

fectly satisfied on the point. I therefore move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

The President resumed the Chair.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 7th March, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

SELECT COMMITTEE, RABBIT PEST.

Extension of Time.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [4.35]: I move—

"That the time for bringing up the report of the select committee be extended for one week."

We have examined a great many witnesses and have sat on not less than one dozen occasions. Some of the members of the select committee now desire to visit certain portions of the wheat belt and find out for themselves what sort of work the rabbit carts are doing.

Question put and passed.

BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1917-18.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Agricultural Department (Hon. H. B. Le-froy, Minister).

Vote—Agriculture generally, £49,786:

The Chairman: Before commencing the debate on the Vote "Agriculture generally, £49,786," I think it highly desirable to decide whether members are to be allowed to speak more than once on the general discussion. The question turns upon the interpretation of paragraph (b) of Standing Order 386b, namely—

A general discussion on the administration of the one department held on the first vote of that department.

My interpretation is that it applies only to a department which includes two or more votes, such as the Premier's Department which includes votes for the Premier's Office, the London Agency, and Government Motor Cars. I hold that it does not apply to a department which has one single vote, such as "Agriculture generally, £49,786." It is quite true that the words of paragraph (b) will bear another interpretation, namely that a single vote is the first vote. But we have a guide to the right interpretation in the report of the Standing Orders Committee upon recommending Standing Order 386a to the House. The third paragraph of this report reads as follows:—

Your committee are further of opinion that it would be unwise for the House to restrict the rights of individual members when speaking to the vote or item immediately under discussion. To do so would be an interference with the important principle of full consideration of the Estimates in Committee. When, however, an extension of the limits of discussion is allowed to individual members that extension may fairly be made subject to restriction. The two cases in which such extension has been allowed, by the authority of custom, and with the approval of the House, are—(1) a general discussion on the whole of the Estimates, when the first vote is before the Committee; and (2) a general discussion on the whole of a department when the first vote of that department is before the Committee.

These words leave no doubt in my mind as to my interpretation being correct. I rule, therefore, that paragraph (b) of Standing Order 386a does not apply to the discussion on the question now before the Committee, namely that the Vote "Agriculture generally, £49,786" stand as printed, and that members are not restricted in their right to speak more than once to the question. I have no desire, or intention, whatever to flout the will of the Committee because I would be wrong if I attempted to do so, but before we proceed with the discussion I want hon. members to decide this question. At the beginning of the discussion on "Lands and Agriculture," seeing that the vote is divided into two parts, the first "Lands and Surveys" and the second "Agriculture generally," the Honorary Minister (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott) said, in the course of his opening remarks, he would only deal with the Lands and Surveys Estimates. Therefore I thought I would confine the general discussion to that vote, "Lands and Surveys," and I gave hon. members distinctly to understand that when the department of Agriculture was being discussed they would then have the right to freely discuss it on the first item after the Minister had made his opening remarks. It is for hon. members to decide whether I am wright or wrong in this connection; I think the matter might be cleared up before the discussion starts on the vote "Agriculture generally."

Dissent from the Chairman's Ruling.

Hon. T. Walker: It is a somewhat extraordinary procedure to suddenly ask the House

to either interpret or make Standing Orders, especially when in the Committee stage. As to whether the ruling is correct or incorrect, the House is now asked to be the supreme authority. The Chairman has asked the House to give an opinion, and I do not see how we can do so except by at once dissenting from the ruling just given. We are now debating a matter which was discussed last night and on which a decision was arrived at, and neither the Chairman, nor any other member of this House, can stultify the House and go back upon what the House has already done when the point was decided by the ruling of the Chairman last evening. That being so, this procedure is an innovation and really directly contrary to what has been done. Now the House is asked what it is going to do about it. It seems a strange procedure, and I can only adopt the course of moving to dissent from the ruling.

The Minister for Mines: Until some member wishes to speak twice the point will not arise.

Hon. T. Walker: The Chairman has announced that before we start upon these Estimates he wants us to do something, to agree or disagree with what he has said. The Chairman has given a ruling without anything to rule upon, and that is why I am expressing my surprise that we should break through all the rules of procedure in this extraordinary manner. I have never heard the equal of it anywhere. This ruling will now appear in our records, and while it may not be called into question immediately, it may a year hence. Therefore, we shall be bound by it in the future. There is no course open other than to dissent from that ruling. I do not think we need debate the point at any great length because the House was unanimous upon it last night. A discussion on a department is distinct from a discussion on items of expenditure within that department. What the Chairman is arguing is that, if the Minister in introducing the Estimates, speaks for an hour, I can follow him for an hour, and after the interlude of another speech, I can follow again for another hour and reply. Then the Minister who introduced the Estimates can reply to me, and so we can go on.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Ad nauseum.

Hon. T. Walker: It could be abused to the detriment of the business of the House. The object of the select committee which investigated this matter was to provide for the Minister to speak at length covering the whole of the items and the whole of the administration of his department. Hon. members then had the right to follow him at similar length and to review all matters relating to the department as distinct from the items, and it was held and considered that that would be more or less like a second reading debate, as, in fact, it is. And it would certainly be unwise for the business of the House, and it would be against the report of the select committee, and against the Standing Orders, to permit repeated second reading speeches. We discuss a department in the general discussion. There were two things that the Standing Order was

introduced to remedy. First of all it was desired to remedy the discussion which took place on the items. The Minister has the right to lay the whole of the facts of his administration before the Committee of the House and some Chairmen held that that did not give other members an equal right to follow the Minister with a general discussion.

The Chairman: The hon. member might enter his protest against my ruling now. I merely gave it to facilitate matters and to save the time of the House, and not with any intention of preventing a discussion from taking place.

Hon. T. Walker: A mere protest will have no value. The Chairman's ruling stands on the records as a ruling from the Chair, and it is there for future guidance, and I cannot allow it to stand. The select committee which reported on this question some time back resolved that every member should have an equal right, with the Minister, on the general discussion. But if he had that right to traverse the whole of the Estimates of a department, he would have no right to speak twice on the general discussion. There was, however, to be no curtailment of the debate on the items. If we accept the Chairman's ruling we are not to consider this as a general discussion. It is perfectly clear that a forced meaning has been put upon the word "first," if we do not mean that a general discussion shall take place upon the first introduction of departmental Estimates. I move—

"That the Chairman's ruling be dissented from."

[Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Chairman: The member for Kanowna has entered an objection to my ruling in connection with a debate which hinged upon the long discussion last night. To clear the atmosphere this afternoon, and to make the position perfectly sure as we found it and left it last night, I gave an interpretation of what I considered was really a debate in connection with votes with which we were dealing and which votes were divided into two parts. I read my ruling to the Committee. To that Mr. Walker has put in a written objection. I leave the matter in your hands.

Hon. T. Walker: I moved dissent from the Chairman's ruling, relying on paragraph (b) of Standing Order 386a as applied to all general discussions on the introduction of departmental Estimates. I am defending the rights of the Standing Orders Committee. The Chairman in his ruling is relying on the report of the Standing Orders Committee delivered on the 4th November, 1913, quoting these words—

Your committee are further of opinion that it would be unwise for the House to restrict the rights of individual members when speaking to the vote or item immediately under discussion. To do so would be an interference with the important principle of full consideration of Estimates in Committee. When, however, an extension of the limits of discussion is allowed to individual members, that extension may fairly be made subject to restriction.

That has been quoted as justifying the ruling of the Chairman. I submit it is directly contrary to the interpretation the Chairman puts upon it. The Standing Orders Committee say it would be unwise to restrict discussion on the items, but that when the limit of discussion is extended, that is to say, when it covers a whole department, when we have extended its scope beyond an item, then we may well submit it to limitations, may justly limit it to one speech. I do not want to repeat myself, but when a departmental estimate is introduced the speaker introducing it goes on at considerable length, goes into details and matters that might almost appear foreign to any item in the Estimate. He covers the whole of the department. He is followed by another speaker, who traverses the whole of the administration and policy of that department. The Minister might reply, and might feel inclined to go on again and drive home what he advanced in his first long speech. We would find debates interminable. But the very quotation made by the Chairman in support of his ruling justifies the limitation. It is in the general discussion that we extend the limits. It is there that we do not confine ourselves to one item, but cover the whole of the ground if we wish. Therefore, when we take that course, in the words already quoted by the Chairman "that extension may fairly be made subject to restriction." And he goes on—

A general discussion of the whole of the Estimates when the first vote is before the Committee, and a general discussion on the whole of a department when the first vote of the department is before the Committee. "On the whole of a department." That is what gives the wide scope. And the question of whether a vote is the first vote and, having no second, ceases to be the first, is a mere quibble. If we are discussing the whole of a department, we are extending the limits of debate, and under that extension we are justified in applying a restriction, which is provided in paragraph (b) of Standing Order 386a.

The Minister for Mines: I take it the question to be determined is whether or not members of the Committee have a right to speak more than once on the question which is now before us, or rather which should have been put to the Committee, namely, the Vote "Agriculture Generally." To determine that question, I think it would be competent in you, Sir, to decide whether or not we are dealing with a department when dealing with "Agriculture Generally." I would like your decision, as I suggested last night, as to whether there are two departments, namely, the Lands Department and the Department of Agriculture. If we look at the way which the Estimates are printed we find that the Department of Lands starts off with Item No. 1, and goes on consecutively to the end of the department. When the Department of Agriculture comes along it again starts with Item No. 1, and goes on to Item No. 77. Suppose that the Estimates of the Minister for Mines and Railways were put before the Committee in the same way, that is to say, "Minister for Mines £46,000, and Minister for Railways £49,000," would it be argued that they were both under the

department and that therefore there could not be two discussions? It is only because these departments of Lands and of Agriculture are somewhat allied that this confusion has arisen. I take it they are two distinct departments, that we are now dealing with the first vote in the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, and that as it is a distinct department, hon. members in Committee are only entitled to speak once on the general discussion. I concur entirely with the arguments used by the member for Kanowna, and I think they are unanswerable. If you, Sir, decide that the Department of Agriculture is a separate department, that closes the discussion, and the rule set out in Standing Order 386a should apply.

Mr. Harrison: It would appear from the Chairman's ruling that if a department has any branches the discussion should follow the lines of a second reading debate on the first item, and that a member should speak only once, but if there are no branches, then the discussion shall follow the lines of a Committee discussion. It seems that we can only deal with the items, and not with the general Department of Agriculture. If that is to be pursued, especially to-day, it will deprive many members who have spoken on the Lands Department, but who have reserved themselves to speak on the Agriculture Department, strictly on the understanding that they would be allowed to do so.

The Minister for Mines: They should be allowed to speak once on the general debate, and as often as they like on items.

Mr. Harrison: Exactly. I wish to be clear on the matter.

Mr. Money: I wish to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the matter of the "Division." Possibly the mere fact that we have been dealing with "Division X," might have led hon. members to conclude that that is the departmental number. But that figure "X," has nothing whatever to do with the department; it is merely a division of the Estimates. To my mind it is perfectly clear that these are separate and distinct departments. Divisions of the Estimates have nothing at all to do with the Standing Orders.

Mr. Pickering: In reply to the member for Kanowna, let me quote the following from the report of the Standing Orders Committee, dated the 4th November, 1913:—

In these two cases the Committee think it advisable that the rules of debate in the House, which have generally been followed in practice, should be enforced by amendment of the Standing Orders. They therefore recommend the adoption of the following new Standing Order to stand as 386a.

These provisions were inserted in the Standing Orders with the express object of confining the debate to one speech on the general discussion.

Mr. Speaker: I am not inclined to give my ruling on this question, inasmuch as I feel that the Chairman of Committees is more anxious to obtain an expression of the opinion of the House on the question how the debate

should be conducted on the Estimates, than to have his ruling strictly adhered to. That is what I believe. The Chairman of Committees has made his point in these words:—"I hold that it does not apply to a department which has one single vote, such as 'Agriculture Generally, £49,786.' He previously said that it would apply only to the Premier's Department, the Colonial Secretary's Department, and other similar departments. To take the Colonial Secretary's Department, there is a total of £507,065, and the first vote is "Colonial Secretary's Office, £28,894." I take it that the Minister in charge of that vote would explain to the House the administration of the department. The whole of the votes and the whole of his department would be discussed in that opening speech. Hon. members then would have the right to speak, and the Minister would have the right to reply, and that would close the debate on that vote. After that hon. members go on to items, when Standing Order 372 would apply—that is, that in Committee members may speak more than once to the same question. Paragraph (b) of Standing Order 386 is very clear in regard to a department similar to the Colonial Secretary's Department or the Premier's Office, providing, as it does, that a general discussion on the administration of one department shall be held on the first vote of that department, and that in both cases the reply of the Minister shall close the debate. If we take the first vote, members can discuss the whole of the Estimates of the department in one speech. The only person who has the right to two speeches is the Minister introducing the Estimates. That being so, the strong point made by the Chairman of Committees is that as the Agricultural Vote is the first vote, and as there is no other vote following, as is the case in the Premier's Department and in other departments, Standing Order 372 applies and members can speak as often as they please. That is the position taken up by the Chairman of Committees. I do not know whether I am competent to decide whether because there is only one vote that vote is the first vote, or that because there are no other votes that vote cannot be the first. Let us assume that there was an order of this House that the first man to enter the Chamber after a given time should be prosecuted, and that some one man entered the Chamber and the person who was to decide the question of prosecution stood by for an hour or so and watched that man without any other person coming in. Then suppose the person watching the assumed intruder said to him, "Nobody else has come into the Chamber, and so you are not the first man to enter the Chamber, and therefore you can go away." That would appear foolish. I do not know whether that attitude can be taken up under this Standing Order.

Hon. T. Walker: May I suggest the question is whether it is the general discussion or not—not whether it is a first, or a second, or a third vote?

Mr. Speaker: If I were giving my ruling on the Standing Order, I certainly should say that the ruling of the Chairman of Committees cannot be supported. But as I know that the

Chairman of Committees is anxious to obtain an expression of opinion from the House, I would infinitely prefer to take some course by which the House could express its opinion without my having to uphold the Chairman's ruling for that purpose. The House would then decide by dissenting, or not dissenting, from my ruling. There is a difference of opinion among hon. members as to whether the position taken up last night is correct. But we now know that the Chairman of Committees is anxious to have the point decided. As I said before, I certainly would not uphold his ruling.

Mr. Holman: Was not a ruling given on the point last night?

Mr. Speaker: Not on this point. There was some confusion as to how far the debate ranged—whether over the whole of the two votes, or not. The position is clear to-day; and in order to test the feeling of the House, and to afford the Chairman of Committees an opportunity of knowing the feeling of the House, or of the Committee over which he presides, I will support his ruling for that purpose. But I wish hon. members to know that this is **not my opinion**, and that if I were to give an independent ruling it would be otherwise. My desire is that the Chairman of Committees should obtain an expression of the opinion of the House.

Mr. Maley: Would it not be better for you, Mr. Speaker, to give a ruling?

Mr. Speaker: If the House is anxious to have my ruling, I will give it. But I would prefer that the House should decide.

Hon. T. Walker: If you give your ruling and the House does not dissent from it, that means that the House approves of your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Under those conditions I would give my ruling; but I would prefer that the House should decide. I do not wish the House to uphold my ruling if hon. members think I am wrong.

Hon. T. Walker: The House thinks you are right, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I certainly cannot support the ruling given by the Chairman of Committees in this case.

Committee resumed.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [5.20]: I desire to bring to the notice of the Government the serious possibility of an invasion of this State by a new pest—the Anglian sparrow. I hope the Government will act in the matter with a little more promptitude and effect than has been the case in connection with the rabbit pest. It is some considerable time since the question of the sparrow was brought to the attention of the Agricultural Department, but they have not treated it with that seriousness which the threat of invasion warrants. On the 2nd November, 1916, the Advisory Council of Science and Industry, Melbourne, wrote to the Western Australian Secretary of that Committee as follows:—

The question of the introduction of sparrows into Western Australia has recently received the attention of my committee.

As you are doubtless aware, the English sparrow causes considerable loss to the farmers in the Eastern States of Australia by feeding on wheat. Up to the present it has not been introduced into Western Australia, but it has been suggested that the construction of the Transcontinental Railway may afford it the means of traversing the belt of dry country which has, up to the present, proved a barrier to the westward extension of its range. The Commonwealth Railways Department was asked by my committee to make inquiries from the officers in charge of the various construction camps and depôts on the South Australian section of the railway between Port Augusta and the railhead, as to whether English sparrows have been observed at any of these places. A reply has been received stating that no sparrows have been observed west of Port Augusta. It is not, of course, known whether the observations were made carefully and efficiently. The Executive desires me to inform you as to what has been done, and to suggest that possibly your committee may consider the matter of sufficient importance to recommend your State Government to communicate with the Commonwealth Government on the matter.

The letter was referred by the local secretary of the committee to the Under Secretary for Agriculture, on the 29th November, 1916, as follows:—

The attention of this committee has been drawn by the executive committee to the question of the possible introduction of sparrows into Western Australia by means of the Transcontinental Railway. The information received is that no sparrows have been observed, as yet, west of Port Augusta. It is thought that perhaps the matter might be of sufficient importance to justify the Government in communicating with the Commonwealth Government on the matter. I am directed to bring these facts under your notice.

The matter having been brought to the attention of the Agricultural Department, one would have thought that some action would be taken. However, the thing appears to have followed the usual methods of circumlocution through the departments, and to have undergone the usual process of pigeon-holing. On the 5th December, 1916, the Under Secretary for Agriculture advises that the matter is being brought under Mr. Crawford's notice. Mr. Crawford is the Chief Inspector of Rabbits and Vermin; and I presume it is logical to class the sparrow as vermin. Mr. Crawford stated that the sparrows were not likely to come along the railway line, but that he had had it reported to him that they were coming along the coast where there was settlement, and that they were then within 30 miles of the border. At the date of the communication made by the Advisory Council of Science and Industry, namely, the 2nd November, 1916, the sparrows were at Port Augusta, roughly, 400 or 500 miles from our border. The source of Mr. Crawford's information is not disclosed by the file. The mat-

ter was then lost sight of until March, 1917, nine months afterwards, when the Advisory Council in Melbourne again wrote to the local committee and drew attention to the matter and called for a report from the Under Secretary for Agriculture, and this is the reply dated 16th May, 1917—

In further reply to your letter of the 5th ult., relative to the possibility of invasion of this State by sparrows, I have the honour by direction to inform you that it is realised that sparrows are a great pest in Australia, but it is not thought that the adoption of the suggestions made in your communication would bring about any practical result.

It is reasonable to suppose this pest is advancing along the Transcontinental line and some action ought to have been taken in conjunction with the Commonwealth railway authorities. They ought to have been asked to note how these birds were travelling along the line and advise this department, but there the matter rested. The Agricultural Department has no further notice of this matter and it is rather ludicrous to watch the progress of the question in the department. It was brought to the notice of the Honorary Minister (Mr. Thomas) who stated on the 22nd August, 1917, in reply to the secretary of the local committee—

I have to acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter of 15th inst. enclosing copy of Captain White's report on the advance made by sparrows along East-West railway, which I have read with interest.

The last phrase is one which the Minister might have used with regard to the programme of a picture show. This dilatory manner in which the threatened invasion of the pest has been treated is perhaps illustrated best by methods always applied in this country. It is similar to what was done in the case of the threatened invasion of the rabbits. If steps had been taken at the right time and the matter tackled on the border, the invasion of the rabbits would have been checked in this country altogether. So in regard to the sparrows. This morning in the "West Australian" there is a letter from a resident of Eucla stating that the sparrows are 30 miles this side of the border. The Advisory Council of Science, in Melbourne, considers that the subject is of sufficient interest on their side of the continent to keep in touch with the matter and see how the sparrows are advancing and they persuaded Captain White, a prominent ornithologist in an honorary capacity, to keep in touch and watch the advance along the Transcontinental railway. During the 12 months of his observations the sparrows have advanced from Port Augusta to Tarcoola, a distance as the crow flies of 250 miles. Therefore it is only logical to suppose that in the course of time if the sparrows are not checked at the various stations they will eventually get here, and that great natural barrier which it was thought would stop the rabbits from ever getting to this State will be conquered by the sparrows in the same way as the rabbits have overcome it. It is logical to assume the department could have got into communication with the officials along the

railway line and asked them to watch the invasion of the sparrows and have given some notice. It is reasonable to suppose that a big flight of sparrows would not get through but a few stragglers might get through if some steps are not taken. A gun and a few cartridges might prevent this. I want to know if the threatened invasion of this pest is to be treated as the rabbit invasion was treated, and I want the assurance of the Minister for Agriculture that he will do his utmost and take some responsibility in this matter. In speaking to the Agricultural vote, I wish to draw the Committee's attention to the management of our wheat pools. I will take as an illustration of the management of the pool entirely the ability applied to that small pool known as the Geraldton Wheat Pool. If the information I have obtained from the files applies in the same proportion to the larger pools, there is some justification for the friction that has existed between our Advisory Committee and the manager of the wheat scheme which eventually resulted in the resignation of Mr. Dean Hammond or his refusal to accept in an advisory capacity any further work in connection with the pools. The total number of bags of wheat in this pool was 3,050. The acquiring agents were Ockerby & Co. who secured 1,600 bags, the Victoria District Flour Milling Co. 1,400, and Dalgety and Co. who obtained 30 bags. In connection with that scheme, an advance of 1s. 6d. a bushel was made on delivery to the acquiring agents and the pool being a small one, should have been quickly realised. On 1st September, 1916—

The CHAIRMAN: I have no desire to stop the hon. member, but there is no item on the Estimates dealing with the wheat pool.

Mr. MALEY: This is a general discussion of the Agricultural Department.

The CHAIRMAN: All right.

Mr. MALEY: On the 1st September, 1916, the Victoria District Flour Milling Company purchased from the scheme 1,600 bags of that wheat which had been acquired by Ockerby & Co. for 2s. 4d. a bushel. On the 1st November, 1916, the wheat marketing committee asked the Victoria Flour Milling Company to quote for the purchase of 4,260 bushels of wheat held by them as acquiring agents as well as for 38 bushels acquired by Dalgety & Co. On the 7th November the officials of the mill replied offering the committee 2s. 4d. a bushel net, that is 2s. 4d. at the stack. On the 10th January, 1917, the manager of the wheat scheme telegraphed to the mill stating that he considered it worth 3s. 9d., that they were willing to take 3s. 6d. rather than shift the wheat from the mill where it was stacked. On the 12th January, the mill wrote withdrawing their offer of 2s. 4d. and asking for instructions for delivery as the wheat had become troublesome to the mill—it had been stacked there for 12 months—on account of weevils. The manager of the scheme had asked them to purchase the wheat right out—there was no talk at any time of any negotiations with the Geraldton mill for the gristing of the wheat—the manager of the scheme asked if they would purchase and asked for a quote. The mill quoted at 2s. 4d. and the manager subse-

quently would not accept less than 3s. 6d., so the mill wrote and told the manager that they could not see their way to purchase at 3s. 6d., and they asked the manager for instructions for delivery as the wheat was becoming a nuisance to them. On the 15th January, 1917, the manager of the wheat marketing committee telegraphed to the Geraldton mill, "Please consign to Northam mill inferior wheat referred to in letter of 12th." That is the letter in which the milling company replied to the manager stating that they could not accept the terms of the scheme to purchase. On the 16th January the general manager's draft on the file to Thomas & Co., Ltd., at Northam is—

In confirmation of the arrangement made with you over the telephone yesterday, the 15th, I issued telegraphic instructions to the Victoria district mill to consign 2,000 bags of inferior wheat to Northam for treatment at the mill either on a gristing basis of 6d. per bushel or alternatively at the option of the scheme at a selling price of 4s. a bushel.

The alternative of a selling price of 4s. a bushel is fixed in the Advisory Committee's mind by the minutes of the meeting of the committee of 19th July, which is as follows:—

The meeting recommends a further advance of 1s. per bushel be paid under pool 1915-16 and asked for an explanation of the apparent difference between the anticipated price of 4s. per bushel Northam for the parcel sent from Geraldton to Northam mill and the amount of 3s. per bushel Geraldton actually realised.

On the 2nd August the advisory committee's minutes stated that the committee decided to wait Mr. Sibbald's—who was apparently away from Perth at the time—return, for a satisfactory explanation of the price realised. On the same date of the meeting of the advisory committee when they could not get a report from the manager who was away, the committee obtained a report from Mr. Child.

Point of Order.

The Minister for Agriculture: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is dealing with the wheat pool which does not appear on these Estimates. It is not a State matter but a Federal matter, and we have nothing to do with it in the Agricultural Department. I should like to know whether we are discussing the ramifications of the wheat pool or those of the Agricultural Department. If we are discussing the wheat pool then there will be no limit to the debate in regard to these matters. I have always understood that in the general discussion on departmental estimates, hon. members could only discuss those general matters which the Estimates themselves embrace.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The administration of wheat pool. The Minister for the time being tural Department, and some of the principal officers of that department also deal with the wheat pool. The Minister for the time being controlling the department is the Minister controlling the Wheat Board, and members can deal with the administration of the wheat pool when dealing with the administration of the Agricultural Department. The Under Secretary

for Agriculture has previously had to carry on communications with respect to the wheat pool, as a branch of that department, and a great deal of the work has to be done by the administrative officers of the department.

Mr. Maley: This is a local pool under the Minister for Agriculture.

The Chairman: I have been asked to decide a point of order.

The Premier: No officers in the Agricultural Department are employed in the wheat pool at all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Under Secretary of the department did some of the work.

Mr. Johnston: There is an item on the Estimates showing a recoup by the Commonwealth of £500. I should like to know if this is a recoup in connection with some of our officers regarding the operations of the wheat pool? If this is not the case, for what reason do the Commonwealth authorities pay us £500? They ought to pay something for the important administrative work which they are getting, not only from the Minister, but from the leading officials connected with the Department of Agriculture.

The Chairman: The member for Greenough is in order in discussing this matter.

Committee resumed.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [5.50]: It ought to be kept in mind that if the manager of the Wheat Scheme had wanted the wheat gristed into flour, instead of dragging it all the way from Geraldton to Northam, he could have entered into negotiations with the Geraldton mill and had it gristed there. Instead of doing that, he only enters into the question of the purchase of the wheat by the Geraldton Flour Mill. The mill only offered 2s. 4d. a bushel for the wheat but, as he wanted 3s. 6d. a bushel, there was no business done. The manager then simply sends away to Geraldton and asks the mill to transfer the wheat to Northam, because he had a telephonic communication from the Northam mill and intended to grist the wheat there. The point in the mind of the Advisory Committee was that the Northam mill had entered into a contract to buy the wheat at 4s. a bushel at Northam. Referring to the meeting of the Advisory Committee on the 2nd August, when Mr. Sibbald was away, the secretary of the board reported to the committee that Mr. Child, who was the inspector of agencies, had explained that Mr. Sibbald had issued instructions that, in order to arrange for a substantial and early dividend on the supplementary pool, 3s., Geraldton could be taken as sufficient for the purpose of the payment of a dividend, as the price that would be actually realised after all the products had been disposed of would not be less than 3s., and possibly more. From the answer to the question I asked in the House on the early assembling of Parliament, it appears that this pool has been practically finalised, and that it has only realised altogether 2s. 6d. per bushel. With capable management the pool could have realised at least another 6d. a bushel for these unfortunate farmers who held this class of wheat. On the 3rd August, 1917, when Mr. Sibbald returned and the matter was brought under his notice, he minuted to the Honorary Minister (Hon. C. F. Baxter), under

the heading of "Geraldton Shrivelled Wheat," as follows—

At the meeting of the Wheat Marketing Advisory Committee held on Friday, 31st August, it was recommended, "That in view of the correspondence between the scheme and the mill, as disclosed by departmental files, the Northam mill should be called upon to pay for the inferior wheat gristed ex Geraldton at the rate of 4s. per bushel, Northam.

This is the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, and it can be gathered that the committee had fixed in their mind the question of the wheat being sold to the Northam mill at 4s. per bushel. The minute continues—

This advice is not wise, and if it were so, cannot now be followed. Unfortunately, owing to my absence in the country on Friday I could not attend the meeting. Had I been present my explanation would probably have affected the committee's opinion. The circumstances of the case are these: The Geraldton mill obtained a quantity of the inferior wheat of season 1915-16, part of which was sold by my predecessors to the mill at 2s. 4d. per bushel.

When the wheat was first delivered the scheme sold wheat to the Geraldton mill at 2s. 4d. per bushel, but 12 months after, when the wheat had become weevil infested, the scheme refused an offer of 2s. 4d. and wanted 3s. 6d. a bushel. They were quite right in wanting more because the wheat was worth more, but it was worth more than 2s. 4d. in the first place. The minute continues—

When the balance came to be disposed of, I obtained a small sample from Mr. Sutton, and estimated it to be worth about 3s. 6d. as compared to F.A.Q. at 4s. 9d. per bushel, Geraldton. I offered it to the Geraldton mill at that figure. They declined to accept, as they had a perfect right to do, and asked for instructions for the removal of the wheat. As no parcel of wheat can be sold and bought satisfactorily by so small a sample, and is subject, in any case, to adjustment on delivery, and as it was eminently desirable to ascertain the true value of this shrivelled wheat, I made an arrangement with the Northam mill to grist this wheat on account of the scheme. The price of 4s. was named as an alternative, being founded on the 3s. 6d. I had asked from the Geraldton mill, plus the cost of railage to Northam. It was not anticipated that 4s. would be accepted by the mill, nor was it, their letter of 24th January being an acceptance of the gristing proposition only. As a matter of fact, the price I asked from Geraldton mill, 3s. 6d., was realised by the wheat when so gristed at Northam, in spite of the deterioration due to the delay in despatch to that mill. Under these circumstances the advice of the Advisory Committee cannot be acted upon, and it is, I think, founded on a misinterpretation of the

correspondence as disclosed by the departmental files. (Sgd.) J. Sibbald, General Manager, Wheat Marketing Scheme. The Honorary Minister, in reply, minuted to the general manager of the scheme on the 5th September as follows:—

Referring to the decision of the Advisory Board, items 4 and 6 of the agenda, the committee desire that the Northam mill should be called upon to pay 4s. per bushel for inferior wheat ex Geraldton. There is nothing on the file to support this recommendation.

It is only reasonable to suppose, in the face of business being conducted in this manner, that the position of the members of the Advisory Board would become absolutely untenable. They were under the impression all through, in connection with the business, that the wheat was being transferred to Northam for sale at 4s. per bushel; but the Minister, in reply to the manager of the scheme, states that there is nothing on the file to support that recommendation. I leave the matter to the Committee. If that sort of business has appertained to the conduct of a small pool containing only 3,000 bags of wheat, I think we have very justifiable grounds for believing that there is cause for serious apprehension in regard to the management of the larger pool. Eventually this wheat realised 3s. 5½d. at Northam, gross.

Mr. Willcock: You say it should have realised more?

Mr. MALEY: It should have realised more. If the wheat was going to be gristed by a mill, it should have been gristed in Geraldton, where it was stacked at the local mill, instead of being railed to Northam at a cost of 4d. or more per bushel. I think the Geraldton mill was prepared to grist the wheat at the same price as that charged by Thomas & Co., of Northam. The pool should have realised 3s. 3d. per bushel instead of 2s. 6d. if this had been done from the commencement.

Mr. Willcock: Do you think that the Geraldton Flour Mill wanted to make a profit?

Mr. MALEY: Certainly. In the first place the Geraldton mill was asked to make an offer for 1,600 bags of wheat held by Messrs. Ockerby, Ltd. The offer of 2s. 4d. a bushel was accepted. The wheat was worth more, but the company was asked to quote for it and its offer was accepted. When 12 months later the manager of the scheme wanted 3s. 6d. for the same class of wheat which had deteriorated in the meantime, the Geraldton mill, having enough work of its own to do, did not want the business. At the same time I think the company would have been prepared to grist the wheat on the same terms as those on which the Northam flour mill gristed it. If the wheat had been gristed at Geraldton the scheme would have saved the 4d. or 5d. per bushel that it cost to rail it from Geraldton to Northam, and the other charges incidental thereto. I wish to know what the policy of the Government is in regard to the administration of the Yandanooka Estate. This season there were between 400 and 500 acres of

crop which were fed off by cattle, although there was a superabundance of feed all over the estate. There was no necessity to put stock upon the crop. It could have been left for summer feed, because the crop was adjacent to water, and would have afforded very good holding ground during the summer months. It was fed off when the grasses and the remainder of the estate were practically green, and had not dried up. This estate is going back to scrub. There has been no suckering done during the past three or four years, and all the rung country now is rapidly going back to its natural state. The department have at the present time between 300 and 400 cattle pasturing at Dandarragan, near Moora, for which agistment is paid. This is on account of the fact that Yandanooka was so badly managed that the stock were allowed to eat out all the feed on the estate near water during the winter months, feed which could have been utilised in the summer months. Another matter is that some 18 months or two years ago the department purchased a fine Clydesdale stallion from the Chief Inspector of Stock.

The Premier: The cattle at Dandarragan are from the North-West.

Mr. MALEY: But they should be running at Yandanooka, which is the depôt for the stock.

The Premier: It will not carry all the stock.

Mr. MALEY: With good management it certainly will.

The Premier: All the cattle are at Yandanooka now.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you contend that paying for agistment is waste of money?

Mr. MALEY: Yes, because of the recent rains which have provided water. It is a fact, however, that the Government have been agisting stock at Dandarragan. With regard to the Clydesdale stallion, this animal was purchased for considerably over £400.

The Minister for Mines: Where is he?

Mr. MALEY: At Yandanooka.

The Minister for Mines: On a point of order, we are not discussing the Yandanooka estate, which comes under the heading of "Business Undertakings," and appears in a subsequent part of the Estimates.

Mr. Holman: What difference does it make whether the hon. member discusses it now or later? There have been too many points of order from the Ministerial bench.

The Premier: Yandanooka is partly under one department and partly under another, but it is specially dealt with in "Business Undertakings."

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may criticise the estate in connection with the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. MALEY: The Clydesdale stallion to which I was referring is too superior a type of animal. He requires a special attendant at Yandanooka, and it is an extraordinary thing that the fee for his services was fixed at ten guineas, which is more than is asked for blood horses. Such a fee is ridiculously high, and the object the Government had in view could have been effected if a good ser-

viceable utility animal had been bought and turned out in the paddocks rather than to purchase an expensive horse for the purpose of exhibiting him at shows. The fee for a serviceable Clydesdale should not be more than two or three guineas. The affairs of this estate are in anything but good order, and I hope the Minister will do something to remedy that condition of things. If the Government made a bad bargain that fact should be admitted, and the estate should be thrown open for selection.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [6.7]: The vote is of such importance that no member should feel any diffidence about speaking on it, particularly if he can make suggestions which are likely to be of benefit to the industry. There has been no greater necessity in the history of the world than that which exists at the present time for raising food supplies. The making of munitions, the building of ships, and the actual fighting have taken men away from many avocations, and especially has this been the case in connection with the agricultural industry. Consequently, this industry is languishing everywhere. The position so far as food supplies in Europe are concerned presents a splendid opportunity for Australia to come in and make good, an opportunity such as has never before appeared. But with regard to the industry in Western Australia, the member for Kalgoorlie the other evening quoted figures to show that it is going back rapidly, and it is in this connection that I wish to speak, and to ask whether something cannot be done in the way of reorganising the industry. The Prime Minister of Great Britain stated definitely not so long ago that increased production from the plough was our only hope. He said that whatever might befall us in the future no Government would ever again neglect agriculture. The war had taught us that the preservation of this essential industry was as important a part of national defence as was the maintenance of the army and the navy. After that memorable speech Canada set about on a campaign of production and thrift. The Agricultural Department, in conjunction with the Education Department, conducted a campaign, and professors and experts travelled throughout the country inculcating into the minds of the people the ideas of production and thrift. I have had handbooks sent to me dealing with every phase of the subject. Recently, too, a Japanese statesman told the world that whilst wheat would win the war, sheep would save the world. He meant, I take it, mutton and wool. So far as we are concerned, this opens up an interesting problem. The important fact is before us that we should make the most of the opportunity which is being presented to us in reorganising our industries, in putting into operation every factor which will bring about increased production. The Royal Commission on Agriculture has made a suggestion that a permanent board of agriculture, free from political control, should be constituted, to bring about a continuity of policy.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The success of it would depend on its personnel.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The time is opportune for us to seriously consider this question. It is time we abandoned the haphazard methods of the past, of one Agricultural Minister replacing another and upsetting the policy of his predecessor.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But you have your permanent officers all the time.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not know whether hon. members have read the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

Mr. Munsie: There has been no more glaring case of want of continuity of policy than that of the recent uprooting of the Brunswick orchard.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Remembering the complexity of the various problems which face Ministers for Agriculture when they take office, problems beginning, perhaps with the potato growers at Albany, extending through the wheat belt, fruit growing, the possibilities of the North-West, so eloquently descanted upon by the hon. member for Gascoyne, and the unexploited tropical lands, the tariff and a hundred and one other things, it is not to be wondered at that there is not a continuity of policy.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Before tea I was dealing with the question of continuity of policy. Many times when I have been speaking members have interjected and asked for some constructive criticism, and I have always endeavoured to give the House the benefit of anything constructive that suggests itself to me. I want members to listen to an idea which I have in regard to the formation of a permanent board of agriculture. In the formation of this board, the duties of the Minister for Agriculture should be to obtain, supply, and introduce any legislation which in the opinion of the board of trustees is necessary. On the permanent board of agriculture each member should be appointed for five years expecting to ensure continuity of policy, and it would consist of (a) Minister for Agriculture as chairman, (b) a nominee of the associated banks, (c) the managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank, (d) three nominees of the Farmers and Settlers' Association representing wheat, sheep, fruit, and mixed farming, (e) the managing trustee of the board of agriculture. This board would meet twice, or more often, during the year for one week, and would be paid according to the arrangements made, but on directorship lines. The managing trustee would protect the industry from the whims and fads of Ministers, would allocate supply for 15 years according to the developmental policy determined upon by the board, to approve of working plants of agricultural experts, and to keep himself au fait with agricultural activities throughout the world, such as development, marketing, shipping, bulk handling, and agricultural education, etcetera, while the agricultural experts, inspectors, etcetera, would be under the direction of the board. The manager of the experimental State farms and agricultural colleges, etcetera, would carry out, approved

working plants, prepare preliminary working plans, undertake all executive work in their own sphere, and to keep in direct touch with the Agricultural Department, or preferably with the managing trustee. Before adjourning for tea I heard interjections made in regard to there being no poverty in the country districts, and members pointed to the findings of the Royal Commission of Agriculture in support of their remarks. My experience is that the man who is suffering from poverty would not go before a Royal Commission to advertise the fact. These men who are suffering are generally very careful to keep in the background. What is keeping a great many men on the land to-day is the 9s. allowance made by the Industries Assistance Board. I have in my hand various papers and receipts from the Industries Assistance Board that have been given me. I asked for them on behalf of a gentleman who is well known in the House. He has had a very large portion of his crop destroyed by rabbits. His payments for water amount to £40, rents £50, while for roads board rates he pays £3 4s. 8d., and his interest amounts to £21 11s. 6d., making a total of £114 16s. 2d. before starting to pay wages, buy seed and other necessities. Again Mr. Mouritzen, a well known hotel keeper in town gave evidence before the select committee on rabbits, and he brought under our notice the settlement that has taken place at Goomarin Rock. That gentleman has invested some £7,000 on his property for his sons. Two boys have gone to the Front, one has been killed and the other is now "doing his bit" in the trenches. After six years Mr. Mouritzen has arrived at the conclusion that wheat farming in that district is not a success. Near by is another settler named Gibson, who has practically been eaten out by the rabbits. There are eight or ten settlers in the Goomalling district fighting under almost impossible conditions, and the question now arises in my mind, rather than pay 9s. a day would not the department save money by bringing these men in and placing them on land not so far removed. A man named Gordon, of Kondinin, is remaining on his block by receiving the allowance which is paid to him. Another man named Trevor, of Mt. Marshall, came to town this week. He may not be in abject poverty, but he is in a bad way. Those who say there is no poverty amongst the agriculturists in this State are stating what is contrary to fact. I want to bring under the notice of members one important loss which has accrued to the settlers. I refer to the large mortality which occurs amongst farmers' horses. Members may not think this a big matter, but it is thought so important by the Royal Agricultural Commission that they presented a special interim report to those concerned, directing attention to this particular. No one seems to realise the great mortality there is amongst farmers' horses. I have approached the Attorney General and the Premier to see if something cannot be done by an amendment of the Veterinary Surgeons Act, and I find that nothing can be done, so they say. At Bruce Rock during the past four years anything between 160 and 200 horses have died

through the want of veterinary skill in that district.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They have a good man there.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, and that man has done excellent work. I do not know what the loss has been but when we reckon horses at £25 a head it will be seen that there has been a great loss in that regard, anything between £4,000 and £5,000. To allow such a state of things to continue is bad for the farmers and a disgrace to the authorities. There is a settler at Bruce Rock, I refer to Mr. Lander, who was a member of this House, whose veterinary skill is beyond question. He has given 89 days and in many cases nights attending to the sickness amongst farmers' horses. He gives attention and advice free on his own farm as well, and he has given lectures on many occasions to the farmers. He has offered, if the settlers or the Government would erect a shelter on his farm, to treat horses there if the feed for the horses is supplied. Mr. Lander has now come to the end of his tether. I know the Government sent a paltry £5 worth of drugs, but that went nowhere and he has practically got to that stage when he cannot afford to go about attending to other persons' horses, as he has been doing, and is still doing. I do not know why something cannot be done to place him under the Veterinary Surgeons Act. When I was in the Old Country on my uncle's farm, if a horse or a cow or any animal was taken ill, we had a veterinary surgeon to go to, and there was also what is called a farrier in the town and we invariably went to the farrier because he was more skilful than the veterinary surgeon. We can alter the Dentists Act and the Legal Practitioners Act and other Acts, but it seems strange to me that we cannot amend the Veterinary Surgeons Act so as to provide some means by which such men as I have mentioned could attend to settlers' horses. I have another man in my mind, Mr. Hegarty, of Kwolyn, who is capable, but who is not allowed to practise. He may do the work for nothing but he cannot afford to do that. I do not know where Messrs. Weir & Co.'s objection come in. If it was owing to the shaking up that Mr. Lander gave to those gentlemen over the tuberculosis and swine fever trouble—as I am given to understand—if that is true, it is a shameful reason. I shall endeavour to see if some amendment cannot be brought forward to make these men's services available and extend their sphere of usefulness in the country districts.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [7.43]: I feel as the member representing the great South-West that it would ill-become me if I did not give some expression of my views in connection with that vast territory. When we think that the development of that territory is part and parcel of the policy of the Government, we should look into the votes and see what we can do in regard to them. When we look at the vote for Agriculture we find with regard to the Government Pathologist, that we have lost in this State the services of one of the best men in Australia, and I think the junior officer who had replaced him and who was

working in conjunction with the Government Analyst, is also leaving the State. Therefore I hope the Minister will be able to throw some light on this important question when he speaks. It has turned out that, instead of economy being effected by the loss of the services of these officers, an additional expense has been involved in providing extra accommodation in the Government Analyst's office. In regard to the development of the South-West, there is on the Estimates a sum for the provision of a Commissioner. But instead of having a Commissioner conversant with the various phases of agriculture in the South-West we have at present a gentleman who was appointed, in the first instance, Commissioner of the Wheat Belt. In their interim report the Royal Commission on Agriculture have said—

Action in the past, which kept the wheat expert of the department busy in the City, instead of attending to the duties for which he was presumably engaged (i.e., instructing the farmer in the best methods of cereal growing), was certainly a grave mistake. Recommendation: (a) That the methods of this department should be reorganised. Lectures should be followed up by practical demonstration by competent field officers working among and in conjunction with the farmer.

If we are to properly develop the South-West it must be by the use of expert, competent men. In the past we have had experts who devoted most of their time to lecturing in the City and in the various towns. Instead of this we should provide experts who are also competent farmers to visit various properties and give private illustrations of the best farming methods.

Mr. Smith: Do you deem the Brunswick State Farm a failure?

Mr. PICKERING: Absolutely. I have not visited that farm, but from the reports of various practical farmers who have been there I am of opinion that the farm has not been run in the best interests of the State. Personally, I am in favour of converting it into a stud farm for dairying purposes. This, I am sure, would result in considerable advantage to the dairying industry. I think also the various State farms should be used as a means of educating returned soldiers anxious to go on the land. There must be an interval between the return of those men from the Front and their acquiring of properties, and this interval, I think, could well be spent studying agriculture at a State farm. Certain Ministers have complained that members put too many questions to the various departments. But I take it members do not evolve questions out of idle curiosity. I will refer to the question of the Brunswick State orchard, not with any feeling of antagonism towards the Minister controlling the orchard, but because I honestly believe that some serious mistake was made in the hasty eradication of that orchard. Some time ago I asked the Minister, had any alternative course been considered before uprooting the orchard. The answer was "Yes." But what that alternative course was we were not told. It is currently rumoured that a certain farmer was prepared to pay £300 per annum for the orchard.

This was even published in the Press. I have also been informed that an offer was made to purchase the Brunswick State Farm.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Do you know who made the offer?

Mr. PICKERING: No.

The Colonial Treasurer: I wish it had been made to me.

Mr. PICKERING: One of the main reasons given for the eradication of this orchard was that the soil was not suitable. That has been endorsed by the Minister. We were told that there was die-back in the orchard, and that it was owing to the unsuitability of the soil. But we know that die-back is common all over the State.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It is not a fruit growing district where die-back occurs.

Mr. PICKERING: Now we get a new reason. We are told that this orchard did not flourish because the climate was against it, that the coastal climate is not suited to fruit growing. But Brunswick is not on the coast at all.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): It is on the coastal plain.

Mr. PICKERING: If the fruit industry is to be condemned on account of climatic influences, many districts in which the industry is at present being successfully carried on will be doomed. We have been officially told that the orchard was five years and six years old. It is not fair to judge an orchard on five years or six years growth. We cannot expect an orchard to come to full bearing within that period. We were told that the Honorary Minister and Mr. Wickens spent two days in going through the orchard, and had decided to root it up. Apparently, they judged the orchard on this year's bearing. Yet it is known to all fruitgrowers in the South-West that this year has not been a fair criterion. All stone fruits have been practically a failure, and Mr. Ecclestone, of Boyanup, has lost 100 stone fruit trees this year through excessive wet. Therefore, clearly, it was not fair to judge the Brunswick State orchard on this year's bearing.

The Colonial Treasurer: Is it fair to go on spending a thousand a year in those circumstances?

Mr. PICKERING: I think a thousand a year an excessive estimate to fix for an orchard of that acreage.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): It is not an estimate; it is the actual cost.

Mr. PICKERING: Then somebody is at fault, probably the manager of the orchard. We know that they had one manager for the orchard and another for the farm, just as they had separate plant, separate horses, etc., for the farm and for the orchard. I think there must have been something wrong with the orchard if the place was costing a thousand a year. Yet we are not told that the manager was removed.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Three managers have been removed, one after another. The department was blaming the managers instead of the orchard.

Mr. PICKERING: I think some new system should be adopted by the department in regard

to the opening up of the South-West. It is evident that the virgin country down there is an almost impossible proposition for any man without extensive means. In considering the appointment, which I hope the Minister purposes to fill, I trust he will take into consideration an entirely new scheme for developing the South-West. We have down there vast areas not yet touched. If we are to give the settlers a chance of making good, we must go in for a new scheme, and I feel that the solution lies in providing partially improved farms. Of course it will take some years to put this scheme into effect, but I am sure it will be found to be the best of all. I hope the Honorary Minister in charge of this department will take into consideration the urgent necessity for giving effect to some of the promises made by the Premier to open up the South-West. I desire to congratulate the Premier upon initiating the policy of bacon factories on the co-operative system. It will be my endeavour to get the people within my electorate at Busselton to take advantage of this proposition, and start a co-operative bacon factory in conjunction with the butter factory that is about to be opened on Saturday next.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [8.1]: I wish to bring under the notice of the Committee the waste of money to the State due to the work of the Royal Commission appointed in connection with the agricultural industry. When we find a report of these dimensions, and consider the cost of printing, and other expenditure, we must come to the conclusion that this Royal Commission constitutes a waste of money.

The CHAIRMAN: This question comes under the Estimates of the Colonial Treasurer, and an opportunity will be offered the hon. member of discussing it when we reach those Estimates. In the meantime I think we had better confine ourselves to matters which are before the Chair.

Mr. FOLEY: Although I do not wish to question your ruling, Sir, I desire to speak on the report of this Commission as it affects the agricultural industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. FOLEY: I have no wish to waste the time of the House in this matter, and will deal with it later. The member for York brought up the question of veterinary work in this State. I think I am right in speaking upon that question, because there is an item connected with it which comes into the Estimates of the Agricultural Department. There are many farmers and others in the State who at present are suffering some injustice through a sufficient number of veterinary officers not being available for them.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Many of the veterinary surgeons have gone to the war.

Mr. FOLEY: I know that. There is one gentleman to whom I wish particularly to refer, and that is Mr. Titus Lander, who at one time represented the East Perth electorate in this Chamber. Everyone who knows that gentleman knows what good work he has done in regard to the care of horses, which have been suffering either from disease or from injuries due to ill-treatment. Mr. Lander is now in the Bruce Rock district, and although in most

straitened circumstances, is making use of money, which he should be putting into the development of his farm, in assisting farmers in the locality with their stock. I do contend that a greater amount should be set apart on the Estimates to provide for more veterinary officers than there are now in the State, if only for the purpose of looking after the stock which has been supplied by the Government until such time as it has been paid for by the farmers using it.

Mr. Smith: In their own interests.

Mr. FOLEY: Exactly. Mr. Lander made an application to come under the Veterinary Act, but owing to his own honesty he was not permitted to do so. When he went before the veterinary board, which is a very close corporation, he was representing the East Perth electorate in Parliament, and when asked if he was making his living out of veterinary work, he replied in the negative, and explained that he was a member of Parliament. He was honest in his reply, although at the time he was representing this electorate he was spending a very large proportion of his Parliamentary salary in prosecuting his good work, but the result of his honesty was that he did not become a registered veterinary surgeon. I remember seeing him in Albany on one occasion indulging in the pastime that we were all indulging in, and leaving that pastime in order to assist a man who was in trouble with a horse which had been burned by fire. Mr. Lander has made a practice of spending every penny he could get, which we others usually spend in sport and amusement, in the interest of horses, and the men who own them. His knowledge of veterinary work is equal, if not superior, to that found in most certificated veterinary surgeons in this State, and yet because of the absolute honesty of the man and because of the law of the land being what it is to-day, he is not a registered veterinary surgeon. The war has taken out of the State nine-tenths of our veterinary surgeons. No doubt they are wanted at the front, and we should say nothing against the departure of these men. When a farmer sends a horse to a veterinary hospital in Perth, although over the door there may be the name of a certificated veterinary surgeon, in most cases it is an uncertificated man who really does the work. I question whether there is any veterinary hospital in Perth in which most of the work is not done by registered men. Mr. Bates is in a veterinary hospital, and unregistered, and the man who employs Mr. Bates is a fully qualified man. I venture to say that if we took away from the veterinary surgeons the work of filing horses' teeth they would not be able to make a living out of the other work that is left. It is their practice to go to the farmers and tell them that their horses' teeth need filing, and they charge whatever they can get out of them for doing the work. This is how most of these men earn a living. In my opinion a great deal more skill is required in the filing of horses' teeth than is possessed by a great many men now doing the work. If the Government can in any way assist men who, like Mr. Lander, are doing so much good in their districts, it is their duty to do it. It is also their duty to look after their own assets, such as the horses which have been

given to farmers, or have been purchased by settlers out of the money they have had from the Agricultural Bank or the Industries Assistance Board. Mr. Lander and others like him, because of the peculiar regulations governing veterinary surgeons, men who are just as sincere and perhaps just as good at their work as, if not better than, registered veterinary surgeons, are debarred from giving to the farmers the assistance which they would otherwise be able to give. If there is a man in a district like Mr. Lander the Government should provide him with sufficient drugs and instruments to enable him to carry on this good work, and should remunerate him in some way for the loss of time incurred in carrying out these special duties, especially when they involve taking him off his holding. I am very sincere over this matter. The Government should keep an eye on the men who do not understand the care of horses, and should also safeguard the interests of the taxpayers of the State by looking after their own security. The regulations governing veterinary surgeons in the State should be altered in the direction I have indicated. It is a farce for any member or Minister to say that the Act cannot be altered. We can do anything in this Chamber if we can get a majority with us. It is only necessary to alter three words of the Act to carry out what I believe should be done.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is another Chamber which might block us.

Mr. FOLEY: I am certain that a majority of members in another place would be heartily in favour of granting licenses to such men as I have mentioned. I wish to voice my protest against Parliamentary inaction relative to the Veterinary Surgeons Act. In my opinion, if the Government do not come to the assistance of Mr. Lander, it is up to the farmers residing in the districts which he visits, to do something for him on his farm in return for the kindly humanitarian work he has done for them. If we had in this country more men of the calibre of Mr. Lander, our live stock would be in better condition. I wish to emphasise that the only thing standing in Mr. Lander's way is that word "registered" in the Veterinary Surgeons Act.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister—Nelson) [8.17]: Whilst listening to the observations of the member for Sussex, I was somewhat surprised at the absolute lack of knowledge he displayed while dealing with the vexed question of the Brunswick State orchard. He said that he had heard this, and that he believed that. But this is the place for facts. Let the hon. member come along with facts.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The hon. member has to get information.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I shall now give the Committee some facts.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is what the private members of the Committee want. If you had given the facts at the outset, it would have saved much debate.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I have some knowledge of orchard

work. The late Fruit Industries Commissioner, Mr. Moody, evidently considered that I knew something of the subject, that I knew how to grow an orchard, and that I knew how to make an orchard produce fruit—which is the object of an orchard; not to grow wood, but to grow fruit. I hold in my hand a pamphlet published by the late Fruit Industries Commissioner, on every page of which, hon. members will see if they care to look, appears my name and appear photographs of one or more of my orchards. That is to say, on every full page. The late Fruit Industries Commissioner inserted these photographs in a pamphlet which was to be distributed throughout Australia and the Old Country. He inserted them because he wanted to show how orchards should be grown, because he wanted to show that fruit grown in Western Australia was second to none in the world. It was for those reasons he published photographs of my orchards and of my fruit.

Mr. H. Robinson: That does not say much for the rest of the orchards.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): There speaks absolute ignorance. Let me add that I have had the pleasure and the pride of winning the cup presented for the best orchard in the Nelson district; and the Nelson district does not take a back seat even to Mount Barker in the matter of production of fruit.

Mr. H. Robinson: Mount Barker fruit has brought 63s. in London. Can you equal that?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes, and beat it.

Mr. H. Robinson: You have never done it.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): My orchard won the cup as being the most productive, the best conducted, the cleanest, and the best pruned in the Nelson district. That is naturally the orchard which would be chosen by the Fruit Industries Commissioner for the purpose of being photographed to show what Western Australia can accomplish in the way of fruitgrowing.

Mr. H. Robinson: For the purpose of pleasing the Honorary Minister.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Was I a Minister in 1913? The hon. member should go back into his native swamps. Now, here is a map, prepared by the late Fruit Industries Commissioner, showing the lands suitable for the growing of various fruits. Hon. members on looking at that map will see that the Brunswick district is marked as unsuitable for apples, pears, and other fruits of that kind. I say it is an extraordinary thing to find a huge orchard, like this Brunswick State orchard, planted on land declared by the Fruit Industries Commissioner himself to be unsuitable for orchard purposes. He advised other people not to plant in that locality. That was sound advice indeed. So much for that aspect.

Member: The Brunswick State orchard was planted for the purpose of scientific experiment.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Nothing of the kind. I have been charged with acting hastily in this matter. Let me say that before uprooting the orchard I spent two days at the Brunswick State farm with Mr. Wickens, the Chief Inspector of Fruit Industries. Moreover, I had watched that orchard for three years.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The act was premeditated, then.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I visited the orchard with the late Fruit Industries Commissioner in August last, and I told him then that I did not like the look of it. I said, "The orchard is costing £1,000 a year, and you are now coming along for more money to put in concrete drains and other things. The expenditure, in my opinion, is not warranted. What is the revenue going to be?" He replied that he expected the proceeds would cover all working expenses. I said, "That is £1,000 a year. It is absurd; it cannot be done. Let us have something final here. I want bedrock. What do you think the orchard can produce?" Mr. Moody reiterated that the proceeds of the orchard would suffice to cover working expenses. After thinking it over, however, he cut the amount of profit down to £300. There is a bit of a fall—from £1,000 to £300. Still, I was not of the same opinion as Mr. Moody. I again went down to the orchard and had a look round, and I was disgusted with it, disgusted to think that £5,000 of the State's money had been flung away in this fashion. However, I did nothing hastily. I went through the orchard carefully. I had a look, not only at the surface, but at the subsoil—a subsoil which, in many places, I mean in that paddock, within two inches of the surface, and is a hard subsoil, a hard pan. I went round the orchard with Mr. Wickens, who will be conceded, by everyone who knows him, to be the man for the position he is holding to-day. I said to Mr. Wickens, "Now, what is your opinion here? Can we do anything with this orchard? Is there anything we can do to make this a profitable proposition for the State? If it cannot be made a profitable commercial proposition, can we use it for demonstration purposes?" Mr. Wickens replied, "The orchard is only demonstrating the fact that this class of soil is unsuitable for an orchard; and I think the country has already paid sufficient for such a demonstration as that." I asked, "Can we use it in any way whatever for the benefit of the fruitgrowers?" He answered, "I regret that I can offer no suggestion by which this orchard can be made of service to the fruitgrowers, except as regards demonstrating to them the inadvisability of planting orchards of this description in such a soil as this and in such a locality as this." Thereupon I had an estimate made of the fruit in the orchard. I am sorry to say it has been stated in the Press by people who are not sure of their facts, that the manager then in charge of the orchard went round pulling the fruit off the trees. A letter from

that man is on the departmental file, and I have a copy of it here. He characterises the statement that he pulled the fruit off the trees as a deliberate lie, and says that he did nothing of the sort. When one comes to think of it, why should the man holding the position of manager of the orchard do something to assist in getting himself out of the job? Is it feasible? Is it likely? Is it not too childish even to be considered? The manager made an estimate of the fruit, and that estimate was 278 bushels of mixed fruit and 1,400 pounds weight of grapes. That is to say, there would be £22 worth of fruit if it all ripened—£22 worth of fruit if it all came to maturity. Some little time ago I informed hon. members that £44 worth of produce had been sold off that orchard, and that the bulk of the £44 was represented by honey. Honey! I have already described as an absolute fabrication the statement of Mr. Connor that the trees were laden with luscious fruit when he visited the orchard. The man who was in charge of the orchard at that time makes, in his letter, the following declaration:—

In regard to Mr. Connor's statement that the trees were loaded with luscious fruit in season, I can only say that Mr. Connor came to me with Mr. Clarke and a lady the day before the sale at the State farm and asked me if I could find them a bit of fruit of any sort, and I had to say I was sorry I had nothing. I found a few dried-up loquats, and I also gave him four oranges I had bought myself as I came through Harvey in the train.

I strongly object to anyone who has occupied such an honourable position as that of Agricultural Commissioner for the South-West of this State trying, deliberately trying, to mislead the people of Western Australia. I ask hon. members who know anything at all about orchards, what luscious fruit is obtainable in an orchard at that time of the year—November? One could not get even pig melons at that season. The only fruits which glistened in the State orchard during Mr. Connor's visit were fruits which glistened in his imagination. As on a previous occasion I stated in this Chamber, certain trees have been left in the orchard for certain purposes. The vines remain, because they are good types of vines; and I have given instructions that every care is to be exercised in looking after them, so that the cuttings may be distributed amongst those vignerons who want them. The fig trees remain because they are a special kind of fig which is necessary for the propagation of the wasp that is needed for the growth of certain species of figs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They will grow anywhere.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The hon. member interjecting may think so, but he is wrong. Next, as regards die-back. The trees were badly affected with die-back, and nothing that could be done was left undone to cure them. The late Fruit Industries Commissioner himself—let hon. members mark this—pruned those trees every year, with Mr. Wickens. Why? Because he knew there was die-back in the trees and something had to be

done. How else could it be done but by putting four tons of lime in to the acre?

Mr. H. Robinson: You do not prune to stop die-back.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Oh! Here is another would-be expert at the orchard game which I have been engaged in for 17 years.

Mr. H. Robinson: I cannot learn anything from you on the subject.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): No, because the hon. member is too wrapped up in his own opinions. These trees were pruned by Mr. George Wickens, trees which had had four tons of lime to the acre, fertilisers of every description, green crops planted there every year, underground drains put in and every possible thing done for them to make them grow. Yet they would not grow. Those trees, five and six years old, were an eyesore in the orchard. Fracture was tried, but the result of that is that a series of cups is formed in which the water lodges and the trees die quicker.

Mr. Harrison: What is the depth of the hard pan?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): If the trees are in a hard bed, by blasting through that, it is possible to do what you want, but if there is only one bar, that bar can be blasted and the water can drain away. But in this orchard if the whole thing had been blown heavens high the desired effect would not have been obtained. I have pointed out that this orchard was inspected by the Chief Fruit Inspector, Mr. Breen, a competent officer, and that it was reported on by the manager at the time, Mr. Rhodes. It was also reported on by Mr. Loaring, who is one of the chief commercial fruit growers in this State. Mr. Loaring said my action was justified. Not content with that, however, people wrote to the Press and said that if the opinion of Mr. Price of the famous Illawarra orchard, was obtained, the iconoclastic action of the Minister would be roundly condemned. What does Mr. Price say? Does he condemn me root and branch for doing this? Is there any hon. member who has the temerity to set his opinion against that of Mr. Price? Even the member for Albany (Mr. H. Robinson) dare not do so, and that hon. member would set his opinion against anybody's. I invited Mr. Price to go down there and I told him that I wanted him to look at the trees which had been left, and to report on the suitability of the site for an orchard and to give me his opinion generally. This is what Mr. Price says—

As requested, I have inspected the State orchard at Brunswick and I beg to report as follows:—Having had nearly nine years' experience in Western Australia as a nurseryman and orchardist in exactly the same class of soil and climatic conditions, I can say without hesitation that the Brunswick orchard is no good, either as a commercial proposition or as an experimental plot. My reason for saying that it cannot be made a payable proposition is that there are too many varieties of fruit, and any practical fruit grower can see at a glance what a hopeless position it is when they study the

list below. There are planted 142 varieties of apples—

Great scot! Just imagine 142 varieties of apples, when we have been experimenting here for the past 30 years and have bount the number down to a dozen varieties, and declared that anything outside that number would be useless. The report goes on—

Sixty-four varieties of peaches, 49 varieties of plums, 46 varieties of pears, 27 varieties of apricots, and 14 varieties of oranges. Talk about a heterogeneous collection. Nothing like it has ever been seen anywhere.

Hon. T. Walker: The fruits were dried and exhibited.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes; they looked very well dried. The hon. member knows something about that little transaction. The fruits were exhibited as having been grown in the State orchard. They were never grown there. They were brought down from Mr. Loaring's orchard and the rules and regulations were contravened by the late Commissioner so as to get the stuff down, and then it was exhibited as the product of the State orchard. The whole country was hoodwinked over this business. The report goes on—

In addition, there are almonds, figs, cherries, walnuts, persimmons, and grapes. Anyone who could handle this mixture at a profit would be nothing short of superhuman.

Hon. T. Walker: Experimental.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Who would experiment to the tune of 142 varieties of apples?

Hon. T. Walker: Why not?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Let me quote further from the report—

The reason why it is no good as an experimental orchard is that the soil and climate are unsuitable. The three chief fruits planted are apples, pears, and European plums. These would not grow even if the soil were suitable; the climatic conditions are unfavourable; the trees never get a proper rest owing to the very mild winters.

Mr. Green: You are condemning the whole of the South-West.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I am doing nothing of the sort, and the hon. member should be ashamed of himself for making such a statement. I inspected an orchard in the neighbourhood of Bullsbrook recently, where 100 acres of fruit trees had been put in, but on account of the unsuitable soil and the unsuitable climatic conditions the trees were being rooted out as quickly as possible, because out of that 100 acres no fewer than 1,750 trees died last year.

Mr. Green: That is a bad advertisement for the State.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Nothing of the kind. We should not grow apples on unsuitable soil when we have hundreds of thousands of acres of the best orchard land in the world. The report goes on—

There is a peculiar behaviour of the apples grown on these coastal plains, where the winter temperature is so mild, and that is the blooming and fruiting out of season. The second blooms appear about the time the first fruit is half-grown, and the third

bloom when the second crop is about quarter grown. None of these apples are worth as much as the fruit grown in the hills, the Blackwood, or Mt. Barker districts, and they generally realise at the markets from 1s. to 2s. 6d. a case less; in fact the best buyers will not buy them. The soil at the orchard is quite unsuitable; the good surface soil is very shallow, lying on an unkind conglomerate subsoil, quite unfit for plant life. This kind of soil remains too wet and cold, and I should think that it is in this condition for fully seven months of the year. Herewith is enclosed on a separate sheet of paper a sketch of two trees. No. 1 is a fair sample of hundreds of trees grubbed up at Brunswick. You will notice it shows die-back and has very few fruit spurs. The roots are growing up towards the surface with no fibre or feeding roots. Trees trying to grow like this can never be profitable; in fact they are slowly dying.

And yet many people wrote to the newspapers and said that there was no die-back. The sketch which accompanies the plan shows how the roots of a tree should go. Hon. members will see on the first sketch the roots of the unfortunate tree struggling and striving to grow. They go down a few inches and rise again to the surface to suck up the little bit of fertiliser which has been put there from time to time, and the lime which is on the surface of the soil. That is all those unfortunate trees had to live on. Then Mr. Price refers to sketch No. 2 in these words—

Sketch No. 2 shows the tree growing in the right kind of soil, with climatic conditions favourable to its proper development. Please note the difference. This tree has no die-back; it is full of fruit spurs; the roots growing down into the subsoil in a natural way, with plenty of fibre or feeding roots. I have sketched these two trees to enable you to see at a glance how hopeless it is to try and grow trees at Brunswick. I feel sure that you have taken a step in the right direction in grubbing up the orchard, and the people of the State owe their thanks to you.

I shall be pleased to receive those thanks—

I hope people who contemplate planting in the coastal area will take a friendly hint and not plant apples, pears, or plums; even if the soil is good they will never be profitable. What I mean by the coastal area is all that land between Perth and Bunbury and between the hills and the coast.

That is my opinion also.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are you going to close the Brunswick farm?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes, for fruit-trees. Anyone who has seen the beautiful subterranean clover waving there will know that that farm can be made a good proposition for the purpose for which it is suited, but it is not suited for growing apples.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Between Perth and Bunbury and between the ranges and the sea there are hundreds of orchards that are profitable. There are many at Pinjarra.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Of course, but Pinjarra is inland and miles from the sea. I am speaking of the coastal country. Mr. Price goes on—

The Agricultural Department should do all in their power to see that prospective fruitgrowers should get into the right locality to grow fruit. Apricots, peaches, nectarines, oranges, lemons, and Japanese plums can be grown successfully in the coastal area provided sheltered spots, with good soil are selected. You did quite right in grubbing up the drying grapes; the situation is too far south to produce a good dried article. There are several rows of Almeria and Flame Tokay grape vines that are very badly affected with Anthracose which I would recommend to be grubbed up.

He wants to go further than I do—

Some of the oranges and lemon trees below the manager's house are on very unsuitable soil, and should be grubbed up. The sour conglomerate subsoil is very near the surface and will soon kill them.

That was exactly what I said to Mr. Wickens, the fruit inspector. I said, "I will leave them as a proof that if we had left the rest they would have died."

The ten varieties of apples which you have left growing are all, with the exception of two varieties, suffering from die-back.

I know what people are. I know that they delight in finding fault, but we have the actual proof there and that is why I left those trees, so that people who wanted to find fault, who wanted to disprove my assertion, could go to the orchard before coming here and laying down the law, or before flying into print, they could go there and have the proof.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We have never seen you annoyed before.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I am not annoyed. The report goes on—

But as they are on the best soil, on the highest ground—

That is also why I left them, so that people who wanted to find fault could not say that the trees were left in the worst spot. I left them in the best spot.

They may last some years and provide enough fruit for the homestead.

That is the report of Mr. Price of Illawarra, the champion apple grower of this State. He is a man who knows the business of apple growing from A to Z, and when I say that that is corroborated by Mr. Loaring, the Fruit-growers' Association, and every fruit association in the State, I am quoting people who really know something of this subject and are the best judges. Would any hon. member of the Committee running a farm, pay a farm manager who had had orchard experience—because he was looking after 40 acres before he took this on—would they have a separate manager with a separate lot of quarters, separate horses, separate implements, separate wages staff in toto, to run this State orchard? It is ridiculous on the face of it, piling up expense, that is all it was. If members will turn to the Estimates they will find that for the first time this expenditure is shown as

coming out of revenue. Up to now it has come out of loan; it has been covered up under loan; that is why there has been no discussion. In conclusion, I desire to say that I have no wish whatever to reflect in the slightest degree on the late Minister for Lands and Agriculture, Mr. Bath. He is a gentleman I have every respect for, but he is not an orchardist. He simply followed the recommendations of this highly paid official. That recommendation was made when this officer had been only a few months in the State. He recommended at the same time that another State orchard should be planted at Chapman, but, fortunately for the taxpayers of the State, before that orchard was planted, and when he had been here a few months longer, and had gained some experience so as to know the country, and know this was a wild cat's scheme, he said, "I now, after having had some experience, recommend that the proposed Chapman orchard be not proceeded with." Had that officer been here longer before he made the first recommendation he never would have thought of a State orchard at Brunswick. Why put it at Brunswick when in the ranges there are thousands of acres of good orchard land right through to Bridgetown and Mt. Barker? We have at Bridgetown land second to none in Australia.

Mr. Green: Did you not have die-back at Bridgetown in your pears?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Never in my pears; that was a bad shot on the part of the hon. member. If the hon. member came to my orchard, after looking at it, he would say it would go about 40zs. to the ton. If the Commissioner had waited a little longer before making his recommendation to Mr. Bath, his Minister, who was quite right in following the recommendation of that highly paid official, for I never condemned the Minister by one word—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The inference is there, though.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): One can read anything into a report, especially a Cornishman. If the Commissioner had had more time to consider he would never have recommended the expenditure of £5,000 in planting an orchard at Brunswick. If the money had been spent in an experimental orchard, or, if you like, a demonstration orchard, say at Mt. Barker, and another at Bridgetown, and another on the Preston, so that the people who are growing apples to-day would have an orchard there under their noses to see how they could prune, how they could spray, how they could cultivate, it would have been of great service to the State. But what have we had? We have had £5,000 of the State's good money absolutely thrown away by endeavouring to demonstrate this fact. Between Perth and Bunbury we have some land that is suitable for growing some fruits; we have some land that is unsuitable for growing any fruits; and we have no land that is suitable to grow all fruits; and that is what was endeavoured to be done at Brunswick.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [S.48]: I do not profess to know much

about orchards, but when the Honorary Minister was making a statement in the House some weeks ago he caused me to make an interjection. I said, "You blame Mr. Bath for this work." And then the hon. member seemed very much annoyed, he got very angry. Since then I have taken the opportunity of looking up the Minister's statement in the Press, and while he does not say directly that Mr. Bath, who is not here to speak for himself, was responsible for the planting of that orchard, he gives the inference so that no one can come to any other conclusion. To-night he has condemned entirely Mr. Moody, a gentleman who held high positions in the Eastern States, who is highly respected by those who employed him there, and the owners of the farm which he left to come to Western Australia have offered him a higher salary to go back there.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Where are the proofs?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I got that from a gentleman connected with the firm. They were anxious to get him back, and to-day he has gone back to the same firm which he left to come to Western Australia. As to Mr. Moody's position, I do not know anything. He was appointed by a Liberal Government, after making due inquiries, and the Government considered he was competent to carry out his duties as expert in growing fruit. The hon. member in making his statement to the Press said the locality was outside the area suitable for the purpose, according to the statement of the Fruit Industries Commissioner, Mr. Moody. The very orchard planted at Brunswick was planted outside the area recommended, and a map was produced showing where the various kinds of fruits should be planted, and the area where the orchard was established was shown as not suitable. It was started during the period when Mr. Bath was Minister for Lands and Agriculture, and it finished with the remark "It never should have been planted."

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Be fair; you generally are fair, even if you are a Cornishman: read the lot.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The actual words as published in the Press are, "It is a great pity it was ever planted," those are the exact words. When that went to the Press it left the inference that Mr. Bath was responsible for the planting of this orchard, contrary to the advice of the expert, Mr. Moody. Mr. Moody replied to that statement. He took up the question on behalf of Mr. Bath, who he pointed out was out of the City, and the Fruit Industries Commissioner stated that it was he who recommended the planting of the orchard. As far as Mr. Bath is concerned, he was merely Minister, administering the department, and he naturally acted on the advice of the expert. I know the Honorary Minister has stated that to-night, but it was not stated previously by him. The inference was that Mr. Bath planted the orchard in an area outside the area suitable for the purpose, and which was recommended by the Fruit Commissioner.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I was writing about the Fruit Commissioner, who was attacking me.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This was before the Fruit Commissioner made any remark about

the Minister at all. This statement of the Minister to the Press was made when he came back from Brunswick. This was the first knowledge that the public had of the orchard being rooted up. Many people were under the impression that this was another State enterprise, entered upon by the Labour Government. I am pleased the Minister had said that he did not intend that inference.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): You can accept my assurance that it was never intended.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am glad the hon. member has withdrawn what was considered an accusation against Mr. Bath. In dealing with the Agricultural Department, as I have said previously, I do not profess to know anything about agriculture, but I want to say that a statement was once made by a late Premier of one of the Australian States, a man who was well respected throughout that State, that when he appointed some of his Ministers on one occasion members of Parliament discovered that in appointing Ministers to portfolios he appointed them to positions which they were not fitted to fill. He appointed as Minister for Works a man who understood lands,—and he appointed as Minister for Lands a man who understood works. When the Premier of that State was asked the reason for this he said that the State paid for its experts; in other words, he thought it inadvisable to have controlling a department a Minister who considered that his expert knowledge was superior to that of the qualified experts of the department. The other day the Premier of this State, in reply to a question, said that an officer had been sent to the Eastern States to confer on the question of the erection of silos, and on the question of bulk handling of wheat generally. To-day we learn from the newspapers that a deputation yesterday waited on the Prime Minister, and that Mr. McGibbon told the Prime Minister that all the States of Australia except South Australia had agreed to bulk handling. I say that the Parliament of this State has not agreed to anything of the sort. Towards the close of the administration of the Labour Government an agreement was proposed to be entered into with an American firm who undertook to erect in this State silos, elevators, etc., on a commission basis for the bulk handling of wheat. There was in that agreement a clause providing for its submission to Parliament for approval. Last session I asked the Premier whether the present Government intended to follow the same course, and the reply was "Yes," that "the whole question would be submitted to Parliament." Yet the other day the Premier told us that an officer had gone to the East, and that if the terms of the proposed agreement could be arranged in time the approval of Parliament would be sought, but that it was necessary to make provision for the erection of silos in this State for the next harvest.

The Premier: If Parliament approves of the proposed agreement.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But Parliament will not be sitting.

The Premier: How does the hon. member know that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier has said that if the agreement is fixed up in time it will be submitted to Parliament. But in all probability the session will be closing in a week or two, and the erection of these silos will have to be undertaken during the recess if they are to be in time for the next harvest, and so it will be impossible to submit the agreement to Parliament. The erection of these silos will involve an expenditure of one or two million pounds in this State. Surely hon. members will not agree to this large expenditure on a commission basis without having first considered the matter. In New South Wales the first of a series of contracts has just been entered into. This first contract provides for only 16 million bushels of wheat, yet it involves an expenditure of £1,172,000. There is still a considerable element of doubt as to whether bulk handling will be profitable in this State.

Mr. Johnston: The Royal Commission strongly recommends it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I take no notice of the Royal Commission.

Mr. Johnston: The expert officers appointed by your Government also recommend it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They proposed to put in a small elevator only at Fremantle costing £200,000. In New South Wales they are erecting 71 silo plants in the country districts. These country silos consist of from one to seven tanks, each of a capacity of 50,000 bushels, the total capacity being 11 million bushels.

Mr. Davies: What material is to be used in the erection of those silos?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot say. In addition it is proposed to erect terminal plants in Sydney, with a capacity of five million bushels. The Sydney plant will contain machinery for grading and cleaning the grain. The others are to be merely silos. In Western Australia our farmers are scattered all over the place, and in all probability, owing to the agricultural districts being so widely distributed, and having regard to our relatively small crops, the erection of the silo plants will become a burden on the State. Twelve months ago I said here that I thought it would be an advantage if the report prepared by the Engineer in Chief, a copy of which is to be found in the Public Works Department, was printed for the information of hon. members. In that report it is shown that the saving in Western Australia by the adoption of the bulk handling scheme is likely to be very small indeed. There is another point to be considered in dealing with this question, namely, that to carry out this bulk handling in a manner satisfactory to the farmers the State will have to become the farmers' banker. In Canada this work is done by private enterprise. There the wheat, before being put into the elevator, is passed by a Government inspector, who grades and classifies it. When it is deposited in the elevator, the company owning the elevator is prepared to store it for the farmer at so much per bushel, to advance money on it,

or to buy it outright. Each of those companies is a banker for the farmer. In this State, where the farmers are not in a position to act as their own bankers, or even to do much banking with the private banks, it will be necessary for the Government to act as banker to the farmers. I hope the Government will not enter into a contract for the erection of silos and elevators without first giving Parliament an opportunity of considering the proposal. There are other firms besides Metcalf & Company ready to come in, but some of them have expressed a doubt as to the success of the scheme in Western Australia owing to the scattered nature of the farming districts, and consequently they have been kept out, notwithstanding that they are English firms. In my opinion this work could be carried out by our own State officers, thus avoiding the payment of large commissions. I do not think there is any necessity for our going to America to get a firm to erect these works. In any magazine dealing with bulk handling, there will be found plans of the elevators and silos required. If hon. members will turn to the report of the Royal Commission in Victoria they will there find plans giving all details of the necessary works. These have been furnished by the gentleman who was sent from Victoria to America to investigate this question. We should not enter into a contract like that proposed without first giving it every consideration. Unless the contract has been altered it contains a time limit for the work. If I remember aright it is five years, and a commission of five or six per cent. has to be paid for superintending the work. Before any action is taken the House should have an opportunity of discussing the agreement. Some time ago we carried a resolution, moved, I think, by the Minister for Works, that none of these contracts was to be entered into without the approval of Parliament. That resolution must be adhered to. It is necessary that the House should be consulted before any definite action is taken. Only the other day an engineer explained to me that some 30 years ago he erected in New South Wales a silo constructed of timber, and he assured me that that silo is still standing. It is probable that our local timber is eminently suited to the erection of silos in this State.

The Minister for Works: What was the size of that New South Wales silo?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot say.

Mr. Davies: I understood that the silos in this State were to be built of timber.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No; the proposal is that they shall be of reinforced concrete. It is over two years since I saw the agreement, but I think I am right on that point. I remember that I was strongly against it. The Government should consider whether it is not possible to use the local timber in those silos. In connection with the wheat scheme, I notice that a deputation waited on the Prime Minister yesterday, and asked that the guaranteed price of wheat should be increased to 5s. 6d. per bushel. It is all very well to put such a request to the Prime Minister, but it must be remembered that the responsibility

falls on the State. The Commonwealth stands security for the money, and lends it to the States, but the States have to pay the interest and accept the responsibility for any losses. The Commonwealth Government are keeping clear of any responsibility. Twelve months ago we agreed to allow the farmers 3s. a bushel for their wheat. Since that time the Government have flouted the decision of Parliament and have agreed to allow the farmers 4s. a bushel. I do not say that is too much to allow, but if it was necessary to give 4s. a bushel, that should have been discussed at the time. The decision of Parliament should have been adhered to until we again had an opportunity of dealing with the matter. The Commonwealth now come in and say, "We are prepared to advance 4s. a bushel on the wheat," but they added that this means 1s. advance so far as the States are concerned and if there is a loss the Commonwealth Government stand 6d. of it. That is the usual system adopted by the Commonwealth authorities. They have to stand 6d. and the States 3s. 6d. out of the 4s. We have to take the responsibility and not the Commonwealth. It is the duty of the State to look after its own interests, because it has to bear the financial responsibility. That brings me to the statement made on the 16th January of this year by the Honorary Minister (Hon. C. F. Baxter), who is controlling the wheat scheme in this State. We have been told by some travelling politicians and by some of the farmers' journals that the British Government in purchasing the wheat has done so at a price considerably below its value, and that the Federal Government in entering into that large contract with the British Government have in a sense taken down the farmers of Australia, having out of patriotism sold the wheat too cheaply. Our wheat will not feed the people in England if it is lying at Fremantle. The value of wheat lies in what one can get for it in the markets of the world. The Honorary Minister to whom I have referred made a statement to the Press and quoted from one of the English trade journals, a publication called "Milling," as follows:—

The report of the House of Commons committee on national expenditure makes interesting if somewhat melancholy reading. A considerable part of the report deals with the operations of the wheat commission, which, of course, are resulting in a very great annual loss to the country. The purchase of the Australian wheat in particular came in for some criticism, but in fairness to the wheat commission we think it may be taken that the whole story of the purchase of that wheat has yet to be told. The bargain is undoubtedly a bad one from our point of view, but a good one from the point of view of the Australian Government and the Australian farmer. Until, however, it is possible to say exactly how the deal came about, even admitting that there was lack of foresight in regard to the tonnage required to transport it, we think we should do well to suspend judgment before the wheat commission is condemned

for an unnecessary and expensive purchase. It must not be forgotten that they had to buy at a price at which the Australian Government would sell, and we think we are right in saying that the Federal Government stuck out for a price which must be considered exceedingly high.

That statement was given to the local Press. I can only form one conclusion from it and one deduction, namely, that so far as our wheat is concerned, there is every possibility of our obtaining a lower price in the future than we have had in connection with the past contract. In other words, the Honorary Minister was warning the farmers to be careful because they were not going to have such a good bargain in future, and reminding people to be careful not to make the guarantees too high. I think the last contract was on a basis of 4s. 3d. a bushel, which we are told was very high, although the Commonwealth Government stuck to it. In spite of this, we are guaranteeing the farmer to-day 4s. a bushel, although the State has to bear all losses in connection with that guarantee.

Mr. Johnston: It is 5s. 10d. in New Zealand.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is 9s. 2d. in America, but of what use is that? Suppose we wanted wheat and could not get it, what difference would the New Zealand price of wheat make to us? In 1914 we had no wheat, but we could not buy it at 7s. 6d. or 8s. a bushel. Now we have any amount of wheat here that is being eaten up by weevils and lying on the wharf in a rotting condition because we cannot get it away. There is no market for it.

Mr. Johnston: How do they get the price in New Zealand? The growers are getting that price.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some disgraceful actions have taken place in connection with some of the wheat that is being sold to-day, and which never should have been sold. The other day a member of this Parliament showed me some wheat for which he had paid a high price, cash down before delivery. When he obtained delivery of the wheat he found on distributing it to his turkeys and fowls that it killed them. It was really not wheat at all. I gathered that it was some of that wheat which had fermented on account of the water getting into it, and had formed into solid lumps, such as I saw in Fremantle myself in the sheds. There were between 7,000 and 8,000 bags of it, and I could hardly stand the stench which arose from it. It was in a dreadful state, and has been used for the purpose of taking down the poor wheat farmer or the poultry farmer. I have some of that wheat now, and if hon. members saw it, they would agree with me that it is a disgrace that it should ever have been put on the market. The persons who sold it should be prosecuted for doing so.

Mr. Johnston: Who sold it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The agents of the pool.

Mr. Maley: Not the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They would have acted in a similar manner. There has been great dissatisfaction in the wheat scheme on the part of the Farmers and Settlers' Association. At the end of last year the Government relieved the acquiring agents of their responsibilities in regard to the custody of this wheat. In taking over this wheat the Farmers and Settlers' Association naturally looked after the interests of their members and clients in connection with their co-operative scheme, and pointed out to the Minister that they thought a reduction in the charges could be made. They thought that the acquiring agents should not pay a certain amount of money which they would have had if they had retained the control of the wheat they had purchased. Mr. Stanistreet, the secretary of the association, got into correspondence with the Minister. He points out in the "West Australian" of the 17th January last that in their opinion a reduction could be made. I have looked through an Act of Parliament which was passed two years ago and find that certain firms are mentioned as acquiring agents. Amongst other acquiring agents was the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. No distinction was made between John Darling & Son, Dalgety & Co., Ltd., Dreyfus & Co., Ockerby & Co., and the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. They were all acquiring agents. When the Minister replied to the statement, however, he said—

I do not propose doing anything that I consider inequitable by withholding any just payment for such services, particularly if effectively performed, as I am satisfied such services have been rendered in good faith by the late Government acquiring agents and by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. Why was there any necessity to make a distinction between one firm and another?

Mr. Maley: None at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If that letter had been sent to me, I would have regarded it as a broad hint to keep my mouth shut if I had been representing the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and as a reminder to me that if the others were reduced, my company would also be reduced. I would look upon the Minister as saying, "Keep quiet. Do not say any more about any reductions, because if I reduce the other acquiring agents, I am going to reduce you as well." That is the only deduction one could make from a statement of that kind.

Mr. Teesdale: Whom is it from?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is from the Minister to the secretary of the Farmers and Settlers' Association. The secretary is writing on behalf of his executive, and this is the reply to the Minister. No person could come to any other conclusion than that it was a broad hint to those connected with the Westralian Farmers' Limited to keep a quiet tongue, otherwise in all probability they would be penalised as well as the other acquiring agents. I would like to know in dealing with the Estimates, when are we going to have legislation brought down to ratify the agreement entered into with the Westralian Farmers' Limited, in order that we may find out what deposits

have to be put up, what security is offered to the State, and whether or not there is any guarantee or any alteration made in the conditions under which this contract was let. It was promised to the House, but there is no word of it so far.

Mr. Maley: No agreements were ever signed in connection with the pool.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes; they were signed here, and ratified by this Parliament, though in the Eastern States many of the agreements were never signed. I hope the Government will be chary of entering into expenditure at this juncture as regards bulk handling of wheat. If it can be proved that for the protection of our wheat it is necessary to erect silos in this State, then they should be erected in our local timbers, which would mean a considerably reduced cost. We should be chary of entering into agreements whereby outside firms would be paid commissions on the construction of the silos. Further, we should see that the Commonwealth Government realise that Western Australia is a sovereign State, and that they have no right or power—except, possibly, under the War Precautions Act, which enables the Commonwealth Government to do almost anything—to force this State into any expenditure without the State's approval. I observe that the contract let in New South Wales for silos to accommodate 16 million bushels amounted to £1,127,000. I believe the cost in this State would be two millions, before the work was finished. It is the duty of members of Parliament, and particularly of farmers' representatives, to resist this expenditure. If it is possible to make the farmers pay it, they will have to pay it; otherwise, it will fall on the general taxpayer.

Mr. Davies: The cost will go on to the price of the wheat.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. The price of our wheat will be fixed by the oversea markets. I trust, therefore, that the Government will be very careful in this matter and see that the Commonwealth Government do not bully Western Australia into a heavy expenditure.

[The Deputy Chairman (Mr. Foley) took the Chair.]

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [9.33]: My observations will be brief, although I realise that one could put in a considerable time in a discussion of all the ramifications of the Agricultural Department. I was pleased to listen to the defence put up by the Honorary Minister, Mr. Willmott, of his action in connection with the Brunswick State orchard. A good many conflicting statements have been circulated in that connection, and the wisdom of the Honorary Minister's action has been called in question; but I consider that tonight he put up an absolutely unanswerable case. Therefore I do not intend to deal with that matter. The vote contains many items on which, perhaps, I shall have some comment to offer later. The member for Greenough, who opened the ball to-night, expressed con-

siderable alarm at the possibility of an invasion of this State by the sparrow. I hope the hon. member is not giving way unduly to alarm, because personally I think the matter is not one which should cause him to lose any sleep. The sparrow, like a great many other imported pests, may not be an advantage. However, I was brought up in one of the most fertile districts to be found in the Eastern States, and sparrows abounded in that district by the million. I must own to-day that the damage done by the sparrows was nothing in comparison with the damage done by certain other pests that we have among us. I do not hold that there is any great danger from the sparrow. However, what brought me to my feet was that I might offer a few observations regarding the administration of the Honorary Minister in another place, the Honorary Minister who controls the operations of the wheat pool. I do regret the attitude he has adopted over the industrial dispute with the men who were working at the various wheat depôts. I hold no brief for any action of the men which was unconstitutional or unlawful. I have never at any time desired to condone what I think is wrong. But I do put it to this Committee that Mr. Baxter is not taking up a manly attitude in his negotiations with men who, perhaps acting in a misguided moment, ceased work. His attitude throughout the piece has been a callous one. The position, as I understand, is that at the various wheat depôts men were employed and making fairly good wages. At certain depôts, however, they were not making good wages, owing to broken time. Those men had a genuine grievance, but they adopted wrong methods to get their grievance adjusted. I candidly admit that, as president of the labour organisation of this country, I acknowledge that we can never have either unity, or harmony, or co-ordination, if a few men at any time can cause a dislocation of industry. But I do not say that a man in the gutter ought to be kicked. I am prepared to take a lenient view; and I claim a lenient view ought to be taken by the Honorary Minister, who claims to have humanitarian sentiments. I contend that he also should take a humanitarian view when he has his opponents, for the time being, broken and beaten. At Midland Junction the men were unable to average more than £2 15s. per week. My belief is that had they presented their case in the right way, had they made the representations which their case warranted, to the Minister, possibly they would have had their wrongs rectified. I believe that the Honorary Minister, or any other Minister, would listen to reason. But the men took precipitate action, and as a result of their action other men came out at other depôts. I have said that I am not condoning the action of the men in coming out. However, the Honorary Minister, after having made a call for national volunteers from amongst the rural population of Western Australia and not having secured sufficient for his requirements, ought to look favourably upon the request of these men to be reinstated. Negotiations have been proceeding

for the last three or four weeks between the Minister and representatives of the men. So far as I understand the position, the Minister assumes an attitude which discloses prejudice and bias of a most pronounced type. The very morning when the men at Midland Junction ceased work, there appeared in the "West Australian" a statement from Mr. Baxter alleging that the cause of the dispute at Midland Junction was that two of the men working there were members of the I.W.W. You, Mr. Foley, and I know, and every man who has studied the subject knows, that the two men who were unfortunate enough to be concerned in a recent trial, because of an allegation that they were members of the I.W.W., never were members of that organisation. Those two men worked at Midland Junction. One of them is a personal friend of mine, and I can positively declare that he has never in his life belonged to the I.W.W. Those men were tried by a judge and jury of their countrymen, and were acquitted. Therefore I consider it ill becomes the Honorary Minister to seek to excuse himself to the public, and to seek to inflame the public, by alleging that these men who took up an unconstitutional attitude were induced to go out on strike by members of the I.W.W. The Honorary Minister has no right to assert that the strike was fomented by members of the I.W.W. when there was not a single member of the I.W.W. on the work where the strike occurred. I refer to these facts in order to show how easy it is to inflame the public mind against workmen who, on any job, throw down their tools and adopt the war of folded arms. The reason why, in the consideration of these Estimates, I ask the Honorary Minister, Mr. Willmott, to give me an assurance on this subject, is that Mr. Baxter has already told me that he will not give an assurance. I do appeal to the other members of the Government to adopt a more tolerant attitude than that of their colleague. My view is that if a man has a win, knocking out his opponent, he ought to be manly enough to shake hands with the vanquished. Mr. Baxter's attitude seems to me to indicate that he is somewhat after the style of Shylock, prepared to demand his full pound of flesh, prepared to go on pounding his victim with more fury than before. Mr. Baxter is not prepared to reinstate those men, although he requires their services. The work is heavy, and such as a great many people of this State are not able to do. After calling for volunteers, the Honorary Minister is unable to get sufficient to carry on the work. These other men have paid the penalty for their action in bringing about a dislocation of work. They have paid the penalty in the loss of wages, in being thrown behind several weeks—it will be many months before they can recover. I hope it will be a lesson to them, and I hope we shall have no more sectional disputes, where a body of men, without consulting anyone, not even their own leaders, come out and thus cause dislocation of trade and commerce. But, because they made a mistake, for which they have suffered, I am not going to condone the action of any Minister who adopts the attitude taken by Mr. Baxter—whether that Minister be Liberal, Labour, or

anything else—who is so callous as not to say to the men, "I have got you down, and you are well and faithfully beaten; come back, and be penitent for your wrong doing." The Honorary Minister is not prepared to adopt that attitude. If we look just across our eastern boundary we shall call to mind the greatest strike in the history of this continent, which occurred only a few months ago. In connection with that strike we were told that the action of the workers in downing their tools had a disastrous effect on Australia's participation in the war. We were told that the whole of Australian industry was paralysed, and that war work was paralysed; and that was the truth. But, looking across our eastern boundary, we do not see the Acting Premier of New South Wales, Mr. Fuller, adopting an attitude of vindictiveness like that of the Honorary Minister, Mr. Baxter. We do not hear of Mr. Fuller saying to a handful of men, who perhaps defied his authority for the time being, that they are to be barred for ever from returning to work. I admit this is purely an industrial question, and I would not appeal to the Committee were it not for my conviction that the merits of the case are sufficiently strong to appeal to any humanitarian. The Honorary Minister has had his win, and it is not for him to say, "Box on." What has Mr. Baxter to gain from further penalising the men who have asked to be reinstated? In the first place, there was a genuine grievance at Midland Junction. The men were not earning sufficient to keep their homes going. I know many of them. Some of them are returned soldiers. However, they adopted a wrong method to try to get their grievances remedied; and now a high and mighty Honorary Minister says to them, "You are going to stay out for all time as far as I am concerned; although I want the work done, and although the loyalist farmers won't come in sufficient numbers to help me, you are not to get the liberty which is the due of everybody in this State."

Mr. Johnston: A good many of these men were not unionists at all; that was the trouble.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. There was no union at all controlling them. I am not pleading for those men as unionists. I am pleading for them as men, as taxpayers of Western Australia, who with their wives and families are in want to-day because of the Honorary Minister's bigotry, because he fails to show the sympathy and toleration which should be found in every public man of this country. It now remains for the Premier and his Government to see whether they cannot do a fair thing in extending a little mercy to those men, and at least giving them the right to live in their own country.

"While mercy's lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return."

But that couplet does not express the views of the Honorary Minister in another place. As one who invariably tries to avoid industrial conflict, as one who does not at any time wish to see the State paralysed by industrial disputes, I appeal to the Government for these men. I have never done otherwise than plead with men to consider well before taking any drastic action, to refer the business to other heads, which perhaps know more about it than they do, before bringing about a deadlock.

When a deadlock is reached, negotiations are off. At times one has to exercise a remarkable degree of patience. The Premier will appreciate this, in view of the way in which we were barging away at one another for a period of four days. At times one almost feels ready to throw up the sponge, but one does not want to see negotiations broken off and a deadlock ensue. The men on whose behalf I am now speaking, though they did act hastily, have done nothing more than thousands of their fellow-men have done and are doing in all parts of the world. I do not know of any other country in the world where men would be penalised to the extent to which these men are being penalised to-day. All I ask of the Committee is to disabuse their minds of the statement made by the Honorary Minister, Mr. Baxter, that the strike at Midland Junction was fomented by the I.W.W. I know the men to whom the Honorary Minister refers in making that statement. Those two men have stood their trial, and have been acquitted; and I again assert that neither of them ever belonged to the I.W.W. in his life. If they advocated I.W.W. doctrines I would not say a word in their favour.

Mr. Teesdale: You admit that certain things eventuated when they arrived on the ground.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They kept their mouths closed because they had been hunted and hounded by the authorities, even though they had been acquitted on the charge which was made against them, and which was backed by Commonwealth coin. Not one member in this House can justify for one moment the enormous expenditure which was incurred in trying to manufacture a charge against those men. They were tried and acquitted, and once a man walks out of the dock, surely he should be allowed to hold up his head and seek an honest living in his own country. I have it on the best authority that those men never opened their mouths. They were working industriously to earn money for their wives and families who were on the verge of starvation on the goldfields, and who would have starved but for the generosity of their fellow beings up there. Under the War Precautions Act the men were dragged hundreds of miles to trial, and there was postponement after postponement before they were finally acquitted. They made application for a measure of relief for their wives and children, but it was denied them. Then they applied for assistance to enable them to get back to the work that the Government had taken them from.

The Attorney General: And they got it. We gave them their fares back to where they came from, and also money with which to buy food. It was done in my own department.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: How much money was advanced to them?

Mr. STEWART: On a point of order, I would like to know what this has to do with the vote?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I know it has nothing to do with the vote, but I was drawn by interjections and by the desire of the Honorary Minister to buttress his case so as to lead the public to believe that the trouble was fomented by men who belonged to the I.W.W.

The Attorney General: The charge against these men was one of conspiracy, not of being members of the I.W.W.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Why did the Honorary Minister put his brand on two of his countrymen? Why did Mr. Baxter say that two members of the I.W.W. were responsible for the trouble? He had no right whatever to say that. But I am not concerned with what he thinks; I am only concerned with the fact that these men have been out of work for a considerable time, and are now trying to get reinstated. I only ask that that element of human sympathy which should be evident in every public man should be brought to the surface and that these men, to whom I have referred, be given the right to earn their bread and butter, and to profit by their mistakes and experience of the past.

Mr. H. ROBINSON (Albany) [9:50]: I desire to solicit the assistance of the House in connection with the Denmark district, more particularly the extension of the Denmark Butter and Bacon Factory. As hon. members are aware, Denmark has been a part of Western Australia which has been hardly treated from the inception. Ministry after Ministry have made mistakes in connection with the development of that portion of the country, and unfortunately the settlers who are there at the present time have laboured through very strenuous times. In the first instance, after settlement had taken place, the Fruit Commissioner advised settlers to start growing fruit trees, but it was not until Mr. Connor came along that a suggestion was made that they should go in for dairying. That gentleman was ever persuading the Government to advance sufficient money to enable a few of the settlers in the Denmark area to get cows, and then it necessarily followed that they should go in for pig raising. This proved to be so successful that Mr. Connor was further able to persuade the Government to start a small butter and bacon factory. This was done partly as an experiment, to show whether or not the area at Denmark was suitable for dairying. The result to-day has been so favourable that in the last year's operations this small State enterprise showed a profit of £25. For some time there has been a difficulty, on account of the capacity of the bacon factory being limited, and not being able to take pigs during the summer months. This is a serious drawback, and the settlers have been hoping that the Government would provide facilities for receiving pigs throughout the 12 months. Mr. Connor made special requests on behalf of the settlers and these were acquiesced in by the present Premier. They were also agreed to by the late Minister in charge of agriculture, who, in my presence, ordered Mr. Connor to prepare plans and specifications for the extension of the butter and bacon factory. Unfortunately, in the meantime, Mr. Connor's services were dispensed with, and from that time to the present practically nothing has been done. I have interested myself in the matter and have interviewed several Ministers. I had replies from the Premier and the Treasurer, the latter being

particularly sympathetic. He informed me that if I could prove that there was sufficient to warrant the extension of the factory, he would provide the money, and that if he did not have it he would borrow it. The matter was also brought under the present Minister's notice and he took a trip to Denmark, but since that time we have been unable to learn the decision of the Government. The Minister returned to Albany and, for some unknown reason, presented a report which was published in the columns of the "Albany Advertiser," a report which was of an adverse character. That, too, after the Minister had been in the district for something like an hour. I have made several applications to the Minister to learn whether a definite decision had been arrived at as to whether the Government are going on with the factory or not. On Denmark show day the Minister in charge wired me that the Government could not make up their minds, but that I could assure the settlers of Denmark that they would receive every consideration at the hands of the Government. I was not satisfied with that reply and I wired to the Premier asking him to give us something more definite in the shape of a reply. Unfortunately for the settlers, the Premier must have handed the telegram to the Honorary Minister because a reply came to hand signed by the Premier identically the same as that sent by the Honorary Minister. Then I received the following letter from the department:—

I have the honour by direction to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 14th and to state that care will be taken to advise you immediately any definite decision is arrived at regarding extensions at Denmark of butter and bacon factories. The Honorary Minister has called for reports on the matter and intends going into them as soon as they are at hand.

In the same week the Honorary Minister wrote to a private individual at Denmark and stated definitely that the Government could not make up their minds, that they had one or two other projects in view and that it would be two or three months before a definite decision could be arrived at. I want to take exception to the Minister writing a letter to a private person in Denmark the contents of which do not coincide with the statements he made to me. Apart from that, if the Minister deemed it necessary to write to a private individual in my electorate, he should have had the courtesy to send that letter through me. In the course of Mr. Baxter's interview with the settlers at Denmark, he promised that he would send down Government experts to see whether it was necessary, or otherwise, to do anything at Denmark. These experts were Mr. Sutton, the Wheat Commissioner, and Mr. Bratby, the potato expert. These were the professional men who were sent to Denmark to report on the butter and bacon factory. I will read some extracts from their report which the Honorary Minister gave me last week—

To the settlers in this district, both the butter and bacon factories are regarded as something more than commercial concerns to which their cream and pigs can be sold. To them they are a tangible evidence that the district is suitable for dairying, with its usual adjunct, pig raising, and in consequence there has been created a confidence in the possibilities of the district which is stimulating development. . . . Their outlook for some time past has not been bright, and they are facing the future with a confidence that should be encouraged. To remove the factories until better markets for their produce are assured would certainly shake that confidence, and give the district a set-back from which it would not easily recover. I am convinced that the settlers are quite earnest with regard to the views expressed and that if they were financially strong enough they would support their views by purchasing both factories on the co-operative principle. . . . As already indicated, the present factories are not adequate to deal with the demand made upon them, and consequently some change is necessary.

The report then divides the butter and bacon factories and with reference to the butter factory Mr. Sutton writes—

Departmentally, Denmark is regarded as one of the dairying districts of the State, and its development in that connection is therefore to be stimulated. The existence of a butter factory in the township is the best means of giving the necessary stimulus. . . . Having regard to these various aspects of the matter, I am of the opinion that it is advisable to maintain at Denmark an efficient butter factory, even if butter making facilities are also provided at Albany.

With reference to the butter factory, therefore, we have a decided report from the officer and with reference to the bacon factory he has the same idea, which is that Albany should have a bacon factory and that the pigs should be sent in. He says in connection with this—

Until a central factory is, however, in working order, it is desirable that satisfactory arrangements be made for the present factory to continue on such a scale as to be able to receive from time to time all the suitable pigs the district is capable of producing. In the interests of development it is also desirable, if such a central factory be established, that after it is in working order, a branch of it be maintained at Denmark.

After sending down the experts and having such a decided recommendation from them, the Minister says that it will take two or three months to arrive at a decision. Is this the Government who have been calling out, "Produce, produce"? Are we going to keep 300 families in Denmark waiting while the Honorary Minister parades around the place? Are we loyal to our national conditions if we are to sit down and await the pleasure of the Minister while he is considering recommendations which have been made? Is it in the interests of the State that the

people in this district should be treated in this manner? Mr. Baxter would probably have a very good reason for delaying his decision if his experts advised against it. But when he has had a statement like that, backed up by Mr. Connor and supported by the Premier, what can be keeping this matter back? There seems to be some motive behind it when the Government have not the courage to say that they are going to extend the factory, or that they will not extend it. To say that they have not the money is to contradict the Treasurer's statement, who said he could secure this money out of what he is going to get from the insurance companies. I know there is a contractor prepared to build the factory to treat 70 pigs a week for £1,500 or 150 weekly for £2,500. It is a poor condition of affairs in Denmark if the Government cannot find the necessary money.

The Premier: Something rotten in the state of Denmark.

Mr. O'Loughlen: All they are living on down there are pigs.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: This is not a matter to be treated lightly.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I am not doing so. I say they are relying on pigs almost exclusively.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I only wish I could take the Premier down there for a day, and let him look into the question for himself. I am quite sure he would say, "This must be done at once." There are there 300 families hanging on in the hope of this extension. If the extension is not made they will have to leave the district. No matter what Government may be in power it is their imperative duty to do something to help this district.

Mr. Stewart: The Government ought to sell the place if they are not prepared to extend it.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I agree with that.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Something must be done to save those people.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I want to get a definite decision from the Government. This session will be over presently, and we shall be in recess for a considerable time, during which nothing will be done. The factory need not be built immediately, but it is necessary that the people should know the decision of the Government. When we come to the item I intend to move in the matter. I hope the Premier will ask for an explanation from the Honorary Minister in charge as to why, after receiving that report, he should write to a private individual in my constituency stating that it will be two or three months before the Government decide.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Were you not notified?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: The Minister wrote direct, and the only intimation I got was signed, as I read it, "Trethowan." I take exception to the statement by the Minister that three months will be required to decide the question.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [10.5]: I cannot refrain from challenging some of the statements made in respect of the Brunswick State orchard. There is a big principle involved. I am not aware of any authority being given to any Minister to expend £5,000 without the sanction either of the House or of Cabinet, nor am I aware of any power having been vested in any Minister to destroy property worth £5,000.

The statement has been made that the Brunswick orchard was costing £1,000 per annum to maintain. All I can say is that if an orchard of only 45 acres not yet in bearing was costing this sum it reflects very little credit on Government management. If it had cost half that amount the cost would have been excessive. I am the unfortunate owner of an orchard of the same size, and I know that mine has not cost anything like that money. In fact, I do not see how that amount could have been spent on a small orchard not yet in bearing.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How far are you from Brunswick?

Mr. MONEY: Eight or nine miles.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): What is it you are controverting?

Mr. MONEY: The statement that a 45-acre orchard not yet in bearing cost £1,000 per annum to maintain. I challenge that statement. It should not have cost more than half. Another statement made was that the locality is unsuitable to pears. I challenge that statement. I say it is one of the most suitable districts in Western Australia for pears, whether for quantity or size of fruit, whether for flavour or for the soundness of the fruit. I have grown admirable pears within seven miles of Brunswick. I am speaking now on behalf of scores of people who have planted orchards in the area doomed by the Minister.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): In the same soil?

Mr. MONEY: No, in worse soil. My orchard is on Waterloo Plains and Brunswick is noted as being infinitely superior to Waterloo Plains. The action taken by the Minister was highly detrimental to the district. Settlers there have planted scores of acres of orchard on the advice of Government experts. Until recently I have never had a finger pointed at my orchard, but, since the action of the Minister, I have been repeatedly told that my orchard cannot succeed. Are all the orchardists in that locality to be turned down because of the action of the Minister? If the Minister was right, then all that is left for us to do is to root up our orchards. It seems to me that the Minister has protested too much to-night.

Mr. Pickering: He said anything between the coast-line and the hills.

Mr. MONEY: That is so. Another statement I challenge is that apples grown in the district will not keep, and that satisfactory prices cannot be obtained for them. I have exported thousands of cases to England, and I have been in England when some of those apples arrived. I kept some of them for two months after leaving cold storage, and I found they were as sound as when on the tree. People who saw them did not think it was possible to grow such fine fruit. Apples from my orchard have been declared to be equal to any grown in the Bridgetown district. It is monstrous that one Minister should be in a position to condemn a district in this way.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): On a point of order. The hon. member is putting into my mouth words that I never uttered as my own opinion, but which I was reading from this report.

Hon. T. Walker: There is no point of order there.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): I did not state what the hon. member says I stated.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister is entirely out of order. If he deems offensive any statement made by the hon. member, the Minister may ask for a withdrawal.

Mr. MONEY: The Minister gave as his authority the opinion of Mr. Price, and the statement was made to the Committee that apples from that district would not realise a satisfactory price, and would not keep. I challenge that statement again. I have secured a good price for apples grown in that district, and I have kept them satisfactorily in cold storage. On behalf of scores of orchardists deeply interested in this matter, I cannot allow a statement like that to go unchallenged.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Fight it out with Price.

Mr. MONEY: Mr. Price did not approve of the destruction of the orchard. He was called in after the funeral. You called in the doctor after the patient was dead. Another statement has been made to the effect that there were in the orchard too many varieties of apples. The Minister as an orchardist should be aware that when there are too many varieties of apples it is not necessary to cut out the trees, that the proper thing to do is to graft the required varieties on to them; then within two years the trees are bearing good fruit. In this case, if the trees only five years old had been grafted, they would have been in full bearing at seven years. I am grafting apples in my own orchard to-day.

The Colonial Treasurer: But the roots of some of those trees were turning up instead of down.

Mr. MONEY: I am not aware that this is in the Treasurer's department. He may know something about the question, but probably not as much as I do. It is easy to pick out in any orchard odd trees which are not doing well. I have never known an orchard in Western Australia in which no trees have been lost. Another reason given for the uprooting of the orchard was that the trees had not yet come into bearing. If the trees are healthy they will not come into bearing until six or even seven years old. The healthier the tree the later is it in coming into bearing. If a tree is sickly it will come into bearing as early even as the fourth year, but probably that will be the end of it.

The Colonial Treasurer: Do you say that you cannot get a return from an orchard under seven years?

Mr. MONEY: If an orchard is expected to live for any length of time, one would not get any return for seven years. I only rose to speak in consequence of the statements made by the Honorary Minister. There are certain points which are open to discussion in regard to the destruction of this orchard. One of these points is whether as a State enterprise, taking into account the wages paid is it possible to make a State orchard pay. That is a matter which, of course, might be argued from two points of view. The reasons given by the Honorary Minister do not con-

vince me at all. We have heard much upon the question of die-back. I can give the Honorary Minister an instance of 250 trees in one block on my orchard planted on hard pad. Three years ago I was in despair concerning these trees, and thought they had better be pulled up because they looked dead. Mr. Moody came along, and I asked him what should be done with the trees. He said that they were in such a bad condition that he was in doubt about the matter. He did not know whether they would ever recover. I then showed him some trees in the orchard which had been pruned hard. As these trees had done so well he advised me to experiment with the 250 trees I have mentioned, and see what I could do with them. These trees were cut down to their limbs three years ago, and if the Honorary Minister were to visit my orchard to-morrow he would see these trees, and could also see the three or four cases of fruit which has been taken off each one and put into cool storage, cases of the most perfect apples a man could see. I absolutely refute the statements he has made. He may be right, but his reasons are wrong and can easily be refuted. The statements he has made to the Committee are absolutely wrong and misleading.

General debate concluded; votes and items discussed as follows:—

Items, Irrigation Expert, £391, Irrigation Assistant £192.

Mr. BROWN: I should like to know what necessity there is for an expert and an assistant expert whose salaries amount to £583.

The CHAIRMAN: I may inform hon. members that I cannot allow the Committee to go back on the items. Items No. 2 and No. 3 are now under discussion.

Mr. GREEN: It is usual if an hon. member names a particular item which is in advance of another item upon which some other hon. member desires to speak, that the earlier item is taken first. I want to speak on item No. 1.

The CHAIRMAN: We are now dealing with items 2 and 3.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The member for Sussex called item No. 1.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Sussex did not call item No. 1 to my knowledge. He called no number at all, but simply stood up. The member for Subiaco then called items 2 and 3, and these are the items before the Committee.

Mr. BROWN: I do not think, Sir, you should be in too great a hurry over the Estimates. You did not give any hon. member time to call another item.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Subiaco has the floor on items No. 2 and No. 3.

Mr. BROWN: In view of the fact that we are out for economy I cannot see the necessity for these two officers, and should like some information as to whether this kind of thing is to continue.

The PREMIER: These officers are necessary if we are to develop the South-West. Irrigation is an important factor in the development of the country. A considerable amount of work has already been done in connection with irriga-

tion in certain areas between here and Bunbury, and if we are to carry on this work we must have someone to control it. There has been an irrigation expert in charge of this particular branch of the Agricultural Department for some time past, and there has been a large expenditure in the Harvey area upon irrigation. It is necessary to have an irrigation expert attached to the department in order that he may give advice.

Item, Pathologist, £324.

Mr. HARRISON: I understand that the services of Dr. Stoward have been dispensed with. He was one of the most qualified men in the State in his profession, and his services should not have been held in too light a demand. If we are going to be efficient we need men possessing the knowledge that he possesses, and it is false economy to dispense with the services of such a man in order to save the small amount involved in his salary. If we are to do any good with our agricultural industry, we must have the benefit of the knowledge and expert advice of such gentlemen as Dr. Stoward. By employing such a man in the State service, we would save his salary many times over out of the good work that he would do. I am sorry that Dr. Stoward's services have been lost to the State. It should be our duty to make the highest possible commercial use of the knowledge held by our experts.

Mr. PICKERING: I desire to support the remarks of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. It is generally agreed that the Government made a grave mistake in dispensing with the services of Dr. Stoward. I understand that Mr. Wakefield, who was appointed in his stead, is also leaving the service. What is the intention of the Government in regard to this position?

The PREMIER: I recognise as fully as the hon. member the necessity for having someone attached to the Agricultural Department who can engage in scientific research, but at the present juncture it is our duty to see in what direction economies can be effected. I am afraid that in the past Dr. Stoward's services were not fully availed of.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He is the only man of his class in the State.

The PREMIER: Dr. Stoward was engaged very largely in investigating poison plants. I cannot see the necessity for such work in this State, because our settlers all know these poison plants and know the effect of them upon stock. If, however, an antidote for these poisons could be found, much good would be done. No attempt was made to discover any antidote for these poisons, and Dr. Stoward was chiefly engaged in ascertaining what effect they would have upon rabbits. He had associated with him Mr. Wakefield, a man of very high qualifications. He was engaged in the same class of work as Dr. Stoward, and the Government considered that Mr. Wakefield would be sufficient in himself to do all the work necessary for the time being, in connection with that branch of the Agricultural Department. Unfortunately, Mr. Wake-

field resigned as he was offered a better position elsewhere. I regret that we have lost his services. We must have in the Agricultural Department someone who can engage in work of this sort. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Wakefield has gone; he was offered a salary double, I believe, of that which he was receiving here. The Government must now take the responsibility of appointing someone in his place. Perhaps we may find in the University a gentleman able to assist in this matter.

Mr. Nairn: We might find the Professor of Agriculture something to do.

The PREMIER: I do not think the Professors at the University are fully occupied. If the country can get some direct benefit from the services of those gentlemen, it would be well. I must say for the professors that they are anxious to assist.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Senate will make you pay for the assistance.

The PREMIER: No. We find all the money, and I think the State is entitled to make use of the services of the professors.

Mr. HARRISON: I understand that the pathologist, Dr. Stoward, was one of the most highly qualified men of his profession to be found south of the Line. In a State like this, which is constantly running up against new plant diseases, we cannot afford to let the agricultural industry suffer for the want of a pathologist's salary.

Mr. MALEY: I support the contention of the member for Avon regarding Dr. Stoward. There never was in the history of this country a time when the services of a competent scientist to inquire into plant diseases were more urgently needed; and it is false economy to dispense with Dr. Stoward's services. As regards poison plants he was doing good work in the way of identification and classification. To leave a junior clerk, or an understudy, in charge of such work is absolutely ridiculous.

Item, Commissioner for Wheat Belt, £756.

Mr. O'LOUGHLIN: I seek the assurance of the Premier in the matter on which I spoke during the general discussion—the reinstatement of the employees now that the trouble is over and the Honorary Minister has had his victory. Cannot the men be given an opportunity to earn their living again?

The PREMIER: I recognise the perfect sincerity of the hon. member's observations this evening. I shall be glad to go into the matter, and to see whether anything can be done to arrive at a more harmonious state of affairs. I will consult my colleagues.

Mr. PICKERING: According to the evidence taken by the Agricultural Royal Commission, there is plenty for the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt to do in his own particular work. We of the South-West want to know what is the position?

The PREMIER: Even prior to my taking charge of the Agricultural Department, I had for years considered that Mr. Sutton's services were not being utilised for the purposes to which he was best suited—that, in fact, his knowledge and experience were being largely wasted. One of the first things I did on taking up the administration of the Agricultural Department was to place Mr. Sutton in a position

to devote his whole time to matters connected with the wheat belt—the growing of wheat and other cereal crops, and mixed farming generally. Mr. Sutton has been gradually relieved of other work, to that end. I hope the farmers will now profit by Mr. Sutton's work. He is an enthusiastic, energetic, and active officer, whose whole heart is in his work.

Mr. MALEY: I am glad to have the assurance of the Premier that at last Mr. Sutton is to be allowed to devote himself to the work for which he was specially brought here. Like the Premier, I have a high estimation of Mr. Sutton's capabilities. I regard him as perhaps the most valuable official in the State service to-day.

Item, Assistant to Commissioner, £210.

Mr. GREEN: It is common knowledge that the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt has for a long time past been directing his energies to work entirely apart from that for which he was originally engaged. We find now that he is to attend to his own duties and I fail to see, therefore, why he should have an assistant.

The PREMIER: Now that Mr. Sutton is to attend to his own important duties, he will require some assistance in the head office. The officer who has been selected to give him that assistance was in the Lands Department and he was transferred to the Agricultural Department. As hon. members know, too, the Government are classing the farmers' wool with excellent results. The farmers, of course, pay for that classing. When I visited the stores at Fremantle a little while back I was pleased to learn that the appraisers were satisfied with the work which had been done.

Item, Commissioner for South-West, £662.

Mr. PICKERING: The industries in the south-western portion of the State warrant the employment of an expert, and I say without fear of contradiction that a man should be engaged to go about and advise the farmers. Mr. Sutton, who has been placed temporarily in charge of the South-West, will not resent it when I say that it is common knowledge that he does not know anything about dairying.

Mr. Smith: What nonsense; he ran a dairy farm for years.

Mr. PICKERING: He has no knowledge of such things as butter factories. Some provision should certainly be made to fill the vacancy created by the retrenchment of Mr. Connor.

Item, Manager Brunswick Orchard, £185.

Mr. BROWN: Will the Premier explain why this increase of £185 is shown on the Estimates, when the Brunswick orchard has been destroyed? There is another item on the Estimates further along showing an increase of £675 in connection with the Brunswick orchard. Both items should have been considered together.

Mr. GREEN: If it is necessary to have a manager for an orchard which does not exist, he should receive more than £185 a year.

The PREMIER: The amount of £185 represents the salary of the temporary manager for a period of four months. That money has been paid and the services of the temporary manager have been dispensed

with. One of the fruit inspectors is discharging the duties.

Item, Chief Inspector of Stock, £528.

Mr. JOHNS(ON): During the course of the debate several hon. members who knew Mr. Lander referred to the fact that he had been unable to secure registration as a veterinary surgeon. The Chief Inspector of Stock is the chairman of the Veterinary Board. All who know Mr. Lander's work, and those hon. members who were in Parliament when the Veterinary Bill was going through, will remember that it was distinctly understood that the measure was to meet cases like that of Mr. Lander's. I would like the Premier to tell us whether the Government are prepared to do anything in the matter of having Mr. Lander's claims reviewed.

The PREMIER: I will be pleased to go into the matter. I think that very often a practical man brought up to the business knows more about his work than does a professional man. I know that Mr. Lander has a full knowledge of the work he is engaged in, and that the farmers are very glad to have his advice. I will go into the matter and see if something cannot be done.

Mr. PICKERING: I trust that no reflection is intended on the Chief Inspector of Stock. He is a man of great ability and is very conscientious in the performance of his duty.

Mr. GREEN: What are the duties of the Chief Inspector of Stock? If he does anything he is very reticent about it. I admit he does excellent work in answering correspondence in the "Sunday Times," but I would like to know what his ordinary duties may be.

Mr. PICKERING: The duties of the Chief Inspector of Stock are to tender advice to those who require it. There are many in my electorate who can testify to the value of that officer's services.

The PREMIER: The Chief Inspector of Stock advises all the farmers and stock-owners throughout the State. Any of them having trouble with their stock immediately seek his advice. This officer has to go to Wyndham in connection with the tick question from time to time; indeed, his duties take him all over the State. All the purchases of Government horses and stock pass through his hands.

Item, Veterinary Surgeon £414.

Mr. SMITH: I should like to know what are the duties of this officer. I understood that he had to inspect stock landing at Fremantle; but practically no stock has been introduced into the State for quite a long time.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): All the cattle from the North-West have to be inspected by him.

The PREMIER: This officer is stationed at Fremantle. One of his principal duties is to attend to stock coming overseas, whether from our own North or from other parts of Australia. He is fully occupied, and when the Chief Inspector of Stock is away in the North-West this officer, Mr. Burns, acts as Chief In-

spector of Stock. We have to inspect every beast coming from the North-West.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: According to the statement which has just been made this officer's time is taken up in answering correspondence for the "Sunday Times." I have repeatedly seen a column or two in that journal upon matters of importance to the farming community which has been supplied by the officer in question. We cannot afford to employ an officer simply to contribute information to that paper.

Mr. Smith: The information is not for the benefit of the Press but of the farmer.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is for the benefit of the Press. Any newspaper which gives this class of information is likely to have a larger number of subscribers in the country than if this information was not given. If the "Primary Producer" published matter of this kind farmers might not take the "Sunday Times" because they would not require both publications. The Government are charged so much an inch for all their advertisements, and they should now turn round and demand so much an inch for all these replies to questions given by their officers.

Mr. BROWN: The remarks made by the Minister for Agriculture have convinced me that it is necessary to have a veterinary surgeon. This officer has been repeatedly sent for in connection with diseases in stock, and if he could solve the problem of how to deal with some of the diseases that are found in stock he would be worth ten times his salary to the State. In my district alone 1,000 sheep died last year as a result of disease.

Item, Inspectors, £542:

Mr. BROWN: Is it necessary to have so many inspectors in the department? Besides six inspectors provision is made for two temporary inspectors. What are the duties of the temporary inspectors?

The PREMIER: This number of inspectors has been employed for some time past. Provision is made for one inspector in the metropolitan area, where there is plenty of work for him to do amongst the dairy herds and the pig farms. One inspector travels in the North-West, one is at Albany, one at York, one at Esperance, and there is one at Port Hedland. Considering the vast area that has to be covered I do not think we could do with less inspectors, if a proper inspection is made.

Item, Incidental, including postages, stationery, fares and freights, travelling expenses, etc., £4,000.

Mr. SMITH: This is an enormous sum of money to come under such a paltry heading. It is absurd that these items should be bulked together in this way, and distinctly unfair to the Committee.

The PREMIER: This item covers the whole of the administrative costs of the department, and includes the travelling expenses of the various heads of departments, and many small items of expenditure. The item was set out in this way to avoid overloading the Estimates and to save a considerable amount of printing. Owing to the rabbit trouble the activities of the department are certainly greater this year than

they were last year, but as much special expenditure as possible has been cut out.

Item, Wool-classing depot, £300.

Mr. JOHNSTON: When a wool-classing depot was opened at Fremantle a few months ago, the Government promised that similar depots would be opened at outposts, such as Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton. I am more particularly concerned with Bunbury in this connection, so that wool grown in the districts served by that port will not have to be conveyed to Fremantle to be classed. When may we expect a depot to be established at Bunbury?

The PREMIER: The hon. member will recognise that this is a new venture on the part of the Government, and one not yet finalised. The farmers, it should be said, pay for the work of classing, at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound. I am not in a position to-night to state when a depot will be established at Bunbury. The wool-classing, I may add, has been a great success at Fremantle, where the appraisers have expressed themselves as highly pleased with the work.

Item, Wheat and dairy farms, £9,055.

Mr. HARRISON: At some of the wheat farms Mr. Sutton is conducting experiments in wheat-breeding, and I wish to know whether, as a variety of wheat becomes established, a proportion of the seed is kept back in a place secure against fire, so that the results of the labour done may not be lost from that cause. There have been two fires at the Narrogin State farm.

The PREMIER: From my knowledge of Mr. Sutton I feel sure that the point has not been overlooked. However, I will bring it to his attention.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I move—

"That the item be reduced by £100."

I have no wish to harass the Government, but this motion represents my only means of reaching finality with regard to the Denmark butter and bacon factory, until the 1918-19 Estimates come down. I referred to this matter in the general debate.

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member's motion is not seriously meant, but merely represents a momentary feeling of pique. The Government are not unmindful of Denmark in this connection, but they must be careful in extending the operations of butter and bacon factories. The work of bacon-curing cannot go on at Denmark, because that centre lacks refrigerating appliances, which are, however, available at Albany, where, moreover, they will be utilised for the export of frozen lambs.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: The export of lambs is a project we have in view at Albany, and, so far as I am aware, no request whatever has been made to the Government to establish a bacon and butter factory at Albany. That project has previously been attempted, but without success. The machinery is now lying idle at Albany, and no butter is forthcoming. On the other hand, the needs of the Denmark settlers in this respect are not receiving attention. The matter has been before the Government for five months now, and I have been unable to get a reply. Therefore I should be failing in my duty if

I did not use every means at my disposal in order to obtain a decision. How can the settlers at Denmark live on the expectation that in another five months the Government will help them. I do not say that the Government are against Denmark, but it is in the interests of the State that a decision should be given now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member is quite justified in moving for a reduction of the item as a protest against the delay on the part of the Government. Hon. members who have visited the Denmark district can bear out the statement that the settlers there are in a deplorable plight and that at the present time they are hopeful of being able to get some sustenance out of pig raising, to which industry they have turned their attention. One has only to go to the homes of some of these settlers to see the conditions under which they are living. The matter is certainly worthy of immediate attention.

Mr. Harrison: Are the people there worse than the settlers at Yorkrakine?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I believe they are. They have been hampered by the high price of the land.

The Premier: That has been reduced.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But their money has gone and they are now dependent on little butter and bacon factories. I trust the Premier will come to a decision promptly.

The PREMIER: I have already told the hon. member that the Government will go into the matter at once with the view of remedying any disabilities that may exist.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: On that definite promise made by the Premier—

The Colonial Treasurer: There is no definite promise.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: My interpretation of the Premier's remarks is that he has promised to look into the matter at once. That is a promise and I do not want the Treasurer to block me afterwards. I have every confidence that the Premier will give the subject the consideration it deserves. I shall withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Item, Brunswick orchard, including wages, £700.

Mr. LUTEY: I would like to have an explanation regarding this item. As a layman I am now convinced that the right thing was done when the Honorary Minister authorised the *rooting up of the orchard*, but after hearing another expert on the matter in the person of the member for Bunbury, who contended that it cost much less than £1,000 to run an orchard of a similar size, I am wondering whether the amount on the Estimates is a fair charge.

The PREMIER: This amount was on the Loan Estimates, but it was transferred to the Revenue Estimates.

Item, Rabbit-proof fence, expenses of upkeep, £12,200.

Mr. MULLANY: About twelve months ago when the previous Estimates were before this House, considerable discussion took place on this item. On that occasion the member for North Perth moved to bring about a considerable reduction in the item and I supported the

proposal. Notwithstanding an assurance given at that time that the matter would be looked into and that probably reduced expenditure would be brought about, we find now that there is an increase in the item of £929.

The Minister for Works: There are more rabbits.

Mr. MULLANY: I regret we have not the report of the select committee which was recently appointed to inquire into the question of the rabbit invasion, but I believe that were a majority of the members of that committee here they would say that it was an utter absurdity to keep up this ever-increasing vote. The fences have entirely failed in the object for which they were erected and I believe that the sum of £12,200 could better be spent to combat the pest on the farms between the two fences. The fences are absolutely useless. I feel so strongly on the matter that I intend to move an amendment—

"That the item be reduced by £4,000."

The PREMIER: If the hon. member's amendment is carried the utility of the fence will be completely destroyed; in fact we might then just as well take it up. I went carefully into this matter and came to the conclusion that it would be advisable to allow the two fences to remain, and in that way confine the rabbits to the area between the two fences so as to more easily destroy them. The fences are well looked after and those who have seen them can bear out that statement. Not only do these fences keep out rabbits, but dingoes and foxes as well. The wire netting, if taken up, would be of no value. It would be a pity to remove this outer fence. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Agricultural Department.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.32 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 18th March, 1913.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented," see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

BILL—CURATOR OF INTERESTS ESTATES.

Read a third time, and passed.