

tions, and to secure the assistance which the previous Government expected to obtain when the scheme was undertaken. In reply to the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) let me say that the reduction of interest to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. will cover practically all the advances to soldier settlers. I do not know that I can discuss Dr. Teakle's report. There are wonderful crops growing at Lake Camm this year, and there were last year; and I daresay patches of salt will be discovered in that country just as they have been in the wheat belt. In some cases years elapsed before the salt showed itself sufficiently to destroy the crops; for several years the crops were good, although small patches of salt were found. I do not think that Dr. Teakle's report is generally understood correctly. I do not think he made such a general condemnation of the country as is supposed in many quarters. I am afraid that if he had come here years ago, he would have probably declared the whole of our agricultural lands too salt to grow crops.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Dr. Teakle's advice is valuable.

The PREMIER: I agree. I trust hon. members will realise that so far as the Government can help the farmers, the Government will help; but I am afraid it is impossible to do much without funds.

Item—General Manager, and Managing Trustee Agricultural Bank, £1,500:

Mr. SLEEMAN: I understand that this is a most able and valuable officer, but as we hear so much about equality of sacrifice my attention is aroused by the fact that he is still on the same salary while everyone else in the department has been reduced.

The Minister for Lands: He is affected by the Financial Emergency Act. You will see that that is allowed for underneath. He has been reduced by $22\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., while others have been reduced in lesser proportions.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But he is receiving the same salary as last year.

The Premier: He will have a reduction, I assure the hon. member.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am speaking only from the aspect of equality of sacrifice.

Item: Inspectors appointed by Trustees under Agricultural Bank Act, £40,427:

Mr. COVERLEY: Last year the Agricultural Bank had 71 inspectors. The number

has now risen to 96, an increase of 25. What is the reason for the increase?

The PREMIER: Group settlement has been passed over to the Agricultural Bank, as the hon. member knows.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 4).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [10.1]: I secured the adjournment of the debate in order that I might scrutinise the measure. I can see nothing objectionable in it. It contains a small amendment that will concern very few and will apply to one or two clubs only. The alteration to the law will not have any general application.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

House adjourned 10.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 15th October, 1931.

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

QUESTION—STATE GARDENS BOARD.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Premier: 1, Who constitute the State Gardens Board? 2, Do they control Point Walter? 3, Were they responsible for the removal of the road from the campers' reserve at Point Walter? 4, Who was responsible for carting it back; what amount of money was expended in the removal and carting back of the road? 5, If the State Gardens Board were not responsible for this waste of public money, who was responsible?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Messrs. L. E. Shapecott and C. G. Morris. 2, Yes. 3, No road was removed. 4 and 5, Answered by No. 3.

Mr. Sleeman: I myself saw the road being carted back again.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Administrator received and read, notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 2), £960,000.

HOUSE STAFF DESIGNATIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish to announce that I have decided to make an alteration in the designation of certain officers of the staff of this House. For many years past we have had a Chief Messenger and an assistant to that officer. Henceforth the designation of those officers will be Clerk of Records and Accounts, and Assistant Clerk of Records. These new designations will remove the impression in the minds of the uninitiated that those officers perform messenger duties rather than clerical.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Reserves (No. 2).
 - 2, Roads Closure (No. 2).
 - 3, Licensing Act Amendment (No. 4).
- Transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1931-32.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Department of Minister for Lands and Immigration (Hon. C. G. Latham, Minister).

Vote—Lands and Surveys, £55,172:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [4.40]: In submitting the Estimates to the Committee, I am sorry we are not able to do so under far better conditions than obtain this year. There is very little in the Estimates which is different from the Estimates of any other year, the only difference being a reduction amounting to, roughly, £10,000. During the year, I regret to say, the activities of the department have fallen off considerably, due partly to the economic position, and almost wholly to the fact that settlement in the agricultural areas has been stopped. Considerable activity has been shown in the southern portions of the State, where it seems almost impossible to satisfy the demand for land. But there also the difficulties of the economic position are pronounced, inasmuch as very few of those applying for land have money with which to develop it. In many instances they have not even their deposit, which is provided for by the law of the land. So while we still have quite a lot of land for sale, I regret to say that this year we have been unable to dispose of it. There has been considerable activity in the South-West along the proposed route of the railway from Cranbrook to Boynp Brook. The whole of the area of alienated land there has been classified. The report is in my hands at present, but I am unable to give the Committee any information about it, for I have not yet had the opportunity to go into it. However, I do know that it says there is a very great area of land, far in excess of what the settlers will be able to use for many years to come. Until some adjustment of the areas is made, I am afraid we shall not be able to justify the building of the proposed railway.

Mr. Withers: What is the proposed area of the new blocks?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As I have said, we have not yet been able to go into it.

Mr. J. H. Smith: How much of the land is alienated?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Along the route of the line there is very little land that is not alienated. Mostly it has been alienated for many years, and a good deal of it is held in fee simple. Certainly we have asked the settlers to put a price on the land. Some of the prices submitted

are reasonable, but some are excessive, judging by the superficial answers I have had.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The price of the poor land is reasonable, while that of the good land is excessive?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It all depends on the improvements. In respect of some of the blocks, the settlers are anxious to get out because of the liabilities they are carrying. During the year we have placed a few people on the land on the lines suggested by some of the members who have already spoken to the general discussion on the Estimates. At Nornalup, prior to the introduction of last year's Estimates, it was expected to put on 100 settlers. However, only 81 have been allotted holdings, and for the moment it is not considered advisable to go any farther. In April of this year we opened up the Nannup settlement under the same conditions, except that the 47 settlers there know the locality very well and are on sustenance, married men with families getting £2 per week. In the Busselton area a settlement was established in May. There we have 30 settlers on deserted group settlement holdings. We are paying them only sustenance. If they were not on those blocks they would be obtaining sustenance in some of the towns. In many instances their sustenance allowance is supplemented by the produce from their gardens. There is a probability that those settlers may prove even better than some of the original settlers on those holdings. Certainly some of them are more industrious than their predecessors.

Hon. M. F. Troy: From sheer necessity.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. The hon. member last night gave a very good illustration of what had been done in the early days of settlement, and I believe we still have the same degree of responsibility in our settlers to-day.

Hon. M. F. Troy: But those locations are all of poor quality.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In some instances they are not. Of course they have not all been taken away from the previous holders, some of whom have left since the revaluations were made. It is beneficial to the State to have someone in charge of those properties. A regrettable fact is that, immediately a holding is abandoned, people consider they are at liberty to remove portions of the buildings, fencing and other

things. Where we have people in charge, they are assisting us to maintain the securities. At Albany at the beginning of last month we placed 19 settlers.

Mr. Wansbrough: I hope you will continue the scheme, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are trying out a new class of land that hitherto has been rather discouraging. We have selected the best portion of it, and the type of men we have placed there will give us an opportunity to judge of the capabilities of the land. The same conditions apply to the Albany settlement as elsewhere. We have taken men on sustenance from the locality and to date they are proving satisfactory. I am hopeful that they will continue to do satisfactory work. Albany presents an advantage in having a butter factory. The blocks are within 20 miles of the town and are served by existing roads. Consequently, the outlay usually entailed to provide facilities for new settlements will not be incurred. As to supervision, we do not instruct the men, who are left to work entirely on their own initiative. We have a supervisor who is available to direct any man desiring advice. We have asked those settlers to carry out improvements on the best of the land. I do not say that the blocks are 100 per cent. first class, but they contain sufficient good land to enable those people to make a living. We are providing each of the settlers with about 60 sheets of iron with which to build a shack. Each man has to do his own building. We have given each sufficient iron to make a tank, and have provided a stove and various other small items. We have supplied wire netting and superphosphate to encourage them to undertake gardening. We advise them first of all to clear a piece of land and grow their own vegetables. Most of those settlers have done a considerable amount of work. A little while ago the "Western Mail" published an illustration of what one settler had done at a cost of £25. I do not wish that to be advertised as possible for everybody to do. He was an exceptional man, who applied himself to the work. Anyhow, the results justify the action of the Government in settling those men there. Settlers who stick to their holdings will be given a Crown grant, the same as other settlers in the south-western part of the State. During this session I propose to ask Parliament for authority to grant the settlers an area in excess of 160

acres of freehold, just as the ex-Minister for Lands did for the group settlers.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is, a gift of the land, not improvements.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A gift of the land only. All the money paid to settlers by way of sustenance will be a charge against the land. Consequently, I hope we shall build up security there. It is far better to have men working on the land than to have them in the towns drawing sustenance. I wish we were in a position to extend such settlements, but we cannot do a great deal in that direction at the present time. Unfortunately, we have not sufficient money available to lay out a scheme and to ensure being able to make a definite advance from month to month. As we have to depend entirely upon the money obtained from the Commonwealth Bank, it is impossible to provide the funds necessary for all the settlements we should like to start. Nearer the city considerable investigation has been made respecting small areas such as several members have suggested. It has been suggested that men should be placed on blocks to engage in vegetable growing and pig and poultry raising. Regarding vegetables, the market is over-supplied. People engaged in vegetable production are getting practically nothing by way of return. The other day a grower showed me his returns for two lots of cabbages sent to Perth, and the total amount he received after paying expenses was 10d. I wish to warn members that it is possible to overdo production of that kind. The metropolitan area and other centres do not offer sufficient markets for all that is being produced.

Mr. J. I. Mann interjected.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not say it is not done to a limited extent. It may be done at Merredin to supply the gold-fields markets. The fact is that the spending power of the people has fallen and many people are growing vegetables for their own requirements. A while ago nearly every farmer was sending to Perth for his vegetables, but that state of affairs has been altered because necessity has driven most people to provide for themselves. I warn members that if they believe a solution of our difficulties lies in placing men on small areas adjacent to the city and expecting them to market sufficient produce to maintain themselves, there will be a rude

awakening. There may be more scope in poultry raising. This depends entirely on the overseas market, because the local market is certainly over-supplied with poultry products. But for the opportunity to export eggs, I would have grave doubt of the future of the poultry industry. Reverting to the country settlements, I cannot detail the whole of the work done at Nornalup settlement, but it has advanced considerably. On some blocks 50 acres have been partially cleared and have been sown, and the crops are looking well. The following details of the settlements are interesting:—

Settlement—When started.	No. of Settlers.	Expenditure. £
Nornalup—Sept., 1930 ..	81	18,569
Nannup—April, 1931 ..	47	2,977
Albany—Sept., 1931 ..	19	516
Busselton—May, 1931 ..	30	907

Obviously, there has not been that extravagant expenditure to which we have been accustomed in the south-west portion of the State. In view of information having reached the department that good pastoral land existed in the Warburton Ranges and of applications having been made by certain individuals for pastoral leases there, the Government decided to send out a survey party to investigate the possibility of opening up the area. It has been the custom for individuals to spy out the land for themselves, and then set about monopolising all the water supplies. To prevent that, we sent out a survey party under Mr. Surveyor Paine, who is expected to return to Perth in the course of a few days. His assistant has already returned, but I have not had an opportunity to discuss the matter with him. Accompanying the surveyors was an officer of the Mines Department, who went to secure geological information and investigate the possibility of obtaining water. I understand that an advance report from him states that a fairly big auriferous belt exists. Whether the country will be worth trying, I cannot say; we shall have to await further reports. We are now using our surveyors to make a close classification of the land between Mt. Barker and the Frankland River, where there is a considerable area unclassified. When that work is completed, the whole of the south-west portion of the State will have been classified. Let me refer briefly to the position of the settlers in what is known as the 3,500 farms scheme. I quite

agree with members that probably the settlers know a great deal more of the land than do scientists. Previous to the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) leaving office, the Development and Migration Commission insisted upon a scientific investigation being made of the soil before we proceeded further with settlement.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I think we first entered upon the scientific investigation and, as a result of what was discovered, the Commission asked us to go more fully into the matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think we need discuss the initial history of it. The investigations started at Salmon Gums. I know that a telegram reached the Commission in Melbourne before the information was sent to the Minister. It should certainly have gone to the Minister first. When we took office we sent Dr. Teakle out to make an investigation as required by the Commission.

Hon. M. F. Troy: He was out long before you took over.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He may have taken a run through the country, but we had a proper classification made. Surveyor Stokes was sent with him, and there was a camp of six men to do the work.

Mr. Millington: Dr. Teakle was out long before you took office.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Yes, six months before.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He may have taken a run through the area, but we did not have a report from him. We arranged with the Development and Migration Commission for money to make the investigation, and Dr. Teakle was immediately sent out. He may have gone out previously and inspected isolated blocks, and reported at the time.

Mr. Millington: He reported pretty exhaustively and presented his report before we left office.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I can say definitely that that was not so. He went out just previous to my going to Melbourne.

Hon. M. F. Troy: How can you say definitely it was not so when I have a copy of his report as submitted to Cabinet?

Mr. Millington: The report was not published, but we had it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A report covering a close classification of all that area?

Mr. Millington: Not all the area.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Probably the hon. member is referring to Forresteria.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The area from Salmon Gums to Forresteria.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am speaking of the area inside the rabbit-proof fence, where people have been settled, not to the area that has not been settled. Dr. Teakle went there and made a close classification of the land. I will not say that he did not leave some of the blocks unclassified. As a matter of fact, we propose to ask him to go back over certain areas. He went from Lakes O'Connor and Carmody in the north to Lakes King and Pallerup in the south, and inspected 169 blocks. Of them 39 were considered suitable for successful farming; 113 were considered unsuitable in themselves, but under a process of linking up some of them, 43 satisfactory holdings, considered suitable for development, were secured. A total of 125 blocks inspected were Agricultural Bank securities. Another 125 blocks were not inspected, for the reason that the information obtained on similar holdings was considered conclusive and it was not necessary to make a close investigation of them. If the process of linking up were adopted, there would still remain 35 blocks in the whole area unsuitable for cultivation. The idea that the whole area is unsuitable is wrong. Only in the case of 35 blocks so far would it be unwise to keep people upon them.

Mr. Corboy: How many blocks were originally allowed for?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Altogether 169 blocks were inspected.

Mr. Corboy: How many blocks will be left?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Thirty-nine blocks were considered suitable as they are; 113 were considered suitable for linking up with others; and 35 out of the whole area were considered unsuitable.

Mr. Corboy: More than 50 per cent. of the settlers have to get off. Less than 50 per cent. will be kept on their farms compared with the original number of settlers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. One hundred and twenty-five blocks were not inspected and 113 were found to be suitable for linking up with others.

Mr. Corboy: That is less than 50 per cent. of the total.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Out of the total number, there are only 35 blocks that are considered unsuitable.

Mr. Corboy: That is 35 out of 300. Work out your own figures. Less than 50 per cent. of the settlers will be able to stay.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is not so.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is only on the advice of Dr. Teakle. These settlers are growing crops to-day.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Anyone would be foolish to spend other people's money, let alone his own, in continuing a settlement after the scientific adviser had said that the land would eventually become salt. If we declined to take any notice of the views expressed by the professional adviser, and we found country similar to that at Lake Brown, it would mean pouring money into a district which eventually must be depopulated. Taking that into consideration, and the long distance these people are from a railway, I contend it would be wiser to place them on abandoned holdings which the Agricultural Bank trustees have on their hands.

Hon. M. F. Troy: You propose to move 35 settlers out of the whole lot.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That matter has not yet been decided upon. A proposal has been put up to those who desire to leave and take up holdings closer to a railway.

Mr. Corboy: Have you taken into consideration what they are being offered?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. Corboy: Are you satisfied?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am.

Mr. Corboy: I am astounded.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not surprised at that. Inspector Mitchell who is out there has been asked to interview the settlers and point out the position to them. He is to let them have all the facts of the case.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: How will the settlers you leave there get on without transport?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are some farmers, as the member for Mt. Magnet has said, who have gone out a long way from a railway. It is not anticipated that these will earn a living by wheat production alone. If we have to move 50 per cent. of these settlers, there will be sufficient land left for them to go in extensively for

wool production. There is a large area of country and many of the holdings carry water supplies. It was anticipated that if the Government had to do this we could link up some of the holdings and make them available in larger areas than exist to-day. I think that within this district we can grow oats. I believe that the man who possesses sheep is going to do as well for many years as the wheat producer, and the farmer who combines the two things will do still better. It is not expected that these settlers will go in extensively for wheat when situated so far from a railway.

Mr. Angelo: Is there permanent water or dam water?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is mostly dam water, but there may be some wells on the edge of the scrub country. The whole matter depends not only on the quality of the land, and its freedom from alkali, but on the prospects of railway facilities being supplied. At present there is no prospect of getting any money with which to build a railway for these settlers. There are other settlers who are still 50 miles from a railway and they are the people whom we have to consider. Mr. Stevenson, of the Migration and Development Commission, will be in Perth to-morrow and it is proposed to talk the matter over with him. I was pleased to hear the statement of the member for Mt. Magnet that the Commission had acquiesced in the placing of settlers out there. In the past they have repudiated any responsibility in the matter. There is a letter on the file asking us to release them from their obligations. There is no doubt the Commission did acquiesce in this settlement, and indeed were instrumental in the people going there. We are not prepared to release them from any obligations they have towards these settlers. Mr. Stevenson is coming to Perth with a view to winding up migration and development agreements. I hope he will be prepared to meet us equitably in this matter. I have no desire to pit my knowledge against that of professional advisers, but I do think that if railway facilities were afforded the majority of the settlers would make a success of their holdings.

Mr. Corboy: Is there no hope of a railway being put there?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When Mr. Stevenson arrives this matter will be discussed with him. I hope he will, on behalf of the Commission, be prepared to accept

their responsibilities in connection with the whole scheme. The settlement was arranged under the 34 million pounds agreement that was entered into between the Commonwealth and the Imperial Government. This agreement was made to assist the States in placing settlers on the land. If the Commission are not prepared to carry out their share of the responsibility to the farmers in this district, they must assist us to move them from their blocks and rehabilitate them on other holdings. Some of these settlers will no doubt be pleased to go and we shall be glad to be rid of them, and some do not want to go. There are not only migrants, but a number of our own people there. There is a very good type of migrant in this area.

Mr. Corboy: The majority are Australian born.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope later on to furnish members with some information as a result of the discussion between the representative of the Migration and Development Commission and the Government. So far as we possibly can we will rehabilitate those who are moved on to other holdings. I am now going to deal with the Estimates of revenue and expenditure. Last year the expenditure on salaries was £64,306, and this year the estimate is £55,172. The services of a great many officers have been dispensed with. The decrease in expenditure is £9,134. In all, 27 officers have been dispensed with during the year, one died, and there have been two new appointments. Four officers have been transferred to other departments, and four items that were provided last year were struck out this year. Three officers were transferred to other departments, and two who were provided for over a period of two months have been transferred to other departments. The estimated revenue last year was £338,000, made up of Territorial, £318,000, and departmental, £20,000. The actual revenue received was £264,371, made up of territorial £235,441 and departmental £28,930. The decrease in territorial was £82,559, and the increase in departmental was £8,930, the net decrease being £73,629. The estimated revenue for the current year is £255,000, made up of territorial £235,000 and departmental £20,000. The territorial estimate this year is based on last year's receipts, and Departmental at £15,000, and increased by the Treasury to £20,000. There is no need to inform members with regard to the falling

off in revenue. When we prepared our Estimates this time last year we had no idea that the bottom would drop out of the wheat market and that wool prices would fall so low. Farmers are unable to meet their rental payments, and the same thing holds good with regard to pastoralists. During the present session it is proposed to bring down a Bill asking the authority of Parliament to reduce the rents for pastoral leases. The falling off in the income of pastoralists has been so great that unless some relief is given to them many pastoralists may fall back into the hands of the Government.

Hon. A. McCallum: Are you still imposing the penalty clauses on pastoralists who are not paying?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member must know that if a farmer cannot pay his interest we have to borrow the money with which to pay it ourselves.

Hon. A. McCallum: You do not have to pay penal interest.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have to borrow money to pay the interest that is not being paid by those who in turn borrowed it. The Treasurer informed members that a reduction would be made in interest corresponding with the benefit he received from the Conversion Act that was passed. An erroneous idea is held with regard to penal interest. When we borrow money we have to make our interest payments half-yearly. If we lend money and the farmers are unable to pay their interest we in turn have to borrow money with which to pay that interest. It cannot be done out of Consolidated Revenue, particularly when the whole of the national income has gone. So that the idea of penal interest is wrong. It is only interest on the money the Government have to borrow in order to pay interest on loan moneys. As regards migration, last year there were complaints about the number of officers. I thought that in all probability we would be able to transfer the migration officers to the Lands Department, but to my regret I found that the number of active files and documents at the time rendered it impossible to obtain sufficient space in the Lands Department. We hope at an early date to be able to effect the transfer, as we shall soon be able to stow away records which at present are in constant use. The total expenditure for salaries last year was £3,001: the amount provided this year is £2,836, a decrease of £1,065. This amount is decreased by amounts transferred to loan,

representing £809 less than last year, and increased by £270 being a saving effected under the Financial Emergency Act. The net decrease in salaries is £526. The services of five officers were dispensed with, and six officers were transferred to other departments, principally to the Child Welfare Department. The total expenditure on contingencies last year was £1,515; this year only £680 is provided. We are still attempting to collect some money in respect of migration, though we receive very little. The Commonwealth Government, thinking they could assist materially in this respect, last year appointed an officer for that purpose; and his appointment has been renewed for a further period of six months. There has also been a reduction of expenditure under the Town Planning Commission Act, the decrease amounting to £200. I desire to inform the Committee that the Town Planning Board are giving their services in an honorary capacity to the Government; I wish to show appreciation by mentioning that fact to the Chamber. During the year the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act was placed under my administration, the measure coming into operation in December, 1930. So far, I think we can claim, the Act has worked satisfactorily not only to the farmer but also to his creditors. When the measure was introduced here, a good deal of fear was felt as to what was going to be done with the farmer and also as to what was going to be done with his creditors. The measure seemed to be highly unpopular from both points of view, but I am pleased to say that it has served its purpose well. The affairs of 344 settlers are being administered under the Act; and 37 farmers, having made a suitable arrangement with their creditors, have been released. The Director of Agriculture has successfully used his personal influence in bringing about good feeling between creditors and farmers. A considerable increase is shown in the expenditure under this item, due to the fact that provision is being made for a complete year's operations, because in all probability when the harvest is coming forward a good many stay orders will be issued under the Act. The total expenditure last year was £1,129, and this year we are asking for an increase of £1,097. I only hope we shall be able to get through with that increase, because that would mean that the farmers were able to make their own arrangements. It is possible that fresh

legislation may be introduced shortly in regard to the handling of the harvest. On the other hand, it is possible that as the result of the conference which the Minister for Agriculture is now attending in the East the Premier may be able to inform the Chamber that that question has been satisfactorily solved. I have much pleasure in submitting my Estimates to hon. members, knowing that they will treat me kindly in respect of them. Any further information it is possible for me to give I shall be only too pleased to supply.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [5.20]: May I initially assure the Minister for Lands that any assistance which can be rendered by me, and equally, I am certain, by any other member on this side of the Chamber, will be freely given during the difficult time the agricultural industry is passing through. I wish to preface my few remarks on this Vote, if I may, with a reference to the late Mr. Frank Cooke. I know of no man who took a more active or a more useful part in the development of our agricultural industry than did the late Frank Cooke. His demise has robbed not only the agricultural industry but Western Australia itself of a great helper and an able adviser indeed as regards land settlement in this State. I personally regret most sincerely the passing of one of the best friends the man on the land in Western Australia ever had, in the person of Frank Cooke. I wish to deal briefly with one or two points that have been raised during the last 24 hours with regard to land settlement. The position of the settlers at Lake Carmody, Lake King, and so forth has been frequently mentioned during the last 24 hours; and I think it only fair that I should voice an opinion on behalf of the settlers themselves. I speak somewhat feelingly, because I happen to be one of the unfortunates who went to the district in question as a settler. Undoubtedly a most serious position has arisen, which all the sophistry of the ex-Minister for Lands will not put aside, so far as I am concerned—a position which must be faced. While the Minister for Lands says that the settlers went to the district of their own free will—

The Minister for Lands: I did not say that.

Mr. CORBOY: I beg pardon; the ex-Minister for Lands, I should have said. All the sophistry in the world about the settlers having gone there of their own free will must fail to solve the problem that has to be faced to-day. There can be no question that many of those settlers went to the district guided by the expert advice of the officers of the Lands Department and the Agricultural Bank. They invested there all their private capital, because they were personally satisfied as to the reliableness of the opinions which had been expressed by the departmental officers. And now what has happened? Let me, for the sake of this discussion, put forward my own case, and thus refrain from dragging anyone else into the matter. I took up a block which was classified by the Lands Department officers as 100 per cent. first class. After taking it up, I submitted an application to the Agricultural Bank for a loan. Before the loan was granted, the usual procedure was followed: an Agricultural Bank inspector went and again classified the block. His classification agreed that the block was 100 per cent. first-class land. Upon this second classification the Agricultural Bank trustees consented to make certain advances on the block. At the end of two years, after the Agricultural Bank had spent a considerable sum of money on my block—which is typical of the whole area—and after I had expended the whole of my private capital on the block, the same Agricultural Bank inspector came along and said that only 300 acres were first class and that the rest was second class and third class, whereas previously he had declared that there were 1,000 acres of first-class land. On the strength of this later report, after the lapse of two years, the bank meantime having spent its money and I having spent mine, the trustees decided that they could not grant any further advance on such a poor block. This was prior to Dr. Teakle's report.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Would it be fair to ask how much the Agricultural Bank advanced on the block?

Mr. CORBOY: I should say, £600 or £700.

Hon. M. F. Troy: And the Bank refused to advance more?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Before Dr. Teakle's report?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. In my individual case that is so. I know that the greater part of the area was condemned on Dr. Teakle's report, but in my case and in that of a few other settlers the land was condemned by the Agricultural Bank inspector who two years previously had classified the blocks as being 100 per cent. first class.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Who was the inspector?

Mr. CORBOY: Is it necessary to shout the man's name to the country? I am prepared to give it to the hon. member privately. I do not think it fair to broadcast his name in connection with this matter.

Hon. M. F. Troy: It looks as if the inspector had not known his job.

Mr. CORBOY: It looks as if the district inspector, who was his immediate superior, was somewhat lacking.

Mr. Doney: That same district inspector is a man who knows his job.

Mr. CORBOY: Then he must have neglected it.

Mr. Doney: He did not neglect it.

Mr. CORBOY: Then why did this happen?

Mr. Doney: I could not say.

Mr. CORBOY: I am giving the simple facts. The settlers to-day are left high and dry; and they have no remedy, apparently, for the parlous plight in which they find themselves. It is no use for the ex-Minister for Lands to quote to me the great success achieved by an ex-member of another place on perfectly safe country right alongside the railway, and to tell me that because that man has succeeded, settlers who were 50 miles from railway communication and did not succeed must be incompetent or indolent.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I did not suggest that.

Mr. CORBOY: In remarks made by the hon. member last night, that was certainly indicated. I suggest that he read his own speech, when he will see that that is the implication.

Hon. M. F. Troy: What sort of crop did you get last year?

Mr. CORBOY: When the ex-Minister spoke last night about eight-bag crops, I walked out of the Chamber because I did not want to have a public quarrel with him. It is all nonsense to talk about such crops.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The settlers who were down here told me that Mr. McMahon got an eight-bag crop.

Mr. CORBOY: I was in the district at the time the crops were stripped; and, in fact, I carted my own crop into the siding; and I say there is not a single settler in the district who got an eight-bag crop, not one.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I was told they stated that to the Premier.

Mr. CORBOY: If they did, they told lies. Not one solitary settler got such a crop.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Six bags would be a good crop.

Mr. CORBOY: Of course it would be, but the settlers did not get six bags. My own block was supposed to be one of the best blocks thrown open in Western Australia for many years. The ex-Minister's department charged me 16s. per acre for it, and those who know the price of land know what that figure means. The block should be one of the finest bits of country one ever saw in one's life.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The department were not permitted to charge you 16s. per acre.

Mr. CORBOY: The Minister put this over me himself, but does not remember it. I know perfectly well that under the Land Act only 15s. per acre can be charged. The ex-Minister explained the charge of 16s. to me by stating that he had reckoned the survey fee as an additional impost. The ex-Minister possibly does not remember that, but it is so. And mine was not the only block with respect to which that was due.

The Minister for Railways: How far is your block from the railway line?

Mr. CORBOY: Only 50 miles! I repeat, mine was not the only block for which 16s. per acre was charged. On at least one other block a charge of 16s. per acre was imposed while the member for Mt. Magnet was in control of the Lands Department. The ex-Minister charged me and one other settler 16s. per acre for our land; and last year, which was a good year, we were only able to get nine bushels off the best of the land. The position of the settlers in that district is most serious. There is no use disguising the fact that in the area in question there are a great many people who have sunk the whole of their private resources in developing land which they took up on the distinct understanding that they would be furnished with railway facilities very quickly. In fact, last night the ex-Minister himself indicated that had he cared to go fast instead of slow, he would have been able to provide railway communication.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The settlers had no understanding.

Mr. CORBOY: That is rubbish. I know better. I remember when——

Hon. M. F. Troy: You had better prove that there was some such understanding by quoting some public statement I made or some statement issued by the department. There was no such understanding.

Mr. CORBOY: Does the hon. member, as the former Minister for Lands, suggest that these people went there without any understanding from him that railway facilities would be provided quickly?

Hon. M. F. Troy: They had no such understanding from me at all. They had no better understanding than other settlers, and they went out like others, hoping to have railway facilities provided.

Mr. Millington: You cannot keep them from going out.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie has the floor.

Mr. Marshall: It seems that these farmers will never agree!

Mr. CORBOY: The fact is that there was, as everyone knows, a very definite understanding.

The Minister for Lands: There was an implied understanding.

Mr. CORBOY: It was very definite.

The Minister for Lands: And it would have been fulfilled had everything been all right.

Mr. CORBOY: Even the former Minister for Lands, when speaking last night, said that the railway to the settlers to whom I refer, was part of the larger scheme embraced in the 3,500 farm proposition, and with regard to these particular areas, the Government had intended to ask the advisory board to report as soon as possible. I repeat there was a very definite understanding. I could quote other evidence apart from the hon. member's statement last night to show that there can be no misunderstanding regarding the position. If there was no such understanding, then it was a criminal thing for the former Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy) to put those settlers on blocks 50 miles away from the nearest railway.

The Minister for Lands: He opened the area for settlement.

Mr. CORBOY: Of course he did. If there was no understanding in his mind that there would be a railway provided very quickly, the ex-Minister for Lands should not have sent the people there. It was a

criminal thing. It was criminal to open up such an area if he did not know in his own mind that railway facilities would be provided quickly. The hon. member must have known that no one could grow wheat successfully 50 miles from the nearest railway.

Mr. Brown: Was not the opening-up of that portion of the country part of the British migration scheme?

Mr. CORBOY: Of course it was. I may have misunderstood the member for Mount Magnet last night. I hope I did, but I think I heard him say that he could have got money with which to build the railway at the start, but did not avail himself of the opportunity, and when he did want the money, he could not get it.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is not so.

Mr. CORBOY: I said I hoped that I had misunderstood the hon. member.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I said that we had in mind a larger scheme; the Engineer-in-Chief had laid out plans for that later proposal, and that had the effect of delaying matters.

Mr. CORBOY: The matter was delayed long enough to cripple these settlers.

Hon. M. F. Troy: No.

Mr. CORBOY: The ex-Minister for Lands can shake his head, but someone must take the responsibility for the plight of these settlers.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I will take my share of the responsibility.

Mr. CORBOY: I know the hon. member will do so. No one can accuse him of being other than a decent, honourable man who is always prepared to take his share of responsibility. On the other hand, the position of these settlers must be faced. People who are 50 or 60 miles away from a railway cannot grow wheat successfully. They must be dealt with in some other way than the mere offering of sustenance. The member for Mount Magnet remarked that in view of the practical experience of the settlers and of what had been accomplished, he was surprised that the Agricultural Bank had abandoned these propositions and that the Minister had supported the bank. I do not know what the hon. member suggests should be done. Does he suggest that the present Government—I am not backing them up so much in this as I am concerned in making representations on behalf of the settlers—should now provide these people with sufficient subsidy to grow wheat 50 or

60 miles from the nearest railway, in order to keep them on the blocks they are occupying?

Hon. M. F. Troy: I suggest that the Government should provide them with railway facilities as soon as possible.

Mr. CORBOY: Then why did not the hon. member, when Minister, give them the necessary railway facilities?

Hon. M. F. Troy: Ah, now!

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member said he could have done so. These settlers are in a desperate position. I would instance the experience of my neighbour who has been placed in much the same position as I was. His block was also classified 100 per cent. first-class, as mine was, and he took his 13 children with him and to-day he is stranded. That man was a practical farmer, not a new chum as I was at the time. Yet his block has been condemned, just as mine has been.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Has your block been condemned?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. It was originally classified as 100 per cent. first-class, but later was cut down so that only 300 acres were classified as first-class. I am Scotch enough to have that grievance.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Have you received any compensation?

Mr. CORBOY: The only compensation I received was to be forced to pay railway freight on my tractor and other plant that I had to return. I had to sink myself deeper in the mire in order to get off my block. Other settlers have had to do that as well. It is useless for the ex-Minister for Lands to talk about what other people have done. The member for Mount Magnet quoted the great success achieved by an ex-member of another place. The block owned by that settler is alongside a railway. When listening to the remarks of the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition interjected to the effect that that particular settler had succeeded because he did not swank about the country in a motor car, but was a hard worker. Let me assure the Leader of the Opposition and the ex-Minister for Lands that all the settlers in the areas I have been referring to are hard workers, and do not swank about in motor cars. The position of those settlers has been destroyed because of the economic situation, and because they were not provided with facilities that are ordinarily made available.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think the interjection by the Leader of the Opposition had any reference to particular settlers; he was speaking generally.

Mr. CORBOY: No.

The Minister for Railways: I heard him when he interjected.

Mr. CORBOY: The Leader of the Opposition interjected when the position of the Lake Camm and Lake Carmody settlers was being discussed.

The Minister for Railways: I know that, but the interjection had a general application, not a particular reference to the Lake Camm and Lake Carmody settlers.

Mr. CORBOY: That may be, but the innuendo was that the settlers whose position was being discussed at the time, had not succeeded because of something lacking on their part, and that is not true.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Innuendo by whom?

Mr. CORBOY: By the Leader of the Opposition. I did not refer to the hon. member; I made that clear.

Hon. M. F. Troy: We were dealing with farming generally.

Mr. CORBOY: I shall not pursue that phase if the hon. member feels hurt about it. The settlers at Lake Camm and Lake Carmody were decent, hard workers. The majority of them were Australian-born, and those who were not in that category were certainly a credit to Australia. Everyone put forth his best effort, physically and financially. There was another nasty little innuendo with reference to the employment of foreigners. Let me make it perfectly clear that foreigners were practically unknown in those areas. Those employed in clearing were almost entirely Australian-born, and those who were not, were of British origin, and had been resident many years in the State. The best possible work was done by the settlers themselves; so much so that in some instances they did not even crop their land when they had cleared it. They endeavoured to follow the advice given to them by the ex-Minister for Lands and his departmental officers with regard to fallowing. They fallowed their land and before they could get a crop, they were thrown off their blocks without a job, without a bob, without anything at all. What are those settlers to do? What is ahead of them?

The Minister for Railways: Without a job, but with a sob in your voice.

Mr. CORBOY: The Minister would be sobbing himself about it, if he had gone

through such an experience. These settlers did a fair thing. They developed their blocks along proper lines, and they adopted the advice of the ex-Minister and his experts. Their reward was to be thrown off their blocks on which all their money, as well as that of the State, had been spent.

The Minister for Lands: You have no right to say they were thrown off.

Mr. CORBOY: They were thrown off, and I can give the Minister instances.

The Minister for Lands: I do not know of any.

Mr. CORBOY: Ten months ago the Agricultural Bank refused to advance the settlers any further money, and they had no option but to walk off their blocks.

The Minister for Lands: You said they were thrown off their blocks.

Mr. CORBOY: When I say that they were thrown off their blocks, I mean that, the Agricultural Bank having refused further advances, the settlers had no option but to walk off.

The Minister for Railways: There is a difference between being asked to resign and being sacked.

Mr. CORBOY: But the result is the same.

Mr. Marshall: They tell me the Minister got sacked because he was asleep on his engine.

The Minister for Railways: But I have been wide awake ever since.

Mr. CORBOY: As a matter of fact, it was the best turn that was ever done for the Minister. That sacking has made him awake for life.

The Minister for Railways: I've been wide awake ever since.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will proceed.

Mr. CORBOY: Since the settlers were refused, some eight or nine months ago, any further Agricultural Bank assistance, in consequence of which they had to vacate their blocks, they have been offered the choice of the abandoned blocks in the possession of the bank. But that means that any block worth taking over has had already spent on it all the money that the Agricultural Bank will advance for its development. Of what advantage is it to the Lakes Camm and Carmody settlers to be taken from their blocks and put on to other blocks in respect of which they can get no financial assistance from the bank?

The Minister for Lands: Who says that?

Mr. CORBOY: That is the position.

The Minister for Lands: I say it is not.

Mr. CORBOY: Of course it is, and for the last nine months I have been endeavouring to get some better offer from the managing trustee of the bank, Mr. McLarty, and I have not succeeded yet.

The Minister for Lands: Perhaps you are picking out certain blocks.

Mr. CORBOY: No. There is no abandoned block available on which any of these settlers would have a chance of success. Mr. McLarty will not agree to advance enough money to provide for the settlers for more than one month.

Mr. Millington: You are more wary now.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, after my experience. What would be the position of these settlers if they were to take up any of the abandoned properties on the books of the Agricultural Bank?

The Minister for Lands: They know.

Mr. CORBOY: Of course they know, and I know, too. They would have no possible chance of success, and could not get more than would keep them going for a single month, on account of work on the block. They would have no possible hope of securing an advance from the bank in order to assist them to put in next year's crop. They would have no chance of securing a virgin block or of obtaining advances to cover their clearing work. The Minister knows that the bank will not open up any new accounts. The bank regard such transactions as I have indicated as tantamount to opening up new accounts. The Minister knows that these settlers are in a desperate position. I say advisedly that the ex-Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy) is principally responsible for their situation, and the very least that should be done for them is to see that the Agricultural Bank shall assist them for 12 months. I am speaking not for myself but for others who are in the same plight. It is impossible to get from the Agricultural Bank anything that will give me a chance to succeed, or enable me to see 12 months ahead. And what applies to me applies to many others. It is no good the Premier, or Mr. McLarty, or the Minister for Lands, continuing any longer this business of circumlocution, sending us backwards and forwards from one person to another, and in that way disowning responsibility. Somebody must shoulder the responsibility for the position in which these settlers find

themselves; someone must show them the way out.

The Minister for Lands: You know we have not been sending you backwards and forwards, from one officer to another; we settled the conditions under which Inspector Mitchell should interview the settlers, and if you go to the bank you will find that that is so.

Mr. CORBOY: Does the Minister know what the conditions are?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. CORBOY: Does the Minister know that Inspector Mitchell has gone to that area and has taken from every settler there his credit authority, and that where the blocks of two settlers have to be amalgamated, where one must go and the other remain, the credit authority has been taken off and Mr. McLarty and his officers have refused to say which of the two must stay, and which must go? The settlers are left to thrash that out amongst themselves, and until they make up their minds as to who shall remain and who shall go, no money is available from the bank.

The Minister for Lands: That is not true; there is only one way to do it, and it is by mutual arrangement.

Mr. CORBOY: I wish the Minister would try the mutual arrangement business with the settlers.

The Minister for Lands: Your statement that we are leaving them without money is not true.

Mr. CORBOY: It is true, and I will give the Minister the names of the settlers concerned.

The Minister for Lands: I should like to have them.

Mr. CORBOY: I will give the Minister the names of the settlers who have had their credit authority stopped.

The Minister for Lands: And who are not getting any money?

Mr. CORBOY: That is right.

The Minister for Lands: Well, who are they?

Mr. CORBOY: I will give the Minister four or five names.

The Minister for Lands: Tell us who they are.

Mr. CORBOY: Is it necessary that I should give them here, to appear in "Hansard"?

The Minister for Lands: Yes, I want the names of those who have been refused assistance to get their harvest off.

Mr. CORBOY: The Minister is twisting now. He is asking me to give him the names of those who have been refused help to get their harvest off.

The Minister for Lands: You have said that we are leaving them to decide amongst themselves who is to stay and who is to go off, and that we are stopping them from getting any money until they come to a decision. What are the names?

Mr. CORBOY: I will give the Minister four or five names.

The Minister for Lands: Your statement is not right.

Mr. CORBOY: It is correct. It is not right to leave it to the settlers to fight it out amongst themselves who is to go and is to stay. Anyway, I appeal to the Minister to rectify the matter. I think the bank should say which man should go off. If the Minister put himself in the position of a settler, he would realise how unfair it was that he and his neighbour should have to thrash out such a matter between them. The fact remains that these people are out in that country 50, 60, and 70 miles from a railway, and without a chance of getting transport facilities, and the Government, in my opinion, are doing a courageous thing when they say that the settlers will have to be shifted. I say that the Government should move the lot, and not leave six or eight to carry the burden.

Mr. Doney: They are not being shifted merely because of the salinity in the soil.

Mr. CORBOY: If it will not grow crops, what is the good of leaving the people there? The hon. member, who has had considerable experience as an Agricultural Bank inspector, would not take up any blocks down there. The Minister should pull out all these people, or else give them a definite assurance that they will have transport facilities.

The Minister for Lands: You do not suggest that we should forcibly remove them? Some of those men have definitely said they will not go. What would you do with them?

Mr. CORBOY: Leave them there, but do not waste any more of the State's money on them. I say that in all sincerity to the Minister. If any of them want to remain there, well, let them remain.

The Minister for Lands: You are going to use a weapon that you say we should not use.

Mr. CORBOY: I say that none of them should be left there unless you can offer them transport facilities. Would the Minister himself go out 60 miles from a railway to grow wheat?

The Minister for Lands: I did it 20 years ago.

Mr. CORBOY: Never mind what you did 20 years ago; would you do it to-day?

The Minister for Lands: Certainly not.

Mr. CORBOY: Well, do not waste the State's money, or the settlers' money, by leaving the settlers out there unless you provide transport facilities. If a man chooses of his own free will to remain there, let him remain. Those people are in a desperate position to-day because they were misled by the classification of the officers of the Lands Department and the Agricultural Bank. The classifications have since been discovered to have been hopelessly wrong, and to have misled not only the settlers, but the Government.

The Minister for Railways: Quite apart from the soil analysis?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, quite apart from it. I know that my own block was condemned before the appearance of Dr. Teakle's report.

The Minister for Lands: Tell me when your refusal was made; your report was in very early.

Mr. CORBOY: It was not. My block was inspected very early by Dr. Teakle, but the report was not sent in early.

The Minister for Lands: It was one of the few blocks inspected at an early stage. There were two blocks, one north of the other.

Mr. CORBOY: That is so. Our blocks were condemned, not because of salinity but because of the excessive area of morrel country, and the inspector who condemned the blocks was the same man who classified them before. I repeat that the settlers there are in a desperate position, that they have been misled by the report of the Government officers, and the very least that can be done is to provide them with the opportunity to succeed elsewhere. I tell the Minister candidly, I should like to meet him in his office to discuss the whole matter privately with him.

The Minister for Lands: Very well, meet me to-morrow.

Mr. CORBOY: I shall not be able to meet the Minister to-morrow, as I am attending the field days.

The Minister for Lands: But this is more important.

Mr. CORBOY: The Minister should interest himself in the direction of giving these people an opportunity to go elsewhere. I appeal to him to rectify the wrong that has been done, and not to leave 10 or 12 of the poor blighters out there without any chance of succeeding under existing conditions.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [5.57]: I desire to say a few words, particularly because of the wholesale condemnation of the officers of the Lands Department and the Agricultural Bank, and also because of the hon. member's endeavour to lay the blame at the door of the previous Government, and on myself especially, for the position in which the settlers in the area in question now find themselves. Strange to say, I do not feel the least bit guilty. I consider myself as having been particularly conscientious and, so far as these settlers are concerned, I endeavoured to act fairly and squarely by them and the State. The method of settlement was merely a continuance of the system that had been the custom not only in Western Australia but throughout Australia. Every man in this country, unless he is an ass, knows well that when he goes out on the land, he takes chances. He knows, too, that the time will come when he will get a railway. What is the position of these people who took up land that was classified by the Lands Department as good? We used to hear it said that the officers of the Agricultural Bank never agreed with those of the Lands Department. Here, however, the officers of the two departments agreed that the land was good. It was the business of these officers to determine the quality of the land, and in this case they agreed. The inspectors should know the country, and Inspector Mitchell, as has been said, declared that it was good land. When those people went out from the railway they did what thousands of others have done in this country, and what thousands of others will do again. So that experience is not by any means singular. I can conscientiously say that if I were Minister for Lands to-morrow I would do exactly what I did before. It would be impossible to do otherwise, unless it were determined never to

allow people to move a yard out from a railway except under the care of a nurse. The land down there is producing good crops. The hon. member says he did not get good crops; but of course we know that some people get good crops, while others can get only indifferent crops.

Mr. Corboy: No one down there got eight bags, or anything like it.

Hon. M. F. TROY: A deputation came here this week, including Mr. McMahon, a highly respected settler at Lake Grace. He is out there, and his brother-in-law also is settled out there. They told me they knew of eight-bag crops out there.

The Minister for Lands: The average is five bags.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Well that is very good, surely.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have known McMahon for many years, and I can say he never had a failure; he could not have a failure.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister for Lands says the average for that locality is 15 bushels. That is extraordinarily good for a new area where people are putting in their first crops. Most certainly they got good averages.

Mr. Corboy: They did not.

Hon. M. F. TROY: And now because the men are 50 miles away from a railway and in this economic depression the Government cannot find the money with which to provide a railway, the Agricultural Bank says the settlers are to be removed, and that Dr. Teakle's report has given them cause to reconsider their attitude. I am quite sure that if a railway were built even half-way out to the locality, Dr. Teakle's report would not have much weight in view of the crops being grown there. The crops are the best advertisement and, after all, the best guide to any district. But because the settlers are so far out from a railway, the Agricultural Bank thinks it wise to bring them in instead of keeping them out there and paying a bonus on the cartage of their wheat. Again, the hon. member has said the late Government promised a railway, gave a definite assurance that it would be built. I say there is no truth in that statement.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Well then the settlers should never have been put out there.

Mr. Corboy: Of course not. Does the hon. member deny that there was an implication that a railway would be provided?

Hon. M. F. TROY: An implication!

Mr. Corboy: Now do not shuffle on it. You led us to believe there would be a railway.

Hon. M. F. TROY: As a matter of fact I did not know the hon. member had a block out there until I saw it advertised in the Press. A little while ago he said he had discussed it with me and that I had put a price on it. As a matter of fact I did not know that he had a block, and certainly he never discussed the price with me. I would be astounded to know that he was asked to pay 16s. per acre for his block, and I suggest that the Minister for Lands make inquiries on that point.

The Minister for Lands: I think that is right.

Mr. Corboy: Of course it is, and so too in respect of another block alongside mine. It is of no use the hon. member trying to make out that I am not telling the truth.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The average price for land there is 8s. per acre.

Mr. Corboy: It is all very fine for the hon. member to ask the Minister to try to prove me a liar. I am not.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is possible the hon. member was asked to pay 16s. per acre for his block, but as a matter of fact he did not pay anything for it, because he got it for the first five years for nothing.

The Minister for Railways: Was not this part of the 3,500 farms scheme, and was not that scheme to have been financed from the Migration Vote, including water supplies and railways?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes.

The Minister for Railways: So the railway must have been promised.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No, it was not promised. I told the House last night that we did not propose to throw open that land. There were thousands clamouring for land, and we spoke to Sir Charles Nathan and Mr. Gunn of the Migration Commission about the proposition. They said, "Throw open that land and we will provide the money for its settlement." That was the position.

The Minister for Lands: I only wish they had put it in writing.

Hon. M. F. TROY: In those days there was no necessity to put it in writing, for

there was plenty of money, and the Migration Commission were very anxious to get that scheme into operation. Had the prosperous conditions continued, there is not the slightest doubt the money would have been provided, in which case the railways would have been built to those places ere now. However, for lack of money, due to the early stages of the existing depression, it could not be done. The hon. member's attack reminds me of another experience I had in this House. When first I came here Mr. Watts was member for Northam, and he made an attack on the Government for settling people out at Cowcowing and Nankeen. He said they would all have to be brought back again. And his attack on the Government was supported by the House. Like that attack, this attack to-day is made by very short-sighted people. It is quite possible that when prosperous conditions return there will be a huge and insistent demand for land beyond that which we are discussing, and hundreds will go out there. Then if later we fall on difficult times, some other Minister will get into trouble for it. Personally I would do the same thing again to-day, for I did the best thing possible for those people. They were clamouring to go on the land; and, after all, they took very little risk, for the Government were standing behind them. I regret that the present Government should support the Agricultural Bank in its attitude towards those 35 settlers, for the settlers have told me they do not want to go.

Mr. Doney: They told me the same thing only to-day.

Hon. M. F. TROY: They told me here that they did not want to go. They are growing magnificent crops and they have no desire to leave the district. I firmly believe that if the Government had the money for the building of the railway, those settlers would not have to go. I do not feel the least bit guilty about what I did. I was only following the same principle of land settlement that had been followed in this country for many years past. I even told the Royal Commission that what the Government ought to do is to try to get a road for those people. To-day, with wheat at less than 2s. per bushel, and isolated as they are 50 miles from a railway, their condition is not an enviable one. When the hon. member is a bit older and has more knowledge he will realise that the experience of a year or two

does not amount to very much, and that what he condemns to-day he will live to applaud to-morrow. The same thing can be said about the Mollerin settlers, for they also are 50 miles out from a railway. Yet they have no grievance. As for promising settlers that they should get railways, there has always been such an implication; when we open up new country and put settlers on it there is always the idea that they will get a railway later. And that will continue just so long as there is development in Western Australia. Now I want to say a word about irrigation. In view of the Government's proposals to undertake irrigation in the South-West and open up new dairying country, I ask the Minister what the Government are doing in regard to Herdsman's Lake. On the drainage of that area there was expended £120,000, and I suppose with the capitalisation plus interest and compound interest it amounts to a very large sum to-day. But why undertake a system of irrigation in the South-West when we have this Herdsman's Lake area adjacent to Perth, almost within the city boundaries, and available for settlement? I should like to know from the Minister what is being done there. Earlier in the year some settlers were put on that land, but I do not think they have done very well. There we have a large area of country rendered available at great expense, and I should like to know what the Minister proposes to do with it.

The Minister for Works: We spent £9,000 on drainage there last year.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is curious that the Government should be considering irrigation schemes for dairying land in the South-West when we have at Herdsman's Lake a large area of land not utilised.

The Minister for Railways: Herdsman's Lake is not a dairying proposition.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Then what is it?

The Minister for Lands: Ask your colleague behind you. He will have something to say about it. As a matter of fact we have 50 or 60 people there now.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Regarding the settlement of abandoned group settlement blocks in the Busselton district, the scheme may work out all right provided the blocks are standardised. Of course any scheme of settlement can succeed so long as the settlers are on sustenance. I would not be inclined to say too much about that scheme yet: it

may pan out all right, but on the other hand it may not.

The Minister for Lands: The men themselves are very proud of that settlement.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Government will have to be very careful that they do not add to the capitalisation of the blocks. That is all I have to say. I am sorry the activities of the Lands Department have subsided, but I feel sure the time will come when we shall get back to a more vigorous scheme of land settlement.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [7.30]: I wish to say a few words regarding the possibility of settling 5,000 people south of Pinjarra along existing railways and roads. I presume the Minister is anxious to know where he could place men with a reasonable chance of their being successful under intense culture conditions. During the debate we have been told of men being removed from outback places where they had been trying to make a living growing wheat. I have said on many occasions that the time would come when the State would find to its sorrow that farmers would not be able to live entirely on the growing of wheat. To call wheatgrowers farmers is a misnomer; they should be called wheatgrowers, while the agriculturists of the South-West should be called farmers. I was pained and surprised at the remarks of the Minister for Lands regarding the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway. He said the commencement of the earthworks was not justified as a means of relieving unemployment.

The Minister for Lands: I did not say that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the construction of that line is not justified, then no railway ever built in the State was justified. Is it because the Minister cannot see in that direction? Is it because he is not anxious to have that part of the country developed?

The Minister for Lands: You cannot say that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I can, and I will prove it. What was the Minister's reason for saying that the railway is not justified?

The Minister for Lands: I did not say it was not justified.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Two advisory boards reported on the railway, and the building of the line was sanctioned by Parliament. As the Leader of the Opposition stated the other night, it is advisable to get people to work at something that will be reproductive. There are opportunities in the South West to employ thousands of men who are on sustenance at clearing land and putting it in a fit state for future selection. The proper policy for land settlement in the South-West is to send classifiers there before survey to pick out tracts of suitable land. Then the unemployed could be provided with work and given opportunities to make homes for themselves. The member for South Fremantle, when presenting the case for the construction of the railway, quoted statistics and dealt fully with the advisory board's report. Ten years ago within a radius of ten miles of the railway route 20,000 acres were cleared at an estimated cost of £8 an acre; 30,000 acres were partly cleared at an estimated cost of £2 10s. an acre, and there were 700 acres under orchard. There are three times that area under orchard at present, and the people need a railway. There were over 2,000 cows and over 100,000 sheep. That was on land already alienated. Taxation or some other method would force the people holding 20,000 or 30,000 acres of land to bring it into productivity, sell it or forfeit it. I do not wish to consider such people; I want to consider the people who have been settled there for three generations struggling to make a success of their holdings without railway facilities. If there was not a soul settled along the route of the railway, on the advisory board's report, it would be the duty of any Government to build the line. I am surprised that its construction has been delayed so long. According to the advisory board's report there were over 1,000,000 acres of first and good second class land, and 2,500 people could be settled on 400-acre blocks and make a living right from the inception. This is exclusive of timber land. If the Government want to settle people on land where the rainfall has been proved over a number of years, there is their opportunity. The people in that part are doing well. The Government should send their surveyors through the district almost immediately and throw the land open for selection. If they did so, I guarantee that

it would be selected. Eighteen months ago I presented a report from Mr. Terry, a surveyor who knows almost every inch of the South-West, and knows it better than any other man. He forwarded to the Premier a plan showing that within a radius of 20 miles of Manjimup, on land excluding timber areas, 200 people could be settled. The Government are not looking for tracts of country. Day after day deputations are imploring that areas should be thrown open for selection. Only the day before yesterday there was a deputation from Greenbushes, and there have been others from Balingup and Bridgetown. When I made a remark at a South-West conference that 5,000 blocks served by railways and roads and having schools and other facilities could be obtained in the South-West, I was ridiculed and told it was impossible. If the Minister sent two or three classifiers through the country, he would get that number of blocks, but he could not get them while land settlement is held up by the Forests Department. The Conservator of Forests is an excellent gentleman and I have nothing against him personally, but Parliament has given him the powers of a Caesar. He has more power than Mussolini ever had, and it is impossible to get past him. The Minister for Forests tells us from time to time that he has revoked the dedication of certain areas, but land settlement is held up by forestry, and Parliament will have to deal with it. Public opinion will become so strong that when people are turning from the wheatbelt to the South-West, the Government will have to take action to make the land available for agriculture. There is an area of land between Nannup and Pemberton, karri and red gum country that is dedicated for forestry. Between 500 and 600 men could be settled in that area, and all that would be required in the way of facilities would be a road. It is a beautiful tract of country equal to any of the valleys south of Manjimup and Pemberton. Just out from Pemberton in a belt of karri country the sawmillers have been getting 16 to 22 per cent. of marketable timber over the saws. It looked magnificent timber, but the rest of it was ruined by white ants, gum veins, cracks, water shakes and other faults. In that district I understand that a few blocks of land are to be thrown open for selection. The same class of country prevails right through from Stirling's Road to Nannup, and I am told it is not good

karri country. We have any amount of timber land. Let us reserve what is needed for timber purposes—I have never advocated otherwise—but let us throw open the rest for selection. Areas around Greenbushes and Bridgetown have been classified, as the Surveyor General could inform us, but they have been classified by men with a forest conscience. The classifiers have gone through with a compass and have looked at the tops of the trees and estimated the loadage. The Forests Department officials now mark the trees to be cut by sleeper cutters, and I have been informed that in one instance six or seven trees that should have yielded four or five loads did not produce a single sleeper, while from seven trees the cutters got only five sleepers. I appeal to the Minister to send classifiers to the South-West. It would be useless to send a classifier from the Forests Department. It would be idle to appeal from Caesar to Caesar. The Conservator of Forests says a particular tree will produce six loads of timber, but I defy any man to say from merely viewing a tree standing in the bush what loadage it will give. It may look a good healthy tree, but when it is brought down, it is probably full of pinholes, shakes, or dry-rot. Tree after tree might be felled without producing a sleeper. The department, however, say there are so many loads in certain trees and that they must be retained for forestry purposes; therefore the land cannot be made available for agriculture. I should like the Minister for Lands, in his reply, to give some assurance to the people of the South-West that classifiers will be sent there. When a deputation waited on the Minister the day before yesterday, he said he proposed to send our district surveyor from Bridgetown with the forestry inspector. We know these officials will disagree, and when they disagree that is the end of land settlement. Eighteen months ago, when the general elections were being held, we were told that if there was a change of Government a classification would be made of the whole of the South-West, that agricultural land would be set aside and opened up for selection, and that forests would be reserved whether the areas had been dedicated or not. People are still crying out for land. There has been a tremendous drop in the market value of our primary products, our wheat and our wool, and people are turning their attention to parts of the State where the

rainfall is assured, where fruitgrowing is assured, and where dairying is being carried on successfully. In a word, people are trying to get land in the South-West, but cannot get it. I hope the Minister will carry out the promises that were made by the Government, and see that a classification is made by qualified men. If this work is carried out there will be no need for group settlements, nor will there be any need to call for applications because so many people are already waiting for land. When I say that people are applying for land I am ridiculed. We are told that so many applications have been received and so many have been granted. The fact is the applications are never filed. No list is posted showing the number of people who have applied for land during the past two years. When the authorities say that applications are filed, they are hoodwinking people. If an application is refused by the Forests Department, it is not placed on any file. We do not know who has applied, because no list is kept. I want an assurance from the Minister that he will send his land classifiers into the districts I have mentioned. The chairman of the advisory board, the Surveyor-General, is responsible for the surveying of land in the South-West. I want to know whether that gentleman did or did not say there were 2,500 acres of land served by a railway and within 12½ miles of it. I want to know if the Minister will contradict that statement.

MR. WELLS (Canning) [7.50]: We have been travelling rapidly over the southern portion of the State. The member for Yilgarn took us into the Lake Camm area, and the member for Nelson took us into the Manjimup district. I want to go back to the Lake Camm area, which comprises the southern portion of the 3,500 farms scheme. I know something about that country, for I visit it three or four times a year, and have an interest in the district. The member for Yilgarn said that the Federal Government, under the migration scheme, had broken faith with the 300 settlers who have taken up land under the scheme to which I have referred. Undoubtedly a scare was raised when Dr. Teakle was sent down there to investigate the quality of the land between the Salmon Gums and Lake Camm areas. That gentleman reported that alkali had been discovered in the soil. No doubt

the migration commission looked upon this as a happy release from their obligations. The people who have taken up land around Lake Camm and Lake Carmody must now feel that the railway which they were promised at the time the scheme was launched will never be given to them. The settlers went there under this migration scheme, and were assured of railway transport, water supplies and other facilities. They believed that these facilities would be given to them at no distant date. The salt bogey was then put up. I believe it to be only a bogey. I am not pitting my knowledge against that of any scientist, but I hold that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The country is fertile, it has a wonderful climate and rainfall, and is growing good crops to-day. I do not agree with the member for Yilgarn when he says the land is no good. The land is good, and is capable of growing excellent crops.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Everything depends on the rainfall.

Mr. WELLS: The rainfall is there.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There is no more an assured rainfall than there is in any other part of the wheat belt. In the wet weather the salt question does not arise, but in a dry season the salt is disastrous.

Mr. WELLS: I am familiar with many of the blocks that have been condemned because of the decision of the expert that they contain salt. Let us take the country east of Wagin. Dumbleyung is a salt lake area, but grows good crops. At Lake Grace there is one of the largest salt lakes in the State, but in that district there are many fine holdings. Newdegate is another settlement that was established six or seven years after Lake Grace, the latter having been established for 15 or 20 years. Newdegate is still growing excellent crops. The class of country is exactly the same as the district I am speaking of, namely, Lake King, Lake Carmody, and so forth. In the Lake Camm district excellent crops were grown last season and the season before, and are growing this year. It would be a mistake for the Government to withdraw any of the settlers from that area. It would be better to give them the facilities they were promised, and to which they are justly entitled under the scheme. Representations should be made to the member of the commission who is coming to Perth so that the conditions under which the scheme was

originally launched may be given to the settlers who went out there in good faith. It would be a great pity to take the settlers away. Many of them have sunk their life savings in their holdings. They have cleared a good deal of land, and built homes for themselves. I wish to read an extract from a letter written by a settler in the Lake Camm area. This will show the position in which the settlers find themselves to-day, and how necessary it is that they should receive some assurance that they will be able to remain on their holdings. A large majority of these people are satisfied to continue, but hope in the near future to receive an assurance that they will be given the facilities they were promised. The letter is dated 8th October, and reads as follows:—

Thank you for your letter of the 29th September. Mr. Mitchell—the Agricultural Bank inspector—called on me to show me the salt survey of our blocks. He had very little time to spare, and the information he had to give was not in accordance with that given to me by the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank. I showed him our crop. I do not think there is a finer crop anywhere in this State. It is truly magnificent. Lord knows I do not wish to embarrass the Government in any way, but if I were in a fighting mood I would nail this damnable salt lie to the counter by arranging for a display in every shop window in Perth of sheaves of wheat grown here. This crop has been grown on fallowed country worked in accordance with the principles taught at the agricultural colleges, with the recognised quantities of seed and super, and the result proves beyond any shadow of doubt that this is a legitimate extension of the wheat belt of the State. Now I am going to use some forcible language in the expression of my opinion. Dr. Teakle has done the work he was instructed to do in a painstaking and accurate manner. His report has been made out in a strictly scientific spirit. The use that is being made of his report is a prostitution of science to expediency. That's that. I am in agreement with the recommendation of the Royal Commission that it is not advisable in the present circumstances to maintain settlers who are beyond 20 miles from a railway. I admit the stern logic of Mr. McLarty's statement to me to the effect that he could not lend any more money in these areas because he had not the money to lend. Why cannot some one be honest enough to say, "The Government sent you out to pioneer these areas in the belief that the migration agreement would provide you with all that was necessary to make your venture a success. We regret that the Federal Government cancelled the migration agreement, and in consequence all your efforts are wasted. We will now endeavour to give you a real chance of making good, and when better times come we will see that you are given every opportunity to resume the land upon which you

have expended so much effort at the cost of so much hardship." Cannot we find someone with guts enough to be honest and do the straight thing? We are all in desperate straits, but is that any reason why we should behave as liars and sneak-thieves. Let the Agricultural Bank acknowledge that for the time being it has lost its money to the tune of about £100,000. Let them give up their attempts to wring the interest on their loans out of the prospective harvest as they did out of the previous harvest. Let them openly state that they cannot afford to maintain anyone in these areas at the present time, instead of making the absurd and insulting statements at present current about sustenance. Let the Government pass a short Act to free the settlers on the 3,500 farms scheme from the harassing effect of their creditors, and give them all an opportunity to continue the work of primary production in more favourable surroundings. The fact is, as you know, that faith has been broken with the settlers. It is beside the point to discuss where the blame lies. Faith has been broken and restitution should be made.

Mr. Sleeman: Who is the writer of that letter?

Mr. WELLS: It is a letter written by a settler to a member of this Chamber.

The Minister for Lands: It is not a typical one.

Mr. Sleeman: On a point of order! If the hon. member reads a letter sent to another member, should he not give the name of the writer or lay the document on the Table so that we can see the authority for his statements?

Mr. WELLS: It can be laid on the Table.

The CHAIRMAN: That is not necessary, unless the hon. member desires to place it on the Table.

Mr. Doney: What good is it likely to do?

Mr. Sleeman: What has that to do with you?

Mr. WELLS: I know the writer. He is a type of settler we should be proud to have in the State. He has brought a lot of money into Western Australia, and has spent it in building up a home, and cultivating his land. He has done a lot of work, and is a fine example to other settlers. This letter shows that faith has been broken with the people in the district. I know the Government have not the money with which to assist them as much as is desired, but steps should certainly be taken to bring the position clearly before the Migration and Development Commission, when the representative of that body arrives in Perth. Everything should be done to provide those facilities which were promised when the settlers went into the dis-

trict. I hope justice will be done to these people in accordance with the scheme under which they took up their holdings.

MR. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn) [8.0]: Apparently, while there is a decrease in the expenditure of the Lands Department, there is also, unfortunately, a decrease in the department's activities as regards new settlement. As against that, however, it seems to me that there never was a time when there was need for greater activity, not in placing men on new holdings, but in keeping men on holdings which they have already taken up. Thus the Lands Department have had to devise ways and means of assisting settlers to remain on their blocks, whereas in the past a land settlement scheme has generally meant an extension of settlement. As regards the new settlement mentioned by the Minister for Lands, I took exception, early in the piece, mainly on account of the shortage of finance, to money being expended in the Nornalup district. I see, however, that the Government are not overdoing that scheme, but that there are other small schemes in various parts of the South-West receiving attention. I listened carefully to the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith), who again put in a plea for the extension of the Boyup-Cranbrook railway. I went through that country and, like the Minister, I recognised that it is not a wheat-growing district, where a railway is positively essential, but a district where holdings range from 3,000 acres up to 14,000 acres.

The Minister for Lands: There are holdings of 30,000 acres.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I am speaking of the holdings of men who interviewed me. The main product there is wool. The district is a pastoral district. How is the construction of a railway to be justified even in a reasonably good district if the only backloading is to be wool? I put that aspect to the settlers who interviewed me, and they said, "We mainly want the railway to cart our super." I should say that instead of going to the enormous expense of putting in a railway under those conditions, it would pay this country to cart the settlers' super for nothing on trucks. In my opinion, something should be done to decrease the size of the holdings and thus ensure that some of the 5,000 new settlers spoken of will have land available for them. Once the

railway is built, it will not be the State that will get the increased land values resulting from the railway extension. Those increased values will accrue to the present owners of the land, much of which would not be required by them under the closer settlement scheme.

The Minister for Works: And those holders would want to cart their wool on the roads alongside the railway.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. They would want their super carried at less than cost, as is the recognised practice, which involves an annual loss of £100,000. Of that loss, let me say, I do not complain. I admit that the difficulty in the district is the conveyance of super, but I doubt whether the settlers would give the Railway Department their wool to transport. Therefore the proposed railway extension is a matter for further consideration. Apart from the extension of land settlement, for which the department are responsible, there is now a proposal to repatriate, a kind of de-settlement proposal, for the area referred to as the 3,500 farms area.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is not new; it has been done before.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That also now becomes a suggested responsibility of the Lands Department. In place of settlement, there is to be an exodus from a district partly settled in a hurry. As for the suggestion that the previous and the present Governments have been unduly panicky regarding the proposal, I think we were particularly fortunate in that we went to the extent we did in making investigations and inquiries. This country would have been saved a great deal of expense and some costly blunders if similar investigations had been made in connection with other land settlement schemes. That course should have been followed instead of rushing in on a huge experiment such as group settlement and finding, when it was too late, that millions of money had been spent and many people ruined, because the project was not what it seemed on paper. Numerous people have taken upon themselves the responsibility of criticising the Agricultural Department's expert, Dr. Teakle. I venture to say that there is not in this Chamber a better authority from a technical or practical aspect, and from knowledge of this and other countries, than the scientist who made that investiga-

tion. On even an isolated letter from some interested person we are asked to regard that expert's report as discredited. I know of nothing more ridiculous. Dr. Teakle's report has to stand up against actual facts and actual practice. If he is wrong, it will be demonstrated that he is wrong; but it will not be demonstrated by letters which merely disclose that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," letters which set out to criticise and belittle a man who has devoted his life to specialising in one particular branch of science. Indeed, there are many aspects of agricultural science on which Dr. Teakle himself would not offer criticisms. On this particular aspect, however, he is entitled to be regarded as an authority. What are the facts? The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) interjected that one could not tell in one year whether Dr. Teakle's contention was right or wrong. We know that Dr. Teakle would not condemn a district where the land was even impregnated with salt to the same extent as in the area in question, if there was a sufficient rainfall. We know from practical experience that in lands which were cultivated and in connection with which there was no suspicion of too great a quantity of salt, cultivation eventually showed salt. That has been demonstrated in many parts of Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: Yes; in parts of my electorate.

Mr. MILLINGTON: It is too late to discover that land has too much salt after farms have been cleared and cultivated and the district has been provided with railway communication. It is better that men should not be allowed to develop farms only to discover, later on, that findings such as Dr. Teakle's are correct. Some people seem to think that Dr. Teakle condemned the whole district, all the land; but he did nothing of the kind. He merely showed us what we have to guard against, and that is an entirely different proposition from a far-reaching condemnation of a whole district. He points out that there are certain deficiencies in the soil, and also that some land carries too much salt to allow of wheat being grown on it as a commercial proposition. The present position is that he has not had an opportunity of demonstrating in districts actually developed whether he is right or wrong. As regards the new district, however, he has been able to demonstrate, by experiments in the Salmon Gums district, the soundness

of his conclusions. In the Salmon Gums district he has shown just what is the difficulty encountered by settlers who have been struggling for as many as 20 years and wondering why they could not succeed. In the Salmon Gums district quite a large area will have to go out of cultivation so far as wheat is concerned; there is no getting away from that. Yet Dr. Teakle does not condemn the whole of the Salmon Gums district; he only condemns certain types of land there. Had we originally known as much as Dr. Teakle has taught us now, we would not have gone to the expense of developing that district, and the settlers would not have been involved in the hopeless task of trying to make wheat-growing a commercial proposition there. Therefore people had better pause before they condemn a man whose scientific knowledge has saved us from making a blunder in regard to this new settlement. As to the Government's responsibility, I cannot help remarking that in times past there has been a competition between Governments and Ministers for Lands, backed up by enthusiasts, in the matter of the assistance that could be rendered to speed up and extend land settlement in Western Australia. As a result, land settlement did extend rapidly, particularly during the period of good prices, and when suitable areas within a reasonably safe rainfall were being developed. It is now suggested, because of the success achieved in those districts, that there is no limit to the area which can be successfully cultivated in Western Australia. The best judges we have, from a technical standpoint and from the aspect of experience, fully recognise that a district which is safe from the point of view of rainfall is within the development zone. But in such districts are to be successfully farmed, the application of the very best methods is essential. Every care must be exercised in districts such as the Southern Cross district, and right down to the fringe of the 10in. rainfall. No matter how enthusiastic we may be, these are factors which must be taken into consideration when the Government are backing private enterprise to grow wheat, or for that matter to raise sheep, in Western Australia. Whatever may be said about the inadvisableness of placing restrictions on the individual, we must bear in mind that the State of Western Australia is backing the individual. Therefore justification must be shown from the State's point of view as well as from the in-

dividual's when these risks are being taken. There has been a suggestion, I think from the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown), that the Minister for Lands should not interfere with the policy of the Agricultural Bank. Probably no one knows better than the hon. member that most influential and representative deputations are continually waiting on the Minister to request him to interfere with the Agricultural Bank's policy. From the aspect of policy the bank is continually being asked to go greater distances than it would from purely banking considerations. The policy of the institution has been determined by Governments.

Mr. Brown: Yes, policy, not workings.

Mr. MILLINGTON: And workings too. I will guarantee that individual cases are continually being brought under the notice of the managing trustee. Particularly is that the position with regard to those least worthy of consideration. They include, for instance, many I.A.B. clients. Pressure has been brought to bear on the Agricultural Bank trustees and on Ministers to keep men on farms, whereas it would be a good thing for the men, for the bank, and for the State if they had been put off their holdings. We have heard the plea that Ministers should not interfere with the policy of the Agricultural Bank, yet members know that what I say represents the facts. The bank has been particularly generous, and the trustees have gone outside ordinary banking practices to advance the policy of land settlement throughout the State. In my opinion, we have gone too far in that respect. The difficulty has arisen on account of the attempt to speed up land settlement. When we rush into propositions without due inquiry mistakes are made. That accounts largely for the failure of the group settlement scheme. Everyone knows we rushed into that scheme without proper consideration. It was ill-considered from the point of view of the individual as well as of the land on which the individual was settled. We cannot afford to make such mistakes in the future. The complaint made regarding the delay in connection with the 3,500 farms scheme was not warranted. We were justified in going slowly instead of unduly rushing into the scheme, simply because plenty of money was available. It is about time we considered just how far the Agricultural Bank or the Government should make themselves responsible for individual settlers. Attempts have

been made to place the responsibility on the Government and the bank. Once the Government or the bank back the individual to the stage that the bank holds practically the whole of the interest in the holding, we will not inspire much sense of responsibility in the settler himself. We have accepted that responsibility regarding the group settlers so that the State possesses the value attached to the holdings, with the result that the individual settler has little interest in his block. We should make it worth while for the settler to possess a sense of responsibility through having a decided interest in his holding, which he will then seek to protect. Unless we do that, we will not inspire a sense of responsibility in him. There is a disposition, when failures occur, to approach the Government and say, "What are you going to do about it?" Under the old system of land settlement the farmer had to get over his own difficulties. It was then a case of what he intended to do, not what the Agricultural Bank trustees or the Government intended. The individual knew he had to make good, or he would lose his farm. We must get back to that policy and thus create the sense of responsibility that is so necessary to assure the success of any land settlement project. Two members have spoken during the course of the debate regarding difficulties associated with land settlement in their districts. I refer to the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) and the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Corboy), and I wish to deal with the difficulties in my district. I do so merely because the interests of the State are at stake. The Herdsman's Lake area was purchased by the Government for closer settlement purposes, and that estate has involved Western Australia in the expenditure to date of upwards of £120,000. That includes more on account of drainage works than the actual purchase of the land. The lake has been drained by the construction of a tunnel extending for three miles to the ocean. It was an expensive proposition, and the estimates were greatly exceeded. The original scheme was expected to cost £25,000, but it is well over £100,000 now. The big initial blunder—I do not know that anyone here can be blamed for it—was in connection with the high land. Anyone who knows anything of the cultivation of swamp areas will appreciate the fact that it is necessary to have high land upon which houses may be constructed, and which will

give access to the lake. If the lake area is to be adequately settled, it will be necessary to purchase additional high land. It seems to be generally expected in such circumstances that the Government will pay fancy prices, but the fact is lost sight of that whatever the Government spend along those lines must be added to the burden the individual buyer of a block must shoulder. If there is one factor that industry cannot stand in Western Australia to-day, it is over-capitalisation. It is clear that, having spent so much money in connection with Herdsman's Lake, it must be settled properly and therefore additional high land will have to be purchased so that each block will have some high land on which a home can be erected. The practice is to have a small proportion of the high land plus a narrow strip of land stretching into the lake.

Mr. Angelo: How many people have been established on the land there?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Not a great many are doing any good; I shall deal with that later on. When I consider what the Government have done to date, I am afraid they are not too sure whether the people are being placed there under a scheme of land settlement or whether it is regarded as a residential scheme. At present each block has an acre of high land on which a cottage has been built at a cost of about £260. Then there are five acres of swamp land which, capitalised at £70 an acre, represents another £350, making a total in respect of each block of somewhere in the vicinity of £600. Those who have taken up blocks say that they went there under the impression that it would be possible to make a living. They now find themselves in difficulties. I cannot say that I blame the Government or the officials or anyone else in particular. Those who have taken up blocks now realise the difficulties that attach to the cultivation of swamp lands. It constitutes a great problem. At times the effort seems to be successful. A lot of money has been wasted in connection with the settlement of such areas, and in support of that statement I quote the Peel Estate. It has become recognised that in order to successfully cultivate such areas, the swamp must be drained in winter and yet it must be possible to irrigate the holdings in summer. In the first place, the area must be efficiently drained, otherwise it is impossible to do any good with such a proposition. The Herdsman's Lake area has not been sufficiently drained yet. It has been par-

tially drained for some time and one would have thought that the land would have sweetened up by now. That has not proved to be so in the areas that were recently settled. The Minister for Agriculture, the Director of Agriculture, Dr. Simpson and other agricultural advisers went over the land. During this winter it was demonstrated that the land was not drained and could not be drained under the present system. It has been asserted that the tunnel conveying the water from Osborne Park, Njookenbooro, and the surrounding district is not large enough, particularly during the heavy rains.

The Minister for Lands: That is a layman's opinion against professional opinion.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I said that it was alleged to be so. I do not think that the surveyors deny the fact. I asked them if it were so, and they did not deny the statement that the water banks up during the period of heavy rains. If that is so, it means that, there being a 15ft. fall from Osborne Park, that water, when it reaches the level part, banks up and cannot get away, with the result that the holdings in the swamp areas are flooded. That difficulty may be overcome. The settlers have been asked to pay £1 a week for their holdings and, in addition, they are expected to make a living. I was interested in the suggestion advanced by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) regarding the establishment of small holdings. We have always supported that idea and I think the system will have to be developed, particularly in the coastal areas. Encouragement will be lent to such a proposition when people become interested in making a living rather than in making money. It is surprising what a small area of land will produce if properly cultivated. Even those who work for wages would find encouragement in the development of small holdings, for it would help them to produce something for themselves when they were out of employment. The Herdsman's Lake blocks are suitable for that purpose. The difficulty is that we cannot find men with sufficient money to participate in the scheme and even with the long terms provided, the settlers, seeing that they have to pay £1 a week, expect to be able to make a living for themselves and their families straight away. I do not know of any swamp land that will become productive immediately. The difficulty of the settlers there arises from the

fact that they were put on their holdings during the winter and they expected to be able to grow something for themselves, whereas it has been practically impossible to do so. The result is that nearly all the settlers are in difficulties and I think consideration should be extended to them along the lines of conditional purchase terms, under which no rent is charged for the first five years. During that period the settlers would have an opportunity to make their holdings productive. The clearing of rushes is expensive and I am told that in places it costs from £10 to £20 an acre to get the rushes completely out of the soil. We have interviewed the Minister on many occasions but he takes the view that it is not a land settlement scheme. If that is so, there is no need for the Government to give the settler five acres. One acre would be sufficient for a man to enable him to go in for pigs and poultry. I know of a block of 2½ acres that keeps two men fully occupied throughout the year. It is most productive swamp land. In those circumstances, with five acres a settler should have sufficient land to maintain himself and his family in reasonable comfort, but the fact remains that those who are settled there now have reached the stage at which they cannot possibly pay their way. I have been endeavouring to get consideration from the department, but for some reason this land settlement scheme is under the Workers' Homes Board, who know nothing about land settlement or the difficulties of those engaged in its early stages. I quite agree it is only right the Workers' Homes Board should attend to all matters respecting the homes and collecting the money, but surely it is for the Lands Department to deal with all the problems arising from land settlement. When one settles on the land in any kind of primary production and enters into competition, he gets up against all sorts of difficulties, and it requires officials who have had experience of land settlement to deal with the situation. However, I am not dictating to the Government as to which department should administer the settlement, but I say that for the time being, until that land sweetens up, every consideration should be shown to any settler prepared to go there and knock the land into shape; at all events, he should have consideration in

point of his rent for at least the first 12 months. I am not saying anything about the rent of the cottage; it would be quite right to charge him rent for his cottage, but the settler should be given at least 12 months' exemption from his land rents in order that he might have opportunity to make the land productive.

Mr. Marshall: Then why charge him rent for his house?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Whatever the reason for charging him rent for a small cottage, the difficulty is that he has to pay interest and sinking fund on land worth £350 until it becomes productive. As for the class of settler, I think that if a pretty good type had been chosen all round, every one of the blocks would have been settled. One man out there is convinced that it is impossible to get a living in the immediate future. And that man, let me say, has been the champion wheatgrower of the State. He is a returned soldier and as a wheatgrower he was the outstanding example of all his district. Yet he says he cannot make a living for his wife and family on that swamp land. Others out there, first-class workmen, take the same view. I told them I would do what I could for them, and would state their case publicly, but I can see nothing for it except the giving of every consideration to those people until it is possible for them to make their land productive. I think I shall get consideration for those settlers, because neither the Minister nor any official could foresee this difficulty; they were not aware of the salinity in the soil nor that the land was not properly drained. Now that both these defects have been demonstrated, there should be a reconsideration of policy regarding that settlement, and also, I hope, an extension of the settlement. For since we have the lake, the only thing to do is to make the best we can of a bad bargain and encourage the people to develop the land. If that land be made productive in the years to come, the settlers will have done good work for themselves and for Western Australia alike. I promised I would do my best to see that those settlers should have every consideration. I believe that in several instances they would be able to pay part of their rent; but if it is insisted upon that they shall pay all the rent, it means that those who have gone there and put good work into their holdings will be

turned out, and others installed in their places. At present, the only settlers who can manage to make good are those that have outside employment. I want to see settlers there who will devote their whole time to the development of their holdings and the bringing of them into full production. We have there a settlement where no railways are required, nor any expensive roads.

The Minister for Lands: I beg your pardon!

Mr. MILLINGTON: The road around the lake is not an expensive one; it is only an ordinary limestone road.

The Minister for Lands: You know what they have cost?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, and I know also what the roads and railways in outlying districts have cost. The land at Herdsman's Lake is perfectly good, once it is sweetened. So, too, with all the swamp lands in the metropolitan area. From less than a square mile of land at Osborne Park there is taken each year £60,000 worth of produce. It shows what can be done with swamp lands. But there is any amount of work entailed, and one requires to have plenty of experience and knowledge. Therefore the Minister should display a little patience, and instead of demanding his pound of flesh now, should give every encouragement to those prepared to work these swamp lands so that they may make homes for themselves in the immediate vicinity of the Perth market. The question of agriculture has already been touched upon. I think our big problem lies in the betterment of our methods in respect of production rather than in the land settlement policy which was so essential in times past. Largely the land is now settled, and the problem we have to face is the manner in which we use the lands of the State. I am looking to members opposite to discuss the problems of agriculture, and the keen competition to which we are subjected in respect of wheat, wool and all primary products. I want to see that question intelligently tackled by the experts of the Agricultural Department, coupled with the practical knowledge of the agriculturists throughout the State. I hope there will be that co-operation in future, for by that means I believe our methods can still be improved and that our main object in respect of agriculture should be progress in that direction.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [8.40]: I desire to say a few words on this subject, particularly in reference to the Lake Carmody settlers. North Lake Carmody and part of South Lake Carmody are in my electorate. I had an opportunity of looking at the map and seeing the number of blocks condemned on account of salinity in the soil, something like 50 per cent. of them. As a matter of fact, nearly every block was to some extent affected. I am not going to criticise Dr. Teakle, because it would be foolish for me to have an opinion in opposition to that of a scientist. But I should like to recall how that settlement took place. It was in the time of the previous Government, when money was very plentiful. The British Government made available to Australia some £30,000,000 for the settlement of virgin country.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We did not get it, you know.

Mr. BROWN: We got a lot of it. Western Australia had the largest percentage of virgin country in Australia, and so the Minister for Lands requested the British Government to see that Western Australia should get its fair share of the money. But when the depression fell upon us, where was our country, the land we had at Lake Carmody and from there to Forrestania? Years ago I had the privilege of meeting Mr. Banks Amery, Mr. Gunn and other members of the Migration Commission. I met them two or three times out at Kondinin, and stressed upon them that the land we had available was at Lake Carmody and Forrestania. Mr. Banks Amery went through the district and was greatly impressed with the quality of the soil. Such a difficulty as salinity of the soil did not arise: we never dreamt that the beautiful-looking country was impregnated with salt. As the result of the redistribution of seats, this district was taken into the Pingelly electorate, and so it became my duty to go out through the settlement. I did so 18 months ago, and all the farmers I met were living in hopes of making their homes there, and were well satisfied. They were then getting a certain amount of money for development purposes. The ground was all virgin, the timber was all green, and so it took a little time before they had their land ready for cultivation. I think last year was the first in which they had a fair area in crop. The returns were very good indeed. Many of the farmers told

me they had got a six-bag average, and in a few instances I was told it was up to eight bags. One of those blocks which gave an eight-bag return last year now stands condemned, although I have it on good authority that the existing crop on that block is quite as good as last year's crop.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are you prepared to certify the eight-bag crop?

Mr. BROWN: No. I know of it only from letters I have received. I do not know whether the money that was supplied for development purposes was made available through the Agricultural Bank: I do not know what amount of British money was spent in that settlement, but, if there was any so spent, I imagine it was secured at a very cheap rate. Only a few weeks ago, when first it became known that Dr. Teakle had condemned a majority of the blocks in the Lake Carmody district, a deputation was sent up to Perth. I introduced that deputation to the managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank, and I think eventually the deputationists saw the Minister for Lands and the head of practically every department. When that deputation returned to Lake Carmody a meeting was held, and I have here a letter giving the results of that meeting. I do not know exactly how many were present, but the voting was eight to one that all should go off the land. They were quite prepared to forsake their improvements, provided the Government gave them each a block in an area not more than 15 miles from a railway. They realised that if there should be only a few settlers left, they would be unlikely ever to get a railway. Some of them are 55 miles out from the railway, and they appreciate that with only a settler here and there it would be impossible for any Government to build a railway out to the settlement. They ask what on earth have they to remain for. As I mentioned the other night, one man with a young family said, "Do you think it is fair for me to leave my wife and family isolated 50 miles from a railway? No. I would like to be moved to a block in a more settled area closer to a railway." The Agricultural Bank authorities are prepared to transfer all those settlers who so desire to an abandoned or repossessed block. Many settlers had capital when they went to the Lake Carmody district. One man told me he had spent £900 of his own money, another over £1,000, and I think the majority have spent a considerable amount of their

own money. In addition a certain amount of Government money has been expended. I do not know how much it is, but I have heard it suggested as being in the vicinity of £500,000. When the settlers are transferred to other blocks, will they receive any compensation for the money they have spent, or will they be allowed only the amount advanced to them by the Government? If they are to be placed on abandoned blocks, it has to be remembered that most abandoned blocks carry a considerable liability. The Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank informed me that such blocks would be valued in accordance with present conditions. I suppose the land would now be worth £1 an acre as against £2 three years ago. If that is not done and those settlers are placed on over-capitalised blocks, how will they be able to make a success of them?

The Minister for Lands: I am not going to answer that argument here to-night.

Mr. BROWN: The soil of Western Australia is patchy. Possibly many of the abandoned blocks are of poor quality soil, and probably were abandoned when wheat prices were good. Only in the last 12 or 18 months have prices been low.

[*Mr. J. H. Smith took the Chair.*]

Mr. Sleeman: They would not have been abandoned when prices were good.

Mr. BROWN: Some of them have been abandoned for two years. On some of them I would not wish to see my worst enemy settled. Some repossessed farms are really good farms, with as much as 1,600 to 1,700 acres cleared, but they were over-capitalised, and the holders found it impossible to pay interest when prices dropped. How much will be written off if the Lake Carmody settlers are placed on blocks of that kind? In the letter from the Lake Carmody settlers I am asked to find good blocks of land for them. I could not undertake that. No man could pick a block of land on paper. A careful inspection of the property is required by a practical man before he can form an opinion. The Government should be prepared to write down a considerable proportion of the money owing on abandoned blocks before putting other settlers on them. If a settler took an abandoned block carrying a heavy liability, how on earth could he be expected to make good? It would be an impossibility. The bank will have to be prepared

to write off large amounts before they place the unfortunate settlers on abandoned blocks. I have been asked repeatedly what district I would recommend. I saw a list of repossessed blocks that had been supplied to a member of the deputation, and they were scattered all over the wheat belt. I have been told that some of the Lake Carmody settlers may be sent to Lake Brown, where the salt is already hindering the farmers.

The Minister for Lands: That is your best authority, is it?

Mr. BROWN: Yes. Perhaps the Minister would be surprised if I told him my authority. It was the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Lands: Did he say he was going to send the Lake Carmody settlers there?

Mr. BROWN: No, but that is where the condemned blocks are.

Mr. Hegney called attention to the state of the Committee. Quorum formed.

Mr. BROWN: The Minister for Works did not tell me that the Government intended to send settlers to the Lake Brown district, but unfortunately some of the available blocks there are within 15 miles of a railway, and may be in possession of the Agricultural Bank. The Government will need to be careful where they send the settlers who abandon their holdings in the Lake Carmody district. Another point is that we cannot afford to delay. Those settlers have to take their crops off. They will then have to be moved to another block, which will take a considerable time. What will be the state of the new block? Will it be under fallow? Will it be possible to put in a crop straight away? Will the bank be prepared to grant sustenance and a certain amount of money to enable the settlers to carry on? It is the policy of the bank not to advance money on other than fallowed land. If the Lake Carmody settlers are to be moved to repossessed blocks, there will be no fallow, and how long will the settlers be on the new blocks before they get any return? Those points must be considered. If they could only remain where they are, they have means of getting some return, because nearly every one of the condemned blocks in the Lake Carmody district has fallowed land. Those men have been fallowing all the time. Many of the blocks have 300 or 400 acres of crop, and it was only recently that the bombshell came noti-

fying them that Dr. Teakle had made an analysis of the soil and had condemned the blocks. The matter is indeed serious. If the salt is too bad to enable crops to be produced, the sooner settlers are removed from the affected districts the better. A peculiar fact is that the settlers south of Lake Carmody, right away in the direction of Lake Camm and Lake King, are not desirous of leaving their holdings. I agree with the member for Canning (Mr. Wells) that the men who went there with the idea of making homes are perfectly satisfied provided the Government give them the assistance they require and build a railway within a reasonable time. I remember when Mr. Bankes Amery and Mr. Gunn were here it was stated to be part of the scheme that a railway should be built to the district as quickly as possible, and I have no doubt the settlers were induced to go out there in the belief that a railway would be built in the near future.

Mr. Sleeman: Bad luck for them that another party came into power.

Mr. BROWN: Had the Collier Government continued in power, they would not have been in any better position to help the settlers. In fact the ex-Minister for Lands stated that any Government would be very foolish if it proceeded along lines contrary to the views expressed by an expert like Dr. Teakle. I have been through the district a good deal, and there are hundreds of miles of cleared roads.

Mr. Wells: A chain wide, too.

Mr. BROWN: Yes. The Forrestania area was said to be the largest area of first-class land available for settlement in Australia. The settlement of Lake Carmody and Lake King is only on the fringe of it, although it is part of the 3,500 farms scheme.

The Minister for Lands: That is all that is in your electorate.

Mr. BROWN: Forrestania is just outside my electorate. According to the advisory board's plan, the railway was to proceed from Hingham Rock for 32 miles in the direction of Forrestania. If that railway were built—

The Minister for Lands: Is there any settlement there?

Mr. BROWN: If the railway were built, there would be settlement, but settlers are not encouraged to go there. I am not sure that the Forrestania land has been tested for salt. I understand that Dr. Teakle has

tested only those blocks on which people are settled. I know that the Government have no money, and that the Agricultural Bank has none for advancing to settlers for fencing purposes. I am told that the blocks are not fit for settlement, and that it is therefore not wise to spend any more money upon them. The State is likely to lose a good deal of money. It may be that it is possible to put these people on to abandoned blocks which are not now producing anything. We have to look to the future and consider whether, if we put the settlers on abandoned blocks, which have been given up by farmers who could not make a living upon them, we shall be putting the country to still greater expense. The matter is a serious one. I do not think, on top of this report, it would be advisable to allow the settlers to remain there any longer. If there was any indication of a railway going out to the district within a few months, I believe not one of the settlers who is now asking to be removed would desire to go. I was surprised to hear the member for Mt. Hawthorn say that the Minister for Lands dictated terms to the Agricultural Bank. I have never found that to be so. I have had letters from settlers saying they could not get satisfaction from the bank, and asking me to appeal to the Minister. I have done this and he has held the same view that I have held, namely, that such-and-such a settler should receive further assistance. On the matter being brought before the bank the trustees have said, "No, the settler has had up to his limit and it would not be advisable to advance him any more money." The result has been that the settler has had no further advance. Although I have had the support of the Minister, in no case have I been able to get anything from the bank when the trustees have said "No." I am sure the Minister would not like to have that power over the bank, whereby he could induce the trustees to make further advances to settlers. I will give another instance. A man has between 300 and 400 acres of crop in a settled area. On one side of him there is virgin country that is infested with all kinds of vermin. The Agricultural Bank has his land as security. When he asked for an advance for wire netting the bank replied, "No, you are up to the limit, and it is not considered advisable to advance you any more money." The result has been that the rabbits have

eaten the whole of the crop. I do not think the bank's attitude was good policy, for it was the opinion of the trustees that the settler had borrowed up to the limit.

The Minister for Lands: Where is this place?

MR. BROWN: About 10 miles from Kulin. The settler was not able to get any wire netting, and lost his crop. I always thought we were going to have a settlement under the 3,500 farms scheme, and that the people there would be happy and contented. I also thought they would get every assistance that could be supplied to them within reason. All their money is now sunk in their properties, but they are told they must make a fresh start somewhere else. No member can be content that such things should happen. It is the wish of all that our settlers should be happy and contented. We are, however, in such financial stress that the Government cannot find the money for water conservation, fencing, or the building of a railway. If the Government have a number of abandoned blocks on their hands within easy distance of a line, perhaps the best way out of the difficulty would be to place these unfortunate people on those blocks. I hope the Government will assist them to the utmost extent possible, and do so very quickly. They need some encouragement to get in a little crop next year and make their places self-supporting.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

MR. J. I. MANN (Beverley) [9.8]: I wish to refer particularly to the settlement around Narembeen. There are farmers there who have been placed 50 miles east of Narembeen. I cannot see any hope for them while they are so far from a railway.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: If they succeed, those who are near the railway will make fortunes.

MR. J. I. MANN: I had hoped it would be possible to continue the Karlgarin line, so that transport facilities could be brought nearer to these settlers. The Minister for Lands knows this country well. It is a fine belt. I hope he will try to provide some assistance for these people. If it is not possible to give railway facilities, I hope the Government will consider giving a bonus on wheat carting. The settlers have remained there this year in an endeavour to make good, and I hope some assistance will be given along the lines I have indicated.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [9.10]: The member for Yilgarn told us it was absolutely essential we should fix upon someone the responsibility for the settlement of the salt-infected portions of the area comprised in the 3,500 farms scheme. I do not see things in that way. It seems futile to waste time trying to fix the blame upon someone. That will not provide a solution of the problem. Even if we do fix the blame, the trouble remains untouched and uninfluenced. Nor is it necessary to secure any victory for any particular point of view. What is material is that we prevent any calamity from happening in this area. It would be a calamity to take these people away from that part of the State unless there is some real necessity for so doing. It would also be a calamity to permit them to go on if the future is as black as Dr. Teakle paints it. The doctor may be right and he may be wrong. I think he is wrong. He certainly has the support of a brother professor. No doubt if he put his case before a number of scientists, he might have the whole gathering with him, but he is unable to convince a gathering of farmers. It seems to be a question of theory versus practice. My experience is that in such cases practice wins. If Dr. Teakle is correct in his statement, there exists no proof of it. Only the future can show whether his statement is correct or not.

The Minister for Lands: Look at Lake Brown.

MR. DONEY: There is a material difference between the two centres. I am speaking to-night because during the afternoon I met in the city a committee of five or six men representing the settlers in the Lakes King and Camm districts. It is right that their viewpoints should be considered. They furnished me with a lot of interesting data and quoted me the cases of several farmers out there. The tendency of this data is to prove that this land, which has been condemned, is extremely productive. They instanced the case of a man named Cameron, who from 100 acres last year took 750 bags of wheat. From one lot of 20 acres he reaped 161 bags. This lot had been condemned by Dr. Teakle as being unusually salty. It would appear that this unusually salty piece of ground was more productive than any other part of the holding that was under crop. Another case was that of a

Mr. Watts. Last year, from new unfallowed ground which had merely been drilled, he obtained an average of 18 bushels. A Mr. Salter, from condemned land, reaped an average of six bags to the acre. A Captain Carter this year has a standing crop which looks likely to go six bags to the acre. This also is condemned land. I can understand there may be a difference of opinion as to the crops, but I maintain there is no room for mistakes in regard to dams. I believe that in this area no dam put down with Agricultural Bank money can be sunk to a depth of less than 11 feet. There is the case of the dam sunk on Mr. Shield's farm, in supposedly saline soil. The water is, however, fresh. I believe that nearly all the settlers in the area have dams. The information supplied to me shows that these vary in depth from 11 to 14 feet. In only one case is there a salt dam, and that is salt because the settler was stupid enough to sink it in a salt pan.

Mr. Wells: That is used for swimming.

Mr. DONEY: I do not think it is possible to find in any other part of the State such a large proportion of freshwater dams as is seen in this district, where the percentage of salinity in the soil is said to be so high. Reference was made by the Minister to the Lake Brown district. I am told that according to Dr. Teakle's report that district shows far less salt than does the area around Lakes King, Camm, and Carmody. Despite that fact, the salt is perceivable, either from the colour of the soil or from its taste, or from the taste of the water in the dams. I am not asserting that this is correct, but the friends who have given the information are highly reputable men: and it is correct according to the best of their belief, at all events. It was also pointed out to me by these men that in one case where Dr. Teakle had found undue salinity, there was a good crop, and that upon this being mentioned to Dr. Teakle he said, "Very good, but next year you will find that practically no crop will be got from the same soil." That "next year" is the current year; and I say that in this current year there is a finer crop on that land than there was last year. The land is in the Lake King area. I wonder, and I should like the Minister to inform me, whether Dr. Teakle has ever conducted experiments of the same nature in any other part of the State.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.18]: I desire to express my appreciation of the broad-minded attitude and the outstanding industry which the Minister has shown with regard to lands in the hills district. For a long time I have endeavoured to attract greater interest to those lands, because I am thoroughly convinced that their utilisation is a wise and a payable proposition. I am grateful to the Minister for the visits he has paid to the district, and I desire to express my thanks to him for the practical work he has done in throwing open lands which have been withheld from cultivation almost right up to the present.

Mr. Sleeman: Whereabouts? Kalamunda?

Mr. SAMPSON: This is in view of my belief that one way, and the best way, out of our present difficulties is the provision of small allotments of land which can be cultivated intensely. The Minister is, in my opinion, doing the wisest possible thing. To-night we have heard a long story regarding the disabilities which wheat-growers, and men engaged in other forms of cultivation, have to face; but we can take heart of grace and enjoy encouragement from the knowledge that the people in the hills district are relatively better off to-day than has ever been the case before. I do not mean to say that they are positively better off than they have been previously, but relatively, in comparison with people engaged in the cultivation of wheat. Therefore I hope the Minister will continue to carry out the policy of throwing open those lands, and in fact extend that policy. I welcome this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the efforts he has made.

Mr. Sleeman drew attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [9.23]: I shall not intensify the depressing tone of this debate. There has been a recital of a succession of failures in land settlement. I was wondering what a casual visitor, drifting into this Chamber, would think of the prospects of the country in the light of the information furnished on this portion of the Estimates. I wish to offer a few remarks on the Minister's statements regarding small holdings around the metropolis. He dismissed the proposition as

not worth encouraging in view of the fact that market gardening is not a payable industry at the moment. I agree with him that at present market gardening does not pay; but as regards putting families on small holdings around the metropolis, their entering into the market gardening business is not essential. Large numbers of men working in the metropolitan area are on part time, and not getting enough money to keep their homes or rear their families. If they were put on allotments where they could grow enough to help to keep the home going, and, what is equally important, keep the youths of their families occupied, great good would result. Shortly after entering this Chamber I brought forward a scheme for giving additional employment to the large number of casual labourers at our ports. I regret that during the six years we were in office I was unable to bring that proposal to fruition. The previous Government tried on three occasions to get an adequate Closer Settlement Bill passed. The measure got through only towards the end of our term, and only in a modified form; and then we could not secure suitable land handy to the ports. At this moment, however, there is a chance of such land being obtained. I desire to point out to the Minister that there are now over 2,000 men looking for work on the waterfront, and that there is not enough employment for a fourth of that number. Thus the labour of about 1,500 men is being lost to the country. The great majority of those men have families. Numbers of them have sons now at the adolescent stage and out of work. Those young men are living in the town, and we all know what that means to a young man without employment. In any case, the time of those youths is being idled away. I suggest that the fathers of families could be settled on blocks of about five acres with a permanent water supply. There is country available that will grow anything. Not only would they be able to grow enough to keep up their homes, but employment would be found for the youths, and a liking developed in them for cultivation of the soil. They would also gain an insight into some parts of the dairying industry. The proposal, if carried out, would make a wonderful improvement in the whole domestic life of the families. While we were in office we approached the Commonwealth Government with a view to their parting with the

land they had resumed for the Henderson Naval Base. I opened the matter up with the Federal Government when I was in Melbourne, and corresponded with them on the subject later. I have visited Canberra and Sydney twice since last Christmas, and on each occasion have broached the issue to the Commonwealth Government. I think that if the present Government re-opened the issue, they would have a good chance of securing the land. The Commonwealth resumed land from Fremantle to Spearwood, Coogee and Point Peron, including Garden Island. Families could be settled on the beautiful tuart country adjacent to Spearwood and Coogee. The district has a regular bus service.

The Minister for Lands: And there is a good road.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes. There is also a taxi service, and schools and other requirements are already provided. Some of the finest gardens in the State are in that area. With the transport facilities available, the settlers could get into work at the port when required, and return to their homes in the evening. When not at work, they could remain on their blocks and engage in developmental operations. They could go in for fruit, pigs, poultry, vegetables and keep a cow or two. There are many side-lines that could be developed, and they would prove of economic value to the settlers and to the State, while, at the same time, they would provide the young men of the family with some occupation at a time when there is little hope of employment for them. I hope the Minister will take this matter up with the Commonwealth Government. All idea of establishing the naval base there has been abandoned. Why, therefore, should such a stretch of country be held idle? A number of fine orchards were established there when the Commonwealth resumed the area. Some of them are held under lease still, but a number of the orchards were neglected and have gone back nearly to a state of nature. There is a lot of virgin country that can be thrown open, and there is an unlimited supply of magnificent water available at shallow depth. The soil is good and the locality is handy to the port. Everything is in its favour. I am given to understand that if representations were made to the Commonwealth at the present juncture, there is every possibility that the State would be able to secure the

land at a reasonable figure. It will not need much money to inaugurate the scheme I have propounded. Houses could be provided somewhat similar to those erected on the Peel Estate. I understand a number of them are still available, and they should be used. All the fencing posts necessary could be obtained on the blocks, and a 5-wire boundary fence would be all that would be required. A well would have to be sunk and all the rest of the developmental work would resolve itself into mere manual labour. The great bulk of the men who would be affected in the Fremantle district, are employed on casual labour, and instead of being idle when they were out of work, the scheme I have outlined would enable them to engage in productive effort instead of remaining idle. In addition to that, as I have pointed out, it would provide profitable occupation for the sons who then would not have to put in their time as they are unfortunately compelled to do at the moment. The land was resumed by the Commonwealth Government very cheaply, and I think if representations were made to them, the State could secure it at a nominal figure. It is hard to conceive any reason for which the Commonwealth would require to retain the area now that the naval base has been abandoned. Many hundreds of families could be established there. I want the Minister to understand that I am not advancing this proposal with the idea of the men engaging in market gardening. All I suggest is a means by which men casually employed on the waterfront would have an opportunity of developing a holding during the period they were out of work. I was interested when abroad to find that, although I had no idea any such scheme was in operation, it is actually an established fact in Holland and other parts of Europe where, when a port is busy, the services of these men are available. Then in slack periods they are otherwise profitably engaged. During the past two years, I do not think the 2,000 waterside workers at Fremantle have averaged £2 a week. The great bulk of them would not have averaged 30s. a week. It is doubtful whether there is work available to keep one-fourth of them fully employed throughout the year. I hope the Minister will take up this matter with the Commonwealth and if he should succeed in coming to terms, it should not be difficult to arrange a scheme that would result in the development of the area I refer to.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York—in reply) [9.37]: I thank hon. members for the manner in which they have received the Lands Estimates. With regard to the suggestion advanced by the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum), I had no idea there was any possibility of the State Government securing the land he has referred to. Had we been aware of the fact, the position would have been investigated. I can assure him that the matter will receive attention. I want to clear up any misunderstanding that may have arisen from my remarks regarding small blocks for men on casual labour. I wanted to correct an impression that it was possible for men so settled to go in for market gardening. It is not possible to get a market for all their produce. The suggestion advanced by the member for South Fremantle is a totally different proposition altogether. That is an ideal system, and the scheme propounded by the hon. member is one to which I will give every assistance possible. I have been through that part of the Fremantle district on several occasions and I believe that we could produce there all the onions we require for pickling. It is necessary to have a special variety of onion for pickling, and the country there appears to be ideal for that purpose. At present, if the best onions are required for pickling, they have to be imported, and this scheme seems to me to open up an avenue for industry. I can assure the hon. member that the matter will be taken up at once with the Commonwealth authorities. I want to correct a statement made by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney). He said that he had received information regarding Dr. Teakle's report on Lake Brown. No official report has been received by the department. I cannot vouch for the reliability of the information that has reached the hon. member, because we have not had that information ourselves. The member for Beverley (Mr. J. I. Mann) referred to the bonus on wheat. The Government did agree to pay the farmers in the area he referred to a bonus of 4½d. a mile on wheat carted 20 miles or more from a railway. That question is now receiving the consideration of the Treasurer, and I hope that some arrangement will be made so that in all probability we will pay some such bonus on wheat carted over distances of 15 miles. That will serve to encourage farmers to cart their wheat. The member for Pingelly (Mr.

Brown) dealt with a number of matters, but I am afraid he has not as full a knowledge of the subjects he dealt with as he ought to have. I cannot understand for one moment the hon. member thinking that we would send an expert to Lake Brown to make an analysis of the soil, and before he had concluded his work, send men there from another area, because there was a suggestion that there was too much alkali in the district from which they had been taken. I hope the hon. member has some idea of the intelligence of departmental officers. They would be responsible for actions such as he suggested, and I certainly hope that such things as he indicated are not likely to take place. As a matter of fact, since we found out that there was some element of danger in the area he dealt with, no land has been made available for selection. Although the hon. member himself has brought pressure to bear upon the authorities to release land there, I want him to bear in mind that, had it not been that I took the necessary precautions to prevent anything of the sort happening, we would now have additional settlers in the areas concerning which difficulties have arisen. The hon. member has evidently been to the Agricultural Bank and obtained reliable information as to what it is intended to do. It is proposed to take the settlers off their holdings if they desire to leave them—we shall not force them off their blocks—and place them on other blocks that will be revalued. I hope that men who will avail themselves of that opportunity will have sufficient business knowledge to know whether they will be better off on the blocks to which they may be transferred, and that we shall not have the spectacle later on of those men finding that the blocks they have taken up are not profitable propositions, and members of Parliament approaching Ministers with requests to take the settlers off the land. If that should happen, they will get little support from me. Farmers should know the value of land, and if they take up fresh blocks that are revalued, the figure arrived at should be reasonable, because land values are lower today than I would care to mention to hon. members. If we do transfer men from their present holdings to others, it will be with the intention of enabling them to rehabilitate themselves. We certainly do not desire to shift a settler from one block to another where he will be no better off than he was before. I re-

gret that it is true that some men on farms could not make a living there at all, just as in other occupations we find men who are equally unsuccessful. Personally, I wish Parliament had long ago passed an Act of Parliament to prohibit members of Parliament and Ministers using political influence with departmental officers. If a man's position is fairly stated to departmental officers, every consideration will be given him. There is no necessity for political pressure, more particularly because officers, in the face of such pressure, are at times apt to do things that they would not agree to in normal circumstances. When I look back over the few years I have been in this House, I wish that we had passed an Act, similar to that applying to the Commissioner of Railways, under which members would not be allowed to go to the Ministers and officials with complaints.

Mr. Marshall: But they should be able to come here and state their case.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no objection to that, but they go to departmental officers and put up a case, and sometimes the information given is not reliable, although the good faith in which it is given is unquestionable. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) declared that I said I was not in favour of the construction of the Cranbrook-Boyup Brook railway. I did not make that statement. What I said was that until some adjustment of area was made we would not be justified in building the railway. We had a classification made of the land along the route and it revealed what a very small area of land is being used there.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You do not deny the advisory board's report?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have not even questioned it. But there is no doubt that as soon as the Bill authorising the construction of the railway passed this House, all the land that could be selected along the route was selected. Were it not for a forestry reserve down there, I doubt whether there would be any Crown land available within 15 miles of the line. We have had a classification made of the alienated land, and have asked the holders of that land whether they were prepared to return it to the Government, and at what price. But we are not going to enhance the value of the land by building the railway and then

attempt to repurchase the land. Some of those 3,000-acre and 4,000-acre properties have only 150 acres cleared, and the rest will not be cleared for generations to come. If we are to spend a lot of public money there, at least we should be able to place a lot more settlers in the district so as to make traffic for the railway.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But already you have an Act under which you could repurchase the land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But it is a most cumbersome process trying to put that Act into operation. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows that.

Hon. A. McCallum: Yes, it is impossible.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Premier when previously in office introduced legislation that would have been more effective, but it was thrown out by another place. Not very long ago the member for Nelson introduced a deputation to me, in the absence of the Premier. I then said that the Cranbrook-Boyup Brook line would be the first to be constructed, but that primarily we would want information as to the land down there and the price at which it would be available to us. The liability existing on a lot of that land would make it quite practicable for the holders to release at least portion of their holdings.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But those settlers must have railway facilities.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course they must. The hon. member told the House that he could place 5,000 men from Pinjarra south. But if we cannot get the money to buy this land between Cranbrook and Boyup Brook, how are we to find money for the purchase of land from Pinjarra south? Only recently we had certain land along that route offered to us, but the cheapest holding was offered at £3 5s. per acre, and that for unimproved land. We cannot place men on land at that figure. If we are to buy land at a high value and expect men to make a living off it besides improving it, then such land can only be sold to men who have capital.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Hundreds of people who want to go on the land do not require financial assistance.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member will introduce them to me I can find land for them at from £2 to £3 per

acre, freehold land about the capabilities of which there is no room for doubt.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But they all want to go on Crown lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the trouble. We do not seem to be able to satisfy all those that want Crown lands in the South-West.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You are not making any effort to satisfy them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is now going back to his pet subject of the relative claims of the Lands Department and the Forests Department.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Well, you should make a classification of the country.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot bring down a Bill dispossessing the Conservator of Forests of all the timber land he holds under statutory powers. The timber in this country is of great value, and I would not be carrying out my responsibility to the people of the State if I did not work for my colleague in trying to conserve to the people their timber rights. There are, in this State, many persons who are quite prepared to select all our forestry land with a view to taking off the timber and leaving the land. We are not going to permit that.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You have not much knowledge of the South-West.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Most of the restricted land settlement now going on is going on in the South-West; and it will continue, but it will be done on pretty sound lines. The hon. member brought a man to see me at Pemberton the other day. He knows that the Forests Department have been clearing up that land with a view to releasing it for agricultural purposes.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I did not know it then.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Well, the hon. member knows it now. If he can bring along any man who knows of timber country well worth releasing for agricultural purposes, I am sure it will be released. The member for Canning (Mr. Wells) dealing with the lake country, read a letter from a gentleman in that area whom I esteem very much. But let me tell the House that Dr. Teakle was not instructed to go out and report on that land with a view to condemning it. The very gentleman who wrote that letter was present at a meeting at Lake King, and I was

not aware that Dr. Teakle was at the meeting. I told that gentleman definitely that the Government had sent out their professional officer to advise them, but not to be like some professional men who are very pleased when they find something they are looking for. What we desired Dr. Teakle to look for was good land, not salty land. I believe the report Dr. Teakle submitted is a truthful report. Certainly he has the necessary qualifications. He is a young Western Australian who was a farmer until he went to the University. From the University he went to America, where he studied further. Down in the Californian area, at Sacramento Valley, where they have great difficulties owing to salt and chemical deposits in the soil, he gained quite a lot of experience. Long before I knew who he was he told me of his experiences, and what gypsum was doing to rid the land of deleterious chemical actions. I myself know of a farm which has been worked for 20 years. Two years ago it developed large salt patches. It has a freshwater dam within half a mile of where the salt patches developed, but it will not grow one bit of herbage to-day. So when these scientists give us advice, we ought to beware of spending money foolishly in keeping men out there. I have no doubt we can place them near a railway, with great advantage to the State. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Corboy) made some wild and reckless statements to-day. He led the Committee to believe we were going to send a man out and cause all sorts of trouble to those people. Actually we picked out a senior officer who knew how to handle men. After all, if there are two properties to be amalgamated, the most reasonable thing to do is to get the two settlers together and let them try to arrange between themselves which is to go and which is to remain. I am sure if they could not settle it any other way they would draw lots for it, or get out of it somehow. But for an officer to say to one of them, "You have to go," would set up in both settlers resentment against the officer. Every man on his holding who requires financial assistance to enable him to stay on his farm and take off his crop is getting that assistance. I want to refute the statement made by the hon. member that we are cutting off the financial supplies to those men. The statement is not true or, if it is, it is due to the fault of those men them-

selves. What I am sorry for is that if the money had been available to build the railway there would not have been so much notice taken of the first discovery of salt at Salmon Gums. But the people of the State have a responsibility to the people there, and the British Government and the Commonwealth Government share that responsibility. I for one am not going to relieve either of those Governments from their responsibility. When over in the Eastern States, I told the Commonwealth Government we could not release them until arrangements were made to repatriate those people off their land, or alternatively to give them facilities for remaining. When the officer reaches here to-morrow, we will endeavour to persuade him of the responsibility they have under that £34,000,000 agreement to those people, and to the people associated with them in this State.

Mr. MARSHALL: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Immigration, £2,576:

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is ridiculous that this department should appear in the Estimates. Such a department should exist to bring migrants to the State, and, if not for that purpose—

The Minister for Railways: To send them Home?

Mr. SLEEMAN: No, to collect money due to the Government by migrants who have come here. There is no need for the department to bring migrants out. We are all agreed that for a considerable time there will be no migration to this State. The estimated revenue of the department is £177, and to collect it the Treasurer proposes to expend £2,576. There is not much business acumen about that. Last year the Government expected a revenue of £1,000 and the actual revenue was £709. Last year transport, postage and telephones were to cost £250, and this year £300 has been provided for those items. The department should be abolished. If that were done, several employees would be thrown out of work, but perhaps they could be absorbed in another department.

The Minister for Lands: The £709 is commission on money collected for the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Then why not let the Commonwealth Government do their own collecting and save the £2,576? The money could be put to better use if it were devoted to returning unfortunate migrants to their own country.

The Minister for Railways: We could not do that. Migrants owe the money to the Commonwealth.

Mr. SLEEMAN: We should put up a fight against that sort of thing. Because Bill Jones owes the Commonwealth £5 for a fare, is it right that the State should have to maintain him indefinitely?

The Minister for Railways: Whether right or wrong, it is so.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Many of the migrants will never be any good to the State and will have to be maintained for the next 20 years. Families in Fremantle have drawn from £300 to £400 sustenance and the fathers have been certified unfit for any work. Are we to continue keeping such people year after year? The House recently carried a motion in favour of repatriating migrants, but the Government were unsympathetic and have done little towards giving effect to the motion. However, I shall continue to fight in the interests of the unfortunate migrants. Quite a number of migrant families will continue to cost the Government £120 a year until the Government can find work for the breadwinners. I have received letters from migrants not only in this State but from all parts of Australia.

The Minister for Works: Such is fame!

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am informed that a petition bearing 100,000 signatures is to be sent from Victoria to the House of Commons praying that stranded migrants be returned to the Old Country. Some of the migrants are quite satisfied to stay, but those who want to go home and cannot get work should be sent back by the Government. We ought to test the feeling of the Committee to see whether it is a business proposition to spend all this money for so small a return. I doubt whether we shall get back even £85 this year. There is not much evidence of business acumen in this sort of transaction. Unless the Minister can give me some

reasonable explanation of the figures on the Estimates I will move to strike out the whole vote.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is not a revenue-earning department.

Mr. Sleeman: Is it there to be looked at?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have a responsibility towards those migrants who have come out here, and it is necessary to keep a staff employed to carry out this responsibility.

Mr. Sleeman: For what purpose?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Many inquiries have to be answered.

Mr. Sleeman: Inquiries to go home?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: From people overseas. Most of the migrants have their mail addressed to the office. We have to look after these people. There is also a considerable sum owing to the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. J. H. Smith: How many migrants have you had in the last two years?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some came out in December, 1929. Those people have to be looked after for two years, and this is the department to do it. I am glad the passage money is owing to the Commonwealth Government and not to the State. Last year we received a grant from the Commonwealth as part of the salary of the migration officer. This year it has been cut out. The officer was appointed for 18 months, and the Commonwealth recently appointed him for a further six months.

Mr. Sleeman: That does not lessen your expense.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The expense has been reduced by £1,065. We receive commission on the money we collect from the migrants. They are not all hard up, for some of them are engaged in business. Last year our vote was made up by the part payment of the salary of the migration officer, but this year the contribution from the Commonwealth has been withdrawn. All inquiries as to how to get back to England are made through this department. People also send out the passage money to enable their friends to go Home. Everything to do with these requests has to be verified. So soon as we can transfer the work to the Lands Department this will be done. At present there are so many files

dealing with migrants that there is no room for them in the Lands Department.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I would not waste five minutes over the person who had enough money for his passage to England. The Minister said that it was a breach of contract to allow a migrant to leave the country.

The Minister for Lands: If a migrant has been here for two years and owes us nothing we cannot stop him from leaving.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Most of the migrants have been here for more than two years, and will never be able to pay anything. We may have to keep them indefinitely. It would be much more economical to send them back to England. Let the Minister put all the files away with moth balls and leave them to look after themselves. It is no use keeping the department going merely for the sake of bundles of files. The State and Federal Governments are persecuting these migrants in the effort to squeeze money out of them as soon as it is earned. I am sure that every member of Cabinet realises it is a sounder proposition to send these people back than allow them to live here under half-starved conditions. No good purpose can be served by retaining this department.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister says that a certain gentleman—delegated, I assume, by the Federal Government—is to arrive here to-morrow for the purpose of negotiating with the State Ministry the breaking of an agreement which has existed for some time between the Commonwealth and Western Australia. The agreement embodies much that comes under the heading of migration. The agreement provided that we should bring out so many migrants. I ask, if it is possible to break the agreement in one respect, is it not possible to break the agreement so as to permit of the return of migrants to a place which they prefer to this country? The Western Australian Government cannot tell the migrants that they would not be as well off in their own country as they are here. Let the migrants choose for themselves. We have not found them work, or happiness, or prosperity, or comfort, or any of all the good things that were promised them. Some of the migrants are suffering hunger and are ill-clad and ill-housed. Since we have not fulfilled our undertaking to them, they are at liberty to choose to return to their home. It is not economical to feed families perpetually at great expense when we know from the utter-

ances of the Premier that there is no possibility for years to come of providing the men with work. Only recently the Premier stated that unemployment would be with us probably for years, owing to the impossibility of securing loans. It is absolutely unsound policy to retain people here and merely enable them to keep body and soul together. There is no work for them in the summer, and most certainly there will be no work for them next winter.

The Minister for Lands: A good many hundreds of the migrants have gone Home.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not concerned about those hundreds; I am concerned about the thousands who wish to go Home. The misrepresentations of past Governments brought them here. They were told all sorts of rubbish. In any case, the best they could get here was hard work; and even that is now unobtainable. It is idle to argue that to return them would be wrong because of the numbers of unemployed in Britain. The additional number would not even be noticed. Migrants who wish to go back should be allowed to do so, and it is the Government's duty to provide the necessary facilities.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There is a good deal in the argument that this department ought to be closed down. No migrants have been coming for about two years.

The Minister for Lands: Since 1929.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yet there is a staff of ten clerks, whose only function, according to the Minister, is to act as debt collectors for the Commonwealth. Surely the Minister will not argue that the State has to keep that staff to re-direct correspondence for people who have been in Western Australia two years or more?

The Minister for Lands: The officer in charge is not there now.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: We are asked to vote for this department £2,576.

The Minister for Lands: The former officer in charge is doing work for the Unemployment Board. There are nine clerks now.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: But the officer in charge is down for £570. Migration has not been in active operation for two years. What can the staff possibly find to do? I know that if they are left there they will find work and build up records. Anyone who has been in a department knows that.

The Minister for Lands: They deal with other matters too.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: What matters?

The Minister for Lands: All correspondence from the Old Country. There is quite a lot of it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: What, after the migrants have been here for two years?

The Minister for Lands: There are many inquiries about people who have migrated here.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Surely there is some other method of attending to that!

The Minister for Lands: It would have to be done by someone else.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: What happened when we came here? Was it necessary to have police tracking us about the country?

The Minister for Lands: Unfortunately, your leader, as Premier, entered into an agreement to look after these people.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Does the Minister say that after two years we are to have a sort of detective agency—

The Minister for Lands: Well, that is what it amounts to.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It is high time it was stopped. I would throw the responsibility on to the Commonwealth to collect their money.

The Minister for Lands: But you know you agreed to do it. The agreement makes provision for that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not know that there is an agreement to that effect. It seems anomalous to have an Immigration Department dealing with such matters, although it is admitted that there has been no migration from Britain for two years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I propose to take this matter up with the officer who is to arrive here to-morrow. Some little time ago I dealt with this, and asked the Public Service Commissioner to look into the position as we had an opportunity to lease part of the building where the department is housed. He did remove a couple, but he said that the accommodation would probably be required. I want to clean up the whole matter with the officer who will be here to-morrow. It must be realised that we had to carry out the terms of the agreement that was entered into. However, I give hon. members the undertaking that I do want to clean up the matter, and I shall go into it thoroughly.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I will move that progress be reported. I think we should have more information about this matter.

The Minister for Lands: There are only a few items, and then we can get on with the Health Estimates.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister has not given us the information we required.

The Minister for Lands: I have promised to clean it up. We may not be able to do so by next Tuesday.

Mr. MARSHALL: If we report progress to-night, the Minister can go into the matter with the official and then we will know on Tuesday what has been done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members should have the fullest opportunity to discuss the items, but I cannot undertake to deal with the matter finally by Tuesday. The officer may not be in a position to discuss anything with us immediately he arrives to-morrow. There are other things to be attended to on Saturday, and Tuesday is Cabinet day, so we may not have a chance to further the matter then. I want to deal with the question personally. I have given my undertaking to clean up the matter.

Mr. SLEEMAN: An extraordinary position has been disclosed. An officer is provided for in these Estimates, but he is not in the department at all, being engaged on unemployment work. In those circumstances the officer's salary should be debited to unemployment. The Government are smothering outside expenses in the Immigration estimates.

The Minister for Lands: The officer has been loaned for unemployment work.

Mr. SLEEMAN: And immigration has been debited with his salary. I enter my protest against such a procedure. I understand an officer was transferred from the State Implement Works and put on to other duties.

The Minister for Lands: But this officer has not yet been transferred.

Item—Temporary clerical and other assistance, including provision for payment of temporary officers who may be appointed to permanent positions, and who, when appointed, will be paid from this Vote if provision is not made elsewhere, £235:

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: What is the explanation of this item? Apparently it is a general smother-up.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: If the hon. member will look through any of the Estimates for former years, he will see that the same item has appeared regularly.

The **CHAIRMAN**: It is quite the usual item.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is wrong.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I did not deal specifically with this item, but I did take up a similar item under another heading with the Under Secretary, and he told me that it was not known when a contingency would arise, necessitating the expenditure of additional money. That is why the item appears. The money may never be required.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Town Planning, £1,003—agreed to.

Vote — Farmers' Debts Adjustment, £2,706—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 20th October, 1931.

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

QUESTION—SECESSION, REFERENDUM.

Mr. J. MacCallum **SMITH** asked the Premier: In view of imminent action by the Federal Government to take a referendum on the question of unification and

other constitutional changes, will he state when he intends to give effect to the recent resolution of this House asking for a Bill to provide for the taking of a referendum on secession?

The **PREMIER** replied: The necessary Bill will be introduced.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Administrator received and read notifying assent to the State Savings Bank Transfer Bill.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Introduced by the Minister for Lands and read a first time.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX (No. 2).

Message.

Message from the Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.39] in moving the second reading said: Before I deal with the Bill may I say how pleased we all are to see the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) back in her place in the House after a long illness. We hope she has thoroughly recovered and that we shall see her more often in future. The Bill is one that is customarily presented at this period of the year. There are two variations on this occasion. It is necessary to render some assistance to the primary producers. Every member is fully alive to the difficult position in which the primary producers in the pastoral areas and agricultural areas find themselves. The alteration, as compared with last year, is that the land tax will not be levied this year on pastoral leases and on improved land devoted to the agricultural, horticulture, pastoral or grazing purposes. This will mean a sacrifice to the Treasury. We expect to lose £37,000 cash, and the total tax will amount to £85,000. We have already built up considerable debts against land holders because of their inability to