing for that, the number of cases in which one farmer was bought out in order to replace him with another man, amounts to over half the total.

Capt. Carter: The money is still in the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Quite so, but we owe it. It is an indebtedness we have incurred and for which we have added to our interest bill about £200,000 a year.

Col. Denton: Do not we owe something to the men who went away?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member must not misunderstand me. I am not complaining of the expenditure of this money; I am speaking purely from the point of view of the State. We have added perhaps a couple of hundred thousand pounds to our annual interest bill, and the Premier is getting no additional revenue for it.

Capt. Carter: That is assuming all this money is locked up. You have to take into consideration the money being expended in this State.

Mr. Underwood: But we still owe it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the point. The Treasurer is going to feel the effect on his finances if he has to borrow millions of money for which he has to pay an added interest bill annually, and if as a result of that expenditure he does not get increased production.

The Premier: It would have taken years of preparation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that; I am not complaining. I am merely pointing out the position from the point of view of the State. The Premier had no alternative; he was faced with the position that no preparation had been made. If preparation had been made for some years before, we should have been able to do our duty to our returned men without buying someone else out.

Mr. Harrison: And at equal cost.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But inasmuch as no preparation was begun until 1918 or 1919, the State, to keep faith with the pledges made to the men who went away, had no alternative to buying farms for them.

The Premier: It was a pity we had to do so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, and the Government of the day will have to share the responsibility for not having taken steps earlier.

Mr. Lambert: They were warned about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: During the two crucial years prior to the termination of the war, when the State should have been busy preparing holdings for soldiers, practically nothing at all was done, and so expenditure has had to be incurred to keep faith with the soldiers. From the State point of view, if we had been able to add 4,000 producers by the expenditure of that four millions of money, the State would have reaped a greater benefit. If there is anything good in land settlement at all, it is that the more persons we can place on the land, the better it is for the State.

Mr. Harrison: And the more capital expended to prepare farms for other people, the better.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member can state his own views. We should scrutinise every item of expenditure in these Estimates, and if it be pointed out that expenditure can be legitimately reduced, it should be reduced. I am quite aware that, although the Premier asks for three and a half millions of money, he will not of necessity expend it all. Last year he asked for three and a half millions and expended only two and a half millions. He is not going to expend money unless he feels justified. Money, however, is dearer to-day than ever before, and because of this, it is an unwise policy to expend any money at all which is not thought to be absolutely essential for the development of the country. On the other hand, it would be unwise to withhold the expenditure of money if, by withholding it, we are going to hamper the development of any of our essential industries. Even throughout the war period it-

self, money was cheaper than it is to-day. As the Premier told us, our recent three million conversion loan cost us £6 13s. 10d. per cent. The price was high, 6 per cent. and the amount £95, and I saw in a financial journal that, three days after the loan was floated, it was quoted at a discount of 15s. We need not take much notice of that, but when we compare £95 at 6 per cent. with pre-war days, when our loans were floated at par and at as low as 3½ and 4 per cent.—4½ per cent. was considered very high—it goes without saying that any works constructed with money costing £6 13s. 10d. will be saddled with very heavy charges throughout the whole of their existence. The outlook is that money will not become much cheaper, so that the State is faced with the alternative of borrowing at a high rate or going in for a policy of stagnation. Such a policy I do not advocate, nor does any other member of this House. Running down the summary of the Estimates we find that the large sum of £715,100 is set aside for railways and tramways. For the harbours and rivers £162,500, is provided; for water supply and sewerage £281,750. If members compare these items with the expenditure for last year, they will find them considerably in excess. For the development of goldfields and mineral resources £57,000 is provided; for the development of agriculture £1,978,748; for roads and bridges and public buildings £72,432, and for other undertakings £214,650. Therefore, the item for the development of goldfields and mineral resources is the little baby in the whole summary. Even though it is the lowest, I do not say it has not been lower on former occasions, but I do not think we are pursuing a wise policy by devoting such a small sum to assisting the development of the goldfields. After all, it is the second industry in the State.

The Premier: Water supplies for the goldfields are provided for elsewhere.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Only a few hundred pounds is provided.

The Premier: There is provision for the goldfields water scheme.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That represents largely maintenance and improvements in the agricultural districts between Mundaring and Kellerberrin. The gold mining industry has done much for the State—no one will question what it has done for Western Australia—and we might be a bit more generous, even if it involves taking greater risks. I admit that the State takes a greater risk of getting a return of this capital than of expenditure in the agricultural, pastoral and, what I might term, the more stable industries. But even so, it is almost platitudinous to say that if, by taking the risk of spending a little more money on the development of mining, one new field could be discovered, the State would be repaid ten times over. Having regard to the extensive areas of our mining fields, stretching as they do from Westonia right through the Eastern and Northern districts, and to the North-West and embracing

the Murchison, it must be admitted that £57,000 is a very small sum indeed for assisting the development of an industry spread over such a huge area. The Government might safely have doubled the amount and could have reduced some of the other items without doing much harm. For instance, £72,000 has been provided for roads and public buildings. I remember, in the good old days, when the State was paying its way better than it is doing to-day, works of this description were paid for out of revenue. In fact it would have almost justified a motion of no confidence in any Government which then might have attempted to expend loan moneys on anything but actual reproductive works. Since those days, however, we have launched out on expenditure in directions which cannot be said to be reproductive, except perhaps that indirectly they might prove reproductive. I remember an occasion about ten or twelve years ago when a boundary rider died along the rabbit-proof fence the burial expenses were paid out of loan funds, it being afterwards claimed that this was a reproductive work. I do not wish to take up any more time, but will reserve any further remarks I may desire to make until a later stage when we reach the items. I may, however, emphasise the fact that the expenditure of three and a half millions in one year without a proportionate increase in our population is going to be a serious matter, and that if it be continued for a couple of years, will land us in difficulties. The expenditure of three and a half millions of loan money at the present time is equivalent almost to the expenditure of six millions in pre-war days. The Premier knows that a considerable amount of our borrowed money was then obtained at less than 4½ per cent. and even as low as 3½ per cent. Taking the value of money as we find it to-day, whilst three millions would have carried out certain works, say, ten years ago, a similar sum of money would not do more than half that amount to-day and at the same time we have now to pay double the rate of interest. It costs a pound sterling to-day to do what could then be done for about 18s. We must also remember, whilst four per cent. loans were then floated at par, our 6 per cent. loans to-day are floated at £95 which makes a great difference. We need to bear these facts in mind when considering the Loan Estimates and not indulge in any expenditure which we feel under the circumstances is not absolutely warranted.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.7]: I have no doubt, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, that members looked carefully through the Estimates during the Christmas holidays, but at the same time it must be apparent that the proposed expenditure is more or less essential to the advancement of the State.

Mr. Latham: What about the East Perth power house?

Mr. PICKERING: I am speaking about the Loan Estimates generally and am not adversely criticising any particular item. The hon. member may do so when he speaks. I think the treasurer to-day is carrying increased responsibilities which few of us envy him. It has been said by the Leader of the Opposition that the expenditure of money to-day is really more or less in the way of over-capitalisation. We all realise that the people of the State are suffering considerably, but if we look the position in the face and say we are not to spend money on a sound basis, the State must become stagnant. Therefore, looking at the position in the light of present necessities, I claim that we are committed to expenditure such as that outlined in the Estimates. I will go further and say, that in many directions the proposed expenditure is not commensurate with existing needs. I know of many directions in which money could be spent with advantage to the State. Many other members must also be aware of a similar fact. Taking some of the items on the Estimates, I would like to know, for instance, what exception can be taken to the sum it is intended to spend on existing lines? Regarding the whole of the railway service, if anything is in need of urgent attention, it is surely the railway system. I contend that the sum set down in these Estimates is too small to meet existing requirements.

Mr. Underwood interjected.

Mr. PICKERING: We do not receive the revenue from the railways to enable us to carry out repairs, and neglect in this direction may endanger the lives of the travelling public. Our rolling stock is defective in every direction, and there is also a scarcity of that which is required to meet the needs of the primary producers. For instance there is urgent necessity for loaded trucks for the carriage of fruit and dairy produce, and I contend that the sum placed on the Estimates for the purchase of rolling stock is totally inadequate. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that we should go through these items with the view of cutting them down. I regret to say that there are very few openings in this direction. Those of us who desire to see railway lines constructed must maintain that the amount it is intended to spend in this direction is far too small. In connection with the Busselton-Margaret River line the amount on the Estimates is merely £10,000. That will go only a very short way towards building that line which, is so urgently needed. It must be remembered that considerable soldier-settlement is taking place throughout the district to be served by this railway, and if this community being settled are to be contented and prosperous, facilities for transport must be given them in the immediate future. When we consider that some of the settlers in my electorate are 60 miles from a railway, it will be realised what difficulties confront these people. If we desire our land settlement policy to be successful we must provide those facilities which

are essential. It has been pointed out in this House time and again that profitable farming cannot be carried on at a greater distance than 12 miles from a railway. How then can we ask people who are 60 miles from a railway to carry on? On looking through the Estimates I find that there is an amount provided for rails and fastenings. I do not know whether that sum is intended to cover the requirements of the whole of the railways it is contemplated to construct, or whether it is for general railway purposes.

The Minister for Railways: You will notice that the items for rails and fastenings are separated.

Mr. PICKERING: I notice that no provision has been made for the widening and strengthening of the Busselton jetty. I quite expect the Minister for Works to say that this is my fault. He has said that several times already.

The Minister for Works: I have not said a word.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not think it is quite fair. Since the Minister made that remark I have had an opportunity of perusing the files, and I find that the fault lies with the Commissioner of Railways, who said that he could manage well without extending or widening the jetty. We have had a report on that jetty by various experts in the Works Department, and the advisableness of widening the jetty was endorsed not only by the Minister for Works, but the Engineer-in-Chief and the Premier. A vote was subsequently passed by this Chamber, and I do not think it is the desire of the Chamber that its decision should be over-ridden by a Government official. I trust that, if this year it is not possible for the Government to fulfil their promise in this connection, advantage will be taken of the very first opportunity to do so. The Estimates contain an item for drainage. Every member of the Chamber has expressed the view that the utmost possible should be done to develop the lands lying within 12 miles of our existing railway system. Within those limits there are to be found in the neighbourhood of Wonerup, Busselton, and Quindaly thousands of acres of good agricultural land still the property of the Crown, which would be made available for settlement if effect were given to a comprehensive drainage scheme. The Minister for Works was kind enough to place at my disposal a departmental report on such a scheme, which report estimated the cost at £15,000. By that expenditure there would be made available for settlement thousands of acres of good agricultural land within carting distance of an existing railway, and this without involving a penny for resumption. In the past considerable sums have been paid by the State for repurchased estates, and thereupon the Government have proceeded to lay out large amounts of money in drainage, feeder roads, and so forth.

Mr. O'Loghlen: There was a big gamble on the Peel Estate.

Mr. PICKERING: It may be so; I do not know. The Government might deal with the land I referred to in the same way as they dealt with the Peel Estate, making the cost of drainage and feeder roads part of the cost of the land. Judging from what I saw on a recent visit to a part of my electorate of which hitherto I have not had much knowledge, I am of opinion that this expenditure would be of great benefit to the State as a whole.

Hon. P. Collier: We could spend twenty million pounds all for the benefit of the State.

Mr. PICKERING: I agree with the implied contention of the Leader of the Opposition that it is a very serious matter to expend large amounts of money to-day, but I am arguing that this money might be spent to greater advantage in the district I refer to than in many other quarters. The expenditure would result in practically immediate settlement. I trust my friends of this party will not consider that I am trespassing on their preserves when I refer to the amount set down for water supply in the dry areas. It has been my privilege to travel through those areas, and to me their outstanding feature was the impossibility of fully stocking them in the absence of adequate provision for water supply. I believe some portions of those areas could be supplied by dams, but others will have to draw their water from the Goldfields Water Scheme. I speak particularly of the Dowerin-Merredin district.

Mr. O'Loghlen: There is abundance of water in that district.

Mr. PICKERING: I have had a different account from a gentleman who farms there.

Mr. O'Loghlen: When a meeting was called to advocate the extension of the Goldfields Water Scheme to the district, no one turned up. The settlers have enough to carry already.

Mr. PICKERING: Possibly that may be so, but various people from that district have told me that the necessary additional expenditure could easily be faced by the settlers there. The point is one that deserves consideration, and I have no doubt the Leader of my party will deal with it more fully. An item which has been stigmatised by the Leader of the Opposition as the baby item of these Estimates, is the one referring to mining. I am not intimately associated with the mining industry, but there is one phase of it in which my constituency is deeply interested, and that is oil prospecting. Oil prospecting should be encouraged in every way, and there are certain directions in which the Government could render assistance at very small cost; for instance, by the loan of boring plants. I am not aware what plants the Mines Department have available, but those plants should be readily placed at the service of people who have prospects of

finding oil. There are such people in my district, and I hope the Minister for Mines will take the matter into his favourable consideration. I believe the department loaned a plant free of cost to a prospecting party operating on the coast.

The Minister for Mines: The Mines Department have no such plants.

Mr. Latham: It was the Public Works Department.

Mr. PICKERING: I trust that the Minister concerned will extend similar consideration to the people in my district.

The Minister for Works: They can always get plants if they want them.

Mr. PICKERING: I will take an early opportunity of carrying the matter further. I observe that there is to be an increase in the capital of the Agricultural Bank to the extent of some £600,000. I hope the Premier and Treasurer will see that the operations of the bank are extended to the South-West upon more favourable terms than has been the case in the past. This is not the first occasion on which I have preferred such a request to the hon. gentleman. I can only hope that my persistence, like dropping water, will eventually have the desired effect. In the South-West we are not able to bring land to the point of fruition as early as settlers in the wheat belt can, and therefore we of the South-West want some special consideration in that connection.

The Premier: You are getting it.

Mr. PICKERING: I am glad to have the assurance of the Premier. I had not noticed it. Next, I come to the item for soldier settlement. The arguments adduced by the Leader of the Opposition in dealing with this matter have been expressed here many times, and were endorsed by the present Premier and myself as far back as 1917, when we said that the question of preparing for soldier settlement should have been taken in hand at the commencement of the war.

Mr. Lambert: I had a resolution on that subject carried in 1917 or 1918.

Mr. PICKERING: I see that the Estimates provide £200,000 for that purpose. I should like an explanation from the Premier as to how he proposes the amount should be spent.

The Premier: In resuming estates.

Mr. PICKERING: Judging from the amount already expended in soldier settlement, and the large proportion accounted for by land resumption, this sum of £200,000 is not likely to do very much, especially as up to £7 per acre has been paid for improved land that has been resumed. But if we adopt the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition, to develop our Crown lands rather than resume estates, we shall do better for the soldiers and also for Western Australia as a whole. I must just refer to the Busselton butter factory. It is a very fine factory, only it was built on wrong lines. It was built as a miniature factory.

Mr. Lambert: It is still too big.

Mr. PICKERING: The returns of the factory show that it has advanced by leaps and bounds.

Mr. Teasdale: When are the residents going to take the factory over?

Mr. PICKERING: When it is run on proper lines. The inclusion of this item is due, I think, to my persistency. We are anxious to establish the butter industry in this State, and we are anxious that Western Australian butter should be pre-eminent in Australasia. We shall not achieve that unless we proceed on proper lines. When the Busselton factory was first established, no one anticipated that it would extend as it has done; and consequently a good deal of additional expense has been necessitated. That expense has been disproportionately high because the original plan did not allow for the extensions which have proved to be necessary. Until the factory is in a position to put on the market butter which will be accepted at all times, the people of the district cannot be expected to take it over. At present the factory is not able to do so. It is in need of a proper refrigerating plant. No butter can be properly manufactured unless such a facility is available. Once the factory is in a position to turn out butter in first class condition all the year round, I guarantee that a co-operative company will be established to take it over. Let me point out that the Railway Department have seriously interfered with the prospects of the factory, by imposing an iniquitous rate on cream, thereby precluding the factory from getting half the cream it should have got. If the Railway Department work against a State undertaking in that way, what inducement is there for the people concerned to take the factory over? The factory should be able to draw supplies of cream from within a reasonable radius. Assuredly, in the absence of that condition, the people of the district should not be expected to take over as a co-operative concern a factory which is improperly handicapped.

Mr. O'Loghlen: How many cows have you down there now?

Hon. P. Collier: Strawberry is still there, but the other one has gone.

Mr. PICKERING: I regret that the expensive trip which the Premier afforded hon. members a short while ago should have resulted in so little enlightenment. The Busselton district is the most up-to-date of all in point of dairying. It is the one district that has gone in for herd testing, the evidence of which is supported by the dairy expert. It is a disgrace to the State that the Boya quarry should not be able to fulfil requirements. I am glad to see on the Loan Estimates an amount for the purpose of increasing the plant. The Government could sell the quarry if they liked, but they will not do so. If they are going to keep it, they must certainly develop it.

The Minister for Works: We cannot do without a quarry.

Mr. PICKERING: Then if the Government will not sell the quarry, it is but wise to render it efficient.

The CHAIRMAN: Would it not be better at this stage to discuss general principles instead of items, all of which must come up again?

Mr. PICKERING: But I may not be present when the items are being discussed. If we do not mention items we cannot well speak on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It is a good job you have that arrangement with the "South-Western News" to publish all your speeches.

Mr. PICKERING: But they do not publish them, that is the trouble. I am not going to assist in indiscriminately cutting down the Loan Estimates. The outlook in front of us is very serious, and it is obviously unwise to cut down Loan Estimates, only to have them excessed before the year is out.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.35]: I was forcibly struck with the expansive national spirit displayed in the eloquent speech of the hon. member who has just sat down. If only it were possible to get the hon. member to refrain from speaking for one session, sufficient cost would be saved to build a couple of butter factories.

Mr. Pickering: You have not been missing many chances this session.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Leader of the Opposition struck an important note when he warned the Committee that it was essential the loan expenditure should bear strict relationship to the safe and responsive increase in our population. There is nothing more serious for the country to face than the fact that we must come to a point where it is safe and also expedient to keep our loan expenditure within the bounds of at least our anticipated population. It is true there are on the Loan Estimates items which could be erased, at all events for this year. Our present indebtedness is largely due to the fact that, instead of making people use land adjacent to the railways, we have built further railways. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) in advocating that land along the railways should be brought into use is expressing views diametrically opposed to every vote he has cast; because when Parliament desired a closer settlement Bill which would give striking force to that policy, we found the hon. member endeavouring to preserve the interests of the land holders along the existing railways. Therefore it is barefaced hypocrisy for him to cry out, "Settle the lands along the railways," when he will not give the Government a measure for effectively dealing with the situation. One important matter affecting both the agricultural and mining districts is the provision of reasonable feeders for the existing railway system. Possibly by motor trolleys, we could provide additional revenue for the railway system. I think the Minister for

Railways has in view the economising of small sectional lines by the running of motor trucks on the railways. I think he said some had been ordered.

The Minister for Mines: Three.

Mr. LAMBERT: At all events that is a start. I believe it is possible to effect considerable economy in that direction.

Mr. Teesdale: At Port Hedland for a start.

Mr. LAMBERT: And probably with Roebourne to follow. In trying to place our railways on a commercial basis, these factors must be taken into consideration. One item which must be dealt with from a broad, national standpoint, is the proposed extension of the electric power station at East Perth. I should like to see an investigation made to determine whether it is advisable to further increase the power station at East Perth, or whether we should not establish a central power station at the pit's mouth, which is the trend of modern practice. In Western Australia, with our comparatively low value coal, the establishment of a central power station at Collie would commend itself to modern thought and modern practice. The Minister for Railways, who took a commendable part in the establishment of the existing station, will see the wisdom of looking years ahead and meeting, not only the needs of the electrification of our railway system, but also those of the commercial and industrial expansion of the State. This can only be done by generating current at the pit's mouth. Not only at Collie could power be economically generated and transmitted to points of vantage, but also at the Irwin River coalfields, from which current could be transmitted to Geraldton. The Minister has some excellent officers who, surely, can indicate to him that in every country progressing industrially and commercially, the trend is to generate power at the pit's mouth. With a central generating station at Collie, the important port of Bunbury could be used for the development of our big iron deposits. A renowned American mining engineer has recently gone away from this State fortified with many important particulars in this respect. Given cheap electric power, the port of Bunbury could become one of the most important sea ports of Australia. I hope the Minister will see the advisability of calling for an expert report on this question before incurring additional expenditure at East Perth. Some of the other items dealt with by the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering), such as the joy avenue at Busselton, as he calls the Busselton jetty, are of a national character. I have been there two or three times, and frankly, have used the jetty for that purpose. Never but once have I seen it used for any other purpose. I have a vivid recollection of the population of Busselton getting into a wild state of excitement in consequence of a little boat calling at the jetty. It was the event of the year. The hon. member talks in nonsensical fashion about the expansion of

the Busselton butter factory. Why, the people down there are too lazy to milk cows! I speak from bitter experience. Nine-tenths of those settlers would rather buy concentrated milk than milk cows. Those members who have a personal knowledge of these subjects will doubtless exercise their discretion in supporting the member for Sussex in his desires for national works of this description.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.45]: I notice that the sum of £715,000 is being spent by the Government on railway construction. I have carefully scrutinised the manner in which this money has been allocated, and the most charitable thing I can say about the Government is that I suppose they have done their best. I regret to say that I have searched in vain amongst the items making up this amount for any reference to expenditure upon the railway that was authorised by Parliament seven years ago, from Narrogin to Dwarda. There are several railways which have been authorised, most of which were authorised as far back as the tenure of office of the Labour Government in 1914. If the war had not intervened shortly after the authorisation of these railways, they would I think all have been built before now, and most of them would have been put in hand by the Government which authorised them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Or if the supporters of the Government had kept on supporting them.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The policy of building agricultural railways which the Labour Government did so much to carry out was one of the best things ever done in Western Australia. Particularly was that so when we remember how the cost of railway material has gone up since then. I would draw attention to the small and inadequate sums that are being voted for the construction of the railways which the Government apparently do intend to construct. I am afraid that these amounts are so small that they can be of no practical use. I find a sum of £200 for the Kondinin-Merredin-Emu Hill extension, and for the Nyabing-Pingrup railway, which was authorised in 1914, there is a sum of £2,000 set down for its construction. These amounts cannot go far. Even the £10,000 which is put down for the Busselton-Margaret River line will fall very far short of the sum required for the construction of that railway. My most serious complaint is that of all the railways which have been authorised since 1914 the only one which receives no mention whatever in the Estimates is the Narrogin-Dwarda railway.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is an oversight.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Premier, as shown by "Hansard," was always one of the warmest supporters of this railway. The absence of any reference in the Estimates to this line is a disappointing fact, against which I must enter an emphatic protest. We are asked to vote a sum of 3½ million pounds, of which £715,000 is to be provided

for railway and tramway construction and improvements, and yet no reference at all is made to this very necessary and long-required public work. The railway is needed for the opening up and closer settlement of this fertile area, the average rainfall of which is 23 inches, and the people of which can produce sufficient to provide very heavy traffic over the line.

The Minister for Mines: The railway would have been built years ago but for the outbreak of war.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I can recall the occasion when the Minister for Mines visited Hotham as Premier of this State in order to open the railway there. He announced that the line would be extended through Dwarda to Narrogin by the Government of which he was the head. When he made that announcement to the gathering of 500 settlers there, he was as good as his word, for a few weeks after his Government introduced a Bill for the authorisation of this railway. In reading the debates at that time I notice with pleasure the support that the present Premier gave to the proposal. He reminded the Labour Government of the urgency that existed for building the line, and said it was not sufficient merely to introduce a Bill and promise the people a railway, but that the line should be built, and built as soon as possible. Notwithstanding that statement he has introduced a Loan Bill for the expenditure of 3½ million pounds without making any reference to that railway. We are entitled to hear from the Premier how it is that this oversight, omission, or dereliction of duty on his part has occurred. The member for North-East Fremantle in reply to the remarks of the Premier, when that hon. gentleman was sitting in opposition, said, on behalf of the Labour Government, that they believed the railway was necessary, and that when the money was available the construction would be immediately commenced.

The Premier: I will repeat that.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am glad to have that assurance. When, however, I find the position as it is, I cannot sit quiet without making a protest against the omission of any expenditure upon this railway.

Hon. P. Collier: On one occasion when we were in office, it was mentioned in the Governor's Speech, and there it has been ever since.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I gratefully remember that instance. The railway was authorised at the same time as the line from Kukerin to Lake Grace was authorised, in 1914. Within six months of the authorisation of that railway the energy of the Government had succeeded in completing it.

Hon. P. Collier: The result was reflected in the energy of the respective representatives.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I regret that my efforts have proved so fruitless in this respect. The great development in the way of production and settlement that has occurred at Lake Grace is well known. In this district between

Hotham, Dwarda, and Narrogin there is an exceedingly fertile area capable of carrying a large population, and having a good rainfall. The railway I specially speak of is required to assist production and also reduce the distance between Narrogin, Perth and Fremantle.

Hon. P. Collier: We would have built it years ago, but you would not stick to it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I believe the country would have built it had it not been for the unfortunate position caused by the war. During the last seven years the people in the district have suffered and waited patiently. We have not unduly harassed the Government by way of deputations, although we have kept the matter before the Premier from time to time. It will be a grievous disappointment to the settlers when they learn that the railway is not even mentioned in the Estimates.

Hon. P. Collier: The Government must think that when we passed this we were only joking.

Mr. JOHNSTON: When the Government next bring down their Loan Estimates I hope they will not apply one of these thousand pound insults to the railway I am speaking of. The estimated cost of construction is £87,000, and I hope next year the Government will bring down an amount that will cover the whole of that expenditure. The railway will serve as the first section of a trunk line from Narrogin via Dwarda to Armadale. The Premier knows that when the Narrogin-Armadale railway is built it will not only open up large well watered and fertile areas for settlement, but will reduce the distance between Fremantle and Narrogin from 174 miles to 117 miles, representing a saving of 57 miles in freight between Narrogin and Fremantle.

The Premier: It will only be a short line.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Dwarda section will extend 33 miles from Narrogin. The people also hope to see the railway constructed from Dwarda, a distance of 70 miles to Armadale. This will effect a great saving in distance between stations in the Great Southern districts and Fremantle. If the Narrogin-Dwarda line is built, a distance of 33 miles, it will reduce the distance from Narrogin to Perth, which at present, via Spence's Brook, is 162 miles, to 143 miles. To-day it is 174 miles from Narrogin to Fremantle via Spence's Brook, but from Narrogin to Fremantle via Dwarda and Pinjarra the distance would be only 141 miles, a saving of 33 miles between Narrogin and Fremantle. I am distressed at the action of the Government in not providing an item on the Estimates for the construction of this long authorised, long desired and necessary railway between Narrogin and Dwarda.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [5.57]: I only wish to deal with one question on these Estimates. I do not think it is quite fair to place money on the Estimates as assistance towards developing the gold mining industry in the way that is now done. We have been

told that enormous sums of money have been spent on the development of that industry. That is not really so in every instance. Some of the large sums which are supposed to have been spent in this direction are merely loans and are returned to the Government.

The PREMIER: Not many loans come back.

Mr. CORBOY: A good many do. Between 1914 and 1916 a sum of £138,000 was advanced to the State smelters at Ravensthorpe out of general loan fund. That money was used to purchase ores at the works. After the ore is sold the Government will get the money back. Instead of that money being put back into general loan funds to the credit of mining development funds, it is put into the Sale of Government Property Trust Account, and is then voted out of that account as loan money for other purposes. Last year enormous sums were spent on schools out of that fund. We find from the Estimates, however, that this money was voted and expended on the development of goldfields and mineral resources. It is not fair to the mining industry to say that these large sums are spent on the development of the goldfields and mineral resources of the State, when they are really returned to the Government, put into the Sale of Government Property Trust Account, and used for other purposes very different and remote from mining and the goldfields.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [6.0]: I fully realise that this is not the time to spend money if expenditure can be avoided. I am afraid, however, that if we are to wait until the interest charges are considerably reduced, we shall have to wait a long time. As it is, we have waited for a long time and there are works which have had to stand aside because of the cost their construction would involve. There is the project in which the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) is so much interested, namely, the construction of the Esperance-Northwards railway. There is, too, the railway referred to by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston). These lines have not been built because, apart from the dearth of money, the cost of construction and materials and so forth, has also increased so much. I contend that it is in the interests of the State that we should keep moving. The greater proportion of the loan money spent last year was in connection with agricultural development. That expenditure is absolutely necessary and is more than ever necessary now because there has been a falling off in production from other industries. On agricultural development, £1,777,200 was spent out of the £2,586,000, leaving only £800,000 for expenditure in connection with other developmental avenues. This year it is proposed that two millions will be spent on agricultural development; that is to say, it will be spent by way of loans to individuals on which interest is collected. It seems

to me that loan moneys lent to persons who pay interest on the money which is used for solid developmental work is the best possible means of carrying on work that we must find for the people.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course, if you get your interest, you are all right.

The PREMIER: We have been wonderfully successful in collecting the interest on the money loaned. There has been very little money lost. Every country has to pay for agricultural development, and Western Australia has to pay for it as well. If I could come down to the House and say, "Will you agree that a bonus should be provided for the production of butter, or any other such commodity?" the House would agree. As hon. members are fully aware, however, the granting of bonuses is not allowed under the Federal Constitution. The States could develop rapidly if that system were permitted but as it is not allowable, we have to adopt other means. The method we adopt is that we find the money if the individual borrowing the money works at the industry, clears the land, farms it, and then produces from it. That is the only opportunity left to us. If we could grant bonuses, it would be a very simple matter, and it would probably mean less money having to be found by the State. It is within the knowledge of every member of this Chamber that during the last three years, we have spent most of our money on land settlement generally and on soldier settlement in particular. I contend that the only hope Western Australia has, is to go on spending money on land settlement. Last year, we said we must have a large amount of loan money voted, because if there was unemployment, we would have to find work for the people. Fortunately, we got off lightly and we did not require as much loan funds as I asked the House to grant. Now I ask members to grant 3½ million pounds. I do not suppose we shall spend all that money, but I want to be in a position to have that money to spend if the necessity arises. We had a bad time last year as men were thrown out of work owing to various causes. We were able to put in hand sufficient work to absorb the people who required work, and thus help in the direction of land settlement. The large vote I ask for is necessary, because of the position which confronts us nowadays. Private employment is not so active as in the past, and our industries have been checked. Many men are not employed where formerly their services were in demand. I hope the Committee will realise that the greater proportion of the money is to be loaned to individuals or local authorities, and that that money will carry its own interest. There was never very much loss in respect of the other works brought down by the Government, but some works depend upon use by the public for earning interest and sinking fund. There is a considerable vote for tramways and electricity supply. It will be seen that the power house will absorb £175,000. Hon. members

will realise that when we start a work such as that which I refer to, we must keep pace with the demand. Thank God, there are a lot of industries starting in the metropolitan area, all of which require power. We have the power station; we are bound to supply power, and so we are bound to go ahead. As we have the works, we must carry on. When we as a Government set out to supply a public demand, we cannot avoid keeping pace with the demand. So it is, that I ask the Committee to agree to this vote, in order that the power house may cope with the demand which it sets out to satisfy. I do not suppose that the builders of this power station ever anticipated that the demand would grow up as it has developed. As a matter of fact, at that time it was thought that too much money was spent on the power house. The use of electric power has become pretty general and many industries have started, because of the cheap power which is available.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The business people of this community will not object to you trading in that way so long as they reap the benefit.

The PREMIER: It is a public utility in the best sense of the word. It is like the trams, or our railways, and equally with them this public utility has to be kept going. We must increase the capacity of the power station in order to meet the demands. No one would deny the advantage the power station has been to the industries which have been springing up. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) says that the power station helps the individual, but it also helps the State as well.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some people are not sending out circulars every day about the electricity supply, as they are regarding other trading concerns.

The PREMIER: The power station is of advantage in the development of our industries.

Hon. P. Collier: I cannot understand why these people do not issue circulars about this State trading concern.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are attaching some names to the circulars now and we know where they come from.

The Minister for Mines: It is a shandy-gaff arrangement now.

The PREMIER: I saw a circular with the name of the Leader of the Opposition attached to it; probably next day, it will be one from the member for North-East Fremantle.

Hon. P. Collier: In any case, it is all good for the printer; but I wonder who is financing it all.

The PREMIER: I am not in love with State trading concerns.

Hon. P. Collier: You will do us so long as you stick to them.

The PREMIER: No one will suggest that I am in love with them.

Hon. P. Collier: You and the Minister for Works will do us all right.

The PREMIER: I wish the State trading concerns were owned by someone else. I do not think anyone can accuse the Government of wanting to stick to the State trading concerns. They mean a tremendous amount of work, worry and money.

Hon. P. Collier: We have nothing to complain about.

The PREMIER: I have some complaints to make.

Mr. Lambert: Some of the men who complain about the State trading concerns would not put a bob into the industries.

The PREMIER: The cost of construction of railway lines has been so great during the last few years that we have used the loan moneys for land settlement rather than construct railways which have been authorised. The Leader of the Opposition was very fair in discussing the position which I found when I came into power. At that time I knew that there was the necessity for providing land for the soldiers. I assure the Committee that we could not have settled the soldiers so well had it not been for the fact that we bought improved or partially improved holdings. I think the Leader of the Opposition fully realises that the expenditure provided for the goldfields is not very large, but at the same time it is sufficient to meet all demands. The Committee would not object to any Government meeting demands necessary to carry on works likely to bring about development in the goldfields areas. No one can fail to realise how important and beneficial it would be to the State if new goldfields could be discovered. Much of the expenditure provided, however, does have a bearing on the goldfields.

Hon. P. Collier: A good deal of it does, as, for instance, that in connection with the railways and water supply.

The PREMIER: And also that provided for harbours and production generally. The money provided is spent on State batteries and mining development generally. I do not think anyone could accuse us of being niggardly if someone made it clear to the Minister for Mines that, with the aid of help from the Government, there was a fair chance of developing a goldfield. If such a proposal were made to the Ministers, he would be found sympathetic. If we could find oil, or a new goldfield, it would be the easiest way out of our difficulties. The Loan Estimates have been carefully prepared. Probably members may take exception to one or two items but I believe that the objections will be answered readily. We have seen to it that only necessary work is provided for. I would like the Committee to realise that we must on all occasions meet the demands, which involve increased expenditure in connection with the various public utilities. We want to vote as much money as we can to encourage our primary industries, including agriculture, the export of meat, pearl shell, and every other form of production. We have devoted ourselves almost entirely to the

encouragement of primary production during the last few years. We have withheld certain works but we cannot wait much longer. Some of the land which should be tapped by railways has been taken up by people and they have been content to wait until the cost of material has fallen. There are many railway lines I would like to see built. I would like to see the Dwarda-Narrogin extension built but it has to be realised that in other parts people have to go much greater distances to get to their railways.

Mr. Harrison: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) will know of instances where people have been carting their produce over 60 miles for nearly three-quarters of a century.

Mr. Pickering: Hear, hear! That is correct.

Mr. Johnston: They have ports close at hand for sea carriage.

The PREMIER: But they are nearly 60 miles away. I do not say that these different lines should not be built and I do not say that the Dwarda-Narrogin line should not be built, but it is not possible to do so at the present moment. We hope to make a start with the Nyabing extension because a good many soldiers have settled in that part of the State. There is also the question of the survey of a line to serve the people between the Northam-Merredin and Dowerin-Merredin lines. Something must be done as soon as possible. I hope the Committee will realise that we have only provided money that is absolutely essential in the best interests of the State. I believe we have safeguarded that position.

Vote put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Vote—Railways and Tramways, £715,100.

Item—Surveys, new lines, £7,000:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Last year there was an expenditure of £1,212 under this heading. According to page 11 of the Estimates, it is proposed to expend money on the survey of a railway from Big Brook to Denmark. This expenditure is not warranted this year, because there is no possibility of being able to finance the construction of such a railway for some years to come. What is the use of spending money on a survey of a railway with regard to the building of which nothing can be done for years? Two years ago the Minister for Works, in answer to a question, stated that the cost of surveying this line would be £25,000. If we pass this item, we will be asked to pass additional amounts in succeeding years until the whole £25,000 is provided. What is the use of surveying new lines when we have half a dozen railways which have been authorised for five to eight years and which cannot be constructed owing to lack of funds? It will be impossible to

build the lines already authorised within the next three years.

Mr. Underwood: And there is no intention of building this line.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Quite so. This expenditure on surveys is utterly unnecessary.

The PREMIER: In the South-West the railway routes should be surveyed as soon as possible. To survey a line there is a very different proposition from surveying a line in the wheat belt. If the land of the South-West is to be subdivided, it is necessary to survey the railway routes as soon as possible.

Hon. P. Collier: Surely you are not going to subdivide the land when you cannot build the railway for years?

The PREMIER: For some years development can take place for a distance of at least 40 miles at either end of the proposed line. The country can be served by road tractors which for some years must be the method employed. The Minister for Works can tell members that it is better to survey lines ahead of subdivision wherever possible. It has been argued in this House that lines should be constructed ahead of settlement. That is impossible, but we should undertake the survey of the routes.

Mr. Munsie: Will this survey run through Crown lands all the way?

The PREMIER: Yes, and considerable areas of timber.

Mr. HARRISON: In the Yorkrakine and Baaudee district thousands of tons of agricultural produce are being carted distances averaging 17 miles. In some instances farmers are carting from 22 to 25 miles to a railway. The settlers in these districts, relying on a statement in the Governor's Speech in 1914, have developed their holdings, and it is up to the Government to give them much-needed facilities. Further clearing will not be carried out unless the survey is put through as a proof of the bona fides of the Government.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that until we can see our way clear to construct the lines already surveyed, we should not go on spending or wasting money on further surveys. When a line is surveyed, it is a sort of guarantee to the settlers, that a railway will be built. If we surveyed a route without having money to build the railway, we would be putting up a confidence trick on the settlers.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There has been considerable trouble owing to railways having been surveyed and to settlers taking up holdings in expectation of lines being built. Until we are prepared to build the lines, we should not survey the routes. When we intend to build a line it would be better to move for its survey and construction at the same time, but even this would not be too good a guarantee. For the last ten years there have been settlers along the route of the Esperance line, and that railway has not yet been built. Before making surveys

in the beautiful timber-growing and most expensive country of the South-West, we should look for unutilised land adjacent to our existing lines. We have already passed legislation to enable such land to be resumed.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That measure will not do much good.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There is good land for closer settlement along the coast from Waroona to Gingin, and people taking up this land would be close to a market and a port. When you start to get away to Nornalup Inlet you take the people 400 miles away from their market and 110 miles from a shipping port.

The Minister for Works: Augusta is less distant than that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: You can only get a whaling boat to Augusta.

The Minister for Works: You can take a full sized ship to Augusta.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: You, Mr. Chairman, will remember when I tried to navigate you up that river and tipped you into it. It was very shallow. Talk about getting a full sized ship there! There is land much closer to existing ports and safer ports than Flinders Bay, and that is the land that we should first of all deal with. The survey of that far away country is only putting up a confidence trick on intending settlers. That line is not going to be built for many years, and it would be inadvisable to build it before we had used up the land that is alongside existing railways.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I trust too much notice will not be taken of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Pilbara. Neither of those gentlemen accompanied the Parliamentary party that recently visited the south-west.

Hon. P. Collier: I have been to Big Brook.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Leader of the Opposition has condemned even the survey of this proposed line, but let me remind him, and the member for Pilbara also, that when they were Ministers and were in power, they advocated that a railway should be built in conjunction with the State sawmills running from Pemberton through to Flinders Bay.

Hon. P. Collier: Big Brook to Flinders Bay is a different proposition from Big Brook to Denmark.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The country between Pemberton and Flinders Bay is practically the same as that between Big Brook and Denmark. Settlers should have some guarantee that a railway will be built, and by giving the sanction of Parliament to a preliminary survey, that sense of security will be given. The Railway Advisory Board went through that country many years ago and they advocated long before the Esperance Railway was approved, that a line should be built there. At the present

time there are about 100 farmers with large orchards situated some 40 or 50 miles from the railway, and the position of these people is exceedingly difficult. I trust the Leader of the Opposition will withdraw his objection to the survey. If these people find that Parliament has approved of the survey being carried out they will regard it as a guarantee that the line will be built when funds are available.

Capt. CARTER: The Premier justifies the expenditure of £6,000 on surveys on the ground that those surveys are necessary in connection with railway lines which will be built at a future date. Since the trip we had to the south-west we are all optimists in regard to the future of that part of the State, but there is something in what the member for Pilbara said that a man may be misled into thinking that the construction of the railway will be put in hand at an early date. I suggest that in a case like this the Government should reserve a certain area of land in the vicinity of the termini of the proposed line—Big Brook at one end and Denmark at the other. The reserves should be for railway purposes, and would give the people an idea that the line was eventually going to be built. The Premier by way of interjection a little while back said that the survey was already in hand. That is one of those things which I, in common with other new members, have been repeatedly bumping up against during the last few months. It does seem extraordinary that we should be deliberating—I was going to say wasting time, because that is what it amounts to—in regard to the expenditure of money, when that money has already been spent.

The Minister for Mines: The money was voted before you came here.

The Minister for Works: It is not all being spent on one survey.

Capt. CARTER: The Premier told us that the reason for the expenditure of this money is to give a guarantee that the line is going to be built. I know that country and I know its possibilities, but surely we can adopt a less expensive method of affording the people there the sense of security that they require.

Mr. O'LOUGHLIN: If I were consistent I would vote for the deletion of this item. Last year we had a similar proposition in respect to the Bolgart railway and I opposed it because we had an assurance from the Premier that 100 miles of railway per annum would be the maximum that we would construct. The position now is that we have 100 miles of railway authorised, and an immense mileage survey, and I do not know that we are justified in luring people away beyond a reasonable limit of carting in the hope of their getting a railway in the near future. Parliament should not go in for a policy of false pretences if it is possible to avoid doing so. I hope that the result of this short debate will prompt the department not to send settlers out until Parliament has definitely authorised the expenditure on a railway.

Mr. Underwood: And until there is money to spend.

Mr. Harrison: We should find the money for those who are already far away from railways.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: One could talk for hours on the disappointment of the settlers at Yorkrakine. In that locality they are producing wonderful crops, and the bigger the crop the heavier does the burden become in getting the produce to the market. I regret the member for the district did not make more noise about this railway. He could have had an effective punch if he had known how to go about it.

Mr. Harrison: There were no rails to be got.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We got rails for the Lake Clifton line. It is just a matter of forcing the Government. All the hon. member has done has been to ask a question of two. If the member for Sussex had been representing that district the Minister for Works would not have had a minute's peace until the rails had been laid. It would not be good to push this matter to a division. Settlers have gone into that country, and the deletion of the item might react injuriously on their prospects. I hope that in future Parliament will give such settlers something substantial, and not something that is merely shadowy. To get money just now is impossible, but Parliament should not authorise another line of railway or another railway survey until we have got ahead with railways already authorised. It is not fair that settlers should be kept waiting for railway communication through a whole decade.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Yorkrakine survey, of which the Leader of the Country Party spoke, was no doubt promised some years ago.

Mr. Underwood: What is the good of promising a survey now? A line has been promised.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is quite a reasonable expectation on the part of the Yorkrakine people that the line should be built. The line must be built as soon as possible. The delay is due to the fact that the Commonwealth is desirous of continuing its railway from Kalgoorlie to Perth. During the past five years the Commonwealth has tried quite a number of propositions so as to get the best possible route, and so as to avoid, as far as may be, interference with the 3ft. 6in. gauge railway system of this State. One proposition was that the Commonwealth people should run their broad-gauge line on from Kalgoorlie to Merredin, through or near Yorkrakine, and finally reach Perth via the Avon valley. That is the route most favoured by the Commonwealth Railway Commissioner. I discussed the matter with him.

Hon. P. Collier: I discussed it with him 10 years ago. We used to put that up as a bluff then. I know the gag.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is no gag. During the last three years the matter has gone forward, and I think it would be foolish of the State Government to proceed with the survey of a 3ft. 6in. line knowing it is only a matter of a little time before the broad gauge railway will be put through.

Mr. Harrison: Can you get any direct word from the Commonwealth that they will pay the cost of the survey? If so, I would like you to get it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will write to the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner on the subject. It may be information to the member for Leederville and other hon. members that the Votes and Proceedings of Parliament for 1919 contained a vote from General Loan Fund, which vote was continued in 1920, for surveys of a line from Pemberton to Augusta, of an extension of the Mt. Marshall-Wyalcatchem line, of a line from Narrambeen to Bruce Rock, and for other surveys as required.

Hon. P. Collier: But that does not cover Big Brook and Denmark, which is quite a different proposition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under instructions from the Premier the survey of the line from Denmark to Big Brook was commenced four years ago. We started one party at the Denmark end, and another party at the Big Brook end. When one leaves the Big Brook sawmills, there is a large area of first-class karri timber, and that must be got away before the line is taken through. The six miles of survey to the Warren River was the heaviest part of the job. It has been finished some time ago, and Mr. Babbington, who started out from Big Brook, is now some miles south of the Warren River, proceeding to the point where Mr. Dartnall, who started from the Denmark end, left off. The real reason why this survey work has been started is to be found in the foresight of another Minister who had to deal with the matter, who was called upon to see what land he might have available for the settlement not only of our own soldiers, but also of soldiers from other States and other countries who had fought in the great war. I have been through the country in question, and I saw there some magnificent karri and jarrah, and also a large quantity of tingle-tingle. I was very pleased with the country. However, land settlement does not fall within my province. I disagree entirely with the talk about this being a confidence trick.

Mr. Underwood: It is a waste of money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I daresay the hon. member interjecting would spend the money on something else. However, I believe in surveys going first, before the authorisation of railways. I have seen in this State and in other States tens of thousands of pounds being lost every year to the people merely by reason of the fact that when surveys were made in the first instance the money was cut too short, so that the engineers were not able to search for the best route. They were told, for instance, that a one-in-sixty grade would suit. But the best possible grade should have been obtained. I believe in surveys being done first, thus enabling the Lands Department to subdivide most suitably for service of the settlers by the proposed railway. What is the use of asking people to settle on land unless there is a reasonable hope of their being supplied with means of transit, not within one year, but within perhaps five or ten years? In my opinion, it is the right and proper thing to put surveys of contemplated railways through as soon as one possibly can. I do not think it a right and proper thing to commit the State to unlimited expense in this connection; but here the Government are asking for only £7,000, of which we shall probably not spend more than one-half. We shall not spend any of it if information should be forth-

coming to show that the expenditure is inadvisable.

Mr. MUNSIE: While the Leader of the Opposition was speaking I learnt from the Premier, by way of interjection, that the whole of the area to be served by this proposed railway route is Crown lands. From other members I have learnt that there are numerous settlers on the area already. Now, which statement is correct?

Mr. Underwood: Both statements are true.

The Premier: The Denmark settlers will be within reach of the proposed line.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Denmark settlers have a railway now.

The Premier: Well, there are two settlers at Nornalup.

Mr. MUNSIE: I agree with the member for Pilbara that this is playing a confidence trick on supposed settlers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There are settlers south of Big Brook.

Mr. MUNSIE: Those settlers, I understand, went there because they believed a railway line was to be built there.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Of course they expected a line.

Mr. MUNSIE: Now we propose to expend money on a survey of the line in question. This is only playing a confidence trick on settlers still further south.

The Minister for Mines: It is a wicked thing to say that.

Mr. MUNSIE: It may be wicked, but it is true.

The Minister for Mines: It is not even true.

Mr. MUNSIE: For many years past the Western Australian Parliament has been playing confidence tricks on settlers and intending settlers in Western Australia. That remark applies most particularly to settlers in the Esperance district. They are still waiting for the line, and are likely to wait many years yet. The Minister for Works assures us that in all probability not more than £3,000 will be spent on the proposed surveys. Then why ask for £7,000? I protest against the survey of any more lines in Western Australia until we see some reasonable prospect of completing the lines already surveyed. The Premier says they want this survey for the purpose of subdividing the land. But why subdivide land along the route of the proposed railway when, on the testimony of the Premier, they cannot start the construction of the line for at least six years? The Premier has admitted that the State cannot build more than 100 miles of railway per annum. It is true the Government, behind the back of Parliament, have built 15 miles of line at Lake Giffon, but, on the other hand, the Esperance railway is being built at the rate of something below one mile per annum. The South-West has more than fulfilled my expectations. There are wonderful opportunities down there, but also there is room for thousands of new settlers alongside the existing railways in that portion of the State.

Mr. Money: And they want some more roads down there.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the Premier does go on with the survey, I hope that when he receives applications for the land he will strictly limit the area which any person can take up.

The Premier: I will do that.

Mr. MUNSIE: There is to be seen in the Bridgetown and Donnybrook districts some of the most magnificent land in Australia; and in certain instances individual owners hold as much as 5,000 acres of it. In point of fact, no man could successfully work more than 200 acres of that country. Yet the Premier, probably, will allow settlers to take up land along the proposed survey in whatever areas they like, and, later, posterity will have to repurchase the land at ten times its cost.

The PREMIER: In the South-West we are cutting most of the first class land into 100 acre blocks. This particular survey is almost completed, and must be carried through. There is not too much land in the State for those willing to come to the State. As we have sold the wheat belt, so we must deal with this land in the same way. We can put thousands of people into the South-West, but there are tens of thousands of people willing to go there as soon as ever we can make ready for them. It is because of that we want this survey. What I said was that we cannot build much more than 100 miles of railway per annum. During the last year or two, for want of rails, we have not been able to build any railways at all, and so we have some back work to catch up. I only wish we had ten times as much good land as we have. This survey cannot be made too soon. It was started four years ago. I hope the item will be passed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I disagree entirely with the policy enunciated by the Premier when he said he wished we had ten times as much good land to open up. I wish it too; but the policy we should pursue is not the policy of opening up new areas and building railways to them while we have thousands of miles of idle land along the existing railways. To-day the policy is not to go out into new areas and plant a few settlers here and a few settlers there, and then spend hundreds of thousands of pounds in providing railways for them. That has been the bad policy of the past, which has landed us in financial difficulties. This State is the most over-railwayed country in the world. We have a mile of railway for every 75 persons. What is the remedy? It is to utilise all idle lands within a reasonable distance of an existing railway. When we have done that and brought in thousands of new settlers to occupy those particular lands, then by all means let us extend our railways once more. But the time is not yet for the building of the railways referred to by the Premier. The Premier's policy, of course, is to run out surveys of railways to all Crown lands, send out settlers, and then come to Parliament and ask authority to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds in the provision of those railways. That is an entirely wrong policy. In respect of agriculture the problem facing the world to-day is to see that every acre of land is producing to its utmost capacity. That is the only solution of this State's difficulties. The Premier balks at a policy which will force into use lands already served by railways. He will not face that situation. He did bring down a Bill purporting to deal with it, but it will be as ineffective as water on a duck's back. If the Premier will not adopt that policy, he must of necessity go away out into new areas

remote from existing railways. If he is going to continue his policy of land settlement and will not adopt an effective policy, he has no other recourse but to go right out into the country, and keep on spending money in building railways. The Premier knows that the more new railways he builds for many years to come - except in a few cases where there is already authorisation passed, and where there is a fair amount of settlement and other settlement will speedily take place, such as in the wheat growing areas and in localities where land can be made immediately reproductive and produce freight for the railways the further will he get into financial difficulties. We want to build up our population. If we had another hundred thousand people we would provide employment, and traffic for the railways already built.

The Premier: Twenty-five thousand people if we can get ready for them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the optimistic Premier again. I read in the "British Australasian" that four years ago the Agent General on the authority of this Government was advertising that Western Australia was ready to and could receive 25,000 immigrants a year. There is something nice and round and full about that number, 25,000.

The Premier: You brought out 16,000 in one year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is the first time the Premier has given us credit for doing it. He knows that in those days, 11 years ago, we had an immense area of wheat belt which could be easily and speedily settled. That is no longer with us. It is not so easy to place immigrants in the South-West. It will be many years and will mean a totally different policy from this one, before we can take anything like 25,000 settlers a year from overseas. One year of immigration at that rate would fill up all our spare Crown lands. What did the Royal Commission on Agriculture, which reported four years ago, say? The Premier knows that we had not more than half a million acres of Crown lands left in the State for settlement. If the Premier gets 25,000 people next year he will have to stop immigration for all time. He will have no other land to offer immigrants unless he adopts another policy, and makes the land already served by railways available for them. I will stick to that policy unless I see good reason for departing from it. I have been led to make these remarks because it really bears upon the policy which ought to be pursued. A very good case will have to be put up before my support will be given for the construction of new lines. The Railway Department says it is not able to do any good because it has 3,500 miles of railway for a handful of people.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Members have not confined themselves to the survey of this line so much as they have to the survey of a new political line. Seeing that this affects my district I feel that I cannot let the matter pass without a few words.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I never had that in mind.

Mr. Munsie: I did not know the line was in your district.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will exempt the Leader of the Opposition but cannot do so in the case of the other members. Whatever

may be the opinion in regard to the mileage of railways in this State, we sometimes lose sight of the fact that a fair percentage of the railway mileage is in goldfields districts which are now sparsely populated. We also have several miles of railways which are disconnected from the main system and are expensive to operate.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Even then we are over-built.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will admit that. I have already said this session that we ought to operate our railways the same as any individual would operate any branch of his business, and determine that we shall cut out that portion of our business which is not profitable, and bring in new business in other directions. It would be good policy if the State made use of the lines that are constructed in goldfields centres, where now only a few people are served and which are remote from other parts of the system, and placed those lines in districts which would bring new traffic to the system. It is not a reason for saying that because we are over-built in some directions we should not do something to assist approved provinces which can be developed in some other part of the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I said, while we have lands already served by a railway and which are not put to full use.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We as a Parliament should take any action that is necessary to compel persons who are not producing from their lands what those lands are capable of producing, to make them available for somebody else. We cannot continue to allow those lands to be held as they are now being held. The legislation dealing with that matter will probably have the same effect as the Federal land tax had many years ago, and cause people so to fear what may follow that they will break up their big estates and make them available for settlement. The member for Pilbara made quite an oration, followed by the member for Hannans, on the question of the wasteful expenditure of money on surveys having no other effect than to delude the people. I would point out that Parliament agreed four years ago that the line should be surveyed, and yet those two members have only just awakened to the fact that we have been deluding those settlers and playing a confidence trick upon them.

Mr. Munsie: It is time they were told.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There are two settlers in the Nornalup district who were there long before the line was ever thought of.

Mr. Munsie: I say you are playing a confidence trick on 70 odd settlers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Apparently we have been playing a confidence trick on these settlers for four years.

Mr. Munsie: For over 10 years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I agree with the Premier that if we have lands that are proved to be suitable for settlement, we ought to have a survey of them made. Instead then of practising the policy we have practised in the past, one that has landed us in our present difficulties, of allowing free selection with an undertaking that we will build a railway, we should do what they do in Canada, and say that we will build 25 miles of a railway, but not another inch of it until the land served by that 25 miles of railway is fully occupied and made productive.

Hon. P. Collier: That would prevent the Premier from sending out people to Crown lands in the way he is doing.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Are we going to wait until someone comes along with a policy that will be acceptable to this country, and confiscate private lands?

Hon. P. Collier: Why use that word?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It practically amounts to that. Many who have been writing on the question recently have suggested confiscating private lands. We cannot do that.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not a fair argument.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If we are going to wait till then, we shall have to wait a long time. Members have been discussing the Denmark-Big Brook survey. Why was no mention made of the Piawaning northwards survey?

Mr. O'Loughlen: I mentioned it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But not seriously, I think. It is a good thing to let people know that we have a huge province that is suitable for settlement and can be served in the future. The member for Pilbara has a railway which is losing us more money per annum than the whole of this survey will cost. No one suggests that we should pull up that railway, because it is helping development. When a simple survey is proposed in some other part of the State of which he knows nothing, he suggests we are wasting money, deluding the public and playing a confidence trick upon them. By his efforts to-night he is playing a confidence trick on his own electors. We shall not get through much development by croaking in the way some members have been croaking to-night.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know where the Minister got his information that we voted for this survey four years ago from Big Brook to Denmark. I have seen no mention of it in the Estimates. This is the first time it has appeared.

Hon. P. Collier: They have been spending the money.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not see why hon. members should be accused of doing something which they have not done. In 1919 the survey was from Big Brook to Augusta, but in 1920 Big Brook was not mentioned.

The Minister for Works: The work was going on.

The Minister for Mines: There must have been an authority somewhere.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was covered up in some way.

The Minister for Works: Under surveys that may be required.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was not a question of voting upon it, for no person was aware that it was going on. We are deluding the people by passing these surveys.

Mr. Munsie: Of course we are.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Every one of us is doing it. Immediately a survey is made the people form the opinion that the railway line will be built at an early date.

Mr. Pickering: They ought to have been disillusioned long ago.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Last year we passed a railway Bill, and we were told there was no chance of starting it for six years.

The Premier: Who told you that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for that district. We were also told that we could not construct more than 100 miles of railway a year. In many of those districts for which railways were approved by Parliament, the war prevented the lines from being constructed. If we could find the money to go on with railway construction, these districts should have first attention. We should not go on year in and year out agreeing to construct railways, because that is what a survey means. We shall be told during the next year or so that in such and such a year we voted for a survey, and shall be asked why we wasted money on a survey if we did not intend to construct the line.

Mr. Pickering: You are an old hand at the game.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In these circumstances, we should be very wary as to how we proceed. There is good land in this particular part of the State but it must be remembered that in opening up large areas in the South-West, one of the most important aspects to receive attention is the finding of markets for the products. I think the Minister was in error in referring to the Denmark line.

The Minister for Mines: I was not in error. It was there in 1920.

Mr. Munsie: It was not.

The Minister for Works: Records show that reference was made to the Big Brook-Denmark railway, and also to the Big Brook-Augusta line.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not object to surveys or railways if we have the population and the money. The country requires to be opened up. It is necessary to have greater settlements than we have at present. That being so I do not think we should do anything that would have a tendency to delude the people regarding the railway surveys.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In order to put the member for North-East Fremantle right I would like to point out that the details attached to the Loan Estimates for 1918/19 contained the item, "Progress made for expenditure for year ended 30th June, 1918, Big Brook-Denmark railway, part of permanent survey." The next reference was in the 1919/20 Loan Estimates, when the entry appeared: "Progress made for expenditure for year ended 30th June, 1919, Bolgart extension railway completion, Big Brook-Denmark railway commencement; progress anticipated to be made during the year ending 30th June, 1920, Big Brook-Augusta," and so on.

The Minister for Mines: It appears, therefore, two years running.

Item, Waroona-Lake Clifton purchase, £70,000.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We have heard a lot about the Waroona-Lake Clifton railway purchase, and it is not my intention to flog a dead horse, regarding the merits or demerits

of the agreement made between a previous Government and this company. I think the past experience should convince the Government that they should be very careful in their transactions with this particular company, and they should be satisfied that the company has carried out its part of the contract before the £70,000 is paid over. I have some correspondence from the company which certainly proves to my mind that the company has not carried out the agreement so far as the supply of lime to the agricultural community for the past six months is concerned. One of the vital parts of the agreement was that the company should supply lime for agricultural purposes to settlers who required it throughout Western Australia. I have before me the special agreement passed by this Chamber in December, 1916, between Mr. J. H. Johnson and the Government. Paragraph 13 of the Agreement sets out—

That the lessee will as soon as the said railway is completed and thereafter at all times during the term of this lease supply lime to the public, so far as there may be a demand for the same, to the extent of the output for the time being of the demised premises, which shall not be less than fifty tons per day, in a dry condition and finely crushed so as to pass through a twenty-inch mesh sieve or unscreened, as the purchaser may require, and in either case containing on analysis not less than eighty per cent. carbonate, and being the product of the demised premises, at a price not to exceed, twelve shillings per ton screened, or ten shillings per ton unscreened, delivered at Waroona.

The essential part of the agreement was that lime should be supplied for agricultural purposes by the company, and that the supply should continue, the works to be in operation for a period of six months before the sum of £70,000 was to be paid by the Government to the company. The agreement provides that no less than 50 tons per day should be supplied by this company for six months before they were entitled to the money.

The Minister for Works: That means about 15,000 tons per year.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yet we find that a resident of my district who required five tons of lime for agricultural purposes from the company, has been unable to procure it. He is a man of good financial position and I have with me a letter from the company sent to him on the 20th July, 1921. The letter is headed "West Australian Portland Cement Company Limited," and then follows a lengthy address. The letter is addressed to a gentleman in Narrogin, and I propose to give the letter to the Government for their own protection. The letter reads—

We are in receipt of your letter of the 12th inst., relative to lime, and wish to mention that the general construction work at Lake Clifton has not yet been completed, and when such construction work

is completed, the lime will take some time to dry. We anticipate being in a position to entertain orders for lime in time for the next season, viz., January of next year.

The letter is signed for and on behalf of the West Australian Portland Cement Company Limited, by T. R. Campbell, as local secretary.

Mr. Pickering: That letter means that their six months will date from January.

Mr. Johnston: But even so, this man has not received his lime yet.

Mr. Money: The company wrote to the Government saying it was prepared to supply lime.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is so, but the fact remains that this man has not received his lime yet. The company is supposed to have been in full operation for six months, and it was supposed to be in operation for that period before it became entitled to the amount of £70,000. The company, in this letter states that it cannot supply any orders until January of this year. The company's claim for the payment of £70,000 was made in December of last year, and in the circumstances it should have been fulfilling orders for lime for six months prior to that date.

Mr. Money: In November the company wrote to the Government saying it was prepared to supply lime.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The fact remains that this man has not received his lime yet. In the circumstances, the claim for the £70,000 should not have been made for some months yet. The gentleman who received this letter was public spirited enough, when he saw the correspondence in the Press, to make this letter available for use by the Government.

The Premier: It is a wonder he did not post it to us at once.

Mr. JOHNSTON: At any rate, it was given to me during the New Year holidays and I brought it to Perth with me to-day. It appears to me that the meaning of this letter is clear. It says that the company has not been fulfilling the conditions of the agreement for the supply of lime for the past six months. I hope the Government will hold over the payment of the £70,000 until they are satisfied that the company's agreement has been fulfilled. I am not advocating any repudiation of the agreement which Mr. Colebatch signed, but as the company may justly claim from the Government the fulfilment of the contract entered into, so I contend the Government should strictly see that the company's agreement is fully carried out before payment of £70,000 is made to the company. I hope this letter will be of some assistance to the Premier.

Mr. PICKERING: I support the contention advanced by the member for Williams-Narrogin, because it is laid down in the agreement that lime under certain conditions must be supplied to the settlers. The letter shows definitely that the company does not contemplate being in a position to supply orders until the present month.

The Premier: We will see that the agreement is carried out and that the company complies with its agreement.

Mr. PICKERING: We know that the company is securing its lime supplies from Gilling. Why should that be so? We know that it is because the lime from Lake Clifton is not sufficiently dry for the purpose of the Burswood cement works.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Your vote was bought the other night when you said that everything was all right. You endorsed everything.

Mr. PICKERING: Nothing of the sort! My vote on the no-confidence motion was a different thing altogether. The Leader of the Opposition himself said that we could not repudiate this contract. I believe that, and I do not see that I was justified in voting for the motion.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not ask you to repudiate a contract.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought you might reasonably repudiate the Government while sticking to the contract.

Mr. PICKERING: I was not taking that on.

The Premier: We will see that nothing is paid until the agreement is observed.

Mr. Lambert: You should stick to the money as long as you can.

Mr. PICKERING: The interest on £70,000 for a period of six months represents a considerable sum, and I hope the Government will take advantage of that candid admission by the company appearing in the letter, and see that the money is not paid over until the works have been operating for six months.

The PREMIER: I assure the Committee that I will see that the agreement is carried out by the company before the money is paid over.

Hon. P. Collier: It is part of the agreement that lime shall be supplied.

The PREMIER: I know. Of course, we will see that the agreement is carried out, and lime supplied for six months before the money is paid over.

Mr. Lambert: In addition to that, I suggest that the Government should see that the company does not merely execute two or three orders, but that it has the plant there and that it is kept in full going order.

The PREMIER: I will see that that is done.

Item: Tramways, Perth Electrical, and extensions, £60,000:

Mr. LATHAM: I want to be satisfied that this item does not provide for the extension of any new lines in the metropolitan area. I am convinced that we should economise at the present stage, and should not embark upon any new extensions. I do not want to see any new tramways in the metropolitan area, and I ask the Minister for Railways to give the Committee an assurance that this does not cover any new extensions.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know that I should give the member for York that assurance, because if we find it necessary to make an extension of half a mile or so, he may accuse me of repudiating the assurance I have given in this House.

Mr. Latham: We would not object to half a mile.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I can only say that there is no provision for any new lines.

Mr. Johnston: This does not deal with the Como extension?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This item does not make provision for that extension. All I can say is I regard that as regrettable.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If there is to be no extension except some short extension necessary for the working of the system, the Minister might explain why £60,000 is required this year as against £33,000 last year.

The Minister for Mines: That amount includes cars.

Hon. P. COLLIER: On the page of the Estimates where information is supplied, we are referred to the Commissioner's report and in his report the Commissioner refers to an extension of the tramways to Como.

The Premier: There is no money for such an extension.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course I accept the Minister's statement, but the official information really is that there is to be an extension.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I repeat that I regret the money for the Como extension is not available. This, however, is a matter for the Treasurer, and I have no quarrel with him because he cannot find funds for tramway extension. As Minister controlling the department, I believe it would be in the best interests of the system if this extension were made. Too frequently members criticise Ministers, forgetting that the question of carrying out certain work finally depends upon the Treasurer's ability to find the funds. Probably some material will be coming forward, but until Parliament has been consulted, it is not my intention to proceed with any general extension of the system. However, we are not entitled to retain possession of a monopoly if Parliament will not provide the conveniences which the public demand, and I am considering submitting to the Premier as a matter of policy next session the question of the formation of a trust to control the trams. Under this system, we would retain public control, but the trust would have to find the money for their own purposes. There is no money on these Estimates for the extension of trams to Como.

Hon. P. Collier: Does this include payment for the cars?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A sum of £53,311 is involved in the building of 20 new bogie cars by the Midland shops, and as the cars are turned out, the Railway Department is being credited with the cost.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: When are they coming out?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: One or two are out already; the rest of the bodies have been built, but the wheels are not available.

Hon. P. Collier: Is it a fact that the department failed to order an essential part and that this caused the delay?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No; the people who accepted the contract for building the wheels and axles or some portion of the under carriages had tremendous failures.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are being built in Australia.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and it has only been possible to supply a limited quantity. No one regrets more than myself and the manager that the new cars were not available during the holidays.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is the Minister going to do with the rails and equipment which were intended for the construction of the Como line? If the rails and other equipment have to be paid for, the laying of the line will be a very small proportion of the cost.

The Minister for Mines: Will it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the rails are paid for, it is better to put them into use rather than leave them to rust. We were told that the rails were expected in October. Now the material is to lie idle.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then what is the Minister going to do with it? I consider that some influence has been brought to bear on the Minister to cause him to alter his mind. No doubt it is due to the dictates of his party and because the metropolitan area is concerned that the construction of this line is not to be proceeded with. There was a great outcry from members of the cross benches when it was announced that the line was to be constructed.

The Minister for Mines: That is unworthy of the hon. member, who knows that these Estimates were prepared during my absence.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then I shall say the Minister responsible for the Estimates. Everyone understood that this line would be constructed. The railway report says that the material has been ordered and the money must be found to pay for the material. Is the money to lie idle until the material is used? Why not lay the line and earn something?

Mr. Latham: Or lose more.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. I consider that an injustice has been done to the people of the Como district owing to the Government having decided not to construct the line as promised.

The Minister for Mines: We did not promise to construct it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then I do not know what a promise is.

Member: Subject to the approval of Parliament.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What! After the material had been ordered. I do not want the Minister to shelter himself behind the proposal to form a trust. No one knows better than the Minister the difficulty he will have in that regard.

The Minister for Mines: No difficulty at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister experienced considerable difficulty when he purchased the trams originally. The Government have one of the finest tramway managers in Australia, a man who takes a great interest in his work. If the Minister has to find the money for the rails and other gear, why not lay the line, seeing that the district has undertaken to guarantee the interest and sinking fund? The member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) told us that on the Address-in-reply.

Mr. Johnston: That is news to me.

Hon. P. Collier: It has been said over and over again.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Now we are told the line is not to be constructed. It strikes me that, as soon as anything is proposed for the metropolitan area the Government become funky.

The Minister for Mines: You cannot accuse me of being funky.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister said he was away and knew nothing about it. We have a metropolitan members' party which might give the Minister a bad shock. This district has been badly treated by the Government. The Government laid down the construction of the line as part of their policy, but because they were attacked in the Press, we are told that the line will not be constructed this year. The delay will be detrimental to the district. The south side of the river has been neglected. It is the best part of the metropolitan area, and this was an opportunity to open it up.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nothing gladdens my heart more than to receive support from an unexpected quarter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But rails have gone down in price.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And the hon. member's experience has gone up. The hon. member knows that tramway material can be purchased and put in the road. To-day we are receiving complaints regarding the condition of certain roads. During the past 12 months we have spent a lot of money in relaying the line along Hay-street. When the old rails were taken up everyone marvelled at the fact that the trams had been able to keep on the track. I have told the House that in order to get electrical material it was necessary to order well ahead. With regard to the promises of tramway construction, nothing definite was stated in respect to Como. I received deputations from all parts of the metropolitan area urging the extensions of the system and I replied that I would have investigations made, and that if money was available those extensions would be carried out. I stated at the time

that I realised that parts of the metropolitan area required extensions urgently. Now I marvel that opposition has come from those from whom it should not be expected. I can see no possibility of carrying out the extension to Como or elsewhere this year, and I declare that if the public insist that the Government shall continue to own and control the tramway system, the system will have to be treated in the same way as any other utility for the benefit of the public. If I were to propose to this Chamber that South Perth should have the right to construct its own tramway to connect with our system, numerous objections would be raised. The member for North-East Fremantle would object.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I would not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member objected to the city council having the right to build a tramway to North Beach.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I actually introduced two Bills here for that purpose. I objected to motors.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I did not tell the people of Como, or anywhere else, that tramways would be constructed this year. If any blame attaches to anyone for not going on with these extensions it is attachable to members of Parliament. Those who say that there shall be no extensions must carry the responsibility. I have urged that as tramways only serve a limited number of the community, those who are served shall pay, and that the burden shall not rest on the whole of the community. The South Australian system compares favourably with any other system in Australia. The member for North-East Fremantle would not object to those who are the actual users, paying, and he should not object to the provision of a trust similar to that of South Australia. Whenever those who get all the favours have to pay, they should control in the same way as is done in the case of the Fremantle tramways. The member for North-East Fremantle would not agree to a Bill being brought to Parliament for the sale of the Fremantle tramways to the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you paid for them as you did for the Perth tramways, I would have no objection.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have done my part as Minister in making inquiries and I have told the public that I believe extensions are wanted.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I did say last year that I thought tramway extensions should cease, but since then there has been a drop in the price of rails of from £14 to £17 c.i.f. So far as the trust is concerned it is all bluff and the Minister knows that we cannot get the local authorities to agree.

The CHAIRMAN: I have allowed hon. members a good deal of latitude in connection with this item, but there is really nothing dealing with trusts that can be dis-

cussed under it. Let us confine ourselves to the question.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have been discussing tramway extensions by the Government or by a trust.

The CHAIRMAN: Trusts are not before the Chair.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The question before the Chair is that of tramway extensions by the Government, and I am not so daft that I cannot understand that. Last year we voted £80,000. Was that amount used for extensions, or was it for electrical gear for new cars? If the electrical gear which arrived here some time ago was paid for, we are justified in asking in which direction the remainder of the money was spent.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The expenditure last year on bogie cars was £13,715, on workshops £6,489, on track improvements £10,015, on car barn additional accommodation £632 and for "various," which may have included rails and electrical gear, £35. For this year the principal items are: bogie cars £50,000, completion of new machine shops £10,000, fitting Grinnell sprinklers in car barn £2,800, improvements to the Walcott and Beaufort-streets lines £2,700, and terminal loop at North Perth £1,388.

Item, Electric Power Station, East Perth, £175,000:

Mr. LAMBERT: On the general Estimates I brought up the question of the huge expenditure involved in equipping the East Perth power station. The present estimate of an additional £175,000 on top of the original expenditure of £600,000, makes the capital cost climb towards three-quarters of a million of money.

The Minister for Mines: That is not quite correct.

Mr. LAMBERT: Those are the figures as I see them; the Minister can give the exact figures. I do not wish to be understood as expressing myself derogatorily to the present station, which I believe is serving immediate purposes. But I think the Government should immediately call for competitive plans for a much bigger scheme to generate electric current at the pit's mouth at Collic and to deliver it at, say, Bunbury, which is our second biggest port and is situated within 30 miles of Collic. The trend of industry is in the direction of conveying power in that way to a port, for manufacturing purposes. Under the conditions I have suggested, every big industry established in the Eastern States could be established here. In Tasmania a hydraulic electric plant is developing well over 200,000 horse-power per annum. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that seeing the greater cheapness of raw material in Western Australia, we could meet the Eastern States in competition on equal terms. Under the conditions I have sketched out, it is quite possible that even in the near future we could electrically smelt iron and steel at

Bunbury. Half of the steel of the world, practically, is being produced by electric current to-day. Certainly over 50 per cent. of the steel now produced in the United States is produced by electric current. The United States are not in a better position than Western Australia for producing cheap steel. The Yampi Sound iron deposits are equal to any in the world. The iron ore from Yampi Sound could be landed at Bunbury on better terms than iron ore is landed in many parts of England. It is the imperative duty of the Government to formulate a clear plan in this connection.

The Minister for Works: There is plenty of ironstone in the South-West.

Mr. LAMBERT: No doubt; but in the matter of water-borne iron ore Bunbury is perhaps situated as favourably as the iron works on Lake Superior. A big ferro-alloy trade could be established in Western Australia right away. There is also the alkali industry which, in view of the big salt deposits outside Geraldton, at Port Gregory, offers wonderful opportunities of development. The lead sulphate industry could be established here under the conditions I have indicated, and in the same way we could have central metallurgical works for treating our lead and copper at one centre. The essential, however, is that the electric power should be conveyed to a port which could both receive the raw materials and ship the finished products.

The Minister for Works: You cannot beat Bunbury for that.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not concerned about the particular port; but it is imperative that a definite scheme should be formulated, unless we are to have a huge army of unskilled labour, unless we are entirely to neglect the State's scientific needs, unless we are to pay no regard to the future of the chemists whom our University is training. In the matter of cheap fuel we are situated at least as favourably as Victoria with its brown coal. I may mention, too, that Germany is now making big strides in the development of its brown coal deposits. I hope the Government will not deal with this as a merely abstract question. The present power station is doing good enough work in lighting our houses and assisting various small industries in the metropolitan area. But that is not sufficient. We have to see whether we cannot compete upon equal terms with the Eastern States. We are importing seven million pounds' worth of goods from the Eastern States annually. I could mention half a dozen other industries which, with power properly developed and centrally delivered, would be established here. There are the pyrites deposits and the lead deposits. Even savages, with salt lakes available as they are here, would not purchase salt; yet every pound of common salt that is now used in this State has to be imported.

The CHAIRMAN: What has salt to do with electric works?

Mr. LAMBERT: In 1912 there was established at Edithburg a small salt works, with a capital of £50,000. Last year that capital was increased to £250,000, for the purpose of embarking upon the electrolytic manufacture of caustic soda and bleaching powders and other things essential to the woollen industry, the manufacture of paper, and other subsidiary industries. We can do the same thing here. About Port Gregory there are salt lakes covering thousands of acres, with the salt five inches thick on them.

The Minister for Agriculture: There are salt lakes in my district, too.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, and also in the district represented by the hon. gentleman's brother. Yet every pound of salt this State uses has to come from beyond the borders of Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Salt is got from Rott-nest.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is only a detail. We have no caustic soda works, and we have no soap works; or no large soap works—only a couple of small establishments. With respect to the establishment of an electric scheme such as I have suggested, could not our Government induce the Victorian Government to let Sir John Monash come here and report, as an initial step, on the realisation of what is now waste fuel at Collie representing probably 10 per cent. of the output? I repeat, no start can be made with the establishment of secondary industries until we have cheap electric current.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I realise that it would be a very excellent thing to have salt works and caustic soda works and soap works and quite a number of other works established in Western Australia; and therefore I suggest that the hon. member should go out and preach the doctrine to a larger audience, and a more attentive audience—I judge from the state of the House—and an audience with more capital in its pockets. Meanwhile let me inform the hon. member what we are actually doing. The hon. member is quite wrong if he imagines that at East Perth we are producing electric current at excessive cost.

Mr. Harrison: Are not you selling it cheaper than you are producing it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. The trouble is that quite a number of people imagine that one must not on any account sell part of one's production of a commodity at less than the average cost of production.

Mr. Lambert: That is nonsense.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am glad the hon. member has common sense on that point. What we lose on the merry-go-rounds, we get back on the swinging boats. At the East Perth power station we are producing current cheaper than it is being produced at any station in the British Isles or at any station in the British Empire, except hydro-electric stations. And we are doing that while using coal brought from Collie, on which pretty high freights are paid.

Mr. Lambert: Do you produce current as cheaply as the Morwell station will be able to?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not quite so cheaply. However, we have not defied the decision of the control board as regards the price to be paid for Collie coal, as Victoria did in the matter of the price to be paid for Morwell coal. Perhaps power might be produced more cheaply at Collie; but the hon. member must know that the current is used, not at the station, but at the place where it is required. Of course current would be used at Bunbury for certain purposes, but to turn iron ore into a commercial commodity requires a good deal of current. A furnace using only a small quantity of current would be quite useless, because the production of small quantities of current is always very expensive. So, until we are in a position to find £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 for iron works at Bunbury, we cannot establish a station for the generation of the current they require down there.

Mr. Money: What about current for the electrification of the railways?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That, I am afraid, is many years ahead. We have too much awaiting immediate attention to be talking about the electrification of the railways. It cannot be done, because we cannot hope to find the necessary money. We erected the power station at East Perth in 1912, when the total requirements were about 12,000,000 units per annum. To-day, without any addition to that station, we are selling 25,000,000 units per annum, and are right up against the provision of sufficient additional machinery to produce safely the current already required in the metropolitan area. The cost of producing at that station the current required in the metropolitan area is not much more than would be the cost of transmitting the current from Collie to the metropolitan area. Moreover, one cannot produce at any station at .35 pence all the current which would be necessary for the purpose of a steel works. Therefore, you must have some current used in other forms such as lighting, and traction, at a price above the actual cost of production, in order to allow you to sell at less than the cost. If we could get a power station established at the pit's mouth at Collie, and have it surrounded by all those industries which we have in the metropolitan area, it should certainly be to the benefit of the State. But we have not all those industries at the pit's mouth. Therefore, the power would have to be transmitted to Perth, and the cost of transmitting it would be almost as much as the cost of producing it in the metropolitan area. The hon. member suggested bringing over Sir John Monash. That gentleman may be a magnificent organiser, but he has a totally different proposition to handle. The men in Victoria are being paid 2s. 6d. per ton on the open cut system. They are not treated as are the miners at

Collie. The Victorian Government held up the whole State rather than pay the rates laid down by the tribunal. Would the hon. member have us do that? We have not overlooked the using of the coal at present thrown aside at Collie. We have introduced special stokers which will enable us to burn almost dust from the Collie mines. Members come here and criticise the power station, but I do not think more than five of them have ever visited it. Hon. members would do well to go down there and see what is happening. We have here an item for a new generating unit.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is wanted, too.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is, indeed. We have in sight a total demand for sufficient current to keep all three units in that station fully occupied. One cannot run an electric generating station with the whole of the machinery continually in operation. There must be a standby unit. It is doubtful, however, whether in June next we shall have one. I take some little credit for the manager of the scheme, Mr. Taylor, and a little to myself for having the courage to back him in foreseeing, 12 months ago, that we would require a new generating set. We are to-day able to get a set which, in consequence of the latest improvements, will occupy very little more than the space occupied by any of the sets already there. We have in sight a demand for 4,650 additional horse-power which will be required during the current year. It is essential that we should have the new generating set. When that station was built we not only provided the three existing sets, but we provided housing for another set. The station, therefore, from its inception, has been carrying overhead charges which embraced the additional capital outlay for the purpose of making provision for 1922. Then people ask why this station does not pay. If the supply of electricity were controlled under one head, the people in the metropolitan area would get cheaper current than they are getting to-day, and it would be to the benefit of everybody. A member of another place brought out electrical appliances to put in his home in West Perth. After they had arrived and were put in position, the city council refused to make the connection, declaring that there would be some difficulty in West Perth in regard to the supply of current. Here is the manager of the power station looking for fresh customers, while the city council sits down and will not even step out of its way to get additional subscribers! I should like to see a change made, placing the supply under one head and doing away with the middle man.

Mr. Mann: The city council will take new subscribers—at its own price.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We provide people beyond a five mile radius with current at very much cheaper rate than the city council requires from them.

Mr. Mann: But you cannot relieve the people in the metropolitan area, who have to trade with the city council.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The people in the metropolitan area can do that for themselves. If I were to bring down a Bill to annul our agreement with the city council, I should be decried for doing something in the nature of confiscation. As a matter of fact, the city council is robbing itself. The industries are compelled to go beyond the five-mile radius in order that they might get their current from us instead of from the city council. In Mt. Lawley, in the heart of the city, the people are paying more for lighting current than the people of Guildford have to pay, although the Guildford supply is paying the power station handsomely.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But it does not cost you as much as it costs the city council.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not consider that a man who wishes to establish a business to-day should be called upon to carry the burden of the purchase of an old gas plant, effected by the city council years ago.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Somebody must carry it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Let it be carried by a special rate; then you will get current distributed at a figure at which it will be profitable to establish industries.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It cost us at Fremantle over £40,000 to take your current.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That was only the first charge. Did you borrow the money, or did you do it out of revenue?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We had to borrow some of it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The city councillors talk about what it cost them to change over, but they do not explain that they are charging people just outside Victoria Park Rd., whereas we charge them 5d. A fair percentage of the money required for the power station is for the purpose of laying additional cables into the outer suburbs in order that people may be supplied with current at a rate which will enable them to establish industries.

Mr. Mann: In the meantime the small manufacturer in the city has to suffer.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot help it. If the hon. member will back me in the view that the city council is merely a deputed body, and that we ought to prescribe its charges for current, we may be able to afford relief to the small manufacturer in the city. I am rather proud of the power station. Through it alone have we been able to introduce secondary industries which would not otherwise have been started here. The Australian Steel Company, which began operations in Sydney, was able to get current from us at a lower rate than that at which it could be obtained in Sydney. The company commenced here with a small plant for the making of high class steel tools. The manager, probably by invitation, went to England, and in consequence Hadfield & Co., of Sheffield, are about to establish works which will require from three million to five million units per annum from our power

station. It is not only a question of the units of electricity but of the employment that this power will give. They are going to take our raw material, and make not only what is required in Western Australia and other parts of Australia, but actually manufacture it here. It is not a question merely of pounds shillings and pence, but rather of the advantage to be derived by the general community. Taking all these facts into consideration, I say that the power station is one of the best assets that could have been established in the metropolitan area. I have no hesitation in asking the Committee to pass this additional amount. The power station will assist us in making ready for those industries which are so desirable in the interests of Western Australia.

Mr. MONEY: I appreciate the power of electricity, but have never known a Minister to display such an attitude towards it as the present Minister. Surely, if we can vote £175,000 for extensions to the power station, we can look elsewhere than in the city of Perth for the development of our future industries. Are all the industries to be centred in Perth? No details have been afforded to us as to whether it is possible for the power that may be required to be generated elsewhere. If we can create cheap power in Perth we can surely create cheaper power in Collie, if we have not to pay 12s. a ton for railing the coal to Perth.

Mr. Mann: It was originally 4s.

Mr. MONEY: We should know whether any inquiry has recently been made into the question of generating electricity at Collie. With our increasing railway mileage we shall yet have to develop along the lines of what amounts to a motor service, and that will require electricity transmitted from some central generating station.

The Minister for Mines: They have not been very successful elsewhere.

Mr. MONEY: Western Australia must show the road to success even if others have failed. Instead of encouraging new industries to come to the cheap power in Perth, it will be better to generate cheaper power in Collie, and encourage industries to establish themselves out of Perth.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have no desire to detract from the value of the power station at East Perth. The Minister has been far seeing in making provision for extensions there. I am not blind to the fact, however, that we require something bigger than this for the industrial and commercial expansion of the State. The Minister need not bluff through by indicating that this is the last word in the generating of electric current.

The Minister for Mines: It is.

Mr. LAMBERT: In 1912 he thought the greatest output that would be required would be 12 million units per year, whereas to-day it is 25 millions, and next year he wants another four million units for the steel works. The Minister's narrow vision then is equally narrow to-day. It will not allow him to see that if we are to have large

industries here we must have a central generating power station at the pit's mouth. It is no use his trying to bamboozle members into the belief that those who are suggesting this course fail to recognise the value of the East Perth station to the metropolitan area. It is not possible to establish any new industry of any magnitude unless we are able to assure the people concerned that we have the necessary natural resources, and that the intention of the Government is to develop such a source of electrical power that will enable industries to utilise those natural resources. How are we going to prevent importations up to seven millions a year unless we develop our own resources? It is necessary to encourage our struggling industries here just as it was necessary to do so in the other States. We have been in relation to the other States what Australia was before Federation in relation to foreign countries. We are handicapped by the unfair competition with the Eastern States. We should throw our imagination forward and look to the time when we must utilise our products to the full, and possess a central generating station without which it will be impossible to do so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister has been rather unjust to the city council. It is thought that the local authorities who are getting current from the Government are making exceedingly high profits.

The Minister for Mines: So they are.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The city council has done well so far as power is concerned. Although electrical material has gone up over 300 per cent., and wages have been raised from 11s. to 19s. a day, and other expenses with reference to retailing electricity have greatly increased, the price for current charged to the public for lighting is just the same as it was before the war. The profits on the current are not as great as they were in 1914.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, they are, in the bulk.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am talking about retail. The profits are not as great as members are led to believe. When the city council took the current over from the Government a large expenditure was necessary. Sub-stations had to be erected, new machinery had to be provided, and the cost of the old plant had to be met by the ratepayers.

Mr. Mann: Do you appreciate the fact that the small manufacturer in Perth is at a disadvantage?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, because the local authorities outside are in a position to offer current at a cheaper rate than the city council. If a certain quantity of current is taken it can be had to-day at .9d. per unit. That applies right through the metropolitan area; and if that is not cheap enough, I do not know what will be.

The Minister for Mines: The department have never had any trouble with Fremantle in this matter.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Power has been charged too high in Perth, but the Fremantle Tramway Board to-day are not making the same profit as they were making in 1914.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Harbours and Rivers, £162,500.

Item, Bunbury Harbour Works, £29,000:

Mr. MONEY: It is a considerable time since the whole of the representatives of the South-West took a keen interest in this work, and it is now nearly two years since they were at the trouble of pointing out to the Government the depths and facilities required in order to allow of Bunbury harbour serving the grain growers of the Williams-Narrogin and Pingelly districts, the coal producers of Collic, and the fruitgrowers of the Nelson district. They were given to understand that the depths furnished by them as possibilities would be investigated promptly; but from that time onwards they have no official intimation of what has been or is to be done. Those 16 or 17 representatives took the keenest interest in saving the port from becoming the white elephant of Western Australia. There was an authorisation for the expenditure of £150,000 at the port, and it was through the efforts of those members that a scheme was evolved for an expenditure of £90,000 to supply every facility that the £150,000 scheme was designed to furnish—the distinct understanding being that the balance, £60,000, would be devoted to the provision of the necessary facilities for shipping everything that the South-West had to export. To-day the port of Bunbury consists simply of a jetty. For the export of timber it is probably as good a port as any in Australia; timber is shipped there with great expedition. But in the matter of coal export Bunbury has not the facilities it ought to have. Depth of water is absolutely requisite for a coal export trade. The South-Western members have satisfied themselves that the necessary depth of water is there—satisfied themselves from the records of official borings made 15 years ago. Those records show a possibility of a depth of 40 ft., and this with the area of water fully protected. The breakwater has been extended to 1,000 feet. If another breakwater were constructed parallel to the existing breakwater, it is obvious what would be the extension of the area protected. I have put the matter to harbour engineers, and they agree with me; and they tell me, further, that the more one narrows the portion between the end of the breakwater and the shore, the less will be the volume of rough water that will enter the harbour. The Minister informed the South-Western members that they would receive a reply within a fortnight.

Hon. P. Collier: How long ago was that?

Mr. MONEY: Over two years ago. Since then we have inquired again and again, and have again and again been informed that the engineers are still boring for the purpose of confirming the borings made 15 years ago.

The Minister for Works: Nothing of the sort!

Mr. MONEY: The Government were boring in Bunbury harbour 28 years ago, when I first saw Western Australia. Are the wheat growers of the Williams-Narrogin and Pingelly districts ever to have proper facilities for exporting their wheat from Bunbury? Are we ever to have sites on shore at Bunbury for the bunkering of Collie coal and the bulk handling of wheat? What a trade this State is losing every year in bunkering alone! Dredging and reclamation will make Bunbury harbour sufficiently deep to accommodate any steamer that comes to Australia. Is it simply camouflage and delay that we encounter every time in connection with this matter? The fruitgrowers of Western Australia have been severely handicapped for many years. It costs them two-thirds of their gross returns to place their fruit on the market. That has been the position for the past two years. No other producer in the world has to pay so large a proportion of his return for the mere placing of his product on the market.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Four years ago the Minister promised to remedy the position.

Mr. MONEY: Not only has the fruit-grower of the South-West to pay 5d. or 6d. per case extra rail freight owing to his fruit being brought away from its proper port to Fremantle, but there is the matter of deterioration of the fruit owing to the unnecessary length of transport, which deterioration is probably equal to 9d. or 10d. per case. Again, as regards coal, why should the Collie industry have to pay 12s. per ton extra to have its coal hauled from Brunswick Junction to Fremantle instead of to Bunbury? We learn that coal from the Old Country and from America is now successfully competing with Australian coal at Singapore. If the Government of to-day intend to do nothing, let them tell the people in the South-West so in plain words, and then the South-West will be prepared to do its own work, take over its own port.

The Minister for Works: Rubbish!

Mr. MONEY: That is the sort of answer a man gives when he has no proper answer.

The Minister for Works: I am sure the people of the South-West cannot do it.

Mr. MONEY: I am not stating rubbish, but plain facts. The people of the South-West have had promises upon promises. When I was doing my best to save this wastage in rail freight and to assist the development of the South-West, I was looked upon by the Government as a nuisance. True, the Government have made a timber port of Bunbury; but, if they had not done that, what would have happened to their railways? When the timber strike was in progress, the railways showed a huge loss.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The mistake was that the timber was not taken to Flinders Bay in the first place.

Mr. MONEY: Would the member for North-East Fremantle advocate that being done?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: At any rate, I know what I am talking about. It would not cost anything for haulage there.

Mr. MONEY: That is what the member for North-East Fremantle thinks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Bunbury has had more done for it than any other port in Western Australia.

Mr. MONEY: Is there any site provided for the bulk handling of wheat at Bunbury?

Mr. O'Loughlen: No.

Mr. MONEY: Are there any up-to-date bunkering facilities for handling Collie coal at Bunbury?

Hon. P. Collier: No, nothing.

Mr. MONEY: There was a £90,000 scheme for the provision of export facilities there. We want to know if the work done, has cost the full amount and if not, what has become of the balance. This is not the time for niceties or friendship or for any other interests than the interests of one's district. Nothing will help better than to provide proper facilities at the natural port so that the development of the hinterland may be encouraged. What will happen if those facilities are not provided? The railway line from Perth to the wheat belt will have to be duplicated. The line from Perth to Bunbury is well occupied in carrying coal from Collie and if we are to continue hauling coal all the way to Fremantle, we will have to duplicate the line from Collie to Brunswick.

The Minister for Works: It should have been done years ago.

Mr. MONEY: Now we have an admission from the Minister.

The Minister for Works: If I did not know more about it than you do, I should not be here.

Mr. MONEY: The Minister admits that the line from Collie to Brunswick should have been duplicated years ago.

The Minister for Works: I did not say that. I referred to the Bunbury-Perth line.

Mr. MONEY: As evidencing what may be done by the development of the natural harbours of a country by making use of the trade which should go to them, New Zealand may be quoted. No country has gone ahead like that Dominion where they develop their natural ports in a proper manner.

Hon. P. Collier: The curse of Victoria and New South Wales is centralisation.

Mr. MONEY: That is right, and from the evil of centralisation has arisen the movement for smaller states.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That movement will continue to grow.

Mr. MONEY: I was astonished to hear the Minister for Works say that it was rubbish when I said that the people of the South-West would be willing to take over their natural port.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: So would any district be prepared to take over their port—after the harbour is finished. They do not want to pay for it.

Mr. MONEY: Are not all the goods produced in the South-West worth something, that they should not take advantage of their natural port? Yet the Minister says they have Buckley's chance of getting the port; the Minister had no right to say that.

The Minister for Works: I did not say they had Buckley's chance.

Mr. MONEY: The Minister said it was rubbish and that they had Buckley's chance. As it is now, it is sheer wastage to haul goods all the way to Fremantle, when Bunbury is the natural port for this district. We talk about decentralisation, but is it merely to be a platform cry to enable members to secure return to Parliament? We should act upon that principle and see that real decentralisation is brought about. Yet when I advocate something along those lines the Minister for Works says that it is rubbish.

The Minister for Works: Well, that is my opinion.

Mr. MONEY: If I can get an expression of opinion from the people of the South-West that they are prepared to take over their natural port, will the Minister be prepared to hand it over?

The Minister for Works: I will consider it.

Mr. MONEY: It is not fair that the South-West should be handicapped by all this camouflage. I do not understand the attitude of the Minister. As a matter of fact, he did not know the depth of water we have at that port.

The Minister for Works: Were those depths where you said they were?

Mr. MONEY: We have the Public Works Department's plans! Are they wrong? If so, we should have an inquiry into the operations of the Public Works Department.

The Minister for Works: You move for that and I will support you.

Mr. MONEY: These particulars were referred to the Engineer-in-Chief and he said they had them in the office.

The Minister for Works: Why do you not tell the whole story and not merely the part of it that suits your own purposes?

Mr. MONEY: That is not a fair interjection by the Minister. If I have said anything that I cannot corroborate I will withdraw the statement, but it is not right for the Minister to talk like that. No one has taken a keener interest in this matter than I have.

The Minister for Works: You are not the only one.

Mr. Pickering: No, of course not.

Mr. MONEY: I know that it is only by being so convinced that errors were being made in regard to the Bunbury Harbour that members representing South-Western constituencies come to take a keen interest in this matter. It was only when convinced there was a huge waste of money going on that the members for the South-West took the steps they did. Had they not pointed out the inefficiency of the Bunbury harbour scheme, it would have been gone on with. I remember that on one occasion the Minister authorised me to get certain information from the Public Works Department; but when I went along for it, that information was refused me.

The Minister for Works: By whom?

Mr. MONEY: Yet the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor was not above discussing engineering works with me. Any school boy could see the faults in the Bunbury harbour scheme.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor designed that harbour.

Mr. MONEY: No, he did not. He wanted a safe harbour, inside the estuary. Unfortunately

we took something which promised to be completed more quickly, and it has ever since proved a mistake. The breakwater was put in a position where it has always silted up.

The Minister for Works: I wish you would silt up.

Mr. MONEY: No doubt, but I am not going to do so.

The Minister for Works: Why not give the name of the man who refused you the information?

Mr. MONEY: I have too much pity for you. The siltage down there is going to be a trouble for all time. The site has been dredged three or four times, and it requires constant dredging. Considering the lack of facilities, it is amazing that Bunbury should maintain its position as the fifth export port in the Commonwealth. By the interjections, one would think it was only the question of a jetty at a little fishing village. One is not degrading Fremantle, or Geraldton, or Albany; they are all entitled to their trade in their own zones. However, there seems to be no real effort made to provide facilities for doing all the trade which belongs to a given port. It is inconceivable that when public men approach the Government everything should be done to put them off. The people of the South-West deserve better treatment at the hands of the Minister.

The Minister for Works: They have had very good treatment.

Mr. MONEY: I hope that in this particular matter the members of the South-West will be afforded all possible information.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Bunbury is evidently obsessed with an idea that Bunbury is regarded by the Government as being of no moment. That impression is quite wrong and he ought to know it. He should know there are other factors to be taken into account in connection with public works. The right of Bunbury to export the bulk of the timber, fruit, and wheat produced in the district cannot be denied and has never been denied by the Government or by myself. Representative people of the town have thanked me time after time for supplying information which they had been unable to get before. The suggestion that the necessary money to take over the harbour could be raised from the people of the South-West is quite untenable. The sum required to give them what they want would probably amount to three-quarters of a million. If we attempted to put on the land to be served a special rate of only a half-penny in the pound for this purpose, there would be such an outcry that the hon. member would be ousted from his seat. Let us get down to facts. The expert in Bunbury before the present member took on the job was a draper named Tipping, a very estimable gentleman, but the old saying about the cobbler sticking to his last applied to him. Mr. Tipping was enthusiastic about the harbour, but he was a draper. Our engineers gave attention to his suggestions and also to the representations of the member for Bunbury. When I asked the hon. member to name anyone who had refused to give him information which I had said he could have, he would not state the name. Will he give it now? His strictures on officers of the Works Department were unwarranted and unworthy. Mr. Tipping and Mr. Money

both said there was a mud hole at Bunbury. There are several mud holes. There was one having a full depth of 40ft., but in the area to be covered by the dock there were portions where rock occurred at 23 to 26 feet. The position of course was governed by these lesser depths. This information did not satisfy the people of Bunbury and so I promised to have the whole affair probed. We then found depths which were not marked on any of the charts in the department.

Mr. Money: Good depths, too.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These have not yet been plotted out in such a way that the information can be put before me. Whatever we have found, however, the Premier has not the funds required to carry out the work. The member for Bunbury said that lack of funds should not hinder the getting of information. The hon. member may have all the information as soon as it is ready, but he is not going to get it until it is ready.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What are those depths not shown on other charts?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We found some depths of 40ft. and some of 39ft. In my opinion the money expended in boring in the Bunbury harbour will be money well spent, even if it does not produce results, for it will set at rest the opinions of those gentlemen who are not trained engineers. The hon. member said there was simply a jetty at Bunbury. It is a good jetty. It is what the people of Bunbury were satisfied to get when I went there and spoke with them. But the people of Bunbury are like the people of other shipping ports—they are always on the look-out for more.

Hon. P. Collier: And you let these unsophisticated drapers select their own plan?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, we tried to satisfy them, but it is impossible to do so. Last year we spent on the Bunbury Harbour £36,000; this year we propose to expend £29,000. For dredging the approach to the jetty the sum of £9,000 has been allocated. When the mole was built many years ago it was considered that it would completely prevent the drift of sand which has given Bunbury so much trouble. It is now found that the force of the sea is so great that it drives the silt through the wall, along the wall, and round the corner. It was proposed to spend £10,000 on electric cranes. These have been made at the State Implement Works, at a price that compares favourably with the imported article and has resulted in a good profit to the works. On the installation of electric power and light £1,000 will be spent. An investigation in connection with the inner harbour and other minor works brings up the total expenditure to £29,000.

Hon. P. Collier: What does Mr. Tipping think of it now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know. They will get the depth of water that is available, and it cannot be made any deeper. The member for Bunbury has bombarded me with letters on this subject for several years. I do not remember the promise he speaks of. No one is going to deny Bunbury the necessary facilities for handling wheat and coal when we have the money to provide them. The late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor's scheme was for an inner harbour. When the late Lord Forrest put the

first item on the Loan Estimates of £100,000 the matter was fully discussed between us. The scheme that was carried out had the approval of Mr. O'Connor, but there is no doubt he would have preferred the inner harbour scheme if he could have got it. Every Minister for Works has to be governed by the state of the Treasury. If the hon. member feels he is not getting what he would like let him go to the Treasury. During the last few years money has not been available for these works, and nothing the hon. member can say can alter the fact that without money we cannot do anything.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about the £70,000 in connection with Lake Clifton?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Is it necessary to introduce that matter now? There is going to be a Royal Commission on the matter, and I cannot reply to the hon. member.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why can you not reply? Who wanted the Royal Commission?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did for one, and Mr. Colebatch also wanted it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The House did not want it. The State should not have to pay that money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot discuss the matter now. Every attention has been paid to Bunbury that could be paid to it.

Mr. Money: We can neither import nor export.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We cannot any of us do all that we would like to do. Until the financial position improves it is useless to suppose that we shall have any large sum of money to spend there.

Progress reported.

BILL—ARCHITECTS.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

House adjourned at 11-10 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 4th January, 1922.

Papers: Litter Deposits, Donzara	Page
Bills: Nurses Registration, report	2674
Permanent Reserves (No. 2)	2674
Inspection of Machinery, recom.	2674
Traffic, 2A., referred to Select Committee	2674
Workers' Homes Act Amendment, recom., 3A., passed	2680
Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, Com ...	2684
Stamp, Assembly's Message—Money Bills procedure	2688
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, 2A.	2688
Land Agents, Com., report	2692
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 2A., Com., etc.	2695

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.